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PROCEEDINGS OF 84*th* NATIONAL CONVENTION *of the*

AMERICAN LEGION

Charlotte, North Carolina

August 27–29, 2002

2002 : 84th NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION : 2002

108th Congress, 1st Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 108–19

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION PROCEEDINGS OF THE 84TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA FROM AUGUST 27, 28, AND 29, 2002 AND A REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49

JANUARY 27, 2003.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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84–009 WASHINGTON : 2003

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, January 22, 2003.

Hon. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In compliance with current public law we herewith transmit for printing as a House document a financial statement and independent audit of The American Legion, proceedings of our 84th annual National Convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina from August 27, 28, and 29, 2002 and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

Sincerely,

STEVE A. ROBERTSON,
Director, National Legislative Commission.

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FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive resumé, in as small space as possible, of what took place at the Eighty-fourth Annual National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27-29, 2002.

The final report of the National Organization, for the period ending December 31, 2001, and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2001 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001 are included in the Summary.

To make a quick distribution, speed has been necessary. Every precaution has been taken to avoid errors, but some may have occurred in the rush of Convention events and the haste of editing and printing.

Permission is hereby given to quote from this Summary without further consent. However, because of the nature of our resolution process, I urge that the full text of any or all *resolve clause(s)* is used when a quotation from a resolution is required for publication.

Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutamt

Note: At various times, the National Vice Commanders, as follows, presided over the Convention sessions, when called upon by presiding officer, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure as shown in the verbatim proceedings: Russell H. Hanseter, Wisconsin; Charles R. John, Oklahoma; Terry D. Lewis, Pennsylvania; James F. Mareschal, Missouri; Dale R. Salmen, Nevada.

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND NATIONAL OFFICERS
THE AMERICAN LEGION, 1919 to Date

Note: In the following list it should be noted that the terms of each group of officers expire with that particular convention under which they are listed.

* indicates deceased

HONORARY COMMANDERS

General John J. Pershing*
Marshall Ferdinand Foch*

PARIS CAUCUS

Paris France, March 15 to 17, 1919
Temporary Chairman: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)
Permanent Chairman: Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1926 National Convention)
Chairman Pro Tempore: Thomas W. Miller*, Delaware (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1968 National Convention)
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)
At the Paris Caucus an Executive Committee was elected to complete arrangements, the chairman and secretary of which were:
Chairman: Milton J. Foreman*, Illinois (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)
Secretary: George A. White*, Oregon

ST. LOUIS CAUCUS

St. Louis, Missouri, May 8 to 10, 1919
Temporary Chairman: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. *, New York (Voted title of Past National Commander at 1949 National Convention)
Permanent Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas
Vice Chairmen: John J. Sullivan*, Washington; Fred Humphrey*, New Mexico; P.C. Calhoun*, Connecticut (Voted titles of Past National Vice Commanders at 1933 National Convention)
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)

1st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10 to 12, 1919
Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention)
Vice Chairman: Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania
Treasurer: Gasper G. Bacon*, Massachusetts
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado

2nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cleveland, Ohio, September 27 to 29, 1920
Commander: Franklin D'Olier*, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: James O'Brien*, California; Allan A. Tukey*, Nebraska; Joyce S. Lewis*, Minnesota; Alden B. Chambers*, Massachusetts; William Follett*, Oregon
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Chaplain: Rev. Francis A. Kelly*, New York
Judge: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

3rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Kansas City, Missouri, October 31 to November 2, 1921
Commander: Frederic W. Galbraith, Jr. *, (died June 9), succeeded by John G. Emery*, Michigan
Vice Commanders: John G. Emery*, Michigan; Thomas Goldingay*, New Jersey; Claudius G. Pendill*, Wisconsin; James G. Scrugham*, Nevada; E. Jackson Winslett*, Alabama
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. John W. Inzer*, Tennessee
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

4th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16 to 20, 1922
Commander: Hanford MacNider*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: H. Nelson Jackson*, Vermont; George L. Berry*, Tennessee; Raymond O. Brackett*, Massachusetts; Charles H. Kendrick*, California; John A. McCormack*, Colorado
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Earl A. Blackman*, Kansas
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

5th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Francisco, California, October 16 to 19, 1923
Commander: Alvin M. Owsley*, Texas
Vice Commanders: Edward J. Barrett*, Wisconsin; Watson B. Miller*, District of Columbia; E. Erle Cocke, Sr. *, Georgia; Robert O. Blood*, New Hampshire; Chiles P. Plummer*, Wyoming
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. William P. O'Connor*, Ohio
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

6th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Paul, Minnesota, September 15 to 19, 1924
Commander: John R. Quinn*, California
Vice Commanders: Lester F. Albert*, Idaho; Celora M. Stoddard*, Arizona; William B. Healey*, Pennsylvania; F. Ryan Duffy*, Wisconsin; Dr. I. Thurman Mann*, North Carolina
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, WashingtonCResigned 2-1-24; Succeeded by Russell G. Creviston*, Indiana
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Ezra Clemens*, Minnesota
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

7th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Omaha, Nebraska, October 5 to 9, 1925
Commander: James A. Drain*, Washington
Vice Commanders: Frank H. McFarland*, Kansas; Eugene P. Armstrong*, Connecticut; A.L. Perry, Panama; Peyton H. Hoge, Jr*, Kentucky; William Stern*, North Dakota
Adjutant: Russell G. Creviston*, Indiana , ResignedCSucceeded by James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Joseph M. Lonergan*, Illinois
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

8th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 11 to 15, 1926
Commander: John R. McQuigg*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Joseph Y. Cheney*, Florida; Hughes B. Davis*, Oklahoma; Vincent A. Carroll*, Pennsylvania; Raymond B. Littlefield*, Rhode Island; Judge James A. Howell*, Utah
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. William E. Patrick*, California
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

9th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, October 18, 1927
Paris, France, September 19 to 22, 1927
Commander: Howard P. Savage*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: C. Thomas Busha, Jr. *, Montana; Stafford King*, Minnesota; John G. Sims*, Tennessee; John E. Curtis*, Nebraska: Dr. John G. Towne*, Maine.
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Joseph L.N. Wolfe*, Pennsylvania
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

10th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Antonio, Texas, October 8 to 11, 1928
Commander: Edward E. Spafford*, New York
Vice Commanders: John T. Raftis*, Washington; Ralph T. O'Neil*, Kansas; Paul R. Younts*, North Carolina; Dan Spurlock*, Louisiana; John M. Henry*, Minnesota.
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. Gill Robb Wilson*, New Jersey
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

11th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky, September 30 to October 2, 1929
Commander: Paul V. McNutt*, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Lawrence E. McGann, Jr. *, Illinois; George W. Malone*, Nevada; Edward L. White*, Connecticut; Miller C. Foster*, South Carolina; Walton D. Hood*, Texas
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rabbi Lee J. Levinger*, Delaware
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

12th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, October 6 to 9, 1930
Commander: O.L. Bodenhamer*, Arkansas
Vice Commanders: Milt D. Campbell*, Ohio; John J. Dugan*, Delaware; Morton M. David*, Colorado; Frank Schoble, Jr. *, Pennsylvania; Willis M. Brewer*, Michigan.
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. George F. Kettell, D.D. *, New York
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

13th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Detroit, Michigan, September 21 to 24, 1931
Commander: Ralph T. O'Neil*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: Bert S. Hyland*, Vermont; Roland B. Howell*, Louisiana; Harry B. Henderson, Jr. *, Wyoming; Dr. James A. Duff*, West Virginia; Dr. Neal D. Williams*, Missouri
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. Joseph N. Barnett*, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois to 6-24-31CSucceeded by Acting Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

14th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Portland, Oregon, September 12 to 15, 1932
Commander: Henry L. Stevens, Jr. *, North Carolina
Vice Commanders: Richard F. Paul*, Massachusetts; Forrest G. Cooper*, Mississippi; Roy L. Cook*, New Mexico; Frank N. Brooks*, Washington; Harold L. Plummer*, Wisconsin
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. Harris A. Darche*, Illinois
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham*, Indiana

15th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, October 2 to 5, 1933
Commander: Louis A. Johnson*, West Virginia
Vice Commanders: Russell Meadows*, Arizona; Robert D. Flory*, Nebraska; William E. Easterwood, Jr.*, Texas; John J. Maloney*, Maine; Chas. A. Mills*, Florida
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Irwin Q. Wood*, Idaho
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts (died January 22, 1933)CSucceeded by Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham*, Indiana

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 22 to 25, 1934
Commander: Edward A. Hayes*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Charles R. Mabey*, Utah: Robert L. Gordon*, Arkansas; Miguel Munoz*, Puerto Rico; Ed W. Carruth*, Kansas; Charles L. Woolley*, Rhode Island.
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. White*, Massachusetts
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham*, Indiana

17th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Louis, Missouri, September 23 to 26, 1935
Commander: Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. *, California
Vice Commanders: Daniel J. Doherty*, Massachusetts; Harold J. Warner*, Oregon; John K. Kennelly*, North Dakota; Milo J. Warner*, Ohio; Quimby Melton*, Georgia
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Park W. Huntington*, Delaware
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: James A. Drain*, Washington
Judge Advocate: James A. Drain*, Washington

18th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cleveland, Ohio, September 21 to 24, 1936
Commander: Ray Murphy*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: Raymond F. Gates*, Connecticut; Dr. W.E. Whitlock*, Florida; Oscar W. Worthwine*, Idaho; Dr. F. Whitney Godwin*, Virginia; Louis R. Probst*, Wyoming
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas D. Kennedy*, Missouri
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

19th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, September 20 to 23, 1937
Commander: Harry W. Colmery*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: Salvatore A.Capodice*, California; Leo A. Temmey*, South Dakota; Leonard Sisk*, Tennessee; J. Fred Johnson, Jr. *, Alabama; Jack Crowley*, Vermont
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Bryan H. Keathley, D.D.*, Texas
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

20th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Los Angeles, California, September 19 to 22, 1938
Commander: Daniel J. Doherty*, Massachusetts
Vice Commanders: Drury M. Phillips*, Texas; Phil M. Conley*, West Virginia: Harry M. Johnson*, Montana; James F. Daniel, Jr. *, South Carolina; James R. Mahaffy*, Hawaii
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Frank J. Lawler*, Illinois
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

21st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, September 25 to 28, 1939
Commander: Stephen F. Chadwick*, Washington
Vice Commanders: Edward J. Quinn*, Maine; Charles W. Crush*, Virginia: Earl T. Ross*, Nevada; James T. Crawley*, Mississippi; Henry C. Oakey*, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Jerome L. Fritsche*, Nebraska
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

22nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, September 23 to 26, 1940
Commander: Raymond J. Kelly*, Michigan
Vice Commanders: Leo E. Ray*, New Hampshire; Charles Q. Kelly*, Arkansas; Matthew J. Murphy*, Illinois; James B . Fitzgerald*, Maryland; H. Elwyn Davis*, Colorado
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Patrick N. McDermott*, Iowa
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

23rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 15 to 18, 1941
Commander: Milo J. Warner*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Erwin A. Froyd*, Wyoming; James L. McCrory*, Nebraska; Harold P. Redden*, Massachusetts; Edward R. Stirling*, Pennsylvania; Alcee S. Legendre*, Louisiana
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Brigadier William G. Gilks*, Texas
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

24th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Kansas City, Missouri, September 19 to 21, 1942
Commander: Lynn U. Stambaugh*, North Dakota
Vice Commanders: W.C. Sawyer*, Arizona; William DeLacy Allen*, Georgia; Charles E. Booth*, West Virginia; V.M. Armstrong*, Indiana; John F. Sullivan*, Vermont
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Frederick J. Halloran*, New Jersey
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

25th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Omaha, Nebraska, September 21 to 23, 1943
Commander: Roane Waring*, Tennessee
Vice Commanders: John T. Batten*, Alabama; Arthur J. Connell*, Connecticut; Fred G. Fraser*, District of Columbia; Herman H. Lark*, Missouri; Jefferson Davis Atwood*, New Mexico
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas, (died July 25)CSucceeded by Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan, Acting Adjutant
Chaplain: Dr. Paul De Forrest Mortimore*, Idaho
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

26th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, September 18 to 20, 1944
Commander: Warren H. Atherton*, California
Vice Commanders: Martin V. Coffey*, Ohio; E.A. Littlefield*, Utah; Robert 'Roy' McMillan*, North Carolina; Edward Al Mulrooney, Delaware; Hector G. Staples*, Maine
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John F. McManus*, Kansas
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

27th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, November 18 to 21, 1945
Commander: Edward N. Scheiberling*, New York
Vice Commanders: Bascom F. Jones*, Tennessee; Frank E. McCaffrey*, Rhode Island; Dan M. McDade*, Oregon; Ray S. Pierson*, Kansas; William P. Shadoan*, Kentucky.
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. DeWitt C. Mallory*, Florida
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

28th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Francisco, California, September 30 to October 4, 1946
Commander: John Stelle *, Illinois
Vice Commanders: R. Graham Huntington*, New Jersey; Fred LaBoon*, Oklahoma; Sam L. Latimer, Jr. *, South Carolina; H. Dudley Swim*, Idaho; Jeremiah Twomey*, Massachusetts
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward J. Smith*, Iowa.
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana, (died 7-13-45)CSucceeded by Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

29th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, August 28 to 31, 1947
Commander: Paul H. Griffith*, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: Joseph W. Brown*, New Hampshire; Martin B. Buckner*, Michigan; Richard C. Cadwallader*, Louisiana; Ernest H. Dervishian*, Virginia; Edward J. Sharkey*, California
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Arthur L. Rustad*, Minnesota
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

30th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Florida, October 18 to 20, 1948
Commander: James F. O'Neil*, New Hampshire
Vice Commanders: LeRoy William Barns*, South Dakota; Albert A. Cree*, Vermont; Richard B. Ott*, Washington; Myron R. Renick*, West Virginia; Joe W. White*, Georgia
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Frank L. Harrington*, Montana
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

31st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 1, 1949
Commander: S. Perry Brown*, Texas
Vice Commanders: James Lane, Alabama; Leonard W. Moody*, Arkansas; James Annin*, Montana; Walter E. Alessandroni*, Pennsylvania; Edward J. Kelly*, Connecticut
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska.
Chaplain: Rev. Thomas Grice*, California
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

32nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Los Angeles, California, October 9 to 12, 1950
Commander: George N. Craig*, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Milton G. Boock*, Minnesota; David H. Fleisher*, Missouri; Frank E. Lowe*, Maine; J. E. Martie*, Nevada,: Dr. D. R. Perry*, North Carolina
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward J. Carney*, O.S.A., Massachusetts
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

33rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 15 to 18, 1951
Commander: Erle Cocke, Jr.*, Georgia
Vice Commanders: Joe H. Adams*, Florida; Herbert J. Jacobi*, District of Columbia; Felix Pogliano*, Colorado; Lewis K. Gough*, California; Fred C. Bramlage*, Kansas.
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rabbi David Lefkowitz*, Louisiana
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

34th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, August 25 to 28, 1952
Commander: Donald R. Wilson*, West Virginia
Vice Commanders: Adolph F. Bremer*, Minnesota; Frank R. Kelley*, Massachusetts; Thomas E. Paradine*, New York; Oscar B. Rohiff*, Wyoming; Audley H. Ward*, South Carolina
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Olaf G. Birkeland*, Wisconsin
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

35th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Louis, Missouri, August 31 to September 3, 1953
Commander: Lewis K. Gough*, California
Vice Commanders: William R. Bourdon*, Arizona; Lyon W. Brandon*, Mississippi; Wilbur C. Daniel*, Virginia; Harry V. Groome*, New Jersey; J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John E. Duffy*, Ohio
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

36th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 2, 1954
Commander: Arthur J. Connell*, Connecticut
Vice Commanders: John A. High*, New Hampshire; Dr. Deward H. Reed*, New Mexico; Truman C. Wold,* North Dakota; Thomas W. Bird*, North Carolina, Herbert M. Walker*, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Dr. Tom B. Clark*, Oklahoma
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

37th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 10 to 13, 1955
Commander: Seaborn P. Collins*, New Mexico
Vice Commanders: Leonard L. Jackson*, Louisiana; Patrick H. Mangan*, Jr., Vermont; Howard C. Kingdom*, Ohio; Dr. Carl J. Rees*, Delaware; Robert L. Shelby*, Utah.
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Albert J. Hoffman*, Iowa
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

38th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Los Angeles, California, September 3 to 6, 1956
Commander: J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Vice Commanders; Guy Stone*, Georgia; John H. Van Horn*, Alaska; L. Everett Page*, Texas; Gilman H. Stordock*, Wisconsin; James V. Day*, Maine (resigned Jan. 1, 1956), succeeded by William J. Holliman*, District of Columbia
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska (resigned), succeeded by E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Joseph MacCarroll*, New Jersey
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

39th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 16 to 19, 1957
Commander: W.C. 'Dan' Daniel*, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Gaylor M. Brown*, Iowa; George T. Lewis*, Jr., Tennessee; Carl R. Moser*, Oregon; John E. Stay, Pennsylvania; J. Edward Walter*, Maryland
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Bernard W. Gerdon, Indiana
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

40th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, September 1 to 4, 1958
Commander: John S. Gleason, Jr.*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: William A. Cottrell*, Hawaii; Ramon R. Guas*, Puerto Rico; Harry W. Miller*, West Virginia; Leo A. Lemos*, Rhode Island; Isadore E. Levine*, Indiana.
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Feltham S. James*, South Carolina
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

41st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24 to 27, 1959
Commander: Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma
Vice Commanders: C. D. DeLoach, District of Columbia; John W. Collins*, Pennsylvania; James B. Kerrigan*, Missouri; Robert Charles Smith*, Louisiana; James C. Bangs*, Idaho
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Twiss*, Massachusetts
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Florida, October 15 to 20, 1960
Commander: Martin B. McKneally*, New York
Vice Commanders: William A. Brennan, Jr., Indiana; A. Layman Harman*, South Carolina: Nate V. Keller*, Minnesota; Irven Frank Gianotti*, Minnesota (appointed September 14, 1960, to fill vacancy created July 25 by the death of Nate V. Keller); Willard W. Brandt, North Dakota; Charles McGonegal*, California; Corydon T. Hill*, California (appointed May 4, 1960, to fill vacancy created January 27 by the death of Charles McGonegal)
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, D.H.L., Texas
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

43rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Denver, Colorado, September 9 to 14, 1961
Commander: William R. Burke, California
Vice Commanders: George K. Walker, Massachusetts; James M. Wagonseller, Ohio; Vincent J. Maxheim*, Iowa; Dr. Harry H. Kretzler*, Washington; R.C. Godwin*, North Carolina
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. William H. Moss*, Tennessee
Historian: Glenn B. Hoover*, Iowa
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

44th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, Nevada, October 5 to 11, 1962
Commander: Charles L. Bacon*, Missouri
Vice Commanders: Walter W. Barnard*, Montana; Edward T. Hoak*, Pennsylvania; Wilson H. Morrison*, Michigan; J. Milton Patrick*, Oklahoma; Edward Wysocki, New Jersey
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Robert G. Keating*, Connecticut
Historian: Earl David Young*, Colorado
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

45th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Florida, September 6 to 12, 1963
Commander: James E. Powers*, Georgia
Vice Commanders: Harold D. Beaton*, District of Columbia; James W. Doon*, New Hampshire; Claude A. Hamilton*, South Dakota; Paschal C. Reese*, Florida; Victor F. Whittlesea*, Nevada
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rabbi Albert M. Shulman*, Indiana
Historian: H. Armand de Masi*, Italy
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

46th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Dallas, Texas, September 18 to 24, 1964
Commander: Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota
Vice Commanders: Earl D. Franklin, Jr.,* Colorado; Emilio S. Iglesias*, Vermont; Garland D. Murphy, Jr. *, M.D., Arkansas; George Emory Sipple*, Wisconsin; Harry Wright*, Mexico
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John J. Howard*, Virginia
Historian: H. Armand de Masi*, Italy
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

47th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Portland, Oregon, August 20 to 26, 1965
Commander: Donald E. Johnson*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: David Aronberg*, Kentucky; Herbert D. Black*, South Carolina; Ward W. Husted*, Wyoming; Edward H. Lynch, Jr.*, Connecticut; Joseph Paul*, Michigan
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Morris N. Dummet*, Louisiana
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

48th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 1, 1966
Commander: L. Eldon James*, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Dr. A.R. Choppin*, Louisiana; William E. Galbraith, Nebraska; Robert O. Phillips*, Philippines; William J. Rogers, Maine; Soleng Tom,* Arizona.
Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore*, Wyoming (died 4-21-67)CSucceeded by Ernest N. Schmid 5-4-67 to 8-31-67
Chaplain: Rev. Alfred C. Thompson, New York
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

49th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, August 25 to 31, 1967
Commander: John E. Davis*, North Dakota
Vice Commanders: Robert M. Fritz*, Indiana; Lewis W. Emerich, Texas; Harry V. Klein*, Pennsylvania; Frank L. Orfanello*, Massachusetts; James A. Tadlock*, New Mexico
Adjutant: William F. Hauck, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Anthony J. O'Driscoll*, New York
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

50th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, September 6 to 12, 1968
Commander: William E. Galbraith, Nebraska
Vice Commanders: Coleman Nolen*, Oklahoma; Louis R.J. Malo, Rhode Island; Roscoe D. Curtiss*, Tennessee; Dr. Edwin L. Peterson, Utah; Marvin W. Roth, Wisconsin.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward P. Nolan*, Pennsylvania
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

51st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Atlanta, Georgia, August 22 to 28, 1969
Commander: William C. Doyle*, New Jersey
Vice Commanders: C. Russell Huber*, Alaska; John A. Jones*, West Virginia; Howard E. Lohman*, Minnesota; Lewis E. McCray*, Alabama; Maurice Parisien*, Maine.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. C.J. Olander*, Mississippi
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

52nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Portland, Oregon, August 28 to September 3, 1970
Commander: J. Milton Patrick*, Oklahoma
Vice Commanders: Kent. T. Lundgren*, Michigan; Roland D. Marble, Mississippi; Raymond F. Mudge*, New Hampshire; Earl R. Norgard*, Oregon; Gilberto M. Font*, Puerto Rico
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. William D. Curtis, Minnesota
Historian: John A. May*, South Carolina
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

53rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Houston, Texas, August 27 to September 2, 1971
Commander: Alfred P. Chamie*, California
Vice Commanders: Claude Carpenter, Arkansas; Max Hanson*, Idaho; Robert E.L. Eaton*; Maryland; Gabriel T. Olga*, Massachusetts; John E. Gilbert, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Milton B. Faust*, North Carolina
Historian: Howard M. Swinney*, Kentucky
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

54th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, August 18 to 24, 1972
Commander: John H. Geiger, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Howard W. Fann*, Kentucky; Arthur M. MacCarthy*, Florida; Roy Sweet, Vermont; Harry G. Wiles*, Kansas; Wallace C.S. Young, Hawaii
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Paul J. Schwaab,* Nebraska
Historian: G. Greer McCallister*, Ohio
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

55th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Honolulu, Hawaii, August 17 to 23, 1973
Commander: Joe L. Matthews, Texas
Vice Commanders: Tim T. Craig*, North Carolina; Sam Gray*, California; Donald L. Gruenbaum*, Ohio; Albert J. Moeller*, New Jersey; Raymond J. Novak*, South Dakota.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. L.P. Fitzpatrick*, Iowa
Historian: Mrs. Loretta O. Phillips*, California
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

56th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Florida, August 16 to 22, 1974
Commander: Robert E. L. Eaton*, Maryland
Vice Commanders: John N. Roberto, Connecticut; Frank C. Brooks*, Washington; Gilbert E. Sheeks, Indiana; Merrick W. Swords Jr. *, Louisiana; N.E. Brown*, South Carolina
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry, Missouri
Historian: R. Robert Filter*, Wisconsin
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

57th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 15 to 21, 1975
Commander: James M. Wagonseller*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Boyd H. Clemens, North Dakota; Jack W. Flynt*, Texas; Jay E. Harville, Tennessee; Donald H. Jeffery, Pennsylvania; William A. Lindsay,* Montana.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Harvey T. Goodling*, Oregon
Historian: Nolie C. Deas, Sr., Florida
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

58th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Seattle, Washington, August 20 to 26, 1976
Commander: Harry G. Wiles*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: John W. Adams, Jr., Kentucky; Fred W. Anderson, Jr., Nevada; Leo F. Malloy, Massachusetts; Thomas W. Miller, Arkansas; James F. Walker*, Minnesota.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Claude E. Smithmier, Georgia
Historian: Mrs. Dorothy Grimes, Colorado
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

59th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Denver, Colorado, August 19 to 25, 1977
Commander: William J. Rogers, Maine
Vice Commanders: Lloyd J. Berken*, Wisconsin; Thomas B. Coll, District of Columbia; Robert B. Grauberger*, Colorado; Frank A. Kelly, Georgia; Wilbur Walker*, Virginia
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. James C. Tuxbury, North Dakota
Historian: Alton H. Carpenter, New York
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

60th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, August 18 to 24, 1978
Commander: Robert Charles Smith*, Louisiana
Vice Commanders: Eugene V. Lindquist, Minnesota; Roger A. Munson,* Ohio; John J. O'Connell*, Rhode Island; Chester Phillips, West Virginia; Irving B. Selmer*, Wyoming
Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen*, Minnesota
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Walter D. Power*, Maryland
Historian: Arnold J. Stockstad*, North Dakota
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

61st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Houston, Texas, August 17 to 23, 1979
Commander: John M. Carey, Michigan
Vice Commanders: L. Max Connoly*, Arizona; Alvin F. Grauerholz, Kansas; Joseph F. Ward,* New Jersey; John H. Wienand, Jr. *, Alabama; Nathan M. Wolfe, South Carolina
Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen*, Minnesota
Chaplain: R. Drew Wolcott*, Mexico
Historian: Harry H. Kretzler, M.D. *, Washington
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

62nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, August 15 to 21, 1980
Commander: Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana
Vice Commanders: G.Y. Fails*, New Mexico; Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin; Bob Legan, Arkansas; Max E. Robinson, North Carolina; Lawrence R. Spaulding*, New Hampshire.
Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen*, Minnesota
Chaplain: Rev. Karl E. Kniseley, California
Historian: Phillip Haddad, Oklahoma
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

63rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Honolulu, Hawaii, August 28 to September 3, 1981
Commander: Michael J. Kogutek, New York
Vice Commanders: Ralph M. Godwin*, Mississippi; Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah; Matthew W. Jamieson*, Michigan; Robert W. Lowry, Nebraska; Dr. Almo J. Sebastianelli, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. George S. Macres*, Minnesota
Historian: Neal S. Sundeen, Arizona
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

64th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, August 20 to 26, 1982
Commander: Jack W. Flynt*, Texas
Vice Commanders: Frank T. Markovich*, Missouri; Dan C. McDonough*, Alaska; Percy C. Miller, Tennessee; Melvin 'Doc' Simon, Vermont; David A. Wade*, Maryland.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. George R. M. Rumney, Virginia
Historian: Bernard J. Chisholm*, Minnesota
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

65th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Seattle, Washington, August 19 to 25, 1983
Commander: Al Keller, Jr.*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota; Margaret M. Malone, New Jersey; H. Melvin Napier, Indiana; Jack C. Plato*, Oregon; Leo O. Walker*, Oklahoma.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John D. Kempf*, Ohio
Historian: James W. Conway, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

66th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3 to 5, 1984
Commander: Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
Vice Commanders: J. Leslie Brown, Jr.,* Kentucky; Roberto Gonzalez, Puerto Rico; Charles R. Green*, Ohio; Robert W. Groccia, Massachusetts, John N. Lockhart*, Hawaii
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: James Clay McKee, Utah
Historian: Herberta T. Stark*, New Hampshire
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

67th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, August 23 to 28, 1985
Commander: Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
Vice Commanders: Robert S. Turner, Georgia; Harold E. Collett*, Idaho; Ronald D. Birk, Kansas; Stewart Kunde*, Minnesota; Stephen J. Mikosky*, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Charles G. Rice, Jr.*, New York
Historian: Roy B. Mahoney, Florida
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

68th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cincinnati, Ohio, August 29 to September 4, 1986
Commander: Dale L. Renaud*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: Bernard Black, South Carolina; Norman Conn*, California; Vito M. DeFilipp, Maine; Miles S. Epling, West Virginia, H. F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Dr. Gordon L. Patterson,* Nebraska
Historian: Ethel M. Matuschka,* Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

69th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Antonio, Texas, August 21 to 27, 1987
Commander: James P. Dean, Mississippi
Vice Commanders: William M. Detweiler, Louisiana; Doris R. Gross, Washington; Donald E. Neil, Delaware; Allen L. Titus, Indiana; Ervin F. Van Dyke, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Arthur J. Jakobiak, New Mexico
Historian: J. Ruffin Apperson*, Virginia
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

70th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky, September 6 to 8, 1988
Commander: John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts
Vice Commanders: Neale V. Cabral*, Connecticut; Joe Frank, Jr., Missouri; W.P. 'Bill' Peterson, Montana; Paul B. Phifer, Jr.,* Virginia; Leon Reed, Arkansas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Jerry Salveson*, Minnesota
Historian: Edward F. Brennan*, Illinois
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

71st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Baltimore, Maryland, September 5 to 7, 1989
Commander: H.F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota
Vice Commanders; Thomas L. Gabel, Ohio; Harvey Holcomb, Texas: Archie Pozzi, Jr.,* Nevada; Ray G. Smith, Sr., North Carolina: John P. Tipping, New York
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. F. Robert Davidson, Michigan
Historian: Richard A. Stevens, Sr.*, Louisiana
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

72nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, Indiana, August 28 to 30, 1990
Commander: Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Vice Commanders: Vincent E. Blank, Iowa; Joseph E. Caouette, New Hampshire; Andrew J. Cooper, Alabama; Gerald Goetzinger, South Dakota; Vinton R. Guy, Colorado
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Lynn S. Kearsley, Idaho
Historian: C. Carl Pilgrim,* South Carolina
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Phoenix, Arizona, September 3 to 5, 1991
Commander: Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Vice Commanders: Lewis Adams, Nebraska; James T. Anderson, Wyoming; Fred M. Ingellis, Mississippi; Harry F. McDowell, Florida; George E. Sampson, New Jersey
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Michas M. Ohnstad, Minnesota
Historian: Harold Matthew Branton, Texas
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

74th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, August 25 to 27, 1992
Commander: Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: James 'Jim' G. Brouillette, Vermont; Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan; Ronald C. Murphy, Arizona; Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma; Lee R. Stolfus, Kansas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Donal M. 'Jack' Squires, West Virginia
Historian: Bettie M. Canon, Montana
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr, Maryland

75th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 3 to 9, 1993
Commander: Roger A. Munson*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Joseph V. Adams, Pennsylvania; Paul Andrejewski, Minnesota; Robert E. 'Jack' David, South Carolina; John William 'Bill' Murphy, Arizona; Louis A. 'Tony' Santillanes, New Mexico
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. James R. Wagner, Mississippi
Historian: Delfo Barabani, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

76th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 6 to 8, 1994
Commander: Bruce Thiesen, California
Vice Commanders: Juan H. Cintron, Puerto Rico; Douglas A. Mason, Utah; John J. Mulkern, Massachusetts; K.W. Ohl, Indiana; Curtis O. Twete, North Dakota.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Msgr. Raymond J. Kozlowski*, New York
Historian: Marjorie T. Simpson, Georgia
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

77th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, Indiana, September 4 to 6, 1995
Commander : William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Vice Commanders: Joseph T. Craig, Alaska; Silas M. Noel, Kentucky; Calvin E. Patton, Maryland; H. Gordon Burleigh, New York; Vernon K. Grosenick*, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor, South Carolina
Historian: M. LaReine Maxey*, Nevada, (died 10-7-94) Appointed at 1994 Fall Meetings, Carl S. Wipperman, Washington
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

78th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30 to September 5, 1996
Commander: Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Vice Commanders: Keith Baker, Iowa; William L. Ciciotte, Maine; Robert D. Scott, Oregon; C. Darrel Haskell, South Dakota; Ralph J. Reel, Tennessee
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Joseph E. Reynolds, Texas
Historian: R. Paul Tenney, Vermont
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

79th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Orlando, Florida, August 29 to September 4, 1997
Commander: Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
Vice Commanders: Wilson R. Timmons,* Florida; Orland H. Taylor, Hawaii; Roger L. Wild, Nebraska; Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey; Robert L. Bowen, Virginia
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Charles H. Richmond, Oklahoma
Historian: Barbara 'Bobbe' Stuvengen, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

80th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, September 4 to 10, 1998
Commander: Anthony Jordan, Maine
Vice Commanders: Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut; Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho; Norris W. Preston, Missouri; Gerald L. Moore*, Ohio; Robert E. Vass, West Virginia
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania
Historian: Tommy Mills, Mississippi
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

81st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Anaheim, California, September 3 to 9, 1999
Commander: Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Leo P. Burke, California; Roger L. Tingler, Georgia; James W.

Gravenstein, Kansas; Fernando M. Goulart, Rhode Island; John D. Morris, Texas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. Sweeney
Historian: Robert L. Klipstine
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

82nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 1 to 7, 2000
Commander: Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
Vice Commanders: James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan; Robert Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert F. Neville, New York; L. Harry Easley, Washington
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: David R. Brown, Louisiana
Historian: Robert Mead, Nebraska
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

83rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Antonio, Texas, August 24-30, 2001
Commander: Ray G. Smith, North Carolina
Vice Commanders: Charles C. Ragsdell, Arkansas; James E. Koutz, Indiana; Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts; John C. Pellegrini, Montana; William A. Weatherly, South Carolina
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Calvin C. Turpin, California
Historian: James Buterbaugh, Kansas
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

84th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27-29, 2002
Commander: Richard J. Santos, Maryland
Vice Commanders: Russell H. Hanseter, Wisconsin; Charles R. John, Oklahoma; Terry D. Lewis, Pennsylvania; James F. Mareschal, Missouri; Dale R. Salmen, Nevada.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Calvin C. Turpin, California
Historian: Walter L. Davis, Michigan
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

PROCEEDINGS

of the

84th ANNUAL Convention

of

The American Legion

Tuesday, August 27, 2002

...At 8:30 a.m. the Delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole, our organist.

...At 9:00 a.m. the Delegates assembled for the 84th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

Call to Order
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Before we begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for Peter Ole, our musician.

The 84th National Convention will come to order. Please rise as the National Champion Honor Guard from The American Legion Post No. 86, Rockville, Maryland presents the Colors. Remain standing for the singing of the National Anthem, by Lance Sweigart, a member of The American Legion Post No. 60 of Laurel, Maryland.

...Color Guard of American Legion Post No. 86, Rockville, Maryland presented the Colors, following Lance H. Sweigart sang the National Anthem.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: For the Invocation, I call on our National Chaplain, Dr. Calvin C. Turpin of Post No. 320, Spotsylvania, Virginia. Please uncover.

Invocation
Dr. David F. Russell, Virginia, National Chaplain

This morning, not only do I come to you as your Chaplain, but also, as a Christian minister asking for your prayers for the SAL Chaplain from Georgia, Harry Howell. He has been the Chaplain there for over 5 years, but he's terminally ill. He wanted to make this Convention his last Convention and his first Convention. But he is now in Presbyterian Hospital. Reverend Foss, Department Chaplain of Georgia, contacted me and we went over to the hospital. He definitely needs your prayers this morning and I also encourage Chaplain Foss that he might get a card and that we might sign it so that it would be a remembrance to him.

Our Dear most Gracious Heavenly Father we thank You for this opportunity to come

to this Convention. We thank You for the safe journey that You've given us here. We pray You watch with care upon us while we are here and that all which we do and that which we say will bring honor not only to Thee, but also to our organization and to our country.

Father, we pray for Brother Howell. You have said in Your word that You would never place anything upon us that You didn't give us the strength to bear up underneath it. You have promised us in Your word that You would be with us no matter whether we went through highest mountain or through the valley of the shadow of death.

And we pray for Your hand to be upon our brother. We pray that it be Your Divine will that You will raise him up and give to him the assurance of Your presence, Your power and Your love. We pray in Your Son's precious name. Amen.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: As we remain standing, uncovered, it is with a heavy heart that we pay tribute to a true leader of this great organization. At this time I ask Past National Commanders Dan Ludwig of Minnesota, Butch Miller of Virginia, a native of Wabasha, Minnesota to unveil a picture of Past National Commander, Daniel F. Foley.

Dan Foley was National Commander of The American Legion from 1963 to 1964 and a U.S. Army veteran of World War II. He was an attorney and Minnesota Appeals Court Judge. Dan Foley, born in Wabasha, Minnesota, October 9, 1921, went to be with our Supreme Commander, August 17, 2002. May God welcome him home.

Pledge of Allegiance

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

...At this time the Delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lighting of the Peace Candle
Raymond P. Jacquez, Maryland National Sergeant-at-Arms

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I now ask that National Sergeant-At-Arms, Raymond P. Jacquez of Maryland, light the Peace Candle.

...At this time National Sergeant-at-Arms lit the Peace Candle.

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony
Robert S. Turner, Georgia, Past National Commander
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, Chairman Foreign Relations Commission

NATL COMDR SANTOS: At this time we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. We in The American Legion will never forget them. We will not ease the pressure on our Government to do the right thing and to continue to work for an accounting of all those missing. I ask Past National Commander Robert Turner of Georgia, Chairman of the special POW/MIA Committee and Thomas Bock of Colorado, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission, to place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

...At this time, the POW/MIA flag was placed on the Empty Chair.

Preamble To The American Legion Constitution
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

Legionnaires, please join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals on which our great American Legion was founded by reciting with me the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

...At this time, the Delegation recited the Preamble.

National Commander's Remarks
Richard Santos, Maryland

One year ago, we were assembled in San Antonio, Texas for the 83rd Annual National Convention. And there this Commander was elected, and the new officers put in place. We had a plan of the day, you might say, for our year. But on September 11, that plan was altered in many ways. We had to restructure ourselves to address the issues of the time; whether it was in the short or long run. In that adjustment process we called upon you to react, to activate, and to assist.

I appreciate what you had done in them moments following September 11. You reacted, you acted, and you helped those that had some tough times to handle, whether in New York, Arlington, Virginia, or in Shankville, Pennsylvania. You made this organization a leader in the community by that reaction and by that action.

You put a positive image of this organization with the general public by being out front when the troops started to leave and the Guard and the Reserves were activated. You were out front when their families needed help upon their departure, whether it was for the Homeland Defense or overseas commitment. You continued your action by promoting the Blue Star Service Banner in the homes of the families who had loved ones on active duty and the Reserve and Guard that were activated. You also went to your civic leaders and your business leaders to promote Blue Star Service Flags.

We've done many things since September 11, beyond the items that I have mentioned. But our work here is not done. This War on Terrorism is going to be a long drawn out affair. Affair is not the right word, engagement might be better, whether it is in Afghanistan, or on our soil here. So I ask you to prepare yourselves to continue to support our military. Support their families and support Congress and most importantly, support our President as they steer us through these troubled times and unsettled war.

Again, thank you for being the Legion family. On behalf of all of the military and our fellow veterans, we thank you for your service, your dedication, and commitment to those ends. You deserve a round of applause for that type of commitment and service. We thank you from our National staff and our National Officers.

We have a special guest on the way that we're asking your patience with. For a few moments here I'm going to ask Mr. Peter Ole to continue to entertain us with fun and frolic through his musical notes. And while Peter is preparing himself, when I visited the Department of New Hampshire, we had the opportunity to go to the Veterans Home in Tilton. And who do I meet in there entertaining veterans? Peter Ole.

He wasn't there for just one occasion, he does it every week. So beyond his entertainment process to us here, he does it day in and week out for our veterans in New Hampshire. Peter, we thank you for that service to our fellow veterans and their families, and so acknowledge, please, it's all yours.

...The Delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole, organist.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: When "Enduring Freedom Operation" and "Enduring Freedom" was initiated, troops, soldiers, sailors, airmen, coast guardsman, and Marines were sent overseas. Many of our Guard and Reserve were activated and sent. A lot of people responded to the needs of our military and their families. It wasn't necessarily those Legionnaires, Auxiliary, or Sons of The American Legion members. They weren't necessarily adults.

We have two young people with us today that on their own and their own initiative, wanted to do something for our troops. They initiated "Operation Send A Hug." These two young ladies from Fishers, Indiana, that's Casey, age 8 and Megan, age 6. Casey and Megan Smith with their mother, Mrs. Barbara Smith, are here with us on the stage. We'd like to give them a hand in recognition of what they did, on their own, with their own initiative. It goes to show you that we're never too young to lend a helping hand.

In the days coming, we're going to have to reassess ourselves with our Homeland Defense. Tomorrow you're going to hear from Mr. Tom Ridge, with important issues on homeland security. For those that travel, I know that I have over a half a million miles this year flying. We went through the airports right after September 11, as soon they allowed flying again. We experienced frustration, impatience, long lines, hostile people that couldn't wait. Back in September we issued a plea to you to have patience and understand what was going on.

We've transgressed through that era now. We're in the second stage. And possibly this organization, the Legion family, is going to be called upon to aid in some capacity or in some fashion for our Homeland Security. We have offered The American Legion Family to the President, Tom Ridge, and Congress, to implement and carry on or improve any program or any effort they are putting forth or will put forth.

Remember, with our 14,800 plus American Legion Posts throughout the world, we're at grassroots level. If they need something distributed, something initiated in local communities, who better than The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion to be a part of that? Because we are already in place, they don't have to bring in their bandwagons and their task teams to initiate it. They simply contact us to get it done.

We are preparing you for possible future activities in the Homeland Defense. It might be in the capacity of trying to do something similar to the old civil defense. We might need Post homes to utilize for meetings to distribute information, have town-type meetings to share with our citizens, possibly emergency scenarios or evacuations. Those on the coastline do it every year for hurricane threats.

We're going to have to carry it a little further now from physical threats from those that might not care for our style of living or our government. I ask you to be ready when called upon. Make yourselves available. Make your assets available to this effort.

Tomorrow, Tom Ridge will bring us word on what they are doing, what they will do, or intend on doing. Creating this new department is not going to be an easy task. The proposed budget is $39,000,000,000. And that's not coming from separate money. That money is coming from the various Departments that they're drawing their personnel from. Then they're bringing in 177,000 people to be in that department. I believe that department when formed will be the third largest department of our federal agency. It's going to be a big task and a big job.

I ask again for your support, especially when contacted by national staff to react or activate or assist in any manner.

During the past 12 months, it has been an honor to serve side-by-side with our next guest. This inspiring woman—I call her strong—was elected the 81st National President of

the American Legion Auxiliary in San Antonio, Texas, one year ago.

Throughout the year she has traveled extensively, telling people that "There Is Magic in America's Dreams." She has also continued sponsorship of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. She has held many offices in her years of volunteer service in the American Legion Auxiliary. Please welcome the leader of the Nation's largest patriotic women's organization, a member of Emil H. Dutler Unit 177 of Vinton, Iowa, the American Legion Auxiliary National President, Sherry McLaughlin.

Address: Sherry McLaughlin
National President, Iowa, The American Legion Auxiliary

NATL PRES TALA MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Commander Ric, and I use that term, not in disrespect, but in endearment. What a thrill to stand here before you this morning. One year ago, Ric and I were elected along with Cliff Smith, to lead The American Legion family. Little did we know what kinds of challenges would be presented to us by the September 11 events in this country.

I want to assure you that your Commander did not miss a beat. It was really rather amazing because we began to implement programs immediately. It was almost as if he and I had ESP when it came to the programs that we felt were most needed in America. It's been an absolute thrill to serve with both Ric and the SAL Commander Cliff Smith this year.

I have truly been the queen of the family. They have treated me with such respect and such dignity, as have your members and my members. When I thought about what I might tell you today, one thing came to mind, and that was two simple little words, 'thank you.'

Thank you for your friendship, thank you for your love, thank you for the support of the American Legion Auxiliary, but most of all, thank each one of you for helping to keep freedom in America, for doing your part. I know that I for one will never again take my freedom for granted as I believe the citizens of America will not take their freedom for granted, either.

I encourage you to continue the wonderful work you've done on behalf of veterans, communities, and our children. I ask you bend down and hug those children and reassure them that we do live in a safe country, that it is still the greatest place in the world to live and to grow up. Make them aware that we as adults care about their world and we will do every single thing within our power to assure them that it will be a strong country.

Thank you so much for everything you have done this year. This truly has been a magical year. I do believe there is magic in America's dreams.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I asked that our President stand here for one second. When we were elected last year in San Antonio, and then we gathered on the stage at the close of our Convention, many photographs were taken. It was in this pose that was put in the newspaper the following morning, and come to find out this was my wife according to the *San Antonio News*, not Madame President of the American Legion Auxiliary.

We both had our slogans for the year. In some areas where I had the opportunity to speak to the American Legion Auxiliary and their Departments, I combined both of our slogans because it was quite unique. It simple went, "There is magic in America's dreams by reaching out in all directions." It was kind of a good carry on. And that's the way this year has been.

I say to this strong, inspirational lady, thank you for a job well done for all of our veterans, their families, and the people of our communities, states, and nation. Indeed, I think that the Legion Family has made a difference this year. Madame President, thank you, God bless. I know you have a Convention to proceed with. We thank you for sharing this

time with us this morning, and God speed.

Opening: Remembrance–Faith–Patriotism
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

Remembrance. Faith. Patriotism. Three words that describe the very soul of The American Legion. Our faith in God and country forms the bond of comradeship and provides the strength to shape the future. It's our love of country—patriotism—and service to veterans, their families and to the children of this nation that are the core of our membership in The American Legion.

Remembrance
September 11, 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

At every meeting of The American Legion, including this National Convention, we renew our commitment to God and country and the values of our nation by reciting the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion. We remember our country's history and we renew our faith in its future.

America will mark the first anniversary of September 11th in 16 days, as each citizen will remember the terrorist attack on our nation. Our nation up to that very hour and day, was a nation at peace. We were a nation at peace when our fleet was attacked at Pearl Harbor. We remember Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. And, we will remember September 11, 2001. We will do what Americans have always done, learn from history and work for a stronger future for our great nation and generations of Americans to come.

That is why today I ask you to stand with me and pay tribute to the victims of 9/11 and the brave Americans who served and died in Operation Enduring Freedom and Taskforce Dagger.

(At this time the Convention stood and listened to bagpipes playing Amazing Grace, while viewing videotape displaying casualty totals from New York City, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania, then lists individuals who have lost their lives in military service both at the Pentagon and in Afghanistan.)

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SAM GRAVES, TALENT: Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. We are a nation at war. We struggle with the cold, hard fact that it is our sons, daughters, grandsons, grand daughters, members of America's family who are on the front line in America's war on world terrorism. Yes, they are all our sons and daughters because they are the sons and daughters of our nation. Listen to these words written by a father, which speak for us and thousands of mothers and fathers and husbands and wives who wait anxiously for word from their loved ones:

"It both ends and begins with a phone call. 'Hey Dad ... Just got the word that we're moving out, pronto. Like we talked before, it'll be a while before I can call again. I love you Pop. Don't worry about me. Put Mom on for a sec, will you?'" It's the end of the waiting for military orders. The end of hope that they don't come. The end of uncertainty about deployment. He's going. "The end is bad, but the beginning is worse. It's the beginning of long months of silence, long nights of worry. Watch the news. Search the Internet. Wait for the phone to ring . . . but it doesn't. "He might be in Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan, or a dozen other countries I didn't even know existed before September 11.

I knew it might happen. After all, this is what he was trained for. He's a soldier. I know he's proud to do his duty. And I'm proud of him. I hug my wife and tell her he's going to be

okay, but we need something more to cling to. 'Lord give him strength. Lord protect him.'

Still, I have to focus. I have to keep on living, despite the hollow numbness in the pit of my stomach. My boy's gone to war. I've been there - but I've never been here. I've been the one to go to war, but not the one left behind ... to wait ... to worry ... to wonder. I didn't want this for him. Only yesterday he was a little kid pleading for me to go outside and play ball. Today he's a man doing his duty, defending his nation. He's special to me, but really no different from thousands of others.

Your sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, friends and neighbors. they're all doing their duty, leaving their homes, leaving their families to fight an enemy who wears no uniform, swears allegiance to no country, and recognizes no rules of war.

America's troops may be gone for weeks, even months or years. Some may never come home, yet all will be with their 'family.' Not blood relatives—not mom and dad—but with other young men and women with whom they serve in the military uniform of our country. Come what may, none will fail those with whom they serve. They are today's 'Private Ryans' and 'Band of Brothers.' Their platoons and air wings and ship's companies are their families, their brothers and sisters. Each has pledged his life and entrusted his safety to the other. All have forged a sacred bond that will last a lifetime, a bond none can understand; except those who share it.

We are praying as a family, because, in a very real sense, every Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman and Coast Guardsman is a part of our family, The American Legion family, and we love them all and we're proud of them. No words are sufficient to describe our national sense of resolve or our collective feeling of concern for those young ones who have gone into Harm's Way on our behalf.

Instead, let us pray to the God of us all that we gain victory and rejoice in the safe return of our family. Nonetheless, let us also pray that His will be done, and that He give us the strength to bear it—be it sorrow or rejoicing. God has blessed America with much bounty and many fine men and women through the years who have risked their lives—and given them—to preserve our liberty and our way of life. So today let this be our prayer, as in ages past, 'God Bless America.'

NATL COMDR SANTOS: As we listened to those words of concern—it is a message for all of us—we remember our own service. We remember the bond forged in our wartime experience that we have with these fine young men and women who are defending our nation today. That is why we recognize those who serve today through our Blue Star Service Banner and Blue Star Corporate Flag programs.

These two programs serve as a highly visible reminder in our communities that a family is affected and a family member is serving to protect us. We in The American Legion also recognize that 65% of today's military are married and have families. When our men and women are engaged in this War on Terrorism it is The American Legion Family Support Network that is ready to help with unforeseen family problems.

Whether it's fixing a car, painting, lawn care or just a friendly, understanding voice, The American Legion Family does what is needed, because we have been there. And, yes, some of our military forces have paid and will pay the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our nation. We of The American Legion are their comrades, their extended family. That is why we formed the September 11th Memorial Scholarship Fund. We will be there for their family and their children in years to come. We will provide scholarship funds for the children whose mothers and fathers died in defense of our freedom.

The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion has been our commitment for 84 years. It has demonstrated its wisdom for four generations of American's veterans.

The Preamble is about Remembrance, Faith and Patriotism. We understand the common bond of military service. That common bond is about faith in your buddy and comrade. That faith crosses all generations of those who have been there. That is why we stand in solid resolve and support of those in uniform today. That faith, that common bond, is strengthened by the example of those selected to receive The American Legion Spirit of Service Award.

Faith
Presentation: Spirit of Service Awards

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Each year The American Legion presents the Spirit of Service Award to a young, enlisted member of the military services. To receive this recognition the individual must be an outstanding military professional and be actively involved in volunteer projects in the community during off-duty hours. The American Legion provides this recognition because volunteerism has been at the heart of our efforts since our founding 84 years ago. And, it is community volunteerism that keeps the Nation's largest veterans organization growing.*

Joining National Commander Santos for the presentation of the 2002 Awards is Lieutenant General Doug Brown, the Commanding General of the U. S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 2002 Spirit of Service Award recipient from the United States Army has served in three locations during his short time in service, and at every assignment he has met community needs. Using his interest in emergency medicine, he became involved in instructing CPR and first aid for the Red Cross and eventually the Georgia Rescue Dog Association.

He volunteers weekends to teach the American Red Cross Babysitter Course and participates in the Meals on Wheels program. During time attending Niagara University in New York, he assisted the homeless through the Saint Vincent DePaul Society and Habitat for Humanity.

This young soldier has also volunteered with Fire Services in several cities. The American Legion is proud to present the 2002 Spirit of Service Award to a man who grew up in Rochester, New York and is currently assigned to Fort McPherson, Georgia, Specialist Eric Hall.

SPC HALL US ARMY: It's truly an honor to be here today to receive this prestigious award. I thank The American Legion for providing such great hospitality and for welcoming us new members to their family. I especially thank the U.S. Army and the leaders with whom I've had the opportunity to serve under with this great opportunity.

Last, but not least, I'd like to thank my family, who could not be here today, for the support and their love throughout my military career. I look to supporting The American Legion and to continue to serve my community and my country.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *The Spirit of Service Award recipient for the United States Navy is a foster parent to three children through the Lutheran Services. He serves as a church deacon and the Youth Group Supervisor where he provides example and mentoring to children from 7 to 13 years of age.*

Finally, he squeezes in time to serve as a Student Intern Investigator for the Pan Patricio County Child Protective Services and a volunteer for Home Missions in Rockport, Texas. The 2002 Spirit of Service Award winner for the Navy is Engine man Second Class Jesse Givens.

PO2 GIVENS U.S. NAVY: I'm not much at giving speeches. But first, I'm going to give honor to God, who is head of my life. Secondly, I thank The American Legion for allowing me to receive such a prestigious award. I have worked a lot of times, and

sometimes, us service members have a lot of work that we're doing and sometimes not get recognized.

I'd like to thank my supervisors for recognizing all of the work that I have done. Also I'd like to thank the Navy for allowing me to represent the Navy. And I'd like to thank again The American Legion. I'm proud to serve as an American Legion member.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SAM GRAVES, TALENT: The member of the United States Marine Corps receiving the Spirit of Service Award for 2002 consistently sacrifices countless off-duty volunteer hours to improve the lot of America's youth. He serves as a mentor, instructor, executive officer, and Commanding officer of a Young Marines program working with children 8 to 17 years old. His unit received the Youth Achievement Award for Volunteers in Hampton Roads in 1999.

He is a member of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard Drug Education For Youth Program – DEFY. The program focuses on youth 8 to 13 years old providing them with information to prevent substance abuse, de-glamorize crime, alcohol and drugs and assist with conflict resolution management skills. This Marine also volunteers as a judge in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Command drill competitions at local high schools.

Finally, he volunteers many hours for a local elementary school's "Career Days," helping to motivate young students to achieve higher goals. He has adopted the school reading program and assists many in increasing their reading proficiency.

The 2002 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Sergeant Charles Cloud, United States Marine Corps.

SGT CLOUD USMC: I thank my wife for coming down with me. Without her support I don't think any of this would be possible. Second of all, I thank The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the United States Marine Corps. It's truly an honor to be the recipient of this award for the United States Marine Corps.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *The 2002 Spirit of Service Award recipient for the United States Air Force gives freely of his off-duty time, despite being assigned to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. He is actively involved with a project called "Day of Caring" where he spends time working with a local elementary school.*

During the 60th Anniversary Ceremony for Pearl Harbor Day he volunteered to escort veterans of the infamous day. He was a member of a team that cleaned a Korean War Memorial, helping to preserve a local historic landmark. And, he was a volunteer first aide provider for the 29th Honolulu 19K Marathon. The 2002 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Air Force Technical Sergeant Christopher Culbreth.

SSGT CULBRETH USAF: National Commander Santos and American Legionnaires, thank you. Not just thank you for selecting me, and not just for allowing me to be here today, but thank you for the sacrifices that you have made in the pursuit of a free nation under God and for the freedoms that I have today.

I am a proud member of the Armed Forces and honored to represent the Unites States Air Force for such a prestigious award. As a new member I am looking forward to having a lasting relationship with all of you and The American Legion as a whole.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *The 2002 Spirit of Service Award for the United States Coast Guard also recognizes an individual whose volunteerism benefits the youth of America.*

While assigned to Sitka, Alaska, this young lady pursued increased access to educational opportunities and curriculum improvements for pre-school through elementary school children. In doing this, she spent countless hours meeting with teachers and school administrators recommending innovative policy changes and creating new programs for the school system. She was a proactive teacher's aid, focusing her "hands-on" efforts by

assisting first grade students with reading difficulties.

She also gave hundreds of hours to Sitka's Drug Education for Youth Program. Realizing that nurturing a love of sports while instilling the values of teamwork, character, and good sportsmanship is important to a young child's future she served as a baseball, soccer and t-ball coach in local leagues.

To cap her efforts she served as a counselor and mentor for socially and emotionally disadvantaged children. The 2002 Spirit of Service Award recipient from the Coast Guard is Yeoman Second Class Francine Sak.

YMN2 SAK USCG: I'm very proud and honored to have been selected for this award. I have been very blessed. Thanks to my Command and the U.S. Coast Guard for this opportunity. Thank you to my husband and my children for their support. Thank you for the men and women who keep this country safe, past, present, and future of which I'm honored to be a part.

Thank you all out there that protected our country and supports our community with the American way of life. Most of all, thank God that we're Americans.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Ladies and gentlemen, the 2002 Spirit of Service Award Recipients.*

The American Legion Youth Champions

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Just as we have faith in those who are serving in the Armed Forces today, we also have faith in our Nation's future, led by youth influenced by programs of The American Legion. It is through these programs they receive a foundation so that they may carry forward the principles and values of our free nation.*

Our first youth champion is a senior at W. G. Enloe High School in Carey, North Carolina. After intense face-to-face campaigning at the annual American Legion Boys Nation program in Washington D.C., his fellow Senators elected him President. Sponsored by American Legion Post 1 of North Carolina, please give a warm welcome to a young man here to say a special "Thank You" to The American Legion, Bradley Johnson.

BRADLEY JOHNSON: Let me be the first guy to say welcome to North Carolina. I'm very proud to represent this state and I hope you all are having a good time here.

On behalf of the 28,000 Boy Staters this year, the 96 Boy's Nation Senators, Vice President Ellis from Texas, President Pro Tem Gomez, Rhode Island, and Secretary of the Senate Haron from Nebraska our deepest and heartfelt thanks to all of you.

For each and every Boy Stater, we have had a door open for us by you, because we now realize that we can now go on and lead this country into the next century. I thank you for that. But also, you have not just nurtured the leaders of this country, you've also taught them how to be patriotic in the truest sense and how to have incredible reverence for our veterans.

I can promise you that the leadership of this country and the future is strong and that they will respect you and that you get your due as you grow older.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *The next youth champion is a young woman who twice ventured all the way to Indianapolis in her quest for the title of American Legion National High School Oratorical Champion. In 2002, her trek took her to the top as she took the audience on a time-travel trip back to the days when the U.S. Constitution was written.*

Sponsored by Morgan County Post 15 in Decatur, Alabama, please welcome the 2002 National High School Oratorical champion. She's a freshman at the University of Alabama, Candice Neal.

CANDICE NEAL: It's an honor to be here today. My speech was titled *The Constitution: A Fantastic Journey*, and I can truly say that my participation in this contest has been a fantastic journey.

In the beginning of this contest and of my journey, I was on a pursuit of knowledge. The outcome was much greater than that. I developed leadership skills, oratorical skills, confidence, friends and most importantly, it prepared me for my second journey, college.

Today, I want to thank The American Legion for opening so many doors for me, making my dreams come true and helping me further my education. I want to thank Post 15 in Decatur, Alabama and O.J. Height for his dedication and hard work in this program. I do not have the words to express how faithful and grateful I am for The American Legion and for this excellent scholarship program.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Capping off our youth champions for 2002 is the Junior Shootings Sports Champion in the Precision Class. Scoring 2,475 out of a possible 2,509 points, this young lady is sponsored by Palmyra Post 72 in Palmyra, Pennsylvania.*

A freshman at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks where she will be a member of their rifle team, she is also a member of the USA Shooting National Rifle Team. Please welcome to the 84th National Convention, Jamie Beyerle.

JAMIE BEYERLE: It is a pleasure to be here today. The American Legion has done so much for Junior Programs over the past years. It's just great. I'd like to thank them for that. It's because of you that I can be here today representing the shooting sport. Shooting has been my life and all of you help me get through it and reach my goals to go to the University of Alaska and compete on the National Rifle Team.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Please give a rousing show of our faith in our Nation's future in the hands of those we call our American Legion Youth Champions.*

Patriotism
Presentation: 82nd Airborne All American Chorus
Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Through the youth programs of this great veterans organization, the words from our Preamble again are re-enforced. To "... transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy ...." Our Preamble truly encompasses Remembrance–Faith–Patriotism.*

We remember the first victims of this War on Terrorism, the men and women of the New York City Police and Fire Departments, the Emergency Medical Technicians, and the Port Authority Police. We remember our fellow citizens who were passengers on four airliners. We remember the workers in the World Trade Center, in the Pentagon and our men and women in Operations Enduring Freedom and Taskforce Dagger in Afghanistan.

Our faith is renewed by the young Spirit of Service recipients and by the representatives of our American Legion youth champions. Patriotism is faith in—and love of—our country. Throughout our history, American's have expressed patriotism through music.

Here, this morning, are 24 soldiers who are truly "All-Americans." Their primary mission is serving as soldiers of the United States Army's 82nd Airborne Division–the "All Americans Division" at Fort Bragg. Their passion for music and deep patriotism is most apparent when they perform as the All-American Chorus.

Times may have changed but "This still is the Army, Mr. Jones."

(Chorus perform songs)

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED DEP DIR PR HARRIS: *Ladies and gentlemen – the 82nd Airborne Division's All-American Chorus.*

Remembrance – Faith – Patriotism. Values anchored in each and every member of The American Legion and our nation. Values found in the Preamble to The American Legion constitution ... words that we recite before every meeting. Values that we all feel deeply and strive to pass on to others. Remembrance – Faith – Patriotism. More than mere words, they are the very essence of our comradeship and the common bond we share with all wartime veterans.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I think history stands that we never question the courage and bravery of Airborne. There should be no question of their talents now either.

Our next guest has been to many National Conventions and other meetings of The American Legion. He is the Cabinet Secretary responsible for a multitude of veterans' services. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he commanded a river patrol unit in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War. He's a member of American Legion Post 17 in Kodiak, Alaska. I ask to please rise and give a warm welcome the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi.

Address: Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs

Thank you, Commander, for your kind introduction. And most importantly, thank you for your great leadership over the past year. Your valued advice and counsel has helped me guide VA and my Department and the veterans we are privileged to serve are better for it.

Thank you also for inviting me here today. It is always a special joy to be among my fellows Legionnaires. Before I begin, let me just say a few words in tribute to my distinguished predecessor, Jesse Brown, who passed away just a short time ago.

Jesse Brown was the veterans' veteran. He was a leader of tremendous foresight and vision, a tireless defender of the rights of veterans, and a man of enormous and moral courage. Americans have lost a great leader and an outstanding comrade. I have lost a good friend. God bless the soul of Jesse Brown.

Eighty-three years ago last March, a group of battle hardened Americans who fought and won the war that they prayed would be the war to end all wars, gathered together for God and country in Paris, France. The organization they formed changed their lives, the lives of fellow veterans and the lives of generations of veterans and other Americans yet unborn. Brave men who boldly marched behind 'Old Glory' on the bloodstained battlefields of France, associated themselves to uphold and defend the Constitution, whose revolutionary principles they so ably represented.

They were proud men who defended freedom. Through a haze of poison gas, they took a clear vow to consecrate and sanctify their comradeship through the new union they just created. As strong men who survived hailstorms of bullets and bombs, they pledged to safeguard all hazards to the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy and to transmit them to posterity. Fellow Legionnaires, we are the heirs to the dedication and foresight of history making patriots who at Paris in 1919, we and all Americans are the beneficiaries of their extraordinary vision.

President Harry Truman once said, "The American Legion shall live forever in the hearts of all those who love justice and of all those who seek the triumph of freedom and the right." For 83 years, those who look for the meaning of duty, honor and country have found it in The American Legion. Thank you for turning America's young people into responsible leaders, voters and parents, through your support of the Boy Scouts, Boy's State, Boy's

Nation, American Legion Baseball, and the National High School Oratorical Contest. By introducing students to the best traditions of our country, you ensure that when future generations are called upon to defend freedom on far flung battlefields, America will never be found wanting.

Thank you for you Service Officers Program which helps veterans cut through the red tape and get the compensation they richly deserve. Thank you for donating $8 million to charity, $4 million to scholarships and more than 1.5 million hours of volunteer time to help our comrades in VA hospitals, just in this past year alone. And thank you for donating nearly 100,000 pints of blood to support our troops as they fight to rid the world of terror and terrorism and to heal our fellow citizens injured in the attack on our nation on September 11th.

I have been fortunate to be able to accomplish many things over the course of my life, but I am especially proud of three things. I am proud to be a citizen of the greatest country in the world, I am proud to have earned the honored title of American Veteran and to have served in combat, and I am very proud to be a Legionnaire. God bless The American Legion, our leadership, our membership and all who support or benefit from our organization's good works.

This past May, I accompanied President Bush to Normandy to commemorate Memorial Day in a place where so many Americans consecrated the soil with their lives. I had the opportunity to stand on Omaha Beach where 58 years ago our nation's best young men faced the ultimate challenge, knowing full well their lives were expendable. The cliffs facing Omaha Beach looked daunting to me, standing there on a calm spring morning in 2002. I could only imagine what they must have looked like to 17, 18 or 19-year olds loaded down with gear and taking heavy fire from and entrenched enemy. Our boys did not cut and run. They did not shirk from their duties and they did not allow fear to overwhelm them. With one objective in mind, they proceeded to take those cliffs. With one goal squarely before them, they faced their challenges and overcame them. The value of the freedom we enjoy today, is measured in the price they paid that morning on June 6th.

The true metal of those who loved liberty more than life is tested in such moments. And not one American was founding wanting of courage, determination and sacrifice that day on Omaha and Utah beaches. In World War II, as in each of America's struggles, heroes in uniform, ordinary GIs, emerged from among us to inspire America on to victory. They remind us that the righteousness of our destiny over arches the anguish of our losses.

It is my great privilege to lead the VA in the spirit of the men and women of our Armed Forces who took on extraordinary challenges with no thoughts of giving into the hardships and sacrifices they faced. The citizen soldiers who stood the lonely watches on freedom's ramparts, or who took up the sword of liberty and selflessly placed themselves in harms way, are today's veterans. They are you and the 25,000,000 men and women who earned the right to be honored and respected by VA's doctors, nurses, and researchers, and our VA benefits professionals, our National Cemetery Team, and our leadership in Washington.

If VA is going to properly redeem America's debt to you and your comrades, we must face the long challenges of providing the best care and services under very demanding conditions. I don't want to be too dramatic and attempt to equate the challenges facing VA to the challenges facing American Rangers at Pointe Du Hoc, but there is a similarity inasmuch as VA has a tough climb in front of us. And the climb is only the beginning. There will be much more we will have to do once we have successfully achieve our initial goals. We must first fix a sound base of operations, a rallying point for the next push. In June 1944, it wasn't enough to just fight the guns atop the Pointe Du Hoc, the entire beachhead had to be secured before the final assault on Berlin could get underway.

And so it is with our efforts in 2002, to achieve victory over disability claims backlogs and the time it takes for VA to process claims. We must make a good beginning and sustain our efforts to the long run. Admiral Dan Cooper, VA's Secretary of benefits, has his team working with intensity and focus to reduce the backlog. I am pleased to report that Dan has created a base of operations that will sustain us through the rest of our mission.

As I look at reports from the front where we are advancing, I can tell you that we have made serious forward progress in our compensation and pension workload. By virtually any measure, the trends and rating decisions are all up. We are taking more and more ground against the size of the claims backlogged and we are cutting down on the time it takes to process claims as well. The inventory of pending related actions, decisions regarding the origin or the severity of a disability claim is showing a marked decline and a continuing downward trend. We began this year with a total number of pending ratings peaking at 432,000. By March of this year we had taken that number down to 400,000, and by August 1st, that number had fallen to 370,000. These decreases in our backlog are occurring as we receive an average of 60,000 new claims each and every month.

Our claims processing times are also declining, moving in the right direction finally with every passing day. From March to August 1, we reduced processing time from the peak of 233 days to 224 days. A nine day improvement doesn't sound like much. However, time limits in claims processing is marked from the day the claim is received to the day a decision is made. VA's average processing time still reflects our priority on deciding our oldest claims first, claims that have been languishing in VA regional offices for a year, 2 years , 3 years and longer. So the measure of nine days lag is true progress which is considerable. Once we have cleared our backlog on cases we have had on hand for long periods of time, we expect to show much more rapid improvement as we aim for my goal of no more than 100 days to process any claims for disability compensation, pension, death gratuity or whatever.

Last year, as you know, I initiated a Tiger Team to focus on the claims of our aging veterans in the afternoon of their lives, veterans over the age of 70, whose claims have been languishing over a year. They, too, are making remarkable progress in this effort, and I thank The American Legion National Service Officers in Cleveland and other locations around the country for making this a possibility. My goal for the Tiger Teams was to work no fewer than 1,300 claims of veterans over the age of 70 each and every month. I can tell you that each and every month we have exceeded that goal. We will continue to do so every month going forward.

I believe that Admiral Cooper and the wonderful dedicated people in our regional offices are helping build the legacy of service. And I cannot stress enough how vital improving trends are to VA's health, and, most importantly, to our credibility among veterans. Our legacy is far from secure. If we have taken the cliffs along some of the coastlines, we are still making our way up others that keep us from proceeding to our final goal.

I want you to know that we stay the course with strong leadership, focus, discipline, and accountability until we get this backlog under control. Benefits are only one of the fronts upon which veterans look for VA to make progress.

The Veterans Health Administration is experiencing its own daunting ascent of some very slippery cliffs of service. Along the healthcare front, we are facing an almost vertical challenge of demand for care from veterans who are coming to the VA in record numbers, numbers like we have never seen before. Perhaps we're the victims of our own success. I think they are coming to us for many many reasons. Our system is now well-known, not only for the quality of our care, but also for the care that produces our quality. We have

worked hard to ensure that our system is designed with our patient's needs and our patient's safety in mind. Open enrollment, the increase of the eligible population of veterans with access to comprehensive care from VA, combined with relatively new 850 outpatient clinics across the United States adds to the demand for VA medical care.

From 1994 to 2001, while the number of hospital beds declined, we increased the number of patients we treated from 3,000,000 to over 4,000,000 today. And the number of outpatient visits also increased from 26,000,000 to over 43,000,000 outpatient visits today. We cannot look at these number without also being extremely concerned about their effect on their quality of our care and on our ability to exceed in our core mission; to care for service-connected disabled veterans, low income veterans, and those who need specialized services, like spinal cord injury, blind rehabilitation and mental health, and extended care. Our prescription drug program, a premier model of pharmaceutical management, experienced some explosion in popularity over the past 6 years from $750 million in prescription costs to more than $4 billion today.

Since 1996, the number of Category 7 veterans, veterans who have no service connected disabilities and have slightly higher income has risen 500%. The number has grown from 200,000 in 1996, to over 1,000,000 today. And Category 7 will comprise nearly 45% of our workload by the end of this decade. Without a dramatic increase in spending authority by the Congress, or the ability to mange our workload, we will be left with a recipe for failure. And let me give you a vivid example of what I mean.

I became so concerned about the backlog and what was happening to some of our veterans that I charged one of my assistant secretaries to go out and make unannounced visits to outpatient clinics, to get himself enrolled. Now this veteran is a 100% combat disabled veteran of the Vietnam War, having fought at the battle of Nha Trang and then taking a bullet in the spine during the Tet Offensive. He's been in a wheelchair for over 32 years. Gordon enrolled himself into 8 outpatient clinics across this country. At six of those clinics they turned him away. And one clinic they told him that he'd have to drive close to 100 miles to receive his care. And at one clinic, the clerk told him that all veterans are created equal.

Ladies and gentlemen, this unacceptable. Service-connected disabled veterans are the very reason VA exists. Our every action must focus on their needs of the service-connected. And that is why I am proposing a priority for scheduling treatment for veterans who are 50% or more service-connected and for veterans who need care with their service-connected disabilities. I don't want to see veterans who are seeking appointments and other healthcare services pinned to the side of a cliff and facing a field of fire of increasing demand from below, and limited resources from above with no relief in sight. Veterans waiting weeks or months or years for an appointment are not impressed by praises from the Institute of Medicine for the quality of care or media accounts of improvement in service. If they can't get into see a doctor, the cliff of service they face appears to be unclimbable.

Although we are devoting a considerable amount of time to solving the problem of explosive demand, we are also finding other methods to improve the care we provide. Two years ago in Milwaukee, then Governor Bush spoke at the Legion's 82nd National Convention. That day he promised Legionnaires that he would convene a veterans healthcare taskforce to focus on initiative to improve healthcare for America's veterans. He kept that promise under the able of leadership of Dr. Gail Wilensky and former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt, and I am pleased to say that the President appointed our National Adjutant, Bob Spanogle, to this very distinguished panel of healthcare experts.

They are looking for ways to enhance healthcare for veterans. They are considering a broad array of options including Medicare subvention which the Legion has embraced for

many years, whether there should be a healthcare entitlement and, very importantly, to help our partnership with the Department of Defense can be strengthened. I am convinced that access to DVA and DoD healthcare can be enhanced and hundreds of millions of dollars better utilized annually if VA and DoD can tear down the walls that separate our Departments. We have worked very closely with members of the taskforce and I am looking forward to receiving their report early next year.

I would like to say a word about the VA's budget. I know that some of you, perhaps all of you, are concerned that the President did not release $275 million in supplemental funding for this fiscal year. Please let me briefly explain the circumstances of this decision.

Back in the early spring, the President requested a $142 million supplemental for VA healthcare because of the long waiting time. Congress generously added $275million to that appropriation. Unfortunately, the supplemental lay dormant on Capitol Hill for many, many months and we were not able to bring on the physicians and nurses and expand our clinic space until just a few weeks ago when the supplemental finally cleared Congress and went to the President. The good news is that we received the $142 million but what happened to the balance of $275 million? Congress tied that $275 million to a $5.1 billion supplemental that the President had not requested, and told the President that he had to spend the entire $5.1 billion or none of it would be made available.

Unfortunately, the $275 million was tied to the $5.1 billion and the President decided not to add $5.1 billion to the deficit. But, fortunately, as I said, we did receive the $142 million and we're making good use of it around the country. The President has asked for $6.1 billion increase in VA funding for fiscal year 2003, an increase of more than 7% in discretionary spending over last year's funding level.

The VA's challenges are not limited to our budget, healthcare, or benefits. Our National Cemetery Administration faces its own set of challenges as well. Maintaining our National Cemeteries as national shrines, improving our properties, opening up five new national cemeteries and preparing plans for the future of the system as more and more of our aging veterans pass on. Our challenges we must surmount to provide final resting places for those who have earned the dignity of being buried in a national cemetery.

VA and The American Legion share a belief in the sanctity of our veteran's sacrifices. Since 1919, The American Legion has never wavered in its personal or professional support for the men and women who have borne the battle or who have stood the long and dangerous watch. Fifty years ago today, on August 27th, 1952, a Senator from Illinois spoke at the Legion's 34th Annual Convention. His name was Adlai Stevenson and at the time he was a candidate for the President of the United States. Senator Stevenson told that convention things that are worth remembering today on the 50th anniversary of his memorable speech. He said, "The central concern of The American Legion, the ideal which holds it together, the vitality which animates it, is patriotism. Men and women who have offered their lives to their country know that patriotism is not the fear of something, it is the love of something. Patriotism with us is not the hatred of another country it is the love of this republic and of the ideal of liberty of man and mind in which it was born, and to which this republic is created."

I say to you now that there is work to be done. But the difficulties and dangers that beset our path at home and abroad are incalculable. Perhaps the goal of peace is not even for us to see in our lifetime. But we are embarked on a great adventure. Let us proclaim our faith in the future of man of good heart and good cheer. Faithful to ourselves and our traditions, we can lift the cause of freedom, the cause of free men so high that no power on earth can tear it down. Living, speaking like men, like Americans we can lead the way to our rendezvous in a peaceful, happy world.

Today, The American Legion is still faithful to the causes and traditions our founding fathers set out for us. Together the VA and The American Legion have made certain that those for whom our veterans risked their lives do not forget the cause of America's veterans. And through our love for our fellow veterans, we are giving those patriots the rewards for their service they have earned, hopes for cures, compassionate care, reason to hope and the true devotion of a grateful nation.

Yes, my fellow Legionnaires, there is work to be done to ensure that our veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to just as there has always been. That spirit is very much alive with VA. I see it everyday at every VA facility that I visit. And it is the spirit that will lead us to our ultimate success. VA is beginning to take the cliffs that face us, cliffs of new demands for healthcare, of claims that must be scaled on behalf of our aging veterans who don't have any more time to wait and cliffs of limited resources that threaten to slow our assault and every other front. I know The American Legion's voice will be a loud one, for the resources that our Department needs.

I stood on Omaha Beach, I saw the cliff that American soldiers gave their lives to climb, and I know if they have the courage and the patriotism to face their mortality head on with selfless sacrifice, we at VA can and must take our own cliffs and contribute to their last full measure of devotion.

I am honored to lead the way on behalf of the VA and our 223,000 employees. I thank The American Legion for all of its support.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Earlier, our next guest assisted with the presentation of the 2002 Spirit of Service Awards. Now, it's his turn to talk about those he commands, the men and women of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. He is a truly remarkable individual who began a distinguished military career as a private in the Infantry back in 1967. His combat experience includes Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, Operation Desert Storm, and Vietnam.

Ladies and gentleman, please welcome the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Lt. General Doug Brown.

...At this time, the Convention delegation viewed a video.

Address: LTG Bryan D. Brown
Commanding General Headquarters
U.S. Army Special Operations Command

I command the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. The video you witnessed makes it clear that Army Special Operation soldiers just like you American Legion folks. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Patriotism is not a short and frenzied burst of emotion, but the long and steady dedication of a lifetime." and I salute you for your unwavering lifetime of dedication to this country.

I'm honored to take part today in the Spirit of Service and American Legion Youth Champion Awards Presentation. To win such an award from such an outstanding community for outstanding community service and leadership from a prestigious organization from The American Legion certainly gets my attention. Leadership is one of the keys in special operations and to our communities. As a matter of fact, when I speak to my soldiers, I let them know what we expect from the leaders. We expect them to lead. We expect them to make things happen. They are team players with the right vision and attitude. Again, my congratulations to all of our winners.

I'd like to take few minutes today to talk about people in our Command and what they

are doing on the battlefield today, people that you and The American Legion support. I'll take a few minutes to talk about what we're doing on the battlefield in Afghanistan today. I'll share some of these war stories that have been widely reported in the press and tell you what ground troops looks like over there. But what I won't have time to talk about today are the four or five thousand other folks that we have deployed everyday from Army Special Operations Command around the world.

On 11 September, when the World Trade Center was attacked, Army SOC had soldiers already on the ground in Southwest Asia area of operation. We had 13 Special Forces and 12 man A-teams. None were in Afghanistan but they were in the region. We were performing a role we do often called America's Global Scouts.

Within two days we had a deployment order. And within a week our first U.S. based forces were deploying. As you remember, the bombing campaign became highly successful immediately following the introduction of the Special Forces A-team on the ground, adding precision to the fire power of our incredible fighters and bombers from the Air Force and the Navy and our great Marine Corps.

It turned the tide of battle and, quite frankly, caused the Taliban to fall much earlier than we had planned. In fact, everyone was predicating that the fall and the take down of the Taliban government would not take place until after a horrendous winter that would set in and slow us down. Quite frankly, they were wrong. We understood from Day One that this war was a struggle for survival, for us, for our children, for our very American way of life. On a wall at Ft. Bragg there's a small plaque that simply says, from Isaiah, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'" Just like our veterans from all our wars and our greatest generation has stepped forward, now today's generation of soldiers are doing the same thing.

I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you about this nation's Special Operations Forces who did step forward and say, "Here I am, send me." Special Operations has been preparing for this fight and our forces are the best trained in the world. They have been proving that right since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Let me talk for just a moment about an [Operational Detachment Alpha] ODA, a 12 man A-team. We call them now famous ODA595. On 19 October, Captain Mark Nush ODA595, took off from an old Soviet airbase K-2, towards Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Put yourself in his place. Twenty-nine year-old captain, 12 guys, going to meet a famous Afghan warlord, twice his age, fighting for over 20 years in brutal terrain. This warlord has seen enemies and allies come and go for over 20 years, bitterly cold night, absolutely zero illumination, Nush and his ODA595 loaded in the back of an amazing helicopter, the Army Special Operations MH47E to depart into the night.

They penetrated the border with zero illumination. They used terrain following, terrain avoidance to navigate and to give them ground clearances. They went through the mountains. They flew through clouds. They flew through sand storms. They flew through icing. Three times they went up and hit our great Air Force Special Operations Command Tankers to take on gas in-flight, never going above 500 feet. They flew on night-vision goggles, they used all of the special equipment to defeat the threat. They logged over 8 hours in route, six of it on night vision goggles using TFTA [terrain following/terrain avoidance radar] in zero visibility. They flew through valleys 16,500 feet. They were on supplemental oxygen and they arrived on target, plus or minus 30 seconds. They unloaded 595 and then repeated it in reverse.

ODA595 were the first Americans on the ground. There's no Battalion behind them, no company on their flank, no division headquarters, no Command post. There were 12 highly trained and dedicated Americans that were out to prove that this was just as much our

war as it belonged to any Afghan warlord. It was Americans that died in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania. The warlords had been fighting for years, but now it was our war, it was America's war.

Over the next few days, Nush and his team would ride hundreds of kilometers on horseback, using very small, very uncomfortable Afghani saddles. Stirrups weren't adjustable. Oftentimes the stirrups on their saddles were too small for our combat boots. These are very flimsy saddles. As a matter of fact, our first resupply that you read about in the press, where we flew these incredible C-130s at night, to parachute drop supplies to our people, their very first request was for new saddles and for red wheat for their horses.

They would move equipment on mules. The truth is that in an Army Special Operations Command we still send folks to mule skinner school and learn how to load mules just for that purpose. They would advise and orchestrate an eventual attack of several thousand horseback riders against Taliban armor like you saw in the film. They would walk and ride through treacherous mountain passes.

Captain Nush divided his A-team to maximize the effects to bring in an abundance of close air support that was waiting overhead. They were constantly under fire. They were in a series of fire fights. Once caught in a rocket propelled grenade ambush almost overrun, blown off their horses, he split his team. One team of three NCOs up on top of a mountain on 7 November, about midnight Nush called them and said, "Tomorrow night we will fight in the Teongi Pass. I need you there." There were no horses, no all terrain vehicles, no helicopters, no trucks. These three great Army Green Beret NCOs put their ruck sacks on and began moving.

On the night of 8 November, at 2400 hours, they were there for the attack. They had walked over 30 miles that night. On 9 November, that same team was back on horseback moving again. They had snuck behind the enemy and woke them up the next morning at 6:00 a.m. with an Air Force bomb we call JDAM. This was a classic mix of guys who are trained and comfortable in very low tech situation riding horses, being able to apply fire power and satellite communication and use the high tech gear that we provide them.

It was tough duty when they got on the ground. Every person we put on the ground in the initial days of the war lost 10% of his body weight. They took Mazar-i-Sharif, they moved to Kunduz for a fight. Eventually the 5th Special Forces Group elements were at Qala Panja, where the bravest men I know went after intelligent agent Mickey Spann. Last week *CNN* ran a tremendous special about the battle. As you remember on the afternoon of the 25th of November, a Qala Panja Prison was being used as a detention facility for more than 600 al-Qaeda and Taliban POWs. As you remember the two intelligence officers were trapped and required immediate rescue.

Upon arrival at the prison, Major Mark Mitchell, acting as the ground force commander, strategically deployed his five man team within the facility walls, all of the time while receiving small arms fire. Throughout the day, Mitchell and his team exchanged fire. They hunted courageously for the two Intel officers. The prisoners are now large in number. They greatly outnumbered Mark Mitchell and his guys. And by now the prisoners were very well-armed. Finally Mark and the guys climbed a wall to get to a vantage point and hatched a plan that would allow a bomb to be dropped on the armed Taliban. In the confusion, they would maneuver to try and go in and get Mike Spann.

Unfortunately, when calling for close air support and their bomb landed on their position, and they had mass casualties. They immediately began treating and evacuating wounded American allies and Afghanies but continued the mission. After four days of intense fighting, the Americans and the allies had held the prisoners in the prison, retaking control of the prison. It was then that they went in and got the body of Mike Spann that was

located and brought out of the fortress.

As you remember, of course, it was also that location where they found the now infamous John Walker Lynd. I've walked those grounds. I've been in that prison and someday somebody needs to write a book about this incredible battle and this incredible story. Major Mark Mitchell was the Ground Commander, and today he's here in Charlotte, North Carolina. It is my honor to introduce a real American hero, Major Mark Mitchell.

Major Mark Mitchell
Special Operations Ground Commander

LTG BROWN: On March 4th, two MH-47s Special Operations Chinooks, chugged through the frigid air. These Special Operations helicopters have been described in the press as double headed flying beasts like something out of a Tolkien novel. They were headed for the now famous Robert's Ridge. As you have read in the predawn hours soft troops were on their way from Baghlan, north of Kabul to the Takur Ghar Mountains on a reconnaissance mission. This began a chain of events that will lead to one of the most intense battles of the war against terrorism since 11 September. They reached the battlefield which was spread over horrendous terrain, altitudes of 8,000 to 12,000 feet, freezing temperatures that dipped at night down to 15°.

At the predawn hours at 10,000 ft, on snow covered mountaintops they had come under heavy small arms fire and rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons. In that same aircraft, the hydraulic line was cut. The pilots had to find a place to set it down. The crew flew through darkness with no electricity to power the instruments. They physically used a flashlight on the emergency panel to fly through the mountains at night. The crew chief in the back, whose great enlisted folks in the back, opened a case of hydraulic fluid and continued to pour it in the reservoir because the hydraulic lines had been cut.

Unfortunately, when the damaged Chinook landed, one man was missing, Navy Seal Neil Roberts. About 0500 another helicopter with five Seals and Air Force Tech Sergeant John Chapman approached that same mountain, taking enemy fire as it sliced through the helicopter. They were on a rescue mission for their teammate. The team quickly began taking fire. Chapman was killed, two Seals were wounded.

Meanwhile, a Ranger quick reaction force, the same Rangers that climbed Pointe Du Hoc, a Quick Reaction Force loaded two 47-E Chanook helicopters and headed for Takur Ghar the mountain. The first helicopter approached the mountaintop. Once again enemy fire, which included RPGs, exploded in the aircraft. Sergeant Phil Svitak opened fire with his pistol and was immediately killed. The chopper dropped 10 feet and settled in the snowy slopes. Both pilots were seriously wounded.

Seriously wounded, Chuck Gantz, the pilot in command, was shot badly through his left leg. But a quick story about Chuck Gantz. That night when that aircraft crashed he popped the left door in the front of that aircraft and jumped out. His first words to the Rangers in the back were not, "Hey, I'm wounded and I need help!" His first words as he drew his weapon were, "I have security on the left side."

As the troops clamored out of the wrecked 47, they were immediately ambushed. The first two Rangers died. A third young Sergeant Ranger hit the ground and immediately killed the attacker. For 14 hours they defended their comrades' bodies and waited through the darkness to be rescued, never not under fire.

The second MH-47 landed 2,000 feet below the hilltop with the remainder of the Quick Reaction Force. They moved up the mountain, a 45° to 70° slope, through three feet of snow, weighted down with weapons and body armor equipment, struggling against mortar

fire, sniper fire, thin mountain atmosphere, all during a two hour climb. Once there, the Quick Reaction Force attempted to move the casualties, but more enemy fire. A PJ, a parajumper, from our great Air Force Special Operations Command, Senior Airman Cunningham, took a round while caring for his comrades, but he continued to work.

After dark, a tremendous rescue was launched. It was almost a flawless operation. The choppers that came in also carried out the 11 wounded and the bodies of seven Americans, Roberts, Navy Seal, six of his rescuers, four Army Rangers and two Air Force PJs, combat controllers, including Senior Airman Cunningham. All joint comrades.

CW5 Don Tabron, the Special Operations Pilot we call a Night Stalker, was the Air Mission Commander, and he was in charge of that flighted aircraft. He was on aircraft number 475 that was shot down the morning of 4 March. He was wounded and received a Purple Heart for his heroic efforts during the mission. These incredible handpicked Special Operations pilots are not mere men. Their incredible bravery saved many lives on this battlefield and many other battlefields. Their flight skills in this incredible environment are unmatched. Mr. Tabron has 5,800 total flying hours, of which over 1,200 are on night vision goggles. He's also here today. It's my honor to introduce another American hero, CW5 Don Tabron.

Chief Warrant Officer Don Tabron
Operations Pilot, Air Mission Commander

LTG BROWN: I'd like to share a letter I received from a woman in Oklahoma recently, a letter I carry with me and share with many of the associates and my family in regards to CWO Stanley Herriman.

> Dear Sir, I wanted to write you and let know how deeply saddened I am to hear that there has been more casualties in this war in Afghanistan. I read on ABCNews.com regarding a soldier I believe to be under your command, Chief Warrent Officer Stanley Herriman , 13 years of service at Ft. Bragg and all that time to defend my right to live free, to defend a proud nation, and to be a quiet professional. I wanted to extend my thanks to his family, his wife and his father Buzz Herriman for the great sacrifice they and CWO Harriman have made.
>
> Please convey my thanks and my pride. Please tell all your troops and personnel their work and dedication means the world to me and to all of America. Tell them also there's a young woman in Oklahoma that will never forget, not for a single instant, that I am able to sleep safe in my bed because brave men stand on the wall. They look across at the enemy and say, "Not tonight, not on my watch!" Tell them that and thank them.
>
> With Sincere Pride,
>
> Anita Breland

In the spirit of remembrance, faith, and patriotism, as we remember our fallen comrades from wars since past, and this War on Terrorism, and those we've lost from the terrorists attacks on 11 September, I want to acknowledge the fact that The American Legion has and always be the major supporter, always on point for the Armed Forces of this nation. The American Legion truly represents Americanism by demonstrating complete dedication to pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. I can still remember my grandfather, proudly wearing his little blue pin with a gold star to signify, as I am, that he was a member of the Legion.

The numbers form the attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are staggering. More than 3,000 people died in those attacks. They came from 80 different nations, and many different races and religions. Approximately 2,000 children lost a parent

or both parents in the World Trade Center. One hundred and eighty four people died, 146 children lost a parent in the Pentagon attacks. Three hundred and forty three firefighters and paramedics and 60 police officers perished at the World Trade Center. These great New York City firefighters and police officers were truly the first soldiers to die in the War on Terrorism. And we in the military don't forget that.

The U.S. responded to the September 11 attacks with commitment and action to root out and punish terrorist and those who harbor, facilitate, and finance them. Your current Armed Forces generation will always remember to keep the faith, which in turn keeps us strong. And we will remember to hold fast to our unfaltering patriotism and love of country.

The American Legion has so many super programs that aid our military, our youth, our nation. The American flag is near and dear to all of us. And The American Legion had done a fantastic job of working to return to the people their right to protect the American flag from acts of physical desecration.

As Charles Province so well penned, it is the soldier, not the reporter who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier not the poet who has given us freedom of the speech. It is the soldier not the campus organizer who has given us freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier not the lawyer who has given us the right to a fair trial. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag, whose coffin is draped by the flag who allowed that person to burn that flag. It is the soldier.

The soldier, a true symbol of remembrance, faith, and patriotism. There is one more young hero who was in Afghanistan battlefields. And I'd like to introduce him. This young Captain currently serves in the 5th Special Forces Group Airborne at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. And quite frankly I brought him in from Ft. Bragg where he is doing some very, very high speed training down there. This young Captain was on an operational detachment in A-team 556, and Operation Enduring Freedom. He was on the ground as part of the operation working as part of the joint Special Operations Taskforce. ODA556 infiltrated into Afghanistan in January, into Kandahar, in support of a commanding control element, code name Rambo. Their mission was to maintain ties with Governor Kharzi and work closely with General Kahn Mohammed in the 2nd Afghan Corps. The team is also responsible for the Spin Baldak and Lashkar Gah and work closely with the governors in these areas.

ODA556 continued ground troop support for the North Commander Task Force Dagger and completed all kinds of missions. They did unconventional war missions, sensitive sight exploitation of the caves at Mullah Omar's compound. They did coordinate searches area assessments, and the destruction of over 80 tons of enemy ordinance. ODA556 redeployed the Taskforce Dagger and returned to Ft. Campbell in March of 2002.

This young Captain that led his A-team in combat is from the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and is the son of your National Adjutant, Mr. Robert Spanogle. Ladies and gentlemen, Captain John Spanogle.

Today, we will award him a well deserved Bronze Star for exceptionally meritorious service during Operation Enduring Freedom and, quite frankly, I can't think of a better place to be awarded than in front of your friends, your parents, and The American Legion. Please publish the order.

Presentation: Major Catherine Kulp

Attention to orders. This is to certify that the President of the United States of America, authorized by Executive Order, 24 August 1962, has awarded the Bronze Star Medal to Captain John P. Spanogle, Taskforce Dagger, for exceptionally meritorious achievement while serving as Ground Operations Chief

for the Commander Joint Special Operations Taskforce North and with a Quick Reaction Force during the conduct of combat operations in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Captain Spanogle led his detachment through the conduct of unconventional warfare with 8,000 Afghan forces. His fearless leadership of operations of strategic significance directly contributed to the establishment of a secure and stable environment in Kandahar. Captain Spanogle's incisive Special Forces skills as well as a his astute understanding of military political dynamics of the incredibly complex environment he operated in, reflect great credit upon him, his Special Forces Group Airborne, and the U.S. Army.

From 22 November, 2001 to March 2002, given under my hand in the city of Washington, the 28th day of June, 2002 signed Thomas E. White, Secretary of the Army.

LTG BROWN: In closing, let me share one quick story with you. In the earliest days of the conflict in Afghanistan, only a few weeks after the first U.S. Special Forces had been inserted in the country, a radio message was relayed to the Army Operations Center in the Pentagon. It came from a young Special Forces Captain just like the one you've just seen, who had linked up with a groups of soldiers from the Northern Alliance. The message stated, "We have not slept in four days. We have not eaten in two days. Our water is running low. We have only 10 rounds of ammunition per man. Tonight we attack."

Army Special Operations Forces stand ready and prepared to defend this nation anytime, anyplace. The message sent to the Taliban and al-Qaeda is: "You hit us and we're coming." We can all take comfort in the knowledge that Americans just like you are on guard tonight, soldiers, sailors, airman, Marines, and coast guardsmen, like the Minutemen who dropped their pitchforks and took up the rifles to defend this nation in 1776. Each of you step forward to defend America against new threats of the new century. And now a new generation will do the same. You can count on it.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: "The American Legion Certificate of Merit is awarded to Lieutenant General Doug Brown, Commanding General U.S. Army Special Operations Command, for your outstanding leadership and the command of the Army's Special Operations soldiers who are performing with distinction and valor in the Operation Enduring Freedom, in the global War on Terrorism. Presented on this 27th day of August, 2002, at The American Legion's 84th National Convention, in Charlotte, North Carolina."

General Brown, congratulations and thank you for your service to our country and to our fellow veterans.

LTG BROWN: Thank you very much. This is very special and it's very special to be here with you today. I appreciate the opportunity. These are great young folks that I had the opportunity to command. We're very very proud of them.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The reading of the order was done by Major Catherine Kulp, a Legionnaire from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

MAJOR KULP: Hello, Pennsylvania. I didn't forget Kansas, either. It's been an honor to work with Mr. Spanogle and all of his staff and all of his team. It was a pleasure and a great time for me to meet all of you that I've met throughout the past few day. I appreciate you having us here. It's always an honor to work for General Brown and I'm just so honored.

Welcome

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Another guest with us is a man who has certainly set an

example for others when he stepped away from the public office until his children had finished high school. Today, his two sons have graduated from Yale, and he is a U.S. Congressman from North Carolina's 12th District, serving on the Financial Services and the Judiciary Committees. Please welcome to our Convention the honorable Melvin Watt.

Address: Melvin Watt
U.S. House of Representatives

You're about to hear from a series of speakers whose purpose it will be to make sure you are welcomed and that you know that you are welcomed in this state, in this region, and in this city. It's my honor to be at the top of that list because I represent the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina. This Convention Center and most the activities in which you will engaged will be conducted in the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina. But do not be fooled by that. The thing that you should note is that you will be welcomed by federal, state, and local officials. They will be Democrats, Republicans, and the whole purpose is to let you know how much we are honored to have The American Legion conduct its 84th Convention here in our area.

I'm honored to bring greetings on behalf of the 600,000 or so residents of the 12th Congressional District. We hope you have a tremendous Convention and time here, both the time you have already spent the remainder of your stay in this area. And we honor your service, your commitment, and your response whenever you have been called and when you will be called in the future.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Another member of the U.S. House of Representatives is next on the agenda. His record in Congress reflects the strong values and beliefs of the citizens of his district. That is why he is among those who voted to protect the flag of our nation from desecration. He is a member of the Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Resources. I present to you the Honorable Walter Jones.

Address: Walter Jones, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives

It is an honor and a privilege to be with you today, because, in my opinion, you are the true heroes of this country. And I say thank you so very much. Let me also add to General Brown's comments about the soldier's poem, because to me the freedom of this country is what is so absolutely critical to the future of America. And those of you who have served this nation to fight for this freedom, God bless you and certainly those who are fighting for our freedom today, God bless them and be with them for today and the years ahead.

I want to also compliment The American Legion because I am one who each and every year that I've had the pleasure to serve in the U.S. Congress and the privilege to serve have joined you in the fight to protect the flag. And I want out say thank you. You must continue to carry that fight forward along with the other issues that are so important to you and to this great nation of ours.

Let me take just a moment to talk about Concurrent Receipts. I am one, along with many of my colleagues who are here today, who have joined in that fight because it is a fight about fairness and justice. Our men and women in uniform who have served deserve justice. This year I have the pleasure to serve on the Conference Committee. I will be on the Conference Committee and when this issue comes up I will join my friends in both the House and the Senate who feel as I do that this is an unjust law that needs to be eliminated.

You deserve what was promised you when you went into the military to serve this nation. The way I look at it, promises made to you should be promises kept and those of us in Washington will work together to make sure those promises are kept to you.

As you probably know, on July 31st, about 225 members of Congress, some of those who are here with us today, joined in a letter to President Bush and asked him to join us in that fight dealing with the Concurrent Receipt and the injustice that it brings about to our men and women who have served this nation.

I have had the privilege to represent the 3rd Congressional District of North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejuene, Cherry Point Marine Airstation, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. We have over 61,000 retired military and veterans combined. I realize, as my colleagues here today realize, that you have given so much to this country and that words like 'thank you' and 'we appreciate you' seem so inadequate. The way we can really thank you for your service of this nation is to make sure that we show you indeed, not just in words, and we will continue to fight on those issues that are important to you and to the next generation of our veterans and retired military.

I close today by the way I've closed every day since September 11th. Bear with me for just one minute please. The close is this: I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless their families. I ask God to please bless you. And I ask God to please bless your families. I ask God to please bless the President of the United States and I ask God to please bless those of us in the House and the Senate who have some very difficult decisions to make for this country and for the next generation.

I close by saying God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Earlier this morning we recognized our 2002 Spirit of Service recipients. Our next guest also remembers how he started with community involvement and public service. Today he is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives where he serves on the Committees on Agriculture, Transportation and Infrastructure and he is the Vice Chairman of the Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Military Installations.

A co-sponsor of the flag protection amendment, please welcome from North Carolina's 8th District the Honorable Robin Hayes.

Address: Robin Hayes
U.S. House of Representatives

The old adage that they save the best for last is not true! Weren't General Brown and our great men and women in uniform fantastic? Thank you for the privilege of addressing you and expressing my thanks and welcome today.

American citizen soldiers know the difference between good and evil. They are not willing to live in a world where evil prevails. So they fight and they win. Because of what you have done, because of what those who have gone before and those who have come after have done, we live in the greatest and freest country the world has ever known.

As President Bush so aptly said, "We are liberators, not conquerors." Today, I invite you to join me around noon in Room 210A & B, to discuss issues of veterans and whatever else you might have on your mind. I look forward to staying. I am honored that North Carolina can be the host for your Convention. I know you'll have a good time and I encourage you to come back early and often.

I also appreciate the chance to speak today and call attention to the ladies. The Auxiliary has played such a wonderful part in making this a successful event today.

Three issues I will address. First and foremost, I would like to discuss the issue of national pride and patriotism which Congressman Jones has brought to our attention once again. Our flag, the Pledge of Allegiance to 'Old Glory', America is the land of the free and the home of the brave. But the liberty that we enjoy did not come without a price. Our Nation's veterans, active duty, and Reserves draw their strength not from America's great material wealth, but rather you all are moved by the belief that there are causes much bigger than ourselves.

You know that there are some things worth dying for, a conviction rooted in principle, as represented by our flag. Patriots like yourselves who have fought for freedom, know in your heart that the cause was just and that making the ultimate sacrifice for freedom, liberty and justice was worth the risk. Many Americans have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live in peace and freedom. One of the first and foremost ways that we can honor our fallen heroes is to protect the American flag. The brave men and women who died fighting for freedom deserve to be honored by the flying of the Stars and Stripes. Our flag represents the freedoms we enjoy, the spirit of democracy and the sacrifices of all those who have worked to make this nation what it is today.

Who could ever forget the image of the American flag being raised amid the rubble and chaos in New York by the firemen following the terrorist attacks, on September 11th? I know the flag deserves the honor of federal protection. I'm honored to support the measure that protects the great symbol of the United States of America. This important piece of legislation passed the House. We need on this side and in the middle. We've to get it through the Senate. I need your help and so does everyone sitting here.

The American flag and the principles for which it flies are deserving of honor and protection. I'm also disturbed by the recent ruling of the courts in California declaring the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. The United States was founded on the principle of freedom of religion. The first amendment to the Constitution prohibits the establishment of a religion. It does not prevent the free exercise. Reciting the Pledge does not establish a religion. In fact, the Pledge is based on love, respect, devotion for our country, and the principles of freedom.

Our flag represents the freedom that we enjoy, the spirit of democracy, and the sacrifices of those who have worked to make this nation what it is today. Honoring and protecting our flag are ways in which we can and should pay tribute to our nation and those who have sacrificed so much.

Second, I would like to discuss another issue, Concurrent Receipt. As you know this is the first year Congress has not only supported the policy of fully offsetting disability and retired military pay, we've gone on record to fund it. Many of my colleagues and I have worked tirelessly to fully eliminate the penalty between retired and disability pay for the military, including signing numerous letters and working with Congressional leadership, co-sponsoring legislation, so on and so forth.

The House Armed Services Committee took the first step to remove the inequality in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2003, making it the first time that Congress has allocated funding for Concurrent Receipt. While there is still much to be done, I am proud of the progress we have made, and solicit to further and continued help on this important issue. Even though there's some uncertainty about where this will end up, let me be perfectly clear. I fully support this effort of equity of military and retired pay regardless of the opposition.

Last, but not least, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I would like to take a brief moment to speak about our National Defense. After almost a decade of neglect we are beginning to take steps to rebuild and transform our military. As our brave

young men and women prosecute the War on Terrorism, now more than ever, it is important that we send a message loud that we believe in a strong, robust and well-funded military to protect the freedom and liberty that we enjoy.

I'm happy to report that we are on track to pass the largest real increase in defense spending since 1966. This signals unwavering support to the men and women who currently prosecute the War on Terrorism. It sends a message loud and clear to our adversaries that we will not tolerate any impositions on our liberty and our way of life. I believe we must consistently focus on supporting the needs of military personnel, not only making sure they have weapons to do their jobs, but also adequate support structures, housing, resources for themselves and their families, our retirees and our veterans.

George Washington said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportionable to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by this nation." He said it well and it is well that we remember early and often that quote.

When the terrorists attacked on September 11th, all America suddenly found themselves on the front lines of combat. But our veterans and active duty personnel were on the front lines long before that attack. Those who have served the nation are the heroes who helped preserve American heritage. Their life experience is evidence that freedom comes at a price. These men and women made great sacrifices and services to our country. We as Americans must honor our commitment to these individuals and work to ensure that their needs are met.

Samuel Adams, prior to the Revolutionary War, said the following statement to those who lacked the courage and commitment that you so strongly have, "If you love wealth greater than liberty, the tranquility of servitude greater than the animating contest for freedom, go home from us in peace. We seek not your counsel, nor your arms. Crouch down and lick the hand that feeds you. May your chains set lightly upon you; and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen." My friends, I say to you because of your service, your commitment, and your contribution, we and this country shall lick no hands.

God bless you, your families, and protect you and our men and women in service and give wisdom to our leadership.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Next to welcome us to her state is a woman who has a reputation as an advocate for streamlined and more efficient federal government. She is a member of the House Rules Committee and a former Mayor of Charlotte. She is credited with bringing infrastructure improvements into the city, as well as landing the National Football League, North Carolina Panthers to the city. Welcome the Honorable Sue Myrick.

Address: Sue Myrick
U.S. House of Representatives

We really are honored that your are here and it's a joy to have you in Charlotte, and to see this many of you in one place does everybody's heart good. Thank you. Because if, of you who are here today, hadn't done what you did, to preserve our freedoms, we wouldn't be standing where we are today and representing you in Congress. We wouldn't have the freedoms in America we have. I think we often time forget that. That's one of the things that go by the wayside and we don't always say thank you to you. But believe me, we mean it.

My concern, very frankly, and it has been for a long time, is what's going to happen when those of us who are here today and others like us are no longer around. A lot of our young people today don't even know what a veteran is. This was really made apparent to my husband and me a few years ago. He called over to our daughter's house one day and one

of our granddaughters answered the phone. It was a normal school day. He said, "What are you doing home?" she said, "I don't know. It's a holiday of some kind and we're out of school." He said, " A holiday of some kind? What holiday is it?" And she said, "I think it's veterinarian's day." He said, "You get your sisters together, I'm coming right over, we're going to lunch, and you're going to learn what a veteran is." And so it really has been a concern as to what's going to happen.

I can't resist this opportunity to tell you about something we're doing in our District. For those of you from other states, I hope you'll take it back and do the same thing. We're starting a program called CHAMPS. It stands for: Children Honoring America's Military Patriots. What we're doing is matching veterans from all of the wars, who are still around in our District, from World War II up to the Persian Gulf War, and any of the others who want to participate from more recent conflicts. We're matching them with schools in their Districts. We've gotten schools to agree to allow them to come in and talk to the kids about what a veteran is, what our freedoms are about, what are flag stands for. Very basic things that you and I know and take for granted. But they [the students] really don't have a clue or think about it. So far we've got 40 schools online. And I encourage you who are from North Carolina to participate.

I've got a couple of staff members who are in the far back, and if you're willing to help, please come and sign up. We'd love to have you in the 9th District to help. For those of you in other areas, go back and see if your Congress people would be willing to do the same thing. We need to make sure that our children don't forget why they have the freedom they do and why our country is what it is today and where it is today.

You've already heard from the others that you're a high priority with us. We want to do what we can to help. You need to continue to let us know, and you're good about that, I appreciate it, what you need. But I can tell you that we will do what we can to be sure, as Walter says, you get what you promise and you've been promised, and also what your needs are going forward because you're an important part of our history and our country.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Each year The American Legion selects a city to host its National Convention. It is a big challenge and an opportunity for the host city. Our next guest this morning has a deep understanding and love for this city. He was elected by a vote of the City Council members as the Mayor Pro Tempore. We are proud to be in this city and to welcome this community leader, Mayor Pro Tempore Patrick Cannon.

Address: Patrick Cannon
Mayor Pro Tempore of Charlotte, North Carolina

I am Mayor Pro Tempore, or Deputy Mayor, Patrick Cannon of the city of Charlotte. I know I don't look as such. I promise you I didn't just graduate yesterday from high school. This is actually my fifth consecutive term serving on the Charlotte City Council and we are indeed happy to have you here this day for your Convention. It is something that we've been waiting to have here in the city of Charlotte for a very long time, in terms of awaiting you. We are proud to have you here this day.

One of the most precious gifts in life is that gift of unselfish living. It is that gift in which you all who are gathered here today, the Commanders, the Officers, the membership of The American Legion, and your spouses. You are the example of that unselfish living. That's what we need throughout all of this country. Representative Sue Myrick who spoke just prior to me, talked about children and their level of involvement. I will tell you that it so important that we do send a resounding ringing in their ears of how important it is to be

one involved in the political process of voting. But more important, to be a part of understanding of the process is being involved in the ideas of our military, all those things that make our country what it is today, a strong country. And that country would not be strong if it were not for people like yourselves stepping up in our past, doing what you're currently doing in our present, and making a way for us in our future.

As you talk about unselfish living, one of those things you continue to give of yourself, is commitment. You continue to give your love, and you continue to give your service to this country. On behalf of Mayor Patrick McCrory, as well as 10 members of the Charlotte City Council, I bring you greetings and say welcome to our lovely city. We hope that you will take advantage of all it has to offer. If not, we will hear about it I'm sure. In the past, we've not had any complaints and had great things from people like yourselves to suggest that you want to come back soon. I certainly want to have you back. We as a city want to have you back and so our six hundred thousand people say again, welcome to the city of Charlotte. Enjoy your stay.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Our next two speakers will bring with them an important message, a little nostalgia for all and information on a very important project.

In May, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution to support a special tribute to a man who touched many of our lives –that man being Bob Hope. If we didn't get to experience a Bob Hope USO show in person, we remember the television specials and more that helped build morale and public appreciation of those in uniform.

A special memorial tribute is being constructed in San Diego, California, to honor this great American. He received The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal in 1946. He was honored by The American Legion family when the National Convention was held in Phoenix, Arizona. For those of us there, it is hard to forget the surprise we pulled on Bob with thousands of us singing "Thanks for the Memories" to him.

With us this morning is a woman who made several trips with Bob Hope to entertain troops. She is a television and movie star in her own right and a great singer. She was recently honored with the highest award that the Armed Forces can give to a civilian, the Dedicated Service Award. With details on the special tribute to Bob Hope and how members of The American Legion family can choose to help, please welcome Miss Connie Stevens.

Address: "Military Tribute to Bob Hope"
Connie Stevens

I am delighted and honored to be among you. It is no secret that in my lifetime that veterans have always been my favorite people in America. I know you well, I think, having seven or eight uncles and cousins who served. My father served in the Second World War, my older brother was in Korea, and my baby brother was in Vietnam. So I think I know you well. I knew that it was going to take veterans to come aboard on this magnificent project so that I am delighted and honored to be a part of.

If you go to the Convention Hall, you will see what the actual Memorial to Bob Hope is going to look like. It is beautiful and it is in San Diego. The land has been given to build this incredible amount of statues. You can all be a part of it. I want give you some details about it.

As you know, four veterans, your own Legionnaires, are spearheading an effort to honor Bob Hope with this tribute. It's for all of the things that he has done for America's men and women in uniform over 50 years. I don't know why in a lifetime it hasn't been done before. I knew it would take veterans to do this.

This tribute will be built at the tip of the old fleet land in San Diego where all of our ships go by. As a matter of fact, I was just down there with General Jones as I saw off 5,000 more of our glorious young warriors to Afghanistan. By the way, I do want you all to know how I am just in awe of our military today. I have seen many decades of them and to see them so brave and so exemplary still, from four or five decades just amazes me. The things that they do to safeguard our country. I wanted to offer my congratulations to them as we greet them today.

Four veterans started this nonprofit corporation not too long ago called Taffy 3. This is specially qualified with the IRS to make contributions that are tax deductible. That's always good. Although I know veterans, they'd give it anyway. Words are inadequate to describe this breathtaking tribute. You are just going to be amazed. Taffy 3 has set up a group, as I said, inside. You will be as moved as I am when you see the architecture, the great plans that are going to be done for it. It's going to take place May 29th of next year which is Bob Hope's hundredth birthday. Wouldn't that be the most perfect tribute to him? I think so.

I was privileged to be an entertainer with Bob Hope and will tell you just a little bit from my heart about that. How so many times I observed and joked with a group of vets before telling them that I was the one who he'd call up on a Saturday night and say, "I'm going to go entertain at this hospital or this base," and I'd say, "I've got a hot date. I can't go again." I would be the one who he'd talk into and say you got to go. And what has happened by observing Bob, is that it made me a better American, it made me a better mother. It has given me much more conscience about who I vote for and why. Certainly I want to thank each and everyone of you for service to our country on behalf of my entire family.

His compassion for our troops was just wondrous to behold. You can just imagine I was in places that some of you know and some you may not have every gotten there. Aviano Air Force Base in Italy, Germany, Diego Garcia, very, very special places. Incirlik, Turkey, the craziest place. I've also been in the jungles of Vietnam. I have also served my country by going to different hospitals for veterans over the years. July 4th is always a special day in my home. Valentines Day is certainly special in Los Angeles where I visit our vets a lot of times. What I observed is that he really loved what he was doing and they loved him back. Throughout these decades of years that I have been an entertainer, I have been all over the world and everybody has a Bob Hope story. I say this in all honesty, there isn't a lawyer, CEO of a large corporation, a baggage handler, a travel agent, a pharmacist, anyone who doesn't come over to me not only to thank me, but give me their own Bob Hope story.

That's exactly why I decided to join all of you today and speak about this project that I think is so worthwhile. And that is that we hope to get all of our great veterans across our great land, everyone who ever saw a Bob Hope show, everybody who saw a special to donate $1 across the world to build this great memorial for his 100th birthday. We don't have much time, you know. You all know May 29th is going to come around before we even know it. Before we leave you today, I'd certainly hope that you all can dig deep and say to yourselves I'm going to tell my District about it and sure, I can afford $1 to see that this gets done for this great American.

Some of the things that happened with Bob Hope and myself were history making. I was with Neil Armstrong when we were in Vietnam. Many times Neil and I would go into the jungles at night in a small Cobra strafing so that we could visit young boys who could not come to the show. I was privileged to have held young dying men's hands in Vietnam. It certainly made a full-fledged woman out of me because I went as a little sort of flighty young female entertainer and I came back full fledged American. I knew what they were

fighting for and how deeply they loved their country. It gave me the emphasis to do the same over all of these years.

I toured with him to so many places and heard all of his jokes and laughed every single time. And I saw the look on his face as I also stood on the stage when that tremendous roar of the audience came at him. It was like feeding him. He didn't need air or food or anything. I've been privileged to be with Bob in the middle of the night where he'd come and wake me up and say, "I'm talking to a ship in the middle of the night. Would you mind getting up and coming to talk with them?" and I would say ok. I would go up into the cockpit and talk to some of our young men who had been out to sea for six and seven months during the Vietnam conflict and talk to them over the loudspeaker, not knowing what to say. It was just so surreal. Those are the memories that I cherish. I have found that in a career of accolades and things that have happened so wondrously for me, with a healthy family, those are the things I cherish.

My own younger brother I miss. In Vietnam, he was a casualty of the Vietnam War. He was one of the walking wounded who came home. I've always had a special affinity for the veterans of the Vietnam conflict. In 1997, when they opened up the doors, I went back to Vietnam with 100 hundred women who had served in that conflict in all types of capacities, USO, intensive care nurses. I'm sure some of you great warriors have met some of those glorious women in a lifetime, Christian foundations, and people who got orphans. One woman saved over 800 young babies lives. Those are the kind of women I traveled with to every major base in Vietnam and every hospital.

I've decided that because of this closeness that I have had, I made a film. It's called *A Healing*. It's a documentary and hopefully I will get in every high school and college across America and around the world. But because of the closeness that I have felt for Vietnam vets over these years, I have decided to kick this glorious project off. I am going to donate personally one dollar for each and every name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

You know, coming home—one of the reasons why I decided to do that, even on the special with Bob Hope I stand there. If I could digress for one moment, I had some young men on stage. Of course, we were all excited. They were wonderful and they sang and so forth. It was a great moment in all of our lives. When I got home, two of those young men's mothers came to me and said their sons were lost a week ago. A week after he was on stage with me, that was all he talked about. This is the kind of work, the privilege, that was given to me and it was because of Bob Hope.

I have one wondrous story to tell you and then I'm going to present the check and, of course, we can go on. This is my favorite story. I was standing on stage and sang this crazy song. It was called "Bill". "Will you marry me, Bill?". I asked if there was anybody named Bill and 19,000 young men rushed the stage. So I had to pick and choose because the stage would have fallen down. We were all singing and having a glorious time and out of the corner of my eye I saw a young man get out of the Hospital Corps. He made his way through this enormous amount of soldiers to the stage. I said, "Wait a minute, I've got a real hero here" and helped him on the stage.

All of the other guys gave way to Bill who sang with me. I said, "Just throw those crutches down, put your arms around me. I can handle you." He did and we sang together. Well, many years passed and I am in a hotel in Houston, Texas, up on a special floor. Everybody is greeting me and I'm having a drink with my friends. One of my friends said there's a fellow over at the bar who knows me. I said, "He knows me?" "Yes, he met you in Vietnam."

I turned around and saw his face. How could I ever forget his face? I saw the sunken eyes and he was wounded. He made his way all the way to the stage. I looked at him and I

said, "Bill, you were in Da Nang" and he said yes and started to cry. And I started to cry! We talked; I said please come and sit with us; let's have some food and talk about our lives together that were so intimate and so long ago. When we finished for the evening, we said our goodbyes. We hugged and kissed goodbye like lovers. Then he said to me, "I have something to tell you. My name is Mike." True story!

So those are the kind of guys I want to represent. So many of them did not make it home and so many of them deserve the accolades that you all do. Thank you so much for making it a very special thing for a single mother to realize not only her dreams, but raise two beautiful children in the safety, in the arms of America. I want to thank you very much and present this check for $58,299, today to Taffy 3.

I want to introduce them to you because they are the unsung heroes, Jack Houston, Ed Haggerty. Ed, please take a well deserved bow. Please let's give them a big hand. The other two guys couldn't be here but you'll meet them. I just want to urge you that this is a worthwhile project. He gave so much of his time, his effort, and his heart. I know, I was a witness. As long as I'm alive, I'm a witness to the glory of the young warriors I have experienced in many decades. God bless each and every one of you. God keep you safe and certainly bless our young forces wherever they are in the world, one more time and certainly bless our great nation.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I'm so pleased to introduce Bob Hope's son, Tony Hope. Tony is with us today representing the Hope family. A graduate of Georgetown and Harvard Law School, Tony lives in Washington, D.C. where he practices law. He has worked in Government and the private sector for the past 38 years. He served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Air Force Reserve. Tony was the first chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, appointed by President George Bush.

Tony first accompanied his father on a tour when he was 17. Earlier today, I thought he might be younger. They flew to Hawaii, Guam, Okinawa, Japan, and Korea in a KC-97. For a guy in the Navy, I'm not sure of the terminology. Tony says that they played a lot of poker on that airplane. Please help me welcome Tony Hope.

Address: Anthony Hope
Son of Bob Hope

I'm very happy to be able to be here this morning on behalf of my father, Bob Hope and my mother Dolores Hope who, as you know, traveled with him on a lot of the Christmas tours. I was on seven of them myself. The last one I was on was in 1964. We were in Vietnam at a time when we had 5,000 advisors there. We did shows in Da Nang, Nha-trang, Pleiku, Bienhoa, and at Thon Son Nhut, and played to about 25,000 of the 5,000 troops we had there [*laughter*]. This won't come to much of a surprise to those of you who were there.

My father dedicated a tremendous amount of his life to the American servicemen. And the American servicemen paid it back, paid it back with love and respect and with laughter, which is really what my father thrived on all of these years. It was like adrenalin to him, the joy of being able to stand up and make people laugh. There was never an audience that was as good as an audience full of servicemen. He always took the right approach to the audiences. He never allowed officers in the first 25 rows.

I remember one show in Korea at the Bayonet Bowel on Christmas Day. It was snowing lightly and I went out in advance to check out the ice on the stage to make sure the fans could dance without flying off into the audience. I was on the stage and looked out in the first 50 feet or so of seats were covered with a tarpaulin. I was moving around on the

stage. I looked down and the tarpaulin moved. I got off the stage and went over and looked under it and the first rows were 500 GIs who had gotten there the night before and put a tarpaulin over themselves to make sure they got the best seats.

It was that kind of dedication that they had for my father which caused him to keep going back. My mother would say, "Can't you stay home next Christmas?" And he would say that as long as we got men out there, he's going. It's the right thing to do.

It's with great pride and great happiness that I'm able to thank those of you who are giving the money to the tribute for my father and the tribute to the servicemen which the tribute will take place in San Diego. They have a model of it out in the next room where all of the booths are. They've got a five minute tape that they play showing things from some of the old Christmas shows. And they've got brochures and you can fill out the form and give them your Visa card. Give them a dollar or five dollars, or whatever you want.

I particularly want to thank Connie Stevens for her generous contribution to this and to all of those who have already given in this grass roots campaign that is well underway. I want all you to go back to your Districts and push them for the money. We don't want a lot from anybody. We want a little bit from everyone.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The information about this project and the fund-raising can be obtained and viewed in the exhibit hall, today only, please. But we ask you to go by the exhibit. Obtain the information and take it back to your Posts, Districts, and Departments. I ask you to not only open up your heart at the same time. I think have that Connie Stevens has done both. And I ask all you to follow suit.

There was a little item earlier today that we were informed on when we had a conversation this morning on this project, that most of us would be away from home on Christmas when we're on Active Duty, overseas, some of us one year, some two, some three, sometimes four. But Bob Hope was away for Christmas from his family for 22 years on Christmas.

So I'm asking all of you to give like Bob Hope gave to us. You can do that by ensuring that this money is raised by March of 2003, in order to ensure that this military tribute to Bob Hope is built, erected, paid for, and ready to go on May 29th of 2003. So I encourage all of you please get the material. Let's thank Bob Hope by making sure this military tribute is built before his 100th birthday.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The American Legion began sponsorship of an Adventure Racing Team just last year. The experience has been great. The team is gaining national and international recognition and members of the team recently returned from tough competition in Europe. It is my pleasure to introduce you to Team American Legion captained by Dr. Mary Van Dyke of York, Pennsylvania. I'm sure she will introduce you to the rest of the team.

Address: Mary Van Duke, Team Captain
Team American Legion

I want to take you from your comfortable seats here in Charlotte, North Carolina and take you with us to British Columbia, Canada. Go with us as we journey. It's 2:00 a.m., your watch alarm clock is going off. You've only slept for 45 minutes this time. You have just climbed a mountain all the way to the top. You've climbed down, you've reached the valley at midnight, there's no moonlight and you've decided to set up camp deep in the valley before you hike the next mountain at 2:00 a.m. Its 2:01 a.m., no one in your two-man tent,

which now holds four people, have moved a single muscle. It's pouring down rain. It's 2:02 a.m., our fourth team member decides he's going to poke his nose out of the tent to see what it's like outside. Remember, it's pouring down rain in the valley. He hollers back into the tent, "Hey guys, it's snowing in the canyon!" It's not just snowing and I didn't know we were in a canyon. They withhold information from me sometimes.

Down in the canyon is a creek. Not a creek that we think about, a sweet, flowing North Carolina creek, but a canyon creek, a river gushing with white water rapids. It is 2:05 a.m. and our four team members are still snuggled up in that two-man tent. No one wants to move with the rain and the threat of snow outside.

As time passes, we think about the journey ahead of us, the mountain we must climb in order to get to the finish line. But we also think about fellow veterans, veterans who have come before us and made similar journeys, journeys in snow and rain, journeys of patriotism, journeys of faith, journeys of remembrance like ours. We race in honor of all veterans as Team American Legion. We race in honor of Captain Milton Palmer, a citadel graduate who died on his second attempt at Ranger School. He died in the swamps of Florida, not wanting to give up. That's the strength that we carry with us as young Legionnaires, as young veterans. We carry the strength of the veterans who have come before us. We carry the strength of Captain Milton Palmer with us.

We are young Legionnaires and we participate in something we call a sport, a sort of adventure racing. You've all heard General Brown talk about our real heroes in America. Well, those are the people who we race in honor of. We compete in competition, we compete for you. We compete in a sport called adventure racing.

Adventure racing consists of many different sports over a time period of two, three, four, five, and five and a half days in British Columbia. We raced, we mountain biked, we canoed, we climbed mountains, we ice climbed, we even slid on our bottoms all the way down a mountain at times just to get to the bottom quicker. This is all a part of the sport of adventure racing.

You might be wondering how Team American Legion came about. It was the spirit of The American Legion that grew, that developed, that built Team American Legion. In Muncie, Indiana, about two years ago, Steve and I went to see our local VA rep. There we spoke to him about medical benefits, education benefits and told him about how we had just been selected to represent the U.S. Army in the Armed Forces Eco Challenge. He was quite impressed with our athletic credentials but wondered how we would financially support ourselves in such an expensive, time consuming sport with careers as college professors. We told him we were looking for a sponsor. Maybe a gear sponsor like Nike, maybe a soda sponsor like Coke. But we told him that we really wanted to give back something to our sponsor. We didn't think it was enough just to race. We wanted to be able to speak and pass on the mission of an organization.

At that time at 30 years of age, I was first told of The American Legion. He told me about The American Legion Family, about the Auxiliary, about the Sons and that the National Headquarters was located in Indianapolis, Indiana. He also passed on the trusted *The American Legion Magazine*, I swear to you, cover to cover. It was all about the Reconnect effort. I said to Steve and to friends and family, at that time, it was perfect. This is Team American Legion. We can put the faces and voices on younger Legionnaires. We can support the movement of Reconnect.

The next day, I picked up the telephone and I called the National Headquarters. I got the secretary downstairs who told me, "You know, I don't really think that this is something that The American Legion would be interested in." But she passed me on to someone else, and that someone else passed me on to someone else, and I finally got Mr. Bill Sloan in

Internal Affairs and Membership on the telephone. I swear to you for five minutes straight I did not take a breath, I didn't let Mr. Sloan say no. I just kept asking and telling him what young Legionnaires could do for The American Legion. What we could do as voices for younger Legionnaires, what we could do to recruit future leaders for The American Legion. Mr. Bill Sloan gave us the opportunity to come in and meet with members of the National Staff two days later.

Two days later, we sparked that same spirit in The American Legion, to follow the American dream, to remember our veterans, to remember patriotism and faith in the American dream. We continue to race today for The American Legion and to represent all veterans. I'll tell you quickly about one race and one event that we participated in this year.

This race was held in Indiana. National Headquarters is housed in downtown Indianapolis. When we found about the race, we immediately called the race director and said, "Hey, did you know that the National Headquarters for The American Legion is located in downtown Indianapolis? Wouldn't it be great if this race of 24 hours over 100 miles would go by The American Legion National Headquarters?" He said, "I didn't know The American Legion was there in Indianapolis, but my brother is an Army Ranger." Immediately we had that connection. We found a veteran in the race. I'm so proud to tell you that because of that one phone call and because of our passion for The American Legion, the entire race course was redesigned so that every racer, all 150 racers, had to come by the National Headquarters in Indianapolis.

At 12:00 a.m., 1:00 a.m., 2:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m. stood members of the National staff ready to check in and cheer on the racers. We took two teams to this race. It was the first time we had ever done that. We had Team American Legion and Team Sons of The American Legion. These two teams did something that no other two teams in adventure racing had ever done. We traveled and competed together the entire race course. So for 24 hours of canoeing, mountain biking, paddling, scootering, rollerblading, and we went to Conseco Field house and shot baskets. We did that as two teams of three. We crossed the finish line with our arms in the air, wearing our patriotic red, white, and blue American Legion jerseys, as a team of six. We proved to America, we proved to adventure racers, we proved to young veterans all across the country what team work is all about and how The American Legion stands by young Legionnaires, young veterans. Teamwork united under the Legion family.

We had Legionnaires there. We had Sons there. We even had Auxiliary members racing. And we had a one woman support crew. Normally its two to five people who help support a crew. But one Auxiliary member did this with the help of the National Staff. So we truly have the Team American Legion Family in our team.

I thank each and every one of you for your interest, for your excitement, for your enthusiasm, for your passion for Team American Legion. I thank you for that. And I want to turn around and invite you to invite us to come and speak to your Posts and your Departments. Whether it's a meeting, whether it's a race, Boy's State, Girl's State, anything, you name it. We will help you organize it, we'll help you plan it and we will be there to speak and bring our enthusiasm to join your Legion family.

We would like to recognize a few people from the Legion family who helped us to create, to build and to develop the Team American Legion concept. Those people are the National Commander, Ric Santos. Let me tell you a little bit about the gift we're giving to Commander Santos. It might seem a little funny to give the National Commander a simple American flag. But this flag has endured all of our adventure races this year. This flag was wrapped upon itself into a ziploc bag, its stick was cut to save weight. We specifically picked a waterproof flag so that it could endure all the races with us. This flag has made all

journeys with us.

We'd also like to recognize someone who has been behind us from the start, who has believed in the Team American Legion concept and continues to be a great cheerleader for us, and that's the National Adjutant Mr. Bob Spanogle. Another one of our water proof, ziplocked bag with the flag in it goes to Mr. Jack Querfeld, who from the National Staff Headquarters has encouraged us, followed us on the website, and continues to back us in the Team American Legion mission.

And working for Jack in the National Headquarters is Mr. Bill Sloan, the gentleman I told you about who had to suffer through that five minute long phone call from the very start. We want to thank him for believing in us, for taking the teasing that we give him about being our manager, and for always being there for us, whether it's through the internet, phone calls, or emergency phone calls in the middle of the night. We thank Mr. Bill Sloan.

Thank you each for a terrific few days here in Charlotte. We look forward to seeing you throughout the year. Please take us up on our offer to come and visit your home state.

Oops, shame on me. I didn't introduce the handsome gentlemen behind me. I'll let each one do that themselves. I'll tell you quickly my name is Dr. Mary Van Dyke. I'm a college professor at York College in Pennsylvania, and I teach sport management there. So you can see my passion for sports. I'm also an Army Captain in the Reserves in the Combat Sport Hospital. My passion for sports and the military comes together in the Team American Legion.

CPT KREIS: My name is Steve Kreis. I'm also an Army Captain in the Reserves in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and just a proud member and happy to be here. Thank you for everything.

LT BENETIS: Lieutenant Vytenis Benetis, Lithuanian Navy. I'm a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and happy to be with this team. Thank you for this Convention.

NATL CMDR SANTOS: Our next guest heads what is called "The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency." The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed her in 2001. She is a respected woman who has consistently been a leader in efforts to restore a strong ethic of citizenship and civic responsibility to all citizens. She has been active in the analysis, development, and implementation of American public policy for two decades in senior positions in the public and private sectors. It is my pleasure to present to you the Director of the United States Office of Personnel Management, Kay Coles James.

Address: Kay Coles James
United States Office of Personnel Management

I feel so much red, white and blue in this place, I'm absolutely, positively giddy. I want you to know I just got back from vacation and I did that just to be with you, as a symbol of my patriotism and because I wanted to be in the right mood to be here. I only wish the cameras could pick it up, but for the ladies in the room, I had my toenails painted with flags. I said I want to be patriotic down to my very toes. It is an absolute honor for me to be here to talk to you, the courageous men and women who have engaged in some fearsome struggles for my country.

I have been told on my arrival, many times, "thank you for being here" and every time I heard it, I thought how inappropriate. I want to thank you for the privilege of being here today. I want you to know that once again America's Armed Forces are placing their lives at risk on distant seas and shores, and indeed in our own homeland to defend our way of life.

The courageous men and women engaged in today's fearsome struggle are volunteers. They march, they sail, and they fly willingly into harm's way. And as a veteran, you understand the depth of character and commitment required to lay your life on the line for out ideals and our liberty, because you, too, answered the call, you, too, lived the sacrifices. I never want to forget, so did your families and your loved ones.

The James family recently had firsthand experience in this regard. My own son-in-law is a Naval Reservist. As a matter of fact, I think he is going to be getting a call very soon about joining your ranks. While on vacation this week, I was in Roanoke, Virginia. Your family sometimes doesn't understand exactly what it is you do. They know you have a government job. So when they found out I was working in the government, my brother-in-law who is a veteran and one of your members, I might add, said to me that he had a claim pending for the VA. He wanted to know if there was anything I could do about that. I said, "Well, Barry, I know I'm going to speak to many people who are in your same situation. I promise I will do what I can with what little influence I may have in the administration to do something about that." Quite frankly, I want to enjoy Thanksgiving when we all get together again.

I want you to know that I had the privilege several years ago of volunteering goods and some services, to the Julius F. Lynch Post 35, Operation Never Forget. It was a fabulous opportunity to give goods and services for auctions so that veterans in that group would have a place to go by the seaside for recovery. Ladies and gentlemen, if you're not getting it, then I want to say it as clearly as I know how. The fact that I'm here is not just because it's a part of my job, it is, in fact, a labor of love.

The debt that we owe to you, the defenders of freedom, can never be fully repaid. I want you to know that this President is taking an aggressive role in seeing to it that veterans are treated with the respect and the fairness and the dignity befitting your service and sacrifice to this great nation. Shortly after coming into office, I began meeting with the various veteran service organizations. We opened an ongoing and meaningful dialogue on how the federal government can better serve those who have already given so much to our country.

When deployment began for Operation Enduring Freedom, OPM immediately issued guidance to federal departments and agencies to make sure that the rights and benefits of Reservists called to active duty were respected by every federal government agency. After all, we are the largest single employer of members of the Armed Forces Reserve. And when our new veterans return home from their tours of duty, they deserve to be greeted with doors wide open and welcome at the employment offices of federal agencies throughout America.

Veteran's preference is not just the law. It is one very tangible way that we can show our gratitude as a nation to those now serving and to the 25,000,000 living veterans in whose footsteps they follow in selfless sacrifice. (In case you didn't get it, that's what I call an applause line!) Efforts to modernize the Civil Service are long over due. Reform must be consistent with our ongoing commitment to offer opportunities to returning veterans. So as we are talking about Civil Service reform there is no reason for you to be concerned. We will protect veteran's preference.

Our veterans have already given to their country. Certainly their service and experience ought to count for something, ought to be recognized in the federal hiring process. It should come as no surprise that many veterans want very much to continue to serve this great nation after their military careers are over. Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "A man who loves his country on his own account and not merely for the trappings of interest or power can never be divorced from it and can never refuse to come forward." Indeed it is a special kind of person who answers a call to public service. Whether you wear the uniform of our country

in the military or enter the other service, the American Civil Service, our goals are one in the same. This is America's team and we are here to serve the cause of freedom.

President Bush recently observed that public service in America today is not just another job, it is an important act of citizenship, a way to fulfill our obligation to those who have gone before us and to those who will follow us and to those who have sacrificed and have died for us. From our founding, public service in America has been a noble calling. Think back to those early patriots who signed their names to the Declaration of Independence, knowing that we must all hang together or assuredly we shall hang separately. It was not personal gain that inspires these men and women. They risked all their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor to leave a legacy of liberty.

In the years and decades and centuries that followed, our nation has continued to be blessed with men and women of vision and character who understand, as Thomas Paine wrote, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigues of supporting it." Eagerly successive generations have asked what can they do for their country? Unselfishly, you have answered the call.

Why do you do that? What makes us who serve, answer the call? Well, you and I know something, and I think more importantly, feel something, that those who have never served might not. There is a tremendous privilege and a tremendous honor associated with serving our country. We understand what the President's father, President George Herbert Walker Bush, meant when he spoke of Government service as a noble calling and a public trust. He said, "There is no honor higher than to serve free men and women, no greater privilege than to labor in Government beneath the seal of the United States and beneath the American flag."

Americans like you who understand this, we understand the need to work for something greater than ourselves, the desire to make a difference in our country and our world. You who understand this have added to the rich legacy of our forefathers. These dedicated public servants have applied talents, skills, and energies on behalf of our country and many times often add financial or other sacrifice to themselves or their families. Thanks to their contribution the fledgling democracy that was born in Philadelphia, in 1776, continues to shine forth today as a beacon of freedom and opportunity.

I want to discuss for a few minutes about a very special group of public servants, a part of our front line of defense in the war on terror whose primary mission is to keep America safe. That should provide a great deal of personal and professional satisfaction. But I'm here today to ask for your help to make sure that these individuals can carry out this urgent and compelling mission, to make sure that special interests do not tie our hands and hamper our ability to succeed in addressing the larger, national interests. The very nature of the threat that we now face has led the President, after careful study, to call for a major reorganization of the federal government.

Do you realize that homeland defense functions currently are scattered among more than 100 different federal agencies? The President had concluded that we need a unified homeland security structure to accomplish the vital mission of defending the homeland and protecting Americans from terrorist killers who deliberately target innocent civilians.

We had hoped that Congress would act quickly on the President's request, and indeed, the U.S. House of Representatives have done so. Now the legislation is in the U.S. Senate. We hope they will take it up as soon as they get back in September and that they will pass a bill the President can sign. We are optimistic that it will not get bogged down in unnecessary partisan bickering. There are many competing interests in this debate. To keep priorities straight however, I think it is important to remember why we are creating this new department. I think it is important that we not forget that we are a nation at war, to remember

the more than 3,000 innocent people who were killed in unprovoked attacks that placed the front lines of the battle, not on some distant shore, but right here on American soil.

I'm here to make an appeal to you today because I think people inside this room 'get it' when we talk about the importance of flexibility and maneuverability on the front lines. You understand. I need your help to explain it to those people commenting on what we're trying to do who have never had the opportunities and experiences in the service that you have.

You understand that those on the front lines must be defined by a culture of urgency and a culture of excellence. You know that when you are at war you must be able to act quickly on intelligence that tells you that the nature of the enemy has shifted. You know that we cannot afford to tie the hand of those running the new department with rolls of red tape. We will be moving 170,000 of our finest public servants to the new Department of Homeland Security. Our responsibility is to these dedicated public servants, the men and women who secure our borders and protect our transportation systems, who investigate terrorist organizations, who respond to emergencies, and protect us from biological agents.

We must give them an organization that is as focused and committed to protect our homeland as they are. The Department of Homeland Security must be world-class, with the best possible equipment, the best possible personnel system, not a patchwork of antiquated systems and inflexible outmoded, out-of-date practices. Yet, even though employees of the Department of Homeland Security arrive with their pay and benefits and, yes, their union membership, in tact, there are those who are trying to turn this into a debate about workers rights. They ignore the fact that the bill that passed the House has broad bipartisan support that guarantees the very essence of Civil Service protections. Veteran's Preference is there. Merit systems and principles are there. Whistle blower protections are there. Protection against prohibited personnel practices are chief among them.

While the President is worrying about how best to stand up for the new Department of Homeland Security and to protect Americans and to prevent future attacks, there are those critics who are running around like a flock of "Chicken Littles" warning that the sky is falling from the Civil Service. Incidently, not on my watch.

When the President says we need flexibility for the Department of Homeland Security, it is not an indictment of the hardworking public servants, the vast majority of whom appreciate the tremendous honor and responsibility inherent in their assignments. And they are committed to making the Department as successful as possible. It's not about harming Civil Service workers. It's about fixing bad systems so that the employees of the Department of Homeland Security can carry out their urgent and compelling mission of keeping America safe. We need to keep what works and get rid of what doesn't.

The problem with our current systems are no secret. It takes an average of five months to hire and 18 months to fire a federal worker. It is position, not performance, that determines salary, and it's passage of time that brings pay raises. The vast majority of federal employees themselves identify dealing with poor performers as a serious problem in their agencies. The problem is not people, the problem is systems.

In their zeal to protect federal workers, there are those who have established this elaborate game called, 'let's pretend.' Let's pretend that bureaucratic work rules rooted in the long ago are relevant to the 21st century workforce. Let's pretend that there is a uniform compensation system government wide. Let's ignore the patchwork of premium pay rules that apply to the employee who will be transferred to the new department. Or maybe we can pretend that having dozens of separate compensations systems in one department is a good idea. Let's pretend that Congress can design world class personnel systems for the Department of Homeland Security in the next three weeks.

Who could possibly believe that this is preferable to bringing state holders together to work together and with OPM through a deliberative process as the President had envisioned. Let's pretend that weak links don't matter at the Department of Homeland Security, that we should give poor performers multiple chances to fail. After all, Federal workers' mistakes just mean filling out some bureaucratic correction forms. Why not keep them on the payroll and tie up valuable resources, not to mention supervisors' time through months and sometimes years of appeals? Let's pretend that we have all of the time in the world to negotiate our differences. What could possibly be so urgent?

Well, I'll tell you. The mission of the Department of Homeland Security is much too important for games like "let's pretend." We might as well pretend that our nation was never attacked, that the World Trade Center Towers still in lower Manhattan.

September 11th was a wake up call. The Department of Home land Security is an essential part of our response. Now is the time to marshal the urgency, marshal the commitment, marshal the patriotism that every American instinctively felt on that terrible day. We are ready to seize the initiative and create a world class Department of Homeland Security that will protect American lives and with your help, I know we can.

Thank you so much for the absolute privilege of being here. And if you don't remember anything else I said today, veterans preference isn't just the law, it's the right thing to do.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Since our founding, The American Legion has championed the rights and benefits earned by our nation's veterans. I am honored to introduce our next guest. She is the Co-Chair of the President's Taskforce to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans. She knows what she is doing—and is working hard to change many aspects of the payment system for VA services. From 1997 to 2001 she served as Chair of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. She is a nationally recognized expert on a wide range of health policy and financing issues. Welcome to Charlotte, Dr. Gail Wilensky.

Address: Gail Wilensky
Co-Chair, President's Taskforce

Thank you very much for including me on such a distinguished roster of speakers. It's a pleasure to follow Kay Coles James who I had the privilege of serving with in the first Bush administration. I also want to thank Tony Principi who has been an outstanding secretary from the day the President's Taskforce to improve health care delivery for our Nation's veterans was created. His support has been strong and steadfast.

As you heard, my name is Gail Wilensky. On Memorial Day last year, President Bush created the Taskforce and asked me to serve as his co-chair. I said yes in a heart beat. I did so for reasons that go back some 35 years. By training and by background, I'm an economist. You know what they are, don't you? They're the ones who predicted nine of the last five recessions. Or people have frequently accused us of being like accountants but without the personality. And I mean no respect to those accountants.

Economists are known for their cold analysis of facts and figures. But be fore I was an economist, I had a personal vested interest in the medical care of our young men and women in uniform. It was this emotional attachment that came to mind when the White House first called.

My husband, Robert, and I spent our 5th anniversary at opposites ends of the globe. I was in Michigan finishing my degree in economics and he was a General Medical Officer with the 588th Engineer Battalion at the 20th Engineer Brigade, serving in Tay Ninh and Bien Hoa, Vietnam. I don't think even pulling the midnight shift in an ER in Baltimore, which

is what he did when he returned from Vietnam, can compare to being a combat surgeon of wartime. You just can't spend that much time tending the broken and bleeding bodies of so many Americans in the prime of their lives, and then forget about them when you get back home. That's why my husband is now working with the Army Surgeon General Peak to write a history of our military healthcare during the Vietnam War. I can tell you that veterans healthcare is not just a vague notion at the Wilensky home.

The other co-chair named that May was someone many of you know and loved. One of the last things that Jerry Solomon did as Congressman was receive the Distinguished Public Service Award from former National Commander Daniel Ludwig, for a lifetime of veteran's advocacy, an award that he was very proud to receive. He was especially proud of something that happened in October 1988. That was when President Reagan signed into law, Jerry Solomon's bill, making the VA a full Cabinet level Department. As you know Jerry Solomon is no longer with us; he passed away two weeks after our inaugural meeting which was delayed itself, a month, by the terrorist attacks of September 11th. We miss Jerry terribly and have dedicated our work to his memory. We have been very fortunate when this spring President Bush appointed another public servant of equal stature to succeed him as the co-chair. Former Congressman, John Paul Hammerschmidt joined us in the Spring, and we once again have the wisdom and encyclopedic grasp of veteran's issues that are so important if we are to make good recommendations.

It's turned out that arrival of John Paul Hammerschmidt was a good omen and a good catalyst for our interim report. In the first few months of the Taskforce, besides the issues that I've already indicated that we had to deal with, we had at least two major institutional barriers. One, the sheer complexity of two giant healthcare systems, and second, there will always be human factors, resistence to change in the status quo, Washington's traditional defensive turf and a kind of zero sum thinking, concerned that sharing and cooperation might somehow come at the expense of a Department's existing resources. But our mandate is clear. I'm going to spare you the technical bureaucratic language. Essentially, our charter directs to improve and determine how the VA and DoD can work together better to improve access to the veterans and to retirees to find out what, who and how we can make that happen.

At this point I wouldn't blame you if you were to ask, what makes us think that we can succeed where other commission have failed? After all, the General Accounting Office 25 years ago, made public the need for the VA and the DoD to cooperate. And 20 years ago, the Congress directed the VA and the DoD to work together. And yet, at the present time, there is only a small fraction of the joint budget that actually represents cooperative ventures. While sharing a load is not enough, the Taskforce believes that increase sharing would indeed improve the healthcare provided by both the VA and the DoD and result in more timely access to care for veterans and retirees.

On the national level, organizational and cultural differences between the two departments have blocked significant progress. And all the while timely access to healthcare continues to be a problem for too many veterans. I'll bet there are excess horror stories in this very room, many of them caused by the mismatch between the demand for VA healthcare and the funding that has been provided.

So you say we've heard this all before. So what's different about the President's Taskforce?

First, the operative word is in the title: President. It is the President's Taskforce. It was the President who included improving coordination between the VA and the DoD in his management agenda. With his encouragement and support, we have been able to have contact with appointees at the highest levels in the VA and the DoD and White House

whenever we have needed to talk to them.

Second, if anything, the events of last September have underscored the need and urgency of improving healthcare delivery for our veterans. We are engaged in a war. We've been told that it's a war that could last a long time. It is being fought by the young men and women who will be tomorrow's veterans, or our veterans in training as we often call them.

Third, we've been able to knock down a number of barriers, assembling a first-rate diverse team of staff, consultants, and, most importantly, commissioners. One of those commissioners is your very own National Adjutant who is sitting behind me, Bob Spanogle. He has been a wonderful member of our team. We've had access to Executive Director, John Summer, Jr.; National Legislative Commission Directors, Steve Robertson, Carol Rutherford, and Carol Williams, and the rest of the Washington staff. And you can be sure that when Steve Robertson made his presentation at our January meeting, we paid close attention to his recommendations. Our final recommendations will be issued next March as ordered by our charter.

I know a number of you have seen our interim report, but those of you who haven't, it's on the website, it's at President's healthcare.org. We wanted to make sure that we didn't limit our options in that final report with our interim report. So it is general enough to allow us to make the recommendations we think appropriate. But to give you a clear idea of where we are heading, we've taken and will continue to schedule visits to sites where the VA and DoD have collaborated to determine what works and what doesn't. We've had monthly hearings and countless informal briefings, interviewing Commanders and healthcare personnel at military hospitals, officials and staff of the VA medical facilities, representatives of The American Legion and other veterans and military organizations, Congressional staff, managed care network providers, VA and DoD officials, and of course, all of the intended beneficiaries of these efforts, individual veterans and military retirees.

We have looked at the existing literature on the subject and we are trying to fill in all of the gaps with countless data calls. And what have we found? What we've found is that nothing less is needed than a ringing call to action. Similar in kind, if not, in degree to President Kennedy's challenge to put a man on the moon, and I'm not exaggerating. The transition from military healthcare to VA healthcare should be seamless. If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we get computerized healthcare record systems of the VA, DoD and the VA to talk to each other?

Why can't there be one unbroken healthcare record of the individual from the day he raises his hand to enlist, to the day of his discharge or retirement, to the day he dies? That's why information management and information technology figures so prominently in our interim report. We're not asking the two Departments to use the same computerized record system. But we are asking that the two systems be able to talk to each other. Isn't it important for the VA to know where the patient has served and what hazards he was exposed to?

There are major concerns otherwise, as well, like access, a key issue for us. How much does it really matter about the quality of the VA or the military healthcare system if the veteran doesn't have access to it? It is why the Taskforce is so concerned with the significant mismatch between the demand for veteran's healthcare and the funds that have been provided for that purpose. We're concerned with the impact of that mismatch on a veteran's ability to access care in a timely manner. We're concerned, as well, with the ability of the VA and the DoD to manage rapidly rising pharmaceutical costs. Without question, joint pharmaceutical formularies and joint procurement are areas that will get a great deal more attention form this Taskforce.

Finally, there must be accountability. The Taskforce is determined to recommend major

reforms. But reforms that are practical and doable, reforms that the President can implement by Executive Order or that the Congress can legislate. We will distinguish between those reforms that can be made quickly, and those that will require patience and persistence. Our message will be to pass these reforms. Veterans and military retirees will have improved delivery of healthcare but they won't happen without the political will imposed from the top and passed down the chain of command. We must have, and I can't say this strongly enough, a clear, unambiguous commitment of collaboration from the top VA and DoD leadership. The right officials have to be told that their jobs and their careers depend on proven track records of collaboration, proof of adopting best business practices, and proof that their data systems can communicate with the other guy's systems.

We are looking for recommendations that transcend personalities. We know now that much of the collaboration occurs because of the good rapport between a VA hospital director on the one hand, and the commander of a military hospital on the other. But what happens if that military hospital commander is reassigned and his successor sees no advantage in collaboration? Having said all of that, there are certain things we will not do. We are interested in the greater use of healthcare resources, not in scaling back military or veterans' healthcare budgets.

I'm sure there isn't a man or woman in this room who doesn't want to see better use of our tax dollars, but not at the expense of veterans' healthcare, not balancing the budget on the backs of veterans. We are not advocating the total integration of the two healthcare systems. There maybe increasing overlap between constituencies of VA and DoD, but we recognize that these two agencies have separate mission. These missions must not be compromise. We intend to make you proud of our final report. The American Legion has played an important role in the final report as it has and will play, as it has in every advance for veterans since 1919.

Let me finish by noting that The American Legion Baseball World Series is winding up in Danville, Virginia. That's only one of the ways that The American Legion has promoted character formation, citizenship, and patriotism in this country. Everything that The American Legion does to protect the flag and to encourage respect for this, our most visible national symbol, is also a part of what The American Legion has done to promote citizenship and patriotism. There is Girls State, and Boys State, and Boys Nation, the National High School Oratorical Contest, the Eagle Scout of the Year Award, and other efforts that remind us of the things that our men and women in uniform preserve with their sacrifices.

We have an obligation to those men and women, an obligation that I have felt ever since my husband described the things he saw in just one of the many countries where Americans have served. America's soldiers, America's sailors, airmen, and Marines are the finest in the world. The healthcare they get as a result of their service should also be the finest. In pursuing this cause I'm grateful to have The American Legion on our side.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: At this time I call on National Adjutant Bob Spanogle to read a letter of greetings from Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: The Senior Senator of North Carolina, Jesse Helms was invited to this Convention, and if you did not know it, he is quite ill. He writes to us.

Welcome: Letter of Greeting, The Honorable Jesse Helms
Read by Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant

Dear Friends:

Welcome to Charlotte and the 84th Annual American Legion National Convention. I am grateful for the opportunity to salute you for your outstanding commitment to a remarkable organization.

The American Legion proves that the commitment of distinguished war-time military veterans to their country does not end with active service. Your extraordinary group serves as an example to all of us who believe that private citizens working together can make a real difference in our neighborhoods and cities. Your devotion to preserving American values in cities, towns and communities all over the country is every bit as heroic as your valiant military service.

By making The American Legion part of the fabric of the daily lives of countless communities, you are working to preserve the very same democratic ideals that you fought for so bravely. The cities and towns of North Carolina and the rest of our great country are built on organizations like The American Legion and on fine Americans like you. I send my best wishes to all of you as you plan another year of outstanding service to your communities. God bless you all.

Sincerely,
Signed: Jesse Helms
United State Senate

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: I would also like to point out to the delegates and guests of this Convention that the junior senator from North Carolina, John Edwards, was also invited to bring greetings. Senator Edwards, who opposes The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance on the Flag Protection Amendment elected not to appear before this body to bring greetings or explain his position.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We've met national, state and city leaders of government this morning. Now it is time to introduce to you leaders of The American Legion here in North Carolina who have made this national convention possible. North Carolina's Immediate Past Department Commander led the campaign to assemble the volunteers necessary for our successful gathering. He is proud to have us in his home state, and we are proud to be here. Please welcome immediate Past Department Commander of North Carolina, Milton Woodle, also known as a 'Ric's Retriever'.

Address: Milton Woodle
2001-2002 Department Commander

It is the distinct pleasure and honor for me to do something no other Department Commander in North Carolina has ever done. This is the first time we have ever hosted a National Convention of The American Legion. So no other North Carolina Commander has ever welcomed the entire American Legion to our great state. On behalf of 45,000 Legionnaires, I welcome you to the North State.

I'm sure many of you have fond previous days in North Carolina, places like Ft. Bragg, Pope Air Force Base, Camp Le Jeune. Maybe some of you even remember Camp Geiger, Cherry Point, Seymore Johnson Air Force Base, or maybe you were in Elizabeth City or on

one of the Coastguard cutters stationed off of our coast. We welcome you back. We are an American Legion Department actively pursuing recognition of our veterans. If you drove into our state on any of our interstate highways, you noticed the Korean War Remembrance signs. These signs were placed on all of our interstates at the request of The American Legion. These signs will remain in place for 3 years.

North Carolina, though not the biggest state, is surely one of the most picturesque and diverse. From Cherokee, home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indian Nation, to the mountain town of Asheville, home of Biltmore Estates, to the coast in Wilmington, home of the *Battleship North Carolina*, the showboat CV-55, to Kill Devil Hill, the place of the first powered flight, and places in between like Hickory, Lexington, and Statesville, where the world's finest furniture is made. I welcome you to Charlotte.

Here in North Carolina this state perfectly located. Not too far north. Our winters are mild. Not too far south. Our summers are not nearly like San Antonio was last year. Again, enjoy your visit. Plan to visit us again. Whatever you like, we have it here in North Carolina. Mountains, coasts, beautiful beaches, Indian reservations, casinos, NASCAR racing, and most of all, we have friendly people. Come visit, come retire. Welcome back to North Carolina.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The second Legion leaderserved as the President of the Convention Corporation of North Carolina. He is well known to many of you. Welcome to the stage, the President of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of North Carolina, and the National Executive Committeeman from the Tar Heel state, Jerry Hedrick.

Address: Jerry Hedrick
The American Legion National Convention Corporation

On behalf of the National Convention Corporation of North Carolina, and the members of the North Carolina delegation, we are here to spread our Southern hospitality and be of service to your needs. I would like for all of the North Carolina delegation to please stand and be recognized. Wherever you're at North Carolina, these men and women have put in a lot of long hours and continue to do so until we finished this week. They have worked very hard to make this a successful Convention. Without their support and without their help we could never have accomplished this great Convention.

There's a person not out there today that would have loved to have been with us. He worked many years as we were bidding to host the National Convention. C.S. 'Red' Lewis passed away about a year and half ago. This was his lifetime dream. He lived here in the city of Charlotte. But I can bet you Red Lewis is smiling down on us today.

Again, I would like to say that is if there is anything that we can do as a delegation or as a corporation to assist you, let us know. And remember there is nothing finer than to be in North Carolina.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The campaign to restore centuries of protection for 'Old Glory' continues. It has been more than a year since the House passed the Flag Protection Amendment legislation for the third time. Today, the bill is languishing in the U.S. Senate. While the political stalemate continues, the Citizens Flag Alliance has been active. To bring us up-to-date on what needs to be done now, I present to this body the Chairman of the Board of the Citizens Flag Alliance, and a recipient of the Medal of Honor for his life-saving actions in Vietnam. Rise and join me in rendering proper honors to a true American hero, Major General Patrick Brady, United States Army retired.

Hand Salute...Two....

Special Report: Major General Patrick Brady
Citizens Flag Alliance, Chairman

This is a very special Convention for me. For many years I have been coming to visit with you folks. It seems like this Convention always falls on my wife's birthday. I have missed her birthday for many years and I am happy to see that she is here with me and by the way, to day is her birthday. I've always wanted her to be able to meet you folks. I'm sure she's like your wives. She's such a great inspiration. I told her this morning that I was going to have to speak to this august group. I said you never know when you're giving a speech, they might boo you. And in a comforting way, she said, "Don't worry dear, they can't boo and yawn at the same time."

In the year since our last meeting, the year has been truly as remarkable as any year in our history. We're engaged in what will be a most difficult war. We must destroy terrorists or they will certainly destroy us. Tragically, too many of the supporters of those terrorists are in our own country. As a result of 9/11, most Americans now know what veterans have known forever, and that's the mystical, motivational, inspirational magic of the American flag. More people are buying and flying flags than at any time in our history.

By their acts, the terrorists have signed their own death warrant. They also put our hands over our hearts again. This has been a very active year in our efforts to recapture Old Glory. As you know, for the fourth time the Flag Amendment has passed the House. During this period of time, there has been literally scores of other amendments put forth and not one has come close. This could not have happened without your support.

The amendment is now held captive by hostile leadership in the Senate. Senators Daschle and Leahy refuse to allow a vote. These men who profess to support free speech are denying the right of their fellow Senators to speak on this issue.

We've come a long way. It's taken a long time and some, I'm sure, are weary. But you should realize that what you are doing is right, and sooner or later you're going to win. Even with that conviction, I'm truly amazed at the endurance of this organization. We see some of that this morning, too.

It's been my pleasure to know some of the most notable heroes of the last century. There are many heroes who for a moment in their time were courageous. The true heroes are those who are courageous for all the moments of their time, whose courage is enduring. Nowhere has the endurance been more evident than in the state of Vermont. Vermont, as you know, has stood alone these past 13 years among all the states, in refusing to support the right of the people to protect their flag. Vermont has been a prodigal child, but just as a return the prodigal son was the result of the endearing prayers of the father, Vermont has been a symbol of the enduring courage of the Legionnaires of that state. They show that a few people can make a big difference if they refuse to lose, if they raise the awareness of their people, if they endure.

Perhaps the greatest example that I have ever seen of enduring courage is that exhibited by the Legion and the other member of the Citizens Flag Alliance, on behalf of patriotism. For many years, many of us thought that patriotism in this country was dying. Truly, I believe that it was. Since 9/11, we have seen America returning to a form of patriotism you have been promoting for years. You should be proud. On September 11th, you saw the fruits of your enduring courage for all of these many years. Thanks to your efforts and that of others like you, and, I think, the American family, we found that patriotism was not dead, it was just dormant.

9/11 marked a monumental victory for patriots over the elite, a victory for those Legionnaires who wear their patriotism on their sleeve over those who will not wear a flag on their lapel. You are the vault for patriotism in this country and I hope that you and all your people realize that, realize how important patriotism is, and never give up. I think it's why God put you here. I just can't make this point often enough.

In March, we released the results of the February poll that showed the endurance of the people on behalf of their right to protect Old Glory. It also showed the effects of 9/11 on patriotism in this country. For 13 years, the flag has held America's attention. The overall support of the flag has not changed during those 13 years. In fact, it could not get much higher than it has always been. The poll shows that more than three out of four Americans want the amendment and they believe that the Senate should debate the flag in this session. The people again rejected all of the arguments of our opponents on this issue. Burning the American flag is not speech.

Since 1996, there has been truly an amazing 34% increase among those who regard the flag as a unique symbol. Today, 90% of our people believe the flag is unique among all the symbols in America. Now, 9/11 certainly helped but so did your efforts and all the collateral good that you've done in your campaign for the flag. Fifty percent of our people value the flag more after 9/11. This, of course, includes many who could not value it anymore. That figure rises to 60% of men and a remarkable 70% of women who are aged 18-24. They now value Old Glory more. And I think that was the most noteworthy finding in the poll that we did. It is a fact that 18 to 24 year olds now share the same passion for our flag as the greatest generation.

Among the young, guess who are the most pro flag of any group? The women. I have not seen any analysis of the November election that did not emphasize the importance of the women voters. Both sides consider them to be critical. Both sides are working to get the women on their side. The truth is that they are on our side for the flag and it could make a difference in their vote. I think that Adam's rib was the most fruitful investment in the history of mankind. The women can win this for us but we need to make them aware. And we need to get them involved.

The tragedy is that 80% of the 18 to 24 year olds are not aware that there is a debate on the flag issue. They're old enough to vote. We should make them a target for education and voting efforts in this election. Ignorance is a form of repression. It's a sad fact that over 90% of all of us cannot identify our Congressperson with a specific policy. That tells us that 9 out of 10 voters have no idea how their Senator voted on the flag issue. But when they were made aware of that vote, our poll showed that it had a remarkable effect on how they would vote. And that fact alone can make a dramatic difference in this election.

Many voters vote by name recognition alone. And the voters who recognize a name and associate legalized flag burning with that name, many will vote against that candidate. No Senator would vote against that flag if they thought it would cost them the election. And many of them clearly hide behind the ignorance of our people. Those who refuse to do the will of the people should feel the wrath of the people. The people need to know who's refusing to do their will.

As I mentioned, Senator Daschle and Leahy fear a vote in the Senate, especially after 9/11, and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on the Pledge. A vote would expose their position and others like them . And it would unleash the wrath of the people in this election. I hope that you will get after Senator Edwards and see if you can turn him around, and also Representative Watt and see if you can turn them around on this issue. And the people should be aware of the President's support for the Flag Amendment. For the first time in many years, we've now got a President who supports us in this battle.

The key to victory is in your endurance. The lock is the awareness of our people. We need to open that lock. This applies in spades to our youth and our women. We need to get them out to vote. I urge you to work hard this election. It is absolutely vital for the flag amendment. The new patriotism that we see in this country is a great time for our cause.

It's interesting to note that some of the strongest supporters of flag burning denounced the ruling on the Pledge. Senators Daschle and Byrd expressed outrage, and Senator Dorgan in North Dakota said, "Is there not a shred of common sense left?" There is not a shred of difference between the Pledge ruling and the flag ruling. Both fly in the face of common sense. We can be sure that these politicians are outraged because the public is outraged. This is an election year. The public outraged because they are aware of the Pledge decision. We need to make them aware of the flag issue and where politicians stand on it. Again, three keys to victory: voter awareness, voter awareness, and voter awareness.

It surprising that the polls show that the elite in this country are the lowest supporters of our efforts, those who have benefitted the most from blood and sweat of patriots and personally shed the least of either on behalf of patriotism. The Bible teaches that there is a time for everything under the sun. Since 9/11 there has never been a better time to enshrine the patriotism in America, a better time to announce the anti-patriots, those who hate us, or a better time exposed the false patriots, those who hide behind a fake love. Now is the time to identify these people and announce that we are ashamed to have them as countrymen.

The ultimate victory of patriotism over the elite will come through our children and our grandchildren. It's too late for most of us. But we must teach them about these phony patriots. These are the people who try to service a banquet of insanities which poisons our society. They say that the American flag is just a piece of cloth. Desecrating it is protected speech. So is pornography protected speech. But prayer is not protected speech and the Ten Commandments and God are a danger to the public.

These are the people who declare the Pledge to be unconstitutional, who tell us you can burn the flag but don't say a Pledge to it, who defend terrorists and pedophiles and who tell us that child pornography is protected speech. They are the cultural pirates, the domestic enemy we all swore to protect our constitution from. When the poet said patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, these are scoundrels he was talking about. Our children need to know who these people are.

That brings me to my final point. You've heard this from me before. The highest form of patriotism is service to our youth. It's been said that the oldest thing should be taught to the youngest people. The oldest thing in any democracy is patriotism. The last thing that any democracy will be the end of patriotism. No one is born a patriot, it must be taught. One way to teach patriotism to our children is through local programs that unite the flag, the Pledge, and the Constitution, which are the trinity of patriotism.

'Symbol' is from a Greek word meaning half token, which when united with its other half, identifies the owner. It is meant to recognize something above and beyond itself, like a wedding ring. The other half token of the flag is the Constitution. Above and beyond any court, any elite, and all other political documents, and we the people are the owner, not the courts. We must teach our children the moral, immutable truths embedded in our Constitution as embodied by our flag. They should know that when you burn the flag, you are burning our Constitution. It's easy for the likes of the ACLU to attack a piece of cloth or a Pledge to it. But it's harder to openly attack a Constitution united inseparably, with the Pledge and the flag.

The great Civil War General Phillip Sheridan once said: "I never discussed the Constitution much, and I never made many speeches upon it, but I have done a great deal of fighting for it." Many of you are like General Sheridan, Constitutional warriors. You fight

for the Constitution when you fight for our flag. Soldiers sacrifice for the love of country, really for the love of their people who, indeed, are our country. No one would willingly die for an unlovable people. I would not shed one drop of my blood for the elite in this country. Your patriotism makes America lovable. You're the source of the blood that nourishes the tree of liberty. The Bible teaches that charity of love endures all things. So does love of country and protection of our Constitution. We are told what is hard to endure is sweet to recall. You have endured and someday this issue will be cured, and all of your efforts and all your courageous endurance will be sweet to recall.

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed my time with you and how much what you do means for all of America. Nancy and I are so happy to be with you.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Nancy Brady, we thank you for sharing your husband with us on your birthday. We appreciate that. General Brady, we appreciate your leadership today on this important issue. You can count on The American Legion Family to remain firm in all efforts to see this battle won.

The American Legion continues to be a leader in organizing community involvement in the Korean War 50th Anniversary Commemoration. Our next guest is the Director of the Korean War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee. A highly decorated U.S. Air Force combat pilot, he flew nearly 250 missions over North Vietnam. He is responsible to fulfill a mandate of Congress: recognize and honor the 1.8 million military veterans who served in the Korean War. Welcome Retired Air Force Major General Nels Running.

Address: Major General Nels Running
Executive Director, Korean War 50th Anniversary Committee

I thank you for your kind tolerance of my presence again. I was with you in Milwaukee a couple of years ago, and I sweated it out with you last year in San Antonio. It's very nice to be in Charlotte. Doubly nice today since I flew down today on US Airways. I wasn't sure we were going to make it. Something has changed in that operation since they filed for Chapter 11 protection. This morning it was, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry to inform you that we seem to have a minor problem here with fuel in the tank where it shouldn't. We can't seem to get it where it should be and we shouldn't take off in this condition." Oh, boy. It was nothing like that in Hanoi. You knew your gas was coming thanks to the Air Force tankers that were always there.

Well, Commander Santos has told you, and it is true, that The American Legion is doing Legionnaire work, filling a patriotic duty to help the United States of America, this nation, say to its Korean War veterans and the families, and the next of kin, that this nation is grateful for your tremendous service, in saving the democracy, the budding democracy of the Republic of Korea, and indeed, saving the free world from a Communist aggression with a voracious appetite. Do we have any Korean War veterans with us today? Would you rise please or raise your hands and let us say thank you.

Now my message today is not as much a plea as it has been in the last two years, but a challenge as we enter into the third year of the commemoration, the final year, and indeed, the 50th year anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, in that war that has not yet ended. Fortunately, the regime in North Korea has agreed at last in the June negotiations with the DPMO, the Office of Prisoner of War Missing in Action, missing personnel, from the Pentagon they have agreed to three new searched this year for the remains of some of the 8,166 Korean War veterans who are still missing. Much work has to be done. Those three

searches should produce some results. But the numbers are vast and time is running out.

There are also a good number of those 1.8 million who are alive, despite their scars and wounds, living in the Unites States today. Not surprising perhaps, however, only 135,000 of those veterans or the next of kin have come forward to request their Korean War Service Medal which the people of Korea have offered. They offered that medal during the Korean War. But as many of you know, the laws of the land prohibited a United States service member from accepting a foreign decoration. That changed in the efforts to pull together this commemoration. The Republic of Korea renewed the offer of the medal. In 1999, the Secretary of Defense signed the authorization and prescribed the order in which that medal is to be worn by U.S. service member veterans. The challenge I'm talking about is to get the entire American Legion behind this commemoration as we enter this 50th year anniversary of the Armistice.

Oklahoma, are you here today? Do you know that your state was the first state government signed up from the Governor to be a commemoration partner? Do we have the Department of Oklahoma and all its chapters, auxiliaries, sons, cousin, aunts, uncles signed up to be commemoration partners? If not, will you take that challenge and fill the role next year with commemoration partners?

Arizona, are you here? Do you know that your state, your sister organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, was the first to have all the Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts signed up as partners?

Alabama, are you here? Do you know that your Governor was the first to call a joint session of the state legislature to host a ceremony recognizing Korean War veterans with presentation of the Korean War Service Medal and honors? Members of the Government and veterans all were there. A terrific day.

I say to you, far too many Departments across the land have yet to encourage the membership. After all, are we not The American Legion, are we not American? When World War II ended, some of you were around. Do you remember? Some of you are World War II veterans. Remember the ticker tape parades, the welcome home in hometowns, units marching down the street, memorial services across the land. Do you know the welcome that the Korean War veterans received? All too often, it was one of disinterest, and in some cases, even ridicule.

Phil Street, Sergeant United States Marine Corps, learned about the commemoration through the internet. He wrote, "Are you for real? Is this true? Is someone really going to say you remember the Korean War and you honor Korean War veterans?" "You bet" was the response. I sent him a package of some of the commemoration memorabilia. He was thrilled to death and then he relayed the story of how he returned from the Korean War, wore his uniform, a chest full of battle ribbons into the diner down the street. A couple of his World War II buddies were there, a little bit older, but good friends and said "Bill, what in the world is that? What do you have on that?" He said, "I've been to Korea. Those are my war decorations." He said they laughed so hard they almost fell off their stools. "Bill, are you kidding me? War, what war? That was a police action, Sonny. You better get your billy club and whistle out." Not fair. You and I know it.

The challenge next year is to get every community across this land engaged in the Korean War commemoration. If your hometown hosts an azalea festival, why not have embedded in that festival a memorial service for Korean War veterans, a parade? Why not a Korean War veteran as the Marshall?

Cheyenne Frontier Days. Wyoming, are you here? Let's put a Korean War veteran at the head of that parade or a whole group of you on the float.

New York, are you here? War Council of Veterans in New York City has already

signed up. November the 11th, 2003, we will have the nation's parade, the nation's ticker tape parade in New York to welcome home Korean War veterans. But we can't just do it here and there and elsewhere. It has got to be the entire land pulling together. We, as a nation, owe so much to the Korean War veteran. And they are deserving because that was a tremendous victory. And don't let anyone tell you that it was the first war America ever lost. Bologna! You stopped the Communists in their tracks on the 38th parallel. Thirty-seven thousand Americans spilled their last blood on that land in the 37 months of that war.

As I mentioned 8,166 families are still yearning to know the ultimate end of their loved ones. Now, in the 50 years since the signing of that Armistice, you should know that America remains committed to freedom in Korea and against a possible aggression again of a Communist totalitarian. Thirty-seven thousand American service members are on the line everyday. And if you think it's a cakewalk, if you think it's a happy time, if you think it's peace, then reflect on the numbers. Ninety-twoAmerican service members have been killed in hostile actions by the aggressors from North Korea in those 50 years of the so-called Armistice. Two hundred and eighty-eight South Korean service members, as well, have lost their lives. In the process, North Korea sacrificed 889 of its own forces. For to them as with all Communists, life of an individual is not worth a cent.

This is the challenge, if you are a member of a post or a chapter, if you are a son, a daughter, a cousin, an aunt, or an uncle. Here today in this building is a Korean War commemoration table display. Some of our hardworking committee members are there waiting to sign you up. It's the easiest thing in the world. And free! The only thing we ask is a commitment to do something in the next year and to say, "God bless you, Korean War veterans, for what you did, for the freedom that you preserved for the Republic of Korea, and also for the freedom of the Western World." Had we not stopped Communism there, who knows where we'd be today.

God bless you all for what you do. You are patriots to the bone. Let your patriotism show in this way. God bless our Korean War veterans.

Report: National Commander
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

When elected your National Commander, I asked you reach out in all directions to assist our Nation's veterans, their families, and people of our communities, states, and nation. From the grass roots level to the National level, Legionnaires, volunteers, and staff have worked together to serve this Nation's veterans and their families.

This year's accomplishments are indications of your dedication, service, and commitment to persist in the face of adversity. Ronald Reagan expressed this well when he said, "Above all, we must realize that no arsenal or no weapon in the arsenals of the world is so permittable as the will and moral courage of free men and women." It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have.

We have stood tall in protecting the American flag from desecration. Americans overwhelmingly favor of a passage of a Constitutional Amendment allowing Congress to enact laws to protect our beloved flag. With the flag in mind, I share a poem by Edgar A. Guest, titled *A Creed*:

A Creed

Lord, let me not in service lag.
Let me be worthy of our flag.
Let me remember when I'm tired.

The sons heroic who have died.

In freedom's name and in my way,
Teach me to be as brave as they.
In all I am, in all I do,
Unto our flag, I will be true.

For God and country, let me stand
Unstained of soul, clean of hand.
Teach me to serve, and guard in love,
That starry flag that flies above.

First, it was the flag. Now it's the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag that is under attack. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeal of San Francisco has ruled the that the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional. We live in a strange world when saying a Pledge is not speech but burning the flag is speech. The courts may be confused, but we're sure not.

The American Legion has filed an *Amicus Curiae*, friend of the court brief, asking that the Pledge ruling be reversed. A copy of the brief is available in the Headquarters office area at the Americanism Committee. If the 9th Circuit Court ruling is allowed to stand, millions of American school children will be denied the right to recite the Pledge because it offends one atheist and two judges. If the judges had read the Declaration of Independence with its references to God, the Creator and Divine Providence, it would have been clear to them that our founding fathers did not intend for America to be an atheistic nation. The American Legion will stand with American people all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary, to correct this brave injustice. And we will!

2001-2002 was a banner year for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. With total contributions exceeding $789,000, and $547,375 awarded to 20 nonprofit organizations, this is the largest amount ever granted by the foundation. Junior Shooting Sports Program is the fastest growing youth program. Over 1,350 junior shooters entered postal competitions this past year, culminating in the Annual Junior Air Rifle National Championships in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

For the first time in the 65-year history of the program, the Department of Alabama sponsored the National Oratorical Contest champion, Candice Neal. In aggregate, over the years, over $2,000,000 in scholarships have been awarded. Five thousand students competed this past year in the contest. American Legion Baseball showed an increase in teams and players in 2002. American Legion Baseball involved nearly 94,000 players on 5,200 teams. The program engaged an additional 15,000 American Legion coaches and managers.

You raised over $105,000 for The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship Fund. The money will help pay educational cost for children of service men and women who lost their lives in the countries War on Terrorism. The fund-raising efforts continue as much more is need to sustain this scholarship program.

More than 24,000 high school junior boys experienced state government and federal government firsthand in 2002, thanks to The American Legion's Boys State and Boys Nation Programs. We have refined strong morally and financially in our support for th Boy Scouts of America. At the end of 2001, members of The American Legion family chartered 2,525 scouting units that served 73,647 young men and women.

Last year in San Antonio, I challenged you to raise funds for the National Emergency Fund. The National Commander's challenge goal was to raise $500,000, by August 1, 2002. You met and you exceeded the goal with donations in the amount of $528,000. For the first

time fund reserves exceed $1.1 million dollars which are available to respond to the need of the Legion family.

On behalf of those needy families, I thank you. For The American Legion, indeed, does take care of its own. As of this day, our 2002 membership is 2.7 million. That is more than 60,000 more this time than last year. Seven Departments obtained an all-time high in membership. This is the highest total since 1947. And five Departments achieved 100% or more of their goals through the traditional membership effort. A large portion of the membership goals was achieved through the unswerving commitment of Ric's Retrievers and the Gold Brigadiers. There were 5,500 Ric's Retriever pins issued. Each pin represented five new members. There were 175 Gold Brigade winners, each of whom recruited at least 50 new members.

We expanded the Reconnect effort. We recently participated in a DoD transitional assistance conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, which included representatives from all branches of service from around the world. Our efforts in Post development have led to 56 newly formed or revitalized Posts.

Through our Legislative and Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Divisions, The American Legion was very proactive and accomplished the following:

1. Testified at 31 Congressional hearings
2. Lobbied for an additional $417 million for VA funding in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for FY 2002.
3. Successfully lobbied against VA's budget recommendation to initiate a $1,500 deductible for Priority Group 7 veterans.
4. Successfully lobbied against VA's recommendation to transfer the Veterans Employment and Training Services from the Department of Labor to VA.
5. Lobbied for an increase in VA medical care funding. That is included in the Senate Appropriation Committee recommendation for the VA, HUD, and independence agencies appropriations of FY 2003.
6. Lobbied the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans, for medicare reimbursement authority, for VA, and increase sharing between VA and DoD.
7. Lobbied for reform of the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services, also known as CARES, the process to include state folders such as The American Legion in the final decision making.

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program provides a comprehensive network of volunteer and professional service officers at the Posts, Counties, Districts, Departments, National Level. At the present time there are 1,161 accredited professional service officers throughout the United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Philippines, and Italy to furnish direct assistance to veterans, their dependants, and their survivors to claims of Federal and State benefits.

The American Legion was founded in 1919 to care for those who suffered from wounds, disease, and want. Our Service Officers carry on that tradition through their dedication, professional service, and commitment. The American Legion was once again very successful in advocating for improved educational assistance for veterans. The President signed into law the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act 2001 on December 27th, 2001. This new law increased the monthly rate from $672 to $800 for approved full-time program under the Montgomery GI Bill, for those serving on active duty three years or more. It also increased the monthly rate for approved full time program for those with two year obligated period of active duty from $546 to $650, beginning January 1, 2002. The full time rate will increase to $732 during FY 2003 and to $4,800 in FY 2004.

The American Legion also advocated a request to accelerate payment of all educational monthly benefits any time after a veteran meets the criteria for eligibility for financial payments. In response Public Law 107-103 was enacted. The American Legion supported legislation seeking a license or credential to use educational benefits to pay for the cost of taking any written or practical test or other measuring device. Public Law 106-419 revised the law to include certain licensing and certification tests as programs of education.

Concurrent Receipt was, and remains, a legislative and National Security priority. The American Legion will continue to advocate full Concurrent Receipt of military retirement pay for longevity and VA disability compensation. Disabled military retirees are the only group of former Government employees who essentially pay for their own disability compensation. The House version would provide Concurrent Receipt for severely disabled retirees rated 60% and higher for disability. The Senate wants to pay a full reimbursement up front. A conference committee meets next month to resolve this issue. We've got to big difference. If the 60% and higher version is adopted, The American Legion will be back next year fighting for Concurrent Receipt for those military veterans rated 10% to 50%.

The President's Advisors have said—how can they advise if they don't do it right—they would recommend a Presidential veto to any Concurrent Receipt revision. We have urged the President not to veto Concurrent Receipt in any form. We did this on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of disabled retirees who have earned their retirement pay and are owed their disability compensation.

Speaking of bad advice from advisors, $275 million in VA funding in the Emergency Supplemental Bill for FY 2002, is now somewhat questionable, as you have heard, because of the President's promise not to spend $5.1 billion of the funding. Once again, veterans have been placed between Congress and the President over spending priorities. Lack of funding for VA reminds me of a passage, and I quote, "Affordability was not an issue when we were called to active duty." I say that it should not be an issue when that same grateful nation is called upon to fulfill its promises to those who served in a time of war. Plain and simple.

National security remains a top priority of The American Legion. With the end of the USSR many thought that world peace was at hand. But on September 11, terrorists struck without warning and our President declared a War on Terrorism and initiated a Homeland Defense. Our men and women in uniform responded with valor, not only in far away Afghanistan, an unconventional war, but also here on the home front.

Once again, our military has made us proud of them and has made us proud to be Americans. The American Legion continues to press Congress for quality of life, readiness, and modernization issues that are important to all of our military and their families.

As veterans who have fought in hot and cold wars, we know what it takes to remain as a strong nation. The Blue Star Service Banner was first hung in windows in World War I to honor a son, daughter, father, and mother serving in the military. Our organization was formed following the war to end all wars. It is appropriate that The American Legion has brought back this powerful symbol. Today, Blue Star Service Banners are hung in windows all over America. But you took it one step further by getting corporate and civic America involved. Governments and businesses that employ recalled military Reservist and National Guardsmen are supporting the War on Terrorism with their own Blue Star Service Flags flying over hundreds of buildings.

Because of your boundless efforts, Americans are once again aware of and proud of the sacrifices of our military service members. All over America you renewed your dedication to the Family Support Network. Your efforts ensured that families of active duty, Reserves, and Guard suddenly facing long deployments had what they needed to survive. Whether it

was mowing the yard, providing childcare, giving financial aid, or delivering groceries, Legionnaires took care of business.

Did The American Legion experience a truly successful year? I truly believe that we did. I submit one description of success that may apply to our administration for 2001-2002. The submission is a passage often attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson named, *This is to Have Succeeded.*

This is to Have Succeeded

> To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success.

And again, I think we have succeeded. I thank each and every one of you for permitting me to serve as your National Commander. It has been an honor that I will always cherish. The courtesies, friendships, and considerations provided by you to Linda and me, and to Joe Miller, my aide, and to his wife Chris, shall always be remembered.

This had truly been a very productive and successful year for The American Legion because of the vast numbers of Legionnaires and their families who have reached out in all directions. We have accomplished our goals through Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security, Foreign Relations, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, the four pillars of The American Legion. We have truly touched the lived of our nation's veterans and their families and the people of our communities, states, and nations. God bless you, God bless America and God bless The American Legion as we continue out in all directions serving America.

I now call on National Adjutant Robert Spanogle of the Department of Michigan to issue the Call for Convention.

Call for Convention
Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan, National Adjutant

The call for the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27th-29th, 2002. The Convention business sessions will be held in the Charlotte Convention Center, Hall A. Lower Lobby Level.

Purpose

The Annual National Convention is the legislative body of The American Legion. The Convention is called for the purpose of setting the program of The American Legion for the ensuing year amending the National Constitution and By-Laws and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it. At 12:00 noon of the final session or at the conclusion of all business of the National Convention, which ever first occurs on Thursday, August 29th, 2002, officers for the ensuing year will be elected. These being the National Commander and the five National Vice Commanders in that sequence.

Representation

Representation in the National Convention shall be by Department and in accordance with the provisions of the National Constitution. (Section 3, Article V)

Vote

"...Each department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said Convention July 29th, 2002, and whose registration fees as fixed by the National Executive Committee for its total authorized delegate strength have been paid and one alternate for each delegate." (Section 3, Article V)

In addition to the above, the members of the National Executive Committee are delegates to the National Convention with vote which shall be exercised with the respected Departments except that the vote of National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention (Section 3, Article VII)

"Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote." (Section 4, Article V)

Delegates to the National Convention shall be accredited in writing to the National Adjutant in the number and manner prescribed by Article V of the National Constitution. The rights of Departments to make accredited substitutes for absentee delegates or alternate delegates shall be recognized by the National Adjutant provided it says substitution shall be officially certified by the Department Commander and Department Adjutant at the time of the certification required by the National Constitution or at any time prior to the adjournment of the first session of the National Convention.

Alternates

Alternates shall have the power to vote only in the absence of regular delegates. The selection of alternates to represent absent delegates is a matter for decision within the respected delegations. The vote of any registered delegate absent or not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his or her Department.

National Executive Committee

A meeting of the new National Executive Committee will be held at the call of the National Commander with 24 hours after the adjournment of the National Convention as provided by the National By-Laws.

Department Officials

The Department official, unless elected or alternates to The National Convention, have no privilege in the Convention except as a guest of their respective delegates.

Convention Committees

Each Department is entitled to one delegate for each of the following committees:

Americanism
Children & Youth
Constitutional Amendments
Credentials and Internal Affairs
  Credentials and other Internal Matters,
  (Section I & II)
  Membership (Section III)
Economic

Employment & Veterans Preference
Other Economic Matters
Finance
Foreign Relations
Legislation & Rules
National Security Committee; Joint Meeting (Includes Aerospace, Defense, Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs)
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Claims Rating
Hospital and Medical Services

Mr. Commander, that concludes the call for the 84th Annual National Convention.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I now declare the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened.

Certificate of Appreciation
Richard J. Santos, Maryland, National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The man who has served as our National Chaplain this year is truly dedicated to the principle of "God and country."He has been involved with The American Legion since 1987. He is a long time member of the Chapel of Four Chaplains and serves as the Virginia State Chaplain for that organization. He teaches Systematic Theology at the Fredericksburg Bible Institute and Seminary and is the former pastor of the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Falmouth, Virginia. It is an honor for me to present to Dr. Russell a certificate marking his year as our National Chaplain.

And the certificate reads: "Certificate of appreciation, presented to Dr. David F. Russell, appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion, 2001-2002. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion."

Dr. David F. Russell, thank you. Those who were at the memorial service on Sunday—in fact, I think we probably had the largest turnout in many a good time—observed and participated in a class ceremony. That was due to the untiring efforts of Dr. Russell. The message he had for us, I ask all of you to heed. I think he was right on the money. We are going to have to pay attention to what we are doing day in and day out. Make sure God is a part of your life.

Dr. Russell, thank you for your service as National Chaplain during the year 2001-2002. We appreciate it. We're honored to have you with our team.

NCHAP RUSSELL: I'd like to thank [the Department of] Virginia because they are the ones that started me in this direction. I want to make one correction to what the Commander said, and you better be very careful when you correct the Commander, but I am still the Pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church. At least I was when I left last Sunday. Thank you very much for the opportunity in serving you. It has been a great honor. And I thank the Commander for this appointment. God bless you.

Presentation: Plaque to the City of San Antonio, Texas
For the 2001 National Convention
Ray G. Smith, North Carolina, Past National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Now I call on Past National Commander Ray Smith to present the Plaque of Appreciation to the City of San Antonio, Texas for hosting the 2001 National Convention.

PNC RAY SMITH: It truly is an honor for me to be here this morning to make this presentation. Last year in San Antonio, Texas we had an outstanding Convention. Our host city was on top of everything and everything went great. I think it's only fitting that we show our appreciation by making this presentation this morning. It is an honor for me to give this plaque to John Morris from Texas on behalf of myself and hosting the 2001 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

"In appreciation of the hospitality of the city of San Antonio and to commemorating the 83rd Annual National Convent of The American Legion, San Antonio, Texas, 2001, signed by Ray G. Smith, National Commander, as attested by Robert W. Spanogle, National Adjutant."

Please present this to the city of San Antonio on our behalf, and express to them our appreciation for hosting such a great Convention.

JOHN MORRIS: It is an honor to have the opportunity to accept such an appreciation award for such a fine city such as San Antonio, Texas. On behalf of the Mayor and the city of San Antonio, the Texas National Convention Corporation, and the delegates and members from the great state of Texas, we thank you and we will put this in the right place. I will present it to the city of San Antonio at my earliest convenience. I hope you enjoyed it. I know you didn't get rained out. You might have sweated it out. We will be looking forward to you coming back to Texas one of these days. Again thanks for coming and all of the hospitality that was afforded, the friendship that we had while you were there and the new friends that we met and the comradery with the ones we had that we knew.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Now it is my honor to present to you the newly elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. He is a member of Hickory Squadron 48 in Hickory, North Carolina. His tireless work has made huge membership progress at home and he plans to take that progress across the land in the months ahead. Welcome Commander Steve Laws of North Carolina.

Address: Sons of The American Legion
Steve Laws, North Carolina
Newly Elected National Commander

It is with great pride that I stand before you today as the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. It is indeed an honor for me to have this privilege.

As we begin a new year with The American Legion family, I know I have big shoes to fill. Mr. Commander Smith just finished a great year in this organization.

My theme for the coming year will be called Teamwork, Building a Better American Legion Family. You may say, Commander, how do you propose to build a better American Legion family? We do this by asking someone to join this great organization, The American Legion, the Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion. Then we give them the best training that our organizations have to offer, plus getting them involved in our programs. I think today one of the problems we've been having in losing our members, is we haven't

been giving enough training or getting them involved in the programs of this great organization.

I know that the Sons of The American Legion as a part of this great American Legion Family we must help lead the fight to make sure that all of our veterans receive the care that they so justly deserve. We must do this by helping lead the fight to raise the funds, if need be. We must visit the VA Hospitals. I know that my goal this year is to have a VAVS rep in every single veterans' hospital in this great country. And I know that we can do this. It is just going to take a little effort on each of our parts.

I had an opportunity to visit a veterans hospital in the great state of Ohio. As I was walking through that VA hospital, seeing some of the people that had been there 30 and 40 years, I ran across a young man. I say he was a young man, he was 93 years old, sitting in a wheelchair at a desk . He had a little job to do that day. He was checking people as they went in and out of the library. I walked over to him and introduced myself to him and told him who I was, what we were doing there.

He reaches into his coat pocket and he pulls out a little black book that he had in his left-hand pocket. On the very first page when he opened it up, sealed in plastic, I saw he was a life member of the DAV, he was a life member of the VFW, and had been a member of The American Legion for 60 years. If that don't break your heart to see someone like that. He told me there that day, "You know, I've outlived all of my family. They have their cemetery but out there is where I'm going to be laid to rest because I have no place else to go." Those are the type of people, if that don't break your heart, or give you some meaning of care that our veterans need, then you're pretty cold. Because that to me is what we're all about.

Just for a second I'll give you some of the accomplishments that have been done this past year by the Sons of The American Legion. We donated over $59,760 to Special Olympics, with 14,397 hours of service. We donated $90,944 to the Children's Miracle Network, with 7,233 of service. Once again, the Sons of The American Legion was the largest contributor to the Child Welfare Foundation, as the Sons of The American Legion donated $268,000 to this most worthwhile organization.

I know that next year we've set goals to raise our memberships to the 275,000 mark. We are about 262,00 this year. Also, we've set a goal to raise another $275,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation. And I've been told that $300,000 is not out of the question. I hope with your help and with this great organization called The American Legion family that I know that we will accomplish all of our goals.

Now, I introduce to you some people that are here with me today. First, I have my wife Linda; our National Adjutant Mr. Brian O'Hearne; and Past National Commander Cliff Smith. Have a most successful Convention.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Good luck to you Commander Laws.

We have come to the time in our Convention schedule when we are honored by the presence of representatives of veterans organizations in other nations. I'm here to testify to you that we visited all of the nations that are represented that have speakers here today. During our visitations, they provided safety and comfort second to none. They took care of this National Commander, the staff, and family. And within their presence I thank them for that privilege of being with them and their courtesy extended to us during our visitation.

Our first guest comes from Canada. He is the Dominion President of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, and a man dedicated to veterans. Welcome Bob Cassels.

Address: Bob Cassels
Dominion President Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada

Let me commend you and all of the members of The American Legion for the programs in place for the youth that we've seen this morning and also your support of the military and their families that you've done by the programs, the cutting of grass, painting, fixing cars. Also the work you do for the veterans. It is an honor for me today to bring greetings from Canada's oldest veterans organization. The organization started back in 1840, and we've had our progress along. We became Army, Navy, Air Force in 1946. Some mornings after being at these Conventions I think I was there when they started!

This morning you paid tribute to Judge Dan Foley who was the President of ANIVICUS for many years, I believe, started back in the 1970s. He's done a fine job over all of those years. He's been a good friend to myself and other presidents of the Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans in Canada. I know he will be sadly missed by all of you here in the United States and us in Canada.

In the past few days, I've had the opportunity to attend some of your meetings. Believe me, I find it just as if I were back in Canada attending some of our caucus meetings and committee meetings. We in Canada, in the past few months, since the beginning of the year have been meeting with our Minister of Veterans Affairs, his Deputy Minister, and members of his committees, over issues that we are concerned with for our veterans and the people now serving in Canada's Armed Forces.

They've started a committee called the Canadian Advisory Council through Veterans Affairs, for the people serving in the Canadian Forces today. I've been appointed a member of that committee and we travel to the different Army bases across Canada. We have been conveying to the people there what benefits are available to them, how they can apply, and that we're there for assistance ourselves. The Royal Canadian Legion in Canada have people serving on the committee. If anyone is in doubt and they don't know who to contact they can contact one of our associations. We can steer them in the proper direction and help them get through the paperwork so that they can get the benefits they deserve.

We've been dealing on three issues with them, one being long term care. We've asked them to set a standard of care for all of Canada. And we will supply people to help monitor for them in the different Provinces. They've hired a company out of Ottawa and they are going to set up a standard of care. It will be passed out to every hospital that looks after our veterans and those serving in the Forces. They have invited us, the two veterans associations, who also have people assist with that.

Another one we're working on is the VIP Program. The VIP program we have in place in Canada is for the veterans who are not hospitalized but can remain in his own residence. His wife will be looking after him, helping with his care and the Government subsidizes for snow removal, grass cutting, painting, maintenance around the house, if they need walkways for wheelchairs, whatever, they will look after all of that for them. And if a veteran passes away on the 12th month, like the tick of a clock, the Government stops that payment. His surviving spouse is left with nothing.

We're now saying to the government in Canada, you owe it to that individual to do that for her for the remainder of her years because she has saved the Government, I don't know how much money over the years, by looking after her spouse in their residence. If they were to put him in the hospital, you'd be looking at probably $4,000 to $5,000 that they would pay monthly at a minimum to have the veteran in the hospital. They get away sometimes with paying $1,000 to $1,500. So we're saying these people deserve some recognition for looking after their spouse for the many years for something that they deserve.

The other one we worked on was the POW compensation. We're very successful a year ago on getting compensation for the Merchant Marines. The Merchant Navy had served during the war and had no compensation. In 1990, we were able to get them veterans' benefits but no cash. They then could also apply for a pension but when they got out of the Forces, the regular Forces people got a cash payment and were given the right to continue their education via the Veteran's Land Act. So these Merchant Navy personnel never got that. So they got a cash settlement depending on their years of service. Also, if they were taken as a prisoner of war they got an extra 20%. We got them in the neighborhood of $105,000,000 settlement to go between the 7,000 some odd people that were involved in the Merchant Navy still living or surviving spouse.

I'd like to thank you for your time and for the great hospitality that my wife Lisa and I have received. I'm looking forward to seeing Ric at our convention in Edmonton, Alberta. I'd also like to thank Jim and Stella. We will see that the hospitality is just as good.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Our next guest comes from a nation that shares The American Legion passion of caring for those with whom we've served. He is the Secretary-General of the Veterans Affairs Commission for the Republic of China, General Gong, Yi-min.

Address: Gong Yi-Min
Secretary-General Veterans' Affairs Commission

Thank you for this very warm welcome and kind introduction, my fellow veterans. On behalf of my General Yang Te-chih, chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, I bring to you greetings and congratulations on the occasion of your 84th Annual National Convention.

I am very pleased to be in the company of this distinguished group of American veterans, who have devoted their untiring efforts to the causes of justice, freedom and democracy. Your sacrifices and contributions to the security of the Free World can never be repaid. You have been the vanguard upholding traditional American values by ensuring that your veterans, their widows, dependents and orphans receive proper care and just treatment. Your organization is committed to community service and has earned respect and acclaim at home and abroad. You have always remained vigilant and have passed resolutions at each year's National Convention to remind your Congressmen of the importance of national security and defense.

Today, we are very proud to be here to salute your efforts and sacrifices. We come to learn from your successes. We come to renew our friendship and comradeship. We are especially pleased with the close association between our two organizations over the last four decades, because our association has been based on the solid foundation of common goals and ideals. Last November National Commander Santos completed the annual American Legion visit to the Republic of China, which has brought the relations between our two organizations even closer.

The people of the Republic of China especially wish to thank The American Legion for the encouragement you have given our country through your National Convention resolutions over these many years. Your support for diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China, sales of advanced weapons and technology to our country, and re-entry of the Republic of China into the United Nations are deeply appreciated by our countrymen. We will continue the exchanges of visits and information, as we have in the past. We will open our arms to welcome you whenever you come to Taiwan, your home away from home.

In closing, I give you my best regards for a most successful 84thAnnual National

Convention, and I wish each of you the best of health, happiness and success.

Now, I present National Commander Santos with the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat on our government's behalf. I give the floor to my colleague, Jonathan, who will read the citation accompanying the award of that special medal.

JONATHAN: It is my great honor to read a citation accompanying the award:

> Mr. Richard Santos, National Commander of The American Legion, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the people's of the United States of America and the Republic of China, and to the enhancement of its ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries. In appreciation of his meritorious service, National Commander Santos is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China in accordance with Article 11 of Armed Forced Declaration Regulations signed by Chen Shui-bian, President; Yu Shyi-kun, Premier; and Tang Yiau-ming, Minister of National Defense, August, 2002.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: National Executive Committeeman from Alaska, Jimmy Foster and Commander Chuck Unsworth please join me on stage.

The International Amity Award

> In grateful recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs, and for contributions made in the development of internation goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and wartime allies of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China. Awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion with advice and consent of the National Executive Committee to General Gong, Yi-min.

Another group of individuals with a strong commitment to veterans are the men and women of the Royal British Legion. They are committed to helping to relief hardships for veterans and their families. They are committed to assisting those serving in the military today and helping them with the return to civilian life. We are honored to have comrades in Great Britain who understand service to others.

With us today is the Chairman of the Royal British Legion. He served in a Royal Air Force in the late 1950s. He is a community activist and a freelance broadcaster and journalist. Welcome Ian Cannell.

Address: Ian Cannell
The Royal British Legion

I count it as a considerable privilege to be allowed the opportunity to address the Convention—we call them conferences, you call them conventions—of this great organization. I want to thank you all for the warmth of your welcome to Molly and me since we arrived yesterday.

It is always good to be invited to address gatherings where people understand what you're saying. When I attended the conference of the Commonwealth Ex-Services League they spoke English. The Royal Canadian Legion speaks English. The American Legion speaks, uh, well, I'm not sure really.

In the United Kingdom, we're used to hearing about the special relationship that exists

between us and the United States, that we're traditionally the closest of allies and so on. It was with some interest that I went to the Convention of the Royal Canadian Legion. I heard a speaker from the United States—no, it wasn't your National Commander—telling them that America's closest ally is undoubtedly Canada and they shouldn't believe anything else. Well, I suppose from time to time we all tailor our remarks to suit the audience.

National Commander, it is good that major ex-service and veterans organizations like ours talk to each other in order to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing us all and how we meet them in our different ways. We're not so large as you. We have about 600,000 members. But we still have as many members as our main political parties put together. The Conservative Party recently elected a new leader, Ian Duncan Smith, not, perhaps, as well known yet as his one time predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, but elected, we were told, by the Party's 300,000 members. The ruling Labor Party is much the same. The Royal British Legion is still one of the largest membership organizations in the land.

We do our work in a rather different way to you, in that in addition to being a campaigning and lobbying organization, we also deliver welfare assistance directly to veterans and their dependents through our network of volunteer caseworkers and staff officers in each county. The Legion is represented in virtually every town and village through its 3,000 Branches—you call them Posts. You may be interested to know that we have three of those branches here in the United States, one in California, in San Francisco; one in Deerfield Beach, Florida; and the other in Philadelphia. Only three, so there's no danger of us taking you over yet.

With the help of all those branches and identifying those in need, we're able to meet around 300,000 calls for help each year at a cost equivalent to about $60,000,000. We raise this money ourselves through a comprehensive program of fund-raising, of which the poppy appeal is largest single contributor, raising about half of what we need. The rest comes from a variety of sources, legacies, direct marketing, sponsorship, high profile fund-raising events of all kinds, lotteries, indeed all of the devices employed by the evermore professional charity fund-raising business.

As a campaigning organization, we've had several major successes in recent times. Following the example of our colleagues in Canada, we have persuaded our Government to pay a special gratuity of £10,000 sterling to former Far Eastern prisoners-of-war and widows. We have reintroduced the two minute silence on the 11th of November, the traditional Armistice Day, as a moment of reflection, regardless of the day of the week of which it falls. That's now observed by three quarters of the population. At long last, we've persuaded our Government to appoint a Minister for Veterans Affairs within the Ministry of Defense. At the moment, this doesn't carry quite as broad a political base as it does for example, here in the United States, but it's a start and definitely a step in the right direction.

Currently, we're working closely with agencies here in the United States to make progress on the vexed question of Gulf War illness. The Royal British Legion recently sponsored a very successful joint presentation and hearing with the United States Congressional Subcommittee on National Security and Veterans Affairs and International Relations. That was held in London, actually at the House of Lords, to move the battle forward. We're hoping very much that this initiative and others, many of them funded by your former presidential candidate Mr. Ross Perot, who has taken a very close personal interest in the subject, that they will be helpful in persuading our Government to hold a public inquiry into the whole matter.

As with similar organizations, the demand for our welfare services is increasing as veterans and their dependents get older. We estimate that a quarter of our whole population is still eligible to seek our help, if required. There's no danger of working ourselves out of

a job.

As I travel around, I've been interested to learn that whilst our approach may be different, the challenges facing the ex-service community around the world have many similarities. Opportunities like this enable us to learn from each other, and that knowledge will help deliver that sort of care to our veterans that they deserve.

National Commander, I have been privileged to meet both you and your distinguished predecessor, Ray Smith, in London. I congratulate The American Legion on its many achievements and I welcome the opportunity today to bring you all of the warmest greetings from your colleagues in the Royal British Legion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We often hear Canadians referred to as our neighbors to the north. More than a half-million of those neighbors are members of The Royal Canadian Legion. Their services and goals are very similar to ours. They fight to assure adequate pensions and other well-earned benefits for veterans and their families in Canada. They act as an advocacy agency on behalf of pensioners. And, the Legion deals directly with the federal government to ensure ex-military personnel and their families are treated fairly. Besides sharing a long, unprotected border, American veterans also share a comradeship with Canada's veterans.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you Dominion Vice President of The Royal Canadian Legion, Wilfred Edmond.

Address: Wilfred Edmond
Dominion Vice President
The Royal Canadian Legion

I bring you greetings from the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion and the 460,000 members of our organization who serve our veterans and our communities from coast to coast, in the true north, strong and free. I am honored to be in your presence today and have been asked to bring you these greetings from our Dominion President.

Just a few short weeks ago, your National Commander stood on the stage in Edmonton, Alberta to address the delegates of our Dominion Convention. At that time, he noted the ties between our great nations in war and in peace. It is unfortunate in a way that some of these ties have been developed under the scourge or war. But that is inevitable when you have two countries sharing the same continent which believe so strongly in freedom and justice for all.

Since we went our separate ways so many years ago, we have found that while we may have some differences in the type of governments that we choose to live under, we still live with certain principles and values that make us natural allies when push comes to shove. While you may not like tea anymore and we may not be as observant as you in our overt expressions in our love to country, we share a lot of common grounds. We have been allies for years for the common defense of this great continent.

The latest instant of our commitment to our common defense started just less than a year ago when we were attacked by unconventional forces on September 11th. I say 'we' because 300 Canadians lost their lives that same day. And it doesn't matter on which side of the 49th parallel that they were murdered, our way of life was assaulted and we have responded in more ways than one.

The war on terrorism is one response. I was most impressed with your resolution number 30 which was passed by your National Executive Committee in May, and the establishment of an annual A Day To Remember on September 11th of each year. I

congratulate you on this significant initiative. I especially noted that one of the goals is the remembrance of those who died so needlessly in the multiple attacks.

In Canada we believe that remembrance itself is an act of patriotism and an act of love for our country. We believe it shows a resolve and that it promotes peace and goodwill. And that is why we remember once a year on our National Remembrance Day all those who have died in the service of Canada and as a result of wars to which we have committed out dearest resources, our people. It is indicative of the closeness of the bonds we share, that the Canadian unit deployed to Afghanistan in the War on Terrorism was the 3rd Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. On the dress uniforms that the unit proudly wears is the United States Presidential citation for its action in the Korean War.

Since the start of the past century our servicemen and women have fought together in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. They have served together on peacekeeping and peacemaking missions. But as it is often the case, when they come home, they need help, which is why both of our organizations exist today. And our shared experiences in war and peace is why we share information to help those who often have to fight the very governments they serve for benefits and medical treatment.

It is also our shared experiences in the service of our nation that make our organizations natural allies. Many of our Branches close to the borders gather with yours on a regular basis to experience comradeship and to serve their communities better. Many of our Branches in the United States use your facilities to hold their meetings. We are very grateful for that and we are very grateful that you are our neighbors.

While the respective Governments may have little tiffs from time to time, we all know that they are tempests and that when they need each other, the other will be there. That, my friends, is a relationship that is only enjoyed on one continent. May it never change.

We work together in remembrance as well. For two years now we have been working with you to establish a heritage site on Deadman's Island off the shores of Nova Scotia. It is also called Melville Island. It is here that American, French, Canadian service people lie buried from one war that we didn't fight together. One day our joint work will lead to proper markers for these citizens and that is how it should be.

In closing, let me just say that should we ever have any serious disagreements between our countries, let's just settle our differences the way we are doing in the world of sports. We'll hire Americans to come to Canada to play baseball and you keep hiring our Canadians to come to America to play hockey. That way we can both claim the odd World Series victory and you can have the occasional Stanley Cup. If that doesn't settle it, comrades, let's play football using our three downs and the bigger field.

Thank you, comrades, for your welcome, your hospitality, and for your sacrifice and initiatives in the pursuit of freedom, justice, and good government. On behalf of my wife and I, I thank you for your hospitality.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: During my travels, I had the opportunity to visit with many of our troops serving in Korea. I also had the pleasure of meeting our next guest while I was in his country. He and the members of the Korean Veterans Association are hard at work trying to ensure those who have served, and are serving, in the armed forces of Korea also are protected and cared for. Please give a warm American Legion welcome to the Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association, retired General Lee, Sang Hoon, retired.

Address: General Lee, Sang Hoon
The Korean Veterans Association, President

Before I make a short speech, I will introduce myself to you. During the Korean War, I participated in the Korean War and then in 1967-68 I participated in the Vietnam War as a battalion commander in the Korean Tiger Division. So I participated in two wars in the world. Then I finished my military service for 38 as a post-war general and the next year I became the Korean Defense Minister, in 1988.

Yesterday, I met your Vice President, Dick Cheney, at Veterans of Foreign War Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. When I was Minister of National Security in Korea, he was the Secretary of Defense of the United States. So we made several meetings and that was very happy hour to meet him.

On the occasion of the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, I would, first and foremost, on behalf of 6.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association, like to extend my sincere congratulations to The American Legion for holding such a magnificent convention. It is my great pleasure to meet you again after the 82nd National Convention in Milwaukee is 2000, and my honor to say greetings before you. I am deeply impressed at the progress made by The American Legion under the leadership of National Commander Santos and man who always works for the world peace.

My special thanks go to this wonderful organization, The American Legion, for adopting the year 2000 Resolution regarding that the government of the United States support the North-South Joint Declaration for the cooperation and reconciliation between two Koreas.

Dear American Legionnaires. You are the veterans who once bravely participated in many kinds of wars, such as the First and Second World Wars, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War and many recent wars. You were determined to sacrifice even your precious lives for the world peace and the progress of mankind.

There must be Korean War veterans here today. I would like to take this opportunity, together with all the 47 million Korean people, to express our heartfelt respect to those Korean War veterans. The words 'Freedom is not free, forgotten no more' that are inscribed in the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C., are remembered by hearts of all the Korean people. Thanks to your unselfish support, Korea has become one of the best advanced countries in the world, holding 1988 Olympic Games and 2002 World Cup Games in Seoul. All the Koreans are so glad that we were able to prove ourselves by showing developed Korea today that your commitment and sacrifice were not in vain.

Unfortunately, however, there are still tensions and conflicts on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea has continued to produce weapons of mass destruction and never abandoned its hostility of communizing the entire peninsula. On June 29th, the North Korean naval ship fired guns, illegally crossing over the northern limit line against the South Korean ship. This provocation has made US-Korea relations even stronger and let us reaffirm our commitment for maintaining world peace.

There is a no doubt in my mind that not only the South-North dialogue but also the U.S.-North Korea dialogues are vital for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. I hope that the Bush Administration will pursue the U.S.-North dialog in a more active manner making North Korea give up its hostility and the day of unification come nearer.

Dear American Legionnaires. I love this place, the city of commerce and trade growing rapidly where President James Polk and once Presidential candidate Andrew Jackson were born. Your warmest hospitality endowed to my party is superb and it will be remembered forever. May God bless the great organization of The American Legion, and God bless its

2.9 million members.

MR. HANS SONG: At this time, General Lee, Sang Hoon, the Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association would like to show our appreciation to the National Commander Ric Santos.

"In grateful recognition of your dedicated contributions to the support of national security of the Republic of Korea, and to the promotion of family relations between the two organizations. General Lee, Sang Hoon, the Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association."

NATL COMDR SANTOS: "International Amity Award, for grateful recognition of the outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for contributions made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and our wartime allies of the Korean Veterans Association, Republic of Korea, awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion, with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee to General Lee, Sang Hoon, Retired."

When we returned to Korea our luggage was much heavier than when we left for the gifts they provided to us during our visitation. And in the case of reciprocity, we'd like to present a gift to General Lee and to his wife.

International Amity Award

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The American Legion is again proud to recognize those who have set the standard for reflecting the importance of continuous friendship between the wartime veterans of the Philippines and America. This award is given to individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contribution made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship. This year we are honoring two such individuals with this prestigious award.

The first award is for Commodore Artemio Araguay from the Philippines. Accepting on behalf of the Commodore is Brigadier General Delvin E. Lorenzana, Defense and Armed Force Attache, Embassy of the Philippines.

GEN LORENZANA: Allow me to read the acceptance letter of Commodore Araguay for this award. Mr. Richard Santos, National Commander of The American Legion:

Dear Commander Santos,

On the outset, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the great honor brought upon my person by The American Legion for the prestigious International Amnesty Award. I accept the award, not totally for myself, but for the Philippine Veterans Affairs office, the Department of National Defense, and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines as a whole.

Indeed, the award affirms the commitment of the national leadership and The American Legion to improve the well-being of our veterans, and also to promote closer relations between the veterans of the Philippines and the United States who fought side by side during World War II and the Korean War in defense of freedom and democracy.

It is with deep regret, however, that I am unable to accept the award personally. I certainly would have received the award myself if not for the unavoidable engagement which requires my presence in the country. With my highest esteem.

Very truly yours,
Commodore Artemio Araguay

NATL COMDR SANTOS: "International Amity Award, in grateful recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contribution made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and our wartime allies of the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association. Awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion with the advice and the consent of The National Executive Committee to Commodore Artemio R. Araguay." Please accept this on behalf of the Commodore. We ask you to please ensure it is forwarded to him and presented.

The second individual we honor is Patrick J. Ganio, Sr. "International Amnesty Award in grateful recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contribution made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and our wartime allies of the American Coalition for Philipino Veterans Incorporated. Awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion with the advice and the consent of The National Executive Committee to Patrick G. Ganio, Sr."

MR. GANIO: Our National Commander Richard Santos of this great organization of The American Legion, of which up to now I am still a member of Post 38 in Washington D.C. In the spirit of The American Legion, I've always continued to serve for our veterans in the Philippines through my coming here in the United States in Washington D.C.

In that regard my friends I've dedicated myself in the service of the entire nation. In accepting this award, I look at is as a gift of your love to me and reuniting what modest contribution and effort I have served for the cause of our fellow veterans, particularly my fellow veterans in the Philippines. Those who served with us in Bataan, Corregidor and though the guerilla period and through liberation, where many of us had fought for the same cause of liberty and democracy and the United States that we love so well.

I am a Filipino by birth, but I am equally proud to be an American by choice and for my mother, we have always loved America.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: To our visitors, I say that America is circled by friends. We have England on the east flank, we have Canada at the north, we have Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines to our west. I think we are encircled by friends.

The Chair recognizes Herman G. Harrington of New York, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs, for a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs
(Section I of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)
Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman

To the Eighty-fourth Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002. The section on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs met at 9:00 a.m., August 25, 2002, in Room 218A & 219A, 2nd Level, of the Charlotte Convention Center.

Herman G. Harrington of New York was elected Chairman, and James C. Young of Texas was elected Secretary.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried to accept the Delegate Strength Report as reported by the National Adjutant certifying membership 30 days prior to National Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the report be based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution: Five delegates for each Department, plus one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer thirty (30) days prior to

the opening of the Convention (July 29, 2002); and one alternate for each delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) national Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention. All living past National Commanders are members of the National Executive Committee without vote and life delegates to the National Convention with vote, which is exercised in their respective Departments. (Voting strength figures attached.)

Motion was adopted by majority vote that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on July 29, 2002, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 3,116 located as follows:

Alabama	31	Montana	18
Alaska	15	Nebraska	62
Arizona	51	Nevada	15
Arkansas	27	New Hampshire	31
California	144	New Jersey	85
Colorado	33	New Mexico	19
Connecticut	36	New York	193
Delaware	17	North Carolina	53
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	30
Florida	132	Ohio	156
France	9	Oklahoma	39
Georgia	58	Oregon	32
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	253
Idaho	19	Philippines	8
Illinois	147	Puerto Rico	15
Indiana	136	Rhode Island	16
Iowa	77	South Carolina	35
Kansas	55	South Dakota	33
Kentucky	37	Tennessee	41
Louisiana	45	Texas	94
Maine	34	Utah	16
Maryland	87	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	71	Virginia	64
Mexico	7	Washington	46
Michigan	104	West Virginia	34
Minnesota	124	Wisconsin	82
Mississippi	26	Wyoming	14
Missouri	69		

CHRMN HARRINGTON: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of New York I move the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second?

I hear a second from the floor.

Microphone No. 1

DEL CHRMN KNOX: Delegation Chairman from Michigan would request a correction on the Michigan count. Michigan should be 104.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: You reported 4.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of Credentials and Internal Affairs - Section 1 is adopted

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Paul Morin of Massachusetts, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts, Chairman

The Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 AM on Sunday, August 25, 2002 in Room 206A&B, 2nd Level, in the Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina Forty-seven (47) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus sixteen (16) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, Paul A. Morin, a delegate from the Department of Massachusetts, was elected Permanent Chairman Claude B. Carpenter, a delegate from the Department of Arkansas, was elected Permanent Secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to the business agenda by considering the Rules of the Convention A motion was unanimously approved by the Committee to recommend the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion.

Another unanimously approved motion allows the Permanent Chairman and Permanent Secretary to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate.

The final unanimously approved motion authorizes the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules.

The Legislative and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action.

Under new business, the Committee heard remarks from the Legislative Director, Steve Robertson (LA)After providing updates on pending legislative activities, Committee attended a briefing on the Legislative Action Center presented by Mark Seavey, Assistant Director for Grassroots.

The National Legislative Commission presented John Serva (NY) with a memento for his outstanding work on the National Legislative Council.

The Legislative and Rules Committee would like to offer the Convention Delegates a brief report on current congressional developments impacting issues of primary interest to The American Legion.

Neither chambers of Congress has passed their versions of the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies FY 2003 appropriations bill When Congress returns from the August recess, the principle focus in both chambers will be finalizing the budget.

Few budget experts expect the budget will be completed before the general elections in November. It is anticipated that Congress will rely on a series of continuing resolutions to finance Federal agencies and programs until final funding levels are determined. The American Legion will closely monitor the budget process and continue efforts to influence Federal appropriations.

During the recent August congressional recess, Legionnaires from across the country

are actively lobbying Members of Congress selected to serve as conferees on the National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2003Contained in this bill are two versions addressing the issue of concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military retirement pay without the dollar-for-dollar offset. This inequity must be corrected. The American Legion believes the Senate passed version of this bill is a bold step towards that objective.

Mr. Commander, on September 10, Legionnaires from across the country will accompany the newly elected National Commander to Capitol Hill. The purpose of this visit will be to discuss the legislative mandates adopted by the delegates at this National Convention. The highlight of this event will be the National Commander's testimony before a joint session of the congressional Veterans' Affairs Committees.

National Commander Santos, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Massachusetts, I move the adoption of this report and the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of Legislation and Rules is adopted.

The Chair recognizes Kenneth Danilson of Iowa, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Finance
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

Forty-four (44) members met at the Charlotte Convention Center, Room 105 at 9:00a.m. Sunday, August 25, 2002 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Paul M. Allen (Minnesota), National Finance Director, opened the meeting as staff liaison and made general announcements concerning convention activities.

He then informed the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary. Kenneth D. Danilson (Iowa) was elected chairman and Carl E. Levi (Tennessee) was elected secretary by unanimous vote.

The chairman introduced the National Treasurer, George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Indiana) who updated the committee on the status of the U.S. economy and its effect on the investment policy of the national headquarters.

He stated the U.S. economy has been focused with a crisis of investor confidence based on reports of corporate misgovernance and global violence overseas during most of 2002. The S&P index has lost 13% while NASDAQ has dropped 25% in value.

The economic recovery, now in the process of beginning, should reflect Gross Domestic Product growth of 6% and while moderate, other signs such as improved corporate earning and lower levels of inflation coupled with continued high productivity indicate a much stronger economic environment going into 2003.

The American Legion investment portfolios have remained conservatively invested throughout this down cycle and income stream remains strong with promising signs that the investments in our balanced investment policy remain stable.

Treasurer Buskirk then recommended that national dues be set at $9.00. A motion from Silas Noel (Kentucky) was made that the 2003 per capita dues remain at $9.00. Tony Riley (Indiana) seconded the motion and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chairman then recognized Dennis Henkemeyer (Minnesota), Chairman of *The American Legion Magazine* Commission and Daniel S. Wheeler (Virginia), the acting publisher of *The American Legion Magazine*. Mr. Wheeler reported that *The American*

Legion Magazine is projecting a year-end surplus of $2,600,000, despite a $500,000 annual postal increase. This increase was offset by trimming ¼ off each page, changing from 36# to 32# paper, and renegotiating the printing and paper contracts.

Mr. Wheeler also reported that advertising sales are up about $1,000,000 and they are about $400,000 ahead of the budget.

National Finance Director Paul M. Allen reported that the 2001 BKD certified annual audit, which was distributed to each delegate prior to the convention and published in the convention program, shows our total assets were at $143,744,871, an 3% increase over last year. He also informed the committee that our 2001 year end surplus was $2,376,095 and that we are anticipating a $1,200,000 year-end surplus in 2002. The national financial status is very sound.

Brad Jorgens (Minnesota) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Finance. Bobby Coleman (South Carolina) seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

CHRMN DANILSON: As a duly elected delegate from Iowa, I move for the approval of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of Finance is adopted.

At this time I call on the National Adjutant for Administrative announcements.

Announcement: Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutant

All the shuttle buses tomorrow morning will started at 6:30 a.m. The Western states Caucus will be held tomorrow at the conclusion of the Convention which we expect it to be around 2:00. We appreciate your patience today as we had some weather fronts and some of our guests could not get in on the airplane and were late at the airport.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Delegates please rise, please join me join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. The time is 3:51 p.m. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, August 28.

...At 3:51 p.m. the Convention recessed to convene the following day, Wednesday, August 28, 2002, at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
SECOND DAY

Wednesday, August 28, 2002

...At 8:30 a.m., the Delegates listened to the Prelude.

...At 9:00 a.m. the Delegates assembled for the second day of the 84th Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Convention will come to order. With the Colors of our country being in place right hand salute. Two!

For the Invocation, I will call upon our National Chaplain, Reverend David F. Russell of Post 320 in Spotsylvania, Virginia.

Invocation
David F. Russell, Virginia, National Chaplain

As we bow in prayer this morning, we want to remember the family of Harry Howell who past away last night. He was the SAL chaplain for Georgia. Also, we want to remember in prayer, Charlie Williams, the Department of California, who had heart surgery during this convention. Shall we pray?

Father, we thank You that we could come this morning. We thank You for the activities that are planned for today. We pray that You guide us and direct us in all of them. We pray for those who are in need. Those who are sorrowing. We pray that You'll lay Your hand upon them and give them comfort and the consolation that they need. We know that You had promised in Your word the You would never place upon us something that we could not bear, but you would without all difficulty, heartache, and sorrow give us Your spirit and Your strength to bear it through.

God be with each of us today. Bless us and strengthen us with that which we do. I bring honor to Thee, to our country, to our American Legion. For it is in Thy Son's precious name we do pray. Amen.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Please remain standing and uncovered join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

...At this time the Delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Please be seated. The Convention is now in session.

We start the second day of business for the 84th National convention of The American Legion with a special guest. She's a woman who we all know by watching her grow-up on television. She's a talented entertainer, a savvy businesswoman, and a person who truly believes in making a difference in a child's life. As the co-founder of the Children's Miracle Network she has helped raise $2 billion for children's hospitals across the country. Before I invite her up here to speak, I'd like you to watch a short message. Please welcome a *New York Times* best selling book author, a wife and a mother of seven beautiful children, Marie Osmond.

Special Presentation Children's Miracle Network
Marie Osmond, Co-Founder and CEO

MARIE OSMOND: I am honored to be here today. Very impressive you are. The spirit that you have I wish could be passed more contagiously to our children.

I understand that there are 15,000 of you here. That's almost the size of an Osmond family reunion. They say a good man is hard to find. I see a couple thousand out here. I was talking to Mick Shannon who is one of the co-founders of Children's Miracle Network. I said that it's like seeing the stars of the History Channel up close and personal. You're all out here, you're magnificent.

I am delighted to be here to celebrate an organization that honors the finest men and women in America. If I look a little extra happy is because of all my seven children, from preschool to college, started school again this week. What a wonderful institution that is, isn't it? It keeps mothers out of institutions. I really believe, don't you think, they should increase the school day to 12 hours? I think they should repeat the Pledge of Allegiance for the first hour of school. Don't you think? I do. I tease you, of course.

I had a great summer. My husband and I have been blessed incredibly with seven healthy, beautiful, active children. And I mean active. My 85-year old father was at my house recently and I caught him pointing the television remote at my kids trying to mute them. My father was so pleased to hear that I would be here with you today. He is also a veteran. He was stationed in England during World War II. I get tender about it, he's a great man. I had the privilege of performing for several USO tours, including Desert Storm. I still have sand in my hair.

My father, George and my mother Olive, taught my eight brothers and me the principles behind service at a very young age. We woke up to reveille every morning. It was part of our musical training. I understand that my brothers performed for you last night. Did my brother Wayne tell you any bad jokes. Bad huh? Now you know why I worked with Donny for so many years. I tease you. We tease each other a lot. Being the only girl, with eight brothers, I have seen my share of battles. Let's just say that I didn't grow my fingernails long for looks. You see they're registered weapons. No, I'm kidding, I use my teeth.

It was important to my parents that my brothers and I understood the importance of giving through service to others, not just for my own family or even for the community but for all people. You veterans exemplify the purpose of service. You each put your lives on the line to preserve and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans. You've defended the freedoms and principles that we all enjoy in this great country. It's impossible to express enough gratitude for your incredible sacrifice. But what I can thank you for today is your continuing service. It's very exciting. I am here today to thank you for including the Children's Miracle Network as one of the many causes that you have chosen to champion and also for the $2.7 million dollars that you worked so hard to raise last year. I also understand that you are well on your way to doubling that number this year, which is extremely exciting. I think you should give yourselves a hand for that.

Your support for Children's Miracle Network makes it possible for CMN to help serve 17 million children each year. With your help there now, 170 hospitals affiliated with CMN provide quality medical care for all children with any affliction. No child is ever turned away regardless of the family's ability to pay. The funds that you have raised support medical staff, researchers, care givers and help supply these hospitals with state of the art equipment which saves the lives of children every single day, every hour, every minute. It

is exciting. It's easy to take healthcare and the health of our children for granted. Unfortunately good health is a gift not shared by all people.

I recently experienced what it must be like for parents whose children need advanced medical attention. Over the course of about ten days, five of my seven children needed to go to the emergency room. One had a case of mysterious hives, my three year-old had an asthma attack, my eleven year-old broke his collarbone at camp, and then his sister followed suit a couple days later and broke her collarbone. To top off the week, my five year-old swallowed three pen light batteries. You should have seen the x-ray. The emergency room doctor gave me a card and he said, "Here, after nine visits, we'll stamp it and you can have the tenth free." I was so thankful to have medical care nearby and available. By the way everything came out fine.

Let me tell you about another story that you're all a part of. There's a young man who's walking around his bedroom, looks over the trophies that he won playing school football, straightens his Eagle Scout award on the wall, and bounces his worn out basketball for the last time. As the young man leaves, he gives his globe on his desk one last spin. His father waits for him in the doorway holding his son's suitcase and fighting back tears. They're tears of joy this time because the young man is heading off to college. When this young boy was in the eight grade, a cancerous tumor was found in his brain. It was successfully removed through emergency neurosurgery at Children's Hospital. This little boy is now in his fifth year of remission. This young man doesn't spend much time thinking about when he was sick. His thankful father does and knows that his son's life is a miracle. It's a miracle provided by the generosity of you, The American Legion, and your efforts on behalf of the Children's Miracle Network. The boy's father didn't have the financial ability to provide his child with the best care available. That's where you came in.

I recently read a story that took place during World War II in England. I thought that it might be appropriate for today. It talked about a group of soldiers and guardians who were temporarily caring for some of the children who had been separated from their parents. They noticed that these children were having a very hard time sleeping due to the fears and uncertainties that were going on. The solution the care takers came up with was to give each child a piece of bread to hold as they were drifting off to sleep. It worked. The bread seemed to carry the message, "You have eaten today and you will eat tomorrow, and we are here for you."

I thought this story applies especially to each of you. It may not be bread to give to children but you can give them the comfort of knowing that someone is making sure that they're being taking care of. That's the gift that you continually give to 17 million children each and every year to their families in this great country. It's the gift that you gave to Shelby Conkle, she's a 4 year old girl that was born with 2 holes in her heart. After hours of touch-and-go surgery, her heart was successfully repaired. Her thankful mother told us at Children's Miracle Network, that Shelby walks around the house everyday and sings these Broadway tunes. She's a little miracle. It's the support that you gave Cody Landsman, the eleven year-old girl who made it through life-threatening leukemia with many complications. Today, Cody is a remarkable honor student.

I want you to meet someone else whose life you helped save. He's just turning one year old. He had already been fortunate to have been born into a family with a rich American Legion legacy. Sam Wise came into the world three months premature and instantly began the battle for his life. He was helped right here in Charlotte at the Children's Hospital at Carolina's Medical Center. This one pound baby boy had the spirit to survive major heart and intestinal surgery. He had two very delicate surgeries on his eyes. After three months

of constant struggle and setbacks, little Sam won the fight for his life and he went home in the arms of his grateful mother. Take a look.

...video is played

Would you please help me welcome to the podium Crystal Wise, Sam's mother. And can you just hold up Sam while she's walking? That's what Children's Miracle Network is all about thanks to you. It is such a pleasure to have you here today. What goes through your mind when you watch that video.

CRYSTAL WISE: One hundred and thirty-seven days of a roller coaster ride, but thankfully we have our little boy and can love on him every day now.

MARIE OSMOND: Is there anything you can say today to all of these wonderful men and women here on behalf of Children's Hospital?

CRYSTAL WISE: I would never be able to thank all of you enough for what you have given to CMN and your support. Because without you, equipment would not be purchased, things that were very critical for Sam to have, the ventilators, oscillators, the isolets, the things that he was really dependent on for survival. Those things could not have been purchased without your help. Thank you from the bottom of a thankful mother's heart. He's such a good baby.

MARIE OSMOND: Thank you for being here today. He is such a cute baby.

Whenever I travel to one of the many Children's Hospitals, I love to meet the parents. I am so fortunate and blessed to hear of these stories and to witness firsthand how Children's Miracle Network really does help families. I promise you that there is nothing better that you can do for a family than to help their child. Statistics prove that everybody will use a Children's Hospital at one time in their life.

These provide over $4 billion worth of care to children. You can see how important every dollar raised to CMN is. It is dollar-by-dollar that is raised. We're able to offer care to these children in that way to so many children. It's incredible to see what individuals can do when we come together for the common purpose of helping a child. I know that not everyone is fortunate enough to see the outcome of their giving. I can tell you that I have met thousand of parents who would love to stand here today and thank you personally for giving their child a chance to grow and thrive. We have been born into different sets of circumstances. We've all had the same beginnings. At one time we were helpless like Sam was, we all depended on someone else for survival. I personally think that it was God's way of making sure that we needed one another. This has certainly been a reminder on how precious and fragile life is.

We have seen a group of new heroes step up from a crisis into the front lines. We understand and appreciate everything that they have done. I want to acknowledge the thousands of you who are heroes in everyday life. You have put in countless hours of service to make life better for millions. You may never get a moment in the national spotlight, but you will always have a place in my heart and the hearts of millions of families whose lives you change every single day.

There's an adage that has a deep truth to me. It says: "Nothing makes us stand so tall as when we stoop to help a child." I know this is true. And I am emotional today because looking out at you, I see a room full of giants.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We have good news from one Department and secondary good news from another Department. The American Legion World Series Baseball final

results are: West Point, Mississippi, Post 212, four; Excelsior, Minnesota, Post 259, zero. National Champions are West Point, Post 212, Mississippi.

The American Legion relationship with CMN is one I am proud to see growing. We see it growing, and shall maintain, and will improve upon it. Congratulations on your untiring efforts on behalf of all Miracle Children. That is from all of us to you and your family.

It is kind of unique with us. The American Legion family affects people, from when they're born at one day-old, to yesterday's efforts on the military tribute to Bob Hope who be turning one hundred. Our dealings, our efforts, our dedication, service, and commitment is for all Americans, whether they are premature and are one day to icons and people such as Bob Hope who will be one hundred on May 29, 2003, with our efforts on building him a military tribute in San Diego. You've got to be proud of yourselves, The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion. It is what we do. As I use the words day in and day out, week in and week out, and now, year in and year out, covering a broad spectrum of our society in the United States by making that affect and having an affect on the lives of young children and on centurions. If young Sam could say it, I'm he would say "thank you very much." I'm sure he'll be able to do that when he is older and has the appreciation of what you did for him.

I n our normal schedule, Senator Dole and the presentation for World War II would be next, but his plane has just landed at Douglas Airport in Charlotte, so we're going to proceed with the next regular order of business. When this order of business is finished, we ask you to please remain in co-session because we want the Auxiliary here for the two following presentations and items.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We are honored by the presence of our next guest. He is a man who knows what it means to be on the frontline in battle. The U.S. Army drafted him while in college. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the infantry in Vietnam and earned a star for valor. He served two terms as Governor of Pennsylvania where he cut taxes every year he was in office. Today, he is on another frontline as he works to develop and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to strengthen protections against terrorist threats or attacks in the United States.

Please welcome to North Carolina, a member of Millcreek Post 773 in his hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security, Tom Ridge.

Special Address: Tom Ridge
Assistant to the President for Homeland Security

TOM RIDGE: It is a great pleasure to have been invited to share a few moments with you this morning. As Ric pointed out to you, as a Governor of the great state of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you know I would be remiss if I didn't bring special greetings to my fellow citizens of my home state of Pennsylvania. And to Ron Connelly, my great friend and his wife Barbara, thank you again. Ric, thanks for a very generous introduction and for 35 years and counting, for your service to this organization.

Before we go any further, it is important, that we recognize and salute our brothers and sisters in arms who are far from home right now, fighting the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Their service abroad is helping to secure us at home. They still face many dangers, including an enemy looking to regroup and to re-engage. We must keep them and their families in our prayers.

I don't have to remind men and women in this organization that when somebody in the family puts on a uniform for the country, everybody else puts on the uniform as well. The

spouse puts on the uniform, the children put on the uniform, the parents put on the uniform. So we think of the men and women serving us overseas. We're grateful for their courage and sacrifice in their service. Obviously, we have to recognize the members of their families back home. Keeping the home fires and the home lights burning for them. So we recognize and salute their service today.

During this time of renewed patriotism, faith, and prayer I also want to thank the Legion for your efforts to overturn the federal court decision to strike God from the Pledge of Allegiance. The words of President George Washington ring as true today as they did when he gave his farewell address. He said: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. The mere politician, equally with a pias man, ought to respect and cherish them."

Your work in the Legion for God an country is a constant reminder that you recognize as individuals and as an organization that we are one Nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

Occasionally I have been asked if America lost its innocence on September 11th. Maybe we didn't lose it. Maybe we traded our innocence for something else, perhaps, equally as valuable. Maybe we traded it for awareness. We're still getting used to the idea that our country is vulnerable to a new enemy in the 21st century, getting used to the idea that we are neither isolated or impregnable. While Americans work hard every single day and make a living and raise their families, terrorists in this country and abroad work just as hard planning their next evil act. Americans saw on 9/11 what The America Legion has always taught; freedom is never free, that it can be taken away, and that preserving our freedom requires constant vigilance.

I'm here to report to you that this country has become much more vigilant. Consequently, America today is substantially safer and far better prepared than it was a year ago, not withstanding the fact that although we're safer and although we're better prepared, we still have more work to do. America took many important and immediate steps following the infamy and the horror of 9/11. Our efforts have touched every aspect of life: the food we eat, the air we breath, the water we drink, the energy we use, and the medical care we receive. Governors, mayors, companies, individual citizens have taken the initiative to reduce our vulnerability and prepare for the possibility of another attack. Law enforcement and all levels have organized well over 100 anti-terrorism taskforces. With help from our allies from around the world we have frozen well over $1 million in assets the terrorists formally had access to.

We've added new agents and technology at our borders with Mexico and Canada, we've hired more than 130 new federally trained directors who will be responsible for the overall security at our airports. We're in the process of instituting tough new international standards for cargo and shipping containers. We've issued our first water security grants. We've improved inspections of our food supply. We've hosted a safe and secure and successful Winter Olympics. I think it is also important to note, because this is an audience who appreciates their service as well, and I suspect some of you continue to serve here, many of these accomplishments were made possible with the help of the National Guard members and our Reservists. Our country needs to thank them as well. We're going to distribute billions of dollars to improve our public health infrastructure. The money will help enable first responders in hospitals to handle a chemical or biological attack. We will also make a healthier country as well.

President Bush remains committed to seeing that our veterans receive the very best care possible. He has asked Congress for nearly $2 billion more for veterans medical care in the 2003 budget. There are substantially more dollars in that budget for homeland security as

well. It is my hope that before Congress either recesses for the elections or before the end of the year, they approve appropriation for an additional $2 billion for healthcare for veterans as well as billions more for public health and for our humble heroes, our first responders around this country.

Now I said before that we've come a long way but we still have a long way to go to do everything humanly and technologically possible to secure this country. Over the long term securing the homeland requires a permanent infrastructure, a permanent reorganization of government and a sustained response to the possibility to the threat of international terrorism. That is why the President has proposed creating the Department of Homeland Security. It will unify federal homeland security duties. Presently they are scattered around nearly 100 departments and agencies. The President's proposal takes over 20 of the most important and fuses them together, creating a direct line of accountability.

We veterans understand chain of command. We understand lines responsibility and lines of accountability. That's exactly what the President wants to create in the Department of Homeland Security. This new Department would help insure that the police, firefighters, the hospitals, the emergency medical technicians, and the other first responders have the equipment, training, and the interoperable communications they need. We'll significantly enhance our ability to protect our borders, our airports and our seaports, and monitor those who come into our country.

The President has said time and time again that we're an open and welcoming and trusting country. We are a nation of immigrants and we never want to lose sight of that fact. At all times in the future we need to know who's coming into this country and why. Because as guests, not only do we need to know this information but when that visa expires, we need to know if they left this country as well. We need a new entry and exit monitoring system and this Government will be responsible for providing that in this Department.

This new Department would set guidelines to counter weapons of mass destruction and development. It would develop a nationwide disease early warning system so public health officials can contain outbreaks, whether they are caused by a terrorist or mother nature. The new department will help update our medical tool kit against bioterrorism. It will provide strategic focus to some of the research we need for new and improved vaccines, antibiotics, diagnostics that can save lives. This new department will communicate credible threats to the public and it will implement other recommendation contained in the President's national strategy for homeland security.

In short, it will bring together homeland security responsibilities under one roof, with one clear chain of command in order to get the job done. This is a new kind of war against an enemy who turns innocent civilians into combatants and our cities into battlefields. The strategy and tactics of this war is far different from anything we've ever confronted before. This is an enemy that refuses to distinguish between soldiers and citizens, that has chosen our hometowns and our country as a battlefield. This is an enemy that will take a commercial airliner and turn it into a missile. This is an enemy that has been training thousands to make America its number one target. As the President reminds us everyday, the evil that was directed toward us is because we are an open and freedom loving people, a diversified country, a tolerant country. We have an enduring vulnerability and therefore, a responsibility to create this new Department of Homeland Security so that we can do everything possible at the federal level to develop the partnerships that we need with state and local governments, with citizens, companies, with nonprofit organizations, organizations such as yourselves, to enhance protection that is so much a part of our collective responsibility in the new war against terror.

In this war the frontlines are our cities, our counties and our rural communities. That's where you'll find our nation's critical infrastructure, everything from bridges and reservoirs, pipelines and power plants. We are reminded today that you're going to honor Thomas Franklin who captured some of those innocent civilians in New York City those three firemen raising a flag amid the ruins of ground zero. They were not soldiers. Citizens are not necessarily soldiers in this war, but we're all freedom fighters just the same.

I'm pleased to join not only Mr. Franklin today who you're going to honor but also another great American, a great patriot, great soldier, and extraordinary citizen soldier, Senator Bob Dole who is to join you later. He's a great friend and admirerer. I am grateful for the fact that you recognize his contributions to this country for decades.

To protect all of this infrastructure we will need timely information. We need to know where we are most vulnerable and then we need to have the ability and the resources to take action. The Department of Homeland security will provide all three. One of the first things this department will do and given the responsibility to do is to take the threat information that we get from the CIA and FBI and other agencies with regard to the possibility of attack, take that information and map it against some of these vulnerabilities. This new department will be assigned the task of working with that potential target to ensure that we reduce the vulnerability that we see has been targeted by the terrorists. It's a new strategic product but its very much at the heart of what the President believes this new agency should do.

The President has submitted his bold plan to reorganize the federal government to maximize our efforts to protect our citizens, to protect our way of life. Now only Congress can create the new cabinet department. And that's precisely what we've asked them to do.

I'm here to share with you a couple of additional thoughts. Because just to move the boxes around on an organizational chart and then to call it a day will not be enough. If all we're going to do is change the lines and boxes on an organizational chart, that will not be enough for the federal government to maximize its efforts to secure the homeland. This new agency must be able to quickly move personnel and resources to meet the latest threat. The new department must be as agile as the enemy. As the President has said, "When we create this department, we must do it right." His plan gives the new Department the freedom to lead and the ability to meet the mission that has been set for it.

The President has said and I believe that America understands that we are at war against this new enemy. But what if I told you during the war brigade or battalion commander would need permission from Washington before he could move some of his troops from one part of the battlefield to another part of the battlefield? What if we told a company quartermaster that you couldn't redesignate some of your supplies and some of your resources that had initially had been set out for one particular unit but another unit needed those supplies more urgently but the Quartermaster wasn't allowed to reconfigure and move some of those supplies in a different direction? Can you imagine a general or a company commander or anybody in a leadership responsibility being threatened in a perimeter, pulling out the men who were working in supply or ordinance or the cooks or the transportation, putting rifles in their hands and having them say, "Well, no, we don't have an infantry MOS so we're going to go to the perimeter to fight the enemy?"

The fact of the matter is that if you're at war and you've got a new department that's trying to respond to the challenges of that war, the commander, that leadership team, needs the flexibility to move people and resources around in response to the threats. The President's plan enables the department to do just that. And Congress must be remindful of the responsibility that it's not just enough to move department and agencies under a new cabinet level institution. The President needs the flexibility to move the people and the resources within it. It needs the ability to hire more quickly. Did you know right now it can

take up to five months to hire somebody within the rules existing in some of these departments and agencies? We need the flexibility to manage and lead this organization.

Some in Congress have been reluctant to give the new department the freedom to lead. Let me reiterate, I think this is very important, the President needs the freedom, but he also recognizes the patriotism and the service of the men and women who become an integral part of this agency. The President's plan protects the rights of federal workers, including their union pay and benefits packages, protects the whistle blowers rights, protection against unlawful discrimination, veterans preferences continue to be honored. All of these protections go along with the employees. But the new team and the President still need the flexibility that the President has spoken about public in order to maximize our effort to protect our way of life. We need to be as agile as the enemy.

From my vantage point, I have been privileged to see Americans of all backgrounds stand together to secure their homeland, not just public officials, not just elected officials, not just first responders, but citizens from all backgrounds, all walks of life, all over this country. They understand that the threat of terrorism is permanent and real. They also understand that we have the will and resolve and the ability to fight back. And we will prevail in this effort.

To those who ask what can I do, well there's plenty to do if you're inclined to do so. First of all, if you're inclined to help the President with this new department, contact your r congressman and your senator and say not only give the president that department but give that president the flexibility and the management tools to move the people and resources around. You have an opportunity to work with the state emergency management agency. Help your region write or update their disaster response and recovery plan. I suspect that many of your members in addition to some of the 14,000 plus Posts are already involved in some of these activities in the local community. That's where we really need most of the focus , most of the effort, most of the resources, and most of the leadership. Because we all know that the homeland's secure when the hometown is secure. If we can secure every hometown in this country then we will be just fine. We will prevail in the war against terrorism.

As veterans, I think we have some fairly unique talents, certainly some extraordinary experiences we can count on and call on. We know how to give orders. As sergeants and enlisted men, I guess we know how to take them, too. Your communities look top you for leadership and we know that you have the knack for getting the best out of people and the very best out of your service organization. You may want to check out the President's USA Freedom Corps, the Citizen's Corps. Only when we are aware of the danger, aware of what government can do, aware of what we can do as individual citizens, will we best secure the homeland.

My final day as Governor of Pennsylvania, and many of my colleagues and fellow Legionnaires were present with me., I had the privilege of dedicating Pennsylvania's Veteran's Memorial at Fort Indian Town Gap. I urge you to visit it sometime. It's a beautiful spot. It was built to resemble a bombed out church. It is an extraordinary memorial. It's a very special place for quiet prayer and for reflection. And as we spoke that day in that very peaceful and tranquil setting, the pile and the rubble in New York City was still burning, obviously the Pentagon were still broken. The grounds and the trees at Shanksville were still charred. As we spoke, the first bombs were being dropped in Afghanistan. On that day and every day since, we've remembered those who died for our freedoms, the combatants who fought for over 200 years to preserve our way of life and those innocent victims who were targets because of our way of life and because of our freedoms. Our best memorial to the

victims of September 11th will be the action we take as a country and the actions we take as citizens to win the war and to secure out homeland from terrorism.

I thank The American Legion for all of the work you have undertaken so far to lead the charge and to provide the leadership in this effort. May God continue to bless this great country. And I want to thank you again for your service to God and the country as well.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Governor Ridge, through our Convention processes, The American Legion will reaffirm our commitment to the implementation and organizing of our homeland security. If we can reassure you on several issues, the VA Healthcare system is the largest federal healthcare system composed of over 172 hospitals. They can have a very important role for military healthcare back up and for natural disasters, the VA healthcare system has a very important role to play in your homeland security. We appreciate also your comments on the Guard and Reserve on their contributions to our homeland security. You spoke of hometowns we have nearly 15,000 American Legion Posts in hometowns that you were speaking of. They await to assist you in any capacity that we lend to you on homeland security. Many of these posts have already served as community centers for natural disasters. I'm sure if there is any type of implementation fo local programs. We offer the services and the assets of our organization to that end.

Thank you very much you have one tough job to handle. I'm sure you will have that completed to a successful end and we have the utmost confidence in you.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: There are many great and wonderful things I could say about our World War II veterans. As a group they are now known as "The Greatest Generation."Still, I think an excerpt from Gerald Lewis Geiger's 1997 book, *America, Before the Storm – Portrait of a Nation* more aptly describes the debt we owe all of them. These are just the closing words to a moving tribute:

The biggest of wars they fought,
The greatest of triumphs they won.
They shaped our world and lives
For centuries yet to come.

Hallowed their gift from themselves,
Sacred their living behest;
Ever their glory shines,
Never their memory fades.

Freedom and life they brought
To nations, enslaved and starved;
Safety and food they gave,
Respect and honor they saved.

Goodness and love won out!
Righteousness carried the day!
Dignity, hope were restored
And brightly was justice done!

Forget not their gift to you,
Betray not their simple trust;

Forsake not their sacred bequest
And cradle them well in your heart!

In 1993, Public Law 103-32 was signed authorizing the construction of the long-overdue National World War II Memorial tribute to the generation, to be constructed in our nation's capital. In 1997, The American Legion went on record to support and assist the American Battle Monuments Commission to raise funds for this memorial. In March, myself and a small group of Legion leaders toured the construction site. I received an update briefing on construction milestones. They are on track. Today, we are here to present the national fund-raising chairman, Senator Bob Dole, a symbolic check signifying the total contributions of more than $4.5 million dollars from The American Legion Family to be used in the construction of the memorial.

Joining in the presentation of this check to Senator Dole, are the American Legion Auxiliary National President, Sherry McLaughlin, The National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Cliff Smith. Herman Harrington, the Legion Internal Affairs Chairman and member of the National Fundraising Board working with the American Battle Monuments Commission, Retired Major General John Herrling, secretary of the ABMC, and the Chairman of the Memorial Advisory Board of the ABMC, Pete Wheeler. Also here are Mack Fleming member of the World War II Advisory Board of ABMC, and Major General, Patrick Brady United States Army (retired), member of the ABMC.

Introducing a famous veteran, a famous Senator, a true American, Senator Robert Dole.

Presentation: Senator Robert Dole
National Commander, Maryland

SEN ROBERT DOLE: I'll take just a few moments to say thank you on behalf of all the people of America, including all the people here and all the Legionnaires and their families across America and friends who donated to the World War II Memorial. As the National Chairman along with Fred Smith of Federal Express and many others who helped in this effort I'm just very proud to be here to accept this very generous donation.

I think it is fair to say that those of us World War II veterans who are still around don't need a memorial. It is not being built fo r us because most of us have already passed away. Of the 60.5 million World War II participants, we're down to about 5 million. We lose about 1,200 every day. Between now and the time of dedication which we hope will be early in the Spring of 2004, which isn't that far away, we'll lose another 1.5 million World War II veterans. So its just a great honor for me to represent all of those veterans and all of the heroes of World War II. I'd like to ask, I know there are a lot of World War II vets here, or widows of World War II veterans or orphan sons or daughters, please stand and receive a good round of applause.

Have you ever thought where you'd be today if we had not prevailed in World War II? Have you ever thought what language we'd be speaking had we not prevailed in World War II? Have you ever thought whether we could have a meeting like you're having in Charlotte, North Carolina, a free meeting where you can have an open discussion and criticize whatever your government or whoever you want to criticize and praise whatever you want to praise, had we not prevailed in World War II? I think sometimes we should forget, as we should, the past as we look to the future. But sometimes it is necessary to remember the past if we want to make certain we're going to be on the right track in the future.

I'm very proud to be a veteran. I'm very proud to be a life member of The American Legion. My father was very proud to be a member of The American Legion, one of the

proudest things he had in his life. He finally saved up enough money to buy a Legion suit. He thought The American Legion was just the greatest thing that ever happened. He was a World War I veteran. I would just say to all those in the audience today, veterans and sons of veterans and daughters of veterans, I just say thank you very much.

We were having trouble getting this off the ground because the war had been 50 years ago at the time. It was said that we didn't really need a memorial at the time, and does anybody really care? I finally decided that we that we were going to do this and get a group of veterans together. If they say we can't or shouldn't do it, we won't do it. If they say, we can't raise the money privately and we have to go to the government, we won't do it. Because my feeling was, and I think most of the people here, if we can't raise the money ourselves, we should not build a memorial. We shouldn't ask the government, we should save that money for veterans who need it, disabled veterans and others who need that$185 million dollars.

We had the meeting and we launched the effort and we've raised $187 million total. Only a small portion, I think less than $10 million, came from the government, for startup costs for the ground breaking. The rest of it has come from private individuals all across America, from people in this audience and audiences all across America, people who never served in World War II, people who were, maybe, fathers, farmers, teachers or shopkeepers, because we were all in the same boat. Some of us had on a uniform and some of us didn't. But we we're all apart of that same generation. We understood even though we were very young at the time that if we didn't prevail that somebody else would be running America. That's how it all started.

Once we turned The American Legion loose and they gave us a pledge and the Auxiliary, I remember being there to get a check presentation of $700,000. We certainly want to thank the Auxiliary. Let's have a special thank you for the American Legion Auxiliary for all of the work they have done. We wouldn't be this far without your help. We've had a lot of lawsuits filed. A lot of people said you shouldn't build this on the mall. And they had a group called Save The Mall. I thought we already saved the mall in World War II. We saved everything else, too. I don't know how many million dollars, maybe General Hurley can tell us how many million dollars, we've had to spend because the costs have gone up in the month after month we have been waiting to terminate lawsuits.

Finally, Congress—Democrats and Republicans—came together and said let's build it. Let's stop all of this foolishness and get the memorial built while there are still a few World War II veteran still around. I can tell you that's going to happen. In fact, Senator Thurmond has already asked for tickets. He's going to be 100 December 6th. We expect 200,000-300,000 at the dedication. It is going to be a great celebration, a celebration of peace and strength, not war and conflict. It's a chance to ponder upon what's happened since we were much younger.

I have been called many things in my life, being in politics, some I wouldn't want to repeat. But I'm out of politics now and learned when you get out of politics, your numbers go up. People suddenly can't remember why they were mad with you anymore. It's kind of nice. I thought politics was an honorable profession. But my political job was terminated in 1996. And I said, "What am I going to do now?" one thing I agreed to do was to help raise money for this memorial.

I want to tell you a story about one person in one place. In fact, it's Governor Ridge's hometown is Easton, Pennsylvania. I know there are people from Pennsylvania here. I know there are people from Kansas here. We had a call one day to the office that said, "I'd like to send some money to the World War II Memorial. Where do I send it?" A lady in my office gave the address and about 10 days later a handwritten check comes in the mail for

$1,000,000, the largest individual contribution we've received. Having been in politics, I was a little skeptical, so called this fellow. I had already put the check in the bank of course.

I said, "Mr. Acopion, did you send me a check for $1,000,000?" He said, "Yes." And I said, "I'm certainly pleased. Wouldn't you like to have us come to Easton, Pennsylvania and get the Governor and a lot of World War II veterans and have a little presentation ceremony?" He said, "No, I don't want any publicity. I came to this country, I'm an Armenian American, I came to this country with nothing, I'm 73 years of age. I've got a little business now. I couldn't have made it anywhere else but America. I want to do this and all I want is a seat at the ground breaking ceremony" And I said, "For a $1,000,000, you can have mine." And he came to the ground breaking.

I can tell you 100 different stories about sacrifices people made to send in $5 or $10, or school children with their pennies, dimes and quarters. People who went half way across the country to raise money for the World War II Memorial. So we understand the importance of every penny that was donated and we're going to make certain that every penny is spent wisely and not wasted, and that we have enough money left over to have a special preservation fund. So 10, 20, 40, 40 years from now, the memorial is going to look as good as it did on the day of dedication. And for that we thank you, and I appreciate it very much.

You pick up a lot of good things in the mail. A lot of things people send you, all of us, and one thing I received in the mail several years ago is a little poem called, *Around the Corner*. I think there's a message in it, particularly for veterans' groups, and their families, and their friends. Let me read this little poem:

Around the Corner

Around the corner I have a friend,
In this great city that has no end.
Yet days go by and weeks rush on
and before I know it a year is gone.
And I never see my old friend's face.
For life is a swift and terrible race.
He knows I like him just as well,
As in the days I rang his bell and he rang mine.
We were younger then,
and now we're busy, tired men.
Tired of playing foolish games.
Tired with trying to make a name.
Tomorrow I say I will call on Jim,
Just to show I am thinking of him.
But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes,
And the distance between us grows and grows.
Around the corner yet miles away,
Here's a telegram sir. Jim died today.
And that's what we get and deserve in the end.
Around the corner a banished friend.
[by Charles Hanson Towne]

The message is clear to me. We're losing twelve hundred World War II veterans a day. Were losing Korean War veterans, Vietnam Veterans, widows, children of veterans a day. Just one simple thing that I think would make a veteran's whole day, or a widow's whole

is to walk up to that person and say, "Thank you for your service." Five words. More and more people are doing that everyday. Don't wait until tomorrow to write that note, or to make that phone call. Because as this indicates, it may be too late. Maybe a friend you haven't had contact with, maybe a guy you served with, or somebody you knew in a hospital or somebody you knew somewhere else. You could make that person's day by just saying, "Hello, thank you for your service."

Thank you agin for all you do and God bless America.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Thank you Senator Dole for your leadership in raising the funds necessary for this long, overdue memorial and for your years of public service to our great nation. Rest assured as more contributions from The American Legion Family come in, they will be passed along.

Senator Dole, it is with pride and honor that I present this check to you on behalf of the more than four million members of The American Legion Family. Also, one of those witnessing the passing on of this check was Ken Danilson. He's the Chairman of our National Finance Commission. Of course, he's the man that signs all of our checks. So he was here to witness this transaction and assure you, Senator Dole, the validity of our donation and the commitment for the erection of this memorial.

If I could ask this one last question. We're nonpartisan and we're nonpolitical, but do I understand your wife is Elizabeth is running for U.S. Senate here in North Carolina?

SEN ROBERT DOLE: She's running for the Senate and she supports the Flag Amendment, too.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We have one more item to cover while we're in co-session then the American Legion Auxiliary, Madame President, and their offices, will move to reconvene theirs.

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Award
Richard J. Santos, National Commander, Maryland

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor The American Legion can bestow upon an individual. To be considered for the Distinguished Service Award one must demonstrate outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion. The man we honor this year has three strong characteristics among his core values: hard work, perseverance and civil service. Throughout his life he has demonstrated a love of God and country, and a passion for the law and our Constitution. He is a World War II U.S. Navy combat veteran, having served three-years aboard the *USS Tulagi*. He is a successful Arizona state legislator, and a 26-year member of the U.S. Congress.

His diligent and conscientious efforts helped to expedite the construction of the national World War II memorial when President Bush signed HR-16-96 into law on May 28, 2001. He is a staunch supporter of The American Legion on many issues, including the Flag Protection Amendment. He believes the American flag is the preeminent symbol of the broad freedoms established by our Constitution. It is with great pride and gratitude that I present the Distinguished Service Award, on behalf of all of the members of The American Legion, to the honorable Bob Stump, the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congressman Stump's health will not allow him to travel at this time. He did go to the House television center and sends his acceptance gratitude via videotape.

... here is the video of the acceptance by Bob Stump of the Distinguished Service Award.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Congressman Stump is truly deserving of our recognition and our heart-felt thanks. I ask that a videotape copy of this portion of the proceedings be sent to Congressman Stump so that he may hear and see our appreciation.

Join me in another round of applause for a great American, Congressman Bob Stump.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has been a strong and vocal advocate for our citizen soldiers in the Guard and Reserves. Likewise, we have supported the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve since it was established three decades ago.

As an employer, The American Legion signed a statement of support nearly 30 years ago and we are truly pleased to renew that commitment this morning.

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has prepared a special ceremony for this event and I'm pleased to introduce Lieutenant Colonel Mike Lovitt, Direct of Public Relations for the National Committee.

Presentation: Employer Support of The Guard and Reserve
Colonel Mike Lovitt, Director of Public Relations for the National Committee

COL LOVITT: It is an enormous thrill to be here today. It is hard not to have chill bumps when you're surrounded with 5,000 of the world's greatest patriots.

I am part of a contingent from the Department of Defense and a representative of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, ESGR, as we prefer to be called. ESGR as an organization was the outgrowth of the decision to eliminate the draft in 1972 and the beginning of our nation's total force policy. It placed a greater reliance on our National Guard and Reserve forces as it relates to our national military strategy. It was believed then, as we can see, very prophetically, that a strong national effort was needed to convey to employers the need for guardsmen and reservists to have time off to meet the ever growing training and worldwide mission requirements. Hence, we have the birth of our organization, ESGR.

Also, accompanying me today is Bob Hollingsworth. As Executive Director, Mr. Hollingsworth is the principle advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense on all matters related to employer support programs for all of our reserve forces.

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Thanks Col. Lovitt. It's an absolute delight for me to have the opportunity to talk to you briefly about some of the things that are happening throughout America that really makes America a great place to live. First of all, I'd like to thank Ric Santos and all of these wonderful people that made it possible for us to be here as well as, the other things that you make possible throughout our great nation because they are so significant.

There's no doubt that the tragic events that occurred on 9/11 galvanized our country, our business leaders, and our military together in a way that certainly has never occurred in my lifetime. It has been a pleasure for me to see just how well the business community has responded to support the Guard and Reserve.

I remember during President Bush's inauguration speech. He talked about our special responsibility to ensure and defend the freedoms that we have here in America. My organization accepts that responsibility, the United States military accepts that responsibility, and The American Legion has been accepting that responsibility since that memorable day in March of 1919. I'd like to thank you all for that.

I'm proud to be associated with the Legion and all of the things that you represent. This morning. we've heard some of the wonderful things that you have provided for our country. It's just exciting to be here to see those great things that you all do. You've spent countless hours supporting our military, and certainly, the Guard and Reserve, because they are inextricably linked to the national defense of our country. Many people are astounded when today I tell them that the 1.3 million young men and women in America's reserve and Guard are almost 50% of our total military structure.

Ten years ago we started a decline and strength of our military. We reduced the active duty military by 40%, we reduced the Guard and Reserve by 29%. During that same ten years, we have increased in the Guard and Reserve the support to the active components by 1,300%. We were providing ten years ago, a million man days of active duty support every year to the active components. Last year before 9/11, we had already provided 13 million. That represents about 35 thousand additional people, or 2 Army divisions extra that our military has to deal with which provides our security on a daily basis. Without the Guard and Reserve, we could not be executing the war on terrorism, we could not be defending our skies in America, and we could not respond quickly to the national emergencies that we have here at home. So we appreciate the support that our business community has given us.

How, you ask, do these businesses help? Right here in Charlotte. When the call came out to their employers, Duke Energy Corporation went above and beyond the law that says here's what must be done. They extended their benefits for a year to pay their salaries. The folks here at the Duke University Medical Center and the city of Charlotte, extended the equal pay and their medical benefits. One of my favorites is that there's a Lt. Col. in the Marine Corps who was just about ready to be promoted in his job. He worked for a pharmaceutical company. When they found out he was mobilized, they brought him in and they told him they were going to extend his salary for as long as he was going to be on active duty and let him keep his company car. They let him keep his company telephone and they promoted him right there before he went on active duty. That's the kind of support that we're seeing in America today. A lot of that is because of folks like you, who generate that kind of support in our local communities. We really appreciate all of those things that you do for us.

ESGR is an organization that's made up a lot like you, volunteers. We have 4,500 volunteers in each of the 50 states, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. We have just also implemented a committee in Europe. But they're made up of volunteers that do incredibly wonderful things. They're out there today engaged with the employers and with their Guard and Reservists doing conflict resolution, teaching them about USER, which is the law of Uniformed Services Employments and Reemployment Rights Act. We have one of those folks out here today, Bud Brown, the State Chairman for North Carolina. I'd like for Bud to stand up for you to give him a hand because there are incredible leadership trait that these folks have, and they do great things. Thank you. We appreciate you and your all committee members.

This is a necessary marriage. I see the coalition of us together with ESGR and with The American Legion as being something that is really good for our country and our nation. It makes the whole operation better and more efficient. We thank you. We must work together to build and strengthen the partnerships that is essential to ensuring that America's Guard and Reserves are available when the time comes. It's truly great to be a part of this. It is because of folks like you, that our young men and women are able to be activated and have a free mind to think about what they're doing on their job and not being concerned about their families and about their jobs when they come back.

The next speaker is Mr. Craig Duehring. He is the Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary Of Defense of Reserve Affairs. In that position, he is the key Advisor to Secretary Rumsfeld in all matters affecting the 1.3 million men and women that make up our reserve Forces.

MR. CRAIG DEUHRING: I wandered out here on the floor a little bit earlier and found some friends from my home state of Minnesota. Hopefully there are still a few of you. Next year you can come up closer.

Fellow members of The American Legion, I don't think there's person in this area who could not tell me where he or she was when he first heard of the events of September 11th. For those of us who were working at the Pentagon that morning, our memories retain the full technicolor vision of our feelings and our most personal thoughts that occurred that day. I've often heard September 11th compared to a similar event that occurred years prior. I'm speaking, of course, about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Now, like Pearl Harbor, the attack on 9/11, instantly shocked the nation and reached to depths of our emotions. Like December 7th, the events of 9/11 resulted in the feeling of national unity never experienced by the generations that lived in the 60 years that intervened. Indeed, this global war on terrorism will not be known asa the forgotten war like Korea, or the divided war like Vietnam. And it is certainly not a war over there but has been from the very beginning been a war that encompassed all Americans. For unlike Pearl Harbor, the target of the terrorist attack was not just the American military, but the American people. It is the American people who have responded. As it always happens when our homes, our families, and our way of life are threatened, we call upon the citizen soldiers of our nation, our cousins, our neighbors, our mothers and fathers, the strongest, the most trustworthy, the brightest, the most highly trained with all of these qualities that you find an abundance in the National Guard or Reserve components of the United States.

Last Friday, I had the privilege of meeting the members of one of these groups of America's citizen soldiers. The 5th Special Forces Battalion, Colorado Army National Guard, in Watkins, Colorado. These superb soldiers were in the midst of mobilizing for a dangerous deployment to the Middle East. As I watched, each one went about his task quietly, efficiently, and with a level of intensity that only a veteran of a similar deployment can appreciate. At the end of the visit, we all assembled in one large room. And I had their undivided attention for a few moments. I asked how many of them had been in combat before. And only about a half dozen had raised their hands. I knew that I had a golden opportunity to pass along a lesson learned by veterans who had preceded them in other wars, in other times.

I tried to think of what each one of you would say if you could summarize your wartime experience in one sentence. This is what I said, "Keep your faith in God, fight the way you train, and trust your buddy." I hope you approve of that. While it may fall to them too, as our President put it most eloquently, "Bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies. " It falls to us to see that they are able to carry out their duties without worrying about their families and their jobs. That is why this signing of a statement of support is vital to them. It is a visible sign of commitment that their sacrifices are appreciated. It is a sign of commitment that their families will be taken of in their absence, and it is a sign of commitment that employers everywhere will hold their jobs for them until they return. Thank you for your service to our country. Thank you for your support of our Guardsmen and Reservists. As out Commander is so fond of saying, "May God bless America."

LT COL LOVITT: To say that employers support the Guard and Reserve is important is an understatement. It is absolutely vital. As Mr. Duehring and Hollingsworth pointed out earlier, since 9/11 we have asked employers to go out of their way to show their support for

their employees by signing this statement of supporting. Momentarily, our National Commander will join a long list of patriots who have done the right thing by signing this document. Now as Ric Santos moves to the signing table, I ask that the ESGR and the DoD contingent please join him.

By signing the statement of support Mr. Santos is asking Legionnaires across this great country to join him in recognizing that the National Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being of our communities.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: By our signature, representing the 2.8 million members of The American Legion, we reaffirm our commitment and support of the Guard and Reserve. We urge you to return home, urge you to reemphasize this commitment and support to your local governments and businesses, to reaffirm their commitment and support to their employees that have been called to active duty in the Guard and Reserve. To this end, I ask you please do your efforts in your local communities, town, and cities on behalf of those families and members of our military.

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Just as something you can have to hang on your wall to remind you on a daily basis the support that you're giving our young men and women, I would like to present you with this. It's the proclamation that he just signed saying that he made a public commitment of support. We all know that you all do it anyway. It will remind you of the young men and women that are out there in harm's way doing our jobs for us.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: This plaque will be held in a place of prominence at our National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana to show our visitors our reaffirmation of commitment and support to the Guard and Reserve. Thank you for this recognition on behalf of all of the members of The American Legion.

MR. CRAIG DEUHRING: It is our hope that this statement of support document will become much like the yellow ribbon that we became so accustomed to seeing during the Gulf War. Next, we have a two minute video that tells the ESGR story in a very powerful way.

... here is a video about ESGR ...

MR. CRAIG DEUHRING: The staff of ESGR comes from the National Guard, Reserve, and active component units from across our great nation. Often times we will find that there will be a member there that will have some special talent. One such gifted member of our staff is Lt. Barbara Leonard who will come forward and entertain you with a powerful, patriotic medley.

I agree with you Ric. That was absolutely fantastic. Thank you again very much Barbara for having us. May God continue to bless this great nation of ours.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: In my trips to Europe, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo and the Far East, I've met many of our Reserve and National Guard members who have been mobilized and are serving on the frontiers of freedom. Since September 11th, more than 80,000 of these citizen-soldiers have been mobilized during the war on terrorism. And many more have been mobilized for on-going military missions worldwide. I'm particularly pleased to have three members of The American Legion's national staff who are active Reserve and National Guard members. With me at the podium are two, George Buskirk, who is the Adjutant General of the National Guard and Air National Guard for the Department of Indiana, and Sgt. 1st Class, Joe Sharpe, United States Army Reserve. The third who is not with us is in our offices in Indianapolis, Dave Elmore. He is in our Membership and Post Activities section for Internal Affairs.

I wanted their recognition because we do support the Guard and Reserve. When this call up was initiated, The American Legion ensured that they would pay the offset in pay

between the military pay and the pay of our employees in their absence on active duty. Through your efforts we did pass that on to private employers, small and large, and civic Government to do the same. We urge you to continue that effort.

I believe you have seen in the paper this week that certain guards and Reserves are going to enter into a second year of activation. That does place a heavy burden on that soldier, sailor, airmen, Marine or coastguard man, and their family. I thank you for providing this opportunity to learn more about our citizen soldiers and to renew our commitment to them. It is an honor to sign this statement of support on your behalf and recommit ourselves to this endeavor. It with great pleasure as well as the Legion tradition, that we sign that document. When you go home, commit yourself again, to the families of the Guard and Reserve and to those employees.

The Chair recognizes Fred Platt the Commander of China Post 1, in exile, for a presentation.

COMDR PLATT: Thank you Ric. If they'd flash that picture on the screen of Secretary Duehring on his trip to China Post. China Post operates in 70 countries around the world. We are attached through the Department of New York. Secretary Duerhing, this 21st of January held a Post meeting with banners and flags in place on the continent of Antarctica, at the South Pole, while contemporaneous meetings of China Post were held on the other six continents, making the occasion of China Post 1 being the first and only Post to meet on all seven continents. In honor, we have made a seven continents club certificate to present to Secretary Duehring. "To all who see these presents be advised that Craig Duerhing is a member of the seven continents club of the General's Warden Chenault, And Lieutenant Helseth, American Legion Post 1, Shanghai, China, d.b.a. China Post 1, operating in exile worldwide."

I present the first of these to Secretary Duerhing. We're in the process of building a Post museum at home which will end up being located in Houston, Texas.

We would like to have Secretary Duehring give the next three memberships in the Seven Continents Club to National Commander Ric Santos, National Adjutant Bob Spanogle, and to the Adjutant of New York, Mr. Dick Pedro.

MR. CRAIG DEUHRING: I just want to point out that we talk about the National Guard and Reserve being everywhere. I got to the South Pole and back, compliments of the New York Air National Guard with their ski equipped C103s. This is a remarkable group of people that we have out there. We have 74,000 National Guardsmen and Reservists that have been mobilized for operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. We have between 8,000-10,000 National Guardsmen and Reservist on duty at any given time in other categories for other things around the world. They're wonderful representatives of the American way of life.

I heard yesterday, when I was back at the Pentagon, somebody had just come back from Afghanistan working with the Civil Support people over there. These are the military folks who try to build communities when there is nothing to start with. You can't just leave rock behind you. You have to have liable societies. That's how you bring democracy to a country. The comment was made, "You can keep the United Nations programs, the other non-governmental organizations and give us the United States military, because they're the ones we trust and love and really take care of us."

NATL COMDR SANTOS: On behalf of Richard Pedro, Bob Spanogle, and myself we thank you for those presentations.

We'll call upon the National Adjutant for announcements.

Announcements: Robert Spanogle
National Adjutant, Maryland

There's been some inquiries from the Chair when contributions for various charitable purposes of The American Legion could be received. The Chair will receive contributions for the 9/11 fund after the report on Americanism. We will receive contributions from the Child Welfare Foundation after the report of Children and Youth. We will receive any contributions for the Emergency Disaster Relief Fund after the Report of Credentials and Internal Affairs Section II in today's session.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Kenneth Sercerchi of Maine, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters
Kenneth Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m. on August 25, 2002, a total of 80 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in Room 203A of the Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina, to consider 66 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. Kenneth Sercerchi of Maine was elected general chairman and Casey Martin of Nevada was appointed general secretary. Al Robotti of New Jersey was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and R. T. Lee of California was appointed secretary. Bill Christoffersen of Utah was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Henry Field of South Carolina was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of Ken Sercerchi (ME), Bill Christoffersen (UT), Al Robotti (NJ), and David Desmond (NC), and Richard T. Lee (CA) met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 23, 2002, in the Morehead Executive Boardroom of the Charlotte Hilton to make recommendations to the Convention Committees on Economics. The report of the screening committee was presented to the convention committees and was adopted with five resolutions set aside for separate consideration. The five resolutions set aside were 24 (MA), 132 (TX), 189 (UT), 107 (UT), and 111 (UT).

Resolution 24 (MA), as amended and consolidated, was further amended by the addition of the word "local" to two of its resolving clauses. Resolutions 132 (TX), 189 (NY), and 107 (UT) were discussed and accepted as presented. Resolution 111 (UT) was amended by a change of one word in its title.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing the meaning. The meeting was recessed at 10:20 a.m. subject to recall by the chair.

esolution No. 21: Adequate Funding For Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVERS) And The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)
Origin: Massachusetts
Submitted by: Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 127 (ND))

WHEREAS, Chapter 41, Title 38, U.S. Code provides for a veterans' employment, counseling and training program to be administered by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training within the Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 41 provides for the appointment of a State Director and Assistant Director for Veterans' Employment and Training; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Secretary of Labor shall:

1. **Submit to Congress an adequate budget for the operation of the Veterans Employment and Training Service, including funds for the National Staff, State Director, Assistant Directors and Program Assistants/ Secretaries for the states, and that such budget shall also include funds for Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program positions, which should be equitably distributed; and**
2. **Require fiscal accountability to ensure that funds for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and for the State Employment Service agencies are used for veterans' services or returned to the Department of Labor.**

Resolution No. 24: Support Veterans Preference In The Federal And State Work Forces
Origin: Massachusetts
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As amended and consolidated with Resolution No. 152 (ME))

WHEREAS, Our federal government specially selected as mentally, morally and physically fit, certain members from its society, specially trained this group, subjected them to stringent rules and regulations, removed them from home, family and employment, asked of them a special sacrifice, required some of them to suffer wounds they will live with forever; and

WHEREAS, A grateful nation through its representatives in the Congress of the United States and State Legislatures has in recognition of that special service and loss of employment opportunity while defending the country in time of need, extended a long history of employing the returning veterans by enacting the Veterans Preference Act as contained in Title 5, U.S.C., and Chapter 3-3, South Dakota Code; and

WHEREAS, The term "Veteran" includes every category of sex, age, religion, ethnic group, race and creed; and

WHEREAS, Absence from the highly competitive job market due to military service creates an unfair and unequal burden on veterans in competing for employment with non veteran peers upon completion of military service; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Preference Law accomplished the legislative purpose of honoring veterans and provides a small advantage in competing for Federal and State jobs, and

WHEREAS, There are prominent groups and individuals in the United States today who ignore the employment disadvantages accrued by individuals due to military service, who blindly allege that veterans preference is "discriminatory", who ignore the many judicial determinations upholding veterans preference, who blatantly over-emphasize the advantages of veterans preference although presumably aware of the fact that approximately 28 million veterans in our population have not chosen or have not been successful in obtaining a federal or state position; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion inform the President of the United States and Governor of each State that this organization deplores each and every attempt to degrade, dilute or modify the historical precedent of giving job eligibility preference to those who leave their communities to serve their country in time of war; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Congress and state legislators reject any and all proposed legislation that would reduce employment opportunities for veterans in the federal, state and local work force; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that the President and Governors exercise their veto power to reject any and all proposed legislation that would reduce employment opportunities for veterans in the federal, state or local work force.

Resolution No. 132: Oppose Any Weakening Of The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) And Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) Programs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of The United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the Armed Forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served the United States under the Constitutional Authority vested in, and by director of, the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers, and that veterans helping veterans has proven to be extremely effective; and

WHEREAS, In Title 38, United States Code, as Section 4101, "The Congress declares as its intent and purpose that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training counseling service program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible disabled veterans and eligible persons..."; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, the Congress of The United States to ensure that all veterans who served The United States in uniform in time of war and peace, are afforded such services in a uniform manner, following completion of their service and return to the several States; and

WHEREAS, HR 4015 has been passed by the House and sent to the Senate, which would change sections of Title 38 and eliminate the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be veterans and serve only veterans and reduce the direction and control of such employment assistance programs while relinquishing the direction of veteran services to the discretion

of the Governors of the several States and/or contracting of such services to for profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, HR 4015 also eliminates the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be assigned based on veteran intake and veteran populations, creates half time DVOP positions, thereby eliminating positions available to serve veterans or allowing positions to be assigned at the discretion of the individual state workforce agency, which may or may not adequately assign positions; and

WHEREAS, Such devolution of program responsibility will then be based on each States elected officials whim and will result in either limited services or such variations in employment assistance provided disabled veterans as to make a mockery of the expressions of the Congress found in Title 38 USC; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion oppose any such change in Title 38 which would weaken services to disabled veterans and eliminate the requirement that Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) staff be veterans, allow half time DVOP positions and allow the assignment of positions based on political influence instead of veteran populations and need; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion petition each member of Congress by letter to vigorously oppose removal of the enabling and resourcing provisions of Title 38, Section 41, of The United States Code that require:

- **DVOP and LVER staff be veterans;**
- **DVOP positions be full time;**
- **Veteran staff assignment be based on population and intake;**
- **Veteran staff provides services to veterans only.**

Resolution No. 189: Add Active Reservists To Those Eligible For Certain Job Training Service

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The demands of National Security in the 21st Century are placing greater emphasis on the Reserve members of our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The activation of Reserve Units can be expected to increase, thereby creating employment hardships for reservists; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend Title 38, US Code, Chapter 41, Section 4101(5) to add Subsection (D) to the list of "Eligible Persons" for Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Service for Veterans, to include members in good standing of an Active Reserve Unit of the Armed Forces of the United States who have completed basic and advanced Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) and have been awarded a Military Occupation Specialty.

Resolution No. 256: Support Priority Of Service For Veterans In All State Employment Services Agencies' (SESA) One-Stop Centers

Origin: Economics

Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Priority of service is practice prescribed by the Department of Labor (DOL) as a means of fulfilling the mandate of Title 38, United States Code (USC) to provide veterans with the maximum of employment and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service is defined and practiced as "the provision of services to veterans before the provision of such services to non-veterans"; and

WHEREAS, DOL is moving toward a One-Stop Center operation in each state; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service to veterans, as outlined by law (Title 38, USC, and 20 CFR), will be satisfied with the Federally funded service provider, so that each eligible veteran is afforded the full array of services in order to obtain meaningful employment; and

WHEREAS, The full array of services include, but are not limited to: job search workshops; labor market information; resume development; interviewing techniques; classroom training; support services; job restructuring; job referrals; vocational training; career counseling; job placement; employer information; case management; skills enhancement; selective placement; job development; child care information; temporary housing assistance; transportation assistance and discharge upgrade assistance; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the majority of these services are provided by the SESA's staff, to include the Veterans' Employment and Training Services' (VETS') employment professionals—Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirms support for priority of service for veterans, as outlined in Title 38, United States Code; and be it further

RESOLVED, That any agency provided Federal funding to provide veterans' employment and training services must adhere to priority of service, as outlined in Title 38, USC; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives continue to provide veterans' employment and training services within every State; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That all Department of Labor One-Stop Centers work with the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to ensure the operations of the One-Stop Centers meet or exceed the federally mandated priority of service for eligible veterans.

Resolution No. 257: Reaffirm Support For The Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) For All Separating And Retiring Personnel

Origin: Economics

Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, At the end of the Cold War the Department of Defense (DoD) dramatically downsized its personnel strength; and

WHEREAS, In an attempt to assist separating service members in making a successful transition back into the civilian workforce, Congress enacted Public Law (P.L.) 101-510; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 101-510 authorized the creation of the TAP; and

WHEREAS, TAP provides separating service members with three days of comprehensive training with emphasis on such topics as networking, how to conduct a job search; resume writing, career decision-making, interview techniques, as well as current occupational and labor market conditions; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's (DOL's) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides professional veterans' employment personnel, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), to participate in the TAP program; and

WHEREAS, Placing veterans in suitable employment sooner, the country benefits from increased income tax revenue and reduced unemployment compensation payments thus greatly offsetting the cost of TAP training; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirms its strong support of the Transition Assistance Program; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense require all separating, active-duty service members be given an opportunity to participate in Transition Assistance Program training not less than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the Armed Forces.

Resolution No. 258: Support Full Funding For Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS)
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 134 (TX))

WHEREAS, Within the Department of Labor (DOL) annual discretionary appropriations, the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) receives funding for the administration of various employment programs; and

WHEREAS, VETS provides such programs as the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), the Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, and the National Veterans' Training Institute; and

WHEREAS, VETS programs provide quality employment services to enrolled veterans and potential employers; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), provides a Federally mandated staffing formula for both DVOPs and LVERs; and

WHEREAS, Historically, Congress has failed to fully staff all DVOP and LVER positions in each state; and

WHEREAS, Meaningful employment is a proven effective approach to homelessness among many homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, The goal of VETS is assisting all eligible veterans in obtaining meaningful employment through proactive assistance and aggressive training; and

WHEREAS, NVTI provides VETS with standardizes training for veterans' employment professionals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continues to advocate full funding and staffing for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and its effective programs.

Resolution No. 259: Support Improvement Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS)
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is an agency within the Department of Labor (DOL) dedicated to providing America's veterans with quality employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) is responsible for ensuring that the agency continues to meet its mission ; and

WHEREAS, The ASVET is committed to taking aggressive actions to improve the quality, timeliness, and accessibility to veterans' employment and training services within every State; and

WHEREAS, VETS' programs must meet the needs of veterans facing employment barriers; and

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion continue to work closely with LVERs and DVOPs in local communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, Although Title 38, USC, identifies duties and responsibilities of LVERs and DVOPs, the ASVET cannot accurately capture necessary data to adequately assess performance outcomes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly support improvements in the programs available to and administered by Veterans' Employment and Training Service; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training establish clear performance standards and a means of collecting data to properly measure performance at the local, state, and national level.

Resolution No. 260: Support Licensure and Certification Of Active-Duty Service Personnel
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, DoD establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation with the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupational career fields in the Armed Forces can easily translate to a civilian counterpart; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupations in the civilian workforce that required a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, In the Armed Forces, these unique occupations are performed to approved military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria; and

WHEREAS, Upon separation, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement; and

WHEREAS, This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service; and

WHEREAS, A study by the Presidential Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 military professions where civilian credentialing is required; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill was authorized to pay up to $2,000 for the cost of each credentialing examination for eligible service members; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill is not authorized to pay for civilian licenses or to pay for necessary preparatory course work for the credentialing examinations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support

efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that service members be trained, tested, evaluated and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support making the Montgomery GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

Resolution No. 261: Support Improvements Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS) Performance Standards
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Federal law required the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) to establish performance standards for evaluating state employment services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, The General Accounting Office (GAO) publicly criticized VETS because its current performance standards focus more on process than on results; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's *1997 Annual Report* showed that while nine states met that agency's performance standards, they placed fewer than 10 percent of veteran registrants; and

WHEREAS, A 1997 report by GAO indicated that 18 states placed fewer than one-in-five veterans who came to the State Employment Service Agencies for assistance; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds these statistics unacceptable; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek and support a revision of existing Veterans' Employment and Training Service reporting requirements for measuring performance standards and for determining compliance with requirements for providing employment services to veterans.

Resolution No. 262: Support The National Veterans' Training Institute
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Public Law 100-323 established the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) as the primary training center for veterans' employment program staff and state employment security agency staff nationwide; and

WHEREAS, NVTI has provided several thousand training sessions for State Employment Security Agency staff, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff and Department of Defense staff; and

WHEREAS, NVTI provides standardized training for veterans' advocates providing employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, NVTI's positive impact on the quality of services, provides veterans with well-trained vocational specialists across the country; and

WHEREAS, NVTI's annual budget continues to be flat-lined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion

reaffirms continued support of full funding of the National Veterans' Training Institute.

Resolution No. 263: Continued Support Of Veterans Preference In Hiring By Federal Contractors
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to provide hiring preference to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code (USC), in the employment and advancement with Federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, The majority of the employers covered under the section cited above continue to ignore or fail to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continues to support veterans preference in hiring by Federal contractors.

Resolution No. 265: Oppose The Transfer Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service To The Department Of Veterans Affairs
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with 41 (ND), 130 (TX), 182 (NY))

WHEREAS, Veterans' employment programs began after World War I when the U.S. Employment Service helped place returning veterans in civilian jobs; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service is headed by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training; and

WHEREAS, VETS administers veterans' employment program grants that funds nearly 3,000 state employment service agencies' Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives; and

WHEREAS, VETS coordinates veterans' workforce investment programs with related Department of Veterans Affairs programs and activities; and

WHEREAS, VETS administers homeless veterans' reintegration project grants; and

WHEREAS, VETS facilitates Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for separating service members;

WHEREAS, VETS monitors veterans' preference for federal employment, in cooperation with the Office of Personnel Management; and

WHEREAS, VETS supervises the listing of jobs by federal contractors and the subsequent referrals of qualified veterans; and

WHEREAS, VETS administers a $2 million contract to operate the National Veterans' Training Institute, which provides training for federal and state employees involved in the direct delivery of employment and training related services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, VETS is organized with a national, seven regional, and 52 state-level offices by statute; and

WHEREAS, VETS works closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation Program to assist enrolled veterans in job search efforts throughout their rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has recommended transferring VETS from DOL to VA; and

WHEREAS, DOL has expertise in job placement, job development, vocational counseling, vocational testing, job search training, and many other area of employment services; and

WHEREAS, VA has very little experience in job placement, job development, vocational counseling, vocational testing, job search training, an any other area of employment services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion opposes all legislative or administrative efforts to transfer Veterans' Employment and Training Service from Department of Labor to Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 268: Oppose Eliminating Or Outsourcing Of Veterans' Employment And Training Services (VETS) Programs
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of the United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the Armed Forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served the United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In Section 4301, Title 38, United States Code (USC), Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), "to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service"; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of disabled veterans of the Armed Forces are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, In Section 4101, Title 38, USC, "The Congress declares as its intent and purpose that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training counseling service program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible veterans/disabled veterans and eligible persons....."; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, Congress to ensure that all veterans/disabled veterans are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, Legislation is under consideration that will seek to minimize Federal oversight of the programs operated under Title 38, by outsourcing the programs and give the individual Workforce Development Boards the option of operating veterans' programs; and

WHEREAS, This legislation would seek to remove the job descriptions of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) from Title 38, USC, and allow each State to establish the duties and responsibilities, thus creating 50 difference VETS programs across the country; and

WHEREAS, This legislation would seek to remove the Federally mandated manning formulas for DVOPs and LVERs and allow each State to determine the number of veterans' employment personnel in each State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion opposes

outsourcing of veterans' employment services to any entity other than the State Employment Services Agencies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes removing the duties and responsibilities of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative from Title 38; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes removing the manning formulas for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative from Title 38; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training retaining jurisdiction over all veterans' employment and training services.

Resolution No. 270: Amend Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with 212 (MI))

WHEREAS, The 105th Congress passed the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 and limited employment opportunities to only those veterans with three or more years of honorable service to the United States; and

WHEREAS, There are many various situations where a service member may be discharged with an honorable discharge in less than the three years, as defined by the new law; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes this to be an oversight by the 105th Congress, and recommends that an amendment to Public Law (P.L.) 105-339 be made to include all those who honorably served at least 179 days or more in the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, It would not be discriminatory to those who served honorably, but for some reason beyond their control were discharged in a period less than three years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That an amendment to Section 3304, Title 5, United States Code be made to include all those who honorably served the United States at least 179 days or more.

Resolution No. 271: Hire A Veteran Week
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 213 (MI))

WHEREAS, The United States of America recognizes the importance of "Hire a Veteran Week" to promote the employment of veterans; and

WHEREAS, It is known that of the unemployed, the percentage of unemployed veterans is greater than their non-veteran contemporaries; and

WHEREAS, There is presently no national "Hire a Veteran Week" program; and

WHEREAS, By having a Federally recognized national "Hire a Veteran Week," the President or Congress would publicly encourage the hiring of veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion

supports Congress establishing "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the President of the United States issue an executive order declaring "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year.

Resolution No. 272: Support Staffing Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), As Required By Law
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 20 (MA))

WHEREAS, Under Section 4104a(2)(A), Title 38, United States Code (USC), states that at least one LVER shall be assigned to each local employment office having at least 1,100 veterans registered and an additional LVERs be assigned for each additional 1,600 veterans registered above the 1,100 base; and

WHEREAS, Under the current LVER allocation formula, as utilized by the Department of Labor (DOL), there are inadequate annual appropriations to several states because of policies and practices which cause these states to receive fewer positions and less funding; and

WHEREAS, This procedure caused a deterioration of the available services provided to veterans in those states; and

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law 100-323, the level of funding for these Federally mandated positions has been below the level required for the program to be effective; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion petitions Congress and the President of the United States to adhere to the allocation formula in Chapter 41, Title 38, United States Code, and assign all Federally-mandated Local Veterans Employment Representative positions in each State.

Resolution No. 273: Reaffirm Support For Service Members Occupational Conversion And Training Act (SMOCTA)
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with 23 (MA), 217 (MI))

WHEREAS, In 1992, Congress enacted the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA), which became Public Law (P.L.) 102-484; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was a transitional tool designed to provide job training and employment to certain veterans discharged from the military after August 1, 1990; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA helped eligible veterans enter the civilian workforce through training in a stable and permanent position that involved significant training; and

WHEREAS, VA made monthly payments to employers who employed and trained eligible veterans in these jobs, and made a final lump sum payment when the trainee had completed the training program and was employed for four months; and

WHEREAS, These payments aided employers in defraying the necessary costs of training; and

WHEREAS, To be eligible for participation in the SMOCTA program, the veteran must meet at least one of the following criteria: (a) have a primary or secondary military occupational specialty that the Department of Defense (DoD) has determined is not readily

transferable to the civilian work force; or (b) be entitled to compensation (or would be entitled to compensation but for the receipt of military retired pay) for a VA service-connected disability rate of 30 percent or more; or (c) be unemployed and have been unemployed for at least eight of the last 15 work weeks before filing an application; and

WHEREAS, Veterans eligible for job training under SMOCTA were precisely those individuals who need the most assistance in making a successful transition to the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, DoD, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March 1993, which defined their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SMOCTA; and

WHEREAS, DoD provided funding for SMOCTA, while VA and DOL are responsible for administering the program; and

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the MOU, the SMOCTA program would terminate when all funds provided by DoD are expended or at such time as agreed upon by all parties; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was the only Federal job training program available to strictly for veterans; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was the only Federal job training program specifically designed and available for use by State veterans' employment personnel to assist veterans with barriers to employment; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA offered financial incentives for employers to hire SMOCTA-eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was officially terminated on July 26, 2001; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports legislation to reauthorize the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek adequate funding for Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act.

Resolution No. 274: Support Tax Credits For Certain Employers
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 153 (ME))

WHEREAS, More than 265,300 members of the Armed Forces reserves and National Guard served on active duty during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990-1991); and

WHEREAS, According to Defense Manpower Data Systems, since 1991, an additional 63,938 members of the reserve components served on active duty during the military operations know as Southern Watch, Joint Forge and Uphold Democracy; and

WHEREAS, Currently another 80,000 reserve components are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of those men and women left jobs and careers in the civilian community to answer the call of their country; and

WHEREAS, Many of those veterans and their families suffered economic hardship as the result of that service because the military salaries they received while on active duty were often much lower than the salaries paid by their civilian employers; and

WHEREAS, While some employers were able to make up the difference between their employee's military pay and their regular civilian salary, most employers could not, or would not, make up the difference between the two; and

WHEREAS, There is no incentive for employers to make up the difference between an employee's military pay and their regular salary; and

WHEREAS, The financial disadvantages suffered by many members of the Armed Forces reserves and National Guard who are called to active duty could very possibly serve as a major impediment to the recruitment and retention of a competent reserve component of the military total force; and

WHEREAS, The recent downsizing of Armed Forces resulted in increased reliance on reserves and National Guard units for military operation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation providing tax credits to any employer who either pays an employee who is called to active duty their regular salary or who makes up the difference between that person's military pay and their regular civilian salary.

Resolution No. 275: Support Recognition Of Military Service And Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Office of Personnel Management's interpretation of Section 531.203 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations is as follows: "These regulations provide that a hiring agency may consider a rate of basic pay previously received by the individual in a position in any branch of the Federal Government as his or her 'highest previous rate.' The highest previous rate is used at the agency's discretion and no employee is guaranteed the use of his or her highest previous rate in setting his or her pay. Although this law does not allow the use of military pay rates to determine the rate of basic pay that may be paid to an individual upon appointment to a civil service position, agencies do have the ability to pay above the minimum rate of the grade when the new employee has superior qualifications or the agency has special needs for a candidate's service."; and

WHEREAS, That interpretation has the potential for placing a former member of the Armed Forces at a financial disadvantage because it does not require the hiring agency to consider the applicant's military experience and highest military pay as the basis for calculating that person's starting salary when entering into federal employment as a civilian; and

WHEREAS, This quirk in the law clearly discriminates against the former Armed Forces member because the hiring agency is not required to take that person's military experience and military pay history into consideration when calculating his/her starting salary; and

WHEREAS, While in the military, the veteran was in the service of the Federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that requires Federal agencies to take an employee's military experience and military pay history into consideration when computing that employee's starting civilian salary.

Resolution No. 276: Employment Of Veterans In Government Workforce
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Of the approximately 280 million Americans, only 24.5 million have served this country in its Armed Forces and are considered military veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) provided these Americans specifically to win wars; and

WHEREAS, These individuals receive a variety of training that developed both transferable and non-transferable job skills; and

WHEREAS, Transferable skills are those job skills common within the civilian workforce and enhance the employability of military veterans; and

WHEREAS, Non-transferable skills are those job skills uncommon within the civilian workforce and fail to enhance the employability of military veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted legislation, Veterans Preference Act, to enhance the employability of all military veterans, especially those with service-connected medical conditions, within the Federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Preference provides fully qualified, eligible military veterans with a hiring preference in the Federal workforce; and

WHEREAS, Veterans' status is an earned benefit based solely on honorable military service; and

WHEREAS, There are Federal agencies that employ very few military veterans, thus ignoring the Federal mandate of Veterans Preference; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the President of the United States enforce Veterans Preference in all Federal agencies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress conduct oversight investigations of all Federal agencies to determine equitable application of Veterans Preference; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) closely monitor all Federal hiring to ascertain compliance with Veterans Preference and direct immediate disciplinary action for hiring officials ignoring Veterans Preference.

Resolution No. 277: Support Disabled Veterans As Priority Under Americans With Disabilities Act
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 215 (MI))

WHEREAS, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 gave new and deserved emphasis to the employment problems of people with disabilities and recognized them as a specific group who need special consideration; and

WHEREAS, The attempt is made in other laws also to address these problems, specifically the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the handicapped; Title 38 USC, Chapter 42 for disabled veterans who have barriers to employment; and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which mandates the non-discrimination in employment requirements covering race, religion, age, sex and national origin; and many employers are required to have a written Affirmative Action Plan in order to avoid discrimination against any of these groups; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, Chapter 42 also contains specific requirements for federal contractors and federal agencies to take affirmative action to hire and promote minorities and disabled veterans; although in actual practice there is no breakdown by priority of

affirmative action for minorities, disabled veterans or the handicapped as specific groups; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the high incidence of employment problems among disabled veterans is not enough; and in order to implement the plans and ensure actual practice of affirmative action, the disabled should be considered separately from minorities for preferential treatment by all entities who have affirmative action requirements under law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges Congress to enact legislation that gives disabled veterans priority in affirmative action as a group within the other designated groups for which affirmative action is required.

Resolution No. 278: Support Job Protection For Service-Connected Veterans Requiring Visits At VA Facilities
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to ensure that no veteran shall be denied employment, reemployment, advancement or discrimination in employment for serving the country's call to colors, whether such service was voluntary or involuntary, as provided for in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, formerly the Veterans' Reemployment Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of employers throughout the country have very stringent attendance policies, that DO result in termination for continued attendance violations; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who are required to report to the Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation and pension examinations, as well as treatment for a service connected or service aggravated condition, are exposed to termination, lack of promotional opportunities and other forms of unjustifiable retaliations from employers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to adopt and enforce provisions of protection from any employer, against any veteran who is required to report to the Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation or pension evaluations, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, or treatment for any service-connected condition that is being treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 279: Urge State Employment Security Agencies To Report Veterans' Wages At Placement
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Employment services for veterans vary greatly from one area of the country to the next; and

WHEREAS, This uneven quality of employment services to unemployed veterans ranges from a veterans placement rate (veterans placed in jobs divided by veteran applicants) of an estimated low of six percent (6%) to a high of over twenty-five percent (25%), even among economically comparable areas; and

WHEREAS, Provisions of the "GI Bill" (codified at Chapter 41, Title 38, U.S. Code) clearly require the highest quality of employment assistance for all veterans who use the public employment service; and

WHEREAS, Possibly the single best key to the quality of job placement is wage received at placement, but the U.S. Department of Labor deleted this reporting requirement, relative to veterans only, a number of years ago; and

WHEREAS, The job-related characteristics of veteran state employment service applicants, such as attained education, are ordinarily superior to other applicants, but the fact that veterans' wages at placement are an unknown quantity, prevents comparison with other applicants, as well as comparison with the veteran's prior wage which could be recorded in the "Work History" section or other portion of the Job Service application; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) claims that there is a prohibitively high cost of future reporting on this single data item, wages of placed veterans, in spite of numerous data items already reported on veterans, as recorded in DOL report 9002; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the State Employment Security Agencies to voluntarily report separately on veterans' wages at placement; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Congress and the Department of Labor to arrange for such reporting by state and nationwide, through federal law or executive action.

Resolution No. 280: Credit Service Of Military Retirees Towards Federal Employment Benefits
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Title 5 of the United States Code (USC) allows military veterans entering federal employment to apply all military service to the accrual of annual leave; and

WHEREAS, Title 5 of the USC allows retired veterans entering federal employment to apply only certain "qualifying periods" of military service to the accrual of annual leave; and

WHEREAS, Retired military veterans are no less veterans than non-retired veterans, and indeed have contributed greater service; and

WHEREAS, Retired military veterans, by virtue of their greater service, deserve treatment at least equal to that of non-retired veterans; and

WHEREAS, While retired/retainer pay is awarded for several reasons, it is not awarded as compensation for accepting less than those who gave lesser service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek and support legislation to amend Title 5, United States Code, to allow military retirees entering federal service to credit all military service to accrual of annual leave.

Resolution No. 281: Veterans Hiring Preference For Federal Contractors
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to provide affirmative action to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, 38 USC in the employment and advancement with federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, The mandated VETS 100 reports indicate that the majority of the employers covered under the section cited above have ignored or failed to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code by removing the terms Vietnam era and special disabled and replacing with "veteran" and "special emphasis on disabled veterans."

Resolution No. 282: Veterans Hiring Preference From Employers With Federal Grants
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The employment of veterans should be one of the highest priorities of the federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive preference from employers that receive grants from the federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive preference from employers that receive contracts on federally assisted projects and other target groups do receive special hiring consideration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seeks to ensure that veterans receive preference from employers with grants and contracts from the federal government and preference from employers that receive funding on all federally assisted projects.

Resolution No. 286: Job Protections For Service Connected Disabled Veterans Requiring Medical Treatment Or Examinations At VA Facilities
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Executive Order 5396 signed by President Hoover in 1933 extended certain privileges and protections for disabled veterans needing medical treatment for their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, These veterans who are employed by the federal government must be granted annual, sick, or leave without pay for treatment of a service connected disability without penalty; and

WHEREAS, The Executive Order does not extend these rights and protections to those who must report for a compensation or pension examination; and

WHEREAS, These protections extend only to employees of the Federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek legislation that would extend to any disabled veterans employed by Federal, State, City, County, Municipal or private employer the privileges and protections contained in the provisions of Executive Order 5396; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Labor's Office of Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) be charged with enforcement of this provision.

Resolution No. 288: Support The Development Of Veterans On-The-Job Training Opportunities
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, In years past there have been special employment initiatives for employment of veterans; and

WHEREAS, One was the Servicemembers Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA), and the other was the Veteran's Job Training Act (VJTA); and

WHEREAS, These programs were designed to provide financial incentives for employers to hire certain categories of veterans and have expired; and

WHEREAS, These were highly successful programs because employers were able to defray some costs associated with training these veterans; and

WHEREAS, There have been numerous changes to the Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) making it easier for veterans to obtain higher education and even a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, The MGIB can be a useful tool to help employers defray the costs of training of veterans by developing an on-the-job training (OJT) program thereby benefitting both the veteran and employer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support the development of an outreach program to veterans and employers to develop on-the-job training (OJT) programs for eligible veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the development of joint projects to enhance OJT opportunities for eligible veterans through the Montgomery GI Bill.

Referred to the Standing Economic (Employment & Veterans Preference) Commission

Resolution No. 220: (NY) Disabled Veterans Be Identified As A Priority Category in Affirmative Action Programs

Committee on Other Economic Matters

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approval

Resolution No. 169: Home Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P. L.346, 78th Congress) established, among other things, a home loan guaranty program that was to be administered by the Veterans Administration, which later became the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and

WHEREAS, The two purposes of the original program were to help returning World War II veterans in their readjustment to civilian life and to stimulate the economy by assisting those veterans in obtaining mortgage financing from the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Because of the popularity and success of the DVA Loan Guaranty Program, and because it benefitted the American economy as well as eligible veterans, Congress decided to make that five-year pilot program permanent; and

WHEREAS, To date the DVA has guaranteed 17 million loans to eligible veterans and has, for the most part, maintained a default rate that compares very favorably with the default rate on private sector mortgages; and

WHEREAS, While many of the veterans who have participated in this program could have obtained private sector financing, many others could not have qualified for conventional mortgages; and

WHEREAS, Congress has made numerous changes over the years in attempts to improve this VA program, including authorizing certain pilot programs; and

WHEREAS, In 1992 Congress authorized DVA to conduct a three-year pilot program which allowed VA to guarantee Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs); and

WHEREAS, During that three-year period the DVA's ARM program became very popular and accounted for approximately 22 percent of all loans guaranteed by the DVA; and

WHEREAS, One of the attractive features of an ARM is that it allows the borrower to obtain a home loan with an interest rate below that of a normal fixed rate loan, thus allowing that person to select the financing option that best suits their needs; and

WHEREAS, Because the DVA's ARM program was underwritten much more conservatively than ARMs available in the conventional market, very few loans went into default; and

WHEREAS, Although the DVA and Congress were in favor of making the program permanent, the Congressional Budget Office blocked a permanent extension because it believed that the cost would be $36 million per year, even though the DVA had proven that it could run that program at a lower cost; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirm its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Loan Guaranty Service and its Programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to reinstate the Department of Veterans Affairs' Adjustable Rate Mortgage program; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support any administrative and/or legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the Loan Guaranty Service's ability to serve America's veterans.

Resolution No. 254: Reaffirm Support Of The Small Business Administration's Office Of Veterans' Business Development

Origin: Economics

Submitted by: Economics

(As consolidated with Resolution No. 16 (MA))

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served this country is a traditional veterans' benefit that dates back to the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Among veterans' benefits is assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small business; and

WHEREAS, Veteran-owned small businesses are good for the economy in the local community, state, and nation; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support the efforts of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development in its initiatives to provide enhanced outreach to veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation that would permit the Office of Veterans' Business Development to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals.

Resolution No. 255: Support Preference For Veteran-Owned Businesses
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 14 (MA))

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a veterans' benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion encourages the Congress to require a reasonable set-aside of Federal procurement and contracts for businesses owned and operated by veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That veteran-owned businesses adversely impacted by Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommendations receive the highest priority.

Resolution No. 264: Home Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 108 (UT))

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has been in effect since 1944; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has afforded approximately 17 million veterans the opportunity to purchase homes; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program offers veterans a centralized, affordable and accessible method of purchasing homes in return for their service to this nation; and

WHEREAS, Currently the loan guaranty limit is $252,500; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty limit be raised to at least $300,000, and also be geographically adjusted as local market conditions require.

Resolution No. 266: Delimiting Date For Using The GI Bill
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation, and

WHEREAS, The intent of the Veterans GI Bill for education is primarily to assist veterans in retraining so that they may find productive jobs, and

WHEREAS, The delimiting date for using these benefits is ten years from separation from active-duty, which encourages recently separated veterans to complete formal education in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, The current job market requires highly trained individuals from accredited institutions; and

WHEREAS, There continues to be instability within the workforce due to technological advances that could make a vocation obsolete thus requiring retraining, well after the 10-year delimiting date; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support retaining the ten-year delimiting period for veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide a waiver to any eligible veteran beyond the ten-year limit on a case-by-case basis.

Resolution No. 267: Support Major Enhancements For The Montgomery GI Bill
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill, served as the primary means for reintegrating millions of returning World War II veterans into American society; and

WHEREAS, The GI Bill was responsible for allowing returning World War II veterans and their families to achieve the American dream – an education, a home, a stable and profitable career, and ownership in their own businesses; and

WHEREAS, The original GI Bill benefits package returned to the United States Treasury many times the initial investment through increased tax collections and is considered by many experts as the greatest piece of social legislation ever enacted; and

WHEREAS, The current veterans' educational benefit, the Montgomery GI Bill, has failed to keep pace with escalating educational costs and is significantly diminished in relation to the unique educational benefits offered in the original GI Bill; and

WHEREAS, Today's military educational benefits package directly competes with other federally funded educational programs, such as AmeriCorps, Pell Grants and others that offer equal or greater monetary benefits with less personal sacrifice and hardship; and

WHEREAS, The veterans' educational benefits package for the 21st Century must be designed to recruit outstanding individuals to meet the needs of the United States Armed Forces and to serve as a successful transition instrument from military service back into the civilian workforce; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support passage of major enhancements to the current All-Volunteer Force Education Assistance Program, better known as the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB); and be it further

RESOLVED, That the dollar amount of the entitlement should be indexed to the average cost of college education including tuition, fees, textbooks and other supplies for a commuter student at an accredited university, college or trade school for which they qualify; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the educational cost index should be reviewed and adjusted annually; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a monthly tax-free subsistence allowance indexed for inflation must be part of the educational assistance package; and be it further

RESOLVED, That enrollment in the MGIB shall be automatic upon enlistment, however, benefits will not be awarded unless eligibility criteria have been met; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the current military payroll deduction ($1200) required for enrollment in MGIB must be terminated; and be it further

RESOLVED, That if a veteran enrolled in the MGIB acquired educational loans prior to enlisting in the Armed Forces, MGIB benefits may be used to repay existing educational loans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That if a veteran enrolled in the MGIB becomes eligible for training and rehabilitation under Chapter 31 of Title 38, United States Code, the veteran shall not receive less educational benefits than otherwise eligible to receive under MGIB; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a veteran may request an accelerated payment of all monthly educational benefits upon meeting the criteria for eligibility for MGIB financial payments, with the payment provided directly to the educational institution; and be it further

RESOLVED, That separating service members and veterans seeking a license or credential must be able to use MGIB educational benefits to pay for the cost of taking any written or practical test or other measuring device; and be it further

RESOLVED, That eligible veterans shall have 10 years after discharge to utilize MGIB educational benefits; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That eligible members of the Select Reserves who qualify for MGIB educational benefits shall receive not more than half of the tuition assistance and subsistence allowance payable under the MGIB and have up to 5 years from their date of separation to use MGIB educational benefits.

Resolution No. 107: Amend The Internal Revenue Code For Qualified Veteran Definition

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, The States of Oregon, Alaska, Wisconsin, California, and Texas have authority in the Federal Tax Code to issue Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bonds to finance their respective veteran home loan programs; and

WHEREAS, Veterans' eligibility under current federal tax law restricts the eligibility to veterans who served on active duty prior to January 1, 1977; and

WHEREAS, The Directors of Veterans Affairs of the aforementioned states are desirous of extending their respective veteran home loan programs to include the men and women of the United States of America dispatched to participate in the conflicts in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and Southwest Asia (Persian Gulf); and

WHEREAS, Veterans of these aforementioned conflicts should receive benefits consistent with the benefits available to veterans of previous armed conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Those veterans have been qualified for eligibility into congressionally chartered veterans' organizations by prior acts of the Congress of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Congress of the United States be urged to amend Paragraph 4 of Section 143(I) of the Internal Revenue Code

of 1986 to read: "Qualified Veteran. – For the purpose of this subsection, the term 'qualified veteran' means any veteran who meets such requirements as may be imposed by the state law pursuant to which qualified veterans' mortgage bonds are issued."

Resolution No. 111: Veterans Preference For Housing In The Department Of Housing And Urban Development
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Economics
(As amended)

WHEREAS, There are nearly 12,000,000 living American veterans over the age of 60; and

WHEREAS, Because many of those veterans are living on fixed incomes, it is often difficult if not impossible for them to provide adequate housing for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates affordable housing programs for senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, Many needy and deserving veterans are unable to participate in those housing programs because of long waiting lists; and

WHEREAS, A large percentage of those occupying HUD housing are legal and illegal aliens who have never served this country's Armed Forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports any legislative or administrative initiative that will give preference to American veterans and their families in obtaining housing through the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Resolution No. 283: Funding For Homeless Programs
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has passed legislation to fund the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, the Homeless Domiciliary Care Program and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) rehabilitation program; and

WHEREAS, Some of these programs have been in partnership with veterans service organizations and other non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, There are estimates ranging from 250,000 to one million veterans who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been an active partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with the Health Care for Homeless Veterans and CWT programs; and

WHEREAS, These programs have proved to be successful in rehabilitation of the veteran in helping him/her to become a productive citizen again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion renew its commitment to assisting homeless veterans and their families; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to support the efforts of public and private sector agencies and organizations with the resources necessary to aid homeless veterans and their families; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek and support any legislative or administrative proposal that will provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall call on the Congress of the United States to keep the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, the Homeless Domiciliary program and the Compensated Work Therapy Rehabilitation program funded separately from general United States Department of Veterans Affairs funding.

Resolution No. 151: Full Funding For Small Business Loans In VA
Origin: Maine
Submitted by: Economics
(As consolidated with Resolution No. 22 (MA))

WHEREAS, Small business is the backbone of the American economy; and

WHEREAS, More than nine out of every ten businesses are small firms which produce almost one-half of the Gross Domestic Product; and

WHEREAS, Over one-half of the Nation's work force is employed by small business, with the average company employing approximately 11 persons; and

WHEREAS, America has benefitted immeasurably from the service of its 27 million living veterans, who made great sacrifices in the defense of freedom, the preservation of democracy, and the protection of the free enterprise system; and

WHEREAS, Reliable sources have estimated that 20 percent of all small businesses are owned and operated by veterans; and

WHEREAS, Because of the status of the economy over the past few years, many thousands of workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and have been unsuccessful in finding new employment; and

WHEREAS, One way of combating unemployment is through the creation of new jobs; and

WHEREAS, Government can help to create new jobs by encouraging qualified entrepreneurs to start new small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs either do not qualify for the direct or guaranteed loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA), or do not apply for such a loan because of the red tape involved in obtaining an SBA loan; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed legislation in the early 1980s that amended Chapter 37 of Title 38, United States Code, to establish a pilot veterans' small business program that was to be administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and

WHEREAS, The DVA's small business loan program was never funded and was allowed to sunset on Sept. 30, 1986; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs could realize their dreams of going into business if the DVA's small business loan programs were available to them; and

WHEREAS, The DVA estimates that if its small business loan program is authorized it will help to cushion the impact of the downsizing of the military by creating a million new jobs over the next five years; and

WHEREAS, If the DVA's small business loan program is re-authorized, it should be opened to post-Vietnam-era veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that would re-authorize and fund a Department of Veterans

Affairs small business loan program for disabled, Vietnam-era and post-Vietnam-era veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the Small Business Administration's efforts to provide entrepreneurial information to all service members who are separating or retiring from the military.

Resolution No. 284: Reimbursement For Correspondence And Distance Learning Courses
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, Approximately 1.5 million veterans have chosen to study via correspondence training since 1970; and

WHEREAS, The current GI Bill does not meet the needs of many eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, During the early 1970s veterans were reimbursed for 90% of the cost of their tuition; and

WHEREAS, Today veterans enrolled in correspondence courses are reimbursed only 55% of their total course tuition; and

WHEREAS, The average total cost of an accredited correspondence course is just over $1,000, making it the most cost effective method of education today; and

WHEREAS, Correspondence training is often the only educational opportunity available to veterans who are homebound, hospitalized, incarcerated or living in a rural area where no colleges or schools are within reach; and

WHEREAS, Accredited correspondence institutions offer valuable, salable vocational and professional skills in such in-demand fields as computer programming, health care topics, management, electronics technology, and hundreds of other jobs that will help our Nation's deserving veterans get better jobs faster and with up-to-date training delivered with convenience and flexible learning techniques such as Internet-based education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly supports an effort to amend Title 38 to restore the reimbursement rate for correspondence and distance learning training to 90% of tuition.

Resolution No. 285: Homestead Privilege To Veterans
Origin: Economics
Submitted by: Economics

WHEREAS, Since the Revolutionary War America has honored her veterans by granting them homestead acreage because of their service to our country; and

WHEREAS, Congress is considering granting Alaskan Native Vietnam veterans limited rights to obtain public land allotment; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are the most homeless group of the population that ever existed in our country; and

WHEREAS, Our federal government has ample public lands available to grant veterans homestead lots; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That Congress be petitioned to open up homestead privileges to United States military veterans on a priority basis.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 269 (Economics): National Employment Service Award Recipients

CHRMN SERCERCHI: On behalf of the National Economic Commission that concludes my report. As a duly authorized delegate from the Department of Maine, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. Those, nay. The ayes have it. The report is approved.

Thank you, Ken, to you and your Convention committee and the staff.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Now it is time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making jobs available to veterans. That special recognition comes in the form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organizations as 2001 Employers of the Year.

One award is for companies employing 50 or less people, another for companies employing from 51 to 200 people, and a third for companies with more than 200 workers. Each is nominated by a Post and advances through Department and National competition levels.

The 2001 Employer of the Year Award in the under 50 category goes to the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Winter Haven, Florida. The personnel manager of the center is Laurel Waddingham. Here to accept the award is Ron Kelley of the Department of Florida. Joining Ron is the immediate Past Commander, Ken Powell, Sr.

The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans 2001. Presented to the Wal-Mart Distribution Center of Winter Haven, Florida for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans.

Presented at the 84th Annual National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 28, 2002."

MR. KELLEY: Laurel sends her regrets that she couldn't be here. She asked me to thank The American Legion for this prestigious award. She is proud to be a member of The American Legion. She and her husband are both members of Post 8, Winterhaven, Florida. She says she strives to reach the 55% to 60%. She currently has over 50% of her staff of veterans. She says thank you for this award.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The award in the 51 - 200 category goes to M & T Company of Manchester, New Jersey. Accepting the award is the Human Resource Manager for M & T – Walt Popick.

The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans 2001. Presented to the M & T Company for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 84th Annual National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 28, 2002."

Mr. Popick, please accept this award. We thank you for your company's service to veterans.

MR. POPICK: We are extremely honored for this award. But we don't see where we've done anything different. Fellow vets, we admire you, we thank you, God bless you.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The award in the more than 200 employees category goes to Basic Water Company of Henderson, Nevada. Accepting on behalf of the company's Vice

President, Colen Watts, is Casey Martin, delegate and member from the Department of Nevada, The American Legion.

The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans 2001. Presented to Basic Water Company, for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 84th Annual National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 28, 2002."

MR. WATTS: Thank you. Mr. Watts asked me to extend his gratitude for this award to the national staff and to our past Department Commander, Mr. Sam Rubelo, who urged me to nominate Basic Water Company. He wanted everyone to know how much he appreciates The American Legion. I would like to ask everyone to support all of the Legion programs because if you get in the community and you want better make yourself known, you can get a lot more money out of these companies because this company donates a lot of money to our post.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: On behalf of the men and women of The American Legion, and all of our Nation's veterans, I extend to you our congratulations. We're certain you'll keep hiring veterans. Tell other businesses about the reliability and work ethic of veterans.

Another employment award that I am honored to present goes to the top Local Veterans Representative (LVER) in the nation. The award honors an individual who has done such a remarkable job of placing veterans in jobs that even their peers take notice. The Employment Service Award to the Local Veterans Employment Representative for 2002 goes to Barbara Phillips, of Fort Payne, Alabama.

The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year 2001, presented to Barbara Phillips for your outstanding service to the veterans of the State of Alabama."

MS. PHILLIPS: I'd like to thank everyone for this award for what you have done for our nation. Thank you.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The American Legion is also proud of the men and women who work on behalf of disabled veterans seeking employment. This year I am happy to present the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award to Ronald Mullen of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The award reads: The American Legion National Award—Outstanding DVOP of the YEAR 2001, presented to Ronald Mullen Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist Tulsa, Oklahoma for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Oklahoma.

MR. MULLEN: I appreciate being honored with this award. I also thank The Amercing Legion for honoring all of the hard work that was done by all of the veteran employment reps and all of the employers across the nation. Thank you, The American Legion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Continuing with our recognition of those who assist our fellow veterans in finding meaningful work, it is time to honor the top Employment Service Office of the Year. The award goes to the Fayetteville Local Employment Security Commission of Fayetteville, North Carolina.

The award reads: "The American Legion National Award to the Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year 2001 is presented to the Fayetteville local employment security commission, Fayetteville, North Carolina, for outstanding service to the veterans of the state of North Carolina."

Accepting the award is Glenn McQueen, office manager for the Fayetteville Employment Security Commission.

MR. MCQUEEN: It is truly an honor to stand before you all to accept this award. On behalf of the Employment Security Commission in the state of North Carolina, and of course, the Fayetteville offices, thank you.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Joseph Caouette of New Hampshire, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism for the purpose of a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Americanism
Joseph Caouette, New Hampshire, Chairman

Fifty members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met on Sunday, August 25, 2002, in the Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina, to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the committee.

The committee organized by electing Joseph E. Caouette, Jr. (NH), Chairman; Ted Howarth (NJ), Vice Chairman; and Victor DeSloover (IA) as the Secretary.

The committee discussed 49 resolutions that were assigned to the group. Included among them were several that pertained to the recent ruling on the Pledge of Allegiance by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Your Americanism committee strongly disagrees with the court's ruling that the phrase "one nation under God", as recited in the Pledge of Allegiance, is an unconstitutional endorsement of religion. In fact, The American Legion has responded to this action by filing a motion in federal court in San Francisco to overturn the ruling.

Delegates and guests to this convention, one father and self-described atheist, who didn't approve of his second-grade daughter reciting the pledge of allegiance in her public school, shall not and will not alter our position of support for the Pledge in its present form.

Your Americanism Committee applauds the words of National Commander Ric Santos when he said "I promise that our organization will stand with the American people all the way to the Supreme Court to correct this grave injustice." Mr. Commander, I want to assure you that you have the complete support of the Americanism Committee as evidenced by the following resolution, which I shall read in its entirety.

Recommended Action on Resolutions Were Approved and Consolidated

Resolution No. 292: Pledge Of Allegiance
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 49 (IL); Resolution No. 57 (IA); Resolution No. 140 (MO); and Resolution No. 155 (OH))

WHEREAS, In October 1970, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution 13 titled "Defense and Respect for the United States Flag," that voiced The American Legion's support for continuing the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, several states have passed legislation to encourage and authorize the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance in the schools within their state; and

WHEREAS, In 1954, The Congress of the United States reaffirmed the influence on government by a supreme power when it revised the Pledge of Allegiance by inserting the words "under God" as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, Liberal judicial opinions and media coverage has questioned the propriety of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools in the United States, citing the unconstitutionality in references to God; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the Congress of the United States, and many other groups and organizations open their regular meetings by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reiterate its continuing support for the Pledge of Allegiance in its current form, voicing opposition to any and all attempts to revise it beyond the version approved by Congress in 1954; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the nation's schools to include the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by teachers and students in regular school activities and events; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, at all levels, continue its unyielding support for the Pledge of Allegiance and its provisions of national loyalty and support for our democratic republic.

Resolution No. 293: Internal Security Of The United States
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always recognized the importance of investigations that expose the truth about subversive activities that may harm or seek to destroy our constitutional government; and

WHEREAS, The Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, both security agencies of this Nation, perform functions essential to the maintenance of our national security; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supports the thorough background investigation of all applicants for federal employment to expose possible links to subversive activities or membership in subversive organizations that contribute to the weakening of the internal security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress of the United States to immediately take such action as may be appropriate and necessary to significantly strengthen federal intelligence and security agencies that protect us from foreign espionage, organized crime and subversive activities; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and the Congress of the United States to approve legislation and take executive action as necessary to deny subversive individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate and subsequently destroy our government agencies and institutions through federal employment.

Resolution No. 294: The English Language Be Declared As The Official United States Language
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The United States has over the many years been a haven and in most cases a new home for people of many ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, These people, although keeping their ethnic background alive, were urged to take advantage of the educational system that taught them the English language and American history; and

WHEREAS, Many permanent residents and new citizens, although clinging to their ethnic backgrounds did with pride take advantage of learning the language of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Bilingual programs funded by the Department of Education are designed to teach with the primary instruction in the student's home language, while English is subjected to a secondary status; and

WHEREAS, These programs tend to encourage separatism, rather than a unification of purpose; and

WHEREAS, There exists alternative bilingual education programs which provide a more efficient transition to proficiency in the English language; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion encourage legislation which would establish English as the official national language; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to designate English as the official language of government in the United States; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to encourage and fund alternative bilingual education programs to serve, as was intended, as a short intermediate step to achieve proficiency in the English language.

Resolution No. 295: Return Patriotic Holidays To Traditional Dates
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The dates of certain patriotic holidays have been changed from their original dates to create "three-day weekends"; and

WHEREAS, The time-honored traditional observances of these holidays has been eroded; and

WHEREAS, The majority of Americans view Memorial Day as a time for relaxation and leisure recreation rather than as a solemn occasion and a time to reflect and pay tribute to the American servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives in defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, By urging the ringing of bells in our communities for one minute on traditional Memorial Day, May 30, it will help Americans to realize that the true purpose of this day is to pay tribute to those who have given so much for their country; and

WHEREAS, Our hope for the future has been made possible because our servicemen and women have made sacrifices in order to secure freedom for America and the ringing of community bells is a fitting way to observe traditional Memorial Day in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion calls upon the Congress of the United States to restore the official observance of Lincoln's Birthday to February 12, Washington's Birthday to February 22, Memorial Day to May 30 and Columbus Day to October 12 each year; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the passage of federal legislation that would result in an annual Presidential proclamation calling on all American institutions, public and private, to toll their bells for one minute, beginning at 11:00 a.m. on the traditional Memorial Day, May 30, in remembrance of the servicemen and women who died defending our Nation and our freedom.

Resolution No. 296: U.S. Citizenship Process
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has actively promoted and advocated the inclusion of a formal Naturalization Ceremony, conducted in the English language and in a U.S. District Court, as a step in the process of becoming a United States naturalized citizen; and

WHEREAS, In August 1995, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began its Citizenship USA program to naturalize 1.3 million new citizens by increasing the speed and efficiency of the naturalization process; and

WHEREAS, The increased activity at INS offices created problems in the processing of applications, resulting in an estimated 180,000 being approved without the proper screening by the FBI and the INS; and

WHEREAS, A survey conducted by the Center for Equal Opportunity has revealed disturbing information that there are no uniform standards within the INS for testing citizenship applicants and that many applicants become United States citizens without having the ability to speak the English language or without even a rudimentary knowledge about U.S. history and civics, despite federal laws to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, Many Legionnaires and Posts of The American Legion have traditionally participated in naturalization ceremonies as part of its Americanism program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion encourage Members of Congress to conduct oversight hearings of the naturalization process to insure comprehensive background checks are made on all applicants for U.S. citizenship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress take necessary actions, including corrective legislation, to prohibit the demeaning of the naturalization process and ceremonies by groups and individuals entrusted with naturalization responsibilities.

Resolution No. 297: Illegal Aliens
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Current laws, as established within "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986" (IRCA) has not achieved the results desired by The American Legion for addressing the many and varied problems created by illegal aliens: and

WHEREAS, A 1996 study by the Center for Immigration Studies estimated the cost of the IRCA amnesty after 10 years at $76.7 billion for the 2.7 million illegal aliens who received amnesty, which represents a government subsidy of $28,727 for each illegal alien; and

WHEREAS, The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has reported that, even with IRCA regulations in effect, more than 1.5 million illegal aliens were apprehended at our borders during 1998; and

WHEREAS, Illegal aliens in the United States create serious economic problems which include increased welfare costs, adverse effects on the American labor market, and the expense of detecting, detaining, processing and deporting of apprehended illegals; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are displaced from employment by the employment of illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, There must be a broad exchange of information and related action among those Executive Departments responsible for dealing with various aspects of immigration law and illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion wishes to reiterate its opposition to any type of amnesty ("legalization") program, that excuses and rewards the law-breaking illegal aliens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports strict enforcement of employer sanctions as called for in current law that provide heavy penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) be provided the monies necessary to ensure both the thorough performance of their duties and the security of the borders of the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, That aliens illegally in the U.S. should be denied Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, and other types of public assistance; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the Congress of the United States not to extend or enhance the legalization program beyond what is specifically outlined in Title II, Section 245, 8 USC 1255; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls for legislation to guarantee a free flow of information and technical assistance between the agencies of government tasked with the various aspects of the illegal alien issue.

Resolution No. 298: Injured Or Disabled Non-Citizen Veterans Applying For Naturalization
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, During our Nation's call to arms in the preservation of our liberty, our Nation has been blessed with the services of individuals from many nations who cherish liberty; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has recognized that through service in our Armed Forces these servicemen have forged a bond with our Country; and

WHEREAS, Under the present Immigration and Nationality Act the non-citizen soldier is allowed to apply for naturalization only upon completion of three (3) years of active duty; and

WHEREAS, Some non-citizen servicemen were injured or became disabled while on active duty and were medically discharged from the Armed Forces for said injuries or medical conditions prior to three years of active duty service; and

WHEREAS, Admitting men and women with service-connected disabilities into the U.S. does not increase the taxpayer's obligation, since all U. S. veterans, without regard to their citizenship or residence, are currently entitled to both disability compensation and medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support legislation that will amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow non-citizen veterans with less than three years of active duty -- because of injuries incurred or aggravated while on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, which result in a discharge under honorable conditions, to seek naturalization.

Resolution No. 299: School Prayer
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Americans have historically believed in seeking God's protection and guidance through prayer; and

WHEREAS, The value of expressing spiritual convictions through public prayer has been recognized as a firm basis on which to conduct public proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court decisions during the early 1960s have had the effect of severely restricting the practice of any manner of public prayer even though these decisions simply addressed prescribed or compulsory prayer; and

WHEREAS, This restriction is most evident in our nation's public schools where a concurrent moral and spiritual decline is clearly manifested; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirm its support for an amendment to the Constitution of the United States that would permit voluntary prayer in public buildings, including public schools and at other public gatherings; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress pass legislation to promote the concept of school prayer in order to ensure that our Nation's public school children have a daily opportunity to pray.

Resolution No. 300: Award Medal Of Honor To The Four Chaplains
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, On the frigid night of February 3, 1943, at approximately 12:55 a.m., the United States troop transport ship Dorchester, was torpedoed 150 miles off the coast of Greenland throwing the total ship into complete darkness amid shrieks of escaping steam and the frantic cries for help; and

WHEREAS, The Four Chaplains—Lieutenants John P. Washington, Clark V. Poling, George L. Fox and Alexander Goode—moved quickly among the bewildered troops, calming them and directing them to lifeboats and urging and assisting them to escape the quickly sinking vessel; and

WHEREAS, When there were no more life jackets available, the four chaplains aforesaid took off their own life jackets and made others accept them and use them in escaping the sinking vessel and, further, the four chaplains remained on the ship's slanted aft deck with arms linked together, heads bowed in prayer as the Dorchester slipped beneath the waves; and

WHEREAS, By their heroic actions, these four chaplains have become a legend with memorials to "their three faiths and one God" arising around this nation to promote brotherhood, to fight bigotry, and to encourage interfaith and interracial unity; and

WHEREAS, By these actions and in the sacrifice of their own lives they have become a beacon of faith for the people of this country to emulate with their traits of compassion and understanding based upon interracial and interfaith lessons as illustrated by the personal action of the four chaplains and is the basis for building bridges of understanding among all people of different faiths, religious and racial backgrounds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion requests the Congress of the United States, by special legislative action, award posthumously to U. S. Army Chaplains, Lt. John P. Washington, Lt. Clark V. Poling,

Lt. George L. Fox and Lt. Alexander D. Goode, the Medal of Honor for their heroism which cost them their lives on the night of February 3, 1943.

Resolution No. 301: Constitutional Amendment To Protect The Flag Of The United States
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism
(Consolidated with Res. 177 (NH))

WHEREAS, The American Legion has campaigned diligently for the passage of an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to protect the symbol of our Nation, the Flag of the United States, from physical desecration; and

WHEREAS, Part of that campaign has included the founding of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc., a coalition of more than 142 civic, veteran, business and fraternal organizations which have come together to persuade Congress to propose a flag protection constitutional amendment; and

WHEREAS, The legislatures of all 50 states have indicated by memorial resolutions to the US Congress that such an amendment to the US Constitution is needed in view of the 1989 decision of the United States Supreme Court (Texas v. Johnson) that invalidated all flag protection laws; and

WHEREAS, Surveys have shown that over 80% of the American people support the passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the flag from desecration; and

WHEREAS, Since the time of the American Revolution millions of men and women have proudly defended our country under the "Stars & Stripes" and, as a last gesture of gratitude this emblem of our country is placed upon the coffin of veterans as a token of respect for services rendered to a grateful nation; and

WHEREAS, In the 107th Congress, the US House of Representatives passed a proposed flag protection amendment, 298-125, while the measure is pending action in the U.S. Senate where it has yet to reach the necessary two-thirds required to approve such an amendment to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continue to urge the Congress of the United States to propose and approve an amendment to the US Constitution that would allow the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue its efforts through affiliation with The Citizens Flag Alliance, to bring to a successful conclusion the grass roots campaign to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in order to provide protection of the Flag from acts of physical desecration.

Resolution No. 302: Oppose Foreign Manufacture Of American Flags
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The Flag of the United States is a uniquely American symbol; and

WHEREAS, The Flag Code of the United States as listed in Title 4, United States Code, Chapter l, subsection 8(j) states that: "The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing"; and

WHEREAS, It has come to our attention that foreign manufacturers are making and importing United States Flags and/or merchandise which violate certain provisions of the United States Flag Code; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 191, 1982 National Convention, Chicago, Illinois resolves that The American Legion promote through its Posts and Departments the purchase of American manufactured goods; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion encourage its membership, the general public, and all local, state and federal government agencies to purchase and display only American manufactured Flags of the United States; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation through the United States Congress to prohibit the importation of foreign made Flags of the United States.

Resolution No. 303: Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States of America provides for the common defense of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms we enjoy and the security of our Nation that we desire rests on the individual determination of each of us to help preserve it; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would allow conscientious objectors to elect to have their taxes spent for non-military purposes; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of such a practice could affect military strength and national security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion is opposed to legislation that would give conscientious objectors a voice in diverting monies from military spending.

Resolution No. 304: Oppose Changes To "Title V Of The Immigration and Nationality Act"
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, that includes Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act, has proven to be a valuable tool in keeping terrorists from our shores; and

WHEREAS, A most vital section of this law allows for the gathering of secret evidence that identifies the person as a terrorist or links the person to a known terrorist organization or group; and

WHEREAS, Information obtained by the United States intelligence community on individuals identified as terrorists or having links to terrorist organizations may be used in INS administrative deportation hearings; and

WHEREAS, Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the use of evidence, the source of which must remain secret and allows for the use of this secret evidence in INS administrative deportation hearings; and

WHEREAS, Revealing the sources of the secret evidence would compromise intelligence gathering methods, operations, personnel and jeopardize national security; and

WHEREAS, Denial of this vital evidence in INS administrative deportation hearings would result in known terrorists remaining in the United States, posing a threat to our national security; and

WHEREAS, There is proposed legislation before Congress that would deny the INS the opportunity to have this secret evidence presented at administrative deportation hearings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion oppose any change to "Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act" (8 U.S.C. 1531-1537) that would require revealing the source(s) of secret evidence used in INS administrative deportation hearings; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That Members of Congress be urged to resist all efforts to repeal or delete portions of this Act.

Resolution No. 305: Immigration Reform
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The inability and/or unwillingness of certain government agencies to enforce immigration quotas, laws and policies has resulted in an influx of illegal immigrants into this country; and

WHEREAS, According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) Statistics Division, one fourth of the federal prison population is foreign-born and about 1.5 million apprehensions of illegal aliens occur each year along the southern border of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The INS, lacking sufficient resources, is incapable at present of enforcing immigration laws, making it necessary that state and local law enforcement agencies be empowered to coordinate with the INS on enforcement of immigration laws, as authorized in Section 133 of "The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act" of 1996; and

WHEREAS, Many illegal aliens resort to document fraud to establish their employability, their residency and eligibility for this country's social services, often displacing U.S. workers; and

WHEREAS, The United States has no centralized database for determining eligibility for employment and social services by immigrants; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Academy of Sciences that, even though native households outnumber immigrant households nine to one, each native household in the United States has to pay $166 to $266 a year to support those immigrant households; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress has failed to mandate the enforcement of existing immigration laws; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion is unalterably opposed to illegal immigration; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the United States Congress, state governments, the U.S. Justice Department and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to take necessary action to stop the massive flow of illegal immigration into this country by means that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Hire and train additional U.S. Border Patrol agents with employment preference afforded former members of the United States Armed Forces; and**
2. **Encourage the United States Congress to require the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to work with state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration laws in this country; and**

3. **Initiate immediate deportation proceedings at major points of embarkation for those arriving in this country without valid passport visas; and**
4. **Require that all legal aliens carry identification documents that are made as secure as technology allows and that are verifiable by any employer or benefit agency through an easy-to-access central database; and**
5. **Petition the President of the United States and the Congress to expand and strengthen the U.S. Customs Service; the enforcement arm of the INS and the U.S. Coast Guard; and enact such emergency measures as will prevent smuggling of illegal aliens and stop, detain and deport potential terrorists or those with ties to terrorist groups; and**
6. **That, as appropriate, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into this country, and all of the resources of the United States of America be utilized to enforce the security of our country's borders; and be it finally**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion initiate an information campaign to alert its members, federal and state elected officials, and the general public of the massive influx into the country of illegal immigrants, the consequences of mass immigration and how it will affect the standards of living in these United States.

Resolution No. 306: Illegal Immigration Compromises National Security
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion and other veterans have risked their lives, all over the world, to help protect the freedom and security of the United States of America and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The freedom, security and prosperity that Americans enjoy today was paid for by the heroism of millions of Americans who served in this nation's Armed Forces, many of whom sacrificed their lives so that others could live freely and without threats of aggression; and

WHEREAS, Terrorism is, and is likely to remain, one of the most serious threats to our national security and the safety of our citizens and threatens our freedom to move freely and safely within and across our international boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Our nation's intelligence agencies confirm the presence of large numbers of international terrorists and criminal organizations operating within our borders; and

WHEREAS, The Urban Institute estimates that there are at least 8 million people living illegally in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, The identities and intentions of these illegal aliens are unknown to us; and

WHEREAS, Our country's enemies recognize and understand that our nation's failure to control its borders or regulate the right to live in the United States is a weakness and have already, as in the case of the acts of terrorism committed on September 11, 2001, exploited that weakness with deadly consequences; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion considers massive illegal immigration to be a serious national security threat and that it calls upon all law enforcement agencies to work together to apprehend, detain and deport those who are in the United States of America illegally; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage Congress and all federal agencies involved to make the combating of terrorism in the United States of America a priority and that preventive measures be taken to ensure the safety of all Americans.

Resolution No. 307: Oppose Amnesty For Illegal Immigrants
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Consideration is being given to granting amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants currently in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Any policy that leads to millions of illegal immigrants receiving legal permission to remain in the United States, whether such a policy is disguised in euphemistic language such as "legalization," "regularization," "a guest worker program," "earned status adjustment," or "earned access," is in fact an amnesty for having broken the laws of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Amnesty for illegal aliens will encourage still more people to immigrate illegally to this country and will further erode respect for the law; and

WHEREAS, The 1986 amnesty involving 2.7 million immigrants is estimated to have cost the American taxpayers $78 billion; and

WHEREAS, The amnesty proposals being contemplated today are much larger – encompassing some or all of the estimated eight to eleven million illegal immigrants living in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of existing "family reunification" policies that allow immigrants to bring extended family members to this country, an amnesty program could make millions more people eligible to immigrate in the coming decade and at much greater cost than that of the amnesty granted in 1986; and

WHEREAS, Neither the Administration or Congress have explained how a massive amnesty program for illegal immigrants will benefit the American public; and

WHEREAS, Numerous authoritative studies have shown that mass immigration has harmed the interests of millions of Americans, including veterans, by undercutting wages and working conditions, overburdening local schools, public health care facilities and other vital social institutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion opposes all legislation that would result in the granting of amnesty and legal residency, in any form or by any name, to millions of illegal immigrants currently in the United States; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the federal government to adopt and enforce effective laws against illegal immigration.

Resolution No. 308: Oppose Financial Aid For Illegal Alien Students
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986" (IRCA) has not achieved the results desired by The American Legion for addressing the many and varied problems created by the large number of illegal aliens in this country; and

WHEREAS, A 1996 analysis by the Center for Immigration Studies estimated the cost of the IRCA, after 10 years, at $76.7 billion for the 2.7 million illegal aliens granted amnesty representing a government (taxpayer) subsidy of $28,727 for each illegal alien; and

WHEREAS, Delegates to the Eighty-Second National Convention of The American Legion held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on September 5, 6, 7, 2000, adopted Resolution No. 320, that stated, in part that aliens illegally in the United States should be denied Social Security, unemployment, and other types of public assistance programs; and

WHEREAS, Pending legislation would also cancel deportation orders against and grant permanent residency (amnesty) to illegal aliens under the age of 21, who have been in the United States for five consecutive years and who have been enrolled in a middle or secondary school in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The pending legislation now in Congress would amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), to allow illegal aliens to attend state universities at in-state tuition rates; and

WHEREAS, The pending legislation would place American citizens at a comparative disadvantage by allowing illegal aliens to receive in-state tuition rates, federal education grants and financial assistance while American citizens have to pay higher out of state tuition rates if they are not residents of the state in which they attend a state institution of higher education; and

WHEREAS, That The American Legion believes that "rewarding" illegal aliens with amnesty and financial aid will increase the flow of illegal aliens into the United States increasing the financial burden on law-abiding taxpayers who would ultimately pay for these services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion oppose any legislation or executive order that would allow illegal aliens to receive in-state tuition rates, federal or other government education grants and or financial assistance to attend a college or university in the United States.

Resolution No. 309: Reform Of The Student Visa System
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Participants in both the 1993 and 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center were reportedly in the United States on student visas; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 514,000 foreign students in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, There is no active tracking system for determining whether those admitted as foreign students actually arrive at their chosen schools, whether they change their courses to study military technology, or whether they drop out but fail to leave the country; and

WHEREAS, After the 1993 attack, Congress required the Immigration and Naturalization Service to develop a means to keep records of foreign students, and, specifically, their whereabouts; and

WHEREAS, The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) will provide tracking, monitoring, and access to accurate and current information on non-immigrant students and exchange visitors; and

WHEREAS, SEVIS will enable schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications via the Internet to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Department of State throughout a student or exchange visitor's stay in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many educators formerly opposed a similar program, but now support full implementation of the SEVIS program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to mandate that the INS Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) or a similar program to track foreign students be implemented; and be it finally

RESOLVED, Those institutions of higher education failing to comply with INS requirements are ineligible to receive federal student loan monies benefitting foreign students.

Resolution No. 310: Improve U.S.-Canada Border Security
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The federal government has begun to address the decades of neglect that has left the United States' land borders woefully unprotected; and

WHEREAS, There are only 1,773 U.S. Customs agents and 350 Border Patrol agents (increases of 245 in 2002 and 285 in 2003 are budgeted to be added) to guard the 4,000 mile United States and Canadian border; and

WHEREAS, There are over 9,000 Border Patrol agents guarding the 2,000 mile border between the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service have warned Congress they cannot ensure the security of the nation's borders without additional resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide the U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service with the necessary resources to perform their responsibilities and adequately secure the border between the United States and Canada.

Resolution No. 311: Immigration Policy For The 21st Century
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act giving amnesty to all illegal aliens who had successfully evaded justice for four years or more or were

WHEREAS, As a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, 2.7 million illegal aliens were admitted as legal immigrants to the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Census Bureau estimates that currently there are at least 8.7 million illegal aliens residing in the United States; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that 60 percent of illegal aliens entered the country illegally and 40 percent entered legally and stayed (illegally) past the expiration date of their temporary visa; and

WHEREAS, There have been improvements in border security to impede the 60 percent who enter illegally but there has been little improvement in identifying the 40 percent who overstay their visa; and

WHEREAS, In theory, illegal aliens cannot get jobs or welfare in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of document fraud illegal aliens are able to work and receive government benefits unquestioned; and

WHEREAS, Document fraud is possible because the United States has no centralized database for determining who is eligible for work or welfare; and

WHEREAS, The cost of displacing American workers, the cost of giving welfare to illegal aliens, and the cost of providing them general services is an estimated $15 billion annually; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Congress of the United

States be encouraged to adopt an immigration policy for the 21st century that will reduce or eliminate social, economic and population problems caused by rampant illegal immigration; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reiterate its support for measures that will:

1. **Limit immigration;**
2. **Eliminate visa categories for adult offspring, siblings and the diversity visa program;**
3. **Restrict the eligibility of illegal aliens for publicly-funded assistance;**
4. **Implement a nationwide system for easily verifying authorization to work; and**
5. **Provide necessary resources for effective border management and interior enforcement.**

Resolution No. 312: Amend The "Temporary Protected Status" Portion Of The Immigration Act Of 1990
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a classification granted to eligible nationals of designated countries who are temporarily present in the United States when natural disaster or political turmoil in their country interferes with their plans to return; and

WHEREAS, A person from a designated country who is in the United States is eligible to be granted TPS only by establishing that the designated country was the applicant's last place of habitual residence; and

WHEREAS, TPS beneficiaries are granted work authorization during the TPS period and for any extensions of the designation; and

WHEREAS, TPS was created by the Immigration Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, Anyone here from the designated country is eligible for TPS, whether they entered the country in violation of our immigration law in order to find work or for other reasons, or violated the law by staying in the country and taking a job illegally, or were a bona fide visitor; and

WHEREAS, Sixteen countries were designated as TPS countries and TPS has expired for six of these countries and has not been extended; and

WHEREAS, The Immigration and Naturalization Service has no record of the departure of any of the TPS recipients from those six countries and has not made any effort to inform those persons of their obligation to leave the country or otherwise to enforce the law; and

WHEREAS, Conferring TPS status on persons illegally in the United States rewards them with a work permit that legitimizes their illegal activity; and

WHEREAS, Any person who can establish that they fear persecution if forced to return to their country of origin is eligible for asylum in the United States; and

WHEREAS, TPS allows aliens to live in the United States without our being able to learn their true identities or background information; and

WHEREAS, The events of September 11, 2001 have proven that we can no longer afford to accept people into our country without thorough background checks; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the Temporary Protected Status section of the Immigration Act of 1990 to limit its coverage to foreign visitors legally in the United States.

Resolution No. 313: Tracking Arrival And Departure Of Foreign Visitors To The United States
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, Each day foreign visitors flood our nation's ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, Neither the United States Customs Service or the Immigration and Naturalization Service have the ability to determine when a foreign visitor leaves the United States or overstays their visa; and

WHEREAS, President Bush, during his 2002 State of the Union address, said that (we will) "use technology to track the arrivals and departures of visitors to the United States"; and

WHEREAS, The technology exists to place biometric information on visas to identify visitors, keep track of their entry and exit, and confirm compliance with the terms of their entry; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide agencies of the federal government with the necessary resources to track the arrival and departure of foreign visitors to the United States.

Resolution No. 200: Flag Code Amendment
Origin: Americanism
Submitted by: Americanism

WHEREAS, The United States Flag Code, Title 4, United States Code, Chapter 1, Subsections 1-10, is a codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America, and

WHEREAS, Practices and customs have been modified in the past few years regarding certain display procedures, and

WHEREAS, Previous modifications of the Flag Code did not clearly state the intent of some procedures, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek the appropriate legislation or Presidential proclamation to alter, amend, or modify the following provisions of the United States Flag Code, Title 4, United States Code,

Chapter 1:

SS6. Time and occasions for display

(d) The flag should be displayed on all days, especially on New Year's Day, January 1; Inauguration Day, January 20; Martin Luther King, JR's birthday, the third Monday in January; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February; Easter Sunday (variable); Thomas Jefferson's Birthday, April 13; Loyalty Day - Law Day U.S.A., May 1; Mother's Day, second Sunday in May; National Maritime Day, May 22; Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May; Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May; Flag Day, June 14; Flag Week, week of June 14; Father's Day, third Sunday in June; Independence Day, July 4; Aviation Day, August 19; Labor Day, first Monday in September; Citizenship Day, September 17; POW/MIA Recognition Day, third Tuesday in September; American Gold Star Mothers Day, last Sunday in September; Columbus Day, second Monday in October; Navy Day, October 27; Veteran's Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November; Pearl Harbor Day, December 7; Christmas

Day, December 25; and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States(date of admission); and on State holidays.

(h) The flag should be displayed during public meetings, at cemeteries, and other public gatherings such as sporting events.

SS7. Position and manner of display

(f) When flags or pennants of States, cities, localities, societies, or corporations are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant may be placed above the flag of the United States or to the United States flag's right, that is the observer's left.

(g) When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace. The flag of the United States should be on its own right, the observer's left. The flags of other nations are displayed on the observer's right and in alphabetical order from left to right.

(m) The flag displayed at half-staff is a sign of national mourning and a mark of respect to the memory of principal figures of the U.S. or State Government and should not be so displayed, except as provided herein, or in special proclamation by the President of the United States or the Governor of any state, territory or possession. No other official may designate the United States Flag to be displayed at half-staff. The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day and Pearl Harbor Day - December 7th, the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory, or, possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff. The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President; ten days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a state, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. The flag shall be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day, unless that day is also Armed Forces Day. As used in this subsection -(1) The term "half-staff" means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff;

(2) The term "executive or military department" means any agency listed under sections 101 and 102 of title 5; and

(3) The term "Member of Congress" means a Senator, Representative, a Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner for Puerto Rico.

SS8. Respect for flag

(c) The flag may be carried flat or horizontally when a patriotic effect is desired and when it is of such size that it cannot be carried aloft and free.

(i) The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

(j) No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, postal workers, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel pin being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 15 (MA): Oppose Foreign Manufacture Of American Flags
Resolution No. 19 (AZ): Securing United States Borders
Resolution No. 106 (TX): Strengthen Immigration And Naturalization Laws
Resolution No. 185 (NY): Veteran's Day
Resolution No. 227 (CT): Veteran's Day

Referred to Americanism Commission

Resolution No. 3 (LA): Establishment Of The Outstanding Educators Of America Program
Resolution No. 29 (SD): Non Sale Of Alcoholic Beverages At American Legion Baseball Parks
Resolution No. 38 (ND): Music Camp Scholarship Funding From Hatie K. Tedrow Memorial Fund
Resolution No. 39 (ND): Hattie K. Tedrow Memorial Fund For Southwest North Dakota Students Only
Resolution No. 40 (ND): Hattie K. Tedrow Ad Hoc Committee Membership To Include Southwest North Dakota Representative
Resolution No. 55 (MO): Feasibility Study For Establishment Of American Legion Jr. Baseball Program
Resolution No. 105 (TN): Armed Forces Day
Resolution No. 118 (MX): Constitutional Authority To Be Clearly Stated In Acts Passed By Congress
Resolution No. 119 (MX): Change Rules In National HS Oratorical Contest For Non-Citizen Competitors
Resolution No. 165 (VA): Background Check For Non National Entering the Country
Resolution No. 178 (NJ): Pearl Harbor Day
Resolution No. 190 (NY): English as the Official Language of the United States
Resolution No. 201 (CA): National Commander to Create a Citizens Constitutional Alliance

Resolution No. 216 (MI): Flag Code Revision
Resolution No. 225 (CT): Department Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen and the National Information Conferences
Resolution No. 238 (PI): Immigration and Naturalization for World War II Filipino Veterans

CHRMN CAOUETTE: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered Delegate, from the Department of New Hampshire, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. All opposed? Ayes have it. The report is approved, moved, and adopted.

Presentation: Department Awards

NATL COMDR SANTOS: With the adoption of the Americanism Report it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. The Frank Belgrano, Jr. Trophy is given annually to the Department rendering the most outstanding service during the 12 month period beginning August 1st to the Boys Scout of America program. This year's winner is the Department of California.

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy is given to the Department within the United States documenting the greatest activity in using The American Legion School Medal Program. This winning department shows what can be accomplished by an active, involved organization. The winner is the Department of Wyoming.

Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy
Thomas Hughes, VP/General Manager Hearst Service Center

The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is one of the most impressive awards that The American Legion presents during each National Convention. It is named in honor of one of American journalism's most prominent and influential figures and given to the Department achieving the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs.

The winning Department is selected by the National Americanism Commission on the basis of total resources , manpower as well as financial, devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year.

With us today to announce the winner of the 2002 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is Thomas Hughes, the Vice President and General Manager of the Hearst Service Center.

MR. HUGHES: It is my pleasure to welcome you to Charlotte and appear before you to present the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. William Randolph Hearst founded the Hearst Corporation 115 years ago when he became publisher of *The San Francisco Examiner* newspaper. Mr. Hearst, first and foremost, an American, strongly believed in the principles for which America was founded, among which, was freedom of the press. Through his newspapers, he raised the consciousness of the American people in the early decades of the last century, that this nation should become a strong world power. He continued his advocacy until he died in 1953.

In 1939, Mr. Hearst established the Americanism Trophy in recognition of the Americanism that was exhibited in The American Legion. Certainly no organization has worked harder to preserve our freedoms while in uniform of this great country and just as

significantly afterward. The U.S. is a beacon of democracy, free enterprise, and individual rights. History and faith have positioned the U.S. as the leader of a world that wants to be free. Still, it is a world with many troubled places, wherein the role of the U.S. involves inspiration, problem-solving, and financial aid.

Since Vietnam, the U.S. entered a period where the display of patriotism seems to have diminished. The nation needed more than ever the Legion's Americanism programs which reached out into every community with positive educational programs to instill a sense of personal obligation to the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship. Attacks on New York and Washington by terrorists, while tragic, have become a lightning rod for Americanism. Since September 11th, Americans are more aware than ever of the freedoms once taken for granted. Now, on behalf of the Hearst Corporation and the Hearst Newspapers, it is my pleasure to present the 63rd William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy to the Department of Ohio.

Presentation: National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
Deputy Sheriff Casey Nelms, Lincoln County Sheriff's Department
North Platte, Nebraska

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The next order of business is to honor a member of law enforcement for setting an example in community service. Our 2002 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is an 18-year veteran of law enforcement with a track record for courageous acts and off-duty community service. He volunteers as a coach for youth football, wrestling, baseball, and soccer. He volunteers more than 100 hours a year to local schools and has been a volunteer fire fighter for a decade. Our Law Enforcement Officer of the Year was nominated by the members of American Legion Post 208 in his hometown of Sutherland, Nebraska. I am proud to present The American Legion Police Officer of the Year Award to Deputy Casey Nelms. The award reads:

> "America's Finest" The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Presented to Casey R. Nelms For Distinguished Service above and beyond your assigned duties, rendered through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievement. By your demonstrated performance, you have personified the versatile police officer who represents "America's Finest." The American Legion congratulates you and wishes you continued success in your career. Awarded August 28, 2002 at the 84th annual National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

DEP NELMS: First of all, I'd just like to thank the local Legion people in the state of Nebraska. What an honor it is to be here today to receive such a prestigious award. When I was asked to say a few words, I spent quite a bit of time trying to come up with something that would be appropriate to talk about to such a group of people.

For some reason, kids kept coming back in. The Legion baseball program, the law officer youth programs that you people sponsor, and I guess as I've done my duties over the last 18 years, it seems like not all kids have the opportunity to get involved in a lot of activities. It seems like a lot of the kids that I deal with don't have a role model. I guess at this point in time I ask that you, the veterans, and the Legion to continue with your efforts to sponsor youth programs. Continue to be good role models, which you all are. Your life skills and your knowledge is second to none and we need folks like the veterans to come in and help law enforcement. Help us with those kids that sometimes don't always walk down the road in a straight line.

I'd like to thank Sheriff Jim Carman, my employer. Without his diligence and assistance from a neighbor of mine in Sutherland, Nebraska, Lee Hotson, I probably wouldn't be here today. Their work to get the paperwork and everything was just countless hours I'm sure. Thank you very much. It's an honor to be here.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Before we conclude this section for Americanism, we'll now call upon for donation for The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship Fund. Immediate Past Department Commander, Bill Goede, from the Department of Minnesota; and the Present Commander, Don Hayden.

PDC Goede: On behalf of the great state of Minnesota and its American Legion family and our newly elected commander Don Hayden, we'd like to present this check for the 9/11 scholarship program in the amount of $25,000.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Immediate Past Commander from the Department of Idaho, Cleve Rice.

PDC RICE: Mr. Commander, this isn't nearly as big as the last one but the Department of Idaho had a check for $760 for the 9/11 scholarship fund.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Department of California, Emmit Sharp and Alternate NEC Elmer Caster.

MR. SHARP: Richard visited Santa Clara last December and he told me to pay attention to him when he announced this fund. Our little bingo players out there sent us back $10,000 for the fund.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We recognize the generosity of Departments of Minnesota, Idaho, and California in and through their donations to this Memorial Scholarship Fund, and we thank you all very much. It's special to the children of our military men and women that will utilize those monies for their education.

If I could have Chaplain Russell please join me. The chair now recognizes Mrs. Martha Corriher, representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains, for the purpose of an award.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains

MRS. CORRIHER: No tradition of American society is more precious to or characteristic of our cultures that are voluntarily reaching out to our neighbors in need. Such selfless service is both a part of our civic and our religious heritage. The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national nonprofit organization, is founded upon one shiny manifestation of our heritage, that of four Army Chaplains after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked their arms together with one another and went down with the *USAT Dorchester*, after it was torpedoed on February 3, 1943.

This historical event began at Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested icy waters of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23, 1943, the *Dorchester*, an old coastal steamer, quickly pressed into military service. It left New York's harbor bound for Greenland. The *Dorchester* was escorted by three coastguard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks, the third, the *Tampa*, was 3,000 yards out front. Most of the men were seasick or green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold and gale force winds were in force. Ice began building up on the deck slowing the *Dorchester* to only 10 knots.

Among the four chaplains were George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, John P. Washington, and Clark V. Poling. The chaplains talked and listened to the men, soothing their apprehensions, offering encouragement, and sharing jokes. By their concern and their comradery, the men and others were brought solace. On February 2, 1943, the *Tampa*'s sonar detected the presence of a submarine. So she dropped backed and swept the area of

the convoy but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening the *Tampa* returned to the patrol area up front and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing with their life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight approaching, they would be able to have air cover from the American base. It was just shortly after midnight on February 3, 1943, when the enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the *Dorchester's* flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying their electrical supply and releasing suffocating gas and ammonia. Many on board died instantly. Some were trapped below the deck. Others jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to the starboard. Overcrowded life boats capsized. Rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark churning water far below.

The testimony of the survivors tell us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in all of this chaos came from the four chaplains who calmly guided the men to their stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed the men who were frozen with fear over the side. Soon the supplies of the life jackets were exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the four chaplains either gave away or forced their own life jackets to the young men on board.

These four men of God had given away their only hope of saving themselves. The chaplains gathered together and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way with their arms linked in brotherhood, and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves. It was an historic and heroic act, but it was not the only heroic act aboard the *Dorchester*. It was significantly because of the identity of these four young men, two Protestants, a Catholic, and a Jew. Today, as it has been for many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation, of selfless service to every part of the country.

To recognize and encourage the acts of volunteerism, brotherhood, and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel established the Legion of Honor Program. The bronze medallion is an award given by the chapel in recognition of selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of others and the national award level and the spirit of interfaith cooperation.

Our recipient this year has a diverse background, coupled with an intense focus on his fellow veterans, their family, and the children and youth of our great nation. He joined the Naval Reserve while he was still in high school. He spent 2½ years on active duty, as a radioman with his final stint being around the world cruise aborad the *USS Enterprise,* CVN-65. He understands the leadership needs and the grassroots of The American Legion. He's served as Post commander, he's served a District commander, Division commander, and the list goes on.

Please give a warm welcome to a member of the Greenbelt Post 136, Greenbelt, Maryland, the National Commander of The American Legion, Ric Santos.

Commander, as the chaplain for North Carolina, for the Chapel of Four Chaplains, it is my honor to present to you the bronze medallion and the plaque. And the plaque reads: "The Chapel of Four Chaplains is pleased to present the Legion of Honor bronze medallion to Richard J. 'Ric' Santos, on August 28,2002, in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation bounded upon the fatherhood of one God."

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Those that know me, I'm not a man of surprises, usually I have all i's dotted and t's crossed. Today, I didn't see who was to get this award and I couldn't understand why. But now, I found out the hard way. I ask in advance that our National Chaplain be up here, also, for he is our number one man in God and country. It's a pleasure to accept this award from the Chapel of Four Chaplains. It's a pleasure to have Dr. Russell with me. Martha, please extend our thanks to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for this award. Thank you very much. I accept it on behalf of all Legionnaires who keep the memory of the Four Chaplains alive in the minds of countless Americans.

The Chair recognizes Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children & Youth, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Children and Youth
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman

The Convention Committee on Children and Youth met at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 25, 2002 in the Charlotte Convention Center, Room 208A, 2nd level, Charlotte, North Carolina. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio as Chairman and delegate Robert D. Scott of Oregon as Secretary. There were 49members of the committee present.

Twelve (12) resolutions were considered by the committee.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 99: Admission Of Children Of United States Citizens
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel; and

WHEREAS, Many children in foreign countries are progenies of United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97-359 addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982; and

WHEREAS, No child created by a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Resolution No. 239: Children In Pornographic Literature
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The very future of our country is being threatened by individuals who would use children in pornographic magazines and films; and

WHEREAS, National crime reports reveal that there is a strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes such as rape, incest, molestation, child abuse and even murder; and

WHEREAS, The use of children as subjects in the production of pornographic materials has a devastating effect upon these innocent children, which is a disgrace to our society; and

WHEREAS, Existing laws dealing with those who produce, sell and distribute pornographic materials are often weak and/or inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That state legislatures be encouraged to evaluate and make appropriate improvements in existing laws aimed at those individuals involved in the child pornography business; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we urge the strengthening of existing federal legislation by the United States Congress to make penalties severe enough to eliminate the production, distribution and sale of materials that use children in sexually explicit scenes, and we urge the Congress to provide adequate funding, when necessary, to accomplish these goals.

Resolution No. 240: Production, Sale And Distribution Of Obscene Literature
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, Since 1960, The American Legion has maintained a position of complete opposition to the production, sale and distribution of pornographic or obscene materials to children 17 years and under; and

WHEREAS, Present laws forbid the importation of such materials from foreign countries, interstate trafficking, the use of the United States Mail, and the use over public radio and television; and

WHEREAS, Any attempt to eliminate such protective laws from state and/or federal criminal codes would have a negative impact on our youth and society in general; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly opposes any attempt to weaken our present laws governing the penalties for the production, sale and distribution of pornographic or obscene materials; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States Congress be made aware of our concern through proper legislative channels.

Resolution No. 241: Reaffirming Immunization Program
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long recognized that there is no place in civilized society for communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There are today vaccines and other specific medical treatment to protect children against communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There exists today in our country areas with extremely low levels of immunization against certain childhood diseases that may break out in epidemic proportions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion

reaffirms its position of supporting the fullest use of any licensed vaccine to combat communicable diseases; and be it further

RESOLVED, That local Posts of The American Legion provide leadership and support to stimulate local treatment and immunization programs so that children in every community may achieve the fullest protection against communicable diseases; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That sufficient federal and state funds be provided so that medically indigent children may be afforded an opportunity to receive the necessary treatment and immunization against all communicable diseases.

Resolution No. 242: Violence And Vandalism In The Schools
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, Juveniles account for approximately 35 percent of our population and account for better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Uniform Crime Reports; and

WHEREAS, Numerous government-supported institutions nationwide, specifically schools and housing, are experiencing serious, violent acts of crime and criminal damage and spend in excess of $500 million for acts of vandalism; and

WHEREAS, The impact of violence and vandalism affects the morale of students, teachers, administrators, and parents; impedes educational advancement; and fosters and perpetuates patterns of deviancy; and

WHEREAS, Violence and vandalism in the nation's institutions result in enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential, and contribute to the high rates of juvenile delinquency within the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion recommends school boards and state education agencies develop a balanced and effective program, and provide community support to reduce and prevent violence and vandalism in educational institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, The American Legion urges local law enforcement to implement effective programs for the amelioration of juvenile delinquency in coordination with the Department of Education, community citizenry and other agencies within the criminal justice system; and be it further

RESOLVED, That local Posts urge and assist those in the educational community and criminal justice system to join together in efforts to reduce the development and prevailing patterns of juvenile delinquency in schools and our communities; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress of the United States enact legislation through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish a grant program to assist those public institutions and criminal justice agencies in bearing the financial burden of implementing pro-active delinquency prevention programs.

Resolution No. 243: National Family Week
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, One of the principles guiding The American Legion's Children & Youth Program is to maintain the integrity of the family home; and

WHEREAS, The family is the center of our affections and the foundation of our American society; and

WHEREAS, No institution can take the family's place in giving meaning to human life and stability in our society; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that official recognition be given to the importance of strengthening family life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the Congress to establish "National Family Week" during Thanksgiving Holiday Week as an annual observance.

Resolution No. 244: School Nutrition Program
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, There has been as expression of concern by health authorities and various national organizations with an interest in the status of proper nutrition among young people; and

WHEREAS, The Federal School Lunch Program and other federally-supported nutrition programs for children have demonstrated their effectiveness as evidenced by the reduction of health problems and improved performance among children; and

WHEREAS, There are many school systems throughout the United States which do not participate in the federal/state-supported school lunch program; and

WHEREAS, There are many schools and school systems throughout the United States that have never had a school lunch program or have dropped existing lunch programs because of the lack of funding, adequate facilities, excessive paperwork requirements, and the training of personnel; and

WHEREAS, Since 1941, The American Legion has supported the Federal School Lunch Program and other related programs of nutrition for children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Congress of the United States be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

Resolution No. 245: Catastrophic Illness Among Children
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, There is an ever-widening crisis in many states relating to the delivery and accessibility of health care and medical treatment to the children of this country; and

WHEREAS, Historically, it has always been The American Legion's position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, Several applications have been received by the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division from Departments requesting Temporary Financial Assistance for needy medical cases; and

WHEREAS, Many children are not receiving needed medical treatment because their families have been unable to afford the cost of the catastrophic illness to one of their children; and

WHEREAS, Many of these families have hospitalization insurance and even major medical insurance and yet they cannot meet the cost of a major illness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirms its position in urging the federal and state governments to enact the necessary legislation to assist financially those individual families faced by the catastrophic illness of one of their children in order to maintain the integrity of the family; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That in lieu of a better approach, the present federal Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant program be expanded to include catastrophic illness.

Resolution No. 246: Drug Trafficking
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The illegal trafficking of drugs into the United States is one of the greatest threats to the welfare and safety of our citizens, particularly our youth; and

WHEREAS, The enemies of our Nation and way of life hope to destroy us from within by debilitating our most precious resource for the future, our youth; and

WHEREAS, The economic and social costs of drug abuse annually exceeds the $100 billion mark; and

WHEREAS, The efforts to halt the entry of such illegal drugs may be seen as a war of will and resources—a war that at the present we are not winning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress of the United States to fully support with adequate funding all border state, federal and military drug trafficking prevention programs through which our children and youth might secure a more stable and healthy future.

Resolution No. 247: Support For The Office Of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The National Commission on Children & Youth is vitally concerned about the high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation each year; and

WHEREAS, The office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is organized: to develop and encourage the implementation of national standards for the administration of juvenile justice; to assist State and local governments in removing juveniles from jails and lockups for adults; to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, including methods with a specific focus on maintaining and strengthening the family unit so that juveniles may be retained in their homes; to develop effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization; and to coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children; and

WHEREAS, The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention program now promoted by the Office of Juvenile Justice has proven effective in many states; and

WHEREAS, The proposed block grants for states will not specifically earmark funds for delinquency prevention programs and, therefore, such programs may be significantly limited or even eliminated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, AUGUST 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion opposes any and all efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs because of a lack of funding; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the need to bring the national economy under control cannot over shadow or ignore the need to further the Office of Juvenile Justice and its programs which may be our national defense against an impending escalation of juvenile crime in America.

Resolution No. 248: Protect Children From The Unrestricted Media
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, In the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion we pledge "To uphold the Constitution of the United States;" and "To maintain law and order;" and

WHEREAS, The producers of our nation's movies, TV shows and TV news, and the Internet have become very explicit in describing and depicting various types of violence; and

WHEREAS, Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have taken it upon themselves to defend such actions as the constitutional right of freedom of speech of the author, regardless of the potential consequences to minor children; and

WHEREAS, God has been rejected as a violation of civil rights; and

WHEREAS, The void has been filled with violence, vulgarity, racism, and every other form of moral depravation that can be imagined; and

WHEREAS, The Internet has become a place for promoting violence and illegal activities; and

WHEREAS, The lack of laws governing such productions allows for a vast expansion of audiences at all media levels promoting a violent country without restraint; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity and other forms of moral depravation in movies, TV programs, TV news and the Internet; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion provide leadership and be encouraged to conduct awareness campaigns to educate their members, their families and the general public, about the potential dangers the Internet and other forms of electronic media pose to children and teenagers; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Commission on Children & Youth disseminate educational materials to inform Department and Post leadership to the end that all children and parents will be better informed about the dangers inherent in the media, in an effort to return the country to the God-given principles of life, liberty, and the true pursuit of happiness, under God's moral laws.

Resolution No. 249: Comprehensive Health Care For Children and Youth
Origin: Children and Youth
Submitted by: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion stands for "A Square Deal for Every Child"; and

WHEREAS, Many children continue to face health needs that are not properly addressed due to the high cost of our health delivery system; and

WHEREAS, Title V of the Social Security Act adopted by Congress in 1935 is dedicated to promoting and improving the health of our nation's children; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services works in partnership with the States through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to provide Block Grants which address this continuing need; and

WHEREAS, Funding for these Block Grants and other important programs of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau are dependent upon yearly reconsideration and the appropriation of funds by the Congress of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continues to support and endorse the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, the Healthy Start Initiative, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and the Abstinence Education Program.

A motion was made and seconded to allow the Committee Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the committee. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Our partnership with the Children's Miracle Network continues to flourish. This past year the Legion family contributed $2.7 million to CMN affiliated hospitals nationwide. You all saw the results of it with the little Wise baby and Ms. Osmond this morning.

During July, the Legion family teamed up with International Dairy Queen in a show of patriotism and gratitude for our Nation's military and veterans. On Saturday, July 6, those of you who had the information on time got to partake in "The American Legion/Military Day." Legionnaires and military personnel throughout the Nation received a free 5-ounce Sundae from participating Dairy Queen stores. The purpose of this project was to honor our troops fighting the war of terrorism, our veterans who fought in the past wars for America, and plan to raise $1,000,000 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

Lastly, congratulations goes out to Don Gunderson from the Department of Idaho, The National Children and Youth Chairman Of The Year for the year 2002.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered Delegate from the Department of Ohio, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. All opposed? Ayes have it. The report is approved, moved, and adopted.

Presentation: Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award
Richard Santos, National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I've asked Udie Grant from Kansas to join me. He's the President of the Child Welfare Foundation. I now have the pleasure of presenting the Garland Murphy Award to the Department that had the most participation in raising funds for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. The winner of the award is the Department of Alabama.

Accepting on behalf of the Department of Alabama, Thomas Gentilcore, Immediate Past Department Commander. The plaque reads: "The Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award presented by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Alabama for the program year 2001-2002, in recognition of their designation as the number one Department, in total contributions received from their volunteers, in support of our annual program designed to meet the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of our nation's children through productive and meaningful grants."

It is signed by Udie Grant, the president of the Child Welfare Foundation and William Pease, the foundation's executive secretary.

Congratulations to the Department of Alabama. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and your efforts on behalf of all children in this great nation.

IPDC GENTILCORE: Thank you, Commander and the Child Welfare team. On behalf of the Department of Alabama's American Legion team family, thank you for this award.

Presentation: The Child Welfare Legacy Award
Richard Santos, National Commander

At this time we present the Child Welfare Foundation Legacy Award. This award is presented to the top Department based on the combined totals of The American Legion Family for a contribution year. The Department earning the honor this year donated $145,295. It is with pride and gratitude that I present the 2002 Legacy Award to the Department of New York. Acknowledging is Paul 'Gib' Mitras, the Immediate Past Department Commander from New York.

IPDC MITRAS: Thank you, Commander Ric. I want you to know that one of my projects for the year was the Child Welfare Foundation. And that's why the Department of New York did so well. I visited all 62 counties. That was one of my messages that I preached. New York came through.

Before we leave we have an additional function to do here. This is an additional donation for the Child Welfare Foundation from the great Department of New York, $15,000.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Also in the presentation was the Department Commander from New York, the current Department Commander, Fang Wong.

I want to point out there are four plaques for this award, one each for The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion and the Eight & Forty.

The chair recognizes those who wish to make a donation to the Child Welfare Foundation or the Children's Miracle Network.

MR. KEN TALAKTE: On behalf of Grand Canyon Post 42, Department of Arizona, we proudly present to the Children's Miracle Network this check in the amount of $500.

MR. GRANT: Mr. Commander, as president of the Child Welfare Foundation and representing the board of directors, it is my privilege and pleasure to present to you our

distinguished pin that we give to the organizations whose total exceeds $100,000 each year. It is my pleasure at this time to present to you this diamond pin from the board of directors of the Child Welfare Foundation.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I'm being repetitive at this convention but when the Commander receives something it's not for his efforts but for everyone out there. I will wear this pin proudly.

The Chair recognizes Daniel Dellinger of Virginia, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Membership and Post Activities, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Section on Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters (Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs) Membership
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman

Forty-Five members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee Section III (Membership), considered two resolutions, both of which originated with Departments of The American Legion. Both were rejected.

Lloyd Ricker of Minnesota nominated Daniel M. Dellinger of Virginia, seconded by John Pellegrini of Montana as Chairman. Motion carried. Myron Kirby of Illinois nominated Wayne Richey of South Carolina, seconded by Gerald Goetzinger South Dakota as Secretary. Motion carried.

Gerald Goetzinger of South Dakota made a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report of the Committee. The motion was seconded by Wayne Richey of South Carolina.

Steve Bartos of Nebraska made a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the Resolution(s) reported out of the Committee to insure proper wording and form without changing the substance of meaning of the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Myron Kirby of Illinois.

The following resolutions were rejected:

Rejected

Resolution No. 6 (CO): Parade Position, Convention Seating, Housing and Membership Awards Based on Traditional Membership and DMS
Resolution No. 198 (SC): Transfer of Headquarters Post Members to Department of Residence

It was regularly moved, seconded, and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was regularly moved and seconded that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to edit the Committee report on technical changes without changing the content.

As a duly elected Delegate from the Department of Virginia, I move for the acceptance of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. All opposed? Ayes have it. The report is approved, moved, and adopted.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I stated in my acceptance speech in San Antonio that if we were to be successful in membership we had to continue to reach out in all directions through the programs of The American Legion. We did just that in 2002!

Your hard work paid off. Each of you have shown during the year, that without active, growing American Legion programs, membership will lose strength and our voice will be weakened. Membership is our strength and that strength has been made even stronger in 2002. Our membership is ahead of this same time last year, approximately 60,000, thanks to our members efforts.

Partnerships were expanded with Active Duty, National Guard and Reserves through the Reconnect program. Posts were being developed and revitalized all across the country. This partnership expands the opportunity for The American Legion to reach out to younger veterans and their families. Couple that with our continued commitment of service to veterans, their families and our communities. And we can clearly see why The American Legion will have sustained growth.

I know all of you, and the millions of American Legion members you represent, feel as I do. America needs the values represented by The American Legion. It is my pleasure to make membership awards presentations. At this time I ask National Vice Commander Dale Salmon to assume duties at the microphone and the podium.

NV COMDR SALMON: During the past year, seven Departments took their membership effort to an All-Time-High. For each of those Commanders, their Membership Chairmen and their Adjutants we have rings. In addition, a plaque is presented to the Department Commander for the Department's efforts.

The first Department is Nevada. The presentation is to Commander Sam Ruvolo, Membership Chairman Harry Cowen and Adjutant Lionel Motta.

From the Department of Delaware, Commander Dale E. Nauman, Membership Chairman Robert Voll and Adjutant Ed Phillips.

From the Department of Arizona, Commander Alfred Smith, Membership Chairman John "Jeff" Johnson, and Adjutant John Aldecoa.

From the Department of South Carolina Commander Frank Whittle, Membership Chairman John Palmer, and Adjutant Jimmy Hawk.

From the Department of Utah, Commander Allan Setterburg, Membership Chairman, Al Stark, and Adjutant Randy Knight.

From the Department of Virginia, Commander Thomas Saunders, Membership Chairman Les Clevenger and Adjutant Dale Chapman.

From the Department of Florida, Commander Kenneth Powell, Membership Chairman Tom Seitzinger and Adjutant Dyke Shannon.

This is the highest total of Departments achieving an All-Time High since 1947!

A total of 24 Departments topped the 100 percent mark in membership this year. Five of the 24 Departments accomplished this task through traditional efforts. Simply put, this means they were able to replace expected losses through increasing the number of new members signed up excluding DMS members and the number of renewed members.

Department Commanders for Arizona, South Carolina, France, Georgia and Delaware, please accept these plaques as a token of my personal appreciation for your Department membership efforts.

Before we proceed, I'd like to point out that the Commander hosted a reception on Monday for Departments who obtained 96 percent or better of their membership, through traditional efforts. They were given a 'Ric's Retriever' shirt and watch recognizing their

great membership year.

The next award is to a man who set the standard for recruiting during this membership year. The National Recruiter of the Year gathered 392 new members to The American Legion fold. He did this while at the same time serving as Department Commander. Please give a warm welcome to a dedicated Legionnaire from the Department of Alaska, William 'Gene' Franks.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: "National Membership Recruiter of the Year 2002, W. Gene Franks, Department of Alaska, in recognition and appreciation of exemplary achievement by recruiting more new members for our great organization than any other Legionnaire in all 55 Departments of The American Legion.

"In witness thereof, this act is hereby attested to by the hands of the duly authorized officers of The American Legion National Headquarters at Indianapolis, Indiana, Richard J. Santos, National Commander, Robert W. Spanogle, National Adjutant."

NV COMDR SALMON: Gene this is but a small token of appreciation for the job you have done. Without a doubt you are one outstanding recruiter! Commander Santos is presenting you with a set of Marine colors, a plaque and a Legion cap signifying your accomplishment in 2002 for earning the title of Recruiter of The Year for 2001-2002.

MR. FRANKS: I like those colors, they are really nice. I really appreciate the award but regardless of how good one thinks they are, you always have the people behind you that help. On a national level, we have Billy Johnson that if you ever have a question you can go to him and he'll help you out. From Alaska I've got an NEC Joe Craig, and our Adjutant Dean Hill who're always there to help. I guess the biggest one will be my wife who let me do it. Thank you very much.

NV COMDR SALMON: Membership is critical to The American Legion. Remember, without an active, growing membership, and the efforts from individuals like Gene, our programs will lose strength and our voice will be weakened.

Our commitment of service to veterans, their families and communities will suffer. Congratulations to those individuals and Departments we honored today.

A new membership year is underway. Let's look forward to seeing another group of deserving volunteers on stage in St. Louis next year.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Tom Cadmus of Michigan, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Chairman

Ninety-six members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on August 25, 2002, in the Charlotte Convention Center, Room 203B, Charlotte, North Carolina and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Carol Rutherford (MD), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Peter Gaytan (DE), Principal Deputy Director, VA&R Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. Thomas P. Cadmus (MI), Chairman of the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman appointed Pat Phillips (GA), as Committee Secretary; Michael D'Arco (NM), Chairman of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee and John Nelson (MI), Secretary; Milton Willis (VT), Chairman of the Medical and Hospital Subcommittee and Julius Walsh (LA), Secretary.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Carol Rutherford (MD), Director, Cathleen Wiblemo (VA), Assistant Director and Mark Regan (MD), Assistant Director, to Medical and Hospital; Peter Gaytan (DE), Principal Deputy Director and Philip Wilkerson (MD), Deputy Manager, to Claims and Rating.

As has been the custom for the 58 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolutions, in a three day preconvention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their analysis, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. The Screening Committee was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

REGION 1—Robert Owen (ME)
REGION 2—Lance Sweigart (MD)
REGION 3—William "Bill" Pack (NC), Secretary
REGION 7—H. Michael Jensen (UT), Chairman
REGION 8—Leon Bertram (AK)

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Eighty-fifth National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 58 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee. The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	42
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	4
Referred to the Standing Commission	5
Received and Recorded	1
Rejected	6

A report of action taken on the 5 resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 31: Seek Legislation To Pay Accrued Benefits In A Pending Claim To Date The Deceased Veteran's Claim Was Filed
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who have filed a claim or an appeal of a denial of benefits may have to wait years for a decision to be reached; and

WHEREAS, If the veteran should die while their appeal is being considered, the surviving spouse or next-of-kin is limited to two years of retroactive accrued benefits under title 38, United States Code, section 5121; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to revise title 38, United States Code, section 5121 to pay accrued benefits retroactive to the original date of claim in those cases where the veteran dies while the claim or appeal is pending.

Resolution No. 32: All Veterans Receive "Wartime" Benefits For Active Military Service Between February 28, 1961, and August 5, 1964
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Certain VA benefits require wartime service by veterans; and

WHEREAS, The present dates for wartime service during the Vietnam War are August 5, 1964, through May 7 1975; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served from February 28, 1961, through August 5, 1964, shall be considered as serving during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, On November 10, 1997, Public Law 105-110 was signed by President Clinton; and

WHEREAS, This legislation amended the public law which established The American Legion (41 Stat. 285; 36 U.S.C. 45), approved September 16, 1919, by striking December 22, 1961, and inserting February 28, 1961; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always advocated the principle of equal benefits for equal service and believes that wartime service is not limited to only those who served in combat; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the provision in section 101(29)(A), title 38, U.S.C., which limits entitlement to wartime benefits to those who served "in-country in the Republic of Vietnam" in the period February 28, 1961, to August 5, 1964, discriminates against those other veterans who served on active duty during this period, but who did not happen to have been stationed in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, During these early years of the war in Vietnam, those serving on active duty in other parts of the world were a part of the build-up of military forces in Vietnam and were subject to transfer to Vietnam at any time; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall seek legislation to remove this discriminatory provision of the law and establish February 28, 1961, as the beginning date of the Vietnam War for VA benefit purposes.

Resolution No. 34: The Establishment Of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)As A Gulf War Presumptive Disease
Origin: Indiana
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a fatal neurological disease that controls muscle movement and neither a cause or effective treatment for ALS is known; and

WHEREAS, Preliminary findings of a recent joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) study of nearly 2.5 million veterans indicate that

deployed Gulf War veterans are twice as likely as their non-deployed counterparts to develop ALS; and

WHEREAS, The VA study initially identified 40 Gulf War veterans with ALS and there may be other Gulf War veterans currently suffering from ALS yet to be identified; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that he would explore VA's options for compensating Gulf War veterans who subsequently develop ALS; and

WHEREAS, VA subsequently directed all VA regional offices to submit all Gulf War ALS cases to VA Central Office for expeditious adjudication; and

WHEREAS, From the information obtained by The American Legion at this time, VA does not have plans to draft a regulation establishing an ALS presumption under current law guaranteeing compensation for Gulf War veterans who develop ALS in the future; and

WHEREAS, The preliminary results of the recent VA study support the establishment of an ALS presumption under current law; and

WHEREAS, Legislation was also introduced in the First Session of the 107th Congress to establish ALS as a Gulf War presumptive disease; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement a regulation, under existing law, establishing ALS as a condition presumed to be service-connected when incurred by veterans of the Persian Gulf War or, in the alternative, The American Legion pursue specific legislation to accomplish this purpose.

Resolution No. 35: The American Legion Policy On VA Compensation
Origin: Indiana
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The current disability compensation program has proven to be a fair and equitable manner in which to indemnify veterans suffering disabilities that are incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the military, naval, or air service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is totally supportive of every benefit that is currently provided to veterans for their past contributions to their country and its welfare; and

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on a schedule of ratings of reduction in earning capacity from specific injuries as set forth in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of The American Legion that there is no way to adequately compensate a veteran for loss of ability to be a working, productive member of society, and that the current monthly rates do not adequately compensate these disabled veterans for the loss due to reduced earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes Congress should periodically review the amount of disability compensation veterans are receiving and provide a cost-of-living adjustment to assure they have sufficient economic support; and

WHEREAS, Periodically, proposals are made to tax VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, Taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Veterans in receipt of VA disability pension benefits who have no dependents and are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are entitled to receive $90 monthly

for personal needs and wants (Public Law 101-58), none of which can be used to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, veterans having no dependents in receipt of VA disability compensation benefits and who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are required to utilize all funds received from VA towards the cost of their nursing home costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion vigorously oppose any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any administrative or legislative proposal to dilute or eliminate any provision of the disability compensation program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1114, to provide a periodic COLA increase and to increase the monthly rates of disability compensation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any legislative effort to automatically index such cost-of-living adjustments to the cost-of-living adjustment authorized for Social Security recipients, nonservice-connected disability recipients and death pension beneficiaries; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation authorizing the payment of VA disability compensation to veterans having no dependents who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes of at least $90 per month, but also prohibiting any part of the compensation payment from being applied to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility.

Resolution No. 36: The American Legion Policy On Agent Orange
Origin: Indiana
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was the most common herbicide used in Southeast Asia by the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War from 1962-1971; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was contaminated by the carcinogen dioxin (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-*para*-dioxin [TCDD]); and

WHEREAS, Over 2 million veterans served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War and are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, Scientific evidence has linked human exposure to dioxin and certain diseases; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of Vietnam veterans have developed various cancers, neurological disorders, liver dysfunction and other severe diseases; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported Public Law 96-151 which mandated that VA fund a non-government scientific body to conduct a major epidemiology study of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has still not funded the major epidemiology study mandated by public law; and

WHEREAS, In view of the current absence of alternative judicial recourse to remedy the injustice perpetuated on so many disabled Vietnam veterans, their families and survivors, The American Legion will continue to monitor other pending dioxin-related suits; and

WHEREAS, In September 2000, in response to Department of Defense (DoD) disclosure that South Korean troops sprayed the herbicide Agent Orange along the

demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea in 1968 and 1969, VA expanded its Agent Orange Registry program to include veterans who served in Korea during that time period; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 80,000 troops may have been exposed to herbicides during that time period; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continue to urge the completion of the scientific study mandated by Public Law 96-151; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion vigorously support the liberalization of the rules relating to the evaluation of studies involving exposure to dioxin and the adjudication of claims based on Agent Orange exposure; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the development of all ongoing research on the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure and point out to the proper officials any perceived deficiencies or discrepancies in these projects; and to ensure that government committees charged with review of such research are composed of impartial members of the medical and scientific community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Vietnam veterans reporting to VA medical care facilities claiming exposure to Agent Orange be provided examinations and treatment which are thorough and appropriate, and that VA physicians demonstrate compassion in responding to the medical needs of these veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly urge Congress and VA to take appropriate action to ensure that Agent Orange-related compensation and other benefits, currently afforded to Vietnam veterans, are extended to veterans who served along the DMZ in Korea in 1968 and 1969.

Resolution No. 37: Special Pension For World War I Veterans
Origin: Indiana
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The median age of the surviving veterans of World War I is more than 100 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Their numbers have declined rapidly over the past years from 63,000 in 1990 to probably less than 2,000 today; and

WHEREAS, Over this same period, the number of living female veterans of World War I has also declined sharply from 2,800 in 1990 to less than several hundred today; and

WHEREAS, When these veterans returned home more than eighty years ago, there were no government programs to assist in their readjustment to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, Through the years, veterans of World War I worked tirelessly to develop and support the comprehensive programs of veterans benefits and services for subsequent generations of American war veterans; and

WHEREAS, Now, they are ill or infirm and no longer able to work; and

WHEREAS, In many instances, they are subsisting in financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, The Government of the United States and the American people have a moral obligation to insure that all veterans of World War I are not forgotten in their later years; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, since its founding in 1919 by veterans of World War I, has maintained its special concern for the needs and welfare of these war veterans; and

WHEREAS, The veterans of World War I are deserving of a special measure of recognition and attention, because of their efforts and sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, The most direct and tangible way for the nation to fulfill its obligation to those remaining veterans of World War I is to provide them a modest measure of monthly financial support; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), so as to provide that:

1. **The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay to each veteran of World War I, who meets the service requirements set forth in title 38, United States Code, section 1521(j), a special pension in the amount of $150 per month;**
2. **Such special pension shall be paid without regard to (1) any income of any kind payable to the veteran's spouse, and (2) the corpus of the veteran's estate; and**
3. **Any eligible veteran in receipt of pension under title 38, United States Code, section 1512 may also receive such special pension.**

Resolution No. 51: Urge Improvement In VA Procedures For The Issuance Of Veterans Preference Letters
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, It is the sincere desire of the American Legion to see all veterans, especially disabled veterans, gainfully employed; and

WHEREAS, Under current VA regulations a veteran rated less than 10% disabled but who has residuals of their disability can receive 10 point civil service preference; and

WHEREAS, A veteran seeking these 10 points must ask the VA to make a second rating decision which is called a civil service preference memorandum rating; and

WHEREAS, This additional rating, based on current workloads, could take several months or more to be processed; and

WHEREAS, Most federal job announcements have specific, and usually short announcement and closing dates; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to amend their internal procedures as follows:

- **On all original service-connected rating decisions of less than 10%, an additional paragraph be added to the rating to address the issue of civil service preference eligibility.**
- **The notification letter to these veterans rated less than 10% disabled include a statement as to their eligibility (or lack of, if zero percent with no residuals) for civil service preference points.**
- **Revise VA Form 21-8647, Disability Compensation Award Attachment, to include information about the 10 point preference eligibility.**

Resolution No. 100: Extend Presumptive Period For Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) To Seven Years
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) begins insidiously, involving degeneration of the nerve cells either in the brain, the brain stem, or spinal cord and is characterized by atrophy and almost always fibrillation of the muscular system of the body; and

WHEREAS, ALS in its primary stage is difficult, if not impossible, to diagnose since in this stage the condition may appear to be dormant with little or no progression of symptoms for many years, thus leading the individual and his doctor to believe that the condition has become arrested and nothing more is done to establish its diagnostic entity; and

WHEREAS, Some Gulf War veterans have been diagnosed with ALS several years following discharge from service and some veterans have been denied service connection because the condition was not diagnosed while on active duty or within the presumptive time frame; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War veterans diagnosed with ALS so far appear to be generally younger than the average ALS sufferers; and

WHEREAS, A presumptive period of one year from the date of termination of active duty as currently provided for ALS under title 38, United States Code (U.S.C), section 1112(a) is inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge that legislation be enacted to extend the current presumptive period for service connection of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis from one year to seven years from the date of separation from active duty.

Resolution No. 102: The American Legion Policy On Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 18 (MA))

WHEREAS, Approximately 700,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, More than 40,000 women served in theater during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Over 20 percent of new recruits in the Armed Forces today are women and that percentage is likely to grow in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of Gulf War veterans are in good health, thousands of Gulf War veterans nevertheless suffer from unexplained physical symptoms known as "Gulf War veterans illnesses;" and

WHEREAS, Over 200 scientific studies are investigating these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Few of the aforementioned studies are focused exclusively on the illnesses experienced by women Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, Misleading information about Gulf War veterans illnesses has spread on the Internet and through the media, and this information has caused a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the severity and prevalence of Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine is currently preparing reports that evaluate the nature, the likely causes and the Federal Government's response to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, These reports directly effect Department of Veterans Affairs compensation programs for Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several independent expert scientific committees and organizations have stated that a number of suspected causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses are not likely

associated with those illnesses, whereas others are more likely associated with those illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently established a committee comprised of doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans and veteran service organization representatives to provide guidance and advice on future Gulf War-related research efforts; and

WHEREAS, Pyridostigmine bromide was used by the United States and some coalition troops as a nerve agent pre-treatment during the Gulf War although the Food and Drug Administration had not approved the drug for that use and some researchers contend that pyridostigmine bromide may be associated with Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several medical studies have found that the unexplained physical symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are similar to other medically unexplained symptom syndromes like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States recently signed into law legislation amending the Gulf War undiagnosed illness law (title 38, United States Code, section 1117) to include medically unexplained disabilities such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization strive towards its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to devote the appropriate resources to finding effective medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans; and be it

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs fund more scientific studies that exclusively investigate the health of women Gulf War veterans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly implement any reasonable recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports, or recommendations offered by the newly established Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, regarding its Gulf War veterans programs and research; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses and to refrain from supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to closely monitor the implementation of the changes to title 38, United States Code, section 1117 to ensure proper application of the law at the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office level; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to develop the Persian Gulf Registry; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will continue to consult with medical experts from time to time in order to ensure the effectiveness of its advocacy.

Resolution No. 103: Open-Ended Presumptive Period For Undiagnosed Illnesses For Gulf War Veterans
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Thousands of Gulf War veterans still suffer from chronic unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, The numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are not well understood and the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain evasive for some time; and

WHEREAS, There currently is little significant research on long-term health effects of many of the agents Gulf War veterans were potentially exposed to during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed in a September 2000 report by the Institute of Medicine on the health effects of exposures during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, The current presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses was recently only extended for a period of five years (through December 31, 2006); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge that legislation be enacted to extend the presumptive period for service connection for ill-defined and undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely.

Resolution No. 133: Give Priority Treatment To World War II Veterans
Origin: Texas
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, World War II ended more than fifty-five years ago; and

WHEREAS, Most surviving World War II veterans are over 80 years old and in increasing need of medical care; and

WHEREAS, The cost of adequate medical care is beyond their ability to pay, with over 1500 dying every day; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion National Convention in Orlando, Florida in 1997, in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1998 and in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2000, passed resolutions supporting legislation to grant priority care to World War II veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion does hereby reaffirm that Congress amend Public Law 104-262—Veterans Health Care Act of 1996—to include World War II veterans in Priority Group 6.

Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill Of Health
Origin: Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion's intention in its initial draft of the GI Bill of Health was to ensure the permanent existence of an effective veterans health care delivery system for the nation's veterans and their eligible dependents into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, For the past 50 years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided high quality health care to America's veterans, trained numerous health care providers, engaged in innovative research, and supported the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, VA began to change the way it delivers health care in the past several years through restructuring and legislative initiatives, which has resulted in the implementation of several of the original provisions of the GI Bill of Health; and

WHEREAS, The elements of the GI Bill of Health that have already been accomplished under measures established by Eligibility Reform in 1996 and the Millennium Bill in 1999, include:

1. Portability
2. An equitable standardized resource distribution method
3. Extension of health care access to all veterans
4. A defined benefits package
5. Long-term care for veterans rated 70 percent or higher or for service-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, There are two main components of the GI Bill of Health that should be given legislative priority for enactment as separate legislation. The first bill will be known as the "GI Bill of Health—Medicare Reimbursement," and the second as the "GI Bill of Health—Dependents in VA;" and

WHEREAS, The provisions of these bills shall remain the same as the original GI Bill of Health that dealt with these sections; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support enacting additional components of the GI Bill of Health through the "GI Bill of Health—Medicare Reimbursement" and the "GI Bill of Health—Dependents in VA."

Resolution No. 142: The American Legion Policy On The Department Of Veterans Affairs Medical School Affiliations
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, VHA and its medical school affiliates have enjoyed a long-standing and exemplary relationship for over 50 years that has continued to thrive and evolve to the present day; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has four core missions that include patient care, education, research and contingency support for DoD medical services and the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS); and

WHEREAS, VHA conducts the largest coordinated education and training program for health care professions in the nation and medical school affiliations allow VA to train new health professionals to meet the health care needs of veterans and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Medical school affiliations have been a major factor in VA's ability to recruit and retain high quality physicians and to provide veterans access to the most advanced medical technology and cutting edge research; and

WHEREAS, VHA research has made countless contributions to improve the quality of life for veterans and the general population, and the medical school affiliations are an integral component of VA's ability to expand medical knowledge through research; and

WHEREAS, The partnership with this country's medical schools has allowed VHA to enhance its ability to provide quality medical care to America's veterans, to promote excellence in education and research, and to provide back-up medical care to the Department of Defense in the event of war or national emergency; and

WHEREAS, The academic medical model of integrated clinical care, education and research is universally accepted as the best means of providing high quality and state-of-the-art medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion affirm its strong commitment and support for the mutually beneficial affiliations between the Veterans Health Administration and the medical schools of this nation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA medical school affiliates should be appropriately represented as a stakeholder on any national Task Force, Commission, or Committee established to deliberate on veterans health care.

Resolution No. 143: Restore And Increase Burial And Plot Allowance
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, At one time all honorably discharged veterans of a wartime period were allowed a burial/plot allowance of $450 to assist the family in providing a proper burial of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, The burial/plot allowance is now only paid to certain veterans, i.e., those who were receiving VA compensation or pension benefits at the time of death or died in a VA hospital; and

WHEREAS, The benefit has not been changed to keep up with inflation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to return the burial/plot allowance to all veterans who served during a time of war or conflict and increase the dollar amount to $1,000 to compensate for inflation over the years.

Resolution No. 144: The American Legion Policy On The National Cemetery Administration
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) comprises 120 cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monuments. NCA was established by Congress and approved by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 to provide for the proper burial and registration of graves of Civil War dead; and

WHEREAS, Since 1973, annual interments in NCA have increased from 36,400 to over 84,800. Annual burials will increase to more than 115,000 in the year 2010 as the veteran population ages; and

WHEREAS, Fifty-nine (59) national cemeteries are closed for casket burials. Most of these can accept cremation burials, however, and all of them can inter the spouse or eligible children of a family member already buried. Another 22 national cemeteries are expected to close by the year 2005, but efforts are underway to forestall some of these closures by acquiring adjacent properties; and

WHEREAS, NCA administers a program of grants to states to assist them in establishing or improving state-operated veterans cemeteries. The matched-funds program helps to provide additional burial space for veterans in locations where there are no nearby national cemeteries. To date more than $119 million in 114 grants have been awarded to 28 states and the Territory of Guam and Northern Marianas; and

WHEREAS, Operations, maintenance, renovation, and construction funding must continually be adjusted to reflect the true requirements of the National Cemetery Administration; and

WHEREAS, Congress must provide sufficient major construction appropriations to permit NCA to accomplish its stated goal of ensuring that burial in a national or state cemetery is a realistic option by locating cemeteries within 75 miles of three out of every four veterans; and

WHEREAS, The 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act restricted the plot allowance of $150, which was previously paid to all honorably discharged wartime veterans and eliminated the headstone allowance of $85, which was paid to all eligible veterans in lieu of a government-provided headstone or marker. The 1990 Act limited the plot allowance benefit to veterans who are indigent or are in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension payments. The plot allowance would still be payable to state veterans cemeteries. While veterans would still be entitled to receive a government-provided headstone or marker for their interment site, the headstone or marker allowance was eliminated entirely; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran passes away in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary, or in an institution at which the individual was receiving hospital or nursing care at the expense of the United States at the time of death, VA will pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial; however, a veteran who passes away in a State Veterans Home is not allowed transportation cost for the remains to the place of burial by VA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and petition Congress to provide required operations and construction funding to ensure VA burial in a national or state veterans cemetery is a realistic option for veterans and their eligible dependents; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion go on record as being opposed to any attempt, now or in the future, to collect "User Fees" for burials in any national or state veterans cemetery; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support restoration of a veterans burial allowance and an increase in the burial benefit; along with restoration of the pre-1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act criteria to provide eligibility for a government furnished headstone or marker allowance and restoration and increase of the burial plot allowance; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support action to provide that when an eligible veteran dies in a state veterans hospital or nursing home, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 145: Project "Shipboard Hazard And Defense"
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD) refers to a series of tests conducted in the 1960s to assess the vulnerabilities of U.S. Navy ships and their ability to maintain operational readiness in the event of a chemical or biological attack; and

WHEREAS, The tests identified thus far were conducted on various open sea locations in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans; and

WHEREAS, Participants included, primarily, Navy and Marine Corps personnel, with assistance from Air Force and Army personnel; and

WHEREAS, The total number of participating personnel and units have not been definitively identified; and

WHEREAS, 113 tests have been identified at this time and the total number of exercises associated with Project SHAD remains unknown; and

WHEREAS, Testing the effectiveness of shipboard detection and protective procedures against chemical and biological threats exposed participants to simulated and live biological and chemical agents, as well as decontaminates, that have potential adverse health effects for those participating; and

WHEREAS, Veterans involved in the tests suffer from multiple complaints, especially illnesses associated with the respiratory system; and

WHEREAS, There may be other individuals who have filed claims specifically for this project but the Department of Veterans Affairs is unaware of their names; and

WHEREAS, Most of the information on Project SHAD remains classified and therefore the Department of Veterans Affairs has limited knowledge about the project; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is collaborating with the Department of Defense to acquire information about the nature of the tests, those who participated, the time duration and location of the tests, and the chemicals, decontaminates and other agents used; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is in active discussion with the Department of Defense to establish a mechanism for processing claims should they be received; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense's Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses, or the Office of Deployment Health will provide information to the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist SHAD participants in their claims by verifying their units' participation in Project SHAD; and

WHEREAS, In spring 2002 the Department of Veterans Affairs will notify the first 1200 participants, identified to date, of their participation and encourage them to receive examinations to establish health assessments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense in their quest to identify and declassify tests associated with Project SHAD and to quickly notify veterans of their participation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to continuously provide information, including names of units and ships and the number of veterans involved, to all veteran service organizations as soon as such information is provided by the Department of Defense; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs routinely disseminate all declassified information pertaining to SHAD, especially long term health consequences of exposure to various agents used in SHAD, names of participants identified as well as ships and units involved, to all department medical facilities and regional offices responsible for processing disability benefit claims; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct thorough health assessments of participants as they are located, as well as the records of those deceased, to establish guidelines to be used in examining participants of SHAD and awarding appropriate compensation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs and any government agency that conducts health or mortality studies on SHAD participants disclose their findings to the public; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs be urged to reopen all cases involving veterans of identified units to determine any long-term health effects from exposure to chemical and biological agents during these tests and, when supported by medical and scientific evidence, that these veterans be granted compensation and benefits for disabilities associated with their participation in Project SHAD and associated tests.

Resolution No. 146: Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Remove The Specific Date For The Award Of DIC Benefits For Surviving Spouses Of Former POWs
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Benefits Act, Public Law 106-11, authorized payment of DIC benefits to the survivors of former POWs who died after September 30, 1999, and who were continuously rated totally disabled due to a service-connected disability for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding death; and

WHEREAS, There are thousands of widows whose spouse was a former POW who died before September 30, 1999, and who was rated totally disabled for over one year for a service–connected disability; and

WHEREAS, These widows are not able to become eligible for DIC because their husband's death was before September 30, 1999; and

WHEREAS, When other survivor benefit programs were liberalized, they usually covered the widows of veterans who died before the enactment of the law, e.g., deaths from cancers from Agent Orange; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend section 1318 of title 38, United States Code, to remove the date of September 30, 1999, and substitute "who died any time after discharge from active duty and who were rated totally disabled for over one year."

Resolution No. 154: Support Legislation To Permit States To Place Supplemental Guide Signs Relating To Veterans National Cemeteries On Federal-Aid Highways
Origin: Ohio
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, There are many guide signs directing traffic to various facilities such as camp sites, lodgings, restaurants and gas stations on Federal-aid highways; and

WHEREAS, It is not permissible to place guide signs relating to veterans national cemeteries on Federal-aid highways; and

WHEREAS, For example, the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, located approximately four miles from exit number two on Interstate Highway 76, a Federal-aid highway, in Medina County, Ohio has no guide signs at this location, causing many motorists to miss the exit to the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Approximately fifty vehicles visit this cemetery daily; and

WHEREAS, Approximately one thousand people visit this national cemetery on veterans holidays; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation to permit states to place supplemental guide signs relating to veterans national cemeteries on Federal-aid highways.

Resolution No. 159: VA Benefits and Services For Eligible WWII Veterans Of The Philippine Commonwealth Army, Recognized Guerillas, And New Philippine Scouts
Origin: Philippines
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 135 (PI))

WHEREAS, Since 1946 Filipino World War II veterans have been campaigning to be recognized for their service to America during World War II and to be granted the corresponding benefits; and

WHEREAS, Filipino veterans are grateful to The American Legion for supporting their cause, throughout these years—their efforts are yet unfulfilled; and

WHEREAS, The 106TH Congress partially satisfied the claim for justice and equity for Filipino veterans, when it enacted PL 106-377 granting full disability compensation to those Filipino veterans residing permanently in the U.S. and PL 106-419 granting full burial benefits to those Filipino veterans residing permanently and who die in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs in the year 2000 estimated that there were 60,000 surviving Filipino veterans who are classified as Philippine Commonwealth Army, Recognized Guerrilla and New Philippine Scouts veterans, of whom 45,000 reside permanently in the Philippines and 15,000 reside permanently in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Of the 45,000 residing in the Philippines, 41,000 do not receive any compensation or pension benefit from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and most are sickly, over 70 years old, and live below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, Those Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines expressed great sadness and bitterness upon receiving the news of the enactment of PL 106-377 and PL 106-419 because they benefit only those few Filipino veterans residing in the U.S., while the great majority of the Filipino veterans receive nothing under these new laws; and

WHEREAS, A report to Congress that studied benefits for Filipino veterans, authorized by former President Clinton in late 2000, included among the recommended options that the U.S. Department. of Veterans Affairs "authorize non-service connected disability pension to all Filipino veterans;" and

WHEREAS, At the 2002 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, The American Legion adopted the mandate urging Congress to enact legislation amending title 38, United States Code, section 107, recognizing service in the Philippine Commonwealth Army, Recognized Guerillas, and New Philippine Scouts as active military service in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and that they be granted full benefits for such service, and, further, that Congress appropriate sufficient funds for this purpose; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to enact legislation amending title 38, United States Code, section 107, to recognize Philippine Commonwealth Army, Recognized Guerilla and New Philippine Scouts veterans as members of the active military service in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the

Secretary of Veterans Affairs and grant them full benefits for such service and, further, to appropriate additional funds therefore.

Resolution No. 181: Exempt VA Benefits And Services From Pay-Go Provisions
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Budget Enforcement Act (BEA) significantly amended the laws pertaining to the budget process by constraining direct spending through a Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) requirement for all legislation affecting the direct spending of all Federal agencies and departments; and

WHEREAS, Under this statute, as an example, if Congress wishes to establish a new entitlement or expand an existing program for veterans, it must find the money to fund such change within existing budget limits; and

WHEREAS, Wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a result of the injuries sustained during their period of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, The benefits and services received by wartime disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities are an extension of the cost of war; and

WHEREAS, This country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen-soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Since BEA PAY-GO requires Congress to fund new benefits or services within existing spending limits, this, in effect, requires one group of disabled veterans to give up benefits or services, so that another group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The budget implications of PAY-GO are often a deterrent to favorable congressional action on major changes in veterans legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29 2002, That The American Legion support legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the PAY-GO provision of the BEA.

Resolution No. 187: Amend Legislation Regarding The Geographical Means Test
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Means Test administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs was established to determine those veterans unable to defray the cost of medical care; and to identify those veterans who have a financial responsibility to make co-payments when receiving VA health care; and

WHEREAS, The VA Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001, Public Law 107-135, made changes in the current system of eligibility of veterans seeking VA health care; and

WHEREAS, This legislation established a Geographical Means Test (GMT) that takes into consideration the widely varied cost-of-living across the country by establishing an adjusted Means Test threshold based on the United States Housing Act of 1973 (PL 93-383); and

WHEREAS, Regulations regarding the GMT are still being promulgated; and

WHEREAS, The intent of the legislation is to establish an additional Priority Group for VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Veterans above the traditional Means Test and below the GMT will remain classified in Priority Group 7, and those veterans above the GMT will be classified as a new Priority Group 8; and

WHEREAS, The only advantage of this reclassification is that Priority Group 7 veterans will receive a discount on their inpatient co-payments; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of veterans residing in high cost of living areas across the country are at the local poverty level, unable to afford the cost of medical care, yet are classified as Priority Group 7; and

WHEREAS, Current legislation does not meet the intent of granting relief to these veterans by declaring them unable to defray the cost of medical care based on the adjusted cost of living in their geographic area; and

WHEREAS, The only way to grant this relief is to place veterans in Priority Group 5 when their income and assets are below the GMT, thus eliminating their co-payments for medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support legislation to amend or replace the VA Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 to allow veterans to be re-classified from Priority Group 7 to Priority Group 5 when their income and assets are below the Geographical Means Test threshold.

Resolution No. 191: Oppose Any Initiative To Establish A Deductible For Priority Group 7 Veterans On A Provision To Receive VA Health Care
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law 104-262, which established eligibility reform and an enrollment process, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA), has experienced a dramatic growth from 2.5 million veterans to over 6 million veterans enrolled in VA Health Care; and

WHEREAS, A substantial percentage of this growth has been from veterans assigned to Priority Group 7; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect, and retain co-payments and third party insurance payments of Priority Group 7 veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has proposed to levy a $1,500 deductible on Priority Group 7 veterans; and

WHEREAS, The deductible would suppress the demand for VA services at the expense of Priority Group 7 veterans; and

WHEREAS, Priority Group 7 veterans may not be able to afford the $1,500 out-of-pocket deductible and could be driven away from VA services with no treatment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion adamantly oppose any effort to impose a deductible for Priority Group 7 veterans to receive VA health care.

Resolution No. 193: Allow Veterans To Retain $90 Of Their Compensation While In Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes
Origin: Pennsylvania
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, When a veteran without dependents in receipt of pension benefits is covered by Medicaid for nursing home care, VA pension is reduced to $90 for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, When a veteran without dependents who is receiving compensation benefits is similarly covered by Medicaid, only $30.00 a month is allowed for incidentals; and

WHEREAS, This is an inequity and a disadvantage to the service-disabled veteran; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to change the allowance of veterans who are receiving compensation while in a nursing home under Medicaid coverage so they may keep $90 of their check for incidental expenses.

Resolution No. 194: The American Legion Policy On VA National Service Life Insurance
Origin: Pennsylvania
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, No regular government life insurance program was available to veterans entering and leaving service in the period January 1957 to September 1965; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of the Vietnam War serving on active duty during the period beginning September 29, 1965, through May 7, 1975, were covered under either the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program or, later, the Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program; and

WHEREAS, Upon discharge or separation from service, individuals had only 120 days within which to convert their government life insurance to a private commercial policy, with Veterans Group Life Insurance not becoming available until August 1974 with a retroactive open period to 1970 for unconverted active or inactive SGLI policies, but not applying to the major portion of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Many of these veterans experienced extraordinarily severe readjustment problems and were often financially and/or emotionally unable to take advantage of the conversion provision within the 120 day time limit after discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Many Vietnam War veterans who did not convert their government life insurance to a private policy, as well as veterans of the World War II and Korean War period whose National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) polices may have lapsed, and veterans of the Cold War period of 1957-1965 who had no government life insurance coverage for their families' protection, but because of disability may not be able to purchase commercial insurance; and

WHEREAS, There is precedent for the reopening of the National Service Life Insurance program in that it was previously reopened in 1965-1966 for World War II and Korean War veterans with disabilities who had been eligible to apply for NSLI on or after October 8, 1940, through December 31, 1956 (disabilities could have been service-connected and/or nonservice-connected); and

WHEREAS, Since 1951, veterans granted a service-connected disability and who are otherwise in good health may purchase up to a basic $10,000 of NSLI service-disabled insurance at standard rates within two years from the date the VA notifies them of the grant of service connection (one year prior to September 1, 1991); and

WHEREAS, Many such eligible veterans, due to financial hardships and problems associated with their service-connected disabilities and adjustments to civilian life, or to notification problems resulting from VA procedures, did not apply for NSLI service-disabled insurance within the prescribed eligibility period; and

WHEREAS, VA service-disabled life insurance does not permit an eligibility period for increases in previously rated service-connected disabilities, but only for new ratings; and

WHEREAS, Those who may now be able to afford insurance at standard NSLI-disabled rates, and who still would meet the underwriting criteria, cannot apply due to the statutory bar; and

WHEREAS, The continuous inflation of the past four decades has rendered the maximum face value of $10,000 for basic NSLI coverage totally inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the reopening of the National Service Life Insurance program for a minimum of one year for all disabled veterans within underwriting criteria similar to that of the Veterans Reopened Program of 1965-1966, to include a similar reopened period for the service-disabled insurance program for those veterans in good health except for their service-connected disabilities, regardless of the date of their service-connected rating, and that such reopened issues be at a maximum optional face value at a level that appropriately reflects current inflationary experience.

Resolution No. 195: Provide Emergency Response Service For Independent-Living Veterans
Origin: Pennsylvania
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, VA is treating more veterans as outpatients; and

WHEREAS, Some of these veterans either live alone or with families that work, therefore leaving them alone for extended periods of time; and

WHEREAS, A veteran might experience an emergent medical need during these periods of time; and

WHEREAS, A National Network exists that ensures and preserves an independent lifestyle by providing an Emergency Response Service at home that can be activated by a veteran during a medical emergency; and

WHEREAS, VA already has the authority to issue the Emergency Alert System depending on medical evaluation of the need and the availability of local services; and

WHEREAS, This information does not appear to be widely known; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to educate staff and inform patients about the Emergency Response Service; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA should make the Emergency Response Service readily available to veterans medically determined to need such service.

Resolution No. 196: The American Legion Policy On The State Veterans Home Program
Origin: Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 25 (MA))

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans beginning in the late 1800s and have continued to serve subsequent generations of veterans for over one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of title 38, United States Code, VA is authorized to make payments to states to assist in the construction and maintenance of State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are 109 State Veterans Homes facilities in 47 states with over 23,000 beds providing nursing home, hospital, and domiciliary care; and

WHEREAS, The State Veterans Home Program has proven to be a cost-effective provider of quality care to many of the nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, This program is an important adjunct to VA's own nursing, hospital, and domiciliary programs; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Grants for Construction of State Veterans Home Program which provides funding for 65% of the total cost of building new veterans homes; and

WHEREAS, VA has not been able to keep pace with the number of grant applications; and currently there is over $120 million in unfunded new construction projects pending; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes per diem payments for veterans residing in State Veterans Homes which cover only about twenty percent of the cost of domiciliary care and thirty percent of the cost of nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, veterans are paid increased compensation or pension at the Aid and Attendance (A&A) rate while a patient in a State Veterans Home is entitled to receive drugs and medication from VA; and

WHEREAS, VA is seeking to impose restrictions on this program whereby it will pay either the authorized nursing care per diem rate or provide drugs and medication to eligible State Veterans Homes A&A veterans; and

WHEREAS, The enactment of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits bill makes it mandatory that VA provide institutional care and nursing home service to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 70 percent or higher; and

WHEREAS, Currently VA will only provide those services for 70 percent or higher service-connected veterans, if the veteran either resides in a VA long-term care facility or a private contracted facility, but not in a State Veterans Home; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the growing long-term health care needs of older veterans, it is essential that the State Veterans Home Program be maintained as a viable and important alternative health care provider to the VA system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support increasing the amount of authorized per diem payments (40 percent) for nursing home and domiciliary care provided to veterans in State Veterans Homes; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the provision of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medication to State Homes Aid & Attendance patients, along with the payment of authorized per diem to State Veterans Homes; and be it further

RESOLVED, That VA should allow for full reimbursement of nursing home care to 70 percent service-connected veterans or higher, if the veteran resides in a State Veterans Home; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs be urged to support mutual planning efforts, enhanced medical sharing agreements, and enhanced-use construction contracts with qualified providers.

Resolution No. 202: The American Legion Policy On Dependency And Indemnity Compensation
Origin: California
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) may be paid to an honorably discharged veteran's surviving spouse, children or parents if the veteran died of a service-connected disability or died while in the active military, naval, or air service after December 31, 1956; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation program is to provide an appropriate level of economic support and security for the surviving spouse, children or parents; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that DIC benefits be periodically adjusted to reflect increases in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, The Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Reform Act of 1992, PL 102-568, established a single monthly benefit rate for the survivors of individuals who died on active duty and veterans who died of service-connected causes after December 31, 1992; and

WHEREAS, Survivors in receipt of DIC under the prior law which was based on the veteran's military pay grade were "grandfathered" under this legislation and could elect to either continue to receive DIC based on military pay grade or change over to the new DIC program; and

WHEREAS, Congress in enacting the DIC Reform Act expressed its intentions that those survivors remaining under the prior law DIC program would continue to receive periodic cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in their benefits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes recipients under the prior DIC law are entitled to the same percentage cost-of-living adjustment as those under the current DIC program; and

WHEREAS, Surviving spouses with no dependents in receipt of VA death pension in Medicaid-covered nursing homes are entitled to receive $90.00 monthly for personal needs and wants, none of which can be used to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, surviving spouses having no dependents in receipt of or a parent(s) in receipt of DIC and who are in Medicaid-covered nursing homes are required to utilize all funds received from VA towards the cost of their nursing home care, leaving them without any or very limited funds for personal needs and wants; and

WHEREAS, It would be very beneficial for those surviving parent(s) to receive the $90.00 payment the same as allowed surviving spouses in receipt of DIC who are in nursing homes under Medicaid; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support legislation to provide for periodic cost-of-living adjustments in DIC at the same percentage rate to both current-law and prior-law DIC recipients; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall seek legislation authorizing the payment of VA DIC to surviving spouses having no dependents who are in Medicaid-

covered nursing homes of at least $90.00 per month, but also prohibiting any part of the DIC payment from being applied to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to allow parents in receipt of DIC who are patients in nursing homes under Medicaid to be entitled to a payment up to $90.00 per month from VA.

Resolution No. 203: Support Medicare Reimbursement for The Department Of Veterans Affairs
Origin: California
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 184 (NY))

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides medical care to eligible beneficiaries as authorized by title 38, U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, The fundamental branch of VA that administers and operates this medical care delivery system is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); and

WHEREAS, VHA is the Nation's largest comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system that provides excellence in health care value, service, education and research; and

WHEREAS, The mission of VHA is to meet the medical needs of America's veterans by providing specialized care, primary care and related medical and social support services for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA consists of hospitals, ambulatory clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries and readjustment counseling centers located nationwide; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be the Nation's largest educator of health care professionals through its affiliations with medical schools, academic medical centers and other research institutions; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be a major national research asset conducting basic, clinical, epidemiological and behavioral studies across the entire spectrum of scientific discipline; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to serve as a contingency back-up to Department of Defense (DoD) medical services and, during national emergencies, supports the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS); and

WHEREAS, Open enrollment in VHA for all eligible veterans is based on honorable military service; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment in VHA could be limited by the availability of existing annual federal discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to seek other revenue streams to supplement limited annual federal discretionary appropriations and meet the growing demands for quality treatment of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect and retain payments from enrolled veterans and their health care insurers, except Medicare, for inpatient and outpatient care, outpatient medications and long-term care services, and

WHEREAS, Medicare is a prepaid, federally mandated health insurance program for all eligible Americans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare is an entitlement program for nearly forty million Americans; and

WHEREAS, VA is prohibited from billing and collecting Medicare reimbursements for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled Medicare-eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, Indian Health Service has successfully demonstrated the ability to bill and collect Medicare reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's GI Bill of Health proposes Medicare Reimbursement for VA, as a realistic health care entitlement for enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans seeking treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VHA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion advocate to Congress amending title XVIII of the Social Security Act, to allow Medicare Reimbursement for VA on a fee-for-service basis for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans be authorized to participate in the Medicare + Choice option by choosing VA as their primary health care provider.

Resolution No. 204: VA Role In National Emergency Preparedness
Origin: California
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Under title 38, U.S.C. 8111A, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been established as the principal medical care back up for military health care "[d]uring and immediately following a period of war, or a period of national emergency declared by the President or the Congress that involves the use of the Armed Forces in armed conflict[.]"; and

WHEREAS, Under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the Federal Response Plan (FRP) VA's specialized duties entail conducting and evaluating disaster and terrorist attack simulation exercises; managing the nation's stockpile of pharmaceuticals for biological and chemical toxins; maintaining a rapid response team for radiological releases; and training public and private NDMS medical center personnel around the country in properly responding to biological, chemical, or radiological disasters; and

WHEREAS, The VA Strategic Plan for 2001-2006 lists as an objective, "Improve nation's response in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster by providing timely and effective contingency medical support and other services."; and

WHEREAS, If VA is to play a key supporting role as part of the FRP and the NDMS, it must have adequate resources to execute its role; and

WHEREAS, VA's FY 2003 budget request does not adequately provide sufficient funding to execute its mandated support role as part of the FRP and the NDMS; and

WHEREAS, The Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Service (CARES) proposes to ensure that VA's capital infrastructure would meet veterans needs for health care services in 2010 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned that bed space may be lost as a result of the CARES process, seriously jeopardizing VA's ability to perform its fourth mission as a back up to the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion be

appointed to serve as a member on the CARES Commission to ensure that the implementation of CARES does not jeopardize VHA's ability to carry out its responsibilities as part of the Government's response to disasters and national emergencies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to take a more pro-active role in the development and implementation of plans to enhance Federal homeland security initiatives; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly urge the President and Congress to provide VA with the funding necessary to further enhance its capacity to act as a back-up to DoD in times of war and to FEMA in responding to national emergencies.

Resolution No. 205: The American Legion Policy On Former POWs
Origin: California
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In its interest for the welfare of all those who have served in the nation's Armed Forces, one of the major concerns of The American Legion has been the welfare of those who have been prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported various legislative measures intended to alleviate the disabilities that afflict former POWs as a result of experience during internment; and

WHEREAS, In the past, The American Legion supported enactment of Public Law 97-37, the Former Prisoners of War Benefits Act of 1981, approved August 14, 1981, and the presumptions included in Public Law 100-322; and

WHEREAS, The number of surviving former POWs of the four American Wars of the Twentieth Century is rapidly declining; and

WHEREAS, Continued scientific observation of their condition during the years subsequent to their internment indicates additional health problems probably associated with the conditions of their internment; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a fundamental obligation to do everything possible to alleviate any and all health problems of former POWs and see to their physical, social, and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes there is a need to further modify the current provisions of title 38, United States Code, that provide for former POWs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion shall support legislation to amend section 1112 of title 38, United States Code, so as to provide presumptive service connection for the following conditions in the absence of demonstrable intercurrent disease or injury:

1. **Hepatitis or other infectious diseases of the liver;**
2. **Organic residuals of hypothermia, e.g. trench foot, immersion foot or hand, Raynaud's Disease;**
3. **Arthritis, including osteoporosis;**
4. **Chronic pulmonary disease (where there is a history of forced labor in mines during internment);**
5. **Chronic liver disease;**
6. **Heart disease;**
7. **Stroke;**

8. Adult-onset diabetes; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The Department of Veteran Affairs rescind the requirement that a POW must be held in captivity for at least 30 days to receive benefits and medical care and at least 90 days for dental care, and grant compensation for disabilities incurred in captivity on a presumptive basis; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall support any and all efforts on the part of the United States Government to alleviate and ameliorate social, economic, and physical disabilities experienced by former POWs where such disabilities can reasonably be attributed to the effects of internment by the enemies of the United States; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That former POWs be exempt from making co-payments on VA issued prescriptions.

Resolution No. 206: The American Legion Policy On The Correction Of Military Records
Origin: California
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided for the recognition of representatives of The American Legion, and other organizations, to serve as counsel before the discharge and retirement boards of the Armed Forces, and this recognition was extended to cover the Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) when they were created under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was actively involved in the legislative process that established the Correction Boards under section 1552 of title 10, U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, Although under provision of title 10, U.S.C. 1552, a three year statute of limitations was created which begins as of the date of discovery of an error or injustice on the military records of a former serviceperson, the Boards are also authorized, under statute, to excuse filings beyond the three year period if it is in the interest of justice to do so; and

WHEREAS, For many years, the Boards routinely waived the three year statute of limitation so as to provide veterans the opportunity to correct any error or injustice in their records; and

WHEREAS, In the past, the BCMRs have considered that the effective date of commencement of the three year limit was effective the date of the final separation from service; and

WHEREAS, The Congress is investigating the fairness and independence of the BCMRs and the effective date for the commencement of the correction of records by active service members; and

WHEREAS, Section 205 of The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides for the waiver of periods of limitation for persons in military service with respect to civil proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in the case of Detweiler v. Pena, held that the three year rule does not apply to active duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, The Discharge Review Board, considered to be a lower review agency, has a 15 year statute of limitation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion take appropriate action in support of legislation to amend title 10, U.S.C., so as to eliminate all time limitations.

Resolution No. 207: Provide Full Funding For VA Construction Program
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are increasingly aging physical plants in need of replacement; substantial renovation and improvements relating to fire, safety and privacy standards; and modernization as well as reconfiguration to meet the demands of the advances of medicine; and

WHEREAS, The increasing demands placed upon the outpatient and ambulatory care facilities of VA require substantial alterations to meet changing space requirements; and

WHEREAS, No health care delivery system can be expected to deliver quality care if the physical settings that house that care are allowed to deteriorate to a state which places them beyond redemption; and

WHEREAS, VA has undertaken a Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) planning process with the stated intent to realign its medical facilities and services more effectively and more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, The CARES process will develop a National CARES Plan that will require detailed implementation plans; and

WHEREAS, Major and minor construction appropriations for VA have been consistently targeted for reduction since such funding is regrettably the most vulnerable to annual assault; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient funding must be provided to maintain, improve and realign VA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge Congress to annually appropriate sufficient funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs construction program to ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) receive necessary construction funding in transforming the VA health care system within the proposed National CARES Plan to ensure veterans have increased access to a modern VA health care system.

Resolution No. 208: Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-588, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Improvement Act of 1978, provided major changes in the disability and death pension program for the veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars and their surviving spouses and children; and

WHEREAS, This pension program established different guaranteed annual income levels for necessary economic support; and

WHEREAS, After extensive study, The American Legion concludes that certain inequities exist in the Improved Pension program that need to be addressed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Under the current death pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving spouse with no income and no dependents is $6,407 or about only two thirds of the amount received by a veteran with no income and no dependents; and

WHEREAS, In addition, current regulations provide that surviving spouses are not entitled to pension benefits for the month in which the veteran dies, if they are not found eligible for death pension; and

WHEREAS, The majority of these surviving spouses are elderly and disabled and are living below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, Under the current death pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving child with no income where there is no surviving spouse is $1,630 or seventeen percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income or dependents; and

WHEREAS, This limited amount may impose a severe financial hardship on the surviving child; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, section 1543 where the surviving child is residing with a person who is legally responsible for such child's support, the income and corpus of estate of that person is countable for the purposes of determining entitlement or continued entitlement to pension benefits; and

WHEREAS, Currently, when two veterans are married to one another where both meet the disability, service and income requirements, basic pension benefits are payable only at the rate of a "veteran with one dependent" which is currently $12,516 annually; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that since each veteran in their own right meets the eligibility criteria for pension with the exception of being married to another veteran, this discriminatory provision of the law should be eliminated and each veteran should be paid at the basic pension rate of a single veteran without dependents which is $9,556, reduced by the amount of countable family income; and

WHEREAS, In the determination of annual income, payments under all Government Life Insurance programs are countable, but proceeds from fire and casualty insurance policies may be excluded; and

WHEREAS, Previous pension programs have excluded the proceeds of Government Life Insurance Policies in the determination of annual income; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the effective date of reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income shall be the last day of the month in which the change occurred; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes it would lessen the financial hardship of such adjustments to pension if any such change would be made as of the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support amendments to title 38, United States Code, to accomplish the following:

1. **Establish the pension rates of surviving spouses at ninety percent of the rate for a veteran without dependents;**
2. **Establish the pension rate for a surviving child where there is no surviving spouse entitled at ninety percent of the rate of a veteran without dependents;**
3. **Delete the requirement that the income and corpus of estate of a person legally responsible for the support of a surviving child be counted in the determination of annual income of such child;**
4. **Provide that when two veterans, who meet the service, disability and income requirements for pension eligibility, are married to one another, each shall be paid at the rate of a single veteran without dependents reduced by the amount of countable family income;**
5. **Exclude in the determination of annual income payments all proceeds from Government Life Insurance policies;**
6. **Change the effective date for reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income from the last day of the month in which the change occurred to the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred.**

Resolution No. 209: Support Presumption Of Service Connection For Hepatitis C
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is an easily transmittable blood-borne virus, which can result in long-term, potentially fatal health problems; and

WHEREAS, Because of the exposure risk factors directly related to military service, veterans have a much higher incidence of hepatitis C than the general population; and

WHEREAS, VA estimates 10 to 20 percent of veterans currently have hepatitis C, compared to under two percent for the general population; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam veterans are the group most directly affected by the hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who contracted hepatitis C 25 or 30 years ago or more in service are now showing signs of severe liver disease and 52 percent of the liver transplants done by VA are for veterans with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, In 85 percent of cases, no acute symptoms would have shown up at the time of infection with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Military training and combat situations offer many opportunities for transmitting the blood-borne hepatitis virus through blood to blood contact; and

WHEREAS, No effective blood test for hepatitis C was available until 1992; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with Hepatitis C who were treated for acute hepatitis during military service and who now claim service connection are generally denied by VA, because they cannot prove the current Hepatitis C is related to the hepatitis noted in service; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Veterans Appeals often rejects claims for service connection for hepatitis C, because the veteran's medical records do not show the presence of hepatitis C at time of discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Because of the nature of this disease and the long latency period, veterans who experience certain exposure risk factors in service, such as: blood transfusion prior to 1992; exposure to blood on or through the skin or mucous membrane; hemodyalisis; experience of a needle-stick accident or medical event involving a needle, not due to the veteran's willful misconduct; a diagnosis of unexplained liver disease in service; experience of an unexplained liver dysfunction or abnormal liver test; or duty as a health-care position or specialty as prescribed by the Secretary; should be accorded a statutory presumption for the purpose of establishing entitlement to service connection for hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Service connection for hepatitis C is important to veterans and their families, since it entitles the veteran to compensation for any disability related to the disease as well as necessary medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously promulgate regulations providing for presumptive service connection for hepatitis C; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to provide for a statutory presumption of service connection for hepatitis C under certain conditions in service; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide regular notification to Congress, the veterans service organizations, and veterans on new treatment modalities for hepatitis C.

Resolution No. 210: The American Legion Policy On Radiation
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, section 1112 lists various diseases which will be presumed to be service-connected in radiation-exposed veterans; and

WHEREAS, The term "radiation-exposed veteran" (or atomic veteran) is defined as a veteran who participated in a radiation-risk activity while on active duty or inactive duty for training; and

WHEREAS, The term "radiation-risk activity" is defined as involving onsite participation in an atmospheric nuclear weapons test, or the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki during the period beginning on August 6, 1945 and ending on July 1, 1946, or internment as a POW in Japan during WWII which resulted in an opportunity for radiation exposure, or, more recently, participation in underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, Alaska prior to January 1, 1974, or service at gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, In addition to those radiogenic diseases recognized in the statute as being presumed to be related to the veteran's exposure to radiation in service, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.309, now includes bone, brain, colon, lung and ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.311 requires VA to consider the circumstances of the veteran's service and make a determination of whether the veteran's disease resulted from the claimed exposure; and

WHEREAS, Such determinations are based heavily on an estimate of the veteran's probable dose exposure; and

WHEREAS, It is well documented that, because thousands of veterans who participated in the atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and various other radiation-risk activities did not have dosimetry badges, and record-keeping by the military and other Federal agencies concerning individual and group exposures was poor, current radiation dose estimates have been arbitrary, unreliable, and inaccurate; and

WHEREAS, VA's continued use of questionable radiation dose estimates has caused the claims of thousands of radiation-exposed veterans to be denied; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently expressed concern about this problem in a provision of PL 106-419 requiring VA to conduct a two-year study of the radiation dose estimate program and report back to Congress; and

WHEREAS, Based on the lack of credible historic data as to the amount of radiation atomic veterans were actually exposed to, The American Legion believes this requirement in the regulations should be eliminated; and

WHEREAS, PL 106-398 included provisions amending the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 to include workers in Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons-related programs who were exposed to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, thousands of veterans have been assigned duty at various DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities, such as Hanford, Washington, Oak Ridge, Tennessee and others, and would have been similarly at risk of exposure to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, The claim for a radiogenic disease or a disease related to beryllium or silica by such veterans would be denied by VA, because their military duty does not meet the current definition of a radiation-risk activity in title 38 and proof of such exposure for direct service connection would be difficult if not impossible to obtain, nor do these veterans

meet the eligibility criteria for benefits under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek legislation to eliminate the radiation dose estimate requirement in claims of veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to recognize military duty at all DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities as a "radiation-risk activity"; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to include in title 38, United States Code, those diseases recognized for benefit purposes under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended, including those resulting from exposure to beryllium and silica.

Resolution No. 211: The American Legion Policy On Tobacco-Related Disabilities
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, For the last 83 years, The American Legion has fought to ensure that disabled veterans receive benefits and medical care for injuries and diseases related to their period of military service; and

WHEREAS, This would include certain diseases developing years after service which can be related to nicotine addiction resulting from the use of tobacco products during service; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, agencies of the Federal Government, most notably, the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA, have promoted, condoned, fostered and encouraged the use of tobacco products by members of the Armed Forces and veterans; and

WHEREAS, DoD continues to be the nation's largest distributor of tobacco products to active duty, reserve, National Guard personnel and their dependents through the military supply system stateside and overseas; to post and base exchanges, canteens, ship's stores and commissaries; and

WHEREAS, Historically, DoD took little or no action to discourage the use of tobacco products by making them readily accessible and affordable (in some instances they were free) to military personnel and has only recently established physical fitness policies to discourage tobacco use by active duty and reserve personnel; and

WHEREAS, VA hospitals up until 1991 continued to provide tobacco products at discounted prices; and

WHEREAS, Although the Federal Government has required a health warning on cigarette packages and other tobacco products sold to the public beginning in 1965, such warning labels were not required on tobacco products distributed through DoD until 1970; and

WHEREAS, Until the early 1990s, most all claims for disability and death due to smoking were generally denied by the courts and VA due to the lack of scientific evidence of a relationship between nicotine addiction, tobacco use and certain diseases, such as cancers of the lip, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, larynx, lung, pancreas, bladder, urinary tract and kidney; coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, other circulatory diseases, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and

WHEREAS, Within the last several years, there has been increasing scientific data establishing a causal link between tobacco use and an increased prevalence of certain diseases among those who used tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, There have been ongoing revelations in the course of recent litigation against the tobacco companies about the addictive effects of nicotine and its consequences and the efforts of the tobacco companies to conceal and withhold such information and scientific data from the public, the Federal Government, the Congress and the courts; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, the VA General Counsel issued a precedent opinion which held that a claim for service connection for a smoking-related disability or death was legally possible; and

WHEREAS, From 1993 until May 1997 tobacco-related illness claims were held in abeyance while VA officials debated the practical and budgetary implications of this change in VA policy; and

WHEREAS, The four specific evidence requirements for a tobacco-related illness claim were finally set forth in a May 13, 1997 VA General Counsel precedent opinion:

1. There must be a statement from the veteran that he or she used tobacco products (i.e., smoked, chewed tobacco, or used snuff) during service; and
2. There must be a currently diagnosed medical condition, such as emphysema, chronic obstructive lung disease, lung cancer, etc.; and
3. A medical opinion must state this condition is related to tobacco use; and
4. A medical opinion must also state that the veteran was dependent on nicotine;

WHEREAS, The VA General Counsel Opinion concluded that, providing and four requirements are met, it would be consistent with the historical concept of service connection for VA to grant direct service connection for nicotine dependence and service connection on a secondary basis for a subsequently developing tobacco-related disease; and

WHEREAS, VA has estimated there would be some 2.5 million smoking-related claims filed over the next five years resulting in additional benefit costs of some $15 billion, which VA believes would have a devastating impact on the VA budget, in particular, and the federal budget, as a whole, while ignoring the plight of veterans who used tobacco on active duty and especially those who were introduced to tobacco during such service; and

WHEREAS, The President's FY 1999 budget request for VA was predicated on legislation barring the grant of service connection of any disability or death due in whole or in part to tobacco use as well as entitlement to VA medical care for such disability; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in the course of debate on the FY 1999 Federal Budget, used the $15 billion identified as savings resulting from the bar to veterans claims for tobacco-related illnesses as a funding source for the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA-21); and

WHEREAS, TEA-21, signed by President Clinton as PL 105-178 on June 9, 1998, made veterans' use of tobacco products in service synonymous with willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, New legislation will have to be introduced in the 108th Congress; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that action should be taken by Congress to overturn this anti-veteran legislation that violates veterans constitutional rights, since no other group of citizens, who are ill from tobacco-related causes, is being singled out and stripped of their eligibility for federal benefits and medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support legislation to restore entitlement to service connection for disability or death related to the veteran's use of tobacco products during the period of active military service from June 9, 1998, the date of the enactment of Public Law 105-178, the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century;" and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also support Congressional appropriation of sufficient funds to pay compensation benefits for tobacco-related illness claims.

Resolution No. 214: Clarification Of "Service In The Republic Of Vietnam" For The Purpose Of Agent Orange Presumption
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun to implement a General Counsel opinion that impacts negatively on the eligibility of veterans who served their country during a time of war; and

WHEREAS, Until most recently, VA awarded service connection on a presumptive basis for all individuals who served on the Republic of Vietnam soil and also those who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam, thus recognizing such service as service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Congress in its plain language included a definition of "Service in Republic of Vietnam" in the most general of terms; "performed active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962 and ending on May 7, 1975," so as to plainly be deemed an intent of inclusion, rather than exclusion; and

WHEREAS, Succeeding interpretations in 38 CFR and General Counsel opinion prior to VAOPGCPREC 27-97 have considered service in a "naval" capacity as service in the offshore or territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam, as included in the category of "exposed" to Agent Orange, and, therefore, included in those eligible for presumptive consideration; and

WHEREAS, The plain language and sentence structure of the statute is expanded in 38 CFR 3.307(a)6(iii) to include restrictive terminology which was further supported and confirmed in VAOPGCPREC 27-97; and

WHEREAS, The sentence structure and plain meaning of even the restrictive language can be interpreted to include "service in the territorial waters offshore" as "service in the Republic of Vietnam;" as "territorial waters" would be considered to be within the boundaries of the Republic of Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion seek legislation to plainly identify and further clarify "service in the Republic of Vietnam beginning January 9, 1962 and ending on May 7, 1975" to include those who served in the territorial waters offshore, as this was clearly the original intent of the statute; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That those individuals who served in "other locations," who can show their condition of service-involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam, shall also be included under the definition of those exposed to Agent Orange and the resultant presumptive conditions.

Resolution No. 221: Request Congress Provide VA Adequate Funding For Medical And Prosthetic Research Activities
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Service is very productive in advancing medical knowledge and improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; and

WHEREAS, VA has developed the cardiac pacemaker, nicotine patch, the concepts that led to the Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT) scan, and other medical breakthroughs; and

WHEREAS, VA physicians and scientists conduct more than 9,000 research projects each year; and

WHEREAS, Basic biomedical research provides the most rational and cost-effective means of preventive health care and provides treatments and cures for many diseases; and

WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research lead to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and serve as a successful model in lowering long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, VA realigned its research priorities in response to recommendations of the Department's Research Realignment and Advisory Committee to better serve the needs of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, The Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is a venture undertaken by the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Service to establish a national system to translate research discoveries, innovation, effective and efficient diagnostic and treatment strategies into patient care; and

WHEREAS, QUERI is a comprehensive, data driven, outcome based quality improvement program that will ensure excellence in all areas of VHA medical care: in-patient, out-patient and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Continued research is urgently needed for many diseases if medical science is to overcome cancer, heart disease, AIDS, new strains of tuberculosis, mental illness, hepatitis and others, to help spare veterans and citizens from prolonged illness and permanent disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The need to reduce the nation's budget deficit must not compromise the efforts to maintain and improve health productivity and develop new preventive and therapeutic procedures through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies; and

WHEREAS, The VA Medical and Prosthetic Research budget has not kept pace with inflation during the past 15 years, unlike other federal agencies that have received significant funding increases; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that Congress and the Administration support strong medical and prosthetic research programs within VA so that veterans and all citizens continue to benefit from the exceptional research capability of the Department; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support adequate funding for VA biomedical research activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress and the Administration encourage acceleration in the development and initiation of needed research on conditions that significantly affect veterans—such as prostate cancer, addictive disorders, trauma and wound healing, post-traumatic stress disorder, rehabilitation, and others—jointly with the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health, other Federal agencies, academic institutions and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 222: Support The Automatic Waiver Of VBA Debts Of $250 Or Less
Origin: District of Columbia

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Overpayment of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits is often the result of a lack of understanding of VA regulations and not due to any fraud or misrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, VA processing of collection or waiver of small overpayment amounts requires significant resources and time; and

WHEREAS, Under current regulations, most overpayment waiver requests are granted; and

WHEREAS, Elimination of processing of small overpayment amounts would allow VA personnel to concentrate on other duties, such as claims processing, thus improving the timeliness of VA in delivering benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Congress of the United States be requested to amend title 38, United States Code, to state that any alleged overpayment in the amount of $250 or less be granted an automatic waiver.

Resolution No. 223: Protect Disability Rating After Ten Years
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Section 110 of title 38, United States Code (USC), now provides for the protection of all disability compensation evaluations that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, Permanence should be conceded for disability compensation ratings which have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion recommend that section 110 of title 38, United States Code, be amended to provide that disability evaluations continuously in effect at that same evaluation rate be protected after a period of ten years.

Resolution No. 318: The American Legion Policy On VA's Capital Asset Realignment For Enhanced Services (CARES) Program
Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) owns and/or operates a vast and extensive inventory of capital assets (land and buildings); and

WHEREAS, VA's facilities, built and designed decades ago, do not consistently support optimal veterans access to care for the least cost; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that VA was spending too much money, one of every four dollars, to operate and maintain its buildings and other assets; and

WHEREAS, There have been numerous changes in the dynamics of VA health care delivery during the past several years that have shifted care from an inpatient setting to outpatient treatment; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to experience an unprecedented growth in the number of veterans enrolling for VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-117, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (The Millennium Bill), directs VA to conduct a comprehensive capital asset management/strategic planning policy study to identify mission realignment proposals; and

WHEREAS, In response to the aforementioned factors, VHA initiated the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process with the stated goal of enhancing current and future health care services to veterans by realigning its capital assets to improve the delivery of services; and

WHEREAS, Initially, the process was designed to be completed in three phases until all Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) were evaluated and health care delivery options provided to VA; and

WHEREAS, A pilot study of the CARES process was conducted in VISN 12; resulting in a subsequent reorganization; and

WHEREAS, CARES is now managed by the National CARES Program Office and will involve a nine step process to provide a health care needs assessment involving the 20 remaining VISNs across the country; and

WHEREAS, VA will now develop planning initiatives, Network Market Plans, and a National CARES Plan; and

WHEREAS, To ensure objectivity, VA will establish a CARES Commission of external non-VA members to review the draft National CARES Plan and make recommendations to the Secretary for a final decision; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was concerned about the planning assumptions and the involvement of the Veterans Service Organizations in the initial process; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes much of the underutilized space in VA facilities is the result of budget-driven decisions rather than demand-for-services; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned that CARES could result in an effort to reduce VA expenditures under the pretext of cost-savings without regard to the needs of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's position is that no VA medical facility should be closed or realigned for the sole purpose of cost reduction; and

WHEREAS, The Millennium Bill mandates VHA to provide nursing home care to service-connected veterans rated 70 percent and higher and those veterans with service-connected conditions that require nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) and VA are seeking ways to integrate their health care services through additional sharing agreements and joint venture opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Homeland Security requirements will begin at the grassroots level and many VHA capital assets may serve local, state and national needs in its role as a contingency back-up to DoD medical services and the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) during national emergencies; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial that the CARES process attain its goal to evaluate the best ways to provide quality care to more veterans, now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, The CARES process will occur in a very rapid time frame, and it is important that veterans know about CARES since it will help to shape the future of the VA health care system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion become actively involved in the CARES process at the local, VISN and national level; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the CARES process must be an open and transparent process that continually and fully informs the Veterans Service Organizations of CARES initiatives, criteria, proposals and time frames; and be it further

RESOLVED, That any CARES recommendations should be considered in the context of a fully utilized VA health care delivery system that takes into consideration the tenets of the GI Bill of Health, VA/DoD sharing, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefit Act, and Homeland Security; and be it further

RESOLVED, That VA provide a current list of VHA's capital assets to Homeland Security personnel for consideration in strategic planning at the local, state, and national level; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion formally request representation on the CARES Commission.

Resolution No. 319: The American Legion Policy on VA Medical Care Mandatory Funding
Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annual budget consists of both mandatory and discretionary funding; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding refers to a process where the level of funding is governed by formulas or criteria set forth in authorizing legislation rather than by appropriations; and

WHEREAS, Under budget law, a mandatory program is one that requires provision of benefits to all who meet the eligibility requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding is provided for programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and VA compensation and pension; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, discretionary funding is "all other" funding subject to the annual appropriations process; and

WHEREAS, Discretionary funding in VA's current annual budget provides for programs such as medical care, major and minor construction, National Cemetery Administration, State Extended Care Facility Grants, and State Cemetery Grants; and

WHEREAS, There have been annual struggles to obtain sufficient funding to provide access to quality care for eligible veterans seeking care in VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, A method to provide dependable, stable and sustained funding for veterans health care is needed; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding is one component of a combination of funding mechanisms to ensure adequate VHA funding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That Congress designate VA medical care as mandatory spending; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress continue to provide discretionary funding required to fully operate other programs within VHA's budgetary jurisdiction; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress provide, if necessary, supplemental appropriations for budgetary shortfalls in VHA's mandatory and discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of America's veterans.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 46 (IA): Urge Congress to Direct Medical Care Collections to the VA Medical Care Facilities Providing the Treatment

Referred Resolutions

Resolution No. 7 (CO): VA Establish a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic or a Private Provider System in NW Colorado
Resolution No. 101 (MD): Require VA Establish a Policy of Enrollment in VA Health Care System at the Time of Separation from Active Duty Service
Resolution No. 171 (NJ): Mandatory Eligibility for Nursing Home and Long-Term Care for Wartime Veterans
Resolution No. 186 (NY): Urge VA to Establish a Policy for Reimbursement of Payments when a Claim for Service Connection is Awarded
Resolution No. 237 (PI): Review the Records of World War II Philippine Army Veterans at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO

Rejected

Resolution No. 47 (IA): Amend 38, U.S.C., to Establish Arthritis as a Presumptive Service-Connected Disability for VA Medical Care Purposes
Resolution No. 48 (IA): Request Congress to Consider Medicare Payment to the Department of Veterans Affairs
Resolution No. 126 (MX): Urge VA Expand Availability of Spanish Language Pamphlets and Forms
Resolution No. 158 (OH): Support Naming the Patient Tower at VAMC Dayton, OH in Memory of Marine Corporal Tony Stein
Resolution No. 183 (NY): Urge Legislation to Secure Parity in the Benefits Veterans Receive as Patients in a Federal (VA) or a State Facility
Resolution No. 192 (NY): Support H.R. 3771, "Justice for American Veterans Act"

CHM CADMUS: I thank all the commission, the standing committee and Carol Rutherford and her staff at the Washington office in helping us through this program.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered Delegate to this Convention, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. All opposed? The ayes have it. The report is approved.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy
National Commander Ray Smith

With the adoption of the Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Report, it is appropriate to announce the winner of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually to the Department which best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. For the 2001-2002 program year the trophy is award to the Department of Minnesota.

Accepting on behalf of the Department of Minnesota is Bill Goede, Immediate Past Department Commander and Steve Meyer, Director of Rehabilitation and the Department Service Officer.

"For God and Country, the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy is awarded to the Department of Minnesota. This certificate is symbolic of the trophy awarded annually to the Department which best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. Presented on August 28, 2002, signed by Tom B. Cadmus, Chairman of VA&R, and Carol J. Rutherford, Director."

IPDC GOEDE: On behalf of the Department of Minnesota, I thank the Legion, the Auxiliary and the SAL for all the effort they put into it. With four VA medical centers, five veterans' homes and many other functions that the Legionnaires and Auxiliary and the SAL do in Minnesota, it makes it pretty easy to make out this report to help win this award.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The chair recognizes Herman Harrington of New York, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Section on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section II of Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)
Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman

Forty-three members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, elected Herman G. Harrington of New York as Permanent Chairman, and James C. Young of Texas as Permanent Secretary, and considered twenty resolutions, sixteen of which originated with Departments of The American Legion and four which were created by the committee. Of these, four were approved; two were approved with amendment, five were referred, six were received and recorded; and three were rejected.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 250: Appreciation To Host City
Origin: Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Credentials And Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, The 84th National Convention has been held in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27-29, 2002, and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of North Carolina, the officers of the Convention Corporation and the Department, and by the officials and the people of Charlotte, North Carolina; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That we express our deep appreciation to the Department of North Carolina, Governor Michael Easley; Mayor Pat McCrory; the city officials of Charlotte, North Carolina, including the Fire Department, Police Department, and other Public Safety Officials, and to the 2002 National Convention Corporation Officers, Jerry Hedrick, President. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable Convention.

Resolution No. 251: Tax Exempt Status Of Posts
Origin: Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Credentials And Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a tax exempt veterans organization under Section 501 (c) (19) of the United States revenue code; and

WHEREAS, There is an increase in The American Legion Posts throughout the United States being audited by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and

WHEREAS, In many such audits, the IRS challenges the federal tax exempt status of a Post, because it permits members of other American Legion Posts, the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and the American Legion Auxiliary (Auxiliary) and members of their immediate families to participate in its activities and use its facilities; and

WHEREAS, As a part of such audits, the IRS agents determine that amounts generated by a Post from members of other Posts, SAL and Auxiliary and members of their immediate families is taxable unrelated business income; and

WHEREAS, In some of these audits, the IRS agents have determined that the operation by a Post of a bar and/or restaurant is inconsistent with the federal tax exempt purposes of a Post; and

WHEREAS, Certain Internal Revenue Service agents have attempted in an unwarranted manner to unjustly limit the application of Section 501 (c) (19) and read the United States Code contrary to the perceived intent of Congress; and

WHEREAS, The long term solution to such attempts by Internal Revenue Agents and offices is an amendment to further clarify the congressional intent expressed in Section 501 (c) (19), and

WHEREAS, The position taken by the IRS in these audits is not consistent with the intent of Congress in enacting an exemption from federal income tax for Posts and organizations composed of past or present members of the Armed Forces under Internal Revenue Code §501(c) (19) wherein the regulation has the approval of the National Internal Affairs Commission and recommendation to the National Executive Committee, and

WHEREAS, This resolution (No. 315, Credentials & Internal Affairs, Section II) was passed by The American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 7, 2000, and the U.S. Congress has not yet passed this legislation, and since this is a reiteration year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, and 29, 2002, That The American Legion continue to seek the introduction of and support legislation to amend Section 501 (c) (19) of Title 26 U. S. Code to clearly express that members of other American Legion Posts, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion and family members of members of The American Legion may use American Legion Posts' facilities without endangering the tax exempt status of host American Legion Posts and without creating unrelated business income for the host Post; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be and is hereby directed to take any and all appropriate measures to petition Congress on behalf of The American Legion to pass legislation to amend the Internal Revenue Code §501 (c) (19) and other sections, which measures shall include but not be limited to the drafting, support and passage of legislation to clarify that:

1. **Members of any American Legion Post and members of the American Legion Auxiliary (Auxiliary) and the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and members of their immediate families may utilize facilities and participate in activities of any**

other American Legion Post without jeopardizing that Post's exemption from federal tax on unrelated business income generated by transactions between that Post and members and immediate family members of the Auxiliary and SAL and members of other American Legion Posts; and

2. **The provision by any American Legion Post of social and recreational activities for any member of the American Legion, Auxiliary or SAL, and their immediate families, is a legitimate tax exempt purpose of any Post, and be it finally**

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be and is hereby directed to take whatever additional appropriate action is necessary to assure that

- **The tax exempt status of an American Legion Post will not be revoked because it permits members of other Posts, the Auxiliary or SAL or members of their immediate families to participate in its activities and use its facilities or because it primarily operated a bar and/or restaurant; and**
- **The IRS will not treat income generated by a Post from members of other Posts, the SAL and Auxiliary or members of their immediate families as unrelated business income.**

Resolution No. 252: Legal Immunity For Volunteers
Origin: Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Credentials And Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion volunteer for innumerable activities in support of their communities, States, and the Nation; and

WHEREAS, These volunteers may be sued and forced to undergo a great deal of unnecessary legal expense for merely trying to help their fellow human beings; and

WHEREAS, In a large number of states the law currently does not afford volunteers sufficient protection from frivolous, improper and harassing lawsuits; and

WHEREAS, This resolution (No. 314, Credentials & Internal Affairs, Section II) was passed by The American Legion while in National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 7, 2000, and since not all of the proper legislation has passed, this resolution is for reiteration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That all state legislatures be urged to introduce and pass legislation to provide volunteers who receive no monetary value for their efforts in helping their fellow citizens, immunity from all suits alleging negligence in their volunteer capacity, except those who may demonstrate willful, gross or intentional negligence.

Resolution No. 253: Award Medal Of Freedom To Harry Colmery
Origin: Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 commonly known as the "G.I. Bill" was written in long hand by Harry W. Colmery, the act had long been recognized as one of the most influential laws enacted in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, The veterans of this great nation owe a deep and lasting debt of gratitude to Harry W. Colmery for his ability to set down on paper a document which truly transformed their lives and gave them an opportunity to advance their status in life; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is fully aware of Harry W. Colmery's contribution as well as the fact that he has not had the recognition he so richly deserves for this meaningful service to all servicemen and women; and

WHEREAS, This resolution (No. 330, Credentials & Internal Affairs, (Section II)) was passed by The American Legion while in National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 9, 1998, and since no action has been taken by The President of the United States, this resolution is submitted by reiteration; and

WHEREAS, There is a concurrent resolution working in the 107th Congress which expresses the sense of Congress that the President should posthumously award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That Congress be asked to pass a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President of the United States award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue efforts to ask the President of the United States of America to ensure the posthumous award of the Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery, Past National Commander of The American Legion and author of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 commonly known as the "GI Bill"; in recognition of his role in one of the most significant single pieces of legislation in the history of the United States.

Approved With Amendment

Resolution No. 4: Support Of The National D-Day Museum Exhibit
Origin: Louisiana
Submitted by: Credentials And Other Internal Matters, Section II
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The National D-Day Museum opened in New Orleans, Louisiana, on June 6, 2000, to world wide acclaim; and

WHEREAS, Since the Grand Opening of the Museum in excess of 675,000 visitors have viewed the Museum exhibits; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors has embarked on an aggressive campaign to expand the Museum to adjacent properties to develop the Museum as the world's premier museum of the American Experience in the World War II years; and

WHEREAS, The expansion of the Museum will include the development of a major new exhibition on the American Experience in World War II along with a new Center for the Study of the American Spirit; and

WHEREAS, The National D-Day Museum American Spirit exhibition will include the most extensive compilation of the contributions of the 48 States and American territories and commonwealths in World War II, yet to be assembled in one resource, which exhibit may include, but not be limited to, the following information:

Military Personnel
- Number of citizens of each state, territory, or commonwealth who served.
- Number killed in action.
- Number wounded in action.
- Number missing in action.

Home Front Industries
- Number of defense contracts or contractors (defense plants).
- Number of personnel employed.
- Notable or major manufacturers evidencing the products produced.
- Map of defense plant locations.

Military Installations

Map showing locations and designations of military installations.
Units trained in each location.
Theaters and locations of service for each unit trained.
Function or role of installation.
Number of personnel stationed at each installation.

Units Raised

Listing of units raised in the state, territory, or commonwealth, with shoulder sleeves insignia.
History and definition of the unit insignia.

POW Camps

Locations of POW camps.
Nationality of the prisoners housed in each camp.

Of Special Significance

Medal of Honor Recipients including stories of each.
Significant contributions of individuals and industries.
Noted inventions or innovations created in the state, territory, or commonwealth to the war effort.

Enemy Activity (if appropriate)

Sabotage.
Invasions by the enemy on American soil.
U-boat and I-boat actions.
Firebomb balloons, etc.; and

WHEREAS, The information compiled in this exhibit will be made available to each state, territory, or commonwealth of the Union through kiosks located in the Museum and throughout the United States in each State Capitol, State Archives, State Library or other facility designated by the participating State; and

WHEREAS, The exhibit information will be made available electronically to teachers and students in all of the participating States; and

WHEREAS, One of the basic principles on which The American Legion was founded is to "preserve the memories and incidents of our association in the Great Wars;" and

WHEREAS, The compilation of the information to be included in this exhibit will preserve the memories and incidents of the veterans of World War II and the Americans who supported the war effort on the home front; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support this exhibit, and urge each Department to coordinate with the State agencies to contribute available information to the exhibit, to include, but not be limited to, the following information, to wit:

Military Personnel

Number of citizens of each state, territory, or commonwealth who served.
Number killed in action.
Number wounded in action.
Number missing in action.

Home Front Industries

Number of defense contracts or contractors (defense plants).
Number of personnel employed.
Notable or major manufacturers evidencing the products produced.
Map of locations of defense plants.

Military Installations

Map showing locations and designations of military installations.
Units trained in each location.
Theaters and locations of service for each unit trained.
Function or role of installation.
Number of personnel stationed at each installation.

Units Raised

Listing of units raised in the state, territory, or commonwealth, with shoulder sleeve insignia.
History and definition of the unit insignia.

POW Camps

Locations of POW camps.
Nationality of the prisoners housed in each camp.

Of Special Significance

Medal of Honor Recipients including stories of each.
Significant contributions of individuals and industries.

Noted inventions or innovations created in the state, territory, or commonwealth to the war effort.

Enemy Activity (if appropriate)

Sabotage.
Invasions by the enemy on American soil.
U-boat and I-boat actions.
Firebomb balloons, etc.

Resolution No. 113: Proper Maintenance For Memorials And Monuments
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Credentials And Other Internal Matters, Section II
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, At numerous locations throughout the State of Utah and the Nation there are memorials and/or monuments dedicated to those individuals who paid the supreme sacrifice by giving of themselves to protect our freedoms embraced by all loyal Americans, and

WHEREAS, Their honorable service of duty and honor to their community, state, and nation has demonstrated that, "Freedom is not Free" and that since our nations birth Americans have been called to action to preserve our freedoms and,

WHEREAS, To show proper respect to remind present and future generations of the dedication and sacrifices made, memorials and/or monuments have been erected and dedicated and,

WHEREAS, Due to the normal wear of natures elements and time some of the locations where the "Place of Honor" rest lack the proper on-going maintenance and care worthy of the sites original intent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion, an organization consisting of armed conflict veterans nationwide, go on record to encourage all agencies, organizations, and individuals responsible for the original intent and construction of the memorials and/or monuments be encouraged to assure that first-class perpetual care and maintenance are a "first priority". That it will ensure the proper respect to the memorials and/or monuments be carried on for future generations of Americans to enjoy, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That all American Legion entities work with appropriate agencies within their State County and City to monitor upkeep of memorials and/or monuments in their local areas making sure all are kept in excellent condition by those responsible for their maintenance.

Referred to the Internal Affairs Commission

Resolution No. 43 (NM): Open Membership of Sons of The American Legion of Fathers of Sons on Active Duty or Veterans
Resolution No. 54 (IL): POW/MIA Logo on Envelopes Sent from National Headquarters
Resolution No. 112 (UT): Support of the Pacific Theater Project
Resolution No. 157 (OH): Congressional Change in Eligibility Dates for Membership in The American Legion
Resolution No. 161 (VA): Support the National D-Day Memorial Foundation

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 9 (CO): Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
Resolution No. 110 (UT): States To Establish Veterans Hall of Fame and Monumental Site
Resolution No. 137 (FL): Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
Resolution No. 138 (FL): Support for Team American Legion
Resolution No. 160 (VA): Proclaim "Homefront Recognition Day"
Resolution No. 199 (CA): Support Tribute to Bob Hope

Rejected

Resolution No. 52 (IL): Establishment of Membership Eligibility AD HOC Committee
Resolution No. 139 (FL): Presidential Medal of Freedom for Robert C. Becker
Resolution No. 176 (ID): Stamp Honoring the *USS Enterprise*

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

Mr Commander, as a duly elected and registered Delegate, from the Department of New York, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and I have heard a second. Under the question, hearing none all those in favor, signal by the sign of aye. All opposed? Ayes have it. So ordered. The report is approved, moved, and adopted.

Thank you, Herman, for such a thorough report.

Presentation: National Emergency Fund Raising Award
Richard Santos, National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: During the 2001 Fall Meetings, I issued a challenge to all Departments to raise $500,000 for the National Emergency Fund. We not only made it but exceeded the goal by $28,000. Also, we have for the first time in the history of the Fund, roughly over $1.1 million available to assist our Posts and our members and their families during times of a national disaster.

During the Commanders and Adjutants Conference last year, I issued a fund-raising challenge to the Department Commanders. Those who met the challenge would get a great dinner here in Charlotte. To enjoy such a treat, they had to be the top Department Commander in each of the six categories, determined by size.

The Department commanders and their wives or guests who enjoyed dinner with my wife Linda and I this past Saturday night were Bill Goede of Minnesota, John Milburn of Maryland, Bennie McDonald of Georgia, Gil Lovelady of Louisiana, Linda Thayer of Vermont, and Gene Franks of Alaska. Once again, congratulations to these six commanders who took on the National Emergency Fund as a special interest and ended up on-top in their category. Would each of the Commanders please stand to be recognized? Let's give them a round of applause.

Twenty-nine Departments exceeded their assigned goal in raising funds for the National Emergency Fund. It is our pleasure to make awards to these Departments. I ask National Vice Commander Mareschal to assume duties at the podium.

NV COMDR MARESCHAL: Each of the Departments achieving the goal is receiving a plaque from the National Commander showing his appreciation in their fund-raising efforts this past year. These Departments have met the challenge issued by National Commander Santos. It is with heartfelt gratitude that we present these plaques for the hard work and diligence of your members in raising money for the National Emergency Fund.

We begin with the award to Thomas Gentilcore of Alabama; Gene Franks, Alaska ;Al Smith of Arizona; Danny DuMiller of Colorado; Dale Nauman of Delaware; Ernest Sohns of District of Columbia and accepting is Dennis Kerr; Bennie McDonald of Georgia,; Michael McCloskey of Hawaii, accepting is Bernard Lee; Cleve Rice of Idaho; Richard Denbow of Iowa; Gil Lovelady of Louisiana; John Milburn of Maryland; Lawrence Conners of Massachusetts; John Knox of Michigan; Bill Goede of Minnesota; Richard Reed of Mississippi; Jerry Bove of Nebraska; Salvadore Ruvolo of Nevada; Paul Mitras of New York, accepting is Department Commander Fang Wong.

DEP COMDR MITRAS: Commander Santos, the Department of New York has a additional donation to the National Emergency Fund of $35,000.

NV COMDR MARESCHAL: Milton Woodle of North Carolina; Wayne Pedigo of Oklahoma; Donald Dahl of Oregon; Santiago Rosario Rodriguez of Puerto Rico; Frank Whittle of South Carolina; Vernon Sip of South Dakota; Allan Setterberg of Utah; Linda Thayer of Vermont; Billy Karnes of West Virginia; Ted Adkins of Wyoming;

Congratulations! Thank you for your hard work. Please don't stop the fund-raising efforts because we never know where Mother Nature will strike next. This fund needs to continue to receive funds if we are to help our Legion family members in need. Remember that each and every dollar donated to the National Emergency Fund, stays in the National Emergency Fund.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Before we move forward to take on the last bit of business for this afternoon, we would like to see if there are any further donations out there. There's still a lot of trees out there that we can shake to get more money, a little green falling out of

it for the Emergency Fund. And if there any further donations, please come forward. I see a forest moving this way. That's not a forest, this is a Sequoia.

NV COMDR SOLMAN: On behalf of the Departments of Idaho, Montana and Nevada and newly acquired Wyoming, this is our 18th year of having Fund Days. We have a check here for $1,300 for the National Emergency Fund that we raised August 9th and 10th in Elko, Nevada.

DEL FROM IDAHO: The Department of Idaho has another donation to Commander Santos for the National Emergency Fund of $1,628.50.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Frank Sickle from New Jersey and entourage.

NEC SICKLE: On behalf of the Department of New Jersey, I have with me tonight our Immediate Past Department Commander Dan McCole, and Past Department Commander Joe English for the purpose of a presentation.

PDC MCCOLE: On behalf of American Legion Post 338, Leonardo, New Jersey and Department of New Jersey, I am proud to present a check for $5,000 for the National Relief Fund.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: With that donation that puts New Jersey over the top for reaching their goal, also. Say thank you New Jersey.

DEL DUNAWAY: Post 42 Grand Canyon from our 197 members $1,000 for the National Emergency Fund.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Jeff Seler from Pennsylvania.

PDC SELER: On behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania we're proud to present to you a check for $12,000 in addition to what we've already given.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Of course, Jeff was Immediate Past Department Commander. Along with him is Kit Watson the Adjutant. And Gerry Zorn, the new Commander, and Tiny, too.

Claude Carpenter from the Southern Caucus, along with Jerry Hedrick.

DEL CARPENTER: Mr. Commander, as you know, we had a Southern Caucus breakfast this morning and we appreciate the fact that you were able to tend and participate. We did cajole or whatever term you might use to shake them down for some money, but we took up $4,312 this morning, and it includes a check of $1,000 from Arkansas and $1,500 from South Carolina.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Helping with that presentation was Jerry Hedrick, Vice Chairman for the Southern Caucus. That was an unique and quick fund-raiser of $60,230.50.

CHRMN HARRINGTON: I certainly appreciate what you Legionnaires have done for the National Emergency Fund. It's truly an example that if one member of the family gets in trouble, the rest of the family rallies to their help and that's just what you did.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Again, you decide to open up your heart and open up your wallet and it does show, again, that veterans do take care of veterans and the Legion does take care of its own.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Judge Vincent Gaughan of Illinois, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

To the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002.The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 25, 2002 at the Graves Room, 3rd Floor, Charlotte Hilton Hotel.

Committee Liaison Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD) called the roll and announced that forty-five (45) members of the Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was agreed upon by the members and submitted to this Convention.

The meeting was opened by Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD), who acted as temporary chairman. He stated a quorum was present and proceeded to the first order of business which was the election of a permanent chairman and secretary.

Honorable Vincent M. Gaughan (IL) was elected Chairman on motion by Charles Mills (NY), seconded by Willliam Bryant (VA) and unanimously approved. Cathy Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary by motion made by Walter Saur (IA), seconded by Karl Oltmanns (OK) and unanimously approved. The Chairman and the Secretary assumed their respective places.

Copies of all the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, and copies of the National Constitution and By-Laws were made available to all members of the Committee.

A motion was made by John Titus (PA) and duly seconded by Peter E. Pappas (MA) that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting be seated with voice but no vote. The motion carried.

The Chair called upon Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., National Judge Advocate, to give a summary background report on the resolutions to the Committee, which was done.

The Chair then stated, based upon the National Judge Advocate's report to the Committee with regards to the requirements for consideration of resolutions to amend, he would rule out of order those resolutions which did not meet those requirements.

The Chair announced that he was in agreement with the Report of the Standing Committee that Resolutions Nos. 11 (MT), 28 (SD), 44 (NM), 50 (IL), 117 (MX), 128 (TX), 136 (SD), 168 (WI) and 219 (SC) were out of order. A motion was made by Alan Lennox (CA) that Resolution Nos. 11 (MT), 28 (SD), 44 (NM), 50 (IL), 117 (MX), 128 (TX), 136 (SD), 168 (WI) and 219 (SC) were out of order. The motion was seconded by William Bryant (VA) and unanimously approved.

The Chair stated that Resolution No. 218 (NE) was in proper form for a constitutional amendment to the Constitution of The American Legion, but after discussion the language in the amendment basically says that April 7th, 1917 and thereafter, any veteran would be eligible for The American Legion. Discussion was had concerning this, and the tax problems, and of the very organic change to our organization. After this discussion, a motion was made Alan Lenox (CA) to reject Resolution No. 218 (NE) and seconded by Walt Landi (FR). The motion was overwhelmingly sustained by a vote of 42 to 3.

The meeting then proceeded to consider Resolution No. 104 (MD) and Resolution No. 170 (NY) as consolidated. The chair explained that these resolutions pertained to the same subject matter. And basically this was the Constitutional Amendment resolution that was passed in Milwaukee two years ago.

A motion was made by Charles Mills to approved Resolution No. 170 (NY), and Resolution 104 (MD) as consolidated. Karl Oltmanns (OK) seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted. I will now read the resolve clause.

Resolution No. 170: Change In Eligibility In The American Legion
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Constitutional Amendments

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 1, adopted by the National Convention of The American Legion, September 5, 6, 7, 2000 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin set forth an amendment to the national Constitution of The American Legion to be effective when the corporate charter was amended, which takes an Act of Congress; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress has not yet acted and it is the policy of The American Legion to reiterate for a new Congress all resolutions requiring Legislative action; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion continues to believe the amendment set forth in Resolution No. 1, referenced in the first "Whereas" clause above, is proper and appropriate; and

WHEREAS, The National Constitution of The American Legion in Article IV, Section 1 provides as a condition of eligibility that members will have been honorably discharged or separated or will continue to serve honorably after any of said periods; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has not seen fit to close the period of hostilities called the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, A large number of individuals would like to join The American Legion, but have no military or naval service prior to the gulf War and continue on active duty; and

WHEREAS, Developments since August 2, 1990 have caused this to become a possible impediment to membership; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was originally proposed by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion and recommended to the National Convention for approval; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Convention of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the National Legislative Commission, be and it is hereby authorized and directed to petition the Congress of the United States to further amend Section 5 of the Act entitled "An Act to Incorporate The American Legion, Public Law No. 47, 66th Congress, approved September 16, 1919, (c.59, Sec. 5, 41 Stat. 285; October 29, 1942, c. 633, Sec. 2, 56 Stat. 1012; July 9, 1946, c. 546, 60 Stat. 524; December 28, 1950, c. 1177, 64 Stat. 1122; July 26, 1955, c. 386, Sec. 2, 69 Stat. 380; September 1, 1966, Public Law 89-550, Sec. 2, 80 Stat. 372; December 27, 1974, Public Law 93-557, 88 Stat. 1792; August 17, 1978, Public Law 95-346, 92 Stat. 485; December 21, 1979, Public Law 96-155, 93 Stat. 1165; October 30, 1990, Public Law 101-478, 104 Stat. 1157; December 2, 1991, Public Law 102-179, 105 Stat. 1229; November 20, 1997, Public Law 105-110, 111 Stat. 2270; August 12, 1998, Public Law 105-225, 112 Stat. 1297; November 3, 1998, Public Law 105-354, Sec. 1(6), 112 Stat. 3244; Title 36 U.S.C. Sec. 21703, (as amended) to read when further amended as follows:

"An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation only if the individual

1) has served in the Armed Forces of

A) the United States at some time during any period from

(i) April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918;

(ii) December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946;

(iii) June 25, 1950, through January 31, 1955;

(iv) February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975;

(v) August 24, 1982, through July 31, 1984;

(vi) December 20, 1989, through January 31, 1990;

(vii) August 2, 1990, through the date of cessation of hostilities, as decided by the United States Government, all dates inclusive; or

B) a government associated with the United States during a period referred to in subclause (A) of this clause and was a citizen of the United States when the individual entered that service; and

2) was honorably discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorable during or after that period."; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That when and if the Congress of the United States enacts the above amendment, and the President of the United States shall have approved the same and it becomes law, then the National Constitution of The American Legion shall be deemed amended in conformance therewith, but subject to all consistent limitations and restrictions in the constitution contained, all as provided for under Article XVII thereof, so that Article IV, Section 1 of the aforesaid National Constitution of The American Legion, shall read as follows: "Article IV"

Eligibility

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the Governments associated with the United States; during any of said periods; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continues honorably during or after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

Basically what this does is we didn't have the words 'during or' in our Constitution or in the Act of Incorporation. This takes into actuality the great men and women who we had up here yesterday and today that are serving the United States in a time of hostility.

The chair then asked for a motion that the chairman and the secretary be permitted to sign the report to the convention on behalf of the members of the committee. T. Les Galloway (OR) made the motion and it was seconded by John Titus (PA). The motion carried.

Thomas Moe (ND) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chair. The motion was seconded by Karl Oltmanns (OK). The Chair then thanked the Committee for its cooperation and productive meeting. The meeting was then declared in recess pending a call from the Chair of the Committee.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate of this Convention, I move that this report be adopted. We do have a Constitutional Amendment in this report, so it must carry by a two-thirds vote.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and a second heard. Under the question?

DEP COMDR FARR: Mr. Commander, Ed Farr, a registered delegate from the Department of Nebraska. I would like to either motion or make a request to set Nebraska Resolution Number 218 aside for separate consideration.

CHRMN GAUGHAN: The Commander has said that number 218 of Nebraska will be set aside. What I'm going to do is move that the report again be adopted by this Convention, being a delegate, with Nebraska's Number 218 set aside.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: You heard the correction on the motion. Nebraska 218 will be set aside. Under the question. All those in favor signify by the sign of aye. Nays? Ayes have it. It's awarded. The report is adopted with the exception of Nebraska resolution.

CHRMN GAUGHAN: Mr. Commander, I move that Nebraska 218, which would make everybody eligible from April 7, 1917, who served in the Armed Forces of the United States or in associated government, be rejected by this Convention.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do we have a second? There has been a second. Under the question.

CHRMN GAUGHAN: Mr. Commander, point of discussion. In moving for the rejection our Committee had discussed many, many reasons why. First of all, and primarily, what this would do is change the nature of The American Legion from those magical words of wartime veterans to a different organization. The founders of our organization concluded and knew well about the Spanish-American War, the Mexican American Expeditionary Forces in 1916. They were aware, at that time, the purpose of this organization and what they wanted to do.

Then, there are other things that also must be considered. First, as we had stated earlier, there are definite tax consequences in the area of charitable donations. Those would become nondeductible to the people making those donations. Also, if we lost our charitable status, because we have the requirement of our membership to be a certain percentage of wartime veterans, we also would have to pay income tax. And as you've seen by the New York and Maryland resolution to amend our Constitution, we are codifying what we had done in Milwaukee. Two years ago we sent this resolution to Congress. They have not acted on it yet. The House has acted on it, but the Senate hasn't. So for two years, if we did expand our eligibility, we would not be a charitable organization. So think about those consequences.

Also, the Godwin Report talked about—this was a report that was requested and authorized in 1984 and they submitted their report in 1985. The 1984 data was that there was 28 million veterans. Of that 28 million, 23,600,000 were eligible for The American Legion. There was approximately 15.8 percent or 4.4 million who were not eligible. And as you have heard the people from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the other people concerned with veterans, that overall number of 28 million has dropped down to 24 million.

Since the Godwin Report has been prepared, you have seen that there has been other dates of eligibility which have now come into existence, making more people eligible for The American Legion. And specifically, those three dates were August 24, 1982 through July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989 through January 31, 1990; and the major one where we're getting veterans all the time that are eligible, August 2, 1990 through the cessation of hostilities as decided by the United States government, all dates inclusive. We have that big eligibility date.

So, gentlemen, that's the Committee's reasons for rejecting this resolution.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone No. 2.

DEP COMDR LINDERMAN: Walt Linderman, Commander Department of South Dakota.

Are we telling the veterans that were wounded between Korea and Vietnam and between Korea and the Second World War that they weren't wounded by enemy fire; that they are not eligible veterans? Our Governor of South Dakota was wounded, received a Purple Heart and he was between Korea and Vietnam. I would think he was wounded by enemy fire just as well as anybody else was that received the Purple Heart. And he's not the only one. There's lots of veterans in those service dates that were in fire fights. Who drafted them and under what flag were they serving?

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Repeat your last.

DEP COMDR LINDERMAN: Who drafted the people between the Second World War and Korea and Korea and Vietnam, and under what flag were they serving? Weren't they serving under the same flag we all served under?

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Who drafted? We can't hear you very well up here.

DEP COMDR LINDERMAN: Yes, they were drafted into the service. And some of them were shot and some died and some received Purple Hearts. Weren't they also serving under Old Glory like the rest of us were?

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I think all these questions have been answered ten times in the Committee. What we are doing is rehashing over issues that have been done there.

We all know the answers. They did not serve during time or period of hostility as predicted or dated by Congress. Plain and simple from that aspect. We are not questioning their courage, we're not questioning their bravery or their duty to our country.

DEP COMDR LINDERMAN: Okay. Well, tell them it was non-hostile fire.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone No. 3.

DEP ADJ MILLS: I'm Charles Mills, a delegate to this convention and the Judge Adjutant of the Department of New York. I'm speaking in favor of the motion to reject. Now, the resolution which we are seeking to reject would amend our Constitution and By-Laws in such a manner that anyone who served between World War I and World War II would be eligible. Now that is a concept that the founders of this organization never adopted, and for good reason. The United States Army and the United States Navy, between the two World Wars, were small, professional organizations that based almost no danger, no possibility of going into combat until we got into the next war.

Now, the tax consequences of this resolution are quite serious, and they are not something to be made light of. Right now, The American Legion and all its subordinate units enjoy the most generous tax exemption of any organization in the country with the possible exception of the federal government itself.

Right now, one of our Posts can have a dinner with a Congressman, make a profit on the dinner, berate the Congressman at the dinner about pro veterans' legislation it wants passed, and that profit on that dinner is not taxable. This is an almost unique tax deduction. If we lose this, and we will lose it if we cease to be a wartime veterans organization, The American Legion and every Post and every other subordinate unit will have to get a new tax exemption, we'll have to take pay taxes on everything until we get the new tax exemption, and under the new tax exemption they would be in grave danger of losing it if they carried on normal American Legion functions such as urging the passage of pro veterans' legislation.

Basically, if this happened and we lost our wartime veterans organization tax exemption and a Post, even after it got a new tax exemption, paid a visit on their Congressman or raised some money for the Citizens Flag Alliance, the IRS could yank their tax exemption just like that. And if that happened, their dues would be taxable, their bar receipts would be taxable, their raffles would be taxable. This could be a total nightmare. And the Departments and the national organization would have to do something to prevent Posts from accidentally losing their tax exemption by lobbying. We have a really good thing going with the IRS and if we adopt something like this, we are going to lose it. We are going to be in a nightmare.

Finally, it wasn't too long ago that we debated a resolution that would extend the dates of membership somewhat. Well, over 90 percent of the delegates at that convention rejected that. Now, a number of years earlier we added another 10 months on the Vietnam War because there were good reasons to do that. Those were actually time of war. I don't think that we have now in the period of a few years decided to reject the concept of the founders

of this organization and make all the people who served in the small professional army between World War I and World War II eligible for membership. So I urge this convention to vote yes on the motion to reject this resolution.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone No. 4.

PDC RAWERS: My name is Arthur Rawers, the Past Department Commander of Illinois and a duly elected and registered delegate to this convention. I wish to state my reasons why I support the Committee's recommendation to reject Resolution Number 218.

Now, I'm not going to talk about the tax consequences. We all know that those will be devastating and they will be financially damaging to any Post. I'm not going to talk about the supposed impact on membership. Sure, we need new members, but new members are out there. We're just not doing our job to get them. What I am going to talk about is how this resolution will change the very nature of our organization. And that's why I'm strongly against changing the eligibility to join our great organization.

The resolution goes to the very core of what our organization is. There are many, many organizations and many have limitations and restrictions on membership. And there are many organizations that I and maybe you would like to belong to, but we can't. I am personally a member of the United States Navy Cruise Sailor's Association. If you weren't in the United States Navy, and more importantly, if you didn't serve aboard a cruiser, you cannot join that organization.

My comrades, The American Legion is a wartime veterans association. And I emphasis that. Wartime. Okay. I sound like a elitist. You know what? I am. I'm an elitist when it comes to membership in our organization. The whole nature of our organization is that we are wartime veterans. That's the one thing that we all have in common. That's the thread that makes us unique. That's the thread that makes us different. That's the thread that binds us together. My comrades, don't break that thread. Reject this resolution.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone No. 1.

DEL TROUTMAN: I am Terry Troutman and Chairman of the Wisconsin delegation and I request the chair recognize our delegate to the Constitution Amendment Committee and a member of the standing committee, Cathy Gorst.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: So granted.

DEL GORST: In some respects I would like nothing more than to see the dates opened up because I, in fact, have a husband who would then be eligible. However, as a delegate to this Convention, I have a duty to act responsibly and act in a fashion that promotes the interests of this organization. And to vote against rejecting this resolution would, in fact, be abdicating my responsibility to every single blue cap out there and every Post out there.

Primarily because what I would be doing is eliminating our ability to go out and promote the benefits of veterans' legislation for all veterans, including the ones that are not eligible for our organization, which we do now. We would not be able to go out and promote such things as the GI Bill of Health or the original GI Bill if we were, in fact, not able to lobby Congress.

For that reason primarily, I refuse to abdicate my responsibility to our Post and our organization and to veterans, whoever they are and whenever they served. And I would hope that this entire body would vote unanimously to support the rejection of this resolution.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone 3.

PNC COMER: I am John P. Comer, Past National Commander, the delegation from the Department of Massachusetts. I also urge to vote to reject this resolution. I have answered this question so many times in my career and since I've been National Commander. We'd like to join a veterans organization. As been stated by my colleagues, we are unique. We are the largest war veterans organization in the world.

They can join an organization. They can join the AMVETS. They want a peacetime organization, they can do so. I belong to religious organizations and I belong because of my religious affiliation. I respect the Jewish war veterans, but I am not of the Jewish faith. In Massachusetts, we would lose the exemption on our Post quarters. We are one Department that appreciates no tax on our veterans Posts throughout Massachusetts because of our war veterans status. There are many benefits that would be eliminated because we no longer would be a war veterans organization. And certainly we have heard very clearly the tax situation.

The Congress of the United States respects us to the highest as the organization that is always there when we were ready to present legislation. No, we would be there fighting them. They certainly know that we would be weakened. The establishment by our forefathers was very clear. You must serve within specific dates established by Congress. We honor every other peacetime veteran. We even honor them in Massachusetts by benefits that we are trying to promote at this very time.

I urge all of my colleagues, all of my fellow veterans, please reject this resolution to keep this organization intact. Because when we hear, we forget. And when we see, we remember. It's when we do, as we should do today, we understand.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone 3.

DEL LENNOX: Al Lennox, State of California, delegate to this Convention. I'm also Chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws for the Department of California, a member of the National Commission on Constitution By-Laws and a member of the Constitutional Amendments Committee. I urge that you support the rejection of this resolution. The wartime status enjoyed by The American Legion has two main components. One component is that we were citizens soldiers who left our families, our wives, our children and our jobs. We answered the call of our country in a wartime period.

To ask to open those dates would change that definition of wartime status and remove that prestige and our most-favored treatment that we today enjoy by Congress. I urge the rejection of this resolution.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone 2.

DEL PAPPAS: Sam Pappas, delegate Montana. After hearing all the discussion, I am going to ask for a call to the question. We can bat this around for the next 20 minutes and not accomplish anything. So I call for the question, Commander.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We entertain that call. The question once, the Chairman of this Committee makes his final comment.

CHRMN GAUGHAN: To my comrade from South Dakota, the Commander of the State of South Dakota, if this was a vote against veterans, nobody would have traveled from around the world to come here to vote that way. So let me give you this assurance. This is not a vote against veterans. And you must listen to the other delegates.

It's nice to phrase everything in patriotism, and God loves that, but you have to think about the tax consequences. Posts making over $100,000 might be subjected to 36 or 38 percent federal tax. Think about that. Think about approximately 40 percent of your income going to programs for Children and Youth, going to Boys State, going to Girls State be taken away. That's why I urge this convention to reject Nebraska 218.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We are listening for a second to the previous motion.

The motion was seconded. Motion has been made and seconded to reject this Amendment to the Constitution.

First question here is to close the debate. All those in favor of closing the debate signal by sign of aye. Those nay? Ayes have it and it is so ordered. The debate is closed. Now we'll

move on the motion of rejecting the Amendment. All those in favor of rejecting this Amendment signal by the sign of aye. Those nay? Ayes have it. The Amendment is rejected.

CHRMN GAUGAN: Commander, with the vote on the Nebraska resolution, I move that vote and the report be adopted by this Convention.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Motion has been made and seconded. Under the question? All those in favor signal by the sign of aye. Those against nay. Ayes have it. That report is adopted.

Call on Milton Woodall, Immediate Past Commander from the Department of North Carolina.

IPCD WOODALL: I want to make a small presentation to our National Commander in thanks from North Carolina for his visit to us and for his year of dedication to The American Legion and his assistance to North Carolina. I hope it's something that you will enjoy.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: This is a very large plate with the logo and emblem of The American Legion. To you, Commander Woodall and all of the North Carolina Legionnaires, Legion family, thank you very much for this gift.

Now call upon the National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle, for any administrative announcements.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: The Western States Caucus will be held in Hall A immediately following the recess of this session of the Convention.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Please rise. Delegates, please join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. One, two.

The time is 3:34 p.m. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, Thursday, August 29.

... At 3:34 p.m., the Convention recessed, to reconvene the following day, Thursday, August 29, 2002 at 9:00 o'clock a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
THIRD DAY

Thursday, August 29, 2002

...At 8:30 a.m., the Delegates listened to the Prelude.

...At 9:00 a.m., the Delegates assembled for the second day of the 84th Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Convention will come to order. Delegates will stand. Colors of our country being in place, right hand salute. One! Two!
For the Invocation, I will call upon our National Chaplain, Dr. David F. Russell of Post 320 in Spotsylvania Virginia.

Invocation
David F. Russell, Virginia, National Chaplain

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for this week. We pray that You continue to be with us today and watch over us and direct us. And Father, we remember many comrades and friends who have passed away, some even this week. And we ask You, Sir, to be with the family of Leonnard Overmeier, the Past Department Commander of Michigan, who passed away Wednesday. Bring Your comfort and Your consolation to them that they might feel Your presence at this time and feel the presence of our Legion family as we offer to them our sympathies. For these things we do ask in the name of Thy precious Son. Amen.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Join with me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

...Delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Please be seated. This Convention is now in session.

Remarks: Richard Santos
National Commander, Maryland

The World Series was concluded this week and I would like to read a release in reference to American Legion Baseball. The city of Danville and the entire Dan River Region opened its arms this past week and gave the eight teams participating in The American Legion World Series a good old fashion Southern welcome. Although only one team walked away with the championship trophy, everyone involved was a winner.

There was, however, one defining moment in this year's 2002 American Legion World Series, and it came Monday afternoon following the Dathan, Alabama and Excelsior, Minnesota semifinal game. Excelsior defeated Dothan to advance to the American Legion World Series championship game. But it's what happened in the bottom of the ninth inning and immediately afterward that defined for me what American Legion baseball is all about. Dothan trailed 7 to 1 heading into the final inning and managed to mount a rally that narrowed the gap to 7 to 3.

With runners on first and second, Ron Woods hit a ground ball to second base and appeared to beat the throw to first. The umpire, however, saw it differently and called Woods out. Instead of the bases loaded with one out, Dothan now faced a two-out situation with runners on second and third. Some of the Dothan fans voiced their obvious displeasure immediately after the call. When the next Dothan batter flied out to center field to end the game, the umpires exited the field through the Dothan dugout.

As the umpire who made the call headed off the field, the fans behind the dugout once again voiced their displeasure in his direction. Then it happened. One of the singular most sportsman like acts of gamesmanship I believe that I have ever witnessed. As Dothan's Clint Wade exited the dugout with his teammates to congratulate Excelsior, the umpire that had made the questionable call headed off the field through Dothan's dugout. The fans behind the dugout once again voiced their anger and displeasure in the umpire's direction. The 18-year old Wade turned around, looked up at the disruptive fans, put his index fingers to his lips (in essence telling them to hush) and turned around and walked away.

While the incident doesn't say much for the fans demonstrating their childish frustration, it says volumes about the young man, Clint Wade, and the countless other players just like him on the Alabama team as well as all the other teams that participated in this year's World Series. Where does a young player learn such values? No doubt from his parents, but also from his coach. That is evident by what Dothan manager Larry Tubbs said after the game, "The umpiring in this World Series was outstanding. I really mean that. They did a great job."

Adding to the weight of the magnitude of that statement is that the fact that Tubbs made the comment immediately following his previously undefeated team's exit from the 2002 World Series on what was an obvious questionable call. Yet for Tubbs, there was no sour grapes. Quite to the contrary. It was an example of a class act all the way. It's no wonder then that his players demonstrated the same level of sportsmanship.

The good sportsmanship at this year's American Legion World Series was at a level second to none. It's an example that the players involved have reason to be proud of and that their young counterparts at the Little League World Series should take note of as well as the players on the professional level.

This week there were no incidents of 12-year old kids showboating by pointing to center field and calling their shot or even dancing down the third baseline after a game winning home run. There were no incidents of managers charging out of the dugout and arguing questionable calls or players getting in the face of umpires. We personally didn't witness one single incident of bad sportsmanship that entire weekend. That doesn't mean that every team and every coach agreed with every call.

Of course, they didn't. But like Clint Wade, the rest of this year's participants in The American Legion World Series followed the lead of their coaches and demonstrated exemplary conduct throughout the World Series. But conduct like that doesn't just happen. All the players and coaches know what The American Legion fully expects of the teams right from the start. Arguing is not tolerated. Showboating and taunting are not permitted and fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for expulsion from the tournament. Quite a novel idea, wouldn't you say? Create a level playing field, insist on moral values of conduct and just play good old fashion baseball.

So where did you go on your summer vacation this year? How many of us would choose to leave our family behind, take a week of vacation time and head off to work harder than they probably do the rest of the year? What would your husband or wife say to that proposal? And yet every year hundreds of volunteers do just that to make the American Legion World Series a success.

Well, to Jim Quinlan and his large staff of volunteers, a well-deserved kudos. Once again The American Legion has reason to be proud. Yet again, they put on a great show. Another year has passed and with it another successful World Series has been completed.

We have a little note. *ESPN* didn't broadcast our World Series. They did the Little League. So we say to *ESPN*, please take note. You're televising the wrong World Series.

That report was filed by our staff Managing Editor of *The American Legion Magazine*, Jeff Stoffer out of Danville, and we thank Jeff for his efforts on this.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Our first speaker this morning is a man who has statutory responsibility for all matters relating to manpower personnel, Reserve affairs and more for the United States Army. A U.S. Army veteran, he served two tours in Vietnam early in his career, and retired in 1990 as the Executive Assistant to the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a man committed to achieving a high quality of life for people, strengthening the Army's readiness to prevail in every mission and make the transformation of the Army a reality. Please welcome the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Thomas E. White.

Address: Thomas E. White
Secretary U.S. Army

Let me introduce you all to my good friend Major Don Baldeck, Special Forces A-Team Commander Afghanistan, October, 2001.

Thank you Don, thank you Commander Santos, for that kind introduction. More importantly, Ric, thanks for your leadership this past year of this outstanding organization, The American Legion. Three million patriots in nearly 15,000 Posts worldwide who have been at the forefront of a wide range of issues, both of national and local importance.

Especially, as we once again find ourselves and our country at war, a war we did not seek, but a war that we will win. Thanks to The American Legion leadership for inviting me to be here with you today. It is indeed humbling to be in the presence of so many American heroes, past and present. Those responsible for defending our nation and our way of life in too many far-flung battlefields. I'm especially honored to be with you not only as a representative of this Administration and as your Secretary of the Army but as one of you, a career soldier and a veteran of the Vietnam War.

Now I know in a gathering of warriors, like we have today, that you probably have not heard a single war story told the entire week. I'm sure you haven't. You remember what the difference is between a war story and a fairy tale. The fairytale starts out once upon a time. The war story starts out now this is no B-S and from then they are both the same. But I would like to share with you and indulge you a little bit later in my remarks about how my own personal combat experience relates to my current duties as Secretary in the Army. So please indulge me when I get to that portion of the speech.

Our nation is at war. As Vice President Cheney has recently said, a new kind of war against a new kind of enemy: global terrorism. Let there be no illusions about our opponents. They are absolutely ruthless. They have already murdered thousands of innocent men, women and children, and they are bent on acquiring the deadliest of weapons to pursue their goals. Consequently, this war will be long, as the President has clearly said, and it will be hard. But it is a war that we will win. Let me tell you why we will win this war. We will win this war because we have the complete support of the American people. We must sustain that support.

You, The American Legion, have a critical role in staining that support. As an organization with your resolutions of support and your efforts on Capital Hill, they are critical and they

are much appreciated. But also as leaders and role models and mentors within your communities. You know sacrifice. You know hardship. You know what it takes to deliver victory for our nation. I encourage you to share that with your families, your neighbors and your communities to sustain the support that we will need in the months and the years ahead. We will win because we have national leadership that is committed to victory. Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that our Commander-In-Chief, President Bush, is committed to victory, that he is willing to make the tough calls required of a wartime leader, that he has the moral fiber and the faith in God that sustains those engaged in combat.

The President's team is unsurpassed in its depth of experience, Vice President Cheney, Secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell, to name but a few. Each of them are leaders in their own right, each tested as senior leaders in a war, each committed to victory.

President Bush's budget for next year, which is before the Congress when they come back later on in another week or so, includes a $48 billion increase for national defense. This is the largest single year increase since President Reagan's first year in office. And it was President Reagan and our President's father who led us to victory over communism in the Cold War and victory over tyranny in Panama and Kuwait as well.

The Administration's budget provides the resources the military requires to get the job done. And it addresses a goodly portion of the erosion that has occurred in the defense budget over the past decade. For example, it provides much needed pay raises targeted specifically toward our senior non-commissioned officers; readiness accounts to sustain our training; investment in repairing our infrastructure; and something near and dear to my heart and to your heart, improved medical benefits for retirees.

I should also mention that despite a two percent cap on most other increases in discretionary spending across the federal budget, the President has asked Congress for an eight percent increase for veterans' health care, and a seven percent increase for veterans' programs overall. The message is very clear, our President supports we veterans. No question about it.

We will win the war because we have the best Armed Forces the world has ever known. Remember back to the opening days of our campaign in Afghanistan almost a year ago. The dire warnings from the nay sayers, the beltway defense intellectuals. The hand ringers. Afghanistan was, according to them the, graveyard of empires. The British and the Soviets had failed, and now it was American's turn. In a few short months we proved them all absolutely dead wrong. In the dead of winter, in a landlocked country in the toughest terrain imaginable, we collapsed the Taliban regime and put Al-Qaeda on the run. We've accomplished all this while continuing to deter potential aggression by Iraq and North Korea, sustaining our presents across the globe and assisting antiterrorist efforts worldwide.

We were able to do this principally for one reason, and you know exactly, as well as I do, what that reason is: the outstanding quality of our people. It's been my privilege to visit them in Afghanistan, in Kuwait, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, at Forts Benning and Bragg and Drum and Campbell, and a number of others. I'm here to tell you, you could not meet a finer group of young Americans. They possess the physical toughness to fight at 10,000 feet in freezing temperatures, the tactical savvy to defeat fanatical opponents operating on their own turf, and the mental agility to transform from war fighting to training the new Afghan Army.

I know some of you here would question the toughness of the younger generation, our children and our grandchildren, yours and mine of the new millennium. I'm here to tell you do not be concerned. Our youngsters carry on your legacy carved out in the beaches of Normandy, on the frozen hills of the 38th parallel, in the jungles of the A Shau Valley. They are, flat out in my 40 years, the best soldiers that I have ever seen. We ought to be very proud of them.

Security of our homeland is also being delivered by our people. As you have all seen, we have soldiers, active Guard and Reserve who have helped with the rescue and recovery efforts in New York City and at the Pentagon. They are securing our key installations, airports and borders, training state and local first responders in our communities, providing chemical and biological hazard capability, and even fighting forest fires, whatever it takes to keep America secure. In a war where our greatest casualties have been suffered at home here amongst our countrymen, their presence and contribution in our states and communities are crucial. At any given time we have 30,000 National Guardsmen and Reservist who have stepped up and mobilized for missions here at home and abroad.

In addition to the homeland security missions that I just talked about, Guardsmen have and are conducting rotations in the Balkins, in the Sinai, and are performing Special Forces operations in Afghanistan. The continued support of these great citizen soldiers, the legacy of the Minutemen and the Village Greens at Concord and Lexington remain true 227 years later. Their families and employers have been vital in their support, essential in their ability to execute these important missions.

You, The American Legion, must help us tell those families and tell those employers how much we appreciate their support in this vital effort. We've always had outstanding young people in our armed forces, but you and I know it's also true that they have not always been trained and equipped the right way. Many of you were present in the opening days of the Korean War some 50 years ago when troops were rushed from occupation duty in Japan to fight the North Korean Army. Bazooka rounds bounced off T-34 tanks, grenades failed to explode, ground troops couldn't talk to the airplanes above. Men needlessly died because we had allowed ourselves, after the Second World War and our great victory, to slip into unpreparedness.

I want you who lived through that to know that we have learned from your hard fought experience as we begin and commemorate the 50th anniversary of your Korean War service. We will never send troops into battle without the best possible training. Today, we train as we fight. Our training is demanding, it is realistic and it saves lives in combat, as every veteran knows. Quality training is the cornerstone, in fact, of victory. All across the Defense Department we are working hard to balance our readiness imperative for realistic training with our obligations as good stewards of the environment and good neighbors with our local communities.

The Department of Defense has recently recommended that Congress refine the way that various environmental and species protection statutes impact on military training and testing activities so as to minimize the restriction on our training and the encroachment issues associated with that. Such clarification under our sustainable range initiative is an important cornerstone of the overall strategy to help us restore the balance between the use of military training LANS for their unique military purpose and the need for environmental protection and species preservation. We need your help in making that critical case.

Another lesson from your hard fought experience in Korea was equipping our soldiers properly. Today, we are putting the best technology available in the hands of our outstanding young men and women, not only to deliver victory in war, but in any future war as well. We call this process 'transformation'. And it means that we are changing literally the way that we fight, not only to deliver victory in this war, but in future wars. From the linear sequential operations in the past distributed simultaneous and rapid destruction of our enemies sources of strength today and in the future. Your resolution supporting us in this endeavor shows that you are well aware of its importance.

Technology is advancing, as we all know from our private lives, at a blistering pace. Microprocessors are doubling their capabilities every 18 months. Advances in munitions and

armors and propulsion and robotics and networks and command and control systems almost as fast. These advances enable us to see the enemy, see the terrain and see our friends on the battlefield with unprecedented clarity so that we can apply our combat power, whether from a airplane at 30,000 feet, or from the barrel of a rifle at three feet with precision and deadly effect.

One example is the Army is fielding the first of our new striker Brigade, as we speak, out at Fort Lewis. The strikers are named after two Medal of Honor winners with the same last name. One is from World War II, and the other from Vietnam. The unit is unlike any other in our Army's history. A whole Brigade's combat vehicles is on a common chassis and it fits in a C-130 with a commensurate reduction in logistic burden. Combined arms formations down to company level designed for full integration within the joint team; air and ground and sea. Organic unmanned aerial vehicles, drones, all units are linked by a tactical Internet that enables instantaneous sharing of information across the entire force and allows the unit to access intelligence from space and other national systems.

As part of this joint force combined, recent ground breaking exercise called Millennium Challenge 02, the 82nd Airborne Division, a great unit over at Fort Bragg, jumped into the national training center at Fort Irwin, California, followed by an assault landing of striker infantry from the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division from Fort Lewis. That unit, brand new, deployed by a C-17 and C-130 trained at the National Training Center with the 82nd and the U.S. Air Force, then trained at Twenty-nine Palms with the United States Marine Corp in an urban war for exercise and redeployed by US Navy experimental sea lift back to Fort Lewis. What a hell of an exercise. And they did all that in a space of about a week.

They are leading the way for joint Army experimentation and transformation. Our first striker brigade will be fully operational next summer, followed by five more in the near term. But while technology can afford us great advantages in how we conduct war, I want to assure you that we fully understand that technology does not change the fundamental nature of war that everyone in this room, every delegate, is intimately familiar with. As every fellow combat veteran knows, war remains an intensely personal and brutal experience, the realm of fear and death and uncertainty.

Man's ability to prevail through this ultimate challenge will always be the determining factor in securing victory, as we all know. My own experience with combat was in two tours in Vietnam. It was my honor and privilege during my first tour in 1968 and 1969 to serve as a platoon leader with the Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the famed Black Horse. Combat, with its brutally effective way of scraping away all the parade field nonsense and focusing on what it took to accomplish the mission, showed me why we have an Army and what that Army must be. I have never forgotten to this day, just like you haven't, that important lesson. We had great sergeants and troopers in my platoons and M-Company and K-Troop and the air rifle platoon of the Regimen of the Air Cav troop, the finest men ever put on God's earth, in my humble opinion, taught me my business, corrected my mistakes, convinced me that leading them should be the focus of my life. Leaders like George Patton, Donn Starry and Doc Bahnsen reinforce that view. They took a green, young second lieutenant whose squadron commander told them at the time, he said to me, "White, if you get shot in the head in this war, you won't die of the bullet wound, you'll die of the echo."

I thought about that for a while, and by God, he was right. We were all young men at the time; never concerned ourselves with a grand strategy or the politics or whether the Vietnam War was right or wrong. The war was there and we were there and we were going to accomplish our mission to the best of our ability because, quite frankly, that was the best way to stay alive.

We were proud of our units. We valued our friendship and did the best we could to care for our buddies and won our part of that war down in the mud where it got personal. Together, we experienced days of boredom interspersed with moments of shear terror. As we all know, that experience is what characterizes combat, miserable weather, anger, sadness, lonesomeness, just putting up with the daily stuff that goes along with any war, everything from hand grenades to hemorrhoids, I suppose.

Through it all we developed everlasting bonds of friendship, the bond that brings The American Legion together in those thousands of Posts across this nation and that brings you here as delegates to the National Convention, bonds of friendship and trust and honor and hope that bind us together even to this day like no other people on the face of the earth. It's not like being a member of a football team in high school or the bonding of college fraternity brothers. It's so much more than that.

Soldiers belong to an unique brotherhood of war. We share a common heritage left by those who served with honor and dignity in the service of our nation, service exemplified by The American Legion. We share a special comradery unique to those who enjoyed the best of times together and survived the very worst, a bond so strong that we wouldn't and didn't think twice about sacrificing our own life to save a fellow soldier. I believe that special bond is our reward for doing what we knew was right when we were in the arena of combat. Even though some hand ringers on the sidelines back home might have thought it was wrong. Many times the soldier's normal day will be an average person's worst. And each of our worst days is buried deep inside our souls, only to be shared, if at all, amongst our fellow soldiers, our fellow warriors, our fellow veterans. It can't easily be talked about with our civilian friends or family no matter how close they may be. That also goes for the family and friends who lost loved ones in Vietnam and other wars. They, too, find it hard to share their hurt and their loneliness. To those families I want you to know that there are many of us who knew your husbands and your sons and share in your great loss and in whose memory they will remain forever.

And to those whose loved ones are unaccounted for, many of whom last seen fighting the enemy, we want you to know that your government will persist in the effort to account for every last one of them. These emotions are eternal. They are present in our war on terrorism, just as they were for us in Vietnam and for those of you who served in Korea and World War II and Panama and Desert Storm in combat at any time on behalf of our great nation. Just as in those wars it is the ability of our outstanding soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to prevail in spite of the enduring hardships of combat that will in the end deliver victory for our nation once again.

I want you to know that the overwhelming majority of Americans appreciate you American Legion, we American Legion veterans. So let me express my gratitude to you personally on behalf of the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the American people for all that you do, all you have done and all you will do in the future in service of our country. We owe you a debt of gratitude we can never repay. It is not enough, but on their behalf I just wanted to say to all of you thank you.

We will win this war and future wars because of you and those like you, our sons, our daughters, in some cases our grandsons and granddaughters who continue to serve to this day to protect our civilization and our way of life. We will win this war because we have the support of the American people, because we have leaders who are committed to victory and because we have the finest Armed Forces bar none made up of the finest young women and finest young men that the world has ever known. We will fight together, you and I, to keep it that way.

May God bless each one of you, The American Legion, our Armed Forces, our Commander-In-Chief, and may God bless America.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Following your presentation, sir, in a few minutes, we have our National Security Convention Committee Report. From the mandates emanating from the National Security report, we'll reinforce The American Legion's commitment to a strong national security with the appropriate funding and manpower levels to permit the United States Army and other military services to complete their missions.

We appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule out of Washington, D.C., or Arlington, Virginia to be with us this morning.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award
Richard Santos, Maryland, National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: This morning we honor outstanding journalism that creates a positive impact on a community or state with the presentation of The American Legion Fourth Estate Award.

This year the judges had a difficult time in coming to a decision. In the end, they selected the *Dayton Daily News*, Dayton, Ohio for their series, *The Foreign Game*. The series encompassed two years of research by four reporters and brought to light exploitation of young foreign athletes.

What the *Dayton Daily News* revealed was that these young athletes are actually victims of what amounts to international smuggling ring. This is where rules are ignored and broken to bring them to the playing fields of America's high schools and universities. This report broke ground on a problem that has yet to get wide national attention. The report has directly resulted in the state and national government agencies, as well as private education and athletic organizations, taking quick decisive action to ensure that rules are followed and those who violate them are punished.

Here to accept the award are two of the four reporters involved in the investigative series. Kristine Willmsen and Mike Wagner of the *Dayton Daily News*, Dayton, Ohio.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The American Legion 2002 Fourth Estate Award for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism presented to *Dayton Daily News* for *The Foreign Game*. Presented at the 84th National Convention, August 29, 2002, Charlotte, North Carolina.

KRISTINE WILLMSEN: On behalf of the *Dayton Daily News*, we are very honored to get this award by The American Legion. As Commander Santos said, we worked on this story for two years, went to ten foreign countries, approximately a dozen states in an attempt to discover and investigate an underground system of foreign athletes in which they're marketed to the United States in high schools as well as colleges.

The story, primarily was about money, sports, and the corruption of amateur athletics. Our attempt was to show that thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars in American scholarships in some situations were going to foreign athletes through the system of brokers and agents.

Again, I just want to thank everybody here, as well as *Dayton Daily News* and The American Legion. Mike, I and the other reporters are very grateful.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The large presentation, of course, will be placed in the *Dayton Daily News* offices for display. But we also want to give a smaller version, but just as big from the heart and just as worthy to each of the four reporters.

The Chair recognizes Thomas Bock, of Colorado, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
Thomas Bock, California, Chairman

At 8:30 a.m., Sunday, August 25, 2002, 47 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in room 208B, 2nd floor of the Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Thomas L. Bock was elected Chairman and Doc Simons, Vermont, was appointed Secretary.

At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolutions and to sign the report on behalf of the delegates. A total of 28 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

The Convention Committee was then broken down into two AD HOC subcommittees, General Foreign Policy, and Regional Affairs. I was the Chairman of the General Foreign Policy, Doc Simons of Vermont, was Chairman of Regional Affairs.

I will now give the report of the AD HOC subcommittee on General Foreign policy. The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 8: Terrorism
Origin: Colorado
Submitted by: Foreign Relations
(As Amended and Consolidated with Resolution No. 147 (IN))

WHEREAS, On September 11, 2001 The United States was attacked by terrorists who hijacked four civilian airliners to use as weapons of terror, and inflicted among other results, damage of the Pentagon, the complete destruction of the World Trade Center complex in New York City, and the deaths of almost 7,000 Americans; and

WHEREAS, These unprovoked and despicable acts were carried out by ruthless radicals who despise America's involvement in world affairs and our individual freedoms that Americans enjoy and cherish as well as our national values; and

WHEREAS, For three decades, The American Legion has strongly opposed terrorism in resolutions calling for the U.S. government to not make concessions to terrorists and to use all available means to apprehend terrorists and bring them to justice; and

WHEREAS, The events of September 11th have made the response to the attack on America and the wholesale elimination of terrorism the singular national priority; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion condemns the cowardly attacks on America by terrorists and urges the President of the United States to use any and all means necessary to determine who is responsible for the attacks on America and punish the perpetrators; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government, in concert with allies and friendly nations, to embark on a campaign using military, diplomatic, economic, intelligence and other resources to systematically and completely eliminate terrorism.

Resolution No. 10: Support For A Robust American Diplomacy
Origin: Colorado
Submitted by: Foreign Relations
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 236 (DC))

WHEREAS, The United States Department of State is the first line of defense of the nation in combating the myriad of security threats that face America from abroad, and is charged with a number of missions that are vital to the nation; and

WHEREAS, These missions include: Managing diplomatic coalitions with other countries and international institutions, promoting peace and stability in regions of vital interest, bringing nations together to address global challenges, creating jobs at home by opening markets abroad, and helping developing nations establish stable economic environments that provide investment and export opportunities; and

WHEREAS, The State Department's role as "first responder" to international crises was brutally accentuated by the Al-Qaeda bombing of American Embassies on August 7, 1998 in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in which a total of 223 people were killed and 4,650 people were wounded; and

WHEREAS, The State Department has been allocated just little more than 1% of the total federal budget to accomplish all of these tasks in contrast to the approximately 16% spent on defense; and

WHEREAS, During this period the State Department's responsibilities have expanded enormously to include combating threats from terrorism, international crime, and narcotics trafficking; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion vigorously supports adequate funding for the United States Department of State in order that it can maintain a credible initial deterrent to international threats to the United States and effectively promote American interests abroad.

Resolution No. 93: Priority POW/MIA Actions
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 97 (MD))

WHEREAS, Many thousands of Americans are still reported as missing in action from most of America's recent wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The families of these Prisoners of War and Missing in Action still suffer untold grief and uncertainty due to the lack of any accurate accounting in spite of the heroic efforts of U.S. search teams, and some reports indicate that some of these Americans could be alive in the former enemy areas; and

WHEREAS, It appears that certain information from these areas has been deliberately and cruelly withheld from their families; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is convinced, for example, based on available evidence, that American POWs were detained by Vietnam after Operation Homecoming in 1973, and there is sufficient evidence to lead us to believe there is a chance of American POWs still being held in Indochina today; and

WHEREAS, Specific locations of alleged remains of U.S. serviceman have now been identified by the U.S. Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes U.S. Government POW/MIA operations are still inadequate, and the President's normalization of relations with Vietnam has not achieved substantially greater progress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still Prisoners of War or Missing in Action; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues to exert the maximum effort to account for MIAs from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes the following priority actions should be taken by the U.S. Government:

1. **Continue to provide sufficient personnel and resources so that investigative and recovery efforts can be broadened and accelerated.**
2. **Continue to declassify all POW/MIA information (except that revealing intelligence sources or methods) in a form readily available to public review.**
3. **Initiate or strengthen joint commissions with Russia, the People's Republic of China, and North Korea to increase POW/MIA recovery efforts.**
4. **Establish a joint standing congressional committee on POW/MIA affairs to ensure continued action by the executive branch in addressing the POW/MIA.**

Resolution No. 94: Principles Of U.S. Foreign Policy
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, as veterans of wartime service in the defense of liberty, have a special concern for maintaining peace with freedom and recognize that a strong U.S. foreign policy is vital in that regard; and

WHEREAS, The official concern of The American Legion stems from that part of the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion which states: "We associate ourselves together...to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy..." now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion believes that the following objectives should be incorporated into U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy:

1. **Recognition that the U.S. has great and multiple responsibilities as the singular leader of the Free World**
2. **Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture**
3. **Support for a global war on multiple fronts to end the scourge of terrorism**
4. **Support for democracy and human rights in other countries when such is consistent with U.S. national interests and national power**
5. **Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share**
6. **Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve U.S. national security**
7. **Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles to terrorist, communist or aggressor nations**
8. **Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking.**

9. **Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with U.S. sovereignty and serve U.S. national interests**
10. **Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices**
11. **Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of U.S. foreign policy as envisioned in the U.S. Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding**
12. **Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests worldwide.**

Resolution No. 95: United Nations
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The American Legion played a significant role in helping to establish the United Nations after World War II, believing it would help prevent the outbreak of future wars; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has remained generally supportive of the United Nations over the succeeding years, although it has been critical of particular ineffective, wasteful or undesirable activities of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, The Foreign Relations Commission conducted a year long study to determine whether U.S. participation in the United Nations serves U.S. national interests and submitted its report in May 1995; and

WHEREAS, Although the United Nations in half a century of operation has not fulfilled the lofty purposes of international peace and human betterment envisioned by its founders, it continues to be in the national interest for the United States to function as a member of the United Nations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to seek the following reforms in the United Nations and to use American leverage to obtain these desired ends:

- **Encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner**
- **Refrain from engaging in Peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations unless there is a clear mandate from all combatant parties involved that they desire UN participation to help them achieve a lasting peace**
- **Encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social program.**
- **Professionalize the UN staff on the basis of merit and qualifications**
- **Provide truly independent authority to the Inspector General and ensure that UN agencies become subject to periodic, unannounced auditing, the finding of such audits to be reported to member nations**
- **Admit the Republic of China to full membership in the United Nations since that nation has fulfilled all that is expected of a developing country by adopting democracy, respect for human rights, free enterprise, and a peaceful foreign policy**
- **Establish an equitable fiduciary relationship between the United States and the United Nations.**

Resolution No. 96: Foreign Lobbying
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been concerned with the influence of foreign entities in the legislative process, producing two comprehensive studies on this subject in 1985 and 1991; and

WHEREAS, The 1991 Report Assessing the Relative Influence of Foreign and U.S. Lobbyists' concluded that: "The number of foreign agents is very large and the scope of their operations is rapidly increasing. Foreign agents have easy access to influence the decision-making processes of the U.S. government. Current laws requiring disclosure of lobbying activities of foreign agents are ineffective"; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported comprehensive legislation reforms, some of which have been enacted; and

WHEREAS, In 1997 reports surfaced that exposed contributions to 1996 Presidential campaigns by intermediaries of the Chinese government with the specific aim of securing influence at the highest levels of U.S. government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly supports the U.S. Constitution and the right of all Americans to due recourse and petitions; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Souter recently commented on campaign financing: "Most people assume, and I do, certainly, that someone making an extraordinarily large contribution gets something extraordinary in return; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly opposes payments to potential or current U.S. government officials by foreign entities that has the express goal of granting access to influence decision-making; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion calls for comprehensive hearings that will ascertain the influence that foreign governments and their agents have in the Nation's Capital, particularly in financial contributions to political campaigns; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will support legislation to correct any abuses; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That in the absence of such legislation there will be full and unfettered disclosure of the activities of foreign lobbyists.

Resolution No. 98: Flying The POW/MIA Flag
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The United States has fought in many wars and thousands of American who served in those wars were captured by the enemy or become listed as missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Many of these Americans are still missing and unaccounted for, and the uncertainty surrounding their fates has caused their families to suffer tragic and continuing hardships; and

WHEREAS, As a symbol of this nation's concern and commitment to accounting as fully as possible for all American still prisoner, missing or unaccounted for, Congress has officially recognized the National League of Families POW/MIA flag and seeks further to honor those Americans who, in future wars, may be captured of listed as missing or unaccounted for; and

WHEREAS, The American people observe and honor with appropriate ceremony and activity the third Friday of September each year as National POW/MIA recognition day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion fully supports legislation that would authorize the flying of the POW/MIA flag at Federal facilities and installations, including Post Offices, every day of the year.

Resolution No. 125: Case Of Lt. Comdr. Michael Scott Speicher
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Lt. Comdr. Michael Scott Speicher was shot down in his F-18 Hornet over west-central Iraq on the first night of the Persian Gulf War on January 17, 1991; and

WHEREAS, In 1993 a Qatari general hunting in Iraq found Speicher's jet wreckage with its engines intact as well as the canopy, ejection seat, and a pilot's flight suit; and

WHEREAS, The Qatari general forwarded to the U.S. government both photographs and a shard of metal with serial numbers, which U.S. authorities identified as being from Speicher's aircraft; and

WHEREAS, Senator Robert Smith (R-N.H.), a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee has verified that there was no search for Lt.. Comdr. Speicher at the time of his being shot down; and

WHEREAS, In 1999 an Iraqi defector claimed he had driven an American pilot from the crash site to a hospital; and

WHEREAS, In 2001 the Navy reclassified Lt. Comdr. Speicher from killed in action (KIA) to missing in action (MIA); and

WHEREAS, Iraq held POWs (prisoners of war) from the Iran-Iraq war for over 17 years, including Iranian pilot Hossein Lashgari who was held captive from September 18, 1980 to April 19, 1998; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Convention of The American Legion assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion petition Congress to fully investigate the circumstances surrounding the downing of Lt. Comdr. Michael Scott Speicher; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the U.S. Government takes all possible steps to ascertain the truth concerning the case of Lt. Comdr. Speicher and that it insist upon his release from captivity or the repatriation of his remains.

Referred to the Standing Commission of Foreign Relations

Res. No. 172: POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony (NJ)
Res. No. 173: POW/MIA Remembrance Vigil (NH)
Res. No. 224: POW/MIA Memorial Services (DC)

Rejected

Res. No. 150 Return of the *USS Pueblo* (MA)
Res. No. 156: Declaration of War on Terrorism Regimes and Entities (OH)
Res. No. 235: The *USS LIBERTY* (DC)

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Regional Affairs
Approved

Resolution No. 1: Support To The Republic Of Korea
Origin: Alaska
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The security of the Korean Peninsula is vital to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as well as the security of the United States, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)-United States security alliance based in the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty has made, and continues to make significant contributions to the deterrence of war on the Korean Peninsula and the peace and stability of Northeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, That North Korea's development of weapons of mass destruction and exports of missiles and their technologies pose a threat to the United States, President Bush characterized North Korea as part of an "axis of evil" in his State of the Union address in January and North Korea exported a "significant" number of ballistic missiles to the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa during the first half of last year, the US government believes North Korea will have ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States by 2015; and

WHEREAS, President Bush said the United States is willing to provide economic and trade incentives to the North if the communist regime return to talks and promises to freeze its WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) programs; and

WHEREAS, During the summit meeting held in Seoul on February 20, 2002 between the President of the United States and South Korea the two leaders discussed not only North Korea's WMD but also other pending issues such as anti-terrorism; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Korea President Kim Dae-Jung has emphasized the importance of the role of the US forces now in Korea but also after the reunification of Korea with 37,000 soldiers stationed in the South; and

WHEREAS, There are over 8,000 Americans unaccounted for from the Korean War and the families of those US servicemen missing in Korea still suffer the untold grief due to the lack of adequate accounting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the United States, in concert with its allies including South Korea, should bring pressure to bear on North Korea to immediately cease its efforts to develop nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons and long-range ballistic missiles which can only escalate the threat to stability and peace not only on the Korean Peninsula but also in the world; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the US and Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korean government to resolve the issue of Korean War POW/MIA; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States should provide assistance and cooperation in South Korea's efforts to reduce tension in the Korean peninsula and actively support the direct dialogue between the two Koreas.

Resolution No. 2: Support To The Republic Of China
Origin: Alaska
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long time friend, ally and the seventh largest trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to peace, prosperity and stability of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), the United States is committed to provide defense equipment and defense services, in such quantities that the Government of the Republic of China may maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports and encourages the continued sales of Sophisticated American weapon systems, including naval vessels, submarines, first-line fighter aircraft, tanks, armored personnel carriers, anti-submarine warfare systems, helicopters, military electronics and communications equipment, and air defense missile system to the armed forces of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Resolution No. 12: Japanese Compensation And Equity To America's POWs
Origin: Colorado
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, American service-members were captured by Imperial Japanese army at Corregidor and other sites in the Philippines during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Over 12,000 of these Americans captured in the Philippines were involuntarily forced to endure the nine-day Bataan Death March in which over 1000 died or were killed by atrocities of the Japanese Army; and

WHEREAS, Many of these prisoners of war were shipped to the Japanese mainland where they were tortured, brutalized and involuntarily forced to work under inhumane conditions in underground mines owned by Japanese corporations that are still in business today; and

WHEREAS, Reparations from the Japanese government and Japanese corporations are due to U.S. service members who had to endure the unspeakable atrocities they suffered at the hands of the Japanese; and

WHEREAS, Legal action thus far has been unsuccessful in forcing the Japanese government and Japanese corporations to issue reparations or even an apology; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion demands that the Japanese government and Japanese corporations who employed American POWs in slave labor during World War II issue an unequivocal apology for their heinous actions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports efforts by the U.S. Congress that would facilitate legal actions by former POWs taken against the Japanese government and Japanese corporations to force reparations; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports other appropriate means and remedies to achieve equity and fairness for these courageous veterans.

Resolution No. 33: Policy On Africa
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Decades of colonization, authoritarian rule, severe economic problems, internal conflicts, and in many cases great resistance to change have overwhelmed the African continent; and

WHEREAS, Today some African nations are beginning to economically develop, and are making determined efforts to put the continent on a more solid and Democratic course with multi-party democracies and other significant changes; and

WHEREAS, Promoting policies that support democracy, conflict resolution, Economic development, free and open trade and disease prevention in African countries are in the national interests of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina August 27, 28 & 29, 2002, That The American Legion calls upon the President and the Congress to develop a comprehensive bipartisan U .S. policy which identifies the areas where the United States can make a difference in Africa, such as combating terrorist operations and influence in the region, investment to spur economic growth and promote trade, helping combat environmental damage, leading efforts to halt the proliferation of land mines, sponsoring multilateral efforts which seek conflict resolution and assistance for building African capabilities to effectively deal with their peacekeeping and humanitarian relief issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes there should be no illusions about quick progress in many African states and supports the extension of U.S. economic assistance and humanitarian aid only on a case by case and step by step basis, conditional on progress in economic growth oriented policies, as well as progress on human rights, political freedom, and the rule of law; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that U.S. policies toward African nations which are state sponsors of terrorism should be oriented exclusively on limiting the influence and isolating these nations both economically and diplomatically.

Resolution No. 120: Policy On Cuba
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The communist government of Cuba has ruined the Cuban economy, repressed the Cuban people, provided a base area for forces inimical to the United States, and committed aggression in many lands; and

WHEREAS, Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Cuba has lost the sources of foreign subsidies that alone sustained its inefficient communist economy; and

WHEREAS, If the free world remains firm in its rejection of Communism in Cuba, many economic, social, and political indicators point to the likely collapse of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Convention of The American Legion assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government to continue to maintain control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continue intelligence overflights over Cuba, remain firm in opposition to export of revolution by Cuba, continue broadcasting true news and information to the Cuban people, and encourage the development of democracy and a free market economy in Cuba.

Resolution No. 122: Policy On Ending Drug Trafficking In Latin America
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, At the Cartagena Drug Summit in 1990 in Cartagena, Colombia called by then-President Barco of Colombia, the United States and six Latin American nations (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) agreed to a comprehensive plan of action to reduce the supply of illegal narcotics and the demand for them within the Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, The Cartagena agreements, reaffirmed and expanded in the San Antonio Drug Summit in February, 1992, in San Antonio, Texas, called by then President Bush of the United States, encompass a vast array of weapons in the battle to stop the devastating traffic in illegal drugs including eradication, crop substitution, education, police training and economic assistance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Convention of The American Legion assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government Executive Branch to cooperate fully with Latin American nations to destroy the international traffic of illegal drugs and to provide appropriate economic assistance to aid in this vital endeavor; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Congress to provide adequate funds to support this program.

Resolution No. 123: Policy On Aid To Central American Nations
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Over the past decade Central America has made great strides toward establishing democratic societies; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has taken a great interest in supporting democracy, development, and security in this area so close to our borders and strategically situated between the naval lifeline between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Panama Canal, and one of our major trading partners, Mexico; and

WHEREAS, In the light of the decreasing threat from subversion in Central America as well as budget restrictions in the United States, it is inevitable that U. S. aid to Central America must be reduced; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Convention of The American Legion assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the U. S. government to continue economic aid to friendly, democratic Central American nations which are seeking to develop democratic societies with market economies; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends the U. S. Government provide minimal amounts of military aid while urging nations in the Central American region to adopt the model of Costa Rica and Panama, disbanding military forces and relying solely on police forces for internal security, thus freeing funds for development and contributing to peaceful relations in the region.

Resolution No. 180: Policy On Vietnam POW/MIAs
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The highest level of officials of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam made commitments to the March 1996 Presidential Delegation on POW/MIA and to the

President's National Security Advisor in July 1996, to renew and increase their unilateral as well joint efforts to account for America's POW/MIAs; and

WHEREAS, The Administration has repeatedly stated that accounting as fully as possible for all Americans still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War is the highest priority of U.S. bilateral relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. government has normalized relations with Vietnam and lifted the trade embargo, pledging that such actions would generate increased results in accounting for missing Americans, and such results have not yet been provided by Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Administration to insure that the pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are honestly fulfilled; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in the absence of fulfillment of these pledges, The American Legion opposes any further economic and political steps to improve bilateral relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on Congress to oppose further steps on this same basis.

Referred to the Standing Commission of Foreign Relations

Resolution No. 116 (MX): International Agreements on Social Benefits

Rejected

Resolution No. 121 (MX): Mexican Cooperative Efforts
Resolution No. 124 (MX): Enterprise for the Americas Initiative

Referred to the Standing Commission on regional Affairs

Res. No. 116: International Agreements on Social Benefits (MX)

Rejected

Res. No. 121: Mexican Cooperative Efforts (MX)
Res. No. 124: Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (MX)

SEC SIMON: Mr. Chairman, that completes the report on the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Regional Affairs.

CHRMN THOMAS L. BOCK : Thank you Doc, and also thanks to our staff members Mike Schlee, Mike Dugan and John Peterson for their incredible support this career. As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Colorado, I move adoption of the entire report of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

NATL CMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and seconded to accept the Foreign Relations Report. Question? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? Ayes have it. So ordered. The Report of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Report of Foreign Relations is adopted.

Tom, thank you to you and to your committee and staff for a job well done.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Allen Titus of Indiana, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security for the purpose of making a report

Report: Convention Committee on National Security
Allen Titus, Indiana, Chairman

On Sunday, August 25, 2002, 255 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in Rooms 207A & B of the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and his Secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing its substance and to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee delegates. Allen L. Titus of Indiana was elected Chairman and Richard Crouse of New York was appointed Secretary.

The six authorized Convention Committees met in separate meeting rooms. An additional Ad Hoc committee was appointed for General Security resolutions which required special attention.

In compliance with NEC Resolution 18, a subcommittee on Conservation of Natural Resources was appointed. The following were elected Chairmen and Secretaries of the Convention Security Committees:

General Security Ad Hoc
Joyce Brown-Cooper, Chairman, New Jersey
Allen Setterberg, Secretary, Utah
Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke, Chairman, South Dakota
Thomas Jurek, Secretary, South Dakota
Aerospace
Robert C. Weyenberg, Chairman, Wisconsin
Roger N. Messier, Secretary, Virginia
Defense Civil Preparedness
Erwin Gus Williams, Chairman, Connecticut
Melvin Goslar, Secretary, Iowa
Law and Order
George W. Wehrli, Chairman, Florida
Harry Easley, Secretary, Washington
Merchant Marine
Charles Moreland, Chairman, Florida
Charles Powell, Jr., Secretary, Virginia
Military Affairs
Clayborn Lofton, Chairman, Illinois
David D. Winstead, Secretary, Kentucky
Naval Affairs
Gerard W. Cheffer, Chairman, Illinois
James Van Horn, Secretary, Alaska

The delegates reassembled at 11:30 am for the final meeting of the Convention Committee on National Security. Reports of all Convention Committees and their recommended actions on resolutions were approved. A total of 77 resolutions were assigned

to the Convention Committee on National Security or prepared by the Committee to meet problems which were held to be a concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives.

General Security AD HOC Committee
Joyce Brown-Cooper, New Jersey, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 60: National Security Principles
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Over two centuries ago, our distinguished forefathers wrote the Preamble to the Constitution which began with the words: "We the People" shall "provide for the common defense...," and by so doing, they established the principle that protecting our nation from hostile threats was the fundamental purpose of the Government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion since its founding in 1919 has always supported a strong National Defense which is reflected in its own Preamble to the Constitution, namely, "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America," and "to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation"; and

WHEREAS, Although the threat posed by the former Soviet Union is diminished, the United States is faced with a myriad of short and long term threats and challenges which are far more complex, perplexing and difficult to deal with than was the more predictable and unified threat posed by the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, Although the two-war National Security Strategy has been amended, the Armed Forces are fighting the war on terrorism, maintaining homeland security and conducting peace enforcement operations with a reduced strength of 1.37 million and active military force structures composed of only 10 Army Divisions, 12 active Navy aircraft carriers and 13 Air Force fighter wing equivalents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion upholds the following national security principles as fundamental to the best interests of the United States:

1. **The National Security Strategy needs to be reassessed so that missions and resources are more closely aligned.**
2. **The credibility of the United States in an unstable world needs to be maintained by retaining the requisite military capabilities. Such a strategy requires that the Armed Forces be more fully structured, equipped and budgeted to achieve this strategy. Active military end strengths should be increased to an absolute minimum of 1.6 million for the foreseeable future. Twelve full-strength Army Divisions, 12 deploy able Navy aircraft carrier battle groups, 3 Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces, and 15 or more active Air Force fighter wing equivalents should be retained as the minimum baseline foundation.**
3. **The National Guard and Reserves must be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deplorable and maintained at high readiness levels and not over-utilized in order to accomplish their increasing and indispensable missions and roles in our National Defense.**

4. **Peacetime Selective Service registration should be retained so as to maintain our capability to rapidly reconstitute forces in the event of emergencies.**
5. **Force modernization for the Services needs to be realistically funded, and not further delayed, or the United States is likely to unnecessarily risk American lives in the years ahead. Production of airlift and sealift assets needs to be expedited.**
6. **The American people expect that whenever U.S. forces are committed, that they will be committed only when America's vital national interests are threatened and only as a last resort after all reasonable alternatives have been explored and tried.**
7. **Peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-making and humanitarian operations detract from our declining combat power and readiness and our capability to wage the sustained war on terrorism. Such operations should be limited, Congressionally approved and separately appropriated on a case-by-case basis.**
8. **The honorable nature of military service should be upheld as it not only represents fulfillment of American patriotic obligation but is also a privilege and responsibility that embodies the highest form of service to the nation.**
9. **The United States Government must honor its obligations to all service members, veterans, military retirees and their families, and lasting compensations and incentives should be equitable.**
10. **Major incentives for military service to include an enhanced GI Bill for education and training, improved quality of life features, and a reduced operational tempo in order to recruit and retain a quality and fully-manned force which is professionally led.**

Resolution No. 63: National Missile Defense System
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 188 (NY))

WHEREAS, The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union had placed a cap on deploying missile defense systems and limited more advanced research on such defensive systems; and

WHEREAS, The Bush administration in January 2002 had given Russia and our allies the required six-months notice of U.S. intent to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty and did so this past June; and

WHEREAS, Work on the underground silos for the first missile interceptors in Alaska also began in June which reflected the urgency to begin moving on a missile defense system; and

WHEREAS, As unreliable, hostile nations such as Iran and Iraq seem determined to acquire the capability to deliver a nuclear strike over long distances, including striking the continental United States, the need for a national missile defense as an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security for the continental United States has become as urgent as ever; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to develop and deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people and an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security.

Resolution No. 65: American Battle Monuments Commission Funding
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABM) was established by law in 1923 as an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the United States Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Battle Monuments Commission was charged to erect suitable memorial shrines, for designing, constructing, operating and maintaining permanent United States Military Cemeteries and Memorials in foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, These United States Military Cemeteries have been established throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, These cemeteries are hallowed grounds for America's war dead; and

WHEREAS, Funding reductions for the maintenance of the United States Military Cemeteries in foreign countries has created reductions in human resources, equipment and supplies; and

WHEREAS, United States Military Cemeteries exist in foreign countries today, which are in need of adequate funding for repair, maintenance, additional manpower and other functions necessary to preserve the integrity of all World War I and World War II cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, Visitation numbers are increasing annually at United States Military Cemeteries overseas; and

WHEREAS, This resolution had been approved by the National Executive Committee at the Spring 1998 meetings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the United States Congress to appropriate adequate funding and human resources to the American Battle Monuments Commission in order to properly maintain and preserve the final resting place of America's war dead located on foreign soil.

Resolution No. 66: United States Military Forces In Peacekeeping Operations
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The stated purpose of the War Powers Act (P.L. 93-148) was to "...fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution to insure that the collective judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of the United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent hostilities were clearly indicated;" and

WHEREAS, Our Constitution reserves for Congress alone the right to declare war, which it has done only five times in our history and has not done since World War II; and

WHEREAS, During the Cold War, former Secretary of Defense Weinberger in 1985 set forth specified conditions that had to be met before American military forces were committed to combat, namely, that the United States Government had to determine that our vital national interests were at stake; that we were prepared to commit sufficient forces to win; that political and military objectives were clearly defined; that there was reasonable assurance of support from the American people; that U.S. forces should be committed as a last resort; and that the United States had a clear exit strategy; and

WHEREAS, The successes of United States military operations in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf demonstrated what our Armed Forces could achieve with well-defined

goals and objectives and the unquestioned support of the American people; and the tragedies of Lebanon and Somalia have shown what can happen when they had neither; and

WHEREAS, Peacekeeping operations have increased by 300 percent since 1993 and members of the armed forces have been deployed to as many as 143 countries which has been wearing out military personnel and equipment; and

WHEREAS, According to current Department of Defense policy, United States military personnel captured during such peacekeeping, peacemaking, humanitarian, or nation-building operations are not designated as prisoners of war but as hostages or detainees with no defined legal rights under the Geneva Convention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to include the following principles as an integral part of its national security and foreign policy decision-making process when considering the commitment of United States military forces: America needs a clear definition of its vital national interests as they relate to all military operations to include peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that Congress should approve the commitment of United States troops to any further peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that United States military forces should not be placed under foreign or United Nations operational control except in exceptional circumstances where Congress grants specific approval; and that American service men and women captured during these types of operations should be granted full POW status and afforded all the protections of the Geneva Conventions; and be it further

RESOLVED, The American Legion voices its grave concerns about the continued commitment of the U.S. armed forces to peacekeeping operation unless four conditions have been fulfilled; That there will be a clear statement by the President of why it is in our vital national interests to be engaged in a particular operation; guidelines will be established for the mission, including a clear exit strategy; that there be support of the mission by the U.S. Congress and the American people; and that it be made clear U.S. Forces will be commanded only by U.S. officers which we acknowledge are superior military leaders; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is also convinced that a stronger policy is required to be adopted by the United States Government to ensure that every service man or woman captured by hostile forces knows that his or her Government will take whatever measures are required to secure their release, including the use of force, and that those belligerents who violate such a policy should be held fully accountable.

Resolution No. 67: Foreign Investments In American Defense Industries
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, In this era of changing technology the United States must maintain ownership and control of critical defense industries so that U.S. technological secrets can be protected and adequate production facilities can be maintained to meet any national emergency; and

WHEREAS, The generally declining strength of the dollar in the mid-1980s and the downsizing of our defense industrial base in the 1990's have made it very lucrative for foreign entities to purchase U.S. firms, including those involved in National Defense production; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, 3 of the largest 36 foreign business investments in the United States were manufacturers of electronics and semiconductors, both of which are areas of vital importance to maintaining U.S. national security; and

WHEREAS, The Administration's waiver of sales of space satellite technology to the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as proposed sales of supercomputers and aerospace technology to that potential adversary needs to be thoroughly investigated; and

WHEREAS, Such proposed sales threaten the security of classified U.S. military technologies and U.S. technological superiority; and

WHEREAS, The alleged theft of classified nuclear information at the White Sands laboratories could endanger the national security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to ensure that foreign entities are not permitted to own critical U.S. defense industries, especially those involved in the high technology, supersensitive electronics area; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes the transfer and sales of sensitive American technologies which may endanger our national security and economic interests; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to thoroughly investigate the sales of aerospace and satellite technology to the People's Republic of China, or any actual or potential adversary of the United States, which could seriously jeopardize the national security interests of the United States and her allies.

Resolution No. 70: Support For Collegiate And High School ROTC Programs
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, High school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs are cost-effective and build character, citizenship and leadership among the nation's youth while exposing them to discipline and instilling a sense of patriotism and pride in our Country; and

WHEREAS, Although collegiate ROTC programs have downsized as the military downsized, JROTC programs have expanded largely as a result of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell's calling for an increase of JROTC programs, from approximately 1,600 total programs to over 3,000 units; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion ROTC Achievement Program, which attempts to associate Departments and Posts with specific ROTC units, brings prestige to the Post, Department and The American Legion and promotes the national security well-being of our country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to continue to fund collegiate ROTC programs as well as expand high school JROTC programs as being in our national interests; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to encourage all Departments and Posts to actively participate in The American Legion ROTC Achievement Program and to recognize outstanding ROTC students in both collegiate and high school programs.

Resolution No. 71: The Uniformed Services University Of The Health Sciences (USUHS)

Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported legislation in the early 1970's to establish the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), thus creating the nation's only military medical school dedicated to the provision of uniformed physicians, advanced practice nurses, and scientists who will ensure readiness, retention, force health protection, the medical response to natural and man-made disasters and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and medical support during humanitarian missions; and

WHEREAS, USUHS was created by Congress under the Department of Defense in 1972 to provide the Uniformed Services of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) with a cadre of dedicated, career medical officers who would ensure continuity, leadership, and medical readiness for the medical corps; due to both the extensive military training provided only in the multi-Service environment of USUHS and the extraordinary retention rates of the USUHS graduates who serve, on average, at least 18.5 years, USUHS has met, or has exceeded, the goals set by Congress; and

WHEREAS, In return for their education, USUHS School of Medicine (SOM) graduates must fulfill a service obligation of at least seven years following their residency training, while the service obligation of scholarship graduates is a year of obligated service per year of education, normally on the side of four years; due to their excellent retention rates the 2,465 USUHS graduates on active duty in the Army, Navy, and Air Force currently represent twenty-one percent of the 11,822 physicians on active duty in the Armed Forces (in addition 96 USU SOM graduates continue on active duty in the USPHS); of the USU SOM alumni who have completed their residency training, approximately one out of every two USUHS graduates holds an operational or leadership position; and

WHEREAS, Since the first USUHS graduation in 1980, USUHS has graduated 3,101 uniformed physician officers and 157 advanced practice nurses who ensure continuity for the Military Health System (MHS); in addition, the SOM has conferred 678 advanced degrees to include 216 Doctors of Philosophy; 8 Doctors of Public Health; 67 Masters of Science; 357 Masters of Public Health; 2 Masters of Science in Public Health; 25 Masters of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene; and, 3 Masters of Military Medical History; and

WHEREAS, The General Accounting Office documented in a 1995 report that USUHS, when compared to other sources of military physicians, is an economical source of career medical leaders based on expected years of service and all federal costs; in addition, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award grated to USUHS by the Secretary of Defense on December 11, 2000, officially recognizes that USUHS annually generates over $22 million in documented cost avoidance for the Department of Defense through the provision of clinical services by the USUHS faculty in the military treatment facilities and the University's continuing education programs; and

WHEREAS, USUHS has integrated WMD-related education and training throughout its standard SOM curricula; in addition, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002, USUHS has continued the development of exportable packages for distance learning for the medical response to WMD and has been designated in HR3254 to share its unique expertise with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to assist the VA health care professionals in preparing to respond to WMD-related incidents; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has strongly endorsed the continuation of USUHS annually through legislative direction since 1993 and the Department of Defense

has officially recognized the value and cost effectiveness of the University through its presentation of the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to USUHS in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Since the matriculation of its first SOM class over 26 years ago and the Military Construction Appropriations Bill for FY 2000 which directed the accelerated design of the USUHS construction project, there has been no additional construction on the USUHS campus; while on September 25, 2001, USUHS was notified that its construction project is now included in the TRISERVICE Medical MILCON Program for Fiscal Year 2006, accelerated design has not as yet been approved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to continue its determination to retain and expand the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences as a continued source of uniformed physicians, advanced practice nurses, and scientists dedicated to careers of service in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the United States Public Health Service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly supports accelerated design and new construction at the University campus to fulfill the urgent need for small classrooms and housing for the Graduate School of Nursing.

Resolution No. 72: The Armed Forces Retirement Homes
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home (USSAH) and the United States Naval Home (USNH), jointly called the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), are continuing care facilities which were created more than 150 years ago to offer retirement homes for distinguished veterans who had served as soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in our Nation's conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH system, which is available to retiree veterans from all the Armed Services whose active duty was at least 50 percent enlisted or warrant officer, has been supported by a trust fund resourced by 50 cents a month withheld from active duty enlisted and warrant officer paychecks as well as from fines and forfeitures from disciplinary actions, resident fees and interest income; and

WHEREAS, The extensive downsizing of the Armed Forces has resulted in a 39 percent decrease in revenue and, coupled with rising nursing home care costs, the Homes have been operating at a $8-10 million annual deficit which would reportedly require both Homes to close their doors by the year 2004; and

WHEREAS, As the Armed Forces Retirement Homes have never sought nor received Congressionally-approved funding, the AFRH management has initiated numerous actions to reduce operating costs and increase revenues to include reducing the number of AFRH residents by more than 800 to a total of 1,600 residents, cutting staff by 24 percent and closing two dormitories. Additionally, dormitory resident fees are being increased to 40 percent of received federal annuities; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has authorized the Department of Defense to raise service members' assessments from 50 cents to $1.00 per month which has yet to be exercised; and such an increase could raise revenues by about $7.5 million annually; and

WHEREAS, Even if these potential sources of income reach fruition, they will not likely provide the permanent, long-term funding which is vital to assure the solvency and viability of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the U.S. Naval Home; and

WHEREAS, Maintaining both Homes also represents retaining the promise to current active duty service members and veterans that "our Nation and our military will look after their own" after their military careers have been completed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to support and fund those measures, to include annual Congressional appropriations, which will provide for the long-term solvency and viability of the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the United States Naval Home.

Resolution No. 229: Ensure A Strong National Defense
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 62(MD))

WHEREAS, With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States faces a myriad of worldwide diverse and difficult threats and challenges to include the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security and regional threats to European instability in the Balkans as well as the continuing challenges to stability posed by North Korea, the People's Republic of China and by the vehemently defiant Iraq and Iran. Additionally, the United States must continue to be ever vigilant to the challenges of terrorism and the non-traditional threats of increasing nuclear proliferation and the potential usage of chemical and biological weapons by rogue nations; and

WHEREAS, The serious three major strategy reviews conducted by the Department of Defense, namely, the 1991 Base Force Strategy, 1993 Bottom-up Review and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review all shared the common belief that the United States can remain a global power - the "sole universal power" - at substantially lower defense budget levels than during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, As the world's "sole universal power," the United States has increasingly responded to terrorist attacks and worldwide regional and ethnic disputes, while previously reducing its military forces and defense budgets and reprogramming budgetary resources for domestic programs; and

WHEREAS, The Chiefs of the Military Services have acknowledged that defense budgetary reductions and depressed quality of life features have contributed to alarming low recruitment and retention levels and threatening the Nation's military readiness; and

WHEREAS, Despite the administration's claim to have significantly increased the Fiscal Year 2001 defense budget and the six-year budget plan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have disclosed that the military services faced an $84 billion shortfall over the FY 2001 - 2005 period; and

WHEREAS, Defense economists have also pointed out that without larger defense procurement budgets, the military services would have no choice but to further reduce force structure and manpower levels and to accept higher military risks; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges that the Congress implement the following recommendations, as a minimum, with regard to current and future defense budgets:

- **Passage of defense budgets which call for enhanced military quality of life features and closing the pay gap with the private sector, an improved military healthcare system, improved benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill and reducing the operations tempo.**

- **Defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product needs to be increased from the current 3.3 percent to 3.5 percent annually. At least an additional $84 billion should be authorized and appropriated over the next five years to address those readiness concerns voiced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.**
- **The mismatch between resources and ever-increasing military peace enforcement missions needs to be eliminated.**
- **Finally, force modernization for the Services needs to be realistically funded and not further delayed or the United**
- **States is likely to unnecessarily risk American lives;**

and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion call upon the American people to express their gratitude to the men and women in uniform for their many sacrifices and to urge their elected representatives in Congress to support the requisite funding for a stronger National Defense.

Resolution No. 234: Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base
Origin: District Of Columbia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Past defense budget share included limited funding for technological research and development which resulted in a production short fall in the midst of an unforeseen conflict; and

WHEREAS, Requisite technologies for the Armed Forces can be concomitantly hindered despite the fact that the United States is currently the world leader in development in new technology, thereby disrupting materiel supply vital to national security; and

WHEREAS. Much of our defense industrial base, including weapons production and revitalization of the ship-building industry, lately eroded by plant closures and lay-offs; and

WHEREAS, This country depends on the American fighting forces to win whenever they are placed in combat; therefore, they must be equipped with state of the art technological advances to better their capabilities of winning on the modern battle fields, whether on land, sea or in the air; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to rebuild America's defense industrial base by continuing adequately to fund research, development and acquisition budgets so as to assure our military production can meet national requirements whenever US military power is committed.

Resolution No. 317: The Transformation of the Armed Forces
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The current national security strategy, contained within the Quadrennial Defense Review, establishes a new strategy for American's defense that would embrace uncertainty and is premised on the idea that to be effective abroad, America must be safe at home; and

WHEREAS, A central objective of the strategy is to shift the basis of defense planning from a "threat-based" model to a "capabilities-based" model for the future; and

WHEREAS, The new strategy requires adapting existing military capabilities to new threats and circumstances, while experimenting with the development of new capabilities

or the transformation of U.S. forces, capabilities and institutions to extend America's asymmetric advantages well into the future; and

WHEREAS, Transforming America's defense for the 21st Century will require a long-standing commitment from our Country and its leaders, but the challenges are here and now: They include protecting our critical bases of operation, including the U.S. homeland, and projecting and sustaining U.S. forces in distant environments as well as preemptive actions to confront threats before they emerge; and

WHEREAS, Transformation includes assuring our information systems and providing persistent surveillance, tracking and rapid engagement of adversarial forces by U.S. and allied joint operations; and

WHEREAS, Over time, the promise of transformation will be realized as resources translate into new concepts, capabilities and organizations that maximize our war fighting effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002, confirm the Government's strategic direction as well as the soundness of such planning principles to include its emphasis on homeland defense, on surprise, on preparing for asymmetric threats like terrorism, on developing new concepts of deterrence, and the need to balance the different dimensions of risk; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the United States Government and our Armed Forces, as we contend with the difficult challenges of the war on terrorism, to continue to proceed on the path of transforming America's defense into a modern force capable of providing for the security of all Americans, strengthening and expanding military capabilities, and in honoring America's commitments worldwide as well as on the Home front.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 64 (MD): Theater Missile Defense Systems

Rejected

Resolution No. 26 (AZ): National Defense Initiative

Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke , South Dakota, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 232: Domestic Energy And Production
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States' continued reliance on foreign sources of energy places our national security and economic well-being as a nation at risk during times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, The United States continues to import approximately 50 to 60 percent or more of its oil while its domestic production continues to drop to its lowest levels in over 24 years, thus further compounding our foreign trade deficit at a time when our energy demands continue unabated; and

WHEREAS, The war on terrorism and the continuing conflict in the volatile Middle East has brought into sharp focus the heavy reliance of the United States on imported foreign oil which necessitates a re-evaluation of our current and long-range energy policies; and

WHEREAS, Like our domestic oil and gas resources, nuclear energy is a safe resource where price and supply are not subject to manipulation by foreign countries; and nuclear energy is our second-largest source of electricity in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has denied petroleum exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Region even though such exploration could have reduced our reliance on foreign sources of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Congress and the administration to pursue further development of domestic sources of energy to include:

1. **Increasing U.S. petroleum exploration and production in an environmentally sensible manner so as to reduce America's reliance on foreign petroleum.**
2. **Building new nuclear energy plants and renovating America's electrical grid.**
3. **Implementing domestic oil and gas exploration subsidies.**
4. **Development and implementation of sources to separate and recycle domestic recyclable materials thus reserving our natural resources for future generations.**
5. **That the provisions of the Energy act of 1992 be fully implemented and carried out as mandated by the Act**
6. **That the conservation of energy and natural resources be more actively pursued in the American private and public sectors.**

Resolution No. 233: Nuclear Energy And Nuclear Waste
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 109 (UT))

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy has contributed greatly to U.S. energy independence, having displaced over 4.6 billion barrels of oil and saved over $145 billion in oil payments since the 1973 Arab oil embargo; and

WHEREAS, Oil imports remain the single largest contributor to the U.S. trade deficit; and

WHEREAS, The United States must have a secure reliable supply of energy to fuel our economy and to protect our national security; and

WHEREAS, A growing supply of electricity is essential to U.S. economic growth, U.S. industry and the general well-being of the American people; and

WHEREAS, With a moderately growing economy, the U.S. will still need about 200,00 megawatts of new generating electrical capacity by 2010; and

WHEREAS, The virtues of using a diversity of energy sources including nuclear energy, to produce our electricity are well-recognized; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy is our second largest source of electricity providing 20 percent of our electricity supply safely, reliably and without damage to the environment; and

WHEREAS, The nuclear power plants operating in the United States continue their record-breaking electricity production performance by generating billions of kilowatt-hours of electricity; and

WHEREAS, The National Energy Policy Act of 1992 calls for new, safer, plant design and standardization, as well as Nuclear Regulatory Commission certification, continued studies of proposed sites, and modernized licensing procedures; and

WHEREAS, Over $14 billion has been committed to the Nuclear Waste Fund, and DOE has indicated it is unwilling to accept used fuel until at least 2010, and perhaps as late as 2015; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that the federal government has a legal responsibility to take used fuel from the nation's commercial reactors; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear power plants are running out of space to store used fuel and at least 27 of the nation's 109 nuclear power plants will run out of on-site storage space. By 2010, 80 nuclear plants will have no space to store fuel; and

WHEREAS, Re-licensing of nuclear power plants is subject to a rigorous program of Nuclear Regulatory Commission oversight, inspection, preventive, and corrective maintenance and extensive equipment testing ensuring required safety safeguards are met, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion calls on the President and Congress to compel the Department of Energy to comply with the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act by establishing a process to develop an integrated used fuel management system and find sites for interim, centralized storage; making timely progress in the characterization of any proposed repository sites at various locations; and increasing funding to allow critical science and engineering studies to program on schedule; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the local government directly affected by interim storage and/or permanent disposal should be involved in planning and receiving appropriate benefits from such facilities.

Aerospace Committee
Robert C. Weyenberg, Wisconsin, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 162: Support For The National Space Program
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The national security and technological welfare of the United States are of paramount importance to the people of America; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aerospace research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic, social, environmental and political institution and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The dissemination and use of space systems technology, the research programs on which it is based, and the spin-off products, techniques and services derived from the U.S. space program are vital components of the nation's economy and the well-being of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. space program has kept the nation on the leading edge of the technology frontier, has created jobs, improved communications, electronics, material, diagnosis and treatment of medical care for veterans and all Americans, fostered new scholastic interest in space science, provided insight into the evolution of the universe and

current state of the earth, its environment and its solar system, and has provided visions and objectives for the future for business, industry and academia and the nation's youth; and

WHEREAS, In view of changes in domestic and international priorities in the areas of geopolitics, foreign policy, national security, economics and science, affirmation of new long range and lasting objectives are required for the manned and unmanned U.S. national security, civil and commercial space programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to adopt the following objectives with regard to the National Space Program:

1. **A managerially efficient NASA as the steward of the nation's civil and commercial space program dedicated to focusing on the low-cost use and exploitation of space and technology derived from our efforts there; and**
2. **A consolidated approach to the organizational and operational aspects of national security, civil and commercial space initiatives with emphasis on continuity and efficiency in maintenance of the interrelationships of programs such as launch, on-orbit retrieval operations, celestial and extraterrestrial exploration; and**
3. **Continued research and development on affordable lift into space using new launch concepts, propulsion systems, metals, fuels, and materials; and**
4. **Establishment of special working liaisons and agreements with other space-faring nations who share U.S. goals in space and who will also share costs, technologies and resources with a concern not to compromise national security and leading edge technology; and**
5. **Endorse and actively support those specific goals of the U.S. space program that have high probability to achieve cost effectiveness and nation-wide beneficial results in national security, scientific research and exploration goals based on a permanent national space policy which allows clear, definable progress for the nation at consistent, predictable funding levels; and**
6. **National commitment to build, upgrade and enhance the nation's aerospace research facilities and facilitate academic involvement in aerospace disciplines; and**
7. **That programs such as the nation's space activities are crucial to America's well-being and must co-exist with other national budgetary priorities; and be it further**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that as we move into the 21st century, we must continue to venture beyond and into the premises of space.

Resolution No. 163: Support For Aeronautical Research
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, In the pioneering days of aviation, this nation recognized the important values for aeronautics research. Therefore Congress established the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA the predecessor to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA), with follow-on investment in national aeronautics research laboratories and wind tunnels, which amounts to billions of dollars since 1915. The result was that every US aircraft, used NASA technology; and

WHEREAS, The aeronautic advances we currently enjoy have provided this nation with leading edge technology, world leadership and air superiority in the civil and military

arena, some of which has taken 10 to 20 years of extensive research. Now the Nation's aeronautics research programs are in serious decline and NASA aeronautics research proposed FY 03 appropriations have declined about 40% since FY 1994. The proposed FY02 budget further reduces to approximately a mere $541 million out of the agency's $15.1 plus billion; and

WHEREAS, The September 11 terrorist attacks resulted in a complete shutdown of the US air transportation system for several days. The impact emphasizes just how dependent we all are on air transportation. Although the immediate response was a sharp reduction in the demand for air travel. Within the year airlines will be pressing the limits of system capacity again. In addition, the stunning success of air power in Afghanistan is the result of research performed a decade or more ago and reminds us that continued emphasis on military aviation R&T is essential to future US air superiority; and

WHEREAS, NASA's top priority, the International Space Station, threatens to consume even larger portions of the agency's budget. As a consequence NASA will not achieve the 10 national aviation-related outcome goals announced in the 1997 under the "Three Pillars For Success," #1 Global Civil Aviation, #2 Revolutionary Technology Leaps, #3 Access to Space) which was the response to the 1995 Presidential Report on Aeronautics and Space and pronounced all three pillars as critical to this Nation's continued leadership; and

WHEREAS, In civil air, less than 10 years ago Boeing and McDonnell Douglas had more than 70% of the world market. Europe's airbus now has more than 50% and is focused on 60-70% with a goal of total domination of global aeronautics. This Nation needs to awaken to the fact that competitive nations have recognized the importance of aeronautics for economic and technology reasons and have built new wind tunnels and expanded research, and Boeing and Lockheed Martin are doing a significant portion of their wind tunnel testing abroad because the tunnels are newer and more advanced. Also of significant concern and according to Company officials the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft has also been tested abroad; and

WHEREAS, Critics who view aeronautics research as "corporate welfare" do not recognize the long-lead-time research and technology advances vs. market realities or the national stake (economy, jobs, trade, balance, prestige) in this technology. NASA's aeronautics laboratories have the research facilities, including wind tunnels and technical expertise to conduct the cutting-edge scientific inquiry need to advance the state-of-the-art military and civil aircraft; and

WHEREAS, In February 2002, NASA released "The NASA Aeronautics Blueprints Toward a Bold New Era of Aviation". NASA administrator was quoted as saying "the aeronautics blueprint identifies a new and revolutionary technology vision". The blueprint provides an excellent statement of the problems facing aviation today, and presents a vision of what can be achieved by national investments in aeronautics research. It does not provide a program plan to realize the vision, nor does it address the huge miss-match between the current NASA aeronautics funding level and what is required to realize the vision. It is important for the Congress to act now to ensure that the essential first steps are taken. NASA must be directed to develop a national program plan to realize the technologies needed to achieve its aviation vision. Congress must also take action to strengthen the FY03 NASA aeronautics budget in order to position the agency to implement the plan in FY04; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to restore full funding to the NASA budget and mandate an amount equal to ten percent of NASA's budget for aeronautics research programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress direct NASA to achieve the 10 national aeronautics-related outcome goals announced in 1997 under "Three Pillars For Success," and that Congress mandate that all military aircraft research, engineering and development be performed within the boundaries of this Nation while upgrading research facilities of this Nation and encouraging civil-aero testing within these facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress direct and fund NASA to develop the technologies needed to achieve its aviation vision in the FY02 aeronautic blueprint towards the new era of aviation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That with the decline of the United States global commercial aircraft market of 90% to below 50%, the aging of our military aircraft, and the increased investment by other countries in aeronautics, that NASA aeronautics budget be fully restored to 1990 funding levels to meet the challenges of the 21st Century in military and civil aeronautics; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall employ maximum effort to make this Nation and the Congress rectify the serious decline in aeronautics research which is critical to the Nation's continued world leadership prosperity and military superiority.

Resolution No. 164: Aeronautical Production And Research
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States has been the world leader in aeronautics for over 75 years, since the creation of the Nation's first aeronautical research laboratories; and

WHEREAS, The United States has become the global pacesetter in military and commercial aircraft and space technology through long-range research and development; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aviation and space research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic social and political institutions; and

WHEREAS, U.S. advancements in aeronautics and space technology have made all areas of our earth more accessible and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has committed itself to the advancement of aeronautics and space exploration and the necessary research, engineering and development to propagate these technologies by creating within the National Security Committee an Aerospace Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion deems it imperative that the United States, in the face of increasing competition, maintain its hard won status as the world leader in aeronautics and aircraft production and in space exploration and research. To realize this goal, we urge the Congress to provide:

1. **Adequate funding for the nation's civilian and military aerospace research and development programs.**
2. **Adequate funding to build, upgrade and enhance the nation's civilian and military aerospace research facilities and wind tunnels.**
3. **A renewed national commitment to education involving academia in aeronautical and aerospace engineering research and technologies insuring a state of the art educated work force.**
4. **Over watch and investigating functions and related activities with respect to the transfer of American aerospace technology abroad; and, be it further**

RESOLVED, That the nation must sustain its commitment to aerospace engineering research and development if it is to maintain the role as the world leader as we move into the next century.

Resolution No. 289: Support For The United States Air Force
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, People are the United States Air Force's top priority: the Air Force is the world's premier aerospace force because its great people – active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian – continue to serve selflessly as a total force under increasingly difficult circumstances, and in order to grow the force, recruiting and retention are among its highest priorities; to continue attracting and retaining dedicated men and women, the Air Force recognizes that it must continue its efforts to improve pay, benefits, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, In the past four years, America's Air Force has accelerated its post-Cold War high operations tempo despite a 40 percent force size reduction since 1986; and to maintain this pace while minimizing the adverse impact on its people, equipment, and infrastructure, the Air Force; and

WHEREAS, To meet the challenges of adversaries at home and abroad, Air Force strategy calls for a capabilities – based approach to defense planning: This enables the Service to answer a broad range of challenges posed by potential adversaries, while also developing the capabilities it needs for the future; and

WHEREAS, In assessing existing and potential adversaries' capabilities against our own, the Air Force is developing Task Forces for a variety of mission requirements, from strategic response to homeland security: For example, Global Strike Task Force, which describes how we will operate in an anti-access scenario, is the next step in the journey to fully achieve Air Force missions while also opening doors to adaptive and innovative operational plans, and relevant organization structure; and

WHEREAS, Continued investment in the core competencies of aerospace power – aerospace superiority, global attack, precision engagement, information superiority, rapid global mobility, and agile combat support – will continue to be the key to preserving the Air Force's ability to respond to threats to America's national security whenever and wherever they occur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Congress to appropriately support the United States Air Force's commitment to attract, retain, and train quality people and to mold them into an expeditionary aerospace force capable of flexibly responding to threats to America's national security; to enhance readiness through its continued focus on total force integration and the integration of air and space systems; and to build and implement a transformation and modernization program that will maintain America's dominance in air and space well into the 21st Century.

Defense Civil Preparedness Committee
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 73: Support For The Non-Federal Roles Of The National Guard
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard swear dual allegiance to support and defend the United States as well as the individual states in which Guardsmen reside and serve; and

WHEREAS, In the history of our country, activated National Guard units have served with distinction in all of our Nation's wars, and in combination with Reserve Units, composed 20 percent of the total United States' forces deployed in the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units also perform such invaluable non-federal roles as quelling domestic civil disturbances to include, for example, the employment of Guardsmen in the Los Angeles rioting; providing relief assistance in man-made or natural disasters as in Hurricane Hugo, the California earthquakes and the Mississippi River floods; as well as civil defense and drug interdiction functions, and other vital missions as determined by state authorities; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units are often the first relief or rescue forces to provide immediate on-scene response in the event of such emergencies; and

WHEREAS, Rioting and looting on the order of that in Los Angeles and the reoccurrence of large scale natural and man-made disasters could be repeated across the country requiring the immediate intervention of military units to supplement and assist state and local authorities and our citizenry; and

WHEREAS, With the reduction of National Guard units, and their increasing employment in numerous overseas missions, their participation in these traditional non-federal roles may be severely limited or even eliminated in some cases; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to retain National Guard units at reasonable levels so that in addition to their active duty missions they may continue to provide civil disturbance and natural and man-made disaster assistance; perform civil defense and drug interdiction functions as well as other essential state roles as required.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 53 (IL): The Blood Platelet Donor Program

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 17 (MA): Support for Blood Banks

Law and Order Committee
George W. Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 74: Combating Crime In America
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, One of the major principles contained in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion is "... to maintain law and order"; and

WHEREAS, Although the United States in its history has endured previous periods of high crime rates. Americans in recent years have been experiencing an unprecedented crime wave characterized by escalating and senseless violence and perversion which have permeated all communities and affected all age categories and walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that four out of every five Americans will become a victim of violent crime at least once in their lives, and a violent crime occurred once every 22 seconds in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Persons under the age of 21 committed one-third of all murders in 1990, and young people are also increasingly becoming victims of violent crime; and

WHEREAS, Violent offenders serve on the average only 37 percent of their sentences, so that at any given time approximately 75 percent of convicted criminals are either on probation or parole; and

WHEREAS, The link between federal funding and state performance is vital as 95 percent of all violent crime is covered by state, not federal statutes; and the "war on crime", with a hope of victory, will require a get-tough federal-state partnership to apprehend criminals, put them in prison, and keep them there; and

WHEREAS, The deterrent effect of the current judicial system of punishment and reprisal from society have become less intimidating to would-be criminals, and the elevation of the rights of criminals has surpassed the rights of their victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the time has come for the Federal and State Governments to implement stiffer and more consistent penalties that are as tough and distasteful as the crimes inflicted upon innocent victims; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion recommends that the following measures be considered by municipal, state and federal authorities for application to repeat youthful offenders:

1. **More frequent charging of juveniles as adults.**
2. **Separate prison facilities for chronic, violent juvenile offenders.**
3. **Mandatory sentences for gang-related crimes and for violent crimes committed with firearms. More jail time for certain first-time offenders.**
4. **Holding parents responsible for fines imposed on youthful offenders, as appropriate.**
5. **Establishing more boot camps for youthful offenders; and be it further**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion further recommends that the current system of paroles and probations be drastically revised; that parole for first degree murder be abolished; that the system of endless appeals and delays for executions be more realistically curtailed; that "good time" and community service paroles be eliminated for violent felony convictions; that more drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs be established in adult and juvenile prison systems; and that the criminal justice system work faster and more effectively, and that convicted criminals be required to make monetary restitution to their victims or to surviving family members, as appropriate; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion firmly believes that these types of penalties can impact on reducing repeated criminal activity; and in the final analysis, we are convinced that the most effective deterrent to crime is the strong influence of families and family-oriented programs that foster, strengthen and transmit family and societal values to young adults.

Resolution No. 75: Support For The Second Amendment
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms of his or her choice; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 60 million individuals, representing over half of the households in America, have chosen to exercise that right by owning one or more firearms; and

WHEREAS, Gun bans, registration, and licensing of firearms and their owners of has had little or no effect in such urban areas such as New York City, California and Washington D.C. and has not prevented violent criminals from obtaining firearms illegally and committing crimes; and

WHEREAS, The restriction of firearms purchases by law-abiding citizens will create a black market in illegal firearms and incur further governmental costs to enforce such restriction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirms its recognition that the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the membership of The American Legion urges our nation's lawmakers to recognize, as part of their oaths of office, that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear the arms of their choice, as do the millions of American veterans who have fought, and continue to fight, to preserve those rights, hereby advise the Congress of the United States and the Executive Department to cease and desist any and all efforts to restrict these rights by any legislation or order.

Resolution No. 76: Fire Fighter Of The Year Award Programs
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The Preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion includes as one of the objectives "...to maintain Law and Order" and fire fighting as well as law enforcement contributes to America's internal security; and

WHEREAS, Over 200 New York City fire fighters perished during their attempt to rescue the victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee at the Spring 1970 meetings adopted Resolution No. 13, "Certificate of Commendation for Law Enforcement Officers and Fire fighters," authorized the issuance of suitable Certificates of Commendation to outstanding fire fighters by Posts and Departments; and

WHEREAS, According to a National Security Commission survey of Departments conducted after September 11, 2001, fifteen of the responding Departments have programs

at Department and Post levels and recognize a Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award Program; and

WHEREAS, According to The American Legion's 2000-2001 Consolidated Post Report, which represents nearly 56 percent of all reporting Post Reports, over 1,717 Posts have fire prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, The presentation of Department of Fire Fighter of the Year Awards would reflect great credit on fire fighters, communities and states and on The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge all Departments to establish an annual Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award which may be presented at Department Conventions or other American Legion meetings as deemed appropriate; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That, as Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award programs continue to grow, The American Legion will consider establishing a National Fire Fighter of the Year Award.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 226 (CT): Student Trooper Program

Merchant Marine Committee
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 59: Recognition Of Merchant Marine Service
Origin: Montana
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, World War II merchant mariners, who suffered the highest casualty rate of any of the branches of service while they delivered troops, tanks, food, airplanes, fuel, and other necessary supplies to every theater of war, were belatedly awarded veteran status in 1988 and 1998 by the Congress of the United States; and

WHEREAS, These World War II veterans have been officially admitted to membership in The American Legion specifically for their service during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, both nationally and locally, has failed to adequately recognize these veterans for their wartime service to the nation by failing to display the Merchant Marine emblem when displaying the emblems of the five armed services (U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard) in advertisements, on official displays, and specifically in Post Homes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion adequately recognize the veterans that honorably served this nation in the Merchant Marine during World War II; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion approach the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that will recognize the members of the Merchant Marine for their honorable and devoted service during the Korean, Vietnam, Lebanon/Grenada,

Panama, and Persian Gulf conflicts in direct support of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Resolution No. 290: Support For the Jones Maritime Act And Related Cabotage Laws
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always stressed that maintaining a viable U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and its supporting infrastructure is essential to the economic, national, and environmental security of this nation; and

WHEREAS, The maritime policy of the United States, as articulated in the 1936 Merchant Marine Act, states that "it is necessary for the National Defense and development of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a Merchant Marine:

1. Sufficient to carry its domestic water-borne commerce and a substantial portion of the water export and import foreign commerce;
2. Capable of serving as a Naval and Military Auxiliary in time of war or national emergency;
3. Owned and operated under the U.S. Flag by citizens of the United States
4. Composed of the best equipped, fastest, and most suitable types of vessels, constructed in the United States and manned with trained and efficient citizen personnel; and
5. Supplemented by efficient facilities for ship building and ship repair." and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned about the continued decline of the U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and the shortage of trained American mariners; and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of 1998, the privately owned ocean-going U.S.-flag fleet consisted of only 259 active ships, which includes 119 ships in domestic trade and 36 other engaged exclusively in U.S. government work; thus, only 104 U.S.-Flag ships are operating in international trade in support of the nation's economic and national security interests; and

WHEREAS, The United States is the world's largest trading nation, but only three percent of U.S. imports and exports are carried in U.S.-flag ships which is economically unwise and militarily imprudent; and

WHEREAS, The Jones Act which is critical to United States national security and to America's economic well-being should be reaffirmed as should the continuation of the annual appropriations needed to fund the maritime Security Act of 1996; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion support the Jones Act and related Maritime cabotage laws critical to America's maritime infrastructure, and therefore, to U.S. National Defense, and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion would oppose legislation that has been introduced to alter those laws in ways that, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other defense leaders, and to many members of Congress, would be harmful both to the U.S. defense infrastructure and to America's economic well being; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the Charter and Build program, being considered by the Congress that would provide commercially-financed and commercially-operated ships on long-term charter for the afloat logistic support of naval forces; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support proposals that would move truck traffic from coastal highway and train corridors to offshore ships as a way to reduce both traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, improve highway safety, and

strengthen the U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine by increasing the number of ships in the contiguous coastal trades; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support whatever additional budgetary and legislative measures are needed to maintain a robust U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine and its supporting infrastructure.

Resolution No. 314: Support For the Maritime Administration
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, In his campaign, President Bush noted that "He understands the Maritime Industry has long played a vital role in our nation's commerce and defense;" and

WHEREAS, President Bush pledged that he "will support a revitalized industry that creates jobs and is a competitive transportation option in both foreign and domestic markets;" and

WHEREAS, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is repeatedly developing proposals which would largely dismantle the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) by shifting many of its responsibilities to other agencies; and

WHEREAS, The proposals are apparently being developed as part of President Bush's FY2002 budget; the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) wants to eliminate The Maritime Administration as part of its planed reduced Department of Transportation funding by 11 percent or $2.1 billion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports the retention of the U.S. Maritime Administration; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly opposes any plan to eliminate the Maritime Administration thus putting the economic and national security of America in jeopardy; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the U.S. Congress and President Bush to oppose any bill which would dismantle the U.S. Maritime Administration or weaken the Merchant Marine.

Resolution No. 316: Commercial Shipbuilding For Defense
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States emerged as the worlds foremost economic power and trading nation after the Cold war, and America's policymakers have neglected to use these advantages to sustain the nation's naval and maritime power; and

WHEREAS, Less than 3 percent of America's import and export tonnage is carried in U.S. Flag ships, and American ships represent less than 1 percent of world commercial tonnage, compared to 9 percent 20 years ago; and

WHEREAS, The 600-ship navy envisioned by President Reagan would have kept the ship yards busy; today, with a navy only half as large and declining further, America's shipyards are in trouble; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, only 6 U.S. shipyards had contracts to build large ocean-going ships, down from 11 in 1993, and the industry, as a whole, has seen its work force decline by 30 percent since 1991; this undermines the ability of the United States to rebuild and expand its naval and maritime forces; and

WHEREAS, China has been expanding its shipbuilding and now accounts for 7 percent of the world total, but short of their 10 percent target for 2000; Beijing is restructuring the industry into two regional corporations answerable to the government; and

WHEREAS, There are only about 260 U.S. Flagged merchant ships, and by comparison, the Chinese-Flagged merchant fleet numbers over 1,500 ships; more than 400 of these ships, carrying 30 percent of China's trade, are operated by the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), a state-owned conglomerate with close ties to Beijing's military and routinely provides shipping support to Chinese military and naval exercises; and

WHEREAS, The effort to maintain a robust American shipbuilding industry will be complicated by domestic lobbying for less expensive ships built overseas and manned by foreign crews; and

WHEREAS, Major international carriers have banded together forming a new industry association to lobby the Congress; and

WHEREAS, This group is dominated by foreign-owned firms. Singapore's Neptune Orient lines purchase of the American Presidents lines and Denmark's A.P. Moller's acquisition of Sealand's international operations have left the United States with barely a single major container carrier in the international trades; COSCO is also a member of the new group and has strategic motives for diminishing the role of American ships and shipyards that transcend mere commerce; and

WHEREAS, U.S. commercial build rates are also not large enough to provide the strategic sealift needed in an emergency, or to support a shipbuilding industry large enough to meet future U.S. naval needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urge the Congress to act early and vigorously to stop the erosion of our vital maritime capability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress to boost naval budgets, promote commercial shipbuilding, expand the use of U.S. flagships in world commerce, and resist foreign actions that would further damage America's defense industrial base.

Military Affairs Committee
Clayborn Lofton, Illinois, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 56: Notification of TRICARE For Life Eligibility
Origin: Missouri
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, That Quentin Roosevelt Post No. 1, Department of Missouri, believes that a sincere effort should be initiated and communicated to locate and enlighten all Medicare-eligible military retirees, including retired guard members, reservists, family members, widows/widowers and certain former spouses as to the improvements to the Department of Defense's TRICARE for Life as a secondary payer to Medicare; and

WHEREAS, The Armed Services of the United States of America promised those entering the military service, a life time of medical care when they completed their career in the armed services of their country; and

WHEREAS, The 106th Congress has seen fit to pass legislation to provide for and to fund, prescription and medical care (TRICARE For Life) for eligible military retirees, and their dependents, benefits that commenced on October 1st, 2001 for medical care; and

WHEREAS, A number of eligible retirees and dependents of retirees have not updated their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) information thus being ineligible for TRICARE benefits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was formed to assist veterans, widows and families of veterans to gain access to benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion use its resources, including its membership and publications, and to request the assistance of The American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion and sister service organizations, to advise those Medicare-eligible military retirees, Medicare-eligible family members and widows/widowers of retirees and certain former spouses who are eligible for TRICARE to encourage them to register in, or update their registration in, the DEERS system so as to complete their eligibility for current and/or future health care as provided by the TRICARE For Life Program.

Resolution No. 61: Support For Homeland Security And the War On Terrorism
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(As Amended and Consolidated with Resolutions No. 27 (AZ) and No. 42 (NM))

WHEREAS, The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil have made Americans painfully aware of their vulnerability to violence from international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, These terrorists were able to carry out their attacks because emphasis by the U.S. Government on homeland security and intelligence collection, while improving over recent years, have been inadequate and incapable of preventing such attacks; and

WHEREAS, The multiple federal and local government agencies responsible for safeguarding the United States homeland are disjointed, have had multiple chains-of-command, inadequate communications links and were incapable of effective coordination; and

WHEREAS, On September 20, 2001, President Bush announced the establishment of the Office of Homeland Security, a new cabinet position designed to be the single source of authority, at the highest levels, for all homeland defense programs and policies, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports the war on terrorism and the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and urges the United States Government to make the security of the United States the top national priority; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the President to arm the Department of Homeland Security with the legal powers and fiduciary tools to harmonize the many agencies and offices with Homeland Security responsibilities into a viable and credible deterrent to those who seek to inflict violence on the United States and the American people; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That our national intelligence agencies be fully funded and their efforts and data collection be expanded and coordinated.

Resolution No. 68: Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, There are more than ten countries that have or are suspected of developing biological warfare agents; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the anthrax vaccination in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Anthrax is considered to be one of the major biological warfare threats to U.S. Forces because it is lethal, easily produced and weaponized; and

WHEREAS, There are no other means of protection available, at this time, other than the anthrax vaccination from contacting the disease anthrax if encountered; and

WHEREAS, Over 525,000 service members have received at least one anthrax vaccination shot and the Department of Defense's (DoD) Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program (AVIP) seeks to vaccinate all 2.4 Million active duty and reservists; and

WHEREAS, Studies on efficacy of the licensed anthrax vaccine and long term health effects are currently being conducted; and

WHEREAS, The sole manufacturer, BioPort Corporation, has had numerous problems with financial insecurity, building violations, and repeated failures to pass FDA inspections; and

WHEREAS, The aforementioned problems with the manufacturer and its facility caused a shortage of FDA approved vaccine, necessitating DoD to institute a slowdown of AVIP in July 2000, limiting vaccination to personnel deploying to high threat areas; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that BioPort finally received FDA approval in early 2002, AVIP and BioPort continue to be plagued by controversy and skepticism; and

WHEREAS, Numerous adverse reaction reports have been filed, and some service members are refusing to take the vaccine, thus ending military careers as well as adversely impacting overall morale and an unknown number have seriously questioned the implementation of this program; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and General Accounting Office have noted the passive surveillance reporting that DoD has employed is flawed as a tracking device for reaction rates; and

WHEREAS, The DoD has failed to adequately follow-up on vaccine reaction rates and track pertinent data for entry into individual medical records; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the progress of the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program, urge comprehensive congressional oversight and conduct outreach to service members, veterans and their families; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the DoD to seek production of a newer vaccine proven for efficacy, safety and with a shorter inoculation regiment than the current six inoculations, all in accordance with FDA regulations; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that the Department of Defense expeditiously develop a second manufacturer of anthrax vaccine, and in the quantities necessary, which surpass the funding, credibility and FDA inspection issues which are currently under criticism; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense to re-evaluate the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program and maintain individual medical records with the greatest of accuracy; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to provide timely medical assistance and health care to those participants who experience vaccination reactions.

Resolution No. 69: The American Legion Policy On The Use Of Depleted Uranium
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The military services have come to depend on depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive heavy metal as a kinetic energy penetrator fired from tank and aircraft cannons against enemy armor; and

WHEREAS, Depleted uranium burns after hitting a target, releasing aerosolized uranium particles into the air, exposing troops who come in contact with the target; and

WHEREAS, The scientific community and the Armed Forces do not have adequate medical or exposure information to determine the exact health effects caused by exposure to aerosolized depleted uranium particles; and

WHEREAS, Depleted uranium munitions were fired at, and destroyed, thousands of Iraqi tanks and vehicles during the Gulf War, scattering tons of depleted uranium throughout the theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, A 1993 United States General Accounting Office report found that most American ground troops were inadequately informed about the use and danger of depleted uranium munitions, and as a result, entered destroyed Iraqi tanks and vehicles and were exposed to depleted uranium particles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That the Department of Defense require Commanders to institute proper protective measures for personnel working with or around depleted uranium munitions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense ensure that Commanders adequately inform their personnel about the dangers of approaching targets that have been destroyed by depleted uranium munitions; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense immediately conduct peer-reviewed scientific studies to determine the extent of fallout near targets struck by depleted uranium munitions.

Resolution No. 77: Quality Of Life Features
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(As Amended and Consolidated with Resolution No. 166 (VA))

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported quality of life features for members of the Armed Forces and their dependents as well as military retirees, as people are the foundation of our Nation's fighting forces; and

WHEREAS, Without highly qualified, dedicated men and women, even the most sophisticated weaponry will not provide the deterrent force necessary for this Nation to remain at peace; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has the inherent and moral responsibility for providing for the well-being of members of the active and reserve components and their dependents and military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Military pay must be reasonably comparable to compensation in the private sector if the Armed Forces aspire to compete for quality volunteers and retain an experienced military force for the long term; and

WHEREAS, Military compensation is only one factor in the quality of life equation as to whether a good service member and his family remain in the service: Other major factors include fair treatment, career stability and regular promotions, adequate quarters, adequate health care and commissaries, and day care facilities, all of which ease the numerous sacrifices that are demanded of service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, Our military retirees and their dependents and military survivors are deserving and rightfully entitled to adequate health care treatment and regular cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund such quality of life features, including but not limited to, the following:

1. **Military pay comparability for the Armed Forces and regular increases in the Basic Allowances for Quarters; renovation and construction of military quarters and increased funding for child day care centers are direly needed. Pay raises must be competitive with the private sector.**
2. **Adequate medical, mental and dental health services; morale, welfare and recreational facilities; and non-privatized exchanges and commissary facilities. The Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) and its functions should be retained and not relegated to the military services.**
3. **Preserving an attractive retirement system for the active and reserve components and annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) paid at the same rate and con-currently with other Federal retiree COLAs; oppose any changes to the military retirement system, whether prospective or retroactive, that would violate contracts made with military retirees and would undermine morale and readiness.**
4. **Requiring that the Services perform mandatory physical examinations, without waivers, for all separating veterans.**
5. **Fully funding the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay, military separation pays, and VA disability compensation.**
6. **Amending Public Law 99-145 as to eliminate the automatic age 62 offset of Survivors' Benefits Plan benefits with Social Security benefits and any offset of Survivors' Benefits with DIC benefits, particularly for those survivors who have earned Social Security benefits in their own right. Also, SBP premiums should be paid up after payment for 30 years or until age 70 whichever comes first.**
7. **TRICARE for Life and the Tricare Senior Pharmacy program for Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors, should be adequately funded; and regular cost-of-living adjustments to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans should be paid.**
8. **Non-taxation of military allowances to include moving allowances, and the Congressional authorization for increased tax incentives and assignment incentive pays for military personnel assigned to forward deployed areas to include the Republic of Korea.**
9. **Congressional re-enactment of Impact Aid to fund the local public school education of military dependents.**

10. **Adequately protecting the American public and the Armed Forces from the actual or potentially harmful effects of friendly and hostile chemical, biological and nuclear agents or munitions.**
11. **Urging the Congress to extend additional quality of life benefits, allowances and privileges to the National Guard and Reserves involved in Homeland Security and other missions so as to more closely approximate those of the active force. Military retirement pay and TRICARE healthcare for members of the Reserve Components should be authorized at age 55.**
12. **Military healthcare should also be provided to members of the Reserve Components and their dependents, who become injured while on active duty status regardless of the number of days served on active duty to the same degree as active duty members under the same circumstances.**
13. **Whenever a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is conducted, The American Legion will urge that certain base facilities such as base medical facilities, commissaries, exchanges and other facilities be preserved for use by active duty and Reservist personnel and military retired veterans and their families.**

Resolution No. 78: Concurrent Receipt Of Military Retired Pay And VA Disability Compensation
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 114 (MX))

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, Sections 5304 and 5305, prohibit the concurrent receipt of both military retirement pay for longevity from the Department of Defense and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Disabled military retirees are entitled to receive disability compensation only by "wavering that portion of retired pay as is equal in amount to such compensation, " so that disabled military retirees essentially fund their own disability compensation which is not subject to taxation; and

WHEREAS, Federal civil service employees, as well as other Federal government workers, may concurrently receive retirement pay for longevity and disability payments; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that it is inequitable and unfair to authorize one group to receive federal retirement pay and disability payments while prohibiting disabled military retirees from receiving both; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Defense, the rationale for this disparity is that "VA disability compensation is (meant) for disabled veterans who have left the service before completing a career and before qualifying for retired pay...disabled military retirees did not experience a reduction in earning potential during their military career"; and

WHEREAS, Such rationale defies both logic and the facts: There are approximately 640,000 total disabled military retirees (rated 0% - 100%) who qualified for military retirement yet, during their military careers, sustained non-career-ending injuries, combat wounds, and other ailments which subsequently may have impacted adversely on their post-retirement earning potential and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Military retirement pay and VA disability compensation were earned and awarded for entirely different purposes: Veterans disability compensation is not awarded for being "in-service" but for becoming disabled as a result of military service; and the fact that a veteran who served in the military for 20 or more years and successfully completed his or

her career despite serving with service-connected ailments should be rewarded rather than penalized for not being medically retired; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported and will continue to support Congressional action to amend Title 38, United States Code, so as to authorize the full funding of concurrent receipt for all disabled military retirees, regardless of the degree of their disability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion strongly urges Congressional action to fund the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay for longevity and disability compensation for all disabled retirees; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That if the Congress adopts and begins funding concurrent receipt for severely disabled retirees rated at 60 percent and higher beginning with the Fiscal Year 2003 budget, that Congress be urged to adopt and fund the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and veterans disability compensation for those disabled retirees rated from 10 percent through 50 percent beginning with the FY 2004 budget or as soon as practical.

Resolution No. 79: Support For The Selective Service System Registration Program
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has given long-standing support to universal military training; and despite the success of the All-Volunteer Force, Selective Service registration continues to serve as our defense manpower insurance policy; and

WHEREAS, Some members of Congress are intent on eroding the nation's requirement for registration as they claim that the United States no longer faces a threat significant enough to justify registration; and

WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Cold War, American servicemen and women are deployed world-wide to include their participation in the peace enforcement missions in Bosnia and Kosovo and enforcing no-fly zones in Iraq and engaging in the war on terrorism and homeland security; the unpredictability and volatility of worldwide tensions urge us to think in terms of continued preparedness, not demobilization; and

WHEREAS, The current reality of small Active Forces only reinforces the need for combat-ready National Guard and Reserve units and for the capability to reconstitute our forces in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, World War I and II began long before our country became involved, allowing the United States the benefit of abundant time to accomplish registration before troops were actually committed—a luxury that we cannot expect to enjoy in today's unpredictable environment; and

WHEREAS, The Selective Service Registration Program has enjoyed remarkable success as more that 90 percent of our 18-25 year olds have registered and there is virtually no resistance to the Program; and

WHEREAS, The cost to administer the Registration Program is approximately $7.4 million per year, making the Program extremely cost-effective; and

WHEREAS, Registration is one of the few remaining obligations our nation requires of its young men and removing this "rite of passage" for all men would reduce each man's level of consciousness about military service and the obligation to defend our nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports the retention of the Selective Service Registration Program as being in the best interests of all Americans, and its maintenance is a proven cost-effective, essential, and rapid means of reconstituting the required forces to protect our national security interests.

Resolution No. 80: Department Of Defense Health Care For Military Beneficiaries
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The promise of free health care for life in exchange for 20 or more years of creditable military service was contained in recruiting and retention and was recognized as such by active duty personnel, Reservists and military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The passage of TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Programs for Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents has essentially fulfilled the promise of lifetime military healthcare; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has had a number of concerns with TRICARE healthcare programs to include, for example, TRICARE business practices and benefit portability need to be improved; claims processing reform is direly needed; and reimbursement rates to providers need to be increased; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion recommends that the following guidelines be incorporated as part of the Department of Defense healthcare package for military retirees, dependents and military survivors:

1. **Administrative barriers to an effective TRICARE system to include raising TRICARE provider reimbursements; program portability between TRICARE regions; reducing delays in claim payments; and increasing electronic claims processing need to be removed.**
2. **That the TRICARE programs to include the TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy programs which are used by 1.3 million Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents be fully funded annually.**
3. **That TRICARE coverage options be extended to the Ready Reserve and National Guard, and that retired Reservists and their dependents be eligible for TRICARE coverage beginning at age 55.**
4. **That dual eligible disabled retirees continue to receive health care from both military treatment facilities and VA medical centers.**
5. **That adequate military medical personnel, to include graduates of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and members of the Commissioned Officer Corps of the Public Health Service, should be retained on active duty to provide health care for active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents, and**
6. **That all military beneficiaries be authorized to receive oral dental examinations at military treatment facilities.**

Resolution No. 81: TRICARE Eligibility Of The Reserve Components And Their Dependents
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) created TRICARE to augment its Military Medical System; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE largely consists of regional Federally-contracted, for-profit health care providers; and

WHEREAS, DoD's utilization of Reserve Components in the performance of traditionally active duty missions continues globally; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components, when activated to perform full time duties, can no longer afford their civilian health care coverage for themselves and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components are among the 40 million American with no health care coverage for themselves and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The Reserve Components continue to experience recruitment and retention challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports DoD authorizing TRICARE eligibility for members of the Reserve Components and their dependents.

Resolution No. 82: Departments Of Veterans Affairs (DVA) And Defense (DoD) Sharing
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The DoD has a large integrated, international health care delivery system; and

WHEREAS, The VA has a large integrated, national health care delivery system; and

WHEREAS, The VA and DoD have joint ventures where one agency serves as the host medical facility for the other; and

WHEREAS, The VA and DoD have numerous sharing agreements allowing effective utilization of other's resources where practical; and

WHEREAS, VA and DoD have opportunities to increase buying power through economy of scale with joint purchases of health care equipment and supplies; and

WHEREAS, Any use of VA facilities must be voluntary, not required, for DoD beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, All military retirees are eligible to enroll in VA's integrated health care system; and

WHEREAS, VA awards many military retirees service-connected disability ratings which entitles them to receive health care from VA at no cost; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the Presidential Task Force To Improve Health Care Delivery To Our Nation's Veterans is reviewing VA and DoD sharing and will offer formal recommendations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports coordination, not integration, of VA and DoD health services and urges that they accomplish the following as a minimum:

- **Develop additional VA-DoD health care resource sharing joint ventures**

- **Maximize the utilization of VA-DoD health care sharing partnerships**
- **Expand joint VA-DoD medical education and training opportunities**
- **Effectively use the economy of scale in joint purchases of medical equipment and supplies**
- **Improve information technology to allow the timely exchange of medical information for dual-eligible beneficiaries**
- **That VA and DoD mutually agree on compatible billing and collection procedures**
- **That all dual-eligible, service-connected disabled, military retirees continue to receive health care from both military treatment facilities and VA medical facilities.**

Resolution No. 83: Reforming the Military Absentee Voting System
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 5 (CO) and No. 179 (MN))

WHEREAS, The 1986 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (Public Law 99-410) streamlined the procedures for overseas absentee voting; authorized a back-up write-in overseas ballot if the voter did not receive one requested from the state; Postal Service was to ensure that balloting materials were "carried expeditiously and free of postage;" and the overall intent was to ensure "maximum access to the polls" by both uniformed and civilian overseas voters; and

WHEREAS, The 2000 General Elections demonstrated numerous problems exist not only in Florida, but nationally as well, concerning uniformed and overseas citizens absentee balloting procedures; and

WHEREAS, Although a Presidential Election is held on the same date across the United States, it is composed of 50 separate state elections; and the Constitution of the United States grants the responsibility for the conduct of elections to the states; and

WHEREAS, Many states have difficulty printing and mailing ballots to overseas military voters in a timely manner, thus, posing a real challenge for military members and their family members to vote and return ballots within deadlines; and other states will not accept ballots received 30 days before general elections making it difficult, particularly, for military personnel deployed overseas; and

WHEREAS, Absentee ballots from forward deployed military members entitled to free postage in locales like the Persian Gulf and Bosnia often are not postmarked at mailing but, many times, are postmarked en route resulting in late postmarking in CONUS; and

WHEREAS, Military voters should be protected from disenfranchisement based on technicalities that are beyond their control such as postmark discrepancies, missing notarized signatures and confusion on residency requirements; and

WHEREAS, States are not solely to blame due to complacency on the part of military units which also compounds military absentee voting: voting assistance in the military is often an additional duty relegated to the most junior officers; and special vigilance is often not given to handling election mail; and

WHEREAS, A worldwide Internet voting pilot was recently tested among four states by the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program using digital signatures and ballot encryption, so that voting via the Internet may provide a solution; and

WHEREAS, Forty-six states now allow the fax transmission of absentee voting materials; and

WHEREAS, Despite progress made after more than a decade by the Department of Defense cooperatively working with the states, on the average, some 30 percent of all military absentee ballots are still not counted in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, National Defense is uniquely a constitutional mandate that gives the Federal government the authority and responsibility to ensure that military personnel and their families are not disenfranchised by the circumstances of their service and, thereby, necessitating Federal legislation as the states have not resolved the problem for nearly half a century, and a more adequate uniform and consistent system, not 50 unique systems, is needed; and

WHEREAS, The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws promotes drafts of uniform and model acts, and it could offer uniform formats for the states to follow on military absentee voting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges that appropriate laws and guidelines be developed at Federal, state and local levels with the intent that all military absentee voters and their families will have their votes counted in every election; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion ensure that satisfactorily drafted uniform acts and/or regulations, developed with the assistance of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, are made available to all appropriate state and local election entities; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion take an advocate role on this vital issue at National, state and local levels.

Resolution No. 84: Burial Eligibility For Arlington National Cemetery
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is our Nation's most sacred shrine representing an embodiment of the sacrifices that were made to uphold our country's ideals and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, More than 250,000 veterans and their dependents are buried here on 612 acres of land; and

WHEREAS, Arlington is one of more than 100 National Cemeteries but, unlike the others, Arlington Cemetery is administered by the Department of the Army; and

WHEREAS, In spite of restrictive regulations (Title 32, CFR), there have been numerous waivers in recent years, falsification of military records to gain interment at Arlington and even an unprecedented Presidential requested waiver and reservation; and

WHEREAS, Eligibility criteria for burials at Arlington need to be codified in order to assure compliance and fairness and to assure that the remaining space at Arlington is judiciously used; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002 That The American Legion urges the Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery and that such burial be restricted to service members who die on Active duty; to our most decorated veterans to include recipients of the Purple Heart; former members of the armed forces separated from the military with a physical disability of 30 percent or more before October 1, 1949; and to veterans who spent full careers in uniform, and to their spouses and eligible children; to former prisoners of war; and for the President or former Presidents as Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes there should be no waivers for unqualified persons except under unique and compelling circumstances which comport with codified non-partisan waiver procedures as established by the Congress; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That eligibility for interment of cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans in the Columbarium at Arlington should also be codified.

Resolution No. 85: Military Funeral Honors
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 30 (MD))

WHEREAS, Providing military honors at veterans funerals represents the final tribute to special Americans who served their Country in uniform during periods of war and peace, and rendering these final tributes will continue to warrant a dedication of effort and military manpower to adequately accomplish; and

WHEREAS, Active duty and reserve component (National Guard and Reserves) manpower strengths have been reduced by 35 percent down to 1.4 million in the active component and 886,000 in the reserve components and, coupled with worldwide military deployments, has further strained the availability of manpower resources for veterans funerals; and

WHEREAS, A number of state National Guard organizations such as in Maryland, Missouri, New York and others, have expended state funding for funeral honors without receiving federal assistance; and

WHEREAS, Although the cumulative demand for military burial honors is currently unknown, as are the numbers of accommodated and unaccommodated requests for honors, the military services provided honors for 30,600 funerals in 1997 and nearly 35 percent of these military honors rendered consisted of single representatives; and

WHEREAS, Veterans service organizations have played a significant role in rendering military-like honors at veterans funerals; but just as the military continues to downsize, the membership of veterans service organizations has also been declining due to the passing of its own veterans, and The American Legion performed over 78,000 veterans funeral honors in FY 2000; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recognized the national obligation to demonstrate the Nation's gratitude to veterans who defended our Nation during times of war and peace; and it mandated the Military Services to provide funeral honors at veterans burials, upon request by the next of kin, with a minimum of two uniformed members, one in the service of the deceased, to be provided for flag-folding and presentation along with the playing of Taps; and

WHEREAS, The FY 2000 NDAA also authorized the reimbursement of members of veterans service organizations like The American Legion who participated in military funeral honors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion reaffirms that the Congress mandate and appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the Military Services, to include reimbursing the National Guard, so as to provide military honors upon request at veterans funerals in coordination with veterans service organizations such as The American Legion at local levels; and be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion Posts and Departments be encouraged to participate with the military in the rendering of funeral honors to veterans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense implement equitable and expedient reimbursement procedures for members of the veterans service organizations who participate in military funeral honors; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That veterans of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard be authorized to receive military funeral honors from those Military Services.

Resolution No. 86: Military Commissaries
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has evaluated options to downsize or privatize the Military Commissary System by seeking reduced federal funding, reducing the number of operating military commissaries, and evaluating the privatizing of military commissaries; and

WHEREAS, The value of commissaries in the quality of life equation for junior enlisted families and military retirees and others is indisputable: Military commissary usage has ranked second only to medical health care in the non-pay compensation package according to surveys conducted among active duty and retired beneficiaries as commissaries save patrons on the order of 26 percent in food costs; and

WHEREAS, The nearly $1 billion in subsidized congressional appropriations permits commissaries to sell items virtually at cost, and the removal of this funding would drastically raise food costs which would effectively cause commissaries to close; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to popular belief, military commissaries are not competitive with civilian grocery chain stores as commissary sales represent only 1.7 percent of total U.S. grocery sales; and

WHEREAS, Without commissary savings, pay compensation for active duty and military retirees would have to rise; and

WHEREAS, With the continued downsizing of the military to include reductions in force and military benefits, any effort to reduce or dismantle the integrity of the military commissary system would be seen as a serious breach of faith with a benefit system that currently serves as a mainstay for the active and reserve components, military retirees and military survivors, military personnel involuntarily discharged or released from active duty, and 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense and the Congress to continue full federal funding of the military commissary system and to retain this vital non-pay compensation benefit system which is essential to the morale and readiness of the dedicated men and women who have served, and continue to serve, the national security interests of the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes any efforts to privatize the military commissary system or to dismantle or downsize the Defense Commissary Agency; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the Congress to authorize the full use of commissaries by members of the National Guard and Reserves.

Resolution No. 87: Service Of Women In The Armed Forces
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, That The American Legion has long recognized the invaluable service and contribution of women in the Armed Forces and has supported their service in non-combatant assignments; and

WHEREAS, American military women currently comprise about 12 percent of the 1.6 million service members in the Armed Forces, and more than 40,000 female service members served their Country in the Persian Gulf War with courage, honor and distinction; and

WHEREAS, Due to the fluid and mobile nature of modern warfare, combat support and combat service support units have often been as exposed to hostile fire as front-line combat units: In the Persian Gulf War five female soldiers were killed in action and two were taken as prisoners of war while serving in non-combatant specialties in support units; and

WHEREAS, The key to military readiness is that all service members, male and female, will deploy with their units: Pregnancy rates at the onset of the Persian Gulf War significantly affected the deploy ability of some units, and non-deploy ability rates for female soldiers were three times greater than men, largely due to pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to open more specialties and assignments to military women, then-Secretary of Defense Aspin in April 1993 directed the Services to permit women to compete for aviation assignments, including aircraft engaged in combat missions, and with Congressional approval, to repeal the combat exclusion law permitting the assignment of women to Navy warships, including aircraft carriers and excluding submarines and special operations units; and

WHEREAS, In early 1994, the Department of Defense announced it intended to rescind the 1988 "Risk Rule" which barred women from assignments to combat support and combat service support units and would continue to bar women from ground combat units that "...engaged the enemy on the ground with weapons, that are exposed to hostile fire, and have a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy;" and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has approved allowing military women to serve in the headquarters of air defense artillery, field artillery and combat engineer units as well in air cavalry units and in special operations aviation; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, of 900 servicewomen surveyed, only 12 percent of enlisted women and 10 percent of the female non-commissioned officers said they would consider serving in combat units; and

WHEREAS, Roper polls have revealed that of the American people polled 58 percent said that women should not be assigned to Army infantry units, and 52 percent were against women in Marine Corps infantry. The Roper military poll of military members surveyed indicated that 74 percent did not think women should serve in the infantry, 59 percent opposed women in tank crews, and 54 percent did not want women in field artillery units; and

WHEREAS, Historically, those nations that have permitted women to serve in close combat situations (the Soviet Union, Germany and Israel) have done so only because of grave threats to their national survival; and

WHEREAS, Any proposal to lifting direct ground combat exclusion policies pertaining to military women may undermine the justification used by the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of the all-male draft registration and conscription system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion supports the exclusion of military women from direct ground combat roles including special operations units as well as permanent assignment on submarines.

Resolution No. 89: Uniformed Services Former Protection Act
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA) was adopted by Congress in 1982 in order to protect divorced spouses of military members particularly in those states which had no provisions for alimony; and

WHEREAS, Prior to passage of this law, military spouses always had the full range of remedies in divorce courts as any other spouse in America; and

WHEREAS, Since the passage of the law (P.L. 97-252), divorce courts have been awarding up to 50 percent of disposable military retirement pay to former spouses based on the guidelines in the Federal Law; and among the many inequities in the law are the continuance of lifetime annuities to former spouses whether they remarry or not, and military retirees are the only federal retirees to whom this provision applies; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of the USFSPA were made retroactive so as to be effective one day before the supreme court ruling (McCarthy vs McCarthy) which reaffirmed that military pay could not be divided as property. As a result of this action, divorces settled over 25 years ago were reopened by former spouses; and

WHEREAS, Since the USFSPA was enacted, Congress has enacted 23 amendments to that law virtually all of which were adopted without hearings and 18 of which favored former spouses; and

WHEREAS, The USFSPA threatens grave harm to the goals of the Military Retirement System which serves as the major incentive to the long-term maintenance of a competent and professional military force; and

WHEREAS, Military members must have at least 20 years of creditable service before being eligible to receive retired pay and the spouse of a military member now qualifies for a share of military retired pay immediately upon marriage; and

WHEREAS, As well-intentioned as it was meant to be, the law has created an even larger class of victims than the former spouses it was designed to assist, namely, the remarried active duty service member and military retiree and his or her new family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges Congressional hearings on the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act and supports the principle that spouses of military personnel have the right to adequate support, that military pay should only be included in judicial determinations of appropriate support on a case-by-case basis; and that the Federal Law (P.L. 97-252) to distribute military retired pay as property between service members or military retirees and former spouses as a minimum should be changed as follows:

1. **Military retired pay should be treated as income, rather than property, and state divorce courts should apportion retired pay as alimony and child support in accordance with state domestic laws and regulations rather than federal law.**
2. **Currently, former military spouses receive payments for life, even when they remarry. This practice should be discontinued.**

3. **Payments made to former military spouses should be based on the pay grade of the military member at the time of divorce, not at the time of retirement.**
4. **The period of time following separation or divorce should be limited to two years within which an ex-spouse can assert claims for a portion of military retired pay for alimony or child support.**
5. **Currently, military retired pay which is waived in order to receive disability compensation may be reapportioned in divorce cases. That section of the USFSPA which makes disability pay unavailable for apportionment should be reinforced. This would require amending between that Code and 10 USC 1408 (USFSPA).**

Resolution No. 90: The Korean Defense Service Medal
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Although full-scale hostilities ended on the Korean peninsula in 1954 with the signing of an armistice, more than 1,239 United States servicemen and at least 2,300 Republic of Korea casualties were reported as a result of their service in South Korea during the forty-seven year truce period that US forces have assisted in defending South Korea; and

WHEREAS, Technically, a state of war continues to exist between North and South Korea; and

WHEREAS, The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was awarded briefly from 1966 to 1974 during the Vietnam era, which excluded all other service in the Republic of Korea; and

WHEREAS, The Korean War Service Medal has been authorized and awarded to American veterans who served in Korea during the Korean War period from 1950 through 1953; and

WHEREAS, Army and Navy Occupation Medals were authorized to Army and Navy personnel who served in past World War II Germany and Japan but no such medals have been authorized for past-Korean War service; and

WHEREAS, There is no service award, such as a Korean Defense Service Medal, recognizing the nearly two million American service members and veterans who have participated, and continue to participate, in defending the Republic of Korea during this extended cease-fire period following the Korean War; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to authorize the funding and presenting of the Korean Defense Service Medal to those United States military personnel and veterans who served in defending the Republic of Korea between July 28, 1954 and the present.

Resolution No. 115: Provisions Of Status Forces Agreements
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, A portion of the compensated benefits of military retirees is considered to be the use of military facilities, such as PX, BX, Post Exchange, Commissary, recreational facilities, mail, and other U.S. military facilities worldwide; and

WHEREAS, As a direct result of the Status of Forces agreements Celebrated between the U.S. government and host countries many, if not all, of these benefits are usually denied

to retired military members and their families/dependents residing or visiting U.S. military facilities located outside the U.S.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Convention of The American Legion assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That all future Status of Forces Agreements negotiated, renegotiated, or revised with host countries should allow for the unimpeded use of all U.S. military facilities by retired U.S. military members and their dependents.

Resolution No. 131: War On Terrorism Commendation
Origin: Texas
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion, hereby acknowledge and perpetuate the decisions and actions of the Commander in Chief and President of The United States against the terrorist actions against America on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Those actions were cowardly and tragic, creating national turmoil; and

WHEREAS, That all Americans must pull together to show the world that no person, no group, or no country can overcome the will and determination of the American people; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion go on record commending the President for his steadfastness in pursuing the terrorist enemies of the United States in the War on Terrorism.

Resolution No. 230:Total Force Policy And Viable National Guard And Reserve Forces
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The National Guard of this Country has served as the bedrock for our defense and its service predates the Nation's founding; and

WHEREAS, Under the Total Force Policy, National Guard and Reserve units have been integrated into Active Force structures, and they continue to serve as the bridge between the Active Forces and the American people; and

WHEREAS, The reality of smaller Active Forces strengthens the imperative for fully manned and combat ready National Guard and Reserve Forces which are completely integrated into the Total Force; and

WHEREAS, During the Persian Gulf War, National Guard and Reserve personnel comprised 20 percent of deployed United States forces, thereby, representing both the first and second line of America's defense capabilities; and

WHEREAS, The National Guard, besides serving our national interests in Federal capacities, also performs invaluable State missions to include natural disaster assistance, civil disturbance and law and order missions, participating in drug interdiction, and numerous community service programs; and

WHEREAS, Our National Military Strategy is primarily oriented toward regional conflicts of short duration. Extended conflicts or global warfare could require the full employment of the National Guard and Reserves and, possibly, the reinstatement of conscription to meet manpower needs, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges

that National Guard and Reserves be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels in order to accomplish the missions and roles indispensable to or National Defense.

Resolution No. 231: Support For the Award Of A Cold War Victory Medal
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Armed Forces engaged the forces of International Communism continuously from the end of World War II until the disintegration of the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, The United States, during this extended period, relied on the manpower of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps manned by citizens performing their obligated duty to serve and defend the United States; and

WHEREAS, The defeat of the former Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies constituted the greatest success of the American armed forces since the end of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Many Americans served the nation in assigned duties without receiving tangible recognition for that service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29,2002, That The American Legion urge the Congress to authorize and provide funding for the award of a Cold War Victory Medal to all armed forces members who served honorably during the period 2 September 1945 through 21 December 1991 to commemorate service and victory in the Cold War which eliminated the threat of a determined enemy to overpower the freely elected democracies of the world.

Resolution No. 315: Modernization Of The United States Army
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Army is America's strategic land combat force for power projection and sustained combat operations; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Army must support the National Military Strategy (NMS) by maintaining a force capable of a full spectrum of military operations to provide the joint team with decisive land combat power. This fundamental requirement entails a force of high-quality personnel with modern equipment trained for military operations. The nature of this force enables the Army to provide pivotal support for the three pillars of the NMS; shaping the international environment, responding to crises, and preparing for the future. The Army is not only critical to America's ability to win wars; it is also the principal instrument for conducting military-to-military engagement to influence the capabilities, policies and actions of other nations; and

WHEREAS, The spectrum of 21st Century operations demands land forces in joint, combined and multinational formations for a variety of missions extending from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to peacekeeping, peacemaking, and winning major theater wars. Transformation of the Army requires maintaining our current war fighting capabilities while developing new capabilities for the future. The Army must provide an array of deplorable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable and sustainable formations; and

WHEREAS, The Army Vision calls for improving strategic responsiveness, to be achieved by continuing to emphasize forward-deployed forces and forward-positional

capabilities, engagement and enhancing the deploy ability of all Army forces. Ultimately, the Army will develop organizations with the deploy ability of today's light forces but with the lethality and mobility of today's heavy forces, without degradation of the battle-tested capability of heavy forces; and

WHEREAS, The Army will need to restructure its modernization program to support tailor-made platforms for the Objective Force, but with consideration in the on-going testing and demonstration programs of the special capabilities of tracked vehicles and wheeled vehicles, thus improving responsiveness, deploy ability, and effectiveness of the force; and

WHEREAS, Projecting overwhelming combat power in the theater of operations requires that the Army must aggressively reduce its logistics footprint by evolving systems that are easier to sustain; and

WHEREAS, The ability of the Army to maintain combat readiness is increasingly threatened by the tempo of peacetime operations and a mix of declining resources increasing missions and the continuing need for modernization of the force; and

WHEREAS, Supplemental appropriations for FY 2002 might have eased the funding impact of contingency operations on near-term readiness, but without such funds there have not been adequate funds for operations, modernization and recapitalization; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Congress to provide full funding for the Army to maintain the full spectrum of necessary capabilities with which to provide the Nation with a full array of options to meet the threats of the 21st Century.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 45 (IA): Military Compensation for the War on Terrorism
Resolution No. 58 (MT): Joint Review of Mobilization Personnel Policies
Resolution No. 175 (ID): Selective Service Registration and Drivers' Licenses and State Identification Card Applications
Resolution No. 228 (DC): Remotely Controlled Surveillance and Communications Systems (UAVs—Unmanned Aerial Vehicles)

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 167 (VA): Insure Veterans Receive a Copy of Their Medical Records at the Time of Separation From Active Duty

Rejected

Resolution No. 13 (CO): Oppose Use of Social Security Account Numbers for TRICARE Accounts
Resolution No. 88 (MD): Separate Gender Basic Training
Resolution No. 129 (TX): Military Funeral Honors
Resolution No. 148 (IN): Accountability of Ceremonial Rifles
Resolution No. 174 (NH): The Order of the Silver Rose

Naval Affairs Committee
Gerard W. Cheffer, Illinois, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 91: Retention of the Vieques Weapons Range
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, Training is imperative for readiness and access to realistic training sites and facilities may ultimately save the lives of American service members; and

WHEREAS, The training received by Navy-Marine Corps units is of vital importance to our National Defense policy and to the readiness of deploying naval task groups. Past successful air campaigns conducted by naval aviation squadrons and surface ships in Kosovo and Southern Iraq were made possible because of extensive training received at Vieques; and

WHEREAS, The United States Navy purchased over 25,000 acres of land on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques from 1941-1943 for about $1.6 million; and Vieques has became the Atlantic Fleet's most important training range for every conflict from World War II to Desert Storm to Kosovo; and

WHEREAS, Vieques is the only training range on the United States' East Coast where the Navy and Marine Corps can conduct combined live-fire exercises with aviation, surface and subsurface units and Naval Surface Fire Support; and

WHEREAS, The Vieques Training Complex is located more than eight miles from the nearest town on the island, and in more than 50 years of range operations, not one civilian living or working near the Range has been killed or placed at risk; and

WHEREAS, The accidental bombing death of a Puerto Rican national security guard in April 1999 has prompted the suspension of Range operations, and the Government of Puerto Rico has demanded the closure of the Vieques Weapons Range. Despite months of searching, the Navy has not developed an adequate replacement for the Range which the Secretary of the Navy has called "the only suitable training site; and

WHEREAS, The Navy has worked with the Government of Puerto Rico to enhance economic opportunities to preserve and protect the island's ecological/environmental status, and to significantly reduce live-fire operations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Executive Branch of the Government and the Congress to support the continued live-fire use of the Vieques Weapon Range as vital to the readiness of deploying United States naval task groups, until or unless the Navy develops a suitable East Coast alternative site for the conduct of live-fire combined arms readiness training; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support all of the Services in their retention of adequate and desirable training sites for readiness purposes; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion actively and responsibly support those activities necessary to ensure necessary training locations, sites and facilities by action of the Judicial and Legislative Branches.

Resolution No. 92: Readiness Of The U.S. Navy And Marine Corps
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Our national security and survival depends on the ability of the United States to maintain sea superiority, strategic sealift, and the power projection and strategic combat capability of the United States Navy and Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The Navy and Marine Corps have superbly shown the ability of the United States to maintain presence and project power, when and where needed around the world to uphold U.S. national security; and

WHEREAS, To maintain their high state of readiness, the Navy and Marine Corps need to balance force and personnel levels for proper manning in squadrons and battalions, aboard ships and at shore locations; provide reasonable career prospects and enhance quality of life for service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, Balancing critical near-term combat readiness with future Navy transformation requirements is essential to U.S. maritime superiority; and

WHEREAS, Rapid technological advancement in areas of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance require judicious system upgrades; and

WHEREAS, Substantial investments are required in programs that will be the core of Navy and Marine Corps forces in the 21st Century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to provide adequate funds to fully resource the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to maintain a high degree of current and future readiness.

Resolution No. 149: The *USS Charles G. Abrell*
Origin: Indiana
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, Post 40 of The American Legion, Department of Indiana, is an organization of war Veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of their community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, It is a privilege and duty to honor comrades, and those who sacrificed, in order that we may all enjoy, develop and perpetuate in peace, the fruits of victory which had been won by war; and

WHEREAS, United States Marine Corporal Charles G. Abrell was a resident of the City of Terre Haute, Vigo County, State of Indiana, prior to his entry into the United States Marine Corps five days after his seventeenth birthday; and,

WHEREAS, Corporal Abrell was killed in action on June 10, 1951 near Hangnyong, Korea, while single-handedly charging an enemy machine gun bunker that had pinned down his platoon with murderous automatic weapon fire; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Abrell, though twice wounded himself, attacked the enemy bunker with a hand grenade, was twice more wounded in his heroic charge, and finally killed when he hurled himself, and his grenade, into the enemy bunker killing the entire enemy gun crew, thereby saving the lives of his comrades; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Abrell, though 19 years of age at the time of his death, has also previously distinguished himself, during other actions, in his ten months of combat action during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Abrell was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Truman, as well as other awards, citations and decorations; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Abrell, and those who served so valiantly in the Korean War, deserve honor, recognition and respect from all Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion honor the life, actions, sacrifice and memory of a brave man, Corporal Charles G. Abrell, of the state of Indiana, who gallantly gave his life for his country and comrades during the Korean War; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion request that the Secretary of the Navy name the next guided missile destroyer the *USS CHARLES G. ABRELL* in honor of this Korean War Medal of Honor recipient.

Resolution No. 197: The *USS American Legion*
Origin: South Carolina
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans, who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, American veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces have served or been transported on ships of the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, There was a United States Navy ship named the *AMERICAN LEGION* (APA-17) during World War II which has been decommissioned; and

WHEREAS, The naming of naval ships is recognized as a method of bestowing honor to persons, places, or events; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges that a ship once again be named for the world's largest veterans organization by the Department of the Navy at its earliest convenience and that it be called the *USS AMERICAN LEGION.*

Resolution No. 291: Support For The United States Coast Guard
Origin: National Security
Submitted by: National Security

WHEREAS, By public law the United States Coast Guard is at all times one of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard was able to respond to the terrorism attacks of September 11, 2001, within hours and its homeland security missions have doubled; and

WHEREAS, Included in the numerous peacetime and wartime missions of the Coast Guard are law enforcement in its many facets to include drug interdiction and interception of illegal aliens; environment protection, maritime safety including search and rescue responsibilities and inspecting and licensing Merchant Marine ships; and National Security to include port security and serving as an essential wartime and peacetime partner of the U.S. Navy; and

WHEREAS, Each year the Coast Guard saves about $2.5 billion in property, repaying to the American taxpayer about seven times their annual operating budget for search and rescue. During 1999, the Coast Guard seized drugs worth more than $3.9 billion—five times more than the Coast Guard's annual operating expense budget for drug interdiction. This kept 28,872 pounds of marijuana and a record-level 111,689 pounds—506 million doses—of cocaine from reaching our nation's streets and school yards; and

WHEREAS, These homeland security missions will continue during the War on Terrorism just as they did during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War, Kosovo and all other major conflicts since 1790; and

WHEREAS, To carry out these critical missions, it is essential that highly skilled and motivated men and women continue to be attracted and retained by the Coast Guard and its Reserves and that cutters, aircraft, and required facilities be fully funded; and

WHEREAS, Without adequate resources, the United States Coast Guard will be unable to meet its national and international commitments to the detriment of the American people and other democratic nations; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard's fleet is older than 40 of the world's 42 deepwater fleets, with its two oldest cutters, USCGC STORIS and USCGC ACUSHNET, having served in World War II: The average age of Coast Guard equipment and assets is 27 years old; yet, the Coast Guard counters threats each day that are becoming more sophisticated and capable. Coast Guard performance is increasingly hampered by inadequate cutter speed; poor sensors and night operation capability; limited interoperability between Coast Guard cutters and aircraft as well as United States or Allied Naval forces; inadequate communications; and excessive maintenance and operating costs due to aging equipment and antiquated technology; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard has proposed an "Integrated Deepwater System" to modernize and recapitalize its deepwater assets that was strongly endorsed by the President's Interagency Task Force on Coast Guard roles and missions as a "near-term national priority." The Deepwater Project compromises the acquisition of integrated surface, air, sensors and communication assets that will allow the Coast Guard to efficiently and effectively support national maritime security interests well into the 21st century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27, 28, 29, 2002, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully fund the United States Coast Guard budget to include its "Deepwater" initiatives in order for the Coast Guard to carry out its numerous vital missions including national security, law enforcement, environmental protection, maritime safety and other missions as assigned; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the annual Congressional passage of the Coast Guard Authorization Act; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Transportation to support pay and benefits equity for Coast Guard men and women as well as the same quality of life features as authorized for the other Armed Forces of the United States.

CHRMN TITUS: This concludes the Report of the Convention Committee. As a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Indiana, I move the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made and seconded to adopt the report. Under the question. Hearing none. All those signal by the sign of aye. All those opposed any. Ayes have it. The report is adopted.

Final Remarks: Richard Santos
National Commander, Maryland

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I was blessed to be surrounded by dedicated national officers who completed their duties and responsibilities in an outstanding fashion. I introduce these elected officers for your final recognition, and present them with their Past National Officers Pin as a gift.

First, the National Sergeant-at-arms, Raymond Jacquez of Maryland; National Historian, Walter Davis of Michigan; National Chaplain, Dr. David F. Russell of Virginia; National Vice Commander, Charles John of Oklahoma Also known as the money man; National Vice Commander, Dale Salmen of Nevada, also known as tiny one; National Vice Commander, Russell Hanseter of Wisconsin, also known as the teacher; National Vice Commander, Terry Lewis of Pennsylvania; this is an obvious nickname, tiny two; and National Vice Commander, James Mareschal of Missouri, who we call the bowler.

Gentlemen, to you and your wives who also contributed to the success of our terms, thank you for a job well done. And ladies, thank you very much. We thank you for your splendid service. Thank you for caring for your fellow veterans. Good health and a prosperous and long life for you and your families.

To the staff, those 275 plus employees of The American Legion. You, indeed, were a major contributing factor to the success of the programs this year. Many of you worked long hours, waited patiently for this National Commander to make important decisions, and then, responded in a professional manner that brought credit upon yourselves and The American Legion. Good luck to all of you in your professional careers.

To Maryland, the Legion family from Maryland. My preparation for national office was a result of your patience, assistance and persistence. Thank you for allowing me to represent you and for your support over the years.

To the thousands of volunteers throughout our 55 Departments; your dedication and service have not gone unnoticed. The lives of our nation's veterans and the children of America are richer because of you. You gave this Legionnaire a once in a lifetime opportunity. The courtesies, friendships, and considerations provided by you to Linda and me and to Joe Miller, my Aide, and to his wife, Chris, shall always be remembered.

I break at this moment to introduce to you my Aide, Joseph Millerand his wife, Chris.

I spoke of the volunteers and staff that made this year possible. I now introduce the people that permitted this year to have occurred; my family. Sue Hoffman, cousin; Jean Leaver, my sister; Steffen Santos, our youngest son. His wife and our daughter-in-law, Lea, and our grandson, Anthony; Lee Santos, our second son; Betsy Lee Santos, daughter; my mother, Mrs. Dorothy F. Santos; and, of course, my wife, Linda Lee Santos.

I'm going to do something different. It's been done before and I thought it was a great idea. I wear the National Commander's lapel pin for a whole year. What we're going to do is take the lapel pin, put it in a pendant and give it to the wife. That will be her Medal of Honor for her contributions to The American Legion in allowing us to serve.

Upon completion of a tour you have a change in command or a captain of a ship. But, normally, the crew remains the same and on board. As this National Commander completes his tour, I am most appreciative of the dedication, service, and commitment of the crew. Those volunteers and staff who have exhibited service to our nation's veterans, their families and the people of our communities, states, and nation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you and The American Legion. There will be a new captain, a new National Commander. I ask that you continue to give your dedicated

service under the guidance and able leadership of our new National Commander. Maintain the course and speed of The American Legion through the unsettling waters of post 9/11.

In my report to the convention on Tuesday, I provided a description of what it means to have succeeded. I close with the same words by Ralph Waldo Emerson. "To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty; To find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; And to know even one life has breathed a little easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

We have succeeded. We have completed a successful year as National Commander. We believe that one life, at least one life, has breathed a little easier because of our administration. Yet, my service to this organization and to our nation's veterans will continue. I shall continue to make myself available to those who follow. I shall continue to serve with and for you through my associations in The American Legion.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless The American Legion. And may we continue to reach out all directions to assist our nation's veterans, their families, and the people of our communities, states and nation.

The Chair recognizes National Vice Commander Russell Hanseter of Wisconsin.

Remarks

NVC HANSETER: Commander Richard, Ric Santos, when we began this year at San Antonio, Texas, none of us could have predicted the events that would take place on September 11, 2001.

We were all very excited about serving on your team. We were also pleased with your theme, "Reaching out in all directions." We were pleased because that is why we of The American Legion family exist. Our mission is to reach out to our veterans and servicemen, their families, our youth and our communities, states and our nation to serve. Under your leadership we have served and we have increased our membership in The American Legion.

Your choice of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever and what it stands for has been an inspiration to each of us during this past year. We recall your defining "retrieve: as to recover or regain, to bring back to a former and better state." You have accomplished that goal. You have accomplished that goal by reaching out in a time of crisis after the terrorist attacks in September; by re-establishing the Family Support Network and through the Blue Star Service Banner program; through your continued fight for the protection of our flag; by aggressive legislative programs concerned with the issues that affect veterans; by reaching out and inviting younger veterans to become Legionnaires; and by setting an example with your leadership for each of us to follow.

We are proud to have served with you. We ask that you accept this gift, an original oil painting, "Ric's Retriever," commissioned to commemorate your year as National Commander as a small token of our appreciation. Signed Charles John, Terry Lewis, Jim Mareschal, Dale (Tiny) Salmen, Walter Davis, Ray Jacquez, and Russ Hanseter.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A beautiful gift. We appreciate it. As indicated, it will commemorate our year of regaining and improving The American Legion's image and position in the world and our country.

We call upon the National Adjutant Bob Spanogle.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: We of the staff, who are the stewards of your trust and that of The American Legion, wish to associate ourselves with the remarks of your National Vice Commanders and your appointed officers.

Shortly after last year's convention, 13 days to be exact, we were with you in Washington on September 11. Much has been said about that and you addressed that in your Commander's remarks. But we are observers of your steady leadership, your calmness in the storm. And that steady leadership has taken The American Legion to a membership of 60,000 members more than we had last year. It has also contributed to the financial stability of this great organization. And, indeed, each of our Americanism Children and Youth programs are growing.

Men and women can have many leadership talents. But two talents they can't do without. One is respect and the other is integrity. You possess them both. And you have our respect. As our World War I founders affectionately used the word, you are and will ever be our comrade as a Past National Commander, and we thank you very much.

I would like to call forward Dan Wheeler, who is our Executive Director of the Indianapolis office; John Sommer, who is the Executive Director of our Washington office; and Ron Brooks, who is the Executive Director of our Fort Benjamin Harrison office. And with them they are going to bring a gift that we will present to you there.

We understand that in Delaware and Maryland there are some flyway where mallards and ducks and Canadian geese travel south and north. And that you would like to get some of those, but they fly a little high. So we have purchased for you, from the Directors of The American Legion, from the Executive Directors and myself, out of our own funds, a Remington 1157 shotgun. And I can assure you that they do work well, because I own one myself. So this will be a gift from your national staff.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Those that know me, we do like to hunt. And we will ensure that we will break in that shotgun in proper form in the appropriate time and appropriate place. But, it is something that I can utilize for the rest of my life. Thank you to the Executive Directors and to our National Adjutant Bob Spanogle for that wonderful gift.

We now ask National Vice Commander, will he please take the gavel and preside over the next order of business.

Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland, Past National Commander
John P. Comer, Massachusetts, Past National Commander

NVC HANSETER: I am honored to preside over the next order of business during the 84th National Convention. This is a time when we present our National Commander, Richard J. Santos of Maryland, a plaque and the Colors of his year in office. I call on Past National Commander, Clarence M. Bacon of Bethesda, Maryland to present the Plaque to our outgoing National Commander.

PNC BACON: Comrade Ric, a year ago in San Antonio, I had the distinct honor of administering the oath of office of National Commander to you. I am honored again to present you with your National Commander's Plaque.

As the Legionnaires and members of their families departed San Antonio, no one could forecast or even dream of the leadership challenges that would soon face the nation and The American Legion. But 12 days later, on September the 11th, 2001, America was savagely attacked by terrorists plunging our nation into war that continues today. Those attacks killed and injured thousands of innocent citizens and wrought great havoc across America, disrupting our transportation, financial, economic and equity systems and brought untold

sorrow and suffering to many families. Edward Gibbon, author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, among other books, once wrote: "The winds and waves are on the side of the ablest navigator."

As National Commander, you have proven to be not only an able navigator, but also an outstanding leader in a year of crisis in America. Your theme, "Reaching out in all directions", in service to America and to American veterans have served both you and The American Legion exceptionally well. To illustrate, you quickly launched our Legion into wartime status, calling on Legionnaires and the entire Legion family to engage a battle plan to support our troops, their families and our nation. And the members of The American Legion responded. You called for blood drives. And Legionnaires responded. You activated the family network. And the Legion families were comforted. You called on businesses to offset the pay of National Guard and Reserve members called to war. And corporate America responded. You recognized that the children of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines killed fighting this war would need a chance of life. And through your leadership, the National Executive Committee established the September 11th Scholarship Fund. Contributions to that fund today exceed $100,000 and will continue to grow as the children do.

You called for wartime acceleration of Resolution 107, to restore the cherished tradition of the Blue Star Service Banner. And the National Executive Committee agreed. As a result, Americans of all ages now may recognize not only the honorable nature of military service, but also the sacrifices their families from neighborhoods that reach into every corner of our country. You led the design and promotion of the Blue Star Flag so that corporate America and local and state governmental agencies could show their pride for employees called to active service to fight the war on terrorism. Under your skilled leadership the Legion's response to the war of terrorism was swift and effective, taking our organization through a difficult period, while at the same time achieving notable successes.

For the first time in nearly 100 years, retired military veterans may no longer have to dip into their own retirement checks to pay for their service-incurred disabilities. The Legion's legislative battle this year to fully fund concurrent receipt is on the verge of finally correcting this injustice. In your acceptance speech last August, you called for continued contributions to the Legion's National Emergency Fund to assist needy Legion families adversely impacted by natural disasters. Your goal was to raise $500,000. Today, I am pleased to report that you far exceeded that goal, and for the first time, total assets of the Fund are now over $1 million.

Just recently you vowed to do whatever it takes to overturn the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, the Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional because it contained the words "under God." A Friend of the Court motion was filed last month by The American Legion to reverse the two to one vote of the three-Judge panel and to restore common sense and respect to our Creator and to our Pledge.

Our Legion is healthy and growing, reaching out to new veterans and fighting for all veterans' rights on Capital Hill, and membership today increased by some 60,000 ahead of last year. Commander Santos, your loyalty and dedicated service this past year has brought great credit upon yourself and upon The American Legion. We deeply appreciate and sincerely thank you for your many noteworthy contributions. We wish, also, to thank your wife, Linda, and the members of your family for allowing you to give a year of your life to The American Legion, perhaps a year that will be one of the most memorable of your life.

Looking back over the past year, I can truly say that your year as National Commander has been all about commitment and leadership. And if our good friends, Past National

Commanders, E. Roy Stone and Bob Eaton were present today, I am sure they would be the first to say, "Commander, you done good."

Commander Ric, on behalf of all members of The American Legion, it is a great personal honor to present you with your National Commander's Plaque, which you may proudly display in your home or office, so that your friends will know of your national accomplishments and of the high respect we have of both you and your family.

The plaque reads: "National Commander Richard J. Santos, elected by the 83rd National Convention to serve the high office of National Commander of The American Legion for the year 2001-2002. In appreciation of his dedicated leadership, in recognition of his devoted service to God and country, and in token of the high esteem of his fellow Legionnaires. This citation is presented to him by the authority of the National Executive Committee, and is given on this 29th day of August, 2002, before the delegates assembled at the 84th National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina."

Commander, as one former sailor to another, may you always enjoy favorable winds and following seas. And on behalf of all Legionnaires, both here and around the world, we wish you continued success as you continue to serve your God, our country and The American Legion. Congratulations, Commander.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Thank you Past National Commander Bacon.

NVC BACON: At this time I call on Past National Commander John P. 'Jake' Comer of Quincy, Massachusetts to present the Colors.

PNC COMER: Will the delegates to the 84th National Convention please rise? Delegates, alternates and guests, I ask for the Color Guard from Post 86 from Rockville, Maryland to bring the Colors of the National Commander to center stage and the Commander will join me here. Hand salute. Two.

Commander Ric Santos, one year ago in San Antonio, Texas you were presented your Colors and you were entrusted to carry them throughout the year with respect, honor and dignity afforded these outstanding emblems of our country and our organization. And I know I speak for all members here today and all members of the Legion family throughout this nation in saying that you have carried out your responsibilities with great trust.

From your birth state of Massachusetts to your outstanding Department of Maryland, to your Legion family, the pride is shown throughout your visits this year as you have traveled throughout the length and breadth of this nation and throughout the world. These Colors were flown high, flown proud. You have heard Clarence Bacon certainly speak of all of your accomplishments from the NEF Fund, to the Child Welfare Foundation, to 100 percent plus in membership, and to another banner that brought us great pride in reinstituting the Blue Star Banner.

You have had your ups, and they were many, and you have had your downs. You have had to bring us through the awesome task of reminding the American people after 9/11 that the only importance to this nation are the colors of the National Colors here. And by your dedication and the way in which you handled that from that day on, you approved the great crimson colors of The American Legion were right alongside.

Commander, please accept these Colors and take them home to your outstanding Department and place them in your home or your office or your Department as you see fit. We thank you for all of your service. You have been one outstanding Commander. And I know it's tough when you lost a very dear friend in Past National Commander Judge Dan Foley. That's one of the downs for us this year at this convention. But you have come through magnificently, handling with great poise. Because when we hear, we forget. And when we see, we remember. It's when we do, as you have done, we understand. Commander, your Colors.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Color Guard, retire my Colors. Hand salute. Two.

I thank Past National Commanders Bacon and Comer for doing the honors of presentation of the Plaque and the Colors. They and all other Past National Commanders have been an inspiration to me during my tenure as your National Commander. As we have done during our term of office, we will continue to protect our flag and our Colors from this day forth.

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers
National Commander

NATL COMDR SANTOS: We have come now to a special order of business, the election of National Officers. The National Judge Advocate, Philip Onderdonk of Maryland, will read the rules of convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NJA ONDERDONK: Rules for election of National Officers. Rule 15, final sentence. Election of National Officers shall be by roll call. Rule 17. Prior to the election of National Officers, the National Commander shall appoint, subject to approval of the convention, a judge of election and such number of tellers as he deems necessary, provided that the total tellers so appointed shall be an odd number. In a contested election each candidate going to the ballot shall be entitled to one teller of his choice.

Rule 18. Nominations for National Officers shall be from the floor on roll call from the departments alphabetically arranged. Each department may present as many candidates as it chooses.

Rule 19. Nominating speeches for National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate, and speeches shall be limited to three minutes.

Rule 20. When more than two candidates are nominated for any office, balloting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes of the convention, except in the election of National Vice Commanders.

Rule 21. In a contested election for National Vice Commanders, balloting shall continue until (a) majorities and (b) pluralities are established for one or more candidates under the following provisions:

If, on any ballot taken, less than five candidates receive the necessary majority to elect, the candidate or candidates receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified; except should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

Rule 22. The convention will nominate and elect a National Commander and five National Vice Commanders, in this sequence.

Rule 23. At the conclusion of balloting on National Vice Commanders, each Department Delegation Chairman shall deliver a written ballot to the tellers. Such ballots shall be in the hands of the tellers before communication is made to the National Commander for announcement of the results.

That completes the reading of rules pertaining to the rules of election of National Officers.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: As Chairman of this convention, I now appoint as judge of the election, Tom Davis, Adjutant, Department of Maryland. And as tellers of the election, Kit Watson, Adjutant, Department of Pennsylvania; Michael Palmquest, Adjutant, Department of Texas; and Terry Woodburn, Adjutant, Department of Illinois.

Will the Judges and Tellers of the election please come forward. National Adjutant Robert Spanogle will now call the roll of the departments. The purpose of the roll call is to receive nominations for National Commander of The American Legion.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Alabama.

CHRMN GENTILCORE: I'm Tom Gentilcore, Immediate Past Department Commander and Delegate Chairman for the Department of Alabama. The great State of Alabama, the Department with almost 102 percent of non-traditional membership, but hard work for membership who transferred over 2,000 Headquarter's members to Posts throughout our state, the Department who sponsored the National High School Oratorical winner; a baseball team who played in the National semi-finals; a great state that won the Garland Murphy Award for their efforts in Child Welfare; the state who exceeded their goals in the National Emergency Fund Challenge; who conducted a successful Blue Star Banner and Corporate Flag program, and will soon yield to the great State of Pennsylvania for the purpose of a nomination. Mr. Commander, the great Department of Alabama respectfully yields to the great Department of Pennsylvania for the purpose of a nomination.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Pennsylvania.

CHRMN ZORN: I'm Garry Zorn, the Department Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania. The proud and humble Legionnaire who leads over 248,000 Legionnaires in the Department of Pennsylvania; a state who has seen more tragedy in the last couple of months than it has in its whole history of its life, where Flight 93 landed in Somerset County where 40 people have sacrificed their life to protect, I feel and a lot of our Department feels, the Legionnaires were representing us in Washington, D.C.; where we had the worst mine tragedy in years, and God and the Legionnaires reached down and saved nine miners trapped 243 feet below the ground.

We have on the stage, sir, Dr. Almo Sebastianelli. We would like to have him come forward and announce our candidate, sir.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Chair recognizes Delegate Sebastianelli.

DEL SEBASTIANELLI: These are good days for The American Legion. Our efforts to recruit new members are bearing fruit. We are fanning the flame of patriotism kindled by the devastating attack of September 11th.

We are making headlines in our dogged pursuit of a Flag Protection Amendment; increased homeland security, and quality health care for our veterans. In seasons of success, however, the temptation to become lax in carrying out our duties inevitably lurks. Now is the time to go forward with new energy and creative leadership to work to improve the VA's medical care and availability to all the nations' veterans and similarly, to improve the VA's veterans' benefits disability claims awards in a more timely manner and with higher quality. We must not be negligent in our mandate to fully support our men and women in uniform and their families.

So, although these are good days for the Legion, we see, too, that these are crucial days, days in which good leadership must be sought ardently, and when discovered, value it as a precious stone. Wins and losses yet unimagined awaits us around the bend, and when the Legion meets each one, it is imperative we have someone at the helm who will not allow this organization to lose focus, and when defeated, to lose heart.

Pennsylvania has that man. The challenges of this coming year beg a National Commander who is vigilant and vibrant, simple and sincere, unassuming, yet uncompromising. I offer to you a Legionnaire who possesses all of these qualities and more. With his unblemished track record and unswerving ability to secure the respect and the loyalty of those around him, our candidate is the man you seek.

Before his distinguished Legion career began, our candidate served his country in the United States Air Force. His three year tour of duty included time as an Air Policeman at the Lockbourne Air Force Base in Ohio, and the AndersenAir Force Base in Guam. Upon his discharge in 1966, his father, a World War II veteran, introduced him to The American Legion, and a lifetime of service began.

Though he never personally experienced the horrors of the Vietnam War, he has chosen to commit his life to helping the men who did. And what a marvelous job he has done. Some of you are no doubt familiar with what may be his greatest achievements. The American Legion for Homeless Veterans Corporation, desiring to give this oft ignored group a second chance at life, he worked with the VA in 1988 to purchase and renovate four homes. More than a few homeless veterans have come out of them gainfully employed and drug free, and become productive members of our society. Since its founding, The American Legion for Homeless Veterans Corporation has grown to include eight homes in Pennsylvania. Indeed, it serves as the model for similar programs nationwide.

This Legionnaire's family must share credit for these successes. His wife, Barbara, has motivated and encouraged him through three decades of work for the Legion, enabling him to give us countless hours of time and service. We are in her debt. I would also like to recognize their five children, Christina; Ronald, II; Denise; Shannon; and Tim, and their ten grandchildren, Tara, Tracy, Catelin, Erin, Josh, Brian, Andrew, Jonathan, Daniel, and Benjamin. If you haven't seen the little ones wearing their Sons of The American Legion caps, I can tell you're missing out.

Our candidate, who incidently does not delight in receiving praise, has cemented a place in our organization's grand history. The truth is without him, the veterans of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania, and, indeed, veterans nationwide likely would face even greater obstacles than they face now in obtaining the health care in which they are truly entitled. Legion field officers have visited our state more than once, all because he saw a problem and placed the call. He has testified before Congress several times regarding health care for veterans and other issues. Our nation's lawmakers know his name. The Directors of Pennsylvania VA Medical Centers know his name. And because of the scope of his agenda, I expect that soon all of America's veterans will know his name.

I have the distinct honor and the privilege of presenting to this convention for the high office of National Commander of The American Legion, Pennsylvania's brightest star, and a promise for an outstanding year, the name of Ron Conley.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The name of Ron Conley, Department of Pennsylvania, has been placed in nomination.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Alaska.

CHRMN FRANKS: Gene Franks, Junior PDC Department of Alaska, Delegate Chairman, land of the midnight sun, yields to Colorado.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Colorado.

CHRMN DUMILLER: Danny DuMiller, honored Delegate Chairman from the great state of Rocky Mountains, request the Chair recognize Mr. Tom Bock, and allow him to approach the podium, who is a Delegate of the Colorado Convention, for the purpose of seconding the motion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Tom Bock.

MR. BOCK: I am a duly authorized Delegate from the Department of Colorado to this 84th Annual Convention of The American Legion. It is my personal honor and privilege to second the nomination of Ronald F. Conley to the high office of National Commander of the world's largest veterans organization. Ron is so devoted to our cause that when his township

needed an American Legion Post, he started one in his own home with a Legion emblem on his front door and all. Imagine if all of us had that drive.

He was the first Vietnam veteran to serve as Pennsylvania's Department Commander. He led the effort to bring The American Legion National Convention to Pittsburgh in 1993. And for the past 10 years he has served on the National Executive Committee, where his resume includes the Subcommittee on Resolutions; the Advisory Committee to the National Commander; Citizens Flag Alliance; and Chairman of the Legislation Commission Liaison Committee.

Not to be overlooked are this man's four years as Post Commander, and 22 years as Post Adjutant. He also served as County Commander and District Commander. On every occasion he has been hailed as a visionary and chief among veterans' advocates. His dedication has earned him the Pennsylvania American Legion Distinguished Service Award; the Veterans Affairs Meritorious Service Award; the National Pioneer Award; and the National Achievement Award.

I have personally known Ron for the past several years as we served as members of the National Executive Committee, the Resolutions Subcommittee, serving under our former Chairman, the great Legionnaire, Mr. E. Roy Stone. It was under the direction of Mr. Stone that Ron expanded his knowledge of our great organization, and it was on this subcommittee that I was able to observe Ron in action. His concern for veterans and the programs of The American Legion was clearly demonstrated as he studied the various resolutions that came before the subcommittee. Ron was quick to grasp the situation and always took a strong position, always on the side of the veteran. It was truly an honorable and rewarding experience to serve with Ron. He will make a great National Commander.

So, I'm proud to stand before you and second the nomination of Ronald F. Conley from the great state of Pennsylvania for National Commander, years 2002-2003.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Arizona.

DEL ALDECOA: John Aldecoa, Department Adjutant form the great state of Arizona, number one in membership; home of the Grand Canyon and home of the World Champion Arizona Diamond Backs, yield to the Department of Florida.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Florida.

CHRMN POWELL: Ken Powell, Immediate Past Department Commander and Delegation Chairman from the Sunshine State of Florida, an all-time-high of over 126,000 members. We teamed together this year, and all three of our organizations made that All-time-High and we're very proud of that.

We also support all of the Legion programs and very proudly do it so for the right reasons. Mr. Commander, at this time I would like the Chair to recognize Robert J. "Bob" Proctor, for the purpose of a second nomination.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Bob Proctor from the Department of Florida for the purpose of a seconding.

DEL PROCTOR: It is an honor and a privilege for me to stand before you today and second the nomination of the next National Commander. You have heard from the two previous speakers, and there was no question that this fellow Legionnaire is duly qualified to lead this great organization.

In 1987 I had the honor to serve with him as Department Commander, and it will be an honor and a privilege to serve with him as our National Commander. He, like many veterans, is a union worker. Born and raised in the hills of Pittsburgh, he followed his grandfather and his father into the steam fitting trade.

In fact, the next time you feel the heat or the air conditioning when you pass through Pittsburgh Airport, you can thank Ron, as he served as the Superintendent and General

Foreman on that project. He considers his involvement in the union and in The American Legion much the same. Both are patriotic; hold the American Legion Flag high esteem; and are committed to serving local communities.

During the construction of the Bruce Mansfield Power Plant in Shippensberg, Pennsylvania, he served as union steward. He represented the steam fitters with matters in disputes with thirteen other crafts, a unique test of his ability to work with people. His fellow steam fitters said he passed the tests, earning the admiration of not just his own men, but hundreds of other workers on the site. A number of contractors are eager to have his services in a supervisory capacity. He may be small in size, but don't let that fool you. He stands tall and has a heart of gold. And he will lead this great organization and we will be proud of him.

Therefore, as a duly registered delegate to this Convention, I, Bob Proctor, proudly second the nomination of Ron Conley from the great state of Pennsylvania as your next National Commander.

...At this time a demonstration ensued in support of the nomination of Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania, for National Commander.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Convention will please come to order. Adjutant will continue the roll call.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Arkansas.

CHRMN CARPENTER: I'm Claude Carpenter, NECman and Delegate Chairman of the great state of Arkansas. Having served with Ron Conley for many years on the Subcommittee on Resolutions at the National Executive Committee, and the Liaison of the Legislation Commission, I would do with honor, second the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: California.

CHRMN PARNELL: Chuck Parnell, Department Commander and also Delegate Chairman to this Convention of the delegation of the Department of California, does second the motion for Ron Conley for the office of National Commander of The American Legion.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Connecticut.

DEL SAXTON: I'm Boyd Saxton, Vice Chairman of the delegation of the Charter Oak State of Connecticut, and the home of the NCAA undefeated, undisputed ladies basketball team from the Huskies and UConn, and proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander of The American Legion.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Delaware.

DEL PHILLIPS: I'm Ed Phillips, Adjutant of Delaware, the only Department that made every target date with traditional membership and is proud to second the nomination of Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: District of Columbia.

CHRMN KURRE: I'm Dennis Kurre, the District of Columbia NECman and Delegate Chairman, who gladfully second the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: France.

CHRMN MALONEY: Department of France, Nola Maloney, Department Commander, proudly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley as National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Georgia.

CHRMN SMITH: Al Smith, Department Commander of the Department of Georgia, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Hawaii.

CHRMN CONRAD: I'm Chairman of the Delegation from Hawaii, and very proud to second the endorsement of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Idaho.

CHRMN RICE: I'm Cleve Rice, Delegation Chairman, Immediate Past Department Commander from the great state of Idaho, home of Alan G. Lance, Past National Commander, and our Idaho potatoes, and proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Illinois.

CHRMN BENNETT: I'm Roger Bennett, State Commander for Illinois, and the Delegation Chairman. Illinois, the Land of Lincoln, and proudly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Indiana.

CHRMN SULLIVAN: I'm Lowell Sullivan, Department of Indiana, home of the National Headquarters, and proudly seconds the nomination also for Mr. Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Iowa.

CHRMN DEMAREST: I'm Jim Demarest, Delegation Chairman for the Department of Iowa, and proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Kansas.

CHRMN WAHLBORG: The Department of Kansas proudly endorses the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Kentucky.

CHRMN COFFMAN: I'm Randell Coffman, NEC from the great Department of Kentucky, home of the "Greatest Two Minutes In Sports" the first Saturday in May, and now the proud home of our youngsters 12 and under who represented our country so well, the Little League Series World Champions, we proudly second the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Louisiana.

CHRMN BURSON: I'm Harold Burson, the Department Commander of the great state of Louisiana, and the biggest hospitality room in the National Convention, and proudly endorses the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Maine.

CHRMN PAYE: Glenn Paye, Delegate Chairman to this Convention proudly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Maryland.

CHRMN THORNTON: LeRoy Thornton, Chairman of the Maryland Delegates, and home of the Star Spangled Banner, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Massachusetts.

CHRMN FRATOLILLO: Jim Fratolillo, Department Commander, duly elected delegate from the great state of Massachusetts, home of two champions, Super Bowl Champions New England Patriots, and Past National Commander John P. 'Jake' Comer. I further second the nomination of Ron Conley to the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Mexico.

CHRMN BENNETT: Sally Bennett, Commander and Delegate Chairman of the Department of Mexico, land of beautiful senoritas, pyramids, spewing volcanoes, the sun always shining upon us while mariachi play, although low in numbers, we're high in patriotism. We second the nomination of Ron Conley of Pennsylvania for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Michigan.

CHRMN LYNCH: Jerry Lynch, Department Commander, home of the National Adjutant, Bob Spanogle, also home of the Detroit Red Wings Stanley Cup winners this year.

Also the home of many, many thousands, sometimes millions of trolls and youpers, we would proudly like to second the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Minnesota.

CHRMN HAYDEN: Don Hayden, Department Commander from the great Department of Minnesota, seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Mississippi.

CHRMN BRACY: John Bracy, Department of Mississippi, is extremely proud of their West Point National Champions, gladly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Missouri.

CHRMN CAMPBELL: Norm Campbell, Delegate Chairman, the great state of Missouri, home of President Harry S. Truman, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Montana.

CHRMN SPERRY: Ed Sperry, Delegate Chairman and the Immediate Past Commander of the Big Sky Country where Lewis and Clark and some of the Levi Pass finally conquered the wide Missouri by straddling literally at the highest of the streams. We are getting ready for a major celebration and we hope to see many of you come to see us during the bicentennial. We proudly cast our second for Ron Conley for Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Nebraska.

CHRMN BOVE: Jerry Bove, Delegate Chairman, state of Nebraska, home of a few good football players and a lot of football fans. We proudly second the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Nevada.

CHRMN RUVOLO: Sal Ruvolo of the great state of Nevada, we second the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: New Hampshire.

CHRMN MICKLON: Doug Micklon, Delegate Chairman, Department of New Hampshire, second the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: New Jersey.

CHRMN SICKLE: Frank Sickle, National Executive Committeeman and the last Department to finish the parade at 5:42 on Sunday afternoon, proudly endorses the candidacy of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: New Mexico.

CHRMN ZACK: Bill Zack, Delegate Chairman from the great state of New Mexico, "Land of Enchantment", road runners and dust devils, we proudly take and second our nomination for Ron Conley for our next National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: New York.

CHRMN MITRAS: Paul Mitras, junior Past Department Commander of the great Department of New York, "The Empire State" gladly seconds the nomination for Ronald Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: North Carolina.

CHRMN HUNSUCKER: Coley Hunsucker, Department Commander from the state of North Carolina, known as "The Tar Heel State" and the host of The American Legion 84th National Convention, seconds the nomination of our next National Commander, Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: North Dakota.

CHRMN ROLL: Seb Roll, Department Commander for the great state of North Dakota, "The Peace Garden State", the home of Past National Commander 'Sparky' Gierke, and the

state with the highest percentage of eligible veterans in The American Legion, proudly casts and seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Ohio.

CHRMN ZULCH: Richard Zulch, Delegation Chairman from the Department of Ohio. I am pleased and proud to second the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Oklahoma.

CHRMN YEAGER: John Yeager, Secretary of the Delegation for Oklahoma, the home of the only American Legion National Children's Home, gladly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Oregon.

CHRMN DAHL: Don Dahl, Past Department Commander for the state of Oregon and the Delegation Chairman, and the home of the "Fighting Oregon Ducks" winner of the Fiesta Bowl in 2002, seconds the nomination for Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Philippines.

CHRMN KELLY: Bill Kelly, Department Commander for the Department of the Philippines, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for the National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Puerto Rico.

CHRMN ROSARIO: Santiago Rosario from the Department of Puerto Rico, proudly seconds the nomination of Ronald Conley for the National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Rhode Island.

CHRMN VERRIER: Rick Verrier, the National Executive Committeeman from "The Biggest Little State In The Union," the "Ocean State" situated on I-95 between Connecticut and Massachusetts, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: South Carolina.

CHRMN WHITTLE: Frank Whittle, Immediate Past Department Commander and Delegation Chairman of the Department of South Carolina, the "Palmetto State" and All-Time-High Department and home of Senator Strom Thurman, the oldest and longest member of the United States Senate, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: South Dakota.

CHRMN EVENSON: Paul Evenson, NEC from the State of South Dakota, the birthplace of American Legion Baseball, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Tennessee.

CHRMN DORNAN: Charlie Dornan, Department Commander of Tennessee, also brother Ron Conley of the United Association of Plumbers and Fitters, cast their vote proudly for Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Texas.

CHRMN ROBERSON: Conrad Roberson, Chairman of the Delegation from the great "Lone Star State", home of our Commander in Chief; the Dallas Cowboys, and a new team, the Houston Texans, proudly second the nomination of Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Utah.

CHRMN STARK: Al Stark, Department Commander from the great state of Utah, the home of the 2002 Winter Olympics and a new All-Time-High in membership, proudly seconds for Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Vermont.

CHRMN THAYER: Linda Thayer, Delegation Chairman from the "Green Mountain State" of Vermont, a state that is proud to have at last united the nation with our ratification of the Flag Amendment, seconds the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Virginia.

CHRMN SAUNDERS: Thomas Saunders, Delegate Chairman of the Delegation from the state of Virginia, one of the seven Departments to achieve an All-Time-High this year, proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Washington.

CHRMN SCHRIER: Bill Schrier, Delegation Chairman Department of Washington, Department the Washington proudly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley for the high office of National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: West Virginia.

CHRMN KILE: Bill Kile, from West Virginia, the "Almost Heaven State" proudly seconds the nomination for Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Wisconsin.

CHRMN TROUTMAN: Terry Troutman, Department Commander and Chairman of the Wisconsin Delegation, seconds the nomination for Ron Conley.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Wyoming.

CHRMN JACOBS: Jake Jacobs, Commander, Department of Wyoming, a state of high altitude, low multitudes and great attitudes ,proudly seconds the nomination of Ron Conley for National Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander, that completes the Roll Call.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes microphone number one.

DEL MACINNES: Alexander MacInnes, elected Delegate from the State of New York. In view of the fact there is but one candidate for National Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this Convention, close nominations, and that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this Convention, and that Ronald F. Conley be elected National Commander by acclamation.

I will now make the first motion. Mr. Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander, and the nomination and election of the National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be reinstated at the conclusion of the election for National Vice Commanders.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: There is a motion before us to suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander, and the nomination and election of National Vice Commanders, which rules shall automatically be reinstated at the conclusion of the election for National Vice commanders. The motion is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote.

All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. Those nay. Ayes have it, so ordered. The rules are suspended.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Microphone No. 2.

DEL LEINBACK: Trudy Leinback, Delegate from the Department of Virginia. Mr. Commander, I move that nominations for the office of National Commander be closed.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: A motion has been made, and I hear a second. The motion to close nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires two-thirds. All those in favor signify by saying aye. All those opposed signify by saying nay. Ayes have it. So ordered. Nominations are closed.

Microphone No. 1.

DEL RUST: Julie Rust from the great state of Wyoming. As a duly elected delegate, I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire

delegate strength of this Convention, and that Ron Conley be elected National Commander by acclamation.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Is there a second? Hearing a second, there's a motion before us that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention, and that Ronald Conley be elected National Commander by acclamation.

All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. Those opposed nay. Ayes have it, so ordered.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: As the National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention for the election of Ronald F. Conley of Pennsylvania as the National Commander of The American Legion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I now declare Ronald F. Conley of Pennsylvania the new National Commander of The American Legion.

Will the Sergeant-At-Arms assist, as the new National Commander of The American Legion is escorted to the platform by his sons, Ron and Tim Conley.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander John L. Geiger of Illinois for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the new National Commander of The American Legion.

Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander

PNC GEIGER: Congratulations to you Legionnaire Ronald F. Conley upon your election and nomination for the office of National Commander of The American Legion.

Our pride and satisfaction in your achievement is shared by your proud family and the loyal and faithful Legionnaires of the Department of Pennsylvania. The delegates to this convention are well aware of your outstanding record of service to The American Legion and to America's war veterans and their families. Your dedication, leadership skills and enthusiasm must now be directed to strengthening and enhancing our organization throughout the entire United States.

The vital objectives of your year of leadership will be defined by the mandates of this National Convention and increasingly by events throughout the world. Every officer of The American Legion and our national staff and each member of the Legion and Auxiliary must be alert and prepared for your calls of action.

Each of us, here in Charlotte and at home, should join in a personal pledge to actively support you in this exciting responsibility of service to our God and country. Ron Conley, if you agree to assume this high office, please step forward to pledge your oath of office. Commander Conley, raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your full name loudly and proudly.

...National Commander-elect, Ronald F. Conley, repeated the Oath of Office following the lead of Past National Commander Geiger.

NATL COMDR-ELECT CONLEY: I, Ronald F. Conley, do solemnly pledge myself, to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of the National Commander of The American Legion. I further pledge that I will support and defend the Constitution of The United States of America and the National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion. And I do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government. So help me God.

PNC GEIGER: Commander, as you travel the United States and around the world, there are going to be people who approach you because they see the badge of The American

Legion and shake your hand as the Commander of The American Legion with this red badge. So we're going to put this right here just below the flag.

Congratulations again, Commander. I'll let your wife handle the pinning of the badge here.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Ladies and gentlemen, the 2002-2003 National Commander of The American Legion, Ronald F. Conley.

Acceptance Speech by Newly Elected National Commander
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania

Thank you. While you're standing, I think it's imperative again that this delegation show our sincere appreciation for the great service that Ric Santos has given to The American Legion this past year. Please join me.

I'd like to acknowledge Jerry Hedrick and the Legionnaires of North Carolina for the tremendous job that they have done in putting on this convention. And a special thanks to Dale Punch, who served as a driver to make sure that we were able to get from hotel to hotel with really no problem at all or traffic, from A to B, and that's exactly what he did for us. So to Dale Punch, I greatly appreciate it.

I stand before you as a humble but proud Legionnaire to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you as the National Commander of The American Legion. I want to thank Dr. Sebastiannelli for his nominating speech. I'd like to thank Tom Bock and Bob Proctor for their seconds and to John Geiger. It was mentioned in the seconding speech that we started an American Legion Post and put the emblem upon our house. And when we applied for the Charter for that new post in Scott Township, a suburb of Pittsburgh, the National Commander who had signed the Charter was John Geiger, and here we are today. He swore us in as your National Commander of The American Legion. We want to thank Jake Comer who presented the Colors to the National Commander.

But most of all I want to thank Gerald Zorn, our Department Commander, our Department Adjutant, Kit Watson, and all the members s of the Pennsylvania delegation.

I would like to introduce to you my family. First, my sister-in-law, Patty; my brother, Bill. Then I'll start with my oldest, Kristina, and her husband and their children. I think Doc Sebastianelli mentioned everybody's name. I'll just have them stand. My son, Ronald, and his family. My daughter, Denise, and her family. My daughter, Shannon, and her family. And last, my son, Tim, and his friend, soon to be, I guess, part of the family. And if you notice, all five boys are four and under. And if you want to know why Barbara is a nervous wreck, it's not because I'm being elected National Command, but she babysits the five every Wednesday. My wife, Barbara. She's given a lot over these many years of service to The American Legion, and I greatly appreciate her and all that she does.

As I stand before you, I reflect on three days in history of our great nation that will always be remembered. They will be passed on to future generations as long as the Republic stands free and proud.

First, the shot heard round the world set off the revolution and gave birth to the United States and our Constitution and Declaration of Independence. The second day that burned into our history was the Japanese attack on our military forces in Pearl Harbor on December the 7th, 1941. It thrust the United States into World War II, an action that eventually restored peace and changed the world. And in just 13 days we will remember the third day in our history to never been forgotten, the 9/11 terrorist attack on America. None of us were there to witness the shot heard around the world at Lexington. Some Legionnaires were at Pearl Harbor, and many of you here today fought and defeated the Axis powers to restore peace

to the world in World War II and you became known as the greatest generation that ever lived. But the images of the events that occurred just 12 days after the gavel closed at our national convention in San Antonio are forever burnt into our minds. More than 3,000 good and decent people were killed.

The twisted mind of a radical Islamist, Osama bin Laden and his followers stunned America for a moment in time. We grieved. We reevaluated our priorities. Before our priorities were career, money, status. But today, it's family, it's God and it's country. Our emotions range from sadness, frustration, anger to pride, love and caring. Since September 11, we have united as a people and resolved to once and forever wipe out the seeds of terrorism and those who would practice it.

'United we stand' has become our collective cry as a nation. It dates back to the Revolutionary War and later the Civil War. And the 20th century labor unions used it during labor strikes. Now it is a call for strength to unite our country.

I am proud The American Legion will lead the way in coordinating "A Day to Remember" events around the country this September 11th and every September 11th as The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. I see in you a spirit filled with creativity and confidence in the American Dream, to support the principles our organization was founded on; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, the state, nation and to God; to sanctify our comradeship and our devotion to mutual helpfulness. It is only natural that the nation's greatest wartime veterans organization lead our communities into remembering that those who gave their lives on that fatal day nearly a year ago, did not die in vain. We will not forget. We will never forget. We will lead in making sure that every year on September 11th, our communities will honor not only the memory of those who died in the attacks, but also the brave men and women in our nation's military who go into harm's way on our behalf.

Since 9/11 a number of them have given their lives in Operation Enduring Freedom. In consecrating and sanctifying our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness, our Legion has created the 9/11 Memorial Scholarship Fund to care for children of our military heroes who have given and will give their lives for our nation since the war on terrorism began last year. Let us continue to grow this tribute and their sacrifice.

We need to take care of the children by engaging them in our Americanism programs to help them develop into responsible citizens guided by the principles of freedom and an understanding of the price of maintaining that freedom. John Adams said, "Our obligation to our country never ceases but with our lives."

We need to take care of our fellow veterans in the VA hospitals who are being pushed out on to the streets and into nursing homes because our government will not properly fund the VA. As a republic form of government, we the people delegate rights to the government and not the government to the people. To some, values in government mean power, wealth, recognition. I ask you, what are the values of a true leader today? The answer is courage, compassion and character.

When our country was formed, our founding fathers were rebels with a cause. They were intelligent, they were dedicated to an idea, they were workaholics, some of them were even alcoholics, they were strong-minded, ordinary men, different ages, different backgrounds. They all had egos and some that had a real dislike for others. But they had a common cause—freedom. How many would sacrifice your fortunes, family and home for a principle today?

If we look back to when our American Legion was formed, we know that four friends gathered in Paris, France and discussed forming a veterans' organization. At the St. Louis Caucus, the delegates tried to draft Teddy Roosevelt, Jr. as its chairman. But he said, "We

are gathered together for a high purpose. I want every American through the length and breadth of this land to realize there is not a man in this Caucus who is seeking anything for himself personally, but that he is simply working for the good of the entire situation."

His words ring true today. That is why you are here, for the good of the entire situation. We have been given an organization that is founded on three Ps: patriotism, principles and participation. The American Legion is about real people, real beliefs, love of God, country, family and service. We have survived as a nation because the mind conceived an idea, the heart believed it and the hands achieved it. And by the grace of God and the will and endurance of many dutiful men and women since the revolution, we have endured as a nation.

Today we are a nation at war once again. Thousands of young children are being taught to hate and even kill Americans in radical Islamic schools both overseas and even here in the United States. We are fighting a war not only of bullets, but of ideas. In the end, however, we shall endure because we are right, because we are free. We will do whatever it takes to remain free. As Thomas Paine said, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it." We need to re-energize ourselves so we can carry the torch for those whose voices are silent, those in the VA hospitals, those who are homeless and the security of our nation. We must sustain our mission as a consumer's advocate for veterans.

One of the eight discussions at the St. Louis caucus was the concern about alien status as protection against military service while continuing to reap the benefit of wartime employment. We have that today, both legal and illegal aliens reaping the benefits of this nation while our veterans are being put out of VA hospitals, waiting in line at VA hospitals, and 40 percent of homeless in this country are veterans.

Certain groups in this country want to protect the non-citizens and use our constitution to benefit the Al-Qaeda and Taliban. Yet they have no concern for those who died in the terrorist attacks or those fighting the war or those in a VA hospital or those who cannot get into a VA hospital. They want God out of our life. They want God out of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. They believe it's okay to desecrate Old Glory.

Earlier, I asked you how many would sacrifice their fortunes, families and home for a principle today. The answer is the United States military, active duty, National Guard, the Reserves, veterans, firemen, policemen and paramedics. Just remember, no matter how old you are or how tired you are or how many years you've been involved in The American Legion, you still can contribute to the good of the organization if you remember that we were founded by people that had an idea. The mind conceived it, the heart believed it and the hands achieved it.

Last year on the way back from San Antonio, Barb, I and the Coccimiglios stopped in Memphis and visited Graceland, visiting Elvis Presley's home. He had two plaques hanging in his office near his desk, and it was about leadership. Elvis never struck me as a person that dealt in leadership, but yet he served in the United States military with the United States Army. And one of the plaques was by Theodore Roosevelt titled "The man who counts." But the other one that struck me was the one written by [Theodore] MacManus. It was called "The Penalty of Leadership." It begins by saying, "In every field of human endeavor, he that is first must perpetually live in the white light of publicity. Whether the leadership be vested in a man or in a manufactured product, emulation and envy are ever at work." He continues to write, "Long, long after a great work or a good work has been done, those who are disappointed or envious continue to cry out that it cannot be done." Kind of rings true today.

People are envious and they tell you it cannot be done that way. I think you face that sometimes in our American Legion Posts. September 11th has changed our lives, but not the

essence of our beliefs. Our country was founded on a principle of fighting tyranny. Our founding fathers gave up tangible assets to fight for an intangible belief, the right to be free.

Fellow Legionnaires, as we will not and cannot forget them, our fellow veterans, and those who gave their very lives for the free nation we are today, we will remember them. We will support the brave men and women of our armed forces and their families. They are America's newest veterans. We shall not fail as our country's veterans. We will fight until the promise made to them are fulfilled by a grateful nation. We will continue to grow in numbers, recruiting the 19 million veterans into our organization that still do not carry a membership card in The American Legion. We shall engage America's young people in programs to educate, inspire and grow as responsible citizens of our great nation. We will fight the good fight in Washington and in our own congressional districts to work with our elected representatives in fielding legislation that will embrace our veterans, their families, our national security and our flag.

As Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. said, we will work for the good of the entire situation. May God bless us all in these endeavors.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Chair recognizes microphone 2.

DEL SCHOW: Commander Terry Schow, delegate from Utah. Since the rules of the convention have been suspended, I move the nominations for the office of Vice Commander be made from the floor.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second? All those in favor signal by the sign of aye. All those nay? Ayes have it. So ordered. We will now entertain nominations for the offices of National Vice Commander from the floor. Chair recognizes microphone number 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I request that the Chair recognize Department Adjutant Charles Pat Smith, a duly elected delegate from Colorado for the purpose of making a nomination speech.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Pat Smith, Department of Colorado, for the purposes of a nomination.

DEL SMITH: My name is Charles Pat Smith, duly elected delegate to this national convention. I rise to nominate an outstanding Legionnaire for the high office of National Vice Commander from the Western Region.

The individual I seek to nominate is Mr. Jefferson Luginbuel. We call him Jeff and you can, too. Jeff comes to us as a candidate for this position with many credentials. Jeff has distinguished himself in Colorado, having risen through the ranks of Post, District and Department offices. Jeff has a strong background in the field of public relations and worked for many years as a radio personality in several media markets.

At the Department level, he has served for a number of years as our public relations chairman, and took our PR program to new heights. When Jeff decided that he had the potential to serve in more demanding leadership positions, he ran for and was elected to the office of Department Junior Vice Commander. That wet his appetite and strengthened his love for this great organization. When it came time, Jeff ran for Department Senior Vice Commander and he was elected with no opposition. In this position he brought a new level of enthusiasm and excitement to the Department, and he set the standard for how our Department would look at our annual membership drives. And as a result of his ground work, Colorado is at a level of membership not seen since 1956.

After serving successfully as Senior Vice, he set his sights on Department Commander, and he was elected to that position in 2000. He channeled his energy, excitement and enthusiasm for this great organization, and wrapped it up in his theme of putting veterans

first. And put veterans first, he did. He told everyone who would listen how important veterans were, and his year as commander was a tremendous success as a result.

Jeff not only put veterans first in his Legion work, but he does so everyday in his employment with the Veterans Administration at the Denver Distribution Center. Not a day goes by that Jeff does not interact some way with a veteran. And it is for this reason we feel Jeff would make an outstanding candidate for National Vice Commander. He will bring his high level of enthusiasm and excitement to every task that is presented to him as an Vice Commander. When he visits your Department he will be inspiring and motivational. When he finishes with you, you will catch that enthusiasm, because it is contagious.

Our organization will be enriched and significantly improved with Jeff in this position. Catch the excitement, latch on to his enthusiasm and join with Colorado and support our candidate, Jefferson Luginbuel for National Vice Commander for the Western Region.

Mr. Jefferson Luginbuel. Jefferson Luginbuel. We call him Jeff, and you can, too.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Chair recognizes microphone number 1.

DEL LYNN: I am Kent Lynn, duly elected delegate and Adjutant for the great Department of Louisiana. I request the recognition for our Junior Past Commander Delegation Chairman, Gil Lovelady for the purpose of a nomination.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Gil Lovelady of the Department of Louisiana for the purpose of a nomination.

CHRMN LOVELADY: I'm honored as a duly elected delegate from the great Department of Louisiana to place in nomination the name of Roy Kirkham, a native son of Louisiana. Roy has been active in the Legion for 37 years. He is a member of the Wiley Pevy Post 74 in Minden, Louisiana, where he served six terms as Post Commander. Five of those years he was a 100 percent Commander.

After serving in his Post and moving through the District, he was elected Department Vice Commander. In 1984, he was elected our Department Commander, where he also was a 100 percent Commander. In 1991, he was elected our Alternate NEC where he served six years in that position. He was then elected as our NEC, which he served two terms there. He has served several chairs on committees and commissions in my Department. On a national level he has served on Americanism Council and a member of the NEC Liaison for Children and Youth, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

He is a very successful businessman, owning a property and casualty insurance company. He has four daughters. He and his wife, Shirley, will celebrate their 50th anniversary next August. He has served as police chairman in own parish of Webster, and as a board member in many of the civic organizations.

The Department of Louisiana is very proud of Roy's service to our great Department. He has the time and the desire to serve as one of our nation's great Vice Commanders.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes microphone number 2.

CHRMN THORNTON: My name is LeRoy Thornton, Chairman of the Maryland delegation. I rise for the purpose of requesting that you recognize Maryland's incoming National Executive Committeeman, William B. Proctor, for the purpose of a nomination.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes William Proctor from the Department of Maryland for the purpose of a nomination.

DEL PROCTOR: As a duly registered delegate to this 84th American Legion National Convention, I rise to place the name of Robert M. 'Bob' Johnson in nomination for the high office of National Vice Commander.

The Department of Maryland is extremely proud and honored to present to you a great Legionnaire for this office, and we are truly happy to be given this opportunity. It is my honor to nominate this outstanding Legionnaire who has spent the last 37 years of his life

giving service to America out of uniform. During those 37 years he has acquired much experience about veterans' needs, veterans' issues and making many contributions to his state and nation.

He earned his eligibility for membership through honorable wartime military service in the United States Army. He joined the Army on June 13, 1954, upon completion of his high school education. During his tour of active duty, he served in Korea for 16 months as a military policeman. His civilian employment included 34 years with the United States government, spending the last 15 years as a National Contracting Officer with the General Services Administration.

During his 34 years of service, Bob found time to attend American University taking courses in business administration. He has served The American Legion in numerous leadership positions, including Department Commander, District Commander, County and Post Commander, as well as National Executive Committeeman.

At the national level he served on the Americanism Council, the Finance Committee, the 21st Century Committee, the Committee on Committees and as Chairman of the Children and Youth Liaison Committee. He is a 37-year continuous year and PUFL member of Randolph Furey Post 170 in La Plata, Maryland. Bob continues to be very active in his community of La Plata, Maryland and the State of Maryland. He is a recipient of a Gubernatorial appointment as a commissioner of the Maryland Veterans' Home Commission, where he has been serving as chairman since 1999.

He is a 20-year continuous and honorary member of the Knights of Columbus, member of ANIVICUS, 40&8 Voiture 456, NAACP, Busy Bee Social Club, Advisory Board for the Charles Hickey School and a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In 1959, Bob married the former Dorothy Ella Jones of La Plata, Maryland. Bob and Dorothy reside in La Plata, Maryland. They are the proud parents of one daughter, Kyrese Angela, and one son, Kyle Anthony. Robert has been a lector in the Catholic Church for the past forty years.

It is with great pride that I place the name of Robert M. Johnson in nomination for the high office of National Vice Commander for the year 2002-2003.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Chair recognizes microphone number 1.

CHRMN MICKLON: My name is Doug Micklon, Immediate Past Department Commander and Chairman of the New Hampshire delegation. I rise for the purpose of requesting that you recognize New Hampshire National Executive Committeeman George West for the purpose of nomination.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes George West from the Department of New Hampshire for the purpose of a nomination.

DEL WEST: I am most pleased and honored to bring before you a candidate from the Department of New Hampshire for your consideration to be elected to the high office of National Vice Commander. Robert Bournival served us admirably as our Department Commander in 1995-1996. He has been Department Chairman of Internal Affairs, Flag Education, Community Service and our convention committees. He also served on numerous other committees in our Department, including our Finance Committee, National Convention and served on Boys State for eight years.

Bob held various offices in his district, becoming the District Commander in 1990 and 1991. He was elected Commander of William H. Jutras Post 43 in Manchester, New Hampshire for three terms, and he is presently serving as their Post Adjutant for seven consecutive years. Bob continues to serve with much enthusiasm in American Legion Baseball, Oratorical, VA Hospital visitations and many youth activities, as well as all the community service programs.

On the national level his appointments have been as a Vice Chairman on the Americanism Council, a Vice Chairman on the National Security Council, and seven years on the Distinguished Guest Committee. Bob is a 21-year member and a recipient of an honorary life membership in The American Legion. He served his country as a member of the United States Army during the Vietnam era. He is a retired professional executive chef, and we in the department of New Hampshire take every advantage of his culinary talents. Bob's 42-years of marriage to his wife, Gertrude, exemplifies his true commitment when he says I will and I do. Bob leads by example.

On behalf of the Legionnaires of the Department of New Hampshire, we ask your support for a Legionnaire who is energetic, ready, willing and able to assume the duties, a team player that has the well-being of our fellow veterans, the welfare of the children and youth of our country and our great organization, The American Legion, at heart. The Department of New Hampshire offered you a great candidate for Vice Commander whom you elected back in 1989, who made us all proud. And as the National Executive Committeeman from New Hampshire, I take great pride and pleasure now in presenting for your consideration another very capable candidate who will serve as an asset to our great national organization with great distinction.

I proudly place in nomination for National Vice Commander Robert G. Bournival.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Chair recognizes microphone number 4.

DEPT COMDR LINDERMAN: I ask you to recognize our National Executive Committeeman Paul Evenson for the purpose of a nomination.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Chair recognizes Paul Evenson from the Department of South Dakota for the purpose of a nomination.

DEL EVENSON: As a National Executive Committeeman from the State of South Dakota and the delegate to this convention, it is indeed an honor to come before you today to place in nomination the name of a veteran who has distinguished himself on all levels of The American Legion. This veteran received his eligibility by serving in the United States Marine Corp from January, 1951 through January of 1954 in serving with the 1st Marine Division in Korea from October, 1952, through October, 1953.

He is a 50-year member of the Campbell Timmerman Post 115 of The American Legion in Platte, South Dakota, and he has been an active and contributing member for all of those years. He has been a true leader by serving in all the elected and appointed offices in his Post. On the Department level, he has earned the respect of his fellow veterans and Legionnaires by serving as the National Executive Committeeman for three terms. He also served as the Alternate NEC for three terms, the Department Commander, District Commander and District Vice Commander.

On the national level he has continued to serve on the National Security Commission and Public Relations Commission currently. Referring to him as a true cornerstone can sum up his community involvement. He is very active in his church, business organizations and takes a leadership role by actively developing and promoting businesses in his rural community. He and his wife, Arlene, have two daughters. Before retiring they operated a cattle feeding and farming operation in Platte, South Dakota.

Few people have shown the integrity, loyalty and focus to The American Legion and its programs for as many years as I have seen this veteran and Legionnaire give to the organization. His service to his community, his family and his fellow man are the things that we ourselves would hope to be. He will truly be a team player for The American Legion and will work hard to enhance our programs.

Commander Santos, it is with great pleasure and great honor that I place the name of D.R. Don Mason of the Department of South Dakota in nomination for the office of National Vice Commander of The American Legion in the years 2002-2003.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second to these five nominations for National Vice Commander? The Chair will recognize microphone number 4.

DEPT COMDR HAYDEN: I am Don Hayden, Department Commander of Minnesota and duly elected delegate. I move that the nomination for the offices of National Vice Commander be closed.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second. Hearing a second, non-debatable issue, all those in favor signify by the sign of aye. All those opposed nay. Ayes have it, so ordered. The nominations are closed. Microphone number 4.

DEL CONASTER: I am Martin Conaster, Delegate from Illinois. I move the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Jefferson Jeff Luginbuel, Roy L. Kirkham, Robert M. Johnson, Robert G. Bournival and Donovan Mason be elected National Vice Commanders by acclamation.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Do I hear a second? All those in favor signal by the sign of aye. Those nay? Ayes have it, so ordered.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention for Jefferson 'Jeff' Luginbuel, Roy L. Kirkham, Robert M. Johnson, Robert G. Bournival, Donavon Ray Mason for the offices of National Vice Commander of The American Legion.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: I declare Jefferson Luginbuel, Department of Colorado; Roy L. Kirkham, Department of Louisiana; Robert M. Johnson, Department of Maryland; Robert G. Bournival, Department of New Hampshire; and Donavan Ray Mason, Department of South Dakota elected National Vice Commanders of The American Legion.

Will the new National Vice Commanders come to the platform to be introduced? The National Vice Commanders; Don Mason, Jeff Luginbuel, Bob Bournival, Robert Johnson, Roy Kirkham with our new National Commander, Ronald F. Conley.

I now call on Past National Commander John 'Jake' Comer of Quincy, Massachusetts to present the Colors to our incoming National Commander.

Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander

PNC COMER: Please rise as the National Color Guard, Post 86 of Maryland, present the colors of the National Commander to the station. Hand Salute.

National Commander Ron Conley, you have afforded me the singular honor of presenting your Colors at this convention. We go back a long way. When you so honorably served me as Department Commander of Pennsylvania in the year 1987-1988, you were ready to assume, as you have, an awesome responsibility as you traveled throughout the world representing the largest veterans' organization in this nation and the world.

This past year we have witnessed the National Commander of extraordinary leadership, as we have witnessed the leadership of National Commanders over these many years. And we know full well that you are ready for the challenges as we entrust these Colors to you.

The Colors of our nation, we hope and pray during your watch, will return to their rightful honor and that no individual in the future should ever have the right to destroy or desecrate our nation's Colors. And under your leadership you will take the crimson red of our national organization all across this world with your programs and your dedication and your integrity. As you visit a Veterans Administration Hospital in every state, you truly will

continue what you started in Pennsylvania in honoring the homeless veterans of our nation, and you'll make us so proud.

To you, Ron, and your wife, Barbara, my friends. As you know, who is looking down this afternoon from Heaven above, who wishes she could be with you here for this great honor as you have assumed the office of National Commander of The American Legion, but we'll talk to her later because she is very proud of you and always was.

So continue your fight. Small in stature, but high in integrity for The American Legion, you will make us an outstanding commander. We look forward to your challenges, your programs and we know that come next year in St. Louis, Missouri we will proudly say, " job well done." Commander, I present to you your Colors.

NATL COMDR CONLEY: Color Guard, retire the Colors.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: This is a very special time in the business of this convention, the time when we meet the distinguished lady who will lead nearly a million patriotic women over the next year. She is a woman who has served veterans and their families as an active volunteer since joining the American Legion Auxiliary in 1961. Welcome to our stage the newly elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, a member of Stevenson-D'Alessio Unit 12 in Whiting, New Jersey, Elsie Bailey.

PRES ALA BAILEY: Thank you, Commander. It is my privilege to stand before you as the National President of the greatest veterans' organization in the world, for women.

I cannot think of any organization, no matter how great it was, that would be any better than the American Legion Auxiliary. It is my privilege to serve this year with Commander Conley. I wish him the very best in all of his endeavors. I have accepted the responsibility of President. I have accepted all of the duties. I hope to do them with dignity, with humility. I promise to work with Commander Conley side by side, not behind, but together, and I promise to do my utmost to keep this the best American Legion family there ever was.

Congratulations and I look forward to working with you. Lots of good luck.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Is there any further business to come before this convention? The Chair recognizes National Adjutant Spanogle.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Pursuant to the National Constitution By-Laws of The American Legion, the National Executive Committee will meet following the adjournment of this convention. Immediately following the adjournment of the convention the National Executive Committee will meet in room 208 A and B, second level, of this convention conference center.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: Hearing no request for further business, please rise. Uncover, as the outgoing National Chaplain Dr. David Russell offers the benediction.

Benediction
Dr. David F. Russell, Virginia, National Chaplain

Our dear most gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for a very fruitful convention. We thank You for having been with our Past Commander Ric and we pray that You will continue now to be with our present Commander Conley as he seeks the leadership of this organization. Bless him with the wisdom of Solomon of old and the patience of a Job.

Father, dismiss us now and take us to our homes and give us a safe journey, for we do ask it in Thy Son's precious name. Amen.

Retirement of Colors

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The Color Guard will retire the Flag of the United States. Please remain standing.

...At this time the delegates stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

NATL COMDR SANTOS: The time is 1:42 p.m. I now declare this 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, *sine die*.

...At 1:42 p.m., the 84th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL AWARDS

National American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually for outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: **Congressman Robert Stump**

American Legion Baseball Graduate of The Year Award: Presented to the major league baseball player who played American Legion Baseball as a teenager and best exemplifies the principles and purposes of the program in sportsmanship, citizenship, general good conduct, integrity, and playing ability.
RECIPIENT: **Luis Gonzales, Arizona Diamondbacks**

Bob Feller Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player recording the greatest number of strikeouts during the regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT(s): **Matt Skundrick, Medford OR...and...Josh Johnson, West Point, MS**

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.
RECIPIENT: **Post 212, West Point, MS**

Dr. Irvin L. 'Click' Cowger Memorial R.B.I. Award: Awarded annually to The American Legion Baseball player who is credited with the most runs batted in by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT: **Spencer Ingaldson, Rapid City, SD**

Ford C. Frick Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having within its jurisdiction the runner-up team in the National Finals of The American Legion Baseball program.
RECIPIENT: **Minnesota (Excelsior Post 259, Excelsior, MN)**

The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.
RECIPIENT: **Department of California**

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.
RECIPIENT: **Ty Henkaline, Post 217, Sidney, OH**

The Howard P. Savage Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having the baseball team which becomes the Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.
RECIPIENT: **Mississippi**

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award: Awarded annually to the manager and coach of the national championship team, as representative of the adult leadership Jack Williams stressed during his lifetime.
RECIPIENT(s): **Manager Frank Portera, and Coach Tyler Bratton**

James F. Daniel, Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award: Awarded to The American Legion Baseball player participating in the World Series that represents the principle of good sportsmanship emphasized by the program.
RECIPIENT: **Ronny Woods, Dothan, AL**

Junior Shooting Sports Trophy: Awarded annually in four categories to the top performing Individual and Team in the Sporter and Precision categories competing in the annual USA Shooting National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championship who are members of clubs and teams affiliated with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program.

RECIPIENTS: **Precision Team: Palmyra Sportsman; Hershey, Pennsylvania**
Precision Individual: James Hall; Carrollton, Georgia
Sporter Team: Bogalusa High School AJROTC; Bogalusa, Louisiana
Sporter Individual: Brandon Green; Bogalusa, Louisiana

Louisville Slugger Trophy: Plaque is presented to recipient, or designated representative, by appropriate official upon the conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series.
RECIPIENT: **Josh Sowell, Dothan, AL**

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Wyoming**

Rawlings 'Big Stick' Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player having the highest total number of bases as determined by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT: **Josh Sowell, Dothan, AL**

Spafford National Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department of The American Legion having within its jurisdiction the winner of the National High School Oratorical Contest.
RECIPIENT: **Alabama**

William Randolph Hearst Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department attaining the greatest number of percentage points compiled from information contained in the Consolidated Post Reports, and supporting Department narrative.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Ohio**

Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of authentic veterans' organization in Canada. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the

field of veterans' affairs and in the development and perpetuation of the spirit of international good will and comradeship between the United States and Canada and between their veterans' organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s)	**Gordon Ashton**	**Bob Greenhall**	**Andrew Perrie**
	Shirley Aucoin	**Charles Gordon**	**Edward Plyley**
	Richard Baker	**Kenneth Henderson**	**Cy Poole**
	William Calvert	**Karl Krause**	**Gordon Pope**
	Charles Carroll	**L.A. (Bert) Lafond**	**Elinor Radcliffe**
	William H Childress	**F.S. Sterling McMillan**	**Syd Stamper**
	Jim Eaton	**Willie A. Michaud**	**Thomas Whitfield**
	Allan Egan	**Carol Nolan**	**Robert Young**

Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting: Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post reports.
RECIPIENT(s): No Departments qualified in 2002

Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans: Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.
RECIPIENT(s): Category I— Basic Water Company, Henderson, Nevada
Category II – M & T Company, Manchester, New Jersey
Category III – WalMart Distribution Center, Winter Haven, Florida

Employment Service Awards: Awarded in three categories: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) of the Year; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) of the Year; Employment Service (ES) Office of the Year.
RECIPIENT(s): LVER of the Year: Barbara Phillips, Fort Payne, AL
DVOP of the Year: Ronald Mullen, Tulsa, OK
ES Office of the Year: Fayetteville Local Employment Security Commission, Fayetteville, NC

Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the JC Penney Co., to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.
RECIPIENT(s): To be announced later

National DEPARTMENT History Contest Awards: Awarded annually at the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee to those contestants entered in the National Department History Contest having submitted the One-Year History *Narrative* or *Yearbook* of the Department *which best meets the standards established for that particular competition.*
One-Year Narrative History
RECIPIENT: Department of South Dakota
One-Year Yearbook History
RECIPIENT: Department of South Dakota: (One-Year Yearbook History)

National POST History Contest Awards: Awarded annually to those contestants entered in the National Post History Contest deemed by a duly authorized panel of judges to have

submitted the One-Year History of the Post *which best meets the standards established for the competitions.*

One-Year Narrative History
RECIPIENT: Missing Man Post 667, Universal City, Texas
One-Year Yearbook History
RECIPIENT: Earl Collier Post 153, Olathe, Kansas

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s):	**Artemio R. Arugay**	**George Ellis**	**Patrick G. Ganio, Sr.**
	Yi-min Gong	**Sang-Hoon Lee**	

The Distinguished Public Service Award: Awarded annually by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the Commander's Advisory Committee at the time of the annual Washington Conference. It may be awarded to one or more person(s) of the United States Congress.
RECIPIENT(s): Representative Ben Gilman (NY)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I – 200-1,000 members; II - 1,001-3,000 members; III - 3,001-6000 members; IV – 6001-12,000 members; V – 12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s):	**Category I**	**Detachment of South Carolina**
	Category II	**Detachment of Washington**
	Category III	**Detachment of Georgia**
	Category IV	**Detachment of Florida**
	Category V	**Detachment of Pennsylvania**

General Henri Gouraud Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said Department having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

RECIPIENT(s):	**Category I**	**No Department has exceeded its goal in this category.**
	Category II	
	Category III	**No Department has exceeded its goal in this category.**
	Category IV	**Department of Georgia**
		Department of Arizona
	Category V	**No Department has exceeded its goal in this category.**
	Category VI	**Department of Delaware**

General John J. Pershing Honor Award: Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more, of the post's previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Utah**

The Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Delaware**

The North Carolina Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department, not included among the several state Departments or the Department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year's membership.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Puerto Rico**

The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Delaware**

The American Legion Air Force Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class at the Air Force Academy who demonstrates the highest proficiency in all academic subjects.
RECIPIENT: **Cadet Paul J. Calhoun**

The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.
RECIPIENT: **Cadet Jason W. Haag**

The American Legion Merchant Marine Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the Merchant Marine Academy, enrolled in the Pre-Commissioning Seminar Course, and selected by the Academy Faculty, as achieving the highest grade pertaining to a 1,000 word composition dealing with the subject of National Security.
RECIPIENT: **Midshipman Devin R. Blowes**
The American Legion Military Academy Award: Awarded annually to cadet of the graduating class at the United States Military Academy with the highest standing in Chemistry.
RECIPIENT: **Cadet Paul G. Peterson**

The American Legion Naval Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the United States Naval Academy who stands highest in those English, History and Government courses taken to complete a Foreign Affairs major.
RECIPIENT: **Midshipman Timothy E. Steigelman**

National Commander's Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program.

RECIPIENT(s):	Category	Post Participation:	Individual Participation:
	I: Depts. With 100,000 or more members	Department of **Florida**	Department of **Minnesota**
	II: Depts. With 70,000 to 99,999 members	Department of **Wisconsin**	Department of **Wisconsin**
	III: Depts. With 40,000 to 69,999 members	Department of **Georgia**	Department of **Georgia**
	IV: Depts. With 25,000 to 39,999 members	Department of **Maine**	Department of **Maine**
	V: Depts. With 10,000 to 24,999 members	Department of **Idaho**	Department of **Idaho**
	VI: Depts With less than 10,000 members	Department of **Hawaii**	Department of **Hawaii**

National Law Enforcement Officer Of The Year Award: To recognize an outstanding law enforcement officer as selected from Department law enforcement officer winners for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.
RECIPIENT: **Deputy Casey R. Nelms of Sutherland, Nebraska**

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.
RECIPIENT(s): **Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, and Minnesota**

Fourth Estate Award: Awarded to press, radio, TV, or other communications media; to associations of same, to owners, executive heads or staff members; such award to be in recognition of outstanding service to community, state, or nation, which service shall have been in accordance with or the furtherance of established American Legion policies and programs.
RECIPIENT: **Russell Carollo, Christine Willmsen, Mike Wagner and Doug Harris, Reporters, *Dayton Daily News*, Dayton, Ohio**

National Commander's Public Relations Award: Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.
RECIPIENT: **NASCAR**

The Arch M. Cantrall Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Band winning first prize in competition with all other American Legion bands during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: **The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Post 264, Tonawanda, New York**

Emblem Sales Trophy: To be awarded annually to that Junior sponsored Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Junior sponsored Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: **No Contest in 2002**

The Four Chaplains Trophy: Awarded annually to the winner of The American Legion Firing Squad competition at the National Convention.
RECIPIENT: **No Contest in 2002**

The Glen R. Hillis Trophy: Awarded annually to that Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: **American Legion Post 86; Rockville, Maryland**

The Lemuel Bolles Trophy: Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.
RECIPIENT: **The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Tonawanda, New York**

National Adjutant's Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Firing Squad winning first prize in competition with all other Firing Squads during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: **No Contest in 2002**

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy: Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.
RECIPIENT: **Department of Minnesota**

Abbreviations

A&A	Aid and Attendance
ABM	Anti-ballistic Missile
ABMC	American Battle Monuments Commission
ACDUTRA	Active Duty Training
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADJ Adjusted	
AFRH	Armed Forces Retirement Home
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALS	Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
AMVETS	American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam
ANAVICUS	Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada - United States
ARM	Adjustable Rate Mortgages
ASVET	Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training
AVIP	Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program
BCMR	Boards for Correction of Military Records
BEA	Budget Enforcement Act
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
BX	Base Exchange
CARES	Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services
CAT	Computerized Axial Tomography
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHAMPS	Children Honoring America's Military Patriots
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMN	Children's Miracle Network
COLA	Cost-of-living-adjustment
CONUS	Continental United States
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CPR	Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation
CWT	Compensated Work Therapy
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
d.b.a.	Doing business as
DECA	Defense Commissary Agency
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System
DEFY	Drug Education for Youth
DIC	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
DMS	Direct Membership Solicitation
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DoD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOL	Department of Labor
DPMO	Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs
DVOP	Disabled Veterans Outreach Program

ER	Emergency Room
ESGR	Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
ESP	Extra-Sensory Perception
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRP	Federal Response Plan
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GI	Government Issue
GMT	Geographical Means Test
HR	House Resolution
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munitions
JROTC	Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps
K	Kilometer
LVER	Local Veterans Employment Representative
MARAD	United States Maritime Administration
MGIB	Montgomery GI Bill
MHS	Military Health System
MILCON	Military Convention
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACA	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASCAR	National Association for Stock Car Racing
NASDAQ	National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDMS	National Disaster Medical System
NEC	National Executive Committee(man)
NEF	National Emergency Fund
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSLI	National Service Life Insurance

NVTI	National Veterans Training Institute
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OJT	On-the-job-training
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PDC	Past Department Commander
PJ	Parajumper
PL	Public Law
PNC	Past National Commander
POW	Prisoner of War
POW/MIA	Prisoner of War/Missing in Action
PR	Public Relations
PRC	People's Republic of China
PUFL	Paid-Up-for-Life
PX	Post Exchange
QUERI	Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade
S&P	Standard & Poor's
SAL	Sons of The American Legion
SBA	Small Business Administration
SESA	State Employment Security Agency
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
SGLI	Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
SHAD	Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense
SMOCTA	Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act
SOC	Special Operations Command
SOM	School of Medicine
TAP	Transitional Assistance Program
TCDD	Tetrachlorodibenzoparadioxin
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TFTA	Terrain following, terrain avoidance
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
USAF	United States Air Force
USAT	United States Army Transport
USC	United States Code
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USCGC	United States Coast Guard Cutter
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994
USFSPA	Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act

USMC	United States Marine Corps
USNH	United States Naval Home
USO	United Services Organization
USPHS	United States Public Health Services
USSAH	United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USUHS	Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
VA	Veterans Affairs
VAOPGCPREC	VA Precedential Opinion of the General Counsel
VAVS	Veterans Administration Volunteer Services
VETS	Veterans Employment and Training Service
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VGLI	Veterans Group Life Insurance
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VISN	Veterans Integrated Service Networks
VJTA	Veterans Job Training Act
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Richard J. Santos, Greenbelt, Maryland. Membership was strong with 2.8 million veterans in more than 15,000 posts throughout the nation and overseas. We recorded another year of rewarding service to America, her veterans, and their families.

The American Legion National Headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to the Indianapolis facilities, offices are maintained in Washington, DC, to house those organizational functions requiring a close working relationship with the Congress and the appropriate agencies of the federal government. The editorial and advertising staffs of *The American Legion Magazine* are located at The American Legion's Indianapolis Headquarters.

The National Commander's report is published herein as a part of the National Convention proceedings. Reports of the other national officers, the national commissions, financial statement with accompanying data, and a report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary are included.

Throughout the year, the two organizations continued to provide vital leadership to the nation and, through our activities and programs, contributed significantly to the preservation of the American way of life. We are proud of our accomplishments and look forward to the challenges ahead in the coming year.

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE
National Adjutant

EXCERPTS FROM CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
ARTICLE II

Nature

Section 1. The American Legion is a civilian organization; membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service. Rank does not exist in the Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any convention or meeting of the Legion.

Section 2. The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. The American Legion shall be organized in Departments and these in turn in Posts. There shall be one Department in each state, in the District of Columbia, and there may be one Department in each territory and insular possession of the United States. The National Executive Committee may establish Posts in the territorial and insular possessions of the United States and foreign countries, and shall designate the Department under whose jurisdiction they shall function, but this shall in no way affect the status of Departments already established.

ARTICLE IV

Eligibility

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990 until a date established by Congress for ending the Desert Storm period; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any said periods; provided however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life.

Section 3. No person may be a member at any time of more than one Post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled by a Post shall be admitted to membership in another Post, without the consent of the expelling Post except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, he may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to be admitted to membership in another Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

ARTICLE V

Section 1. The legislative body of The American Legion shall be the National Convention, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. The time and place of the National Conventions shall be determined by the National Executive Committee, which shall have authority to change such time and place for sufficient reasons to it appearing.

Section 3. In the National Convention each Department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each one thousand members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said Convention and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid, and to one alternate for each delegate. The delegates shall be chosen not less than 2 weeks before the National Convention at Department Conventions or in any other manner specified by the Department Constitution.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials after his registration fee has been paid.

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at a National Convention when 60 percent of the Departments are represented as provided above.

ARTICLE VI

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No two Vice Commanders shall be chosen from the same Department. No person shall be eligible for re-election to the Office of National Commander or National Vice Commander.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices occurring between National Conventions shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee, and any member of The American Legion, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy. Provided, however, that no Past National Commander or Past National Vice Commander shall be elected to fill any vacancy in these respective offices.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee at its first meeting following the National Convention shall appoint the National Adjutant, National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, National Chaplain and National Historian, such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing power. All persons having the custody of funds shall give adequate bonds, which shall be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. All Past National Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Posts, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without vote, and shall also be life delegates to all National Conventions of The American Legion, with vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Departments.

ARTICLE VII

National Executive Committee

Section 1. Between National Conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the National Commander, the National Vice-Commanders, and one National Executive Committeeman and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to vote only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman.

Past National Commanders

J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Hon. Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota
William E. Galbraith, Nebraska
John H. Geiger, Illinois
Joe L. Matthews, Texas
William J. Rogers, Maine
John M. 'Jack' Carey, Michigan
Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana
Michael J. Kogutek, New York
Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
James P. Dean, Mississippi
John P. Comer, Massachusetts
Hon. H.F. Gierke, North Dakota
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Bruce Thiesen, California
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
Ray G. Smith, North Carolina

National Executive Committeemen

Ulas Ray White, Alabama
Joseph T. Craig, Alaska
Marco 'Tony' Valenzuela, Arizona
Claude Carpenter, Arkansas
Thomas D. Hetherington, California
Joseph E. Ross, Colorado
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut
Thomas L. Burns, Delaware
Clayton S. Dann, D.C.
Robert J. Proctor, Florida
Merwyn M. Beaver, France
Ray Hendrix, Georgia
LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii
Dee Collins, Idaho
Lloyd R. Henderson, Illinois
Richard Quattrin, Indiana
David K. Rehbein, Iowa
U.S. 'Udie' Grant, Kansas
Randall Coffman, Kentucky
Russell J. Henry, Louisiana
Robert A. Owen, Maine
Robert M. Johnson, Maryland
James Flattes, Massachusetts
John E. Hayes, Mexico
Randolph Browne, Michigan
Robert Skallerud, Minnesota
Charles E. Langley, Mississippi
Sam Yancey, Missouri
Joyce Babcock, Montana
Robert H. Zersen, Nebraska
vacant, Nevada
George V. West, New Hampshire
Franklin R. Sickle, Jr., New Jersey
Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico
Theodore S. Coleman, New York
Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
Aaron 'Moody' Dalke, North Dakota
Jerrold W. Wilson, Ohio
Donald H. Schulenberg, Oklahoma
T. Les Galloway, Oregon
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Ernesto P. Golez, Philippines
Isidoro Cerpa Alicea, Jr., Puerto Rico
Richard Verrier, Rhode Island
R.M. Singletary, Jr., South Carolina
Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota
James E. Markham, Tennessee
Delbert Fuhrman, Texas
William E. Christoffersen, Utah
Clark Ferris, Vermont
George Blume, Virginia
Wayne Sharp, Washington
William W. Kile, West Virginia
David A. Korth, Wisconsin
Todd E. White, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

Clarence 'Jake' Jacobs, Alabama
Jimmie Foster, Alaska
Julius Maklary, Arizona
Bobby L. Wamble, Arkansas
Elmer Caster, California
Jefferson Luginbuel, Colorado
K. Robert Lewis, Connecticut
Robert Poore, Delaware
Dennis G. Kurre, D.C.
Dennis R. Boland, Florida
Michael T. Umland, France
Charles F. Wessinger, Georgia
Orland H. Taylor, Hawaii
H. Melvin Napier, Idaho
Jack W. Cover, Illinois
Ron Lowe, Indiana
Ivan E. Torkelson, Iowa
Damon Christensen, Kansas
Benard D. Wells, Kentucky
Asa E. Stewart, Jr., Louisiana
Richard Blouin, Maine
William B. Proctor, Maryland
Mark Avis, Massachusetts
E.D. 'Joe' Skinner, Mexico
Norbert J. Schollett, Michigan
Virgil Persing, Minnesota
Gayle Gorden, Mississippi
David N. Voyles, Missouri
Arthur Sell, Montana
Michael J. Landkamer, Nebraska
Ernest McAvan, Nevada
Benjamin F. Talford, New Hampshire
Leo L. McKernan, New Jersey
Bruce Jorgensen, New Mexico

Ronald C. Bertrand, New York
David G. Desmond, North Carolina
Joe Bosch, North Dakota
James Morris, Ohio
Jerry D. Askins, Oklahoma
Robert D. Scott, Oregon
Alfred Pirolli, Pennsylvania
Ignacio F. Palad, Philippines
Miguel Rodrigues, Puerto Rico
Eugene Pytka, Rhode Island
B.W. Bell, South Carolina
Larry Price, South Dakota
Joseph W. Young, Tennessee
Ron Cherry, Texas
Terry Schow, Utah
Donald Tetreault, Vermont
Rob Gordon, Virginia
Richard Smith, Washington
William Burkett, West Virginia
Arthur D. Herbison, Wisconsin
Joseph Sestak, Wyoming

EXCERPTS FROM BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
ARTICLE I
National Executive Committee
Commission, Committee, and Employees

Section 6. The National Executive Committee, upon nomination by the National Commander, appoints the following standing commissions: National Americanism Commission, National Commission on Children and Youth, National Convention Commission, National Economic Commission, National Finance Commission, National Foreign Relations Commission, National Internal Affairs Commission, National Legislative Commission, The American Legion Magazine Commission, National Public Relations Commission, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and National Security Commission.

The National Executive Committee shall provide for the appointment and employment of such subordinate officers and employees as may be needed for the administration of The American Legion, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Russ Hanseter, Wisconsin

As National Vice Commander Midwest Division I want to report that The American Legion in these ten departments is "alive and well". We began our year with the tragic events of September 11, and the day is still fresh in our memory. Commander Santos quickly took charge of the situation and served Legionnaires and our country well throughout this past legion year. We are proud to have served as National Vice Commanders under his leadership.

There are some very positive things for me to report to you today. I was especially impressed with the membership efforts in all of the Midwest Departments. There are some things that stand out in the area of membership including membership sweeps in Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio. These Departments took their officers into the field and to Posts ranging from very successful to those with very deep membership problems. The reaction of the average "Blue Cap Legionnaire" was one of appreciation for bringing the membership efforts of the department right down to the Post level. I have never seen a Legionnaire that had accepted the mantel of leadership as a commander, that didn't want to be successful. If membership is to be successful there has to be someone at the Post level that must make it happen. The only place where "success" comes before "work" is in the dictionary. Awards must go to the Post level to be effective.

When I arrived home from Boys Nation at the end of July I attended a church service where we had a guest Priest. His message was a very interesting one as it was built around the following theme; "The main thing, is to know the main thing, is the main thing."

The guest priest didn't define what the "main thing" was but he applied it to the message that he delivered to the congregation that day. I believe that is the most unique thing about that quote. One can interpret the "main thing" however they choose. For my purpose, as a NVC and for The American Legion, the main thing is "service", to the community, state, and nation. That is why we of The American Legion exist. At the end of this year of serving as a NVC, I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the Midwest Division and proud to be on Commander Ric Santos's team.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 had its impact on the entire nation, and will continue to impact on all of us far into the future. While in our nation's capitol on September 11, and sitting in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, I opened a plain brown paper covered book. The title of which escapes me. As I opened to the beginning of one of its chapters there in front of me was a quote written by Sir Winston Churchill in 1940.It seemed to me to be so timely that I wrote it down. It was as follows; "You ask what is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all the strength that God can

give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny…you ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival".

I thought, we must do this for our children and grandchildren. It truly was a sobering moment in my life.

I will close by telling you that the future of The American Legion is in good hands. As I traveled thousands of miles throughout Midwest Departments I told, red caps, white caps, and the partial blue and white caps, that they should never forget the "blue caps" because that is where we got our start and that is where we will return. The blue caps have the ultimate responsibility for our programs and our membership. I look forward to returning to my "blue cap" and continuing in service to The American Legion.

Record of NVC Assignments 2001-2002

September 2001

4-9	Indianapolis Commander's Meeting & Briefings
4	Reception Sec. Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi
5-8	NVC Brainstorming Sessions & Membership Phone Calls
9-14	Washington Legislative Briefings & Commanders Testimony
10	NVC Briefings
	Commanders Testimony to Joint Committee Veterans Affairs

October

5-6	National Commanders Homecoming Baltimore, MD
7-11	Indianapolis Fall Meetings & NEC Report
8	Commanders & Adjutants Conference
9	Department Membership Challenges & Breakfast
10	National Commanders. Banquet
10-11	NEC Meeting & Report to NEC
*12-14	WI Fall Meetings Portage, WI
*20-21	Badger Boys State Meetings Portage, WI
26-28	Americanism Joint Conference & Boys State Directors (For Natl. Cmdr.)

November

2-4	Oscoda, MI Membership Meetings
*9	Seymour Middle School Veterans Day Program
11-15	Iowa Membership Roundup
16-18	Illinois Egyptian Past Commanders & Marion Hospital Visit

December

*1	Wisconsin Commanders Testimonial Sparta, WI

January 2002

17-19	Wisconsin Midwinter Conference
20-26	Illinois Membership Drive
28-Feb. 2	Ohio, Membership Drive

February

8-10	South Dakota Midwinter at Oacoma, SD
15-17	North Dakota Midwinter at Dickenson, ND
*23	Badger Boys State Directors Meeting Portage, WI

March

10-13	Washington Legislative Conference
10	Represent Cmdr. Santos Ohio A&G Winners
15-17	Department Michigan DEC Midland, MI
19-20	Represent Cmdr. Santos Art McLaughlin's Funeral, Iowa
22-24	Minnesota Membership at Northfield, MN

*28	Ripon College BBS Directors
April	
5-7	Region V Information & Leadership Conference Indianapolis, IN
May	
6-9	National Spring Meetings & NEC Meetings
22-24	Naval Academy Graduation, Annapolis, MD
*27	Grove City, Ohio Memorial Day Program
June	
*5-15	Badger Boys State On-Site Ripon College (Director)
14-16	Buckeye Boys State at Bowling Green, Ohio
28-30	Department Nebraska Convention Kearney, NE
12-14	Department of Iowa State Convention Des Moines, IA
July	
*17-27	American Legion Boys Nation Washington, D.C
August	
3	Seymour, WI Lead Hamburger Day Parade.
23-29	National Convention Charlotte, NC

Made approximately 50 unofficial visits to American Legion Posts in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, North & South Dakota, Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Maryland, and West Virginia as NVC.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Charles R. John, Oklahoma

It has been my extreme privilege and honor to have been elected as National Vice Commander. Serving under the superior leadership of Commander Richard Santos, has been a highlight of my years serving the American Legion in various capacities and a gratifying experience that will always be remembered. In addition, I would like to express my pleasure and appreciation to have served with the other National Vice Commanders.

This is a report of my activities as National Vice Commander covering the Central Region, which consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas and the Department of France. I wish to thank the Department Commanders and National Executive Committeemen of each Department I have visited this past year. I appreciate the way each made me feel welcomed and a part of their individual Departments, while I attended the individual Department functions.

A summary of my activities for the year 2001-2002 include:

September 2001	
4-8	Brainstorming Sessions along with Telephone Calls to District and Department Commanders, Indianapolis, Indiana
9-11	Legislative Briefings and National Commander's Testimony, WDC
23-30	NIC, Region 4, Dallas, Texas
October	
5-6	National Commander's Homecoming, Baltimore, Maryland
9-11	Fall Meetings of NEC, Indianapolis, Indiana
December	
5-7	Department of Kansas Membership Visit
January 2002	
11-13	Department of Oklahoma Mid-Winter/Rehabilitation Conference, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

18-19 Department of Louisiana Mid-Winter, Alexandria, Louisiana
24-27 Department of Texas Mid-Winter, Austin, Texas

March

10-13 2002 Washington Conference

May

7-9 Spring Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana
7-10 U. S. Air Force Academy Awards Ceremony, Colorado Springs, Colorado

June

20-23 Department Convention of Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama
28-30 Department Convention of Arkansas, Jonesboro, Arkansas

July

5-8 Department Convention of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
12-14 Department Convention of Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi

August

26-30 2002 National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina

I would like to thank The American Legion and Family for allowing me to serve during this critical year in our Nation's and Department's history, due to the cowardly terrorist attacks on our Homeland, which is also an attack on the principles of which this organization and Country stand upon.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Terry D. Lewis, Pennsylvania

When I served this great organization as Department. Commander of Pennsylvania for the Legion year 2000-2001 under the leadership of Past National Commander Ray G. Smith, it was truly an honor. However, being elected National Vice Commander of the Northeast Region at the 83rd National Convention, and serving as one of "Rick's Retrievers" for the Legion year 2001-2002 has been the highlight of my legion career. I am honored and humbled to have had the opportunity to represent National Commander Rick Santos at many legion posts and legion functions from Maryland to Maine. During these visits, my message was always the same: inform and enlighten on the mission and goals of this great organization.

I have been afforded the opportunity to have 12 of the finest Department Commanders anywhere in the country. Their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm have truly made a difference. I am proud to have had the honor and pleasure to serve with legionnaires who were well-rounded, outstanding Commanders. It is with pleasure that I submit the names of the Dept. Commanders for the Northeast Region for the Legion year 2001-2002: Maine—Glenn Paye, New Hampshire—Douglas (Doug) H. Micklon; Vermont—Linda Thayer; Massachusetts—Lawrence (Larry) Connors; Connecticut—Edward (Ed) Barry; New York—Paul Mitras; Pennsylvania—Jeffrey (Jeff) Seler; Rhode Island— Macon Lawrence, Jr.; New Jersey—Daniel (Dan) McCole; Delaware—Dale Naumon; Washington, D.C.—Ernest (Ernie) Sohns; and finally, Maryland—John (Jack) Milburn.

Many thanks to all the staff at Headquarters in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., and special thanks to Peggy Judd for her help. It has been great!

My travel and activities for Legion Year 2001-2002:

September 2001

Brainstorming Sessions & Phone Calls to District & Dept. Cmdrs.
9-11 Legislative Briefings & National Commander's Testimony, Washington, D.C.
Dept. of Pennsylvania DEC & Membership Round-Up.

	Dept. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia County Meeting
October	
	National Commander's Homecoming, Baltimore, Maryland
	Fall Meetings of NEC, Indianapolis
	Legion College, Western Section, Dept. of PA
November	
6	Election Day, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA – Get Out The Vote
10	Veteran's Day Celebration, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA
22	Thanksgiving Day Parade, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA
	Henry Hopkins Post #881, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA – Turkey Day
27	Philadelphia County Meeting, Dept. of PA
December	
8	Henry Hopkins Post #881, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA – Post Business
11-12	Christmas Tour – Dept. of PA Veteran's Hospitals & Nursing Homes
15	Henry Hopkins Post #881, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA – Post Business
22	Henry Hopkins Post #881, Philadelphia, Dept. of PA – Post Business
January 2002	
	Dept. of Connecticut Mid-Winter
	Dept. of Maine Membership Visit, Auburn
	Dept. of PA Martin Luther King Celebration
February	
	Dept. of New Hampshire Membership Visit
	Dept. of Vermont Oratorical, Barre
	Dept. of PA—Philadelphia County Meeting—VA Hospital
March	
	Dept. of Connecticut Membership Visit
4-6	National Cmdr.'s Tour, Dept. of PA
	2002 Washington Conference
10	American Legion Auxiliary Awareness—Washington, D.C.
16	American Legion Birthday Celebration, Shiloh Post #791
	NIC, Region 1, Nashua, New Hampshire
	American Legion 83rd Anniversary Celebration—Philadelphia County Dinner
April	
6	Dept of PA, Dept. Department President's Testimonial Dinner
	Dept. of Maryland Membership Visit
	NIC, Region 2, Cherry Hill, New Jersey
May	
7-9	Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
18-19	Dept. of Maryland DEC Meeting, Westernport
21	U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Connecticut
27	Memorial Day Services, Arlington National Cemetery, WDC
June	
9	Flag Day, Round-Up, Membership – Dept. of PA
	Dept. Convention of Massachusetts, Pittsfield
July	
12-14	Dept. Convention of Delaware, Dover
17-20	Dept. Convention of New York, Albany
August	
26-30	National Convention, North Carolina, Charlotte

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James F. Mareschal, Missouri

It has been a distinct honor to serve as National Vice Commander of the American Legion under the leadership of National Commander. Richard Santos for the year 2001-2002. Commander Santos I program of Reaching Out In All Directions. was a great success for all of the programs of the American Legion. Increase in membership and the National Emergency Fund are just two of the programs to benefit from this push. Two other programs were reactivated, the Family Support Network and the Blue Star Banner program. These two programs are especially important to aid and support the families and the victims. of the terrorists attack of September 11, 2001 .and all military personnel around the world. It has been an honor and a distinct privilege to work with Commander Santos on all of the American Legion programs.

I have called and written to District Commanders and Department Commanders within my Region several times throughout the year to encourage member ship and support of the Commander's programs. I called and congratulated and offered support to Commanders of new posts as well as their District Commanders.

All of the States in the Southeast Region have worked very hard on their Membership Goals, and we are proud to finish in first place in membership.

I would like to thank Michele Steinmetz for all of the help and guidance she has given me this year. Thank you also to all the great staff at National American Legion headquarters.

My travels for 2001-2002 years are listed below:

September

4-8	Brainstorming se4ssions and phone calls to District and Department Commanders, Indianapolis
9-11	Legislative briefing and National Commander's testimony, Washington, D.C.

October

5-6	National Commander's Homecoming, Baltimore, MD
9-11	Fall Meetings of NEC, Indianapolis
26-28	Dept. Of Virginia DEC Meeting, Hampton, VA

November

2-4	Dept. Of Missouri Fall Conference, Jefferson City, MO
15-18	Dept. Of South Carolina Fall Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC

December

No activity on record

January 2002

19-20	Dept. of Tennessee Mid-Winter Conference, Knoxville, TN
25-26	Dept. of Kentucky Winter Conference, Louisville, KY

February

1-3	Dept. Of West Virginia Mid-Winter Conference, Huntington, WV
12	Lincoln Pilgrimage, Springfield, IL
22-24	Dept. Of Missouri Spring Conference, Jefferson City, MO
28-March 3	Dept. Of Florida Membership Rally, Mulberry

March

12-14	2002 Washington Conference
23-24	Dept. Of Georgia Spring Conference

April	
5-7	NIC, Region 3, Macon, GA
15-16	Memorial Ceremony Honoring the Late Captain Daniel G. McCollum, Pickens, SC
25-28	Dept of Florida Membership visit
May	
7-9	Spring Meetings of NEC, Indianapolis
31	U.S. Military Academy Awards Ceremony, West Point, NY
June	
14-16	Dept. Convention of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
July	
11-13	Dept. Convention of Florida, Kissimmee, FL
27-29	National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, MD
August	
27-30	2002 National Convention, Charlotte, NC

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Dale R. Salmen, Nevada

It is indeed a pleasure and honor to have served as National Vice Commander under the leadership of National Commander Ric Santos. He has proven himself to be a strong adaptable leader in lieu of all the outside influences this year such as September 11th and the Pledge of Allegiance decision. Ric is a man who will come into a room, shake hands and make everyone feel great.

My goals this year were membership and more fun within the Legion family. In my travels I emphasized retention, reconnect, Direct Mailing Solicitation and mentoring. The fun part was easy. Membership was a success. We met our goal and more. The Departments in the Western region are: Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Hawaii, Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Montana, New Mexico, California, Oregon, and the foreign Departments Mexico and the Philippines.

A summary of my activities over the past year follows:

August 2001	
23-31	National Convention, San Antonio, Texas. Elected and Installed
September	
4-8	Attended a reception for Secretary of Veterans Affairs Principi in Indianapolis. Brainstorming Sessions & Phone Calls to District & Dept Commanders, Indianapolis
9-16	Legislative Briefings & National Commander's Testimony, Washington, D.C.
21-23	National Information Conference, Region 8, Boise, Idaho
October	
4-6	National Commander's Homecoming, Baltimore, Maryland
7-11	Commanders & Adjutants meeting in Indianapolis Fall meetings of National Executive Committee, Indianapolis
17	Meeting with Reno Convention Authority regarding hosting National Convention 2007
November	
2-4	Department of Nevada Executive Committee meeting, Elko
10	Guest speaker at Veteran's Day activities in Round Mountain, Nevada
16-18	Guest speaker at District #27 meeting in Big Pine, California

December

15	Guest speaker at Past Department Commander Ron Gutzman Homecoming, Carson City, Nevada

January 2002

4-6	Guest Speaker at Area #3 meeting in Delano, California
7	Attended National President Sherry McLaughlin's dinner in Las Vegas, Nevada
10-13	Department of Idaho Mid-Winter Conference, Boise,
14-16	Accompanied National Commander Ric Santos on his Official visit to Nevada
18-20	Department of California Membership Visit at Brawley
24-27	Department of Colorado Mid-Winter Conference, Colorado Springs

February

7-10	Department of Alaska Southeast District Convention, Haines

March

1-3	Department of California Mid-Winter Conference, Stockton
7-10	Department of Alaska Western District Convention, Anchorage
11-13	Washington Conference, Washington D.C.
14-18	Department of Montana District Meetings, Billings & Big Timber
22-24	Department of Utah Mid-Winter Conference, Salt Lake City

April

5-7	National Information Conference, Region 7, Las Vegas, Nevada
9-15	Department of Washington Post Visitations & District Conferences Uniontown, Medical Lake, Moses Lake and Fort Lewis Veterans Affairs, McCord AFB
16-18	Liaison for National Convention Committee in Reno, Nevada
19-21	Department of Oregon Spring Department Executive Committee Meeting, John Day
22-24	Hosted Candidate Ron Conley's visit to the Department of Nevada
25-30	Department of Montana Membership Visit, Glendive & Opheim

May

5-7	Spring Meetings of National Executive Committee, Indianapolis
17-19	Guest Speaker at Vietnam Veteran's Day in Sylmar, California
23-26	Department of New Mexico Post Visitations

June

1-2	Guest Speaker at District #16 Convention in Lompoc, California
6-9	Department Convention of Mexico, Lake Chapala
13-16	U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Awards Ceremony, Kings Point, NY
20-23	Department Convention of Arizona, Chandler
26-30	Department Convention of Wyoming, Torrington

July

2	Presented Blue Star Corporation Banner to Round Mountain Gold Corporation, Round Mountain, Nevada
12-14	Department Convention of Nevada, Fallon

August

2	Installed Officers of Post #19 in Hawthorne, Nevada
9-11	Attended Fun Days in Elko, Nevada with the Departments of Montana,
22-30	National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina

The highlight of my year was September 12, 2001 at the mirror pond in Washington

D.C. People stood 17 deep around the pond holding candles, waving flags and singing patriotic songs. About 90% were in their 20's and 30's, showing the youth of America will stand up and be counted. It made me feel very proud to be an American.

I am grateful to everyone in the Legion Family for making this year one of the best of my life.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
Dr. David F Russell, Virginia

At the 2001 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, on August 30th, I was honored to receive the appointment as your National Chaplain from National Commander Santos for 2001-2002.

The year has been an active year filled with many events. Starting in September when the Americanism and Children & Youth staff liaison called to give me some dates and, to inform me I needed a theme for the Chaplain's Conference Oct. 26-28, 2001. Also I set up a meeting with him for October 9th when I was to attend the fall National Executive Committee meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

September 11th I watched, as did the rest of the nation, in disbelief as three aircraft were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

September 25th the staff liaison called to ask my participation in a special bulletin to be sent to all American Legion Posts and religious bodies seeking to set a special time of Prayer for our Nation at this time.

I called to set up a teleconference to talk about Veterans Day November 11th, which we observe on Sunday this year (2001).With the events of 9-11 and our troops being called up, the Legion wanted to have something to send out to all the Department Chaplains to be relayed to the local Posts to give a spiritual and patriotic theme. Additionally, a church bulletin insert was produced and set out to all church bodies asking for their assistance.

As your National Chaplain I attended the National Commander's Home coming in Greenbelt and Baltimore, Maryland.

I attended the Fall National Executive Committee meetings and visited with headquarters staff to plan the annual Department Chaplains Conference October 26th through October 28th.

As Chairman for the Chaplains Conference in October, I had the opportunity to work with Harvey H. Klee Department Chaplain (TX) and Past National Chaplain Cal Turpin (CA).We had a very good and informative conference for all. Rev. James T. Akers, Department Chaplain (KS) led a discussion on "Grief Counseling in a Group Setting: Healing the Hurts."Department Chaplain Gerald Theriot (LA) sought to inform us on the uses of an Internet web page and the many different ways we could reach and help others. Chaplain Elliott Foss Department Chaplain (GA) lead us in the POW/MIA Remembrance Service and Ceremony. Much was discussed on the role of a chaplain at the post, department and national level in the light of the events of 9-11.

I received a letter from a member of a post in Minnesota, requesting my opinion on a difference between himself and his minister, in displaying the American flag in a worship service. This was just one of many such questions which I sought to answer by e-mail or letter.

In December I was overjoyed to receive a fax from Lynn Luthy, assistant to the Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, formally inviting me to open the Senate with prayer as the guest chaplain on March 12, 2002.I received a formal invitation shortly thereafter from Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, Senate Chaplain.

I also received a phone call from Don Myhill from the U.S. House of Representatives

telling me that my Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis had arranged for me to give the opening prayer in the House.

The annual Washington Conference was held March 10-13 at the Hyatt Regency Washington D.C. I attended the Ye STEIVOS' Conference breakfast 7:00AM and was awarded an Honorary Life Membership.

March 12th, Mark Seavey, Assistant Director, Legislative Division took me to the House of Representatives where I had the honor to be the guest Chaplain. I met Father Daniel Coughlin the Chaplain of the House and Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House. He took us to the office where John Adams died and we sat on the very couch he passed away on. At the time it was the Office of the Leader of the House, now it is a chamber reserved for the women of the House. He also showed us the House Speakers reception area where the paintings of the past house leaders are. The House Chaplain Rev. Daniel Coughlin was very gracious and took me to the House where I opened the morning session with prayer. I entered the House and stood in the same spot Presidents have spoken, opening the 9AM session with prayer.

Mark again escorted me to the office of Senator John Warner in the Russell Senate Office Building. We were escorted by his staff assistant Dorien Steeves to meet Senate Chaplain Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie with whom I had an enjoyable visit. Dr. Ogilvie mentioned to me that he was a national finalist in the Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest. He said that experience and the encouragement he received from the Legionnaires caused him to pursue public speaking, which eventually led him to the ministry. I then had the double honor to open the U.S. Senate in prayer, followed by some very gratifying remarks by Senator Warner. Mark Seavey was a great help to me making sure I was every place on time.

As a minister, opening both the House and the Senate in prayer was indeed the highlight of my trip to Washington. It was a very moving experience for me to stand in those historic chambers and offer prayer for our nations leaders.

I attended the Spring National Executive Committee Meeting on May 6th to the 9th in Indianapolis. Attended all functions with opening and closing prayers.

I attended the Virginia Departments Convention in Norfolk Virginia July 12th and 13th staying one night at the James Madison on Granby street. I met many friends and spoke with Senators Allen and Warner of Virginia. I met Commander Santos and enjoyed a wonderful time.

On July 21st, I arrived at Marymount University where Boys Nation was housed. I met Virginia NECman Dr. George Bloom and after checking in, I was issued a staff shirt and we went to lunch. Afterward we attended the Boys Nation mock party conventions. It was interesting to watch and hear these future leaders play the role of senators and seek to elect their party leaders to the office of president and vice president.

We traveled by bus to join National Commander Santos in Greenbelt, Md. for a dinner prepared by the Greenbelt Legion Post. After enjoying a delicious meal and hearing Commander Santos' excellent speech we traveled by bus to view the Vietnam Veterans, Korean Veterans and Lincoln Memorials. Returning at dusk to Marymount University.

I traveled with Boys Nation by bus to Arlington National Cemetery and joined National Commander Santos and two Boys Nation Senators in laying a Memorial Wreath at the "Tomb of the Unknowns." Walking along the cemetery roads you are struck with the realization of the many lives that have been given to defend this land we live in…Also, as I walked, dripping with perspiration and sweltering with the heat of Washington in July, I wondered how our early Senators could do any work at all without the benefit of air conditioning.

I attended the 84th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. August 23rd through 29th.

Along with my other duties I had the honor of leading the Patriotic Religious Service Sunday, August 25, 2002 in Charlotte Convention Center. Assisting in the service were Rev. Thomas Glander, Past National Chaplain Sons of the American Legion (MI), Mrs. Betty Turner, National Chaplain, American Legion Auxiliary (GA), Rev. James Jarrell, Department Chaplain (NC) and Mrs. Joyce B. Willis, Department Chaplain (NC).Those assisting in placing the Memorial Wreaths were: for The American Legion: Richard J. Santos (MD), National Commander, Robert W Spanogle (MI), National Adjutant; placing the wreath For The American Legion Auxiliary Mrs. Sherry McLaughlin (IA), National President; Mrs. Peggy Sappenfield (IN), National Secretary; placing the wreath for The Sons of The American Legion, Clifford A. Smith (MA), National Commander; Brian O'Hearne (MA), National Adjutant and placing the wreath for The Eight and Forty : Mrs. Venita A. Holthau (WA), Le Chapeau National, and Mrs. Elyline Schweitzer (CA), La Secretaire-Cassiere, Nationale. Placing the wreath Remembering Those Who have Died In Our Nations Fight Against Terrorism Dr. David F. Russell, (VA) National Chaplain, American Legion, Mrs. Betty Turner (GA) National Chaplain, The American Legion Auxiliary.

I also attended the pre-NEC Meeting, Past Department Commander's Luncheon, opening of the 84th National Convention, and the National Commander's banquet at which I gave the Invocation and the Benediction.

In closing, I wish to thank National Commander Richard (Ric) Santos for my appointment, those from National H.Q. from Robert Spanogle, our National Adjutant, on down for their invaluable aid in my appointments, housing and travel, but most of all to Bob Caudell, Assistant Director, Americanism and Children & Youth and his secretary June Davis for seeing I was at the right place at the right time and helping in the answering of my correspondence. I am deeply in their debt. Thank you each and everyone of you for helping make this one of the most memorable years of my life.

God bless you all.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN
Walter L. Davis, Michigan

Serving as the 43rd National Historian of The American Legion has been both enjoyable and rewarding. Thanks go to National Commander Richard J. Santos of Maryland for the opportunity to service on a national level. I also thank my good friend Past Department Commander, Alton R. Ford, Michigan for his guidance and mentorship.

Exactly 12 days after being appointed National Historian, terrorists attacked America. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives in New York City, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania during the September 11, 2001 attacks. Immediately, I started talking to Legionnaires and historians about the importance of patriotism, especially during chaotic times such as the ones Americans are faced with today.

In October 2001 the National Histories Contests were held during the National Fall Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 50 entries judged by 32 members of the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL). Contest results were given at the National Executive Committee meeting. The winners are as follow:

- One-Year Department Narrative History—not selected.
- One-Year Department Yearbook History—the Department of Wisconsin.
- One-Year Post Narrative History—Ibell-Jacobson-Smith Post 61, Deep River, Connecticut.
- One-Year Post Pictorial Yearbook History—Rosetown Memorial Post 542, Roseville, Minnesota.

Immediately following the history contest, a banquet was hosted by NADHAL to recognize its officers and the newly appointed National Historian. I had the opportunity to speak to many historians who represented a significant number of departments of The American Legion.

In November 2001, the National American Legion College was held at the Indianapolis Legion Headquarters. As a former Legion College graduate, I was invited to serve as a facilitator to some of the future leaders of The American Legion.

A ceremony held on Veterans' Day 2001 attracted over 300 people including representatives from all veterans' organization in Jackson County. I participated in a Veterans Day ceremony in Jackson, Michigan. I was instrumental in the planning and the execution of the event.

The Department of Michigan hosted a Legislative Banquet in Lansing, the state capital, in February 2002. There I, along with other Legionnaires and members of the Legion family, had the opportunity to discuss issues with our legislators that were important to veterans. There were over 40 state legislators in attendance.

National Commander Santos attended a dinner in his honor, which was hosted by the Department of Michigan in February 2002. I had the honor of being a guest at the head table along with the Lieutenant Governor and four state senators.

I attended an Americanism Banquet in Lincoln Park, Michigan. State Senator Valde Garcia and I were guest speakers.

During the 42nd Annual Washington Conference held in March 2002, I met several U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives. The Representatives from Michigan were invited to a reception hosted by the Department of Michigan in the Rayburn House Officer Building. Once again, I was afforded the opportunity, along with members of the Michigan delegation, to speak to government officials about issues that relate to veterans.

In March of 2002, Bresnan Communications MCTV interviewed me during a video production. I spoke about the duties of the National Historian, the history of The American Legion and its relevance today as compared to when it was founded in 1919. The videotape was aired in every major city in Michigan.

I participated in a Loyalty Day dinner, which honored veterans in May 2002. I was instrumental in planning the event, which was attended by more than 100 people including representatives from all the veterans' organizations in the Jackson County.

I was the guest speaker at Michigan Leadership College held in May 2002. The leadership college is held each year to enhance the leadership skills of members of the Legion family. The program is also intended to increase the participants' knowledge of The American Legion.

In May 2002, I addressed the NEC at the Spring Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. I spoke about war, patriotism and the important role The American Legion plays during troubled times. I also spoke about upcoming activities at the National Convention.

The Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony, which was held in Jackson, Michigan attracted hundreds of spectators. Representatives from all the veterans' organizations in Jackson County attended the event as well as the local National Guard, county and city officials and four school bands. I was instrumental in organizing the event and participating in the ceremonies.

Arrangements for the National Historian's Luncheon were completed early in April 2002. Quincy Collins the guest speaker is a native of Charlotte, North Carolina. He spent seven and one half years as a Prisoner of War in a Vietnam prison camp. Collins retired as a Colonel in the U.S. Air Force with two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars and many other medals, awards and decorations.

As my term as National Historian draws to a close, I will have visited every district in

Michigan and many posts throughout Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. I have assisted in starting several Legion posts and providing leadership training. It has been an honor to serve on a national level in an organization that makes a difference in the lives of so many people. It is an experience I will always cherish.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE
P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

Contracts

The following forty-two (42) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

- Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and The American Legion Department of Tennessee National Convention Corporation, covering the convocation of the 2004 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Nashville, State of Tennessee, has been executed.
- Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and the American Legion National Convention Corporation of Hawaii, covering the convocation of the 2005 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Honolulu, State of Hawaii, has been executed.
- A Local Exchange Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Time Warner Telecom, whereby Time Warner Telecom will provide telephone voice services for National Headquarters' telephone system.
- A lease agreement and maintenance agreement by and between The American Legion and General Electric Capital Corporation, whereby General Electric Capital Corporation shall deliver, install and maintain equipment and software for use on The American Legion's telephone system.
- Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fuller Engineering Service Corporation, whereby Fuller Engineering will provide maintenance on the air conditioning in the computer room.
- Memorandum of Agreement by and between The American Legion and the National Veterans Legal Services Program, whereby National Veterans Legal Services will provide consultations, informal training of Department Services Officers, BVA staff and claims/representatives, case work review, briefings on proposed changes in law and regulations and assistance in methods for prompt adjudication of veterans' appeal cases.
- Marketing Agreement by and between The American Legion and ADT Security Services, Inc. whereby ADT Security Services, Inc. will market electronic security services and equipment to The American Legion members.
- Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Comtect Group USA as business partner with IBM Corporation, whereby Comtect will provide maintenance service and support for certain computer hardware equipment located at National Headquarters.
- Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Peak Technologies, Inc. whereby Peak Technologies, Inc.
- will provide maintenance service for certain line bar printers located at National Headquarters and the Fort Harrison office.
- Agreement by and between The American Legion and R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, whereby R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company will print and distribute The American Legion Magazine.

- Letter Agreement by and between The American Legion and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America whereby the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will reproduce and distribute a teaching kit which is copyrighted by The American Legion and titled "A Children's Guide to the Pledge of Allegiance"
- Eight (8) Baseball Regional Tournament Contracts and the Contract for The American Legion World Series.
- Five (4) List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass-mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:
  Brick Mills Studios, Inc.
  Barton-Cotton-Famous Hospitality, Inc. (Famous Artists Studios, Inc.)
  Association Group Insurance Administrators (AGIA)
  S. A. VanDyk, Inc.
- Nineteen (19) Subcontractor Standard List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:
  Aegon Special Markets Group
  Long Term Preferred Care
  Goodkind & Goodkind
  Summit
  Mailing Services of Pittsburgh
  VCT Versatile Card Technology
  Quebecor World Direct
  NGIC Insurance
  Adsell Companies
  Dataquik
  InfoUSA
  Regulus, Inc.
  Sports Graphics, Inc.
  EH Direct, Inc.
  Seabury & Smith
  The Semarca Group
  BPH Graphics
  Orion Direct
  Advertising Specialities

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

ESTATE OF LISA R. MICKENS, by and Through JoAnn Mickens and William Mickens; and WILLIAM MICKENS and JOANN MICKENS, Parents and Survivors of LISA R. MICKENS, Deceased,	)	CIVIL DIVISION
Plaintiffs,	)	No.: 1112 of 1999 GD

v.	)
	)
VAUGHN STEVENSON, an adult	)
Individual; AMERICAN LEGION #762,	)
A Corporation t/d/b/a AMERICAN	)
LEGION; and ROSE FAIDLEY t/d/b/a/	)
THE SHOWBOAT,	)
	)
Defendants.	)

This is a wrongful death case in which Plaintiff alleges Lisa Mickens attended a bar or lounge called "The Showboat" and American Legion Post No. 762 and Defendant Stevenson entered Post No. 762 with a 9mm handgun. He was supposedly already visibly intoxicated yet was served more alcohol. Plaintiffs claim Lisa Mickens and Stevenson left the Post together and Stevenson allegedly shot Lisa Mickens. The Complaint was served on The American Legion but contains absolutely no allegations against the National Organization. Despite this defect, the case was referred to the insurance company who retained counsel. We have agreed that The American Legion will not file an answer. The case is continuing against the Post. We will continue to watch it.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

THE AMERICAN LEGION, a United	) Case No. 99 CV2614 BTM (LSP)
States Corporation,	)
	)
Plaintiff,	)
	)
vs.	)
	)
IMPERIAL VALLEY AMERICAN LEGION	)
HI-PASS CAMP, a California	)
Nonprofit Corporation,	)
	)
Defendant.	)

A complaint for unauthorized use of trade name, for false designation of origin and for injunction was filed in this case after The American Legion was served with a complaint in a civil action filed on behalf of Michael Doe, a minor, in the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego. The complaint named as defendants "American Legion" along with parties designated as "Hi-Pass Camp" and "American Legion Hi-Pass Camp Corp", among others. The American Legion National Office was unaware of the existence of an entity named "American Legion Hi-Pass Camp Corp" and upon investigation identified a California nonprofit corporation under the name "Imperial Valley American Legion Hi-Pass Camp", organized under Articles of Incorporation filed April 19, 1938.

After search of the records in the National Office of The American Legion failed to disclose that any entity under the name "Imperial Valley American Legion Hi-Pass Camp" had ever sought or obtained permission to use AMERICAN LEGION as a part of its corporate name, a written demand was made to Defendant and to certain of its officers to discontinue the use of The American Legion's name and mark in connection with

Defendant's activities. No response was received and the complaint was filed.

Thereafter, the parties settled all matters and the Court entered a final order that Imperial Valley American Legion Hi-Pass Camp shall amend its corporate name omitting the use of the name AMERICAN LEGION or any name confusingly similar thereto and file with the Court a statement in writing, under oath, setting forth in detail the manner in which they have complied with same. The state records were reviewed ninety (90) days from the judgment. The corporation did not complied with the order but filed a Petition in Bankruptcy. We petitioned the bankruptcy court to lift the automatic stay so that we can insure the name is corrected. This was granted and the name has been corrected. The case is over.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

CHESHIRE, SS

SUPERIOR COURT
C.A. NO

Joanne Cuzzi,
Plaintiff,
v.

John Humiston American Legion, John Humiston American Legion Post No. 11, American Legion, Jaffrey Memorial Post #5613, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Patricia Lambert and Sylvester DeRuosi,
Defendants

This is a dram shop case. The plaintiff, Joanne Cuzzi, alleges she sustained personal injuries in a motorcycle accident, which was the result of the negligent service of alcoholic beverages to the operator of the motorcycle, Anthony Cuzzi, her husband and herself, while they were attendees at John Humiston American Legion Post No. 11.

A Motion for Summary Judgment was filed. The case was settled by the insurance company for less than the estimated cost of the trial. The case is over.

ANNA C. GILKEY	)	Superior Court of California
	)	County of Orange
Plaintiff	)	Central Justice Center
	)	
vs.	)	
	)	Case No. 00CC09989
	)	
CITY OF ANAHEIM;	)	
ANAHEIM IN '99	)	
CONVENTION	)	
CORPORATION; THE	)	
AMERICAN LEGION AND	)	
DOES 1 TO 50	)	

This is a personal injury case wherein the plaintiff, Anna C. Gilkey, alleges in her complaint that while attending the National Convention in Anaheim, California she slipped

and fell due to water on the floor. The case is pending.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

NO. 00-5348
(C.A. No. 98-1183)

MARY LOUISE CUMMINGS,
Appellant,

v.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
Appellee

In this case, The American Legion has filed an Amicus Brief in support of plaintiff as authorized by Resolution No. 19, adopted by the National Executive Committee, October 18-19, 2000.

Plaintiff was a Navy flier. Portions of her personnel file were given to a novelist who allegedly used the information in a novel about naval flying. As a result, plaintiff says she was forced out of the Navy.

The trial court ruled that the *Feres* doctrine prevented her from bringing a privacy action and suing the United States Navy. The American Legion believes this is an unwarranted expansion of the *Feres* doctrine which, in this case, is being used to take away the rights of a veteran specifically protected by Congress.

The Appellate Court accepted the amicus petition of The American Legion and the brief. It ruled 2-1 in favor of the position of The American Legion. Ms Cummings can now proceed with her case. Even though our participation has ceased for the moment, we will continue to monitor the case.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

ANN S. AZDELL and	)	
DONALD B. FISHMAN,	)	
	)	
Appellants	)	DOCKET NUMBERS
	)	DC-300A-97-0368-I-1
v.	)	DC-300A-97-0369-I-1
	)	
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT,	)	
	)	
Agency.	)	

The American Legion as authorized in Resolution No. 2, adopted September 4, 2000 by the National Executive Committee is preparing to file an Amicus Brief in support of veterans' preference.

The matter is currently stayed procedurally. The brief will be filed when the stay is lifted.

In this case, the administrative law judge ruled against veterans' preference, labeling it "discriminatory". The American Legion is totally in favor of veterans' preference and will absolutely oppose such an unwarranted characterization. The case is currently stayed.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: CIO 99-2206

MARY KABASAKALIAN,

Plaintiff,

Vs.

ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA,

Defendant.

This is a slip and fall case against the Orange County Florida Convention Center because plaintiff allegedly tripped over a cord at the Orlando National Convention. The defense was tendered to The American Legion pursuant to the lease for the hall. The matter has been referred to our insurance company.

NO. GN102586

ELVIN R. ISCHY, JR.,	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
	§	
Plaintiff,	§	
	§	
vs.	§	TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS
	§	
CURTIS ISCHY, CURTIS "T.J."	§	
BELL, AMERICAN LEGION POST	§	
#317,THE AMERICAN LEGION OF	§	
TEXAS, AND THE AMERICAN	§	
LEGION	§	
Plaintiffs.	§	201st JUDICIAL DISTRICT

This case grows out of an alleged bar fight at a Post in Williamson County, Texas. One of the participants filed suit against his opponent, the Post, Post Officers, the Department and the National Organization.

The insurance company has declined coverage going beyond the four corners of the complaint. This is totally contrary to all practice and course of dealing with this insurance company. While relying on the ability of the plaintiff's attorney to properly plead has its problems, it has the advantage of being a very clear, bright line to determine coverage. This has been the course of dealing of The American Legion with Travelers Insurance since the policy was originally purchased. Now the claims' examiner in Texas insists that she has the right to go beyond the terms of the complaint. A bad faith letter has been sent to the

insurance company pointing out the deficiencies in their position.

In the meantime, counsel has been obtained and the defense is proceeding for the account of the insurance company. A Summary Judgment motion has been filed.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

ROBERT E. POLES, PLAINTIFF — IN FORMA PAUPERIS

V.

THE AMERICAN LEGION: — DOCKET NUMBER:
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS — 1:01CV05963
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA
SIXTH DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
GEORGE T. CORNISH POST 292
And for each listed above:
COMMANDER 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996
JUDGE ADVOCATE 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996
ADJUTANT 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996

This case was filed by an individual who attempted to change the operation of his Post. Many letters to the effect have been exchanged over the years. Mr. Poles refused to believe that the National Organization had no jurisdiction and could not solve his problem. Eventually, disciplinary charges were brought against Mr. Poles. As far as we know, he failed to appeal to the Department claiming that the National Organization had to solve his problem. Since the National Organization has no jurisdiction, Mr. Poles was advised to appeal to his Department. He refused to do so and has now sued including every member of the Executive Committee of the Post, Department and National Organization and a number of officers. The case has been filed but to date no summons has been issued. We will be keeping an eye on the case. Clearly, there is no jurisdiction or venue in New York City or in the Federal Courts in New York.

UNITED STATES MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
MSPB No. SF-3443-00-0085-1-1

CASSANDRA AUGUSTINE,
Appellant,
v.
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
Agency,
And
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT,
Intervenor.

In this case, The American Legion has filed an Amicus Brief in support of appellant, Cassandra M. Augustine, in order to address questions raised by the Board regarding statutes

of providing veterans' preference. The government has attempted to use the "Superior Student" program to undermine veterans' preference. While Ms. Augustine has apparently settled her case, we will continue to be alert for threats to veterans' preference.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

BEVERLY EDWARDS,	:	
Plaintiff,	:	
	:	
v.	:	Case No. AO201l06
	:	
HARTFORD LIFE INSURANCE	:	Judge Cartolano
COMPANY, et al.,	:	
Defendants	:	

Despite the fact that the premiums of a lapsed policy weren't paid, the plaintiff contends that she was the beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued by Hartford Life Insurance Company as part of The American Legion Insurance program. The insurance company is defending The American Legion.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
DISTRICT OF VERMONT

LEANN HASKELL	)	
Plaintiff	)	
	)	
	)	Civil Action Docket No.
	)	2:01-CV-324
	)	
AMERICAN LEGION, BALLARD-HOBART	)	
POST 36; AMERICAN LEGION,	)	
DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT, INC.;	)	
AND THE AMERICAN LEGION	)	
(NATIONAL ORGANIZATION),	)	
Defendants	)	

Plaintiff claims The American Legion, the Department of Vermont and Ballard-Hobart Post 36 failed to give her her COBRA rights under the Post's health plan and also claims a failure to pay health benefits and a violation of ERISA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, several Vermont laws and intentional infliction of emotion distress because the Post terminated her employment.

Plaintiff's attorney sent a letter asking The American Legion to waive service of process and voluntary enter the case to defend. Since the Post is independent and plaintiff did not work for The American Legion, this request was refused. Plaintiff's attorney was advised of the law, the Post's independence and that The American Legion would seek fees from the attorney for a frivolous and harassing case if The American Legion were served. This occurred in October, 2001. To date, we have not received service of process.

OTHER LEGAL MATTERS

There are a number of other legal proceedings in which The American Legion has been contacted for discovery purposes which are not part of or named in the particular cause and a number of cases are in the beginning stages but not yet filed.

The National Judge Advocate has rendered 1044 written opinions on questions which have been submitted by the several Departments and/or Posts of The American Legion, National Officers, staff members and individual members of our organization. These opinions involved matters legal, such as contracts, probate matters, federal tax questions, torts, insurance matters, Articles of Incorporation, civil rights statutes, retirement benefits under the law and other matters of a legal nature; problems concerning the interpretation and construction of the National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion, policy matters, many of which matters required a great deal of legal research.

In each instance, when appropriate, a copy of the opinion rendered was furnished to each of the following so that they would be acquainted with the decision affecting their Department; National Executive Committeeman, Department Commander, Department Adjutant, and the Department Judge Advocate of the Department involved.

Many oral opinions were also rendered to the National Officers, National Commission Chairmen, to Department Officers, and to staff Directors of the national organization upon subjects involving matters legal, financial, administrative and policy.

There were six (6) written opinions rendered during the year to the National Secretary of the American Legion Auxiliary, in response to queries submitted to her for determination by me.

The National Judge Advocate has also rendered oral advice on matters legal and administrative to the National Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary on many occasions during the past year.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

The National Judge Advocate in accordance with established policy, has reviewed all manuscripts of articles destined for future publication in *The American Legion Magazine* and *The Dispatch*, for the purpose of expunging statements or materials questionable in character, contained therein which might subject The American Legion to a suit in libel. To date 355 manuscripts have been reviewed and appropriate comments in connection therewith were transmitted, when necessary, to the Publisher or Editor of The American Legion Magazine.

FIRING LINE

At the 1955 National Convention of The American Legion it was concluded that all statements made in each issue of the Firing Line should be documented and that the National Judge Advocate should approve each issue prior to publication in order to protect The American Legion from actions in libel. In accordance therewith all issues have been reviewed and either approved by the National Judge Advocate prior to publication, or rejected in whole or in part, with appropriate comments.

THE AMERICAN LEGION RETIREMENT PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND SUBORDINATE GROUPS THEREOF

In accordance with the requirements of law, The American Legion has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2001 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Retirement Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also prepared the Summary Annual Report for The American Legion Retirement Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law.

EMPLOYEES' SALARY SAVINGS (401(K)) PLAN

In accordance with the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) The American Legion has filed all of the necessary Annual Return Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2001 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Employees' Salary Savings 401(k) Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also is overseeing preparation of the Summary Annual Report for the Employees' Salary Savings Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law.

PARLIAMENTARY DUTIES

The National Judge Advocate attended the past National Convention of The American Legion and all meetings of the National Executive Committee and has served both bodies in the capacity of National Parliamentarian.

OTHER DUTIES

The National Judge Advocate functions as Secretary for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. and attended all but one of the board meetings of said corporation and caused the minutes of each meeting to be prepared and distributed. The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel on matters involving to date, contracts, labor issues, real estate law, postal regulations, corporate organizations and insurance.

The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel for and a director of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. In that capacity, the National Judge Advocate reviews contracts such as the trust for the flag essay scholarship fund and attends board meetings.

The Office of the National Judge Advocate files required charitable registrations and reports to allow The American Legion National Organization to solicit funds in the states with charitable solicitation registration laws. To date 25 registrations and reports have been filed. Some counties even attempt to require registrations and reports.

The National Emergency Fund has been converted to a Trust and an application filed with the Internal Revenue Service for charitable status.

MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL RETIREMENT COMMITTEE AND SALARY SAVINGS COMMITTEE

The National Judge Advocate, as a member of The National Retirement Committee of National Headquarters, The American Legion, and Chairman of the Employee's Salary Savings Committee, has attended and participated in the meetings held by these committees during the past year.

I have also, in response to requests, drafted legal and other documents for the use of

National Officers of The American Legion and Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the past year I have met with and attended numerous conferences with officials of outside corporations and the government for the purpose of representation or for the rendering of advice and guidance for and on behalf of The American Legion on matters legal and administrative. In conclusion, the National Judge Advocate wishes to thank all National Officers, Department Officials, and members of the National Executive Committee for the valuable assistance and cooperation extended to him during the past year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, Executive Director

Three major responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Director, whose office is located in the National Headquarters, Indianapolis:

- During temporary absences of the National Adjutant from The American Legion National Headquarters, he acts for him. He additionally performs such duties as may be assigned to him by the National Adjutant to assist in meeting the responsibilities of that office.
- He is in charge of the Administrative Services Division, which has the following divisions under that responsibility: Human Resources, Maintenance, Library, and the E. A. Blackmore Museum.
- He serves on the Personnel Committee, Publications Board, HPC/PM Board of Directors, and the IT Committee.

The Administrative Services Division also provides all secretarial assistance to the executive officers of The American Legion, and all Division Directors resident at the Indianapolis National Headquarters report to the Executive Director.

MAIL
June 1, 2001—May 31, 2002

Incoming Letters (distributed to Divisions for processing)	959,761
Incoming Parcels	7,480
Outgoing Letters/Parcels(Exclusive of National Emblem Sales)	9,728,432

FREIGHT AND EXPRESS
June 1, 2001—May 31, 2002

Out (cartons)	2,922
Out (pounds)	202,499
UPS (in)	1,674
UPS (out)	9,039

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Library
Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Librarian

The mission of The American Legion Library is to provide an information storage and retrieval system for The American Legion.

Indexing of documents continues. Resolutions have been indexed back to 1950. Staff vacancies have been the major reason that *The American Legion Magazine* and *The Dispatch* indexes are not more current.

Requests for information from researchers has increased. The Web site of the Legion displays our background and this, too, generates visitors and researchers to the Library. Our collection of military unit histories is excellent and draws many historians. Some projects that the staff have worked on have been:

- Compiling of various subject lists.
- News from *The American Legion Magazine* from 25, 50 and 75 years ago on the Legion's web site.
- The resolution process with The National Legion College.

Without our donations, our collection could not be as valuable as it is. One donor in particular stands out with his generous contributions. Robert H. Barnes from Battle Creek, Michigan has contributed many of the books in our collection and his name is often mentioned in the list of contributors. Among other new books added to The American Legion Library, along with the names of the donors, are the following:

1942 War Map, donated by Pauline Hurst. Battle Maps, donated by Pauline Hurst. *After The Battle*, donated by Robert Barnes. *The History Of The U.S. Army Corps Of* Engineers, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. *2001 Reserve Forces Almanac*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. *2000 Retired Military Almanac*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. *2001 Uniformed Services Almanac*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. *United States Air Force Pilot Training Class 55-V Fourth Reunion*, donated by Robert Barnes. *After The Battle*, donated by Robert Barnes. Bales, Bob, *Ernie Pyle*, donated by Connie Lamm. Blandford, Edmund, *Fatal Decisions*, donated by Robert Barnes. Blandford, Edmund, *SS Intelligence*, donated by Robert Barnes. Blume, George , *Unto Four Is Given*, donated by author George Blume. Blume, George, *Cauliflower Sunday*, donated by author George Blume. Blume, George, *What Might Be Called The Bill Of Rights* , donated by George Blume. Blume, George, *The Constitution*, donated by George Blume. Brown, Anthony Cave, *Bodyguard Of Lies*, donated by Lucille Moore.

Chennault, Anna, *A Thousand Springs* , donated by Lucille Moore. Clardy, John , *Confessions Of The Willis Creek Gang*, donated by John Clardy. Cull, Brian and Galea, Frederick, *Hurricanes Over Malta* , donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To James Pickering. Doyle, David, *True Men And Traitors* , donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Colonel Arthur Broussard. Fowle, Barry, ed., *Builders And Fighters*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School - History Office. Franks, Norman and Giblin, Hal. Mccrery, Nigel, *Under The Guns Of The Red Baron* , donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Captain W. D. Rice. Freeman, Roger , *The Mighty Eighth In Art* , donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Don Nelson. Freeman, Roger, *American Eagles*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To John Foote. Frey, Hugo editor , *Victory Song Book*, donated by Pauline Hurst. Giles, Henry.

Giles and Janice Holt, *The G.I. Journal Of Sergeant Giles*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. Giles, Janice Holt, *The Damned Engineers*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School - History Office. Hatfield, J.H. Mamatas, Nick, *Fortunate Son*, donated by Robert Barnes. Havill, Adrian, *The Spy Who Stayed Out In The Cold* , donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To W. J. Ahlstrom. Heiman, Grover , *Aerial Photography* , donated by Carl Levi, Vice Chairman Finance Commission. Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Reg Thackeray. Holmes, Tony, *American Eagles*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To John Mcninch. Ivie, Tom , *Aerial Reconnaissance*, donated by Ron Darrah, Jalali, Ali Ahmad. Grau, Lester , *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare* , donated by

Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Colonel James Cole. Johnson, David Alan , *Germany's Spies And Saboteurs*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Captain Fred Embleton. Kane, Elisha Kent, *Arctic Explorations*, donated by R.R. Donnelly & Sons Company. Limbaugh, David, *Absolute Power*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To Lieutenant Jerry Davenport. Macarthur, John, *The Selling Of Free Trade*, donated by Robert Barnes. Macdonald, John, *Great Battlefields Of The World*, donated by Bob Barnes. Dedicated To The Victims Of The Attack Of September 11, 2001.

Macksey, Kenneth, *Tank Versus Tank*, donated by Robert Barnes. Marshall, Frank. Spaulding, Fred, *Ripcord Casualty Report*, donated by Fred Spaulding. Martin, Joseph Plumb and Scheer, George Ed., *Private Yankee Doodle*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. Nolan, Keith, *Ripcord*, donated by Fred Spaulding. O'Brien, Pat, Lieutenant , *Outwitting The Hun* , donated by Lucille Moore. O'Reilly, Bill, *The No Spin Zone*, donated by Robert Barnes. Oddone, Patrick, *Dunkirk 1940*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated To G. T. Beckman. Olson, Barbara , *The Final Days*, donated by Robert Barnes. Pace, Steve, *B-2 Spirit*, donated by Robert Barnes. Dedicated In Honor Of National Historian Walter Davis. Page, Arthur W., *Our 110 Day's Fighting*, donated by Thomas P. Jones, Major General. Ploger, Robert, Major General, *U.S. Army Engineers 1965-1970*,donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School - History Office. Plumb, Charlie , *I'm No Hero* , donated by Carl Levi, Vice Chairman Finance Commission.

Romjue, John, *American Army Doctrine For The Post-Cold War*, donated by Janet Fisher, United States Army Engineer School–History Office. Roosevelt, James and Toperoff, Sam, *A Family Matter*, donated by Lucille Moore. Saunders, Hilary St. George, *Combined Operations*, donated by Lucille Moore. Schweitzer, Theodore, Capt., editor, *Iceland Defense Force* , donated by Carl Levi, Vice Chairman Finance Commission. Triplet, William and Feller, Robert, *A Youth In The Meuse-Argonne*, donated by Robert Ferrer. Triplet, William S. Ferrell, Robert , *In The Philippines And Okinawa*, donated by Robert Ferrell. Triplet, William S. Ferrell, Robert, *A Colonel In The Armored Divisions*, donated by Robert Ferrell. Vickers, Philip , *Das Reich*, donated by Robert Barnes. Weiss, Mel, *The Military Retiree's Ready Reference Of Telephone Numbers*, donated by Mel Weiss. Westheimer, *David, Lighter Than A Feather*, donated by Lucille Moore.

Correspondence Received and Filed	5,946
Bulletins, Reports, etc. Received and Filed	521
Periodicals Received	11,648
Books, Pamphlets and *The American Legion Magazine* Catalogued	462
Correspondence Written by National Historian	429
Correspondence Written by Librarian	416
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Mailed	641
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Returned	321
Prominent Legionnaire Entries to Membership File	29,011
Photos Indexed	8,021
Requests Answered via Telephone	9,651
Requests Answered via Visits to Library	632
Follow-ups of Correspondence	450
Items Microfilmed	31,097
Membership search and forwarding service	621
Rolls of Microfilm Added to Stock	52
E-mail	17,595

Museum
Joseph J. Hovish, Curator

The Emil A. Blackmore Museum continues to be visited by individuals and groups. Our visitors book also show most states represented. Represented countries of visitors included the Czech Republic, Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico, France, and the Philippines.

Once again, we thank our donors for their contributions to the collection. Significant objects added in the past year, with the donors' name, include the following:

75th Anniversary Of The Italian Air Force Centenary Of Enzo Ferrari's Birth; First Day Cover, donated by Robert Barnes. American Legion Uniform Jacket and Trousers, WWI Memorial Post 109, Department of Pennsylvania, donated by June Wallach. Canvas Water Bucket and Canvas Wash Basin (?) Used By Larue Carter, World War I, Used By Dr. Frank Ramsey, World War II SW Pacific, donated By Indiana Medical History Museum. Celebrate The Century Limited Edition Stamp Series, donated by Robert Barnes.

Menu Motor Transport Co. 21 Thanksgiving Dinner Fort Bliss, Texas November 28, 1918; United States Honorable Service Lapel Pin, World War I; Insignia, Motor Transportation Corps (Winged Helmet On Wheel) Match Holder, donated By James N. Bardin. National Commander Coin; National Commander Ric Santos, 2001-2002; Reaching Out In All Directions; In Recognition Of Outstanding Performance, donated By National Commander Richard Santos. Photograph Of South Pasadena Post 140 Drum And Bugle Corps; President Herbert Hoover On South Lawn Of White House October 4, 1930, donated By William Proctor, Alternate National Executive Committeeman. Two Officer's Shoulder Knots (Left & Right) (Medical?); Two Shoulder Straps (Colonel?); Red Braided Cord; United States Army Message Book, donated By Indiana Medical History Museum.

United States Flag 48-Star Flag, Flown In Kandahar (Qandahar) Afghanistan On March 5, 2002, donated By Henry Goffinet. United States Flag - 50-Star POW-MIA Flag, Operational Detachment Alpha 556, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group Airborne, United States Navy Uniform, donated by Wayne Brodhecker. Washington Fair Commemorative Envelope, Washington, VT, donated By Paul Tenney, Past National Historian. World War I United States Army Uniform, Medic, 2 Service Stripes (1 Year Overseas War Service), donated By Jeff Faires. World War II United States Navy Uniform Chief Petty Officer, First Class Recruiter Rating, 5 4-Year Service Stripes Honorable Service 'Badge' (Ruptured Duck) Sewn On, donated By Nancy Warren. World War II U.S. Army Air Force Uniform, Patches, Insignias And Personal Effects, PFC Walter Sandage, donated By Donna Sandage, Ph.D.

Internet Operations
Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director

The American Legion's Internet Operations group resides in the Member Benefits Division, located at Legion Building #2 on Fort Benjamin Harrison. The American Legion web site *www.legion.org* provides the organization with an efficient and effective means in which to communicate with Legionnaires, the veteran community and the general public.

The American Legion's newly redesigned web-site provides over 1,100 web pages of information relating to the organization and is divided into easy to navigate areas. Over 900,000 unique individuals visited the Legion's site since August 2001 and over 4

Over 900,000 unique individuals visited the Legion's site since August 2001 and over 4 million pages were viewed. Some of the more popular areas include: The Legion's response to the September 11 attack on America (on-going), Flag Education, Legion Baseball, Legion Magazine, and Veterans Affairs, to name a few. The Internet Operations staff is also responsible for the management and maintenance of the Citizens Flag Alliance web-site, which communicates news regarding the flag amendment issue to the member organizations of the Citizens Flag Alliance, representing over 20 million Americans, as well as the general public.

The Internet Operations staff is responsible reading all incoming e-mail to the organization via the web-site and forwarding them to the appropriate divisions for response. Tens of thousands of e-mails were read and distributed this year, and that number continues to grow.

As the role of the Internet and e-mail communications continues to grow in our society, The American Legion web-site will continue to play a vital role in membership acquisition. This year (since January 02) 3,343 new members have signed up via The American Legion's web-site, which is on-track to, more than, double the number from the previous year (2533). Prospective members have a variety of options available to them depending on what they are most comfortable with. 1) Veterans can ask to sign up by sending a message to the Membership Division of National Headquarters to be billed to their home address. 2) Veterans can print out the membership form found on the web-site and mail the completed form back to National Headquarters. 3) Veterans can complete an online application (a secured form) and send it directly to National Headquarters with their credit card information.

The Internet services area continues to improve the Web Site, adding features such as a weekly poll, a monthly trivia contest, an on-line newsletter and an interactive site for kids. Thousands of cards were sent via The American Legion web site to active military and veterans worldwide during the very successful Veterans Day program.

Staff assigned to this area includes an Internet Manager, a Web Content Manager and a Web Developer.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DIVISION
Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director

IT Staff plays a key role in the selection of all software to be used by National Headquarters staff. IT also determines and procures the hardware to be used by employees of National Headquarters and is responsible for troubleshooting and maintaining the equipment. The IT Division maintains the telecommunications that inter-connect the two Indianapolis, Indiana offices with our facility in Washington, D.C.

IT is responsible for the computer system which houses The American Legion National Headquarters membership database as well as keeping this database updated with changes to the membership-whether it be adding new members, renewing existing members, changing addresses of members or changing any other membership information. Much of this work is accomplished using a high-speed optical scanner, capable of processing in excess of 100,000 responses a day.

In conjunction with the membership database capabilities, The American Legion has invested in sophisticated list processing software, which the IT Division administers. This software ensures that all mailings are done at the lowest cost by complying with U.S. Postal Service guidelines.

The IT Division also has the capability to perform high-speed personalized laser printing. Annual membership cards, membership solicitation letters, renewal notices,

return address labels for the Departments' fundraising programs and mailing labels for a variety of communications pieces are all printed by the IT Division.

AMERICANISM COMMISSION
Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., New Hampshire, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

The Americanism Commission of The American Legion was created by a recommendation adopted by the National Convention of The American Legion held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1919. It read: "We recommend the establishment of a National Americanism Commission of The American Legion whose duty it shall be to endeavor to realize in the United States the basic ideal of this Legion of 100 percent Americanism through the planning, establishment and conduct of a continuous, constructive educational system."

It is the objective of the Americanism Commission to translate Americanism precepts, principles and ideals in an understanding and practical manner to Legion Posts and other groups and individuals, including young America.

While the Americanism program consists of a broad, objective, general plan that features wide-range community service, better citizenship, youth development and counter-subversive activities, the efforts of the Americanism Commission are educational in nature and embrace these specific objectives:

- Promote understanding of the principles of democratic governmental problems, and bringing more citizens to think seriously of the duties of citizenship;
- Give sound, practical service in our communities, working to make these communities better and safer places in which to live;
- Emphasize religion, encouraging its continuation in the life of every citizen;
- Encourage education in every possible manner, presenting school awards, sponsoring and conducting oratorical contests, cooperating with education and citizenship groups, promoting proper flag etiquette and display, and sponsoring objective youth development programs;
- Do important work for the youth of America, sponsoring American Legion Baseball, the National High School Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Boy Scout activities and many other citizenship and objective training activities;
- Work for the assimilation of immigrants through schools of citizenship and other agencies and stand for the restriction of immigration so that this assimilation may approach perfection; and
- Combat subversion and all un-American groups and activities which have for their aim the downfall of democracy in America.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued to be actively involved in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among our legislative priorities are illegal entry of aliens into this country, voluntary prayer in public buildings, bilingual education alternatives and English as the official language of the United States. The current major legislative initiative of The American Legion is the continuing efforts to effect a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws.

This Commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of two standing committees: The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education.

fall. The Commission uses these conferences as an opportunity to train and provide information to Americanism program volunteers.

Following is a summary of the several programs, which are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 2001-2002 American Legion year.

Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its form of government, it must have a citizenry that has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what the Boys State program does for the young men of our Nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government through the state level.

It was 67 years ago that Legionnaires in the state of Illinois recognized the need for a program that would help high school boys understand and appreciate the government they were learning about in the classroom. It was a time in the history of this Nation when un-American ideas seriously threatened the future of the Nation. The whole idea of Boys State, then and now, is to show young people that beyond a doubt, our form of government is good; but its preservation depends on intelligent, informed and loyal citizens in combination with an honest and impartial administration of government activities.

Ten years after the inception of Boys State as a program of the Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a program similar to Boys State at the National level and in 1946, established American Legion Boys Nation. This year, The American Legion celebrated its 56th anniversary session of Boys Nation.

Both Boys State and Boys Nation are unique programs that emphasize participation and personal experience in a respective model "state" and "nation" that is complete with its governing bodies and elected officials.

Each year, more than 25,000 young Americans take part in Boys State, and through 67 years, the program has graduated well over one and a half million young men.

Every year, each Boys State selects two outstanding graduates to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation. In 2002, the program was again held in Washington, DC, during July, and it introduced delegates first-hand to the structure and function of the federal government.

The week of government training in the Nation's Capital combines lectures and forums with visitations to federal agencies and institutions, shrines and historical points in and about Washington, DC. Actual participation in the political process is highlighted through the week to include the organization of party conventions and the nomination and election of a Boys Nation president and vice president. In addition to federal legislators and representatives of federal agencies, American Legion officials and other leaders of national distinction participate in Boys Nation. Bradley Johnson (NC) was elected President of the 56th anniversary session of Boys Nation. He joined the youth champion delegation as a guest of the National Commander at the National Convention of The American Legion in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 23-27, 2002.

National High School Oratorical Contest

The American Legion has awarded over two million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual National High School Oratorical Contest. This program, in its 65th year, was recognized by the Federal Commission for the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution as a program of "exceptional merit." Additionally, the National Association of Secondary School

Principals has placed the program on the NASSP National Advisory List of Contests and Activities for 2002-2003.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to his government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant, taking not less than eight nor more than ten minutes for delivery. Each contestant must also give an assigned topic presentation on a constitutional topic (not known until the time of the contest) taking not less than three nor more than five minutes for delivery.

Funds totaling $138,000 in college scholarships are available to the fifty-four National level contestants, with the winner receiving an $18,000 scholarship. Funds for these awards are provided by The American Legion Life Insurance Fund. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National Organization, there are scholarships awarded by intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 65th annual National Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana, in April 2002. The three finalists were: First place—Candice Neal, Eva, Alabama; second place—Jacquelyn Evans, Pleasanton, California; third place—Scott Chaloff, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Boys Scouts of America

The American Legion charters approximately 2,500 Scout Units in communities across the country involving more than 75,000 young people. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion selected Paul Corsello of Pittsford, New York, as its 2002 Eagle Scout of the Year. Selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive a $10,000 scholarship from The American Legion.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a $2,500 scholarship. They are Christopher Fogle, Plainville, Kansas; Nathan Evans, Mankato, Minnesota; and Eric Roberts, Chadron, Nebraska.

In addition, an estimated 4,500 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

Junior Shooting Sports Program

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national Americanism program administered through Post-sponsored Junior Shooting Clubs. The purpose of the program is to provide gun safety and marksmanship training for young people and to offer a wholesome recreational activity through organized competition. The Junior Shooting Sports Program has 658 active clubs with almost 10,000 young people participating.

The eleventh annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 6-11, 2002, at the Olympic Training Center range in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The tournament climaxed two rounds of postal matches which began shortly after the first of the year and involved over 1,400 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in both categories, as well as in each of the three positions of prone, kneeling and standing.

The 2002 winners were Jamie Beyerle of Lebanon, Pennsylvania (Precision) and Michael Tanoue of Honolulu, Hawaii (Sporter). Both received $1,000 scholarships provided by the Sons of The American Legion.

Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund

The American Legion administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship. This scholarship, established in 1957, was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in supervision, administration or teaching. These prospective positions must have a direct relationship in the areas of care and prevention as it relates to lung and respiratory diseases. The Eight and Forty, for 2002-2003, awarded twenty $3,000 scholarships to recipients in thirteen states for one year's study to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 45 years to 783 scholarships, totaling $1,539,500 to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 2003-04 school year.

Flag Education

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, hundreds of letters, phone calls, and electronic mail messages are routinely answered giving factual information on the display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

Additionally, over 65,000 copies of the publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* and more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, *Flag of the United States—How to Display It, How to Respect It* are distributed annually to schools, organizations and individuals. This information is sent at little or no cost to all who request it.

In 1988, The American Legion published *Our Country's Flag*, an educational comic book for use in elementary schools. Well over one million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced. In May, 1995, the newest education booklet, I Pledge Allegiance, was published, also for use in elementary schools.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the U.S. Flag from physical desecration. All 50 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws.

Service to God and Country

A program of basic Americanism, "Service to God and Country," seeks to prevent the spiritual decay of America by charging the citizenry with a spirit of positive Americanism, respect for law, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

"Service to God" emphasizes regular public worship, daily family prayer and the religious education of children, while "Service to Country" attempts to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and Nation. These objectives are aimed at preparing young Americans to take up tomorrow's responsibilities by teaching them moral and spiritual values, renewed interest in our Country's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, ideals of loyalty and honesty.

Each year, a Conference for the Department Chaplains is held under the direction of the National Chaplain. Training and program information is provided for further

dissemination to District and Post Chaplains who coordinate the program at the local level.

American Legion Baseball

American Legion Baseball marked its 77th season in 2002. Over 95,000 players on 5,200 teams participated in this American Legion Americanism youth activity during the past year.

More than 11 million dollars in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. One million dollars is appropriated by the Legion's National Organization to conduct eight Regional Tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Forty-five former Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. They include Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Pee Wee Reese, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Willie Stargel, Stan Musial, Carl Yaztremski, Warren Spahn, Brooks Robinson and Frank Robinson.

Over 55 percent of the Major League ballplayers and almost 72 percent of college players competed in American Legion Baseball as teenagers. The lessons learned on the baseball diamond, such as leadership, teamwork and respect for the rules, are lessons that are learned for a lifetime.

COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
F. Rodney Loper, Pennsylvania, Chairman

The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee, since its establishment by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 17, 1950, has scrutinized and continues to monitor what is transpiring in the realm of subversion and terrorism. A program of the Americanism Commission, reports of activities are made to the National Executive Committee at its Spring and Fall Meetings and at National Convention.

The Committee is responsible for furnishing background information on assigned resolutions that are considered by the National Americanism Commission for recommended action to the National Executive Committee or the National Convention.

The National Americanism Commission has long been concerned about anti-American activities and, in 1952, developed the publication *Firing Line,* to disseminate information on groups and organizations participating in activities of a subversive nature.

During the past year, *Firing Line* has reported on matters concerning illegal immigration, espionage and terrorism, both domestic and international.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Dr. Charles L. Vawter, Jr., Arizona, Chairman

The National Committee on Education, established in 1976, is comprised of members from both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American

Legion/American Legion Auxiliary, educators, students and other organizations concerned with the well-being of education throughout the Nation.

Education was one of the first major concerns of The American Legion. In 1921, the organization committed itself to a constructive support of education. During the years that followed, The American Legion developed a formal Policy on Education.

The American Legion has always supported the principle that education is a necessary prerequisite to the successful functioning of a republic. While recognizing the right of private and religious groups to maintain schools, The American Legion vigorously subscribes to the necessity for a publicly supported education system to ensure that every American child has the opportunity for an adequate education. The American Legion believes that popular self-government, as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, cannot continue to exist without a continuing system of free public education. Not only does proper national defense require trained personnel, but every phase of life today demands that we have competent citizens who are qualified, willing and able to discharge their responsibilities.

The availability of educational opportunity for individuals to pursue their own development is a prerequisite to the achievement of all other social goals. Our education system must be designed to provide every person with the means to reach their potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers that it requires. In turn, we will have greater assurance of economic growth, of sound decision-making, and the knowledge necessary to promote our national security.

The American education system should produce citizens who understand and are dedicated to principles of free enterprise; to democratic principles and processes; and whose devotion to freedom and human dignity goes beyond mere lip service.

The Education Program of The American Legion consists of four basic elements: (1) recognition of local systems through observance of American Education Week; (2) dissemination of scholarship and financial aid information through the publication *Need A Lift?;* (3) participation by American Legion Posts and American Legion Auxiliary Units in a community-wide effort to enhance the programs and policies of the local schools through the guidelines provided in the handbook PACT (Post, Auxiliary, Community Together); and (4) scholarship programs.

American Education Week is an annual event co-sponsored nationally by The American Legion. The observance was originally established by The American Legion with the help of the National Education Association in 1921. The major objective of the program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is "Making Public Schools Great for Every Child!" The observance was held November 17-23, 2002.

The publication *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains 152 pages of scholarship, grant and loan information, work-study cooperative programs and sources of career information for all students. There is a section directed toward opportunities for veterans and their dependents. Another section lists scholarships and financial aid available from Departments of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary totaling more than $600,000. Each fall, complimentary copies of *Need A Lift?* are sent to more than 26,000 high schools across the nation. In all, last year over 100,000 copies of *Need A Lift?* were distributed from the Legion's National Headquarters.

A companion to *Need A Lift?* is the pamphlet *A Guide for Parents and Students* which contains planning and financial aid information for high school students and their parents. Each year, distribution of more than 100,000 copies of each of these publications is done through American Legion Posts, schools, counselors and librarians, by mail and

through distribution at national education conventions. Copies of these publications can also be obtained by writing The American Legion National Emblem Sales Division, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Individual copies of *Need A Lift?* are $3.95 each, prepaid. *A Guide for Parents and Students* is available at a cost of $13.95 per 500 or $23.00 per 1,000 copies, plus shipping and handling, prepaid.

Scholarship programs include the National High School Oratorical Contest, Eagle Scout of the Year, American Legion Baseball Leadership Scholarship, Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship, Samsung American Legion Scholarship and The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship. Through these scholarship programs, eligible students are able to further their education.

The *PACT Handbook* is the guide for American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the education program, ideas and suggestions for activities, coordinating concepts and a typical calendar for a successful program. Programs covered in the handbook include: Citizenship Education, Career Education activities such as career nights, community resource files, Adopt-A-School, how to promote American Education Week, and financial aid nights.

Over 38,000 students are recipients of The American Legion School Award Medal each year. This award is designed to recognize a student for the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. The award is presented to a boy and girl upon graduation from elementary school, junior high/middle school or high school.

The American Legion believes that the citizens of this country should be dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the entire realm of intellectual endeavor; that our people should recognize those persons who have developed their intellectual abilities to the fullest extent; that teachers should enrich their knowledge, particularly in the field in which they teach and that scholarship assistance to deserving students should be expanded.

Such an educational program will fulfill the dreams of the past, the aspirations of the present and the needs of the future. The American Legion supports such a system of education and believes that the vitality of our democratic way of life is dependent upon such schools.

Americanism Commission
Executive Section

Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., Rollingsford, New Hampshire—Chairman
Daniel J. O'Connor, New Fairfield, Connecticut—Chairman Emeritus
Larry L. Price, Redfield, South Dakota—Vice-Chairman
Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska—Commander's Representative
Kermit Holtgrewe, Belleville, Illinois—Consultant
Charles E. Gannon, Landover Hills, Maryland—Consultant

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

Since its beginning, The American Legion has voiced concern for the care, welfare, and education of our Nation's children and youth. As early as November 1919, Posts were asked to aid the widows and children of our deceased comrades.

Through the decades that followed, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. The early years were devoted to progressive child care and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations—the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and the Eight & Forty—many states and communities improved their own child welfare provisions.

The development of new and expanded public programs designed to provide economic security for children made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other problem areas affecting young people. To date there exists no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency—private or governmental—in its ability to expand into every area of concern for child welfare and child health.

As stated in a 1924 resolution adopted by the National Executive Committee, The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'." This remains our ultimate goal and the definite challenge for the years ahead.

1. To attain this goal, The American Legion, in 1925, adopted the "Whole Child" plan, which states: "every child should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity." Its foundation is based on three guiding principles:
2. To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society, recognizing that the most normal environment for children is a home with their own parents.
3. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth, always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
4. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines for Action, working together:

1. **PREVENTION**—Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
2. **EDUCATION**—Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
3. **LEGISLATION**—Maintaining a knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws which affect young people at the national, state and local levels.
4. **MATERIAL AID**—Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past eighty-three years, The American Legion's Children & Youth Program has contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. While our list of achievements is extensive, it is by no means complete nor completed. The American Legion has, and will maintain a deep community-centered interest in children to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. At present, there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. But all of us know that our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training which we, as parents and citizens, provide for all children today.

The American Legion is proud of the Legionnaires, and the members of its affiliated organizations, and their achievements on behalf of our nation's youth. Their efforts in the area of child welfare are a living testament to the ability of an organization of free men and women to adapt itself to evolving needs, while maintaining high principles and taking on increased responsibilities under those principles.

2001-2002 Program

In May of each year, The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth meets to consider what programs it wants to emphasize. When a decision is made, the National staff researches these areas of concern and publishes materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 2001-02, the Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following quality of life issues, which directly impact our young people on the National level:

1. Child Health—Children's Hospitals
2. Child Safety—Youth Violence in the Schools
3. Child Safety—Teenage Suicide Prevention
4. Family Preservation—Family Life Education & Parental Responsibilities

Children's Hospitals: Since our beginning, the Legion has worked to increase the quality of life for all young people. Our partnership with Children's Miracle Network underscores this mission. Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 17 million children annually in the United States and Canada. These hospitals treat children with all types of afflictions and injuries, rendering service based on need, not the ability to pay. They annually provide $2.5 billion in uncompensated charity care and are committed to turning no child away.

Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to ensuring that 100 percent of local donations made through CMN Champions (the continuing theme of CMN's fund-raising campaign) stay in the community in which they were raised to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

Unveiled at our 83rd National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, our National Walkathon and World War II Memorial Dedication Campaign will benefit children, boost the public's perception of The American Legion, and reinforce the importance and worth of military service. This initiative, rooted in two major areas—media events and fund-raising projects—will take shape incrementally through grassroots efforts, corporate support, television broadcasts, and special events.

Nationally televised two-hour patriotic specials will feature musical performances at well-known veterans' monuments and historical locations, hosted by top name music, movie and sports celebrities. These specials will feature the veterans, who gave us our legacy of freedom, with the children "champions" who will become the custodians of that legacy in the future. These patriotic specials will include no fund-raising elements for children's hospitals. They are designed strictly to honor the legacy, educate the public, and pay homage to those who have donned our country's military uniform in the past, and of those who continue to serve our nation today, and into the future.

In the years that follow, other media events will be added, to include:

- A short subject video contest to encourage research by high school students into their family history as it may relate to veterans. Winners will receive college scholarships and/or awards in a number of categories.

Table No. 1

Region and Department	Reporting Legion	Reporting Auxiliary	Temporary Financial Assistance by National	Contributions to Child Welfare Foundation by Posts & Units	Direct Aid from Posts, Units and Departments	Contributions to Other Child Serving Agencies by Legion and Auxiliary	Other Expenditures for Children by Legion and Auxiliary	Department Admininstrative Expense by Legion and Auxiliary	Total Aid for Children from 8/40	Total Number of Children Served Nationally	Total Aid Legion and Auxiliary Lines 4 thru 10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
REGION 1											
Connecticut	57%	100%	$689	$3,828	$34,345	$73,779	$38,362	$50	$261	5,322	$151,314
Maine	64%	86%	500	848	55,100	128,362	69,107	0	80	7,178	$241,997
Massachusetts	27%	86%	509	3,995	77,389	216,778	88,830	550	2,937	11,826	$390,088
New Hampshire	72%	75%	1,092	1,555	99,719	155,381	24,575	1,000	2,099	11,447	$285,391
Rhode Island	0%	0%	0	25	0	0	0	0	300	0	$325
Vermont	69%	78%	0	515	87,338	194,532	124,987	3,600	285	20,302	$411,237
TOTAL:	**45%**	**67%**	**2,790**	**10,466**	**353,891**	**768,812**	**336,841**	**5,200**	**5,952**	**56,075**	**$1,480,352**
REGION 2											
Delaware	94%	85%	0	2,434	78,815	100,146	52,201	270	(2)	9,492	$233,865
D.C.	0%	17%	0	200	4,800	2,500	1,000	50	10	225	$8,360
Maryland	85%	76%	2,616	3,664	185,825	582,745	307,940	5,500	3,090	246,015	$1,091,380
New Jersey	37%	83%	1,800	2,495	171,580	295,445	106,998	0	1,609	14,800	$580,917
New York	68%	85%	16,325	2,225	437,451	1,463,219	1,089,743	700	5,252	71,544	$2,984,916
Pennsylvania	58%	57%	0	1,957	331,479	515,923	412,329	0	10,079	43,402	$1,271,767
Virginia	64%	61%	0	2,548	193,591	587,821	385,151	2,548	4,877	49,039	$1,186,535
West Virginia	75%	41%	5,128	130	85,594	199,940	89,254	31	1,278	17,089	$381,355
TOTAL:	**61%**	**73%**	**25,889**	**15,654**	**1,489,935**	**3,748,739**	**2,434,606**	**9,099**	**26,195**	**451,606**	**$7,745,097**
REGION 3											
Alabama	24%	46%	8,311	18,465	36,474	112,093	20,010	0	482	4,610	$195,835
Florida	91%	100%	9,677	20,924	369,880	258,331	328,317	400	7,210	52,682	$992,549
Georgia	59%	24%	324	3,336	405,846	220,283	187,166	250	(2)	47,694	$827,205
Kentucky	63%	54%	22,339	1,553	127,240	498,573	97,417	0	797	15,983	$747,925
North Carolina	24%	0%	0	313	88,668	71,434	41,451	0	(2)	3,282	$201,876
South Carolina	29%	11%	0	355	31,197	109,537	33,453	0	(2)	5,552	$174,532
Tennessee	39%	16%	4,200	1,395	30,873	67,062	16,094	0	0	2,622	$118,624
TOTAL:	**46%**	**39%**	**44,851**	**46,341**	**1,090,078**	**1,335,313**	**733,918**	**650**	**8,399**	**133,625**	**$3,259,550**
REGION 4											
Arkansas	28%	0%	2,442	153	14,607	246,865	24,964	0	1,595	2,040	$290,626
Louisiana	21%	14%	0	2,145	14,698	45,537	76,744	3,700	24,317	8,514	$167,141
Mississippi	22%	12%	4,952	2,200	25,015	173,732	16,861	0	794	3,380	$226,265
Oklahoma	39%	0%	11,694	0	44,562	87,070	34,919	0	50	1,410	$178,285
Texas	35%	74%	1,213	18,681	152,214	249,868	89,994	0	4,359	82,769	$597,329
TOTAL:	**30%**	**30%**	**20,291**	**23,179**	**251,297**	**799,072**	**245,282**	**3,700**	**31,025**	**98,113**	**$1,373,846**
REGION 5											
Illinois	35%	51%	17,593	8,635	118,332	694,277	81,754	800	31,024	11,553	$950,385
Indiana	47%	69%	11,613	7,868	222,152	507,151	201,625	50	7,269	68,653	$957,499
Michigan	44%	68%	5,917	2,036	151,370	277,006	127,473	0	15,497	29,235	$578,298
Missouri	47%	0%	400	1,716	44,599	143,787	48,275	0	5,042	3,954	$243,819
Ohio	84%	46%	3,355	18,451	332,777	638,063	361,150	25,000	10,593	702,540	$1,389,389
Wisconsin	89%	72%	4,252	2,432	85,327	176,298	131,530	8,000	(2)	14,135	$387,839
TOTAL:	**57%**	**52%**	**43,100**	**38,969**	**934,557**	**2,436,582**	**951,807**	**33,850**	**69,965**	**831,470**	**$4,508,230**
REGION 6											
Iowa	51%	78%	2,251	812	45,833	100,862	39,605	15	(2)	14,374	$189,378
Kansas	64%	71%	300	5,169	72,773	78,892	65,099	4,260	7,542	10,979	$234,035
Minnesota	42%	77%	59,460	4,650	431,102	737,847	1,149,380	3,613	2,201	137,097	$2,388,253
Nebraska	71%	60%	0	2,345	47,145	109,105	107,605	5,250	3,779	54,472	$275,229
North Dakota	87%	0%	2,828	103	183,351	174,064	88,432	0	(2)	2,025	$448,778
South Dakota	49%	81%	0	342	21,947	42,118	33,391	3,528	2,482	48,108	$103,808
TOTAL:	**55%**	**66%**	**64,839**	**13,421**	**802,151**	**1,242,888**	**1,483,512**	**16,666**	**16,004**	**267,055**	**$3,639,481**
REGION 7											
Arizona	81%	53%	35,241	1,800	181,331	132,429	124,529	9,880	6,619	72,403	$491,629
California	38%	83%	2,601	4,805	216,240	256,319	346,915	300	27,300	40,710	$856,580
Colorado	42%	54%	3,050	420	39,795	39,311	37,399	500	497	25,356	$120,972
Hawaii	54%	35%	400	430	5,815	56,544	3,574	0	697	441	$67,460
Nevada	45%	61%	1,940	182	4,570	9,146	5,448	100	115	1,218	$21,501
New Mexico	44%	0%	8,068	835	51,911	137,094	29,906	4,000	1,870	3,633	$233,787
Utah	5%	19%	6,495	520	3,579	1,094	415	0	180	193	$12,274
TOTAL:	**41%**	**60%**	**57,795**	**9,092**	**503,232**	**633,937**	**548,189**	**14,680**	**37,378**	**143,854**	**$1,804,203**
REGION 8											
Alaska	59%	44%	0	280	32,808	80,217	39,360	1,871	470	11,022	$155,026
Idaho	98%	0%	27,781	790	12,526	27,752	5,790	0	740	1,140	$75,358
Montana	69%	0%	8,367	1,380	19,551	25,482	215,203	3,621	2,100	1,076	$273,494
Oregon	47%	66%	700	500	56,428	96,786	30,958	0	4,126	9,857	$189,598
Washington	95%	0%	104,596	5,539	25,607	30,480	18,692	0	7,174	2,118	$192,088
Wyoming	94%	78%	4,657	1,927	64,046	5,510	20,262	100	229	14,073	$96,725
TOTAL:	**78%**	**23%**	**144,081**	**10,216**	**211,069**	**266,217**	**330,265**	**5,592**	**14,839**	**39,286**	**$982,298**
REGION TOTAL:	**53%**	**55%**	**403,616**	**167,338**	**5,635,210**	**11,228,560**	**7,954,440**	**89,337**	**209,157**	**2,020,484**	**$24,797,057**
FOREIGN											
France	49%	0%	0	0	5,563	2,065	7,670	0	0	1,425	$15,318
Mexico	0%	0%	0	0	8,900	100	6,300	0	0	620	$15,300
Philippines	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	$0
Puerto Rico	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	$0
TOTAL:	**0%**	**0%**	**0**	**0**	**14,463**	**2,165**	**13,970**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**$30,618**
SUBTOTAL:	**51%**	**55%**	**403,616**	**167,338**	**5,649,673**	**11,230,725**	**7,968,410**	**89,337**	**209,157**	**2,020,484**	**$24,828,275**

(2) - Not organized in the Department

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$10,025
Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary	$20,000
Child Welfare Foundation by National 8/40	$3,231
Children & Youth Division by National 8/40	$2,168
Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary	$0
Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals	$123,368
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$133,865
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$266,020
Child Wefare Foundation by National Legion	$9,102
GRAND TOTAL	$25,397,254

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2001 - MAY 31, 2002

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-45	1946-65	1966-85	1986-95	1996-2001	Jun-Dec 01	Jan-May 02	Grand Total
Alabama	29,161.33	51,167.08	76,790.45	165,155.82	110,551.42	6,707.97	1603.11	441,157.16
Alaska	——	1,627.56	1,550.00	——	——	——	——	3,177.56
Arizona	26,081.70	8,752.00	21,380.31	228,396.73	184,484.29	22,672.77	12568.05	604,315.85
Arkansas	33,873.20	25,962.22	2,881.07	58,723.23	11,934.77	1,344.23	1097.39	135,816.17
California	30,106.16	16,028.46	1,550.00	7,559.00	6,450.00	1,500.00	1101.35	64,292.96
Colorado	41,621.11	22,618.11	1,395.00	13,206.83	20,096.90	1,450.00	1600.00	101,986.95
Connecticut	1,854.00	440.00	450.00	1,192.00	4,471.56	689.05	——	9,096.61
Delaware	2,035.00	1,000.00	475.00	2,635.00	2,000.00	——	——	8,145.00
D. of C.	2,570.00	1,203.50	800.00	26,636.75	2,319.00	——	——	33,329.25
Florida	33,341.28	26,520.50	2,530.00	33,542.76	26,622.12	3,192.75	6484.36	134,233.77
Georgia	69,894.07	56,084.42	4,865.00	8,498.51	3,950.00	——	324.00	173,616.00
Hawaii	870.00	——	900.00	——	——	——	400.00	2,170.00
Idaho	7,593.50	5,771.85	7,368.39	24,202.62	85,178.17	19,618.59	7942.60	157,673.92
Illinois	30,220.79	4,343.53	10,525.73	129,729.07	213,538.44	12,178.93	5364.11	405,920.60
Indiana	31,850.05	9,066.40	2,920.00	152,703.98	93,141.06	6,760.36	4852.64	301,294.52
Iowa	17,493.06	597.00	3,928.45	16,982.47	15,661.85	1,810.00	441.08	56,913.93
Kansas	20,766.80	42,064.35	8,923.00	9,591.54	2,000.00	300.00	——	83,745.69
Kentucky	23,843.50	45,527.90	64,854.96	48,497.68	75,799.56	16,149.50	6189.52	280,862.62
Louisiana	23,400.50	38,454.30	3,395.00	7,540.45	1,800.00	——	——	74,590.25
Maine	3,618.94	1,910.26	2,676.55	20,812.00	14,314.50	——	500.00	43,832.25
Maryland	5,887.00	3,390.57	3,383.00	4,770.00	20,020.94	2,916.00	——	40,067.51
Massachusetts	2,754.50	455.00	150.00	7,050.00	11,271.13	506.80	——	22,188.43
Michigan	23,895.53	33,201.24	15,346.62	17,973.75	16,669.94	1,340.00	4577.10	112,906.19
Minnesota	8,810.77	23,322.79	11,840.33	172,936.26	182,644.00	36,692.67	22767.59	457,914.41
Mississippi	40,293.63	63,294.14	117,892.55	54,314.88	31,657.95	4,452.36	500.00	312,505.52
Missouri	53,073.08	47,799.54	11,050.00	19,362.51	20,712.67	400.00	——	152,403.90
Montana	5,414.25	1,668.85	1,575.30	45,267.56	15,339.48	5,366.64	1000.00	76,132.08
Nebraska	18,470.10	17,795.68	17,531.08	4,520.25	——	——	——	58,317.09
Nevada	585.00	766.00	7,272.00	1,495.00	2,516.35	——	1940.00	14,574.35
New Hampshire	4,250.50	4,941.50	——	55,557.79	6,025.00	1,092.00	——	71,865.79
New Jersey	8,995.53	1,946.00	4,478.00	65,437.20	40,472.50	1,000.00	600.00	123,129.23
New Mexico	20,074.30	63,098.74	56,723.89	117,760.24	36,356.83	2,428.38	5639.84	294,082.22
New York	7,887.54	4,903.00	1,150.00	42,484.24	63,150.83	6,710.50	9614.96	125,901.07
North Carolina	46,597.50	81,019.60	9,740.00	23,502.67	15,983.05	——	——	176,842.82
North Dakota	26,017.45	11,788.21	5,771.32	7,084.40	7,460.88	500.00	2328.19	60,930.45
Ohio	23,930.43	5,116.25	11,613.89	12,357.65	2,775.00	3,035.00	320.00	59,148.22
Oklahoma	40,458.05	85,406.47	86,956.03	171,685.84	135,099.73	7,042.44	4641.90	513,293.46
Oregon	1,250.50	13,750.15	24,595.95	46,815.83	13,176.00	700.00	——	100,288.43
Panama	575.00	534.00	500.00	——	——	——	——	1,609.00
Pennsylvania	22,847.41	651.00	19,204.85	38,683.37	10,746.14	——	——	92,134.77
Puerto Rico	17,057.00	57,754.00	55,499.50	49,720.00	10,900.00	——	——	190,930.50
Rhode Island	1,582.00	1,641.00	1,060.00	19,527.38	10,855.14	——	——	34,445.52
South Carolina	68,453.05	26,693.34	5,339.00	900.00	2,599.08	——	——	103,984.47
South Dakota	42,430.27	16,362.05	725.00	46,361.43	3,885.30	——	——	109,774.05
Tennessee	31,144.77	54,613.20	20,604.39	61,868.79	14,884.91	2,500.00	1700.00	187,315.97
Texas	35,373.50	47,392.43	26,714.50	8,534.74	4,366.78	1,212.77	——	123,594.72
Utah	11,125.48	3,248.00	3,398.00	13,414.42	10,922.50	1,275.00	5219.53	48,603.93
Vermont	1,824.50	9,251.60	——	5,425.00	1,085.09	——	——	17,586.00
Virginia	45,310.31	28,037.78	17,836.00	37,295.82	12,144.28	——	——	140,624.19
Washington	3,378.00	427.50	625.00	100,545.28	199,983.77	56,001.98	48594.50	409,556.03
West Virginia	27,629.98	11,395.94	3,460.00	24,514.68	22,328.22	3,527.68	1600.00	94,456.50
Wisconsin	15,881.98	8,067.25	9,678.00	19,309.78	18,252.16	1,340.00	2911.76	75,640.93
Wyoming	8,180.00	1,993.00	1,350.00	2,279.00	5,124.49	4,038.56	618.62	23,583.67
Other Depts	560.00	173.50	——	——	——	——	——	733.50
Miscellaneous	19,499.21 (1)	——	——	——	—— (2)	——	——	19,499.21
TOTAL	$1,121,572.95	$1,089,976.73	$777,325.21	$2,253,246.25	$1,823,458.71	$238,354.93	$165,262.41	$7,469,197.19

1) Includes $19,499.21 for the year 1926--Department totals not available
2) Includes first 5 months of 2002

TABLE NO. 3

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF WWII, KOREAN, VIETNAM, GRENADA/LEBANON AND PANAMA VETERANS RECEIVING AID FROM NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH DIVISION

	No. WWII Children		No. Korean Children		No. Vietnam Children		No. Gren/Leb Children		No. Panama Children		No. Persian Gulf Children	
6-1-01 to 5-31-02	4	0.46%	8	0.92%	359	41.26%	194	22.30%	91	10.46%	214	24.60%
6-1-00 to 5-31-01	6	0.79%	5	0.66%	314	41.59%	134	17.75%	19	2.52%	277	36.69%
6-1-99 to 5-31-00	14	1.55%	8	0.89%	442	48.95%	116	12.85%	15	1.66%	318	35.22%
6-1-98 to 5-31-99	14	1.27%	12	1.09%	545	49.59%	171	15.56%	13	1.18%	348	31.67%
6-1-97 to 5-31-98	14	0.94%	28	2.54%	847	56.66%	216	14.45%	36	2.41%	344	23.01%
6-1-96 to 5-31-97	14	0.94%	38	2.54%	849	56.71%	216	14.43%	26	2.40%	344	22.98%
6-1-95 to 5-31-96	13	1.09%	48	4.01%	904	75.46%	210	17.53%	23	1.92%		
6-1-94 to 5-31-95	27	1.95%	37	2.67%	1096	79.19%	189	13.66%	35	2.53%		
6-1-93 to 5-31-94	17	0.81%	80	3.83%	1814	86.84%	142	6.80%	36	1.72%		
6-1-92 to 5-31-93	8	0.45%	29	1.63%	1565	87.97%	121	6.80%	56	3.15%		
6-1-91 to 5-31-92	36	2.27%	68	4.26%	1731	86.33%			38	2.40%		
6-1-90 to 5-31-91	17	1.32%	74	5.75%	1074	83.45%			75	5.83%		
6-1-89 to 5-31-90	7	1.09%	49	7.62%	587	91.29%						
6-1-88 to 5-31-89	16	2.35%	61	8.94%	605	88.71%						
6-1-87 to 5-31-88	41	6.65%	68	10.97%	510	82.38%						
6-1-86 to 5-31-87	28	4.60%	60	9.85%	521	85.55%						
6-1-85 to 5-31-86	29	4.54%	114	17.84%	496	77.62%						
6-1-84 to 5-31-85	57	9.27%	114	18.53%	444	72.16%						
6-1-83 to 5-31-84	56	8.80%	125	19.60%	457	71.60%						
6-1-82 to 5-31-83	40	5.90%	158	23.30%	480	70.80%						
6-1-81 to 5-31-82	51	14.36%	80	22.54%	224	63.10%						
6-1-80 to 5-31-81	65	14.74%	125	28.34%	251	56.92%						
6-1-79 to 5-31-80	94	21.81%	58	13.46%	279	64.79%						
6-1-78 to 5-31-79	111	27.54%	101	25.06%	191	47.40%						
6-1-77 to 5-31-78	198	30.33%	215	32.92%	240	36.75%						
6-1-76 to 5-31-77	216	38.30%	140	24.82%	208	36.88%						
6-1-75 to 5-31-76	177	29.70%	233	39.09%	186	13.21%						
6-1-74 to 5-31-75	189	36.00%	208	39.62%	218	41.52%						
6-1-73 to 5-31-74	248	36.69%	334	49.41%	94	13.90%						
6-1-72 to 5-31-73	204	43.59%	150	32.04%	114	24.36%						
5-1-50 to 5-31-72	30,294	83.52%	5,652	15.58%	325	0.90%						
7-1-46 to 4-30-50	5,383	76.13%										
Totals	**37,688**	**55.30%**	**8,480**	**12.44%**	**17,970**	**26.37%**	**1,709**	**2.51%**	**463**	**0.68%**	**1,845**	**2.71%**

Grand Total **68,155 Children assisted by the Temporary Financial Assistance Program Since 1956**

Table No. 4

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request
During Period June 1, 2001 through May 31, 2002

American Legion & Children's Miracle Network - Brochure	10,885
American Legion & Children's Miracle Network - Poster	1,500
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	19,081
Americanism/Children & Youth Catalog Brochure	5,385
Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	20,506
April is Children & Youth Month	31,442
Children Beware - (discontinued)	0
Children's Miracle Network Champion Booklet	12,999
Gateway Drugs	33,338
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night - Brochure	125,024
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night - Project Guide	27,339
Nathan's Visit Comic Books	792
National Family Week	20,316
National Resource Directory	462
Outdoor Safety - (discontinued)	0
Play It Safe Safety Booklet - **(new item)**	37,971
TFA Applications	1,000
TFA Brochures	22,990
Warning Signs -- Suicide Prevention	46,844

Citations:

Annual Children and Youth Citations	3,017
Certificate of Meritorious Service	94
National Achievement Award	40
Special Children & Youth Citation	595

Reporting:

Unit Report Form	4,111
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	4,684

TOTAL	430,415

- A national high school essay contest, centering on "the gift of freedom from those who served." Winning entries will be published nationally and college scholarships awarded.
- A national art and drawing contest for all age groupings will graphically show "a salute to our legacy of freedom." Scholarships and/or cash prizes will be given to winners, with their art being displayed in the National Museum of Art in Washington, D.C.

During 2002 and 2003, Posts and Units will conduct individual walkathons in communities throughout this nation, as a prelude to 2004. The 2004 Walkathon will begin at four designated points within the U.S. and weave through all participating Departments, converging in Washington, D.C. for a final walk to the World War II Memorial one-day prior to the dedication services.

Utilizing a uniquely designed paper American Flag icon, this project will emphasize the importance of our flag and the sacrifices made to preserve our freedom. Flags are "sold" for a $1.00 donation and displayed in the post, and in designated community retail establishments.

The National Walkathon and the Paper Flag Projects will raise funds and awareness for children's hospitals, and emphasize the importance of the WW II Memorial Dedication at the grass-roots level. How-to kits for both are provided free to American Legion family members through the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division in Indianapolis, Indiana. During the 2001-2002 program year, the first of the three-year project, The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth will focus on four areas—the national walkathon, the national paper flag sale project, a direct mail program and a national two-hour television special.

The Commission encourages its Departments and Posts to work with and support their local CMN-affiliated children's hospitals to benefit the health and well being of our nation's children. During the 2001-2002 program year, the combined American Legion family provided more than $2.67 million dollars in total donations to local children's hospitals nationwide during the past program year. This is due directly to the dedicated efforts of Legion family members throughout this nation who have embraced this program.

Juvenile Delinquency Prevention: America leads the industrialized world in rates of murder, rape and violent crime. Nearly three out of four convicted criminals are not incarcerated. Fewer than one in ten serious crimes result in imprisonment. The American Legion is seriously concerned about the recent high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation. While juveniles account for approximately 35 percent of our population, they account for better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Uniform Crime Reports. By action of The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth, Youth Violence in the Schools was unanimously approved as one of its major areas of concern. We have developed support materials to be disseminated to communities through our volunteer network of Legion members.

Teenage Suicide Prevention: According to national statistics, the suicide rate for persons under the age of 21 has tripled since 1960. Every hour, at least one American teenager or young adult commits suicide and as many as 40 others make the attempt. Research findings from around the country indicate that eight out of ten people who kill themselves give some warning of their intentions. Because of this, it is imperative for any adult who has daily contact with young people to acquaint themselves with the warning signs of suicide if we are to decrease the numbers in this tragic area. The American Legion volunteers continue their work to educate parents, schools and

communities on this epidemic killer of our nation's young people. We, as parents and concerned citizens, cannot afford to let one of our greatest national resources be lost.

Family Preservation: The family is the cornerstone of American society. But today, modern society places demands on the family that did not exist in years past—demands that can chip away at family strength and unity. Two-income families are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Divorced families, step-families, and single-parent families have reached all time highs. More teenagers than ever hold part-time jobs. Children are placed in day care centers at earlier ages. Instead of safety in their neighborhoods, adolescents face physical danger; instead of economic security, they face uncertainty; instead of intellectual stimulation, they face boredom; in place of respect, they are neglected; lacking clear and consistent adult expectations for them, they feel alienated from mainstream American society.

For many years, the Commission on Children & Youth has, by resolution, advocated the passage of federal legislation designating the week of Thanksgiving as National Family Week. Many organizations have joined us in this quest. It is now our position to continue to push for legislation, but in the mean time, to conduct our own observance of this important event.

Continuing Programs

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA): This is the landmark program of the Commission on Children & Youth. Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid to veteran's children, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. In 2001, the program aided 875 children with more than $380,427 in grants. From its beginning to present, this fund has assisted veterans' families with millions of dollars in non-repayable grants.

The fund is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and health items when the parents are unable to do so; thereby helping to keep the child, or children, in a more stable home environment.

Through TFA, a Post may call upon the Americanism and Children & Youth Division of The American Legion for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children. Funds can be granted over a temporary period to eligible children when it has been determined by investigation that the child is in need and that no other sources are available, or those that are available are inadequate. It is important to note that while the veteran must have served honorably on active duty during a designated war period, the veteran does not have to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

As sure as The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in the world, there are veterans' families who require help. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because a parent is sick or disabled, deceased, or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion, and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program is the vital tool which is used to help meet the maintenance and health needs of veterans' children, thereby allowing the child to develop in the home.

Halloween: The "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night" program is now entering its 30th year of National emphasis. In 1972, the Commission on Children & Youth realized Halloween was no longer the carefree, happy occasion it had once been for our nation's young people. Nationwide attention was focused on our children who were being maimed and drugged by "treats" they had gathered on Halloween. In response, the Commission established a community-oriented program on Halloween Safety.

There are many activities that can be planned at the community level to reduce the risks of children being harmed at this time of the year. A haunted house maze, carnival activities, costume parades with prizes awarded for the most imaginative and safest costume or a party for older youngsters with a Halloween theme.

The Commission on Children & Youth of The American Legion publishes a brochure that provides safety tips to aid children and parents in keeping this a fun and festive occasion. These brochures are available through department headquarters and all are encouraged to use them to help protect our children.

To supplement the brochure, the Commission produces a project guidebook. This guidebook provides suggestions to Posts on how to prepare for a safe Halloween. In addition, there are sample press releases, mayoral proclamations, and radio and TV spot announcements. All are designed to be used in conjunction with the brochure to help ensure that all children "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night."

Child Safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920's. In 1992, the Commission on Children & Youth designated the Child Safety program as one of our annual or continuing programs.

Child safety is defined as any external event that may present a significant danger to a child or young person. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child Abuse and Neglect
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Indoor/Outdoor Safety
4. School Safety
5. Playground Safety
6. Childhood Communicable Diseases
7. Accidents (automobile, drownings, firearms)
8. Fire Safety
9. Substance Abuse
10. Teenage Suicide

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 25,000 children under the age of 19 will die in automobile crashes, drownings, fires, and through the improper use of firearms. In homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to assure that they have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

Alcohol, marijuana and cocaine are considered "gateway drugs" for thousands of young people throughout the United States. The great tragedy of substance abuse, which continues to infest all levels of our society, is its prevalence among elementary school age children. Most come in contact with drugs by age seven.

Prevention education is part of the answer, but it must begin early. Children, of all ages, need to be taught drug awareness, and the physical and mental dangers involved with the use of all substances, to include the legal drugs of alcohol and tobacco. The American Legion considers a child's future to be very important. The brochure "Gateway Drugs" is designed to let young people stop and think about what they may be doing to themselves, and how what they do can affect others. The key to their future is responsible decision-making. As concerned citizens, we must never give up in our battle against drugs. We must strive to increase awareness, and show our children that we care about both them and their future.

National Information Conferences (NIC)

The 2001 NLICs saw an increase in the number of new attendees for both Legion and Auxiliary members. At these workshops, information on programs and methods of implementation is shared with the Posts and Units. In 2001, the NIC's were:

Region 1—Nashua, New Hampshire—March 23-25
Region 2—Cherry Hill, New Jersey—April 20-22
Region 3—Macon, Georgia—March 30-April 1
Region 4 – Dallas, Texas—September 21-23
Region 5—Indianapolis, Indiana—March 23-25
Region 6—Sioux City, Iowa—April 20-22
Region 7—Las Vegas, Nevada—March 30-April 1
Region 8—Boise, Idaho—September 21-23

To stabilize expenses and encourage participation, the National Information Conferences remain at one site within each Region for three years. This provides Posts in every department the opportunity to send representatives at a very minimal cost. Our major goal is to help children, and our presence at these outreach workshops is really having a positive impact on the annual program.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goals during the 2001-2002 program year. At National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5-7, 2000, the following resolutions, here summarized, were approved.

Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 301-2000. United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel. In part, because of this, many children in foreign countries are progeny of United States citizens. Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens, but addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982. As The American Legion believes that no child born of a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country, we urge legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Children in Pornographic Literature: Res. 302-2000. Studies indicate that there is a direct and strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes. Additional data reveals that child pornography, "kiddy porn," is often found in the personal effects of child molesters after their arrest. The American Legion is firm in its position that the interstate transportation of obscene material must be stopped and that the United States Postal Service be provided sufficient investigators to enforce existing federal laws against pornography and the transportation of pornographic material.

Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature: Res. 303-2000. As there have been attempts to eliminate protective laws from the criminal code regarding the production, distribution and sale of pornographic and obscene literature, The American Legion is strongly opposed to any attempt to weaken existing laws.

Reaffirming Immunization Program: Res. 304-2000. The American Legion realizes that in today's society there is no place for communicable disease for which there

is a vaccine. Though true, we also realize that several childhood communicable diseases breakout annually because children are not properly immunized. It is our belief that full protection is available and that the state and federal governments should provide sufficient funding so that indigent families with children can receive the necessary immunizations against all communicable diseases.

Violence and Vandalism in the Schools: Res. 305-2000. Juveniles account for nearly 35 percent of our population and better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Crime Reports. Much of that crime is directed to the over $500 million damage done to Government-supported institutions, specifically schools and housing. With this violence and vandalism in our Nation's institutions is an enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential. The American Legion urges local school boards, law enforcement agencies and their state organizations to develop a balanced and effective program to reduce and prevent violence and vandalism in educational institutions. Further, Congress is urged to enact legislation through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish a grant program to assist in these efforts.

National Family Week: Res. 306-2000. One of the basic principles of the children and youth program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country...the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and stability to our society. We urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during

School Nutrition Program: Res. 307-2000. The American Legion again reaffirms its position that the Congress of the United States and the various state legislatures be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs. This is necessary to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Res. 308-2000. The American Legion is vitally concerned about the high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation each year. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is organized to develop and encourage the implementation of national standards for the administration of juvenile justice. They develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, including methods with a specific focus on maintaining and strengthening the family unit so that juveniles may be retained in their homes. OJJDP develops effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization. They coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention program now promoted by the OJJDP has proven effective in many states. The American Legion opposes any and all efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs because of a lack of funding.

Catastrophic Illness among Children: Res. 309-2000. It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well being. In the Temporary Financial Assistance program, we have seen an increase in the caseload of needy medical problems. Unfortunately, many of our children are not receiving the necessary medical care due to the extreme requirements placed on the financial abilities of the average family. Consequently, children with severe catastrophic illnesses are not receiving the needed medical care. The rising cost of medical care in such cases is not covered by even the best medical policies.

The American Legion believes that the state and federal governments should enact legislation to financially assist those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Drug Trafficking: Res. 310 -2000. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution urges funding for all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of the substances that are being made available in this country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users.

Protect Children from the Unrestricted Media: Res. 311-2000. The producers of movies, television shows and TV news, and the Internet have become very explicit in describing and depicting various types of violence. Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union defend such actions as the author's constitutional right of free speech without regard for the potential consequences to minor children. The American Legion supports appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity, and other forms of moral depravation in movies, TV programs, TV news and on the Internet. In addition, we encourage Departments and Posts to conduct awareness campaigns to educate their members, their families and the general public, about the potential dangers the Internet and other forms of electronic media pose to children and teenagers.

Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth: Res. 312-2000. Many of our children continue to face health needs that are not properly addressed due to the high cost of our health care delivery system. The American Legion continues to support and endorse the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, the Healthy Start Initiative, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and the Abstinence Education Program.

These are the highlights of our 2001-02 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances that deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. The Children & Youth legislative program is a never-ending struggle, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children—everywhere.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 78 years, the Commission on Children & Youth records activities from the nearly 15,000 Posts of The American Legion, 11,000 Units of the American Legion Auxiliary, and hundreds of Salons of the Eight and Forty. In addition, the expenditures of Departments and of the National Organization are obtained for the 12-month period of June 1 through May 31, and combined with these reports.

This year, Posts and Departments of the Legion reported expenditures of $19,339,916. To this amount, we proudly add $5,003,232 by the Auxiliary. An additional $403,616 was given to 456 families in need through our Temporary Financial Assistance program. To this we add contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation in the amount of $651,090. This amounts to a grand total of expenditures and contributions to the total Children & Youth program in 2001-02 of $25,397,854.

Children & Youth Literature

During the 2001-02 program year, hundreds of thousands of pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division in order to further the objectives of the total program.

As shown in Table #5, our most popular brochures are related to our major points of emphasis—Missing Children, Child Safety, Substance Abuse Prevention and Teenage Suicide Prevention. It is of further interest to note that some 3,706 citations were distributed to Departments in order to recognize Posts for their contributions to the overall Children & Youth Program.

Appreciation Acknowledged

The Commission on Children & Youth and its Chairman take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of The American Legion family. Many hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice cannot be repaid. Special mention must also go to National Commander Richard J. Santos not because of his rank, but because of his sincere dedication and enduring support for our programs this past year. In addition, the Commission sincerely thanks National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle for his support and cooperation. The members of The American Legion do an excellent job with this program, but the record must be clear. Without the assistance of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion, our National Children & Youth Program would have little chance for success.

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Executive Section

Elmer Fuhrhop, Hamler, Ohio—Chairman
Robert D. Scott, Lebanon, Oregon—Vice-Chairman
W. Darrell Hansel, Vevay, Indiana—National Commander's Representative
Walter F. Baker, Seneca Falls, New York—Consultant
Margaret M. Malone, Hamilton, New Jersey—Consultant
Talmage C. Carawan, Rockville, Maryland
James P. Holley, Center, Texas
Miles Smith, Chicago, Illinois
Peggy Moon, Glenwood, Minnesota
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Kenner, Louisiana

AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.
U.S. "Udie" Grant, Kansas, President
William A. Pease, Indiana, Executive Secretary

In 1954 The American Legion endorsed the separate incorporation of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted over six million dollars to other non-profit youth oriented organizations.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation's foremost philanthropic priority is to provide other nonprofit organizations with a means to educate the public about the needs of children across this nation. The Foundation accepts proposals from nonprofit organizations for projects that:

- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and/or their programs to benefit youth; and/or
- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations, to the end that such information can be more adequately used by society.

In October of 2001 the Board of Directors approved grants to 20 non-profit organizations in the amount of $547,375 for projects to be completed in calendar year 2002. The organizations and amounts are as follows:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grants

Children's Medical Center of Dallas	Dallas, TX	$11, 315
Children's Performance Workshops Inc.	Virginia Beach, VA	$20,000
Erikson Institute for Child Development	Chicago, IL	$20,000
Wake Forest University	Winston-Salem, NC	$27,000
Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders	North Andover, MA	$41,300
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation	New York, NY	$33,800
KUDDLE KIDS	Payson, UT	$13,800
LensCrafters Foundation (LCF)	Cincinnati, OH	$30,000
Mercy Medical Airlift	Virginia Beach, VA	$38,000
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Tustin, CA	$16,000
National Jewish Medical and Research Center	Denver, CO	$40,000
The Alliance for Children's Rights	Los Angeles, CA	$22,500
The Enterprise Foundation	Columbia, MD	$18,500
The National Exchange Club Foundation	Toledo, OH	$23,000
The National Marfan Foundation, Inc.	Port Washington, NY	$25,000
SUNY College at Brockport	Brockport, NY	$6,210
The Sturge-Weber Foundation	Mt. Freedom, NJ	$12,800
Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation	Rolling Meadows, IL	$49,750
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)	Washington, DC	$58,000
WETA	Arlington, VA	$40,400

During the 2001-2002 contribution year, donations exceeded $651,090 with over $268,000 of that amount coming to the Foundation from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion. Their Posts, Units, Salons, and Squadrons are the primary contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation.

We encourage each member and each local organization to make an annual contribution in support of their Foundation so it can continue to fund projects that will assist children by giving them a better chance at life. It is important to remember that every dollar given to the Foundation is put directly into the trust fund to be used for grants that assist our young people.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation held in Indianapolis on May 5, 2002, the following officers were elected: U.S. "Udie" Grant of Kansas, (President); James P. Holley of Texas, (Vice President); Kenneth D. Danilson of Iowa, (Secretary); and Robert Turner of Georgia, (Treasurer). Administrative personnel that were re-appointed by the Board of Directors were George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Assistant Treasurer) and William A. Pease (Executive Secretary).

Under the 1969 Tax Reform Act, the Foundation retains its tax-exempt status. Gifts, therefore, are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law, and bequests to the Foundation are deductible for federal inheritance tax purposes to the extent permitted by the Federal Tax Act.

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION

Jeffrey L. Olson, Minnesota, Chairman
Richard D. Holmes, Indiana, Director

The 83rd annual National Convention of The American Legion took place in San Antonio, Texas, August 24–30, 2001. National Commander Ray G. Smith (North Carolina) called the opening session to order at 9:00AM on Tuesday, August 28, 2001. Commander Smith welcomed the Legionnaires to San Antonio, Texas and thanked them for "Still Serving America". Mr. Julian Castro, Mayor Pro Tem of the City of San Antonio, James C. Young, Department Commander, the American Legion Department of Texas, and John Morris, president of the Texas National Convention Corporation welcomed legionnaires to the National Convention. Senator Phil Gramm, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Congressmen Lamar S. Smith, Ciro D. Rodriguez, Christopher H. Smith and Charlie Gonzalez addressed convention attendees. Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs and General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also addressed the convention. The Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States of America addressed a standing room only audience of The American Legion Family and Members of our Armed Forces on Wednesday, August 29, 2001. Mrs. Martha Corriher, Department of North Carolina, sang the National Anthem to open the national convention of The American Legion.

One of the many highlights for the 2001 National Convention was The National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests that took place in the Grand Ballroom of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Mr. Larry Gatlin provided entertainment to a record crowd of Legionnaires and guests.

CONVENTION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The National Convention Commission held three regular meetings during the year. Discussions continue regarding the revisions of our request for proposal (RFP) that is sent to cities interested in hosting a National Convention. This process is extremely important as it provides an equal opportunity for all cities to be judged the same way during the initial review and site visit process. It is the commission's desire to continue to attract new cities desirous of hosting our National Convention. This provides our "blue cap" Legionnaires and their families with a varied and enjoyable convention that can be shared by all on an annual basis.

New color guard rules approved by the National Convention Commission for the 2000 convention were refined and improved for the 2001 national convention in San Antonio, Texas. Also included, for the first time at the 2001 national convention, was a "Post Burial Detail Ceremony". Additional color guard classes and ceremonies will be added at future national conventions.

The National Convention Commission also rewrote and submitted for approval the Articles of Agreement between the host Convention Corporation and the National Organization of The American Legion for the conduct of the national convention. Included in this revision were update Convention Corporation Policy and Procedures, which are provided to each corporation hosting the national convention. This revision will allow both organizations to more efficiently and effectively conduct the business of the national convention and those responsibilities for each contained therein.

Beginning with the 1999 national convention and continued at the 2001 convention, each attendee had to have the proper identification badge/credentials to enter all of the venues of The American Legion national convention. On-site registration tables were available for those who needed to register at the site of the convention. This process proved to be successful and will continue for all future national conventions. Additionally, the convention office was directed to procure a new paper within plastic badge for the national convention. This badge proposal was made available for the first time at the 2001 national convention in San Antonio, Texas. Traditional badges will be available for purchase from our Emblem Sales Division during and after the national convention.

The National Convention Commission reviewed bids for the 2007 National Convention from the cities of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, New Orleans, Louisiana and Reno, Nevada. Subsequent to conducting site visits and after hearing formal presentations from each city the National Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that the city of Reno, Nevada be tentatively awarded the National Convention in the year 2007, the dates being August 24–30, 2007. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation.

Dates and future conventions are:

St. Louis, Missouri	August 22 – 28, 2003
Nashville, Tennessee	August 27 – September 2, 2004
Honolulu, Hawaii	August 19 – 25, 2005
Salt Lake City, Utah	August 18 – 24, 2006

DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE
Conrad Roberson, Texas, Chairman

The Distinguished Guest Committee exists under the umbrella of the National Convention Commission. Responsibilities include the coordination of activities of all persons invited to attend the national convention as our distinguished guests. The committee arranges each guest's arrival and departure at the national convention. Each distinguished guest is also assisted with credentials, agendas and other details of the national convention.

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
Kenneth A. Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy Director

This report covers the programs, activities and accomplishments of the National Economic Commission, its two standing committees (Employment and Veterans' Preference), and the staff from July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002. Since the commission and the committees always meet concurrently, all future reference to the commission in this report will automatically indicate the inclusion of the committees.

2000-2001 Meetings

During the period this report covers, the commission met for four regularly scheduled executive sessions. A list of those meetings follows:

- Members and guests of the National Economic Commission met on Saturday, August 25, 2001, in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, in conjunction with the Eighty-third Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, August 27, 2001. The complete text of that report appears in the Proceedings of the National Executive Committee's Pre- and Post-Convention Meetings.
- An executive session of the National Economic Commission was held in the headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 8-9, 2001. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 10-11.
- The National Economic Commission met in conjunction with the Forty-second Annual Washington Conference on Monday and Wednesday, March 11 and 13, 2002. Those sessions were held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. A report on the topics covered during those two sessions is contained in the commission's Advance Report to the NEC.
- Members of the commission met on May 6-7, 2002, in the headquarters of The American Legion, in Indianapolis, Indiana. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, May 8-9, 2002.

Legislative Appearances

A very important part of the work of the National Economic Commission is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony on issues affecting the economic well-being of America's veterans. During the period covered by this report, the commission testified or participated in the preparation of testimony on several occasions. A list of those hearings follows:

October 30, 2001; Subcommittee on Benefits, House Veterans' Affairs Committee; GAO's report on Veterans' Employment and Training Service: Flexibility and Accountability Needed.

September 21, 2001; House Veterans' Affairs Committee; improvement of homeless programs.

April 11, 2002; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits; benefits issues.

April 18, 2002; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits; HR 4015, Jobs for Veterans Act.

May 9, 2002; House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education & Related Services; FY 2003 Budget for Veterans Employment and Training Service.

June 11, 2002; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits; veterans' benefit issues.

The economics staff prepared the commission's portion of the testimony that was presented in September 2001 by the National Commander at a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs regarding The American Legion's goals and concerns.

Administrative Activities

The commission's staff of two manages all of its activities and programs on a daily basis.

The staff's major responsibility is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans at the national level. This is accomplished through the commission's ongoing work with Congress and a number of federal agencies, including the Department of Labor, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The deputy director also represents The American Legion on the following boards and committees: Executive Committee of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and its Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans; the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training; the Veterans' Committee of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies; the veterans' advisory committees of the Small Business Administration, its Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Office of Personnel Management; and the Secretary of Commerce's Decennial Census Advisory Committee. They also act as advisors to the Legion's Veterans Planning and Coordinating Committee.

In addition to those activities, the deputy director and assistant director work closely with community based groups such as the National Organization on Disability, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, and the Veterans Organizations Homeless Council.

Another staff responsibility is answering the large volume of mail and electronic mail that is received annually from veterans seeking information or assistance on issues which come under the commission's jurisdiction. While the staff can neither place individual veterans in jobs nor represent them in labor disputes, the staff does provide information, guidance and, when appropriate, referral. Besides correspondence from individuals, the staff also receives and answers frequent requests and inquiries from government agencies, members of Congress, congressional committees, private organizations, and other groups regarding veterans' economic issues.

One of the commission's major programs is its awards program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who have established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers, and to outstanding members of the state employment security agencies.

Publications

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the commission does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on a network of employment chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding employment.

In order to assist the employment chairmen to be as effective as possible, the staff provides them with pertinent information and guidance through the Legion's biweekly newspaper, ***The Dispatch***. They also provide articles on a routine basis to The American Legion Magazine.

The commission's various publications are kept in stock and distributed upon request, free of charge.

Employer of the Year Awards

Each year since 1969, the Legion's National Economic Commission has sponsored an Employer of the Year Awards Program. This program seeks to honor those employers across the country that have established an outstanding record in the employment and retention of veterans. Nominations for these awards are submitted by Posts to their Departments for review. Each Department must then select what it feels is the most worthy nominee in the large employer category (those companies with more than 200 employees), one in the medium-size employer category (51-200 employees), and one in the small employer category (50 or fewer employees). These three nominations are then forwarded to the National Economic Commission prior to January 15 for final approval and the issuance of plaques. After the plaques are prepared, they are sent to the Departments for presentation.

Prior to this year's Washington Conference, the chairman of the National Economic Commission, Kenneth A. Sercerchi (ME), appointed a six-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 2001 in the Employer of the Year Awards Program. The purpose of this subcommittee was to select a national winner and a runner-up in each of the employer categories.

The members of the Employer of the Year Subcommittee met on March 11, 2002, to consider employer nominations from Departments.

Prior to the meeting, the staff liaison to the subcommittee mailed copies of all nominations and supporting data to each subcommittee member. After a thorough review of this material, the Employer of the Year Subcommittee selected the following winners:

Large Employer: Winter Haven Wal-Mart Distribution Center,
Winter Haven, Florida

Medium Size Employer: M&T Company, Lakehurst, New Jersey

Small Employer: Basic Water Company, Henderson, Nevada

Officials of the three winning companies have agreed to send representatives to the 84th Annual National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, to accept the national awards. Upon their arrival in the convention city, each company will receive a small stipend to help defray the travel costs of their representatives.

Employment Service Awards

Beginning in 1993, three awards have been presented to the Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year, and the Employment Service Office of the Year. These awards are given in cooperation with local Job Service offices across the country, to recognize truly outstanding veteran-dedicated staff members.

Department winners were selected and submitted to the national commission in the same manner as employer award winners. Entries were considered by the employer awards subcommittee on March 11, 2002. Winners are to receive their plaques at their respective Department Conventions. National winners are the following:

LVER of the Year: Barbara Phillips, Fort Payne, Alabama

DVOP of the Year: Ronald Mullen, Tulsa, Oklahoma

ES Office of the Year: Fayetteville Local Employment Security
Commission, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy Director

The mission of the committee is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans. To accomplish this, the committee works at the national level with Congress and various federal agencies. The committee does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on its network of employment chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding employment. These employment chairmen are appointed by their Posts and Departments. Occasionally, Departments also appoint them at the county and District levels.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE
Richard T. Lee Jr., California, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy Director

This committee is charged with the responsibility of promoting veterans' employment opportunities in federal government and for ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

Federal Veterans' Economic Programs

The following is a brief overview of the Commission's interactions with those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

Department of Labor: The Deputy Director for Economics met many times with top officials in the Veterans' Employment and Training Service, and made site visits to several Job Service offices in the greater Washington, DC, area in order to familiarize himself thoroughly with this agency's operations.

The Economic Division referred some dozen veterans' inquiries to VETS for investigation and reply.

Department of the Treasury: The Economic Commission continues its active support of U.S. Savings Bonds, which have recently gained a new popularity because of an added education benefit. Savings bonds can be completely tax free when used for higher education tuition.

Because of federal budget cuts, the U.S. Treasury Department can no longer afford to send each Legion post promotional material on savings bonds. The Economic Commission, however, continues to provide Legionnaires with information on the value of these bonds through articles and public service advertisements in Legion publications.

Department of Veterans Affairs: The Economic Division referred several veterans' inquiries to the VA Home Loan Guaranty Service or the office of health care for homeless veterans for investigation and reply.

Office of Personnel Management: The Economic Division some half-dozen veterans' inquiries to OPM for investigation and reply.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to monitor veterans' employment trends in the future. It will also continue to work with OPM to promote employment opportunities for veterans.

Postal Service: The Economic Division referred several veterans' inquiries to USPS for investigation and reply.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Postal Service.

Small Business Administration: The Deputy Director and Assistant Director of Economics met several times with the SBA's Assistant Administrator for Veterans' Business Development in order to familiarize themselves with his office's functions, and in addition, invited the Assistant Administrator to speak to the Commission at Washington Conference in March 2002 and at National Convention in August 2002.

Conclusion

The National Economic Commission is fully aware that it would be impossible to carry out its mandates without the active involvement of Posts, Districts, Counties, Departments and individual Legionnaires. We deeply appreciate their continued support and involvement. Chairman Sercerchi also thanks the National Commander, the National Adjutant, the National Executive Committee, and the staff of both the Washington and Indianapolis offices for the outstanding support and cooperation they have provided during the past year.

Finance Commission
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman
George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana, National Treasurer
Paul M. Allen, Minnesota, Director

The primary obligation of the Finance Commission is to prepare a yearly budget for the National Executive Committee, handle funds under that budget, and exercise reasonable oversight to see that the various divisions and departments of the National Organization operate within appropriations. The Finance Commission includes seven members, with the National Adjutant as ex-officio secretary, and the National Commander and National Treasurer as ex-officio members. Also attending these meetings are the Executive Directors of the Washington and Indianapolis offices and the Finance Director, as well as liaison observers from the National Executive Committee.

The National Organization had an operating surplus of $2,376,095 for 2001. In that year, we received $9 dues per member, allocating $6 to the general fund and $3 to *The American Legion Magazine.*

Income of the National Organization derives from annual membership dues, interest on investments, magazine advertisements, Emblem Sales, contributions, and other approved activities.

A full financial statement is incorporated in the auditors's report. Your attention is directed also to the Reports of Committees and Trusts, which can be found in this publication.

These entities include the:

American Legion Child Welfare foundation, Inc.
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation
American Legion Life Insurance and Trust committee
American Legion Emblem Committee
American Legion Overseas Graves Decoration Trust

Emblem Committee
Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah, Chairman
Jeffrey O. Brown, Indiana, Director

The American Legion emblem is the exclusive property of the National Headquarters. The sale of the emblem, emblem pins, merchandise carrying the emblem and other items of organizational equipment is the responsibility of the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The following tables show gross sales, net earnings, etc., for the entire calendar year 2001 and for the first three months of 2002.

January 1 to December 31, 2001
(12 months)

Gross Sales	$9,686,857
Cost of Goods Sold	5,559,458
Overhead	2,889,395
Operating Profit	1,238,004

Total number of 2001 orders processed was 96,599.

January 1 to March 31, 2002
(3 months)

Gross Sales	$2,630,334
Cost of Goods Sold	1,477,542
Overhead	750,148
Operating Profit	402,644

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 2002 was 23,795.

THE AMERICAN LEGION INSURANCE COMMITTEE
Leroy S. Lakey, North Carolina, Chairman
G. Paul Dunn, Oklahoma, Member Benefits Administrator

The American Legion Insurance Committee provides oversight for the several insurance plans currently offered by The American Legion and is assigned to the National Finance Commission.

The American Legion Insurance Program supports several National programs which are among the most prominent and visible activities of The American Legion. The programs are listed below with the corresponding funding for 2002.

American Legion Baseball $596,086; National Oratorical Contest $296,799; Junior Uniformed Musical Groups $30,000 for participation at the National Convention; Boy's Nation $159,615; Boy Scout of The Year Scholarship Award $17,500. An award of $2,500 per year up to four years, not to exceed $10,000, for pursuit of a course of study beyond high school. Three second-place awards in the amount of $2,500 each are also granted.

These requests for grants are approved by The American Legion Insurance Committee, the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee.

The American Legion offers a variety of insurance plans, which are described as follows:

National Health Care Plans

The National Executive Committee (NEC) approved the following healthcare plans that are offered nationwide:

- A variety of major medical plans, called **Market Basket**, that allows members (Legion and SAL) to call and request quotes on major medical insurance.
- **Small Business Group Insurance**—provides quotes on major medical coverage for small employer groups of 2-50 employees. Additional options offered for employees are term life, accidental death, long and short term disability and dental. Remember, these plans are for employees of the small business group—not the general membership. Posts and Departments with 2 or more employees could also use this plan.
- **Dental Insurance**—this is an indemnified insurance plan with a full schedule of benefits, for members and their dependents, including SAL.

For information on the above plans, call 1-877-886-0110.

Important Information: Effective January 2002—All life plans will be transferred to Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co. (a GE Capital Company). Insured members will be informed of this change at a later date.

All life insurance plans are currently being evaluated by Union Fidelity. As decisions are made on new plans or the continuation of current plans, appropriate announcements will be made to the membership.

LegionPlus TRICARE Supplement

The American Legion has a National TRICARE Supplement Program for active duty and retired military members and dependents. This program is designed to meet the needs of active duty and retired military members who may be referred to civilian facilities for care. It includes an active duty and retired version.

Requests for information on TRICARE Supplement Plan, should be directed to the Administrator, **Seabury & Smith, Inc., 1776 West Lakes Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50398; 1-800-542-5547.**

Birthday Life

Another plan available to members and spouses is Birthday Life, underwritten and administered by Union Fidelity Life Insurance (now owned by GE Capital) located in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. This plan is a guaranteed-issue, whole life plan combined with accidental death insurance, with premiums at entry age, which do not increase as the insured grows older. No medical exam is required.

The plan provides a limited death benefit, for the first two years, for death from natural causes and provides full benefits during that period for accidental deaths. Full benefits in any event are payable after two years.

Simplified Issue Term Insurance

The American Legion also offers a Simplified Issue Term plan (that is ideal for younger members too)! This program is available to American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members and dependents.

Requests for information on the Birthday Life and Simplified Issue Term plans should be directed to the Administrator, **Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., 500 Virginia Dr., Fort Washington, PA 19034; or call 1-800-523-5758.**

Claims

The primary feature of The American Legion Insurance Plan is the benefits paid to beneficiaries of deceased insured Legionnaires. In 44 years, claims have been paid amounting to more than $218 million in benefits. These benefits were paid at no cost to the National Organization of The American Legion and no expenses to the general membership, other than certificate-policyholders. The insurance plan has proven to be a self-sustaining program. By the end of 2002, the total benefits paid will be nearly $237 million.

Department Healthcare

The National Organization has several healthcare products, **which are offered to Departments on an individual basis**, as requested. Departments must approve the products by a vote of their Department Executive Committee and certify the approval to the National Adjutant. Departments may or may not approve all plans offered. Upon approval by a Department, appropriate announcements will be made to the membership. The National Health Insurance Program now has six Departments who have approved participation: Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and Pennsylvania. Marketing of plans is under way in those Departments.

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, Chairman
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director

The following annual report covers the activities of the American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission and Foreign Relations Council for the 2001-2002 program year ending June 30, 2002.

Overview

There are two principal goals of the Commission's continuing work. First, the Commission is dedicated to keeping the membership and leadership of The American Legion informed on relevant foreign policy issues and to carrying The Legion's important voice as contained in adopted resolutions to our government. Second, the Commission and its staff work to urge bipartisan cooperation by the Congress and the Administration in developing consistent, viable foreign policies for the United States.

To keep the membership fully informed, the Foreign Relations Commission conducts meetings and programs throughout the year, which highlight current foreign policy issues. The Commission is also dedicated to providing and exchanging information on foreign relations topics and ideas through its speaker program, while also regularly consulting with its grassroots membership on these key issues.

The Commission works to influence the Administration and Congress toward development of bipartisan foreign policies, which are consistent with the principles of Democratic Activism as well as our entire portfolio of active resolutions. The American Legion participates in numerous meetings, hearings and programs throughout the year providing both input and recommendations to the State Department, to congressional

offices and committees, and to the White House. This is done through liaison offices at these agencies.

Mr. Thomas L. Bock, of Colorado, was appointed in the Fall of 2001 and serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions
Adopted at National Convention in San Antonio, Texas 2001

Of the resolutions that were adopted, two overarching general foreign policy resolutions outline the major principles that have characterized The American Legion's approach to foreign affairs over many years. These resolutions were reaffirmed at the 83rd National Convention in San Antonio and are:

Resolution Number 100, *America's Future*, which outlines the major international goals sought by The American Legion and recognizes the unprecedented and far reaching changes in the international security environment in the post-Cold War period. This Resolution calls upon the U.S. Government to adopt policies of "Democratic Activism" by promoting democratic values, maintaining a strong national defense to deter or defeat aggression, cooperate with allies, encourage free and fair trade and assist developing nations.

Resolution Number 88, *Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy*, which outlines The American Legion's objectives for U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy. This resolution also suggests that U.S. foreign policy embody key principles that include:

- recognition of U.S. responsibilities as a world leader
- dedication to world peace and a peace through strength posture
- active promotion of democracy
- support for human rights consistent with U.S. national interests
- participation in collective security alliances
- use of U.S. national resources in critical world regions to achieve interests
- equitable and verifiable arms control agreements
- opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery
- opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking
- support for responsible international organizations consistent with our interests
- participation in the increasingly interdependent free world trade system
- recognition of the importance of national sovereignty in foreign relations issues
- recognition of the important roles played by the President and Congress in foreign policy.

The additional resolutions adopted at the 83rd National Convention in San Antonio, Texas 2001 are:

General Foreign Policy

Resolution Number 53: *Priority POW/MIA Actions*
Resolution Number 88: *Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy*
Resolution Number 70: *United Nations*
Resolution Number 73: *POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony*
Resolution Number 100: *America's Future*

Far Eastern Affairs

Resolution Number 4: *Support for Taiwan*
Resolution Number 22: *Opposition to Trade with China*
Resolution Number 71: *Vietnam POW/MIA Policy*
Resolution Number 72: *Japanese Compensation and Equity to America's POWs*
Resolution Number 172: *Policy On Support To the Republic Of Korea*

National Executive Committee Meeting, Fall 2001

On October 8th and 9th, the National Security Commission met in executive session in the Radisson Hotel-Circle West to consider Resolutions properly before it and to conduct other business. In the initial meeting on October 8th, two resolutions were considered. Of these, one was referred for study from the 83rd National Convention.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 were discussed in detail by the Commission. Commission members realized the foreign relations of the United States have dramatically shifted to countering the terrorist threat and responding to the September 11th attacks. The American Legion supports these efforts and urges that all tools be available to those who are going into harms way to respond to terrorist. On October 9, they met jointly with the Foreign Relations Commission.

2002 Washington Conference

The Foreign Relations Commission met in general session on March 11 and March 13, 2002 during the 42nd Annual Washington Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. The following is a summary of their three sessions:

Morning Session, March 11

The Commission met jointly with the National Security Commission to hear several speakers of mutual interest. The Honorable Richard L. Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State gave an address on the Department's role in the war on terrorism as well as a masterful presentation on six trends which will affect U.S. foreign policy in the decades ahead. He also fielded a variety of questions from members of both Commissions. As the number two at the Department of State, Secretary Armitage oversees many of the day-to-day operations around the globe.

The second speaker was the Honorable Dov S. Zakheim, Undersecretary of the Defense (Comptroller) who is the Pentagon's Chief Financial Office. He gave a highly informative and detailed account of the Department's spending and resource needs as well as detailing the proposed increases for FY 2003. He answered a dozen questions on all aspects of the $250 billion budget of the Defense Department.

Afternoon Session, March 11

Both Commissions joined with the Special POW/MIA Committee for an update. Mr. Jerry Jennings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Director of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) led off the afternoon session with a restatement of the Administration's policies on achieving the fullest possible accounting. Mr. Jennings also gave an interesting historical presentation on the accounting for our missing since the founding of the Republic.

Ms. Ann Mills Griffith, Executive Director of the National League of Families of America Prisoners Missing in Southwest Asia gave the group updates on developments in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. She also answered a variety of questions. Past National Commander and Special POW/MIA Committee Chairman Bob Turner chaired the update session.

Wednesday Session, March 13

The Foreign Relations Commission met in a business session on Wednesday morning. Chairman Tom Bock gave an overview of his orientation trip to Washington, DC in February. Bock met with officials at the State Department, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office and staffers at the House International Relations Committee.

One resolution was recommended for adoption "Support for a Robust American Diplomacy." This resolution calls for adequate funding for the State Department and related international programs.

Finally, Assistant Director John Petersen gave a preview of National Commander Santos' upcoming European trip. Commander Santos will visit U.S. troops in Germany, Macedonia and Kosovo and will meet with Legionnaires in London, Germany and Portugal.

Spring 2002 NEC

An executive session of The Foreign Relations Commission met on May 6, 2002 in the Circle West room of the Radisson City Centre Hotel to discuss a variety of issues. The Commission discussed recent world events and corresponding American Legion resolutions. Staff reviewed the recent trip of the National Commander to Europe. The Commission also discussed the upcoming 84th National Convention in Charlotte, NC in detail, including recommendations for speakers and resolution requirements. The Commission reviewed one resolution that was recommended for approval by the Commission at the most recent Washington Conference. On Tuesday May 7, 2002, the Commission met jointly with the National Security Commission.

The National Security—Foreign Relations Division

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security-Foreign Relations Division located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; John C. Petersen, Assistant Director; Angela L. Rose, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Tina T. Hines, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The division also coordinates the National Commander's foreign travel as well as managing a variety of special assignments. The duties included answering correspondence, E-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service

System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. The foreign relation's responsibilities also entail continuing with embassies liaison "think tanks" and a variety on governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization as well as Congress, the Department of State and the general public. Coordinating foreign travel, writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, are also duties of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field. Numerous press interviews, background briefings and public releases are coordinated with our Media Relations Office.

Particularly vigorous activities were conducted during this reporting period to monitor the conflicts in the Balkans, the continuing tensions in Iraq and North Korea, and our relationship with The People's Republic of China. Also, there were many activities in support of full POW/MIA accounting including frequent email information to the Special Committees, Department Chairman and interested members.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as The Dispatch and The American Legion Magazine which are a primary means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign relations.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman
John W. Querfeld, Illinois, Director

The National Internal Affairs Commission was established by resolution of the National Executive Committee in 1947. The original charge for this constitutional commission still remains: "to formulate and recommend policies and to oversee the implementation of adopted policies relating to activities conducted for organizational purposes."

Among those purposes are all those not properly the responsibility of any other national commission, as well as membership strategies, post formation, clerical and records administration for posts and individual members, and special projects. The commission also is required from time to time to provide guidance and assistance to the National Adjutant on necessary administrative operations of the National Headquarters.

Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline, and commemorative activities. The commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities, which potentially affect posts and departments, and recommends appropriate courses of action.

The commission has four standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination. They are Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials, Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws, and Membership & Post Activities. The latter has separate reporting responsibilities to the National Convention and the National Executive Committee.

Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the activities of the Sons of The American Legion, which is not a separate organization, but rather, a major program of the organization.

The commission also oversees long-term programs and activities as the National Paid-Up-For-Life program and the National Emergency Fund.

Special projects of significance are the World War II Memorial fundraising in conjunction with the American Battle Monuments Commission, of which The American Legion raised over 4.5 million for the memorial, and the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War.

TROPHIES, AWARDS AND CEREMONIALS
Randall W. Busch, Nebraska, Chairman

This committee supervises all of the official national awards and recommends to the National Executive Committee recipients for the Distinguished Service Medal; over the years, some of those awarded The American Legion's highest honor were: General John J. Pershing, Ignace Jan Paderewski of Poland, Henry Ford, Ernie Pyle, Bob Hope, Babe Ruth, Dr. Jonas E. Salk, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the dead & missing of the Vietnam War, 10 men who have served as President of The United States in the 20th Century, plus many other citizens of renown who have made lasting and significant contributions. At the National Convention in Charlotte, NC, we will honor Robert Stump, US Representative from Arizona, with this very prestigious award.

Other awards this committee makes recommendations on include the International Amity Award, and the Canadian Friendship Award. A report is also prepared for the National Executive Committee on miscellaneous awards that have been presented during each year.

The committee also supervises the contents of the Manual of Ceremonies of The American Legion.

RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT
Gerald Diercks, Minnesota, Chairman

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the annual National Convention. This committee has the responsibility to receive, consider and transmit all resolutions—with or without recommendation—to the appropriate convention committee for a report to the convention. During an average year, 200-300 resolutions will be assigned.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Vincent Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a National Convention.

However, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the Constitution and By-laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the Revocation, Cancellation, or Suspension of Department and Post Charters of The American Legion.

MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman
Billy R. Johnson, Arkansas, Membership Director

Membership and programs go hand-in-hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide the people and resources to serve the need of the veteran and his/her family. We are pleased to report a continuing membership of nearly 2.8 million members worldwide.

MEMBERSHIP

Final 2001 membership	2,705,649
2001 membership as of Aug. 1, 2002	2,705,649*

***Estimate**. The year-end membership should equal or slightly higher than the 2001 final membership.

39th Annual National Membership Workshop

The 39th annual membership meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Friday, July 26, 2002, with over 400 department and district officers in attendance from nearly all of the 55 departments.

Many of those attending arrive in Indianapolis with a very good understanding of the membership program, especially as it pertains to their areas. But, by the time the workshop concludes they are prepared to face the day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of The American Legion as it relates to potential members.

The goal of this workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to grow the membership in The American Legion. Whether it is membership recruitment or program implementation - it is all about veterans helping veterans and providing communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT/REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Membership and Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996, designed to assist Posts, Districts and Departments in developing and revitalizing posts.

The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers along with practical field application. A total of forty-two Departments has received assistance from this effort.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization/development of almost four hundred American Legion Posts. Many of the Departments have been successful in this program without any actual assistance from National Staff. Whether a Department request field assistance or just the training workshop, if the guidelines are followed, there will be successful results.

RECONNECT PROGRAM

The Reconnect Program is an initiative by the Department of Defense to "Reconnect" America with today's military. The Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Director for Public Affairs (OASD/PA) sent a letter in 2000, to all major commands informing them of this Total Force program that includes both active duty and National Guard and Reserve Components.

"Reconnect" is an open invitation from the military for groups like The American Legion to establish ties between military installations and the civilian community. This is not a free ticket to recruit on military installations, but it is an opportunity for The American Legion to showcase the programs and services we have in place. Legionnaires go into an event with attitude of providing a service to the service members on the installation and promoting the military in the local community.

The National Organization of The American Legion has conducted several "Reconnect" visits to major military installations and National Guard & Reserve facilities in an effort to publicize the joint efforts of the Legion and the Department of Defense. We find that success depends largely on the participation of Departments and the cooperation of local American Legion Posts in the community near the military installations.

An important consideration is that while "Reconnect" visits to larger installations is important from a public relations point of view, the measure of success for The American Legion is the amount and quality of visits and participation with hundreds of local National Guard and Reserve Component units in the United States, as well as smaller active duty training installations. These men and women, and their families, are the "citizen-soldiers" who live far away from the larger established military support networks. They most need our support.

DIRECT RENEWAL

The Direct Renewal Program is a uniform, organized, and simple way to invite members to renew their membership in The American Legion using a direct mail system. This program has been very successful and effective and has been funded at no cost to either the participating Departments or Posts.

The first two renewal notices are optional for Posts but the final three notices go to all delinquent members. Each Department chooses the dates its members receive the first three notices - (1) July 1 or August 1, (2) October 1 or November 1, (3) December 15 or January 11. The March 13 and May 1 notices go to all delinquent members.

DIRECT MEMBERSHIP SOLICITATION

Since 1982, the Direct Membership solicitation (DMS) Program has been responsible for acquiring over 2.3 million new members into the 52 participating Departments. In 2002, the DMS Program acquired 167,000 new members. The 2002 program was a success. Obviously, the DMS Program has proven to be very successful in the acquisition of new members, but again this year, the emphasis was on the transfer, renewal, and retention of those members.

The DMS Program will continue to support The American Legion's on-going membership efforts with special emphasis on the retention of all members.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

National Leadership & Information Conferences

Sponsored through a cooperative effort of the National Headquarters of The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Departments, this important series of conferences is held in eight regional locations throughout the United States to provide updated information and to train current and future leaders.

The American Legion is about Americans taking care of America, assisting others to prepare for the changing world in the 21st Century. This conference explores the rapid and dramatic economic, technological, social and political trends that affect the way we conduce business today, and in the years to come.

Conference instructors are the professional staff of the organization, and some are leaders from the volunteer sector. These knowledgeable, dedicated instructors cover many programs and activities, providing a blend of experience, educational expertise, sharing of ideas, helping to solve problems, exchanging information, and sharpening individual skills.

The American Legion National College

Each November, The American Legion National College hosts as many as fifty talented young Legionnaires from all 55 Departments at National Headquarters in Indianapolis for a week of intensive training. These students return to their Departments armed with newly acquired or sharpened skills in leadership, marketing, communication, membership and fundraising. Student candidates are nominated by the Departments and selected by a National Selection Committee of Past National Commanders.

Candidates for the National College must be Lebanon/Grenada (August 1982) or later veteran with demonstrated potential for further service.

The American Legion National College is a worthwhile investment for every Department. Graduates are making a difference in leadership roles and membership teams across the country. Several have already been appointed to Department level positions while others are used in various leadership and teaching roles in Department Legion Colleges and National Leadership and Information Conferences and membership drives.

Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion will conduct its 31st National Convention at the Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

28th consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion is at an "All Time High" in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 2001 with a record 247,149 members, which represents a 5.3 percent increase over the previous year.

Membership figures for the 2002-year have already exceeded the figures for the 2001-membership year. By the National Convention in Charlotte, the S.A.L. surpassed the 2001 final figures by over 14 thousand members giving them another "All Time High" for membership year 2002.

The SAL continues its support of The American Legion programs and is heavily involved with support to our nation's veterans in the VAVS program. In 2001, the S.A.L. provided over 167,000, volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceed $1,677,400, nationwide. This was remarkable considering only than 10% of the Squadron's submitted reports. The S.A.L. also raised over $246,000 in the year 2001 for the Child Welfare Foundation surpassing all previous years. The Sons also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons of The American Legion has contributed well over one million dollars to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

The Sons continues to support Legion programs with major emphasis on VAVS, National Emergency Fund, World War II Memorial, and this year, the Children's Miracle Network as well as other vital programs. As an integral part of The American Legion

family, the Sons continues to serve and provide assistance to posts and their communities.

National Emergency Fund

The National Emergency Fund continues in the spirit of veterans helping veterans and their families in need as it has since 1989. In 2001, grants totaling over $133,000 went to 76 individuals and 10 posts. Total of grant monies awarded since the NEF was reinstated in 1989 is $3.5 million dollars.

National Commander Ric Santos has actively continued the fundraising efforts for the NEF, and taken every opportunity to ensure our Legion family keeps this a vital and important program. During the 2001 Fall Meetings, he challenged the Legion family to raise $500,000 between then and August 1, 2002, with a goal to top the "$1 Million Mark" in the fund. Due to the generosity of our Legion family, he achieved that objective.

The Legion Family has been extremely generous in the past, but we mustn't rest on our laurels. Every opportunity to continue and sustain local fundraising for the National Emergency Fund is encouraged. Even though the fund is plentiful today (we currently have just over $1,000,000 in the fund available for disbursement), a single disaster can wipe it out very quickly. We continue to help our fellow comrades, their families and Legion Posts in need.

Consolidated Post Reports

The Consolidated Post Report—one of The American Legion's most valuable documents is our report card to Congress. It provides a summary of the collective assistance provided to the nation from our Legion Posts. Nearly 51 percent of American Legion Posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 2000-2001 year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit Color Guards, Firing Squads and other uniformed groups was $3,071,415; Legion baseball team support cost $7,524,410; other athletic teams were provided $2,128,436; cash contributions to VA Voluntary Service was $1,993,369, and over 1,527,937 hours of volunteer service were provided; 55,883 Boy Scouts were sponsored at a cost of $1,742,422; scholarships valued at $3,930,636 were awarded to 9,068 students.

In addition, 3,143,788, hours were spent performing community service work, valued at $5,559,591; nearly 95,686 pints of blood were donated, and additional millions of dollars in goods and cash were contributed to programs helping veterans and their families.

Remember, these facts and figures represent just over half of all American Legion Posts. What if all Posts submitted a report? What are the true numbers?

Paid-Up-For-Life Program

They are Legionnaires who have voluntarily chosen to become Paid-Up-For-Life members under the National plan. The number of Legionnaires who have applied for a lifetime membership since the beginning of the program in 1975 is over 250,000. A Legionnaire must be in good standing to become a Paid-Up-For-Life member…to be in good standing, the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year.

Each Paid-Up-For-Life member receives a permanent plastic card, as well as an annual paper membership card, directly from National, to verify continuing membership in The American Legion. The annual card will be mailed in June or July of each year.

The cost of a Paid-Up-For-Life membership is based on the member's age at the time of application and the current annual dues of the Post; an applicant may pay by check, MasterCard or VISA, Discover or American Express. Also, they may use the Time Payment Plan to purchase a National Paid-Up-For-Life membership. No interest and no service charge is added to the fee.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 11, 2001 through August 10, 2002. During this period, the Commission met four (4) times to review the legislative program and to make recommendations to the National Executive Committee. Reports of these meetings are contained in the published proceedings of the National Executive Committee.

Purpose, Personnel and Organization

The National Legislative Commission represents The American Legion before the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters in which The American Legion is officially interested. The Commission also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of thirty-three members and five National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee in 1975 created the National Legislative Council, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their elected Members of Congress. There is one council member for each Member of Congress. A Council Chairman, who is assisted by a Vice Chairman in 50 State Departments, heads the Council. The Chairman, Vice Chairmen and general membership of the Council are appointed by the National Commander upon recommendation by the Departments.

The professional staff of the Commission (the Legislative Division) concentrates on implementing the legislative mandates of The American Legion which are expressed in resolutions adopted at its annual National Convention and by the National Executive Committee at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. The Legislative Division is located in Washington, DC and consists of the director, a deputy director, an assistant director, a grassroots coordinator, two secretaries, a librarian and a research analyst. The director, deputy director, assistant director and grassroots coordinator are registered lobbyists and submit biannual lobbying reports to Congress. Because The American Legion is a federally chartered organization, an annual report is also prepared and submitted to Congress.

107th Congress, First Session

The budget process remained the focus of congressional attention during the Second Session of the 107th Congress. When October 1 arrived—the official start of Fiscal Year

(FY) 2002—none of the 13 funding measures that are needed to operate the federal government had become law.

Between late September and mid-December, eight continuing resolutions were passed and enacted which extended funding through early January, 2002 at FY 2001 amounts. All of the 13 spending bills were enacted, with the last three signed into law by President Bush on January 10, 2002, after the start of the Second Session. The First Session of the 107th Congress officially adjourned on December 20, 2001.

Children & Youth

On November 28, 2001 President Bush signed Public Law 107-77, the FY 2002 spending bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary. The bill contains $21.7 billion in funding for the Department of Justice (DoJ), $612 million more than the department received in FY 2001. Specifically, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) received $5.6 billion, which is $841 million more than the previous year, to enforce the nation's immigration laws. The increased funds will allow INS to hire 570 additional agents.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) received $3.5 billion, an increase over FY 2001 of $280 million. About $12 million of the FBI's budget will address possible biological, chemical, or nuclear threats to this country. In addition, another $12 million was spent on security measures for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Finally, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) received $306 million, an $8 million increase over the previous year. This program has enjoyed the full support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

Economics

On December 21, 2001 President Bush signed PL 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001. The bill's major provisions would:

- Eliminate chronic homelessness among veterans within ten years.
- Authorize $250 million over five years to strengthen the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) to expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force.
- Authorize $285 million over four years for the Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program.
- Require VA to provide technical assistance grants to non-profit community-based groups to assist other groups in applying for federal grants to address homelessness among veterans.
- Authorize additional low-income housing vouchers—for a program administered by HUD—to assist homeless veterans in need of permanent housing who are enrolled in VA health care and are chronically mentally ill or are chronic substance abusers.
- Earmark $15 million over three years for medical care for homeless veterans with special needs, including older veterans, women, terminally ill, or chronically mentally ill.
- Authorize VA to provide outpatient dental services to veterans enrolled for care in VHA and receiving either direct or contract care in programs that traditionally serve the homeless.
- Allow VA to authorize up to 10 additional domiciliary care programs to provide services to homeless veterans, with $10 million authorized for the program.

- Require VA to have a mental health capability wherever it delivers primary care.
- Authorize VA & HUD to carry out a demonstration program to provide referral and counseling services to veterans leaving incarceration or long-term institutional confinement to assist in reintegration into their communities.
- Eliminate the cap on Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs and require those centers to be available in the 20 largest U.S. cities.
- Authorize homeless veterans receiving care through vocational rehabilitation programs to participate in the VA's work therapy program.
- Establish a VA Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.

Since its inception in the 1980's, the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program has been a significant recruitment and retention tool for U.S. armed forces. However, since that time the MGIB program has suffered from various problems, the most significant being that MGIB benefits only cover about 40 percent of a veteran's college expenses. Also, as nonservice financial assistance has become available, many college-bound young people do not feel the need to serve their country to obtain college money.

On December 27, 2001 President Bush enacted PL 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001. Provisions of this measure that address the MGIB program include:

- Raising the monthly MGIB payment from its current level of $650/month to $800/month in its first year, to $900/month the second, and to $985/month the third year.
- Allowing veterans to receive accelerated payments for education that leads to employment in the high-tech industry.
- Providing for the continuation after service of educational assistance allowances for persons called to active duty in support of or in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11.
- Expanding educational opportunities to include any private entity within the definition of "educational institution" that offers a course or courses to fulfill requirements of a license or certification for employment in a high-tech industry.

Once fully implemented, this legislation would raise the overall educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill to $39,600. Other provisions contained in this law are presented in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section of this report.

In a related matter, there is a provision in the Defense Authorization Act – PL 107-107, outlined in the National Security section—that addresses the MGIB program. This provision allows servicemembers with a minimum of 6 years of active duty—who sign on for at least another 4 years—to transfer up to 18 months of MGIB eligibility to either their spouses or child, so long as the child is at least 18 years old.

Also contained in PL 107-103 is a section dealing with transition assistance to servicemembers who are leaving the armed forces. The Departments of Defense (DoD) and Labor (DoL) have conducted hundreds of transition assistance sessions to assist soon-to-be separating or retiring servicemembers with finding employment in the civilian sector after their separation or retirement.

However, most of these programs have been held in this country, while many servicemembers who serve overseas are also preparing to separate or retire. As a result, PL 107-103 establishes authority for DoD and DoL to maintain offices for transition assistance in overseas military installations. It also allows pre-separation counseling to begin up to 12 months prior to separation, and 24 months prior to retirement.

The law also requires state approving agencies to conduct outreach programs and provide services to veterans about education and training benefits available to them. It

also requires—the first time a veteran or dependent applies for any VA benefit—VA to provide information on benefits and health care services available to veterans and their dependents

On January 10, 2002, the President signed into law PL 107-116, the FY 2002 funding measure for the Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education. Funding for DoL's Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) is contained in this bill. A total of $212.7 million was appropriated for ASVET, broken down into these accounts:

- $186.9 million for federal administration, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), and the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program;
- $7.5 million for the Veterans Workforce Investment program; and
- $18.3 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects program.

Foreign Relations

After the unprecedented terrorist attacks in New York City and on the Pentagon on September 11, President Bush received an unexpected windfall from the House and Senate three days later. Two measures were passed in quick succession—by overwhelming margins—to support the President in the "first war of the 21st Century."

On September 18, 2001 President Bush signed PL 107-38, the "2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery From and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States." Although the President originally asked for $20 billion, the measure makes $40 billion available to the Executive Office of the President to cover the costs of:

- Providing Federal, State, and local preparedness for mitigating and responding to the attacks;
- Providing support to counter, investigate, or prosecute domestic or international terrorism;
- Providing increased transportation security;
- Repairing damaged public facilities and transportation systems; and
- Supporting national security.

Also on September 18, President Bush enacted PL 107-40, a resolution giving the President the necessary authority to "use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons" that he determines "planned, authorized, committed, or aided" the terrorist attacks, or "harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism" against the U.S.

In related news, on October 26, President Bush signed PL 107-56, a measure entitled the "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001." This new law will give U.S. law enforcement new tools to combat terrorism. The law's provisions address four primary areas of concern: a) money laundering, b) immigration laws, c) domestic intelligence gathering and d) foreign intelligence gathering. All of the provisions of this law are set to expire in 2005, but Congress could reauthorize them if needed.

The American Legion stands behind the actions of Congress. National Commander Ric Santos issued a statement from our nation's capitol urging the President "to use all means available to identify, pursue and bring to justice those liable. Today's incidents are

proof that we are not immune to such attacks and we must take all necessary steps to prevent them."

PL 107-77—the FY 2002 Commerce-Justice-State-Judiciary appropriations measure—was signed by the President on November 28, 2001. The final version of the law did not contain language—supported by The American Legion—which would allow American World War II POWs to seek an apology and restitution from Japanese corporations who used them as slave labor. Both the House and Senate had originally included wording in their respective bills which prohibited the federal government from intervening in court cases where U.S. citizens claim they were used as slave labor during World War II. However, that language was excised from the conference report.

On January 10, 2002 President Bush signed PL 107-115, the FY 2002 Foreign Operations funding bill. This measure will allocate $15.4 billion for various economic and military aid to foreign countries and organizations. The final bill is about $200 million more than requested by the White House. This measure contains the primary foreign aid allocations for America's allies.

PL 107-115 contains economic and military assistance for three Middle East nations: $2.8 billion for Israel, $2 billion for Egypt, and $225 million for Jordan. The bill also provides economic assistance for the Independent States of the former Soviet Union in the amount of $784 million, $26 million less than was appropriated for FY 2000. These funds assist these nations in the demolition of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. The bill also contains $600 million in aid for Pakistan, a key ally in the war against terrorism. Also included in PL 107-115 is $475 million to help international HIV/AIDS research and eradication.

Internal Affairs

On May 8, 2001 Reps. Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., and Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., introduced HR 1754, a bill whose aim is to fix a current problem with the Internal Revenue Code regarding use of American Legion Post facilities by members and their families. For several years The American Legion and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have been at loggerheads over the concept of unrelated business income, as well as the possibility of individual Post's losing their tax exemption under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Act of 1986.

According to the Legion's congressional charter, only veterans who served during specific, designated wars or periods of wartime may become members of The American Legion. Section 501(c)(19) requires only 75 percent of the members are current or former members of the Armed Forces, and substantially all the other members are cadets, spouses, widows or widowers of past or present members. The Legion requires that 100 percent of its members be qualifying veterans.

However, The American Legion has many programs—such as the Sons of the American Legion (SAL), American Legion Baseball, oratorical contests, and sponsorship of Scouting units—designed to further the purposes for which the Legion's tax exemptions was granted. Also, many Posts are family gathering places for social and patriotic events. However, questions have been raised whether SALs count toward the 100 percent, or if they might be considered "associate or social members."

HR 1754 would provide that the definition of "member" for purposes of the tax exempt status and unrelated business income would be expanded to include ancestors and lineal descendants of the member (a "member" meaning past and present members of the Armed Services which meet the congressional charter definition). The measure has 52 cosponsors.

On July 24, 2002 Senator Tom Harkin (IA) introduced S 2789, a companion bill to HR 1754. This bill would make the simple change of adding the words "or ancestors or lineal descendants" to existing law. The American Legion is reviewing this measure.

National Security

On December 28, 2001 the President enacted PL 107-107, the FY 2002 Department of Defense (DoD) authorization measure. This law sets the maximum spending targets for the armed forces. It authorizes $343.3 billion in spending for national defense. Some of the measure's highlights include:

- $8.3 billion for continued development of ballistic missile defenses ($3 billion more than in the previous year).
- $5.6 billion for DoD efforts to combat terrorism, including $1.1 billion in aid to nations of the former Soviet Union to eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
- Pay raises of between 5 and 10 percent for all members of the military.
- $10.5 billion for military construction and family housing accounts.
- A total of $125 billion in the Operations and Maintenance account, which is the traditional "readiness" account. It includes $942 million to improve training and readiness of the National Guard and Reserves.
- Set active duty strengths at 1.387 million, with selected reserves placed at 872,000.

Funding for the research and development (R&D) accounts was set at $47.8 billion, the most significant increase in the R&D budget in six years. Some the earmarks include:

- $517 million for modifications, R&D and upgrades for the B-1B and B-2 bombers.
- $3.5 billion for procurement of 15 C-17 cargo planes.
- $3.9 billion for R&D, initial production and advance procurement of the F-22 fighter.
- $1.5 billion for continued development of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.
- $2.3 billion for R&D, upgrades and procurement of the Apache Longbow, Comanche, Blackhawk and MH-60S helicopters.
- $3 billion for procurement of 3 AEGIS destroyers.

Also contained in PL 107-107 is a provision that delays any Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) until 2005. Another provision encourages DoD to make excess clothing, shoes, and sleeping bags available to VA programs that help homeless veterans. Finally, the law contains various provisions to reform the current military voting program to allow servicemembers to have the same fundamental right as those whom they defend—the right to vote and have that vote counted.

On January 10, 2002 President Bush signed PL 107-117, the FY 2002 DoD appropriations bill. The measure provides $317.4 billion to fund this country's defense programs. The law provides $19.2 billion more than was appropriated for FY 2001. It also includes $20 billion in supplemental funding for the military campaign in Afghanistan and for recovery from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Some of the major program areas in PL 107-117 include:

- **Military Personnel**: $82 billion goes to support 1.387 million active duty military personnel and 872,000 Reserve and National Guard personnel. It also fully funds the 4.6 percent military personnel pay raise requested by the White House, as well as other selective targeted pay raises.

- **Operations and Maintenance**: a total of $105.1 billion – an increase of $8.2 billion over last year's budget – which funds increases for spare parts inventories, real property maintenance, depot maintenance, and increased training hours.
- **Procurement**: $60.9 billion – a $1.7 billion increase over FY 2001 – which provides a) $2.6 billion for 13 F-22 aircraft, b) $1.04 billion for 11 V-22 Osprey and variants, c) $3 billion for 48 F/A-18E/F fighter aircraft. It also funds the Administration's request for key Army transformation programs, such as the Interim Armored Vehicle, the Crusader self-propelled howitzer, and the Comanche helicopter.
- **Research and Development**: this area received $49 billion – an increase of $7.6 billion over the previous budget. The White House request of $1.5 billion for the Joint Strike Fighter was fully funded. Funding was also provided for continued B-2 development ($219 million) and for F-22 development ($882 million).

Some specific areas of importance to The American Legion include:

Ballistic Missile Defense: provides $7.8 billion for procurement, research and development, an increase of $2.5 billion over the previous year.

Counter-Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction: this new line item provides $881 million. Its programs are devoted to protecting the U.S. homeland, deployed American military forces, overseas U.S. interests and our allies from non-traditional threats. It also includes counter-terrorism and funds to allow former states of the Soviet Union to destroy their chemical and biological warfare stocks.

Defense Health Program—A total of $18.4 billion was provided for this program area, an increase of $6.1 billion over FY 2001. It matches the Administration's request for defense medical support and Tricare programs.

National Guard/Reserves—Funding for this area totals $729 million. It includes additional funds for Guard and Reserve operations and maintenance shortfalls, as well as selected equipment programs.

On December 18, 2001 President Bush enacted PL 107-87, the FY 2002 Department of Transportation appropriations bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in this measure. The measure appropriates $5 billion for the Coast Guard. Individual account totals include: $3.4 billion for operating expenses; $669 million for acquisition, construction, environmental compliance, and bridge alterations; and $980 million for reserve training, retired pay, and research and development.

The American Legion continues its support for the U.S. Coast Guard and its various missions including air-sea rescues, pollution control, and interception of illegal aliens and drug interdiction.

The FY 2002 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill, PL 107-73, also contains funding for the Selective Service System. The measure would fund Selective Service at $25 million. The basic mission of Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military to ensure the security of the United States during a time of national emergency. Since 1973, the Armed Forces have relied on volunteers to fill manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which men will be brought into the military if Congress and the President should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support this program.

For over two decades, The American Legion has sought a legislative answer to the inequitable treatment of service-connected disabled military retirees who are forced to offset a portion of their military retired pay with VA disability compensation. Disabled military retirees are the only federal workers required to do this.

Four bills have been introduced in the 107th Congress to address concurrent receipt. Two bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Michael

Bilirakis, R-Fla., to address this issue. The first bill, HR 65, would allow service-connected military retirees with a minimum of 20 years of service to receive both military retired pay and VA disability compensation, with the amount of a retiree's retired pay reduced by the percentage of his disability rating. This bill has 77 cosponsors. The second measure introduced by Rep. Bilirakis, HR 303, would allow full concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability compensation without reduction from either for 20-year service connected disabled retirees. That measure currently has 398 cosponsors.

In the Senate, Senator Harry Reid (NV) introduced a bill similar to HR 303, on January 24, 2001. This bill, S 170, the Retired Pay Restoration Act, would also allow 20-year disabled retirees to receive their full retirement pay and disability compensation.

A provision in the FY 2002 DoD authorization act (PL 107-107) allows disabled military retirees to receive their earned retirement pay and VA disability compensation without the dollar-for-dollar reduction currently mandated by law. However, the President must first include budget authority for concurrent receipt in his federal budget, then Congress must approve legislation to enact that authority.

In addition, PL 107-107 contained enhancements of special payments being paid to 20-year retirees who are 60 percent or greater disabled. This program was created in PL 106-398, the FY 2001 DoD authorization measure. These enhancements are shown on the table below.

	For Each Month, Feb. 2002 to Dec., 2002	**For Each Month, Jan. 2003 to Sept. 2004**	**For Each Month After September, 2004**
100 Percent Disabled	$300	$325	$350
90 Percent Disabled	$200	$225	$250
80 Percent Disabled	$100	$125	$150
70 Percent Disabled	$100	$100	$125
60 Percent Disabled	$50	$50	$50

The American Legion continues its commitment to the enactment of full concurrent receipt for this country's disabled veterans.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On November 26, 2001 President Bush signed PL 107-73, the FY 2002 funding bill for the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and Independent Agencies. On November 8, the House by a vote of 401-18 passed the conference report, with the Senate passing the conference report by a recorded vote of 87-7 later the same day. The chart below outlines the amounts appropriated for the previous fiscal year (FY 2001), the spending totals for FY 2002 contained in the conference report, and The American Legion's recommendations for FY 2003.

	FY 2001 PL 106-377	*FY 2002 PL 107-73*	*Legion Request, FY 2002*
Veterans Benefits Administration	$25.7 billion	$27.5 billion	—
Medical care	$20.2 billion	$21.3 billion	$21.6 billion
Medical/prosthetic research	$350 million	$371 million	$375 million
General operating expenses	$1.0 billion	$1.2 billion	$1.2 billion
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$110 million	$121 million	$115 million
Major construction	$66 million	$183 million	$250 million
Minor construction	$170 million	$211 million	$175 million
State Veterans Homes Grants	$100 million	$100 million	$80 million
State Veterans Cemeteries Grants	$25 million	$25 million	$25 million
Total	**$47.9 billion**	**$51.1 billion**	—

Some of the other agencies funded by these measures—in which The American Legion is vitally interested—include:

- The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) will receive $35 million.
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims will be funded at $13.2 million.
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will receive $14.8 billion.
- The AmeriCorps program will be funded at $402 million. The House sought to eliminate the program by denying it funding.

During consideration of the measure, Rep. Lane Evans (IL) offered an amendment addressing a proposal in President Bush's FY 2002 budget. Under the amendment, no funds in the measure could be used to implement an administrative proposal requiring military retirees to make an irrevocable choice between VA or military health care under the new TRICARE for Life plan authorized by the FY 2001 DoD Authorization Act. Rep. Evans' amendment passed by a voice vote. A large number of military retirees use both VA and DoD medical care systems, and making such a choice would cause great hardship in their ability to seek the medical care they need. Mr. Evans' amendment—supported by The American Legion—was retained in the final law.

On November 29, 2001 during a meeting with representatives of veterans' service organizations, VA Secretary Principi announced that an administration proposal to restrict veterans' health care enrollments was being scrapped. The proposal would have denied an estimated 320,000 veterans the opportunity to enroll in the VA health care system in FY 2002. These veterans—Priority Group 7 nonservice-connected veterans who have incomes of more than $24,000 if single or $28,000 if married—are the lowest of the seven priority categories for care in the VA health care system. Coincidentally, it is also the fastest growing segment of veterans using VA. About 1.7 million veterans were enrolled in this category this year, accounting for almost one-third of the 6 million veterans who use the VA health care system.

Secretary Principi had reluctantly proposed this restriction, saying that it would save VA about $142 million. The Bush Administration told him that the restriction was not necessary, and that the funds to continue the enrollment of Priority Group 7 veterans would be found to cover the projected shortfall. However, Principi also said later in an interview, "I felt, based on the resources available while maintaining quality, that the tough decision but the right decision was to limit enrollment…If we lose quality, we might as well close the doors of the health care system." He had told the White House he was unwilling to continue unlimited enrollment without adequate funding.

On December 21, 2001 President Bush signed PL 107-94. This bill increases the rates of disability compensation for service-connected disabled veterans and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, effective December 1, 2001. The percentage of increase in

these benefits would be the same as the COLA authorized for beneficiaries under Social Security. The President's proposed FY 2002 VA budget included a COLA of 2.7 percent, based on the projected increase in the consumer price index.

On December 27, 2001 President Bush signed PL 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001. This omnibus bill contains language from several House bills that were consolidated into a single measure. Among its many provisions, PL 107-103 would:

- Extend for four years—to December 31, 2005—a VA program that makes direct housing loans to Native American veterans living on tribal trust lands. The American Legion testified at a House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee hearing last July in favor of this provision, stating that every man and woman who has honorably served this country deserves the opportunities they have earned through that service, including the chance to purchase a home.
- Authorize VA to provide disability compensation to Persian Gulf veterans whose claims for chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or other hard-to-diagnose illnesses have previously been denied.
- Extend the presumptive period for health care and benefits for Persian Gulf War veterans for an additional 10 years to 2011.
- Authorize VA to continue disability payments to Persian Gulf War veterans who participate in VA-sponsored medical research and who are subsequently diagnosed with a specific disease.
- Increases to $48,000 the amount that VA may pay a disabled veteran for specially adapted housing, and also increases to $9250 the amount a disabled veteran may receive for additional changes to housing that already has special adaptations.
- Increases both the VA burial plot allowance (from $150 to $300) and the burial and funeral expense allotment (from $1500 to $2000) to any honorably discharged veteran who dies of a service-connected disability.
- Requires VA to furnish a government marker for the grave of a veteran who is buried in a private cemetery, even if the grave is already marked with a headstone or marker.
- Increases from $8000 to $9000 the amount VA may pay to a disabled veteran for purchasing an automobile with special adaptive equipment.
- Prohibits payment of certain benefits to veterans who are fugitive felons, as well as certain compensation for veterans incarcerated for a felony in a federal, state or local penal institution since October 1980.

Filipino veterans of World War II living in the US will see significant increases in their disability compensation payments because of recent federal rule making. Two laws passed in the 106th Congress—PLs 106-377 and 106-419—contained language to allow certain Filipino veterans to receive full disability compensation payments and full burial benefits. VA published an interim rule on this subject on December 27, 2001.

Filipino veterans will see their compensation for service-connected disabilities double. This would affect Filipino veterans residing in the US which are citizens or resident aliens. These benefits will be made retroactive to October 27, 2000—the date of enactment of PL 106-377.

In addition, survivors of these veterans—as well as certain lower-income veterans—will receive burial or plot allowances at the full rate rather than half rate, as was previously the case. They must also show that the deceased veteran died in the US and was receiving VA disability compensation. Also, a veteran with whose limited means met income and net worth requirements is also eligible. These benefits will be made effective as of November 1, 2000—the date of enactment of PL 106-419. No new

eligibility for any of these benefits is established under these rules.

Although many Filipinos were ordered into World War II service when the Philippines was a US commonwealth, there were various limitations on their eligibility for US benefits. This fact was a result of a large range of veterans' benefits that the Philippines enacted for its veterans after becoming a sovereign nation in 1946. For Filipino veterans meeting certain criteria, compensation payments for service-connected disabilities from VA previously was limited to half the rate of that paid to US veterans.

According to VA Secretary Anthony Principi, "The new policy recognizes that Filipinos residing in the US have a higher cost of living—or cost of burial—than those living in the Philippines. This recognizes the services and sacrifices of our Philippine comrades while providing this higher compensation while they are residing in the US."

107th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 107th Congress convened on January 3, 2002. Major issues on the agendas of both chambers include campaign finance reform, national defense and homeland security, and the FY 2003 federal budget. As of today, The American Legion has participated in thirteen congressional hearings during the Second Session.

President Bush's budget plan for FY 2003 proposes a 3.7 percent overall growth, with some areas of the federal budget receiving intense scrutiny in the upcoming months. Last year's budget surplus of $5.6 trillion has dwindled away to a deficit projected at $80.1 billion for FY 2003. The main reasons include implementation of tax relief for all Americans, unexpected new spending to fight the war on terrorism, and the current recession.

On February 4, the Bush Administration released its FY 2003 budget request for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). President Bush recommended a total budget for veterans' benefits and other services of $58 billion, $30.1 billion for mandatory entitlements (compensation and pensions) and $26.4 billion for discretionary entitlements (medical care, construction, and burial services programs).

President Bush's funding recommendations for VA did not add a great deal of money to that agency. Though $58 billion was proposed by the administration for VA—an apparent $6.9 billion increase over FY 2002 funding—the administration's request is slightly misleading and inadequate for VA to continue running its programs. The budget request includes nearly $1.1 billion that VA estimates it will gain from the White House's proposal to charge Priority Group 7 veterans a $1500 deductible. It further reflects estimated revenue of $1.5 billion from first- and third-party collections through the Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF). The American Legion believes this estimate is overly optimistic, as actual funds collected by MCCF to date have not met expected projections. Finally, the President inaccurately counts an $892 million transfer from the Office of Personnel Management for payment of VA employee health care and retirement costs as an increase in health care dollars. The budget picture presented to veterans is seriously awry. After stripping away all of these "increases," the actual request for medical care increase is barely enough to cover the cost of inflation.

The American Legion has stated that at least $23.1 billion will be needed to keep VA medical care at current service levels. In particular, VA would receive $22.7 billion in actual, designated funding under the President's budget proposal, an increase of $1.4 billion over current year funding. This amount, however, is still insufficient to keep the VA medical system functioning at current levels.

On March 20, the House of Representatives approved House Concurrent Resolution

(H Con Res.) 353, the FY 2003 budget resolution, by a recorded vote of 221-209. The budget resolution proposes a VA budget of $56.9 billion, a $5.9 billion increase over FY 2002 funding. The House-approved budget would provide veterans' health care with $23.9 billion in funding for FY 2003, which is $2.8 billion more than recommended by the White House, or a 12 percent increase over the current year.

On March 21—the last day of business before the spring recess—the Senate Budget Committee approved its version of H Con Res. 353 by a vote of 12-10. The Senate-passed resolution supports a VA funding level of $56.2 billion, a $5.2 billion increase over FY 2002 appropriations. This would support a health care funding increase of $2.6 billion above current year amounts, and $1.2 billion more than proposed by the administration.

Both the Senate Budget panel and the full House rejected a provision contained in the President's budget request that was opposed by The American Legion. To cover the cost of adding more veterans to the VA health care enrollment, the administration proposed a $1500 deductible for veterans in VA's Priority Group 7. VA officials predicted that—should the proposed deductible be accepted—an estimated 471,000 veterans would have their health care services reduced or eliminated as a result.

During the early weeks of the Second Session, The American Legion testified before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on the FY 2003 VA budget. At the same time, supplemental appropriations for FY 2002 were being debated. The American Legion recommended that $300 million should be added to the supplemental funding bill for VA. This would allow VA to continue enrolling Priority Group 7 veterans without worrying about funding.

On May 6, the House Appropriations Committee agreed to advance the FY 2002 Emergency Supplemental. Among the provisions is $417 million for veterans' medical care—a $275 million increase over the President's request. Recently, VA re-estimated the patient workload and available resources. VA determined that it desperately needed additional revenue due to the growing demands for health care nationally. Final passage would bring VA medical care funding closer to the Legion's original recommendation for FY 2002.

The 2002 mid-term elections are approaching. All members of the House of Representatives, which is now divided 223 Republicans, 211 Democrats, and one Independent, face re-election on November 5. Nineteen House members have announced their retirement; 15 are running for other offices; and 6 have lost in the primaries for reelection. In the Senate—where the ratio is 50 Democrats, 49 Republicans and one Independent, 34 senators face re-election. Four senators have retired and one is running for another office.

Americanism

The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance (CFA) continue the push for a flag protection constitutional amendment, which was re-introduced in both the House and Senate in the First Session. In the House, Representatives "Duke" Cunningham (CA) and John Murtha (PA) sponsored House Joint Resolution (HJ Res.) 36. On July 17 the House passed HJ Res. 36 by a vote of 298-125 with 11 members not voting.

Action on this measure now shifts to the U.S. Senate. Senators Orrin Hatch (UT) and Max Cleland (GA) introduced Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.) 7, which currently has 52 cosponsors. With the recent shift of power in the Senate, the flag protection amendment faces a greater challenge in that chamber than in recent years. The new Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, Patrick Leahy (VT), is an ardent foe of the

amendment. It will take a great deal of work on the part of The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Amendment just to bring this legislation to a vote.

On June 26 the U.S. 9th Circuit Court declared in a 2-1 decision that the words "under God" did not belong in the Pledge of Allegiance, and that the Pledge as currently recited by millions of Americans every day is unconstitutional. Reaction to the decision was swift. On the floor of the U.S. Senate, Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) said, "...When my staff members told me this, I, frankly, thought they were joking. This is a decision that offends our national morality, that rejects the most universally shared values of our country, that diminishes our unity, and that attempts to undercut our strength at a time after September 11 when we need the strength, unity, and our shared belief in God which has historically brought the American people together, and does so today. There may have been a more senseless, ridiculous decision issued by a court somewhere at some time, but I have never heard of it. I find the decision by this court hard to believe.

National Commander Santos issued a statement that said in part, "If the pledge is unconstitutional, so is the Declaration of Independence, since it refers to 'nature's God,' a 'Creator' and the 'protection of divine providence.' The American people know this is wrong. They will not be swayed by the twisted logic of judges who have taken prayer out of schools and ruled that burning our nation's flag is speech. This decision cannot stand. We believe the American people will not allow it to stand. And The American Legion will stand with the American people all the way to the Supreme Court," Santos said.

On July 30, The American Legion filed a motion with the 9th Circuit Court for permission to file an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief to overturn the Pledge decision. Our organization joins 50 states' and territorial attorneys general, as well as the U.S. Senate in the suit.

Children & Youth

On July 18 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S 2778, the FY 2003 funding measure for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State. The Department of Justice (DoJ) would receive $25.8 billion under this bill. This amount is an increase of $2 billion over the FY 2002 funding level, and $2.9 billion above the President's budget request.

Funding for other DoJ areas in this bill that concern The American Legion include: $4.2 billion for the Federal Bureau of Investigation—equal to the FY 2003 budget request; $6.34 billion for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), an amount $150 million above FY 2002 levels; and $298 million for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which is $47 million above the President's request for FY 2003.

The House has yet to pass a companion bill to S 2778. That action will take place after the August recess.

Economics

On May 21, 2002 by a 409-0 recorded vote, the House passed HR 4015, the Jobs for Veterans Act—introduced by Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee Chairman Mike Simpson (ID). This measure would make reforms to the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) in the Department of Labor (DoL) to help military veterans make the transition to the civilian job market. The bill would authorize $260 million over five years for performance incentive awards to states providing the highest quality of

services or making significant improvements in service for veteran job placement. HR 4015 would also provide states with $200 million in staffing grants, and establish a new comprehensive performance accountability system to measure program performance.

The American Legion testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee in April concerning HR 4015. While welcoming the attention being given to help veterans make the transition to civilian life, The American Legion identified numerous problems with the proposed legislation:

- Concern with scrapping the federally mandated manning formula for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOPs) specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). This provision could adversely impact on rural communities and States with small veterans' populations. Congress has never fully funded DVOPs and LVERs to their Federally authorized levels.
- Removal of the federally mandated job description for DVOPs and LVERs. If enacted, HR 4015 would allow each State to determine the number of DVOPs and LVERs they wanted and determine their job description. The American Legion believes this will be detrimental to the entire Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) especially smaller populated states. Under current law, DVOPs and LVERs have common duties and responsibilities; HR 4015 would create 50 different interpretations of the duties and responsibilities and lose continuity of services.
- Concern about opening up VETS to all veterans and not just those with barriers to employment. The American Legion is concerned that job-ready veterans will receive more attention than those VETS was created to serve. Once again, those veterans with barriers to employment will not receive the focused attention they need to overcome these obstacles.
- Authorize and fund job training programs especially for veterans, like the highly successful Service Member Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA). Most DVOPs and LVERs point to programs like SMOCTA as the most helpful program ever available to veterans.
- Effective leadership at the local, state and national level; full funding and staffing of DVOPs and LVERs; and full funding of veterans' job training programs would greatly enhance the entire VETS program.

On May 23 Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (WV), chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced S. 2561, the Veterans' Employment, Business Opportunity, and Training Act of 2002, at the request of the Administration. This measure is similar to HR 4015, in that the Senate bill would transfer the functions of VETS from DoL to VA. It would also establish a new competitive grants program through which employment services would be provided to veterans, servicemembers and other eligible persons. The American Legion adamantly opposes the transfer of VETS from DoL to VA. DoL has a great deal of expertise in job development, vocational counseling, job placement, vocational training, and community outreach. VA has very little expertise in the area of employment and training services.

On July 18, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S 2766, the Senate's version of the FY 2003 funding measure for the Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education. Funding for DoL's Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) is contained in this bill. The House Appropriations Committee has not yet completed action on a companion measure.

A total of $218.1 million will be appropriated for ASVET, broken down into these accounts:

- $191.5 million for federal administration, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), and the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program;
- $7.5 million for the Veterans Workforce Investment program; and
- $19 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects program.

There was some controversy regarding the VETS programs this year. In his FY 2003 budget recommendation, President Bush proposed shifting the administration and funding for VETS from DoL to VA, and then transforming the VETS programs into a competitive grants program. The American Legion opposes this recommendation, saying that DoL is better equipped to handle job-related programs than VA. As a result, the Senate Appropriations Committee rejected the administration's recommendation, and included VETS funding in S 2779.

Foreign Relations

On July 18 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S 2779, the FY 2003 Foreign Operations funding measure. The bill funds various international programs, including military and economic aid, the fight against HIV/AIDS, refugee assistance and disaster relief, and aid to the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

S 2779 would appropriate $16.4 billion for these various programs, which is $229 million more than requested by the Bush Administration and $954 million above the FY 2002 enacted level. Some of the major program areas and their proposed funding levels are:

- $2.7 billion in economic and military assistance for Israel.
- $1.9 billion in economic and military assistance for Egypt.
- $765 million in assistance for states of the former Soviet Union.
- $750 million for HIV/AIDS programs.
- $555 million in assistance for Eastern Europe and Baltic states.
- $448 million in economic assistance for Jordan.
- $157 million for humanitarian, peacekeeping, military, counterterrorism and reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan.
- $125 million in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and Africa.
- The House has yet to introduce a companion measure, but action will occur after the August recess.

Internal Affairs

On July 15 the House by a voice vote approved HR 3988, a bill to make an important change in The American Legion's charter. Currently, members of the armed forces who served in the Persian Gulf are able to join the Legion so long as they have been discharged. However, servicemembers who served in the Persian Gulf—but are still in the military—may not become Legion members. This is due to the fact that the President has not proclaimed an official end date of the Desert Shield-Desert Storm era. Under HR 3988, current members of the armed forces may now join The American Legion. This includes servicemembers who have served—or are serving—in Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. The measure now goes to the Senate for passage.

National Security

On June 27 by a vote of 413-18 the House of Representatives approved HR 5010, the Fiscal Year 2003 DoD appropriations measure. This bill would provide $354.7 billion for DoD programs, $2.1 billion less than requested by President Bush and $33.8 billion above current year spending, excluding emergency supplemental funds. On August 1 by a vote of 95-3 the Senate passed its version of HR 5010. The Senate-passed bill would provide $355.4 billion, $1.4 billion less than the administration's request and $34.4 billion more than

One of the major cuts made in the bill was the decision to withhold funding for the Crusader cannon program. On May 8, DoD Secretary Donald Rumsfeld made the decision to cancel the program. The reasoning was that the 40-ton self-propelled weapon was too heavy for the projected agile, lightweight Army being developed during the next decade.

Cancellation of the Crusader program will save DoD $476 million in FY 2003, and a total of $11 billion overall. The money saved would go to various programs developing new rockets and munitions, as well as accelerate development of a new long-range, mobile artillery piece. Some of the other highlights of HR 5010 are presented below.

Military Personnel: This account would receive $93.4 billion from the House version, an increase of $12.3 billion over the funding level enacted for the current year. The Senate version would provide $93.8 billion. Highlights of this category include:

- Support for active duty personnel level of 1.389 million.
- Funding for 864,558 Selected Reserve and National Guard personnel.
- Full funding for the 4.1 percent military personnel pay raise requested in the President's budget and selected targeted pay raises to mid-grade non-commissioned officers.
- Support for housing allowances for the buydown of servicemembers' out-of-pocket housing expenses from 11.3 percent this year down to 7.5 percent in FY 2003.

Operations and Maintenance: Both versions fund this account at $114.8 billion, a net increase of $9.7 billion over FY 2002 amounts. Highlights include:

- Full funding for budget increases for spare parts, real property maintenance, and depot maintenance.
- Support for budget increase of over $1.7 billion for land force training, flying hours, and ship operations.
- Full funding for increase of $1.8 billion for base support operations.
- Provides $400 million more than the administration's request for individual soldier and Marine equipment, unit tactical equipment, training and support facilities, renovation of barracks and dining facilities, depot maintenance, and other readiness items.

Procurement: HR 5010 would fund this account at $70.3 billion, $3 billion more than requested and $9.4 billion over current year funding. The Senate's bill would provide $71.5 billion, $4.2 billion above the White House request, and $10.6 billion over FY 2002 funding. Major highlights include:

- $4.1 billion for 23 F-22 fighter planes in both bills.
- $3.7 billion for 12 C-17 airlifters from the House, $3.2 billion for 15 planes from the Senate.
- $3 billion for 44 F/A-18E/F fighter planes in the House measure, $3.3 billion for 48 planes in the Senate bill.
- $1.5 billion for 1 New Attack Submarine (Virginia class) in both versions.
- $1 billion for 11 V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft in both versions.

Research and Development (R&D): A total of $57.7 billion would fund this account. This amount would be $4 billion more than the White House request and $8.8 billion over the FY 2002 enacted level. The Senate-passed measure would provide $56.1 billion, or $2.4 billion more than the administration requested and $7.2 billion more than current year spending. Some of the major highlights of this area include:

- Full funding of $3.5 billion for the F-35 (Joint Strike Fighter) in both versions.
- $915 million for continued development of the Army's Comanche scout helicopter in both bills.
- $627 million for further R&D on development of the F-22 in both measures.
- $265 million for continued B-2 technology upgrades in the House bill, $267 million in the Senate version.

Other Programs: Various other DoD programs of interest would be funded as follows:

- $14.7 billion for defense health programs in the House bill, $15 billion from the Senate.
- $7.4 billion for ballistic missile defense R&D and procurement in the House-passed version, $6.9 billion in the Senate version.
- $1.5 billion for the destruction of certain chemical munitions in the U.S. military's arsenal in both versions.
- $944 million for the National Defense Sealift Fund from the House, $934 million in the Senate version.
- $860 million for DoD drug interdiction and counter-drug efforts in the House bill, $916 million from the Senate.

A conference committee has been appointed to reconcile differences. The conference will begin meetings in September. FY 2003 begins on October 1, 2002.

On April 18, 2002 the U.S. Senate defeated a portion of the administration's energy plan—S 517—to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In response, The American Legion reiterated its call for a comprehensive energy policy.

"The energy needs of the nation, an integral component of our national security, must not be held hostage by the instability of regions and nations from which the United States obtains oil," National Commander Richard J. Santos said. "As our nation wades deeper into the war on terrorism, Congress must expeditiously pass a broad energy policy that reduces America's dependence on foreign oil. Such a comprehensive policy, which we will fight to have included in the conference committee's bill, would include drilling in the Alaskan wildlife refuge.

"Given the current and continuing instability in the Middle East and Venezuela, America has no choice but to turn to domestic sources of precious energy. One would believe there is a majority of commonsensical senators who realize that fact." The American Legion supports the House-approved energy bill, HR 4, that would permit ANWR drilling.

On May 10, by a recorded vote of 359-58, the House of Representatives approved HR 4546, the FY 2003 DoD authorization measure. The bill authorizes $383 billion in budget authority for DoD programs in the coming fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2002. This represents the largest real increase in defense spending since 1966.
Presented below are the some of the highlights of HR 4546.

$78.4 billion in Readiness Accounts—Specifics in this area include: a) $31.5 billion for aircraft operations and flying hours; b) $34.4 billion for facility and depot maintenance and base support; c) $8.1 billion for training accounts, including training and readiness for National Guard and Reserve units; and, d) $4.4 billion for ground forces operations.

$73.4 billion to Procure Weapons, Ammunition and Equipment; and, $56.5 billion in Research and Development (R&D)—Specific weapons or weapons systems include:

- $3.8 billion for procurement and R&D of the F/A-18E/F fighter and attack aircraft, and for improvements to the remainder of the F/A-18 fleet.
- $3.7 billion for acquisition of 12 C-17 Globemaster cargo planes.
- $3.4 billion for R&D of the Joint Strike Fighter.
- $346 million for modifications and R&D for the B-2 Spirit bomber.
- $426 million for modifications and R&D for the F-16 Falcon multi-role fighter plane.
- $936 million for procurement of 332 medium armored vehicles and R&D of medium armored vehicles. This item is tied to DoD's vision of transforming the US Army into a medium-weight force capable of deploying anywhere in the world within days, instead of weeks.
- $910 million for development of the Comanche stealth, armed reconnaissance helicopter.
- $866 million for procurement of 74 Apache Longbow helicopter upgrades.
- $3.4 billion for procurement of 3 Arleigh Burke-class AEGIS destroyers.

$7.3 billion for DoD Efforts to Combat Terrorism—This area includes:

- $578 million for R&D of advanced individual protection programs and equipment to detect and decontaminate chemical-biological agents.
- $382 million to procure chemical-biological protection and decontamination equipment.
- $417 million to dismantle and secure former Soviet weapons of mass destruction.
- $452 million for Defense Threat Reduction Agency programs to deter, reduce and counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that may be in the arsenals of various rogue nations or foreign terrorist organizations.

$7.8 billion for the Continuing Development of Ballistic Missile Defenses—The United States still faces the possibility that a missile with a weapon of mass destruction will be used against US forces or the US mainland. At least one rogue nation currently has ballistic missiles that could strike the US, with two others likely developing similar weapons within the next decade. Despite warnings and reports from the intelligence community and outside experts, this country remains open to ballistic missile attacks.

Some of the other provisions of HR 4546—that address various areas of concern of The American Legion—include:

- ✓ A 4.1 percent military pay raise across the board, with targeted pay increases of up to 6.5 percent for mid-grade and senior noncommissioned officers and mid-grade officers.
- ✓ Elimination of current law provisions that deny concurrent receipt of retired military pay and VA disability compensation. Also establishes a phase-in program compensating retirees who are 60 percent or greater disabled. This program will be fully in force by FY 2003.
- ✓ Granting of commissary privileges to National Guard members who are participating in a federally declared national emergency.
- ✓ Authorizing $678 million for construction and improvement of military family housing.
- ✓ Increasing US armed forces manpower levels by about 12,650 personnel, to a total of 1.4 million.

✓ Authorizing the DoD Secretary to establish a daily stipend for military retirees, non-service members, and non-governmental employees who participate in funeral honor detail duties.

On June 27 by a vote of 97-2 the Senate passed S. 2514, the FY 2003 DoD authorization bill. After passing the measure, the Senate then incorporated the language of its bill into the text of HR 4546. This action will necessitate a conference to resolve differences before the President can sign it.

The Senate-passed DoD authorization measure contains budget authority of $393.3 billion for defense-related programs, an amount that is $10 billion more than is contained in HR 4546. This is because the Senate bill includes authority for a White House-requested contingency fund of $10 billion to help fight the war on terrorism. The House will be considering a separate bill—HR 4547—that includes the $10 billion war-fighting contingency authority.

On August 2, President Bush enacted PL 107-206, the FY 2002 emergency supplemental funding measure. The House approved the conference report on July 23 by a recorded vote of 397-32, while the Senate agreed to the report on July 24 by a vote of 92-7. Overall, this measure appropriates $28.9 billion as emergency spending, mainly to help the U.S. fight the war on terrorism. The bill provides $14.4 billion for DoD, $400 million over the President's request. The funds will be used for:

- Ongoing military operations.
- Personnel costs, primarily call-up of Guard and Reserve personnel.
- High priority munitions, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and Special Operations force equipment needs.
- Intelligence and other classified activities.
- Coalition support.
- Unfunded personnel costs associated with force mobilization.
- Other unfunded FY 2002 operational costs to include funding for training, spare parts, and equipment maintenance.
- Replacement of 3 MH-47 Special Operations helicopters destroyed during operations in Afghanistan.
- Accelerate destruction of vulnerable U.S. chemical weapons stockpiles.
- Homeland security.

The American Legion has been working for over two decades of a legislative answer to the inequitable treatment of service-connected disabled military retirees who are forced to offset a portion of their military retired pay with VA disability compensation. Disabled military retirees are the only federal workers required to do this.

One of the many provisions of S. 2514—the Senate version of the FY 2003 DoD authorization bill—is one that has the full support of The American Legion. On June 19, the Senate approved an amendment—authored by Senator Harry Reid (NV) and supported by the Senate Armed Services Committee—that will allow all disabled veterans to receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation without deductions. This amendment would affect about 550,000 disabled veterans in this country. Senator Reid had already succeeded in having language included in the Senate measure that would restore full concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees with ratings from 10 percent to 100 percent.

Under the House bill—HR 4546 – the amount of retirement pay would be phased in over a 5-year period beginning with 30 percent of the otherwise authorized retirement pay in 2003 and increasing to 45 percent in 2004, 60 percent in 2005, 80 percent in 2006 and 100 percent in 2007. The Senate version would be effective October 1, 2002.

During floor debate of the amendment, the Senate expressed concerns over denying

full disability pay and military retirement pay to those retirees rated 50 percent or lower. Senator John Warner (VA), Ranking Member Senate Armed Services Committee, stated "It is unfair to limit concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability compensation to military retirees with a disability rated at 60 percent or more. We cannot differentiate equitably and fairly from those retirees who are 50 percent disabled, 40 percent disabled, or 30 percent disabled. They have all been disabled through their military service to our Nation." The American Legion whole-heartedly agrees.

On the same day as the Senate action, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a policy statement that expressed strong opposition to any legislation granting disabled military retirees concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military retirement pay. In addition to generally opposing concurrent receipt legislation, the statement recommends that the President veto the final version of the FY 2003 DoD authorization bill should it contain any provisions granting concurrent receipt to disabled military retirees. The American Legion continues to support full concurrent receipt for ALL disabled military retirees.

Both the House and Senate must now go to conference committee before a vote on the final version of the Defense Authorization Act can occur. The possibility of a presidential veto still looms. For too many years, service-connected disabled retirees have been the victims of a government that does not wish to give them all that they have earned. Simple fairness should motivate the federal government to allow these former servicemembers to receive both their retired pay and their VA disability compensation without reduction from either.

On July 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S 2808, the FY 2003 Department of Transportation appropriations bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in this measure. The measure appropriates $5.8 billion for the Coast Guard, an increase of $800 million over current year spending. Individual account totals include: $4 billion for operating expenses; $756 million for acquisition, construction, environmental compliance, and bridge alterations; and $997 million for reserve training, retired pay, and research and development. The Senate has yet to vote on the report, and the House has not passed a companion measure.

With the advent of the war on terrorism, the Coast Guard plans to play a growing role in preventing illicit delivery of weapons of mass destruction into the United States. The force is undertaking specialized training, acquiring detection equipment and introducing tighter screening procedures for vessels headed for U.S. ports. With new focus on homeland defense—half of its resources are expected to be dedicated to the mission—the Coast Guard now places the threat of weapons of mass destruction at the top of its list of threat priorities, according to Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thomas Collins. Under current Bush administration plans, the Coast Guard will be moved from the Transportation Department into the proposed homeland security department.

America's maritime domain is highly vulnerable to terrorist activities, including the illicit delivery of chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological materials. It is also a means of entry for terrorists themselves, while ports make attractive targets because of their economic value. The U.S. is placing heavy emphasis on improving its monitoring of its 95,000 miles of shoreline, with a primary objective of identifying what is entering the country.

The American Legion continues its support for the U.S. Coast Guard and its various missions including air-sea rescues, pollution control, and interception of illegal aliens and drug interdiction.

On July 25 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S 2797, the FY 2003

VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. The measure also contains funding for the Selective Service System. The measure would fund Selective Service at $26.5 million, an increase of $1.5 million over FY 2002 funding. The basic mission of Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military to ensure the security of the United States during a time of national emergency. Since 1973, the Armed Forces have relied on volunteers to fill manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which men will be brought into the military if Congress and the President should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support this program.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On July 25 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved by a voice vote S 2797, the FY 2003 Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Independent Agencies spending bill. The House Appropriations Committee has yet to mark up its own version of this legislation. The chart below compares the final appropriations totals for FY 2002 (excluding the funds contained in PL 107-206, the supplemental funding bill), the Bush Administration's request for FY 2003, the Senate Appropriations Committee's proposal for next year, and The American Legion's request for FY 2003 funding.

	FY 2002 Total	***FY 2003 Proposal***	***Senate Committee Request, FY 2003***	***Legion Request, FY 2003***
Veterans Benefits Administration	$28.6 billion	$29.4 billion	$31.8 billion	—
Medical care	$21.3 billion	$22.7 billion	$23.9 billion	$23.1 billion
Medical/prosthetic research	$371million	$394 million	$400 million	$420 million
General operating expenses	$1.2 billion	$1.3 billion	$1.3 billion	$1.3 billion
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$121 million	$133 million	$133 million	$140 million
Major construction	$183 million	$194 million	$194 million	$310 million
Minor construction	$211 million	$211 million	$211 million	$219 million
State Veterans Homes Grants	$100 million	$100 million	$100 million	$110 million
State Veterans Cemeteries Grants	$25 million	$32 million	$32 million	$30 million
Total	**$52.8 billion**	**$54.6 billion**	**$58.2 billion**	—

President Bush on January 23, 2002 enacted PL 107-135, the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act. The major provisions of PL 107-135 would:

- Revise various VA programs to allow the department to recruit and retain nurses.
- Establish a National Commission on VA Nursing to review legislative and organizational policy changes needed to enhance recruitment and retention of nurses in the department.
- Authorize VA to provide service dogs or guide dogs to veterans suffering from severe hearing impairments, spinal cord injuries or similar disabilities.
- Modify VA's system of determining nonservice-connected veterans' "ability to pay" for VA health care services, using the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) housing affordability index, ensuring that no VISN

experiences greater than a 5 percent change in annual funding allocation than would otherwise occur. This provision essentially creates a new Priority Group for VA to determine whether veterans are eligible for VA health care.

- Require VA to maintain sufficient capacity in all VA specialized medical programs by requiring each regional network (or VISN) to maintain a proportional share of national capacity.
- Establish a chiropractic services program—beginning at 30 VA medical centers next year—and adding at least an additional 30 medical centers each year until all are included within five years.
- Require VA to assess all special telephone services made available to veterans, such as "help lines" and "hotlines" and report to Congress within one year.
- Extend for five years—until September 30, 2007—VA's authority to collect payments from veterans' health insurance policies for deposit in the Medical Care Collections Fund.
- Extend through December 31, 2002 eligibility for Persian Gulf War veterans to receive VA medical services.

One of the provisions of PL 107-135 will make changes in the current system of eligibility for veterans who wish to receive health care from VA.

Under the provisions of the new law, Priority Group 7 veterans will be redefined. It will include veterans who have incomes that qualify them as eligible for treatment as a low-income family under the terms of the United States Housing Act of 1973 (PL 93-383), a program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). If that occurs, Priority Group 7 veterans will have their medical care co-payments reduced by 20 percent of the current rates.

In addition, PL 107-135 created a new Priority Group 8 for veterans enrolled in the VA medical care system. Those veterans eligible for Priority Group 8 will be similar to the new Priority Group 7 veterans. However, Priority Group 8 will include veterans above the HUD income level, and will pay full co-payments.

The new Priority Group 8—and the revamped Priority Group 7—are scheduled to go into effect in October 2002. VA is in the process of implementing this new requirement.

In a related issue, VA announced new regulations in February that increased co-payments for veterans getting prescriptions drugs from the VA. For each 30 day-supply of medication provided on an outpatient basis for treatment of a nonservice-connected disability, veterans make a co-payment of $7 per prescription. Until that time, veterans paid a co-payment of $2 per prescription.

In addition, an annual cap was established for veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6. For 2002, the cap is $840. When a veteran reaches the annual cap, he or she will continue to receive medications without making a co-payment. The co-payment applies to prescription and over-the-counter medications, but not for medication administered during the course of treatment.

The American Legion is concerned by the precipitous increase in the medication co-payment. We will continue to monitor developments on this issue.

VA has over six million veterans currently enrolled in its health care system—twice as many as six years ago. After struggling with tight budgets, substantial additional funding has become available to VA over the past several years. Despite budgetary increases, many Medicare-eligible veterans over 65 with nonservice-connected disabilities are still not being fully served by VA, because Medicare will not reimburse VA for medical care rendered for nonservice-connected medical conditions.

The American Legion supports the concept of Medicare reimbursement. This would

allow Medicare-eligible veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities to receive medical care through VA for those ailments. The funds coming into the VA coffers would allow the department to continue to offer the high quality of medical care that veterans using the system have come to expect. It would also relieve some of the pressure VA has experienced from years of consistent underfunding. While VA is an earned benefit, Medicare is a pre-paid health insurance program. Under current law, VA continues to subsidize Medicare with scarce discretionary funds.

There are four measures currently in Congress that address Medicare reimbursement for health care services provided to eligible veterans in VA facilities. Each is briefly outlined below.

The first is HR 1911, the Veterans Medicare Reimbursement Demonstration Act. It was introduced by Representative Jim Saxton (NJ) and currently has 42 cosponsors. This measure would create a demonstration project at eight VA facilities. The project would require VA to set up two health care plans: a coordinated health plan, and a fee-for-service plan. The coordinated health plan would offer a full spectrum of VA health care to eligible veterans, at reduced costs on a premium basis. The fee-for-service plan would be for eligible veterans who would use VA only on rare occasions. The American Legion supports Rep. Saxton's bill as a good approach to Medicare reimbursement for VA.

The Legion is closely monitoring HR 4890, the Veterans Medicare Reimbursement Act of 2002, introduced by Representative Sue Kelly (NY) on June 6. This bill will reimburse the VA 100 percent for Medicare services provided to veterans minus amounts for disproportionate share hospital adjustments, direct graduate medical payments and indirect medical education adjustment. Further, this bill is not a demonstration project or test and would be effective on the date signed by the President.

In the Senate, two pieces of legislation address this issue. S. 2232, the Veterans Health Care Reimbursement Act, was introduced by Senator Mark Dayton (MN). This measure is similar to Rep. Saxton's bill, as it would set up demonstration projects in 10 VA facilities. It would also require the implementation of a coordinated care health plan, but makes no provision for a fee-for-service plan. Further, S. 2232 contains a sense of Congress provisions that any Medicare funds collected through this demonstration project should not reduce any funds appropriated by Congress, a provision firmly supported by The American Legion.

The other Senate measure is S. 2233, the Medicare Equity for Veterans Act. It was introduced by Sen. Craig Thomas (WY) and currently has 12 cosponsors. Among those cosponsors are Sen. John Rockefeller (WV), chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and Sen. Tom Daschle (SD), the Senate majority leader. This measure would set up ten sites for the demonstration project, with at least three located in rural VA facilities. It would also require—similar to HR 1911—that VA offer either a Medicare+Choice option or a preferred provider option. In addition, S. 2233 would require that VA maintain its current services to Medicare-eligible veterans systemwide. The bill has 22 supporters.

The American Legion feels the time is right for passage of Medicare reimbursement legislation. Sen. Rockefeller stated on the day the Senate measures were introduced, "Veterans deserve the opportunity to come to VA facilities for their care and bring their Medicare coverage with them. It makes sense for all parties."

On July 27, House VA Committee Chairman Chris Smith (NJ) introduced HR 2667, the Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Health Resources Access Improvement Act of 2001.

This bill would provide for a joint DoD-VA demonstration project to identify the benefits of these two departments cooperating to provide health care to the beneficiaries

of each system. Five sites would be identified to host the demonstration project, with VA and military medical treatment facilities in close proximity to each other. Further, a unified management system for the facilities should be in place to provide (1) a unified budget and financial management systems for these facilities, (2) a unified staffing and assignment system for the personnel employed at or assigned to those facilities, and (3) medical information and information technology systems for those facilities.

The bill would also authorize appropriations for the demonstration project, in the amount of $10 million for FY 2002, and $25 million for each year afterwards. The demonstration would terminate on September 30, 2006.

In addition, HR 2667 would require the DoD and VA Secretaries—within 2 years after enactment of the measure—to submit a request for the construction of a new joint medical facility to address the needs of both departments. The bill will also address DoD-VA cooperation on graduate medical education at demonstration project facilities.

Since 1982, the VA health care system has been the official back up to DoD's medical system in time of war. This bill will examine the possibility of allowing the two health care systems to cooperate more fully on a day-to-day basis. HR 2667 currently has 19 cosponsors.

On February 4, 2002 VA implemented new regulations regarding certain co-payments made by veterans using the VA health care system. Co-payments for VA physician appointments for Priority Groups 5 and 7 veterans will be reduced from $50.80 per visit to $15 per visit. However, VA is also going forward with a plan to raise the prescription drug copayment from $2 per 30-day supply to $7. In addition, an annual cap of $840 was placed upon total expenditures that VA patients can pay for these prescription drugs.

In 1999, the General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report that VA was spending too much money to operate and maintain its buildings and other capital assets, perhaps 25 percent of its funds. As a result of this report, the CARES program was instituted. CARES stands for "Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services."

The CARES program is designed to realign the use of VA properties to give VA the necessary space and resources it will need to serve the health care needs of America's veterans for the years 2011 to 2022—years when the veterans population is expected to peak. The first phase of the CARES process took place last year, on a local level.

After making some adjustments to the process, VA has begun implementing the second phase of CARES on a nationwide basis recently. However, The American Legion is dubious about the whole process, and concerned that veterans currently using the VA health care system may be adversely affected.

One of the Legion's fears is that VA will lease out or eliminate unused space that could be used for quality health care access points, such as outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities, or other specialized services. Many veterans using the VA health care system are experiencing long waiting periods for doctor's appointments, closed specialty wards due to lack of proper staffing, or traveling excessive distances to nearby VA facilities to receive proper treatment.

Further, VA should be careful not to eliminate space that could be used to fulfill one of VA's secondary roles. These include VA's role in homeland security, as a health care option for DoD in wartime, or for the Federal Emergency Management Agency in times of natural disaster.

In its attempt to save money now and plan for the future, VA could cause even greater harm to its current operations through a flawed process. The American Legion has been consulting with VA officials and testifying before Congress on the CARES process. National Commander Ric Santos offered the assistance of The American Legion

"to cooperate with VA for the best possible outcome for the continued quality health care for America's veterans."

On March 4, 2002 Rep. James Saxton (NJ) introduced HR 3831. This bill would lower the age for eligible members of the Reserves to receive military retired pay from 60 to 55. With America's armed forces dwindling in number—despite increased operations around the world—Reservists are now shouldering a larger burden of national security than ever before. Therefore, it is only fair that Reservists with at least 20 years of service should be able to receive military retired pay at an earlier date. The bill has 137 cosponsors.

During the recent National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings held in May, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolution #3 was approved. This resolution supports passage of HR 3831.

On May 20, the House passed HR 3253, the Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Research, Education and Bio-Terrorism Prevention Act of 2002 by a voice vote. The bill was introduced by Veterans Affairs' Committee Chairman Chris Smith (NJ). On August 1 the Senate amended the bill, then passed it by unanimous consent.

This bill would authorize new funding to help VA meet possible non-traditional threats. It would authorize $100 million for at least four new VA research centers to help develop vaccines and treatments for potential radiological, chemical or biological attacks, to include anthrax, smallpox, nerve gas or a "dirty" bomb. HR 3253 would also provide—through a joint effort of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs—education and training to community healthcare professionals on biological and chemical terrorism responses. If would also provide rapid response laboratory assistance to local health care and law enforcement authorities in the event of future national emergencies or terror attacks.

Another measure introduced by Chairman Smith is HR 4085, the Veterans and Survivors' Benefits Expansion Act of 2002 passed the House on May 21 by a 410-0 vote. The Senate has not yet taken action on the measure. HR 4085 would expand certain benefits for veterans and their survivors. It increases compensation payments to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents through the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), projected to be 2.3 percent, effective December 1, 2002. HR 4085 also increases funding for state approving agencies, which certify the eligibility of schools and training programs for Montgomery GI Bill recipients. Finally, the bill makes changes to benefit surviving spouses of veterans. HR 4085 would allow these spouses who remarry after age 65 to continue receiving their dependency and indemnity compensation payments. It would also allow them to retain eligibility for CHAMPVA medical care, and education and housing loan benefits.

HR 4085 would also require that home loan fees charged to qualifying members of the Selected Reserves be the same as fees charged to active duty veterans. It would also increase Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance coverage from $90,000 to $150,000. Finally, HR 4085 would change current law to allow veterans over age 70 to continue coverage under Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance. The bill passed the House on May 21 by a recorded vote of 410-0.

Introduced by Health Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Moran (KS), HR 4514, the Veterans' Major Medical Facilities Construction Act of 2002 would authorize $285 million for ten major medical facility construction projects in Fiscal Year 2003. Six of these projects are designed to alleviate potential seismic problems at VA facilities in California at Palo Alto (two separate projects), San Francisco, West Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Diego. Other projects were authorized for VA facilities in Cleveland, OH;

Anchorage, AK; West Haven, CT; and, Tampa, FL. HR 4514 would also authorize a lease for an outpatient clinic in Charlotte, NC. The bill passed the House on May 21 by a vote of 411-0.

On May 29 President Bush signed PL 107-184, a bill to rename the VA Medical Center in Wichita, KS as the "Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center." Former Senator Dole, who was wounded in combat during World War II, has been a tireless advocate for veterans his entire life. The measure passed the House on May 20 by a voice vote, then cleared the Senate May 22 by unanimous consent.

On July 22, the House by a voice vote passed HR 4940, the Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act. This bill seeks to redefine eligibility requirements for veterans' burials in Arlington National Cemetery. There are three major revisions to the eligibility provisions include:

- Expansion of burial eligibility to Guard and Reserve members with 20 years of service, but who die before reaching retirement age.
- Expansion of burial eligibility to Guard and Reserve members who die while on training duty in the performance of duty.
- Elimination of eligibility for high-ranking government officials who are veterans but who would otherwise not meet the military service criteria.
- A limited waiver provision that would allow the granting of a waiver for burial at Arlington for persons who have made "extraordinary contributions to the armed forces."

The measure now goes to the Senate for further action.

PL 107-206, the FY 2002 emergency supplemental spending measure, contains funding to mainly combat terrorism. In addition, PL 107-206 contains $1.1 billion in funding for VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, and $417 million for direct medical care. The law also contains a provision that specifically limits the supplemental medical care funds to actual care for veterans, and no other category.

In the opening months of the Bush Administration, the Presidential Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery to Our Nation's Veterans was created. This advisory committee was formed on Memorial Day, 2001 to provide prompt and efficient access to consistently high quality health care for veterans. National Adjutant Robert Spanogle was appointed to this panel.

On January 15, 2002 The American Legion presented its views to the task force. Among the recommendations made to the advisory committee by The American Legion were:

- Retain the integrity of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of VA and the Military Health System (MHS) of DoD, with each system dedicated to its primary missions.
- Maintain access for all beneficiaries—especially for specialized services—in both systems.
- Develop joint ventures between VHA and MHS where physically possible.
- Maximize utilization of sharing agreements between all regional VA and DoD health care providers.
- Improve information technology to include electronic medical records.
- Provide enhanced information technology and training to improve VHA's billing and collection capabilities, or purchase this service from the private sector.
- Allow VHA Medicare subvention for all enrolled Priority Group 7 Medicare-eligible veterans and Tricare for Life veterans to be treated for nonservice-connected conditions.

- VA and DoD should continue participating in joint purchasing ventures for pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, and equipment.
- Expand joint medical education and training, as well as joint research and development opportunities.
- Improve relations between VA and DoD in Homeland Security emergency preparedness.

The American Legion has been making many of these recommendations for the past decade—in congressional testimony—but this statement was made to a presidential advisory panel. It is hoped that any proposals the panel makes to President Bush will include many of the Legion's recommendations.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director

As has been its custom since its inception, the National Security Commission has attempted to remain informed, and to keep the membership of The American Legion informed, on the range of issues related to the National Defense of the United States in order to recommend responsible national security policies to the governing bodies of The American Legion. To accomplish this task, the Commission conducts regular meetings designed to provide members with current information from responsible government officials on timely issues concerning national security. One of these meetings takes place in conjunction with the National Convention, two in conjunction with meetings of the National Executive Committee, and the fourth is held during the Washington Conference of The American Legion.

Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) is Chairman of the National Security Commission. Mr. Titus was selected as Commission Chairman at the Fall 1995 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

Pre-Convention Meetings, 2001

During the 83rd National Convention of The American Legion in San Antonio, Texas, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions convened a joint session at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Major General Willie B. Nance, Jr., the Program Executive Officer of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, spoke on development of national and theatre missile defense systems. He was followed by Mr. Philip Liu a Chinese foreign relations expert and a Research Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. He spoke about the cultural differences between Chinese and Americans and the different manner we approach problems. The members of the National Security Commission also heard from the members of Team American Legion and were highly impressed with their achievements.

The National Security Commission and its six Standing Committees and two Ad Hoc Subcommittees conducted a comprehensive review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security.

National Security Resolutions, 83rd National Convention

The following resolutions, listed in Committee order, were unanimously adopted by the delegates to the 83rd annual National Convention

General Security

Resolution No. 66, *The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences*. Urges the Congress to continue its determination to retain and expand the military medical school and to appropriate military construction funding for classrooms and housing for the Graduate School of Nursing.

Merchant Marine

Resolution No. 132, *Support for the Maritime Administration*. Opposes any plan to eliminate the Maritime Administration.

Resolution No. 133, *Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense.*. Urges the Congress to stop the erosion of United States maritime capabilities.

Resolution No. 134, *Retention of the United States Merchant Marine Academy and State Maritime Academies.*

Military Affairs

Resolution No. 61, *Military Funeral Honors*. Reaffirms that the Congress appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the Military Services to include reimbursing veterans participating in for providing military funeral honors for veterans upon request.

Resolution No. 62, *Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program*. Urges the DoD to reevaluate this program and to develop a second manufacturer of the anthrax vaccine for use by the military and the American people.

Resolution No. 63, *Department of Defense Health Care for Military Beneficiaries.* Urges a number of actions including the annual funding of the Tricare and Tricare for Life health care programs and that dual-eligible military retirees continue to receive care from both military and VA medical centers.

Resolution No. 65, *Reforming the Military Absentee Voting System*. Urges that appropriate laws and guidelines be developed at Federal, State and local levels with the intent that all military absentee voters will have their votes counted.

Resolution No. 68, *The Korean Defense Service Medal*. Urges the Congress to authorize and fund the awarding of the Korean Defense Service Medal to those United States military personnel and veterans who served in defending the Republic of Korea between July 28, 1954 and the present.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Fall 2001

An executive session of the National Security Commission met in the Radisson Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana on October 8, 2001 to consider resolutions properly before it and to conduct other business.

The military operation conducted in Afghanistan was the primary topic of Commission discussion. A total of eight resolutions were considered, and one was recommended for adoption: "Support for Homeland Security." The Commission Chairman also discussed Defense policy and the highlights of the Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization bill. Also discussed were proposed speakers at the Washington Conference in March 2002 and planning efforts for Pre-Convention Trip activities for the 84th National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Chairman Titus' comments follow:

The debate over how much to spend on defense to include missile defense and the policy of keeping U.S. forces ready to win two wars, has been transformed by the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Pressures in Congress to cut the Fiscal Year 2002 Defense budget below President Bush's $343.5 billion request to avoid dipping into the

social security surplus have all but vanished, and while there were differences over issues such as missile defense, the terrorist attacks left little appetite to challenge the President's defense requests. The attacks also offer the President an opportunity to jump-start his reshaping of the military.

In late June, the President added $18.4 billion to the Clinton budget, an increase which was about half of what Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld wanted. Secretary Rumsfeld has dropped the two-war strategy, and military commanders have complained they could not fulfill their existing missions if they gave up manpower and readiness to pay for a new generation of weaponry. The House of Representatives approved a $343.5 billion Defense budget and the Senate approved a similar budget, and both have approved at least a five percent military pay raise and nearly $4 billion to pay for health care for Medicare-eligible military retirees which was authorized by Congress last year. In light of the terrorist attacks, the House version contains nearly $6 billion for DoD programs to combat terrorism, including force protection, intelligence and related operations. Of the $40 billion approved by Congress for recovery operations, about one-half will likely go to national defense. As we are aware, a partial mobilization is underway.

The most contentious issue in the Defense budget had been the President's $8.3 billion request for developing anti-missile defenses, but this issue appears to be resolved in favor of the President's position with the Senate restoring $1.3 billion which had been previously cut from the program. For the first time in years, the Senate narrowly approved the Pentagon's proposal for a new round of base closings, but there is no similar provision in the House version of the Defense budget.

This budget will put the Defense Department on the path to recovery in such categories as quality of life but short on funding defense-related service and technology, maintenance of weapons systems and renovating facilities. Although all the services have made their recruiting goals for the first time in three years, all the services have readiness shortcomings. We are pleased that the Quadrennial Defense Review will reportedly not further reduce military forces, and will emphasize homeland defense and the changed nature of the threat. The American Legion will continue to push for an increase of forces to bolster our homeland security while enhancing the military's capabilities for conventional warfare and peacekeeping. We support the President's war on terrorism and the establishment of the Office of Homeland Security. We also strongly support our military who have been ordered into "harm's way."

Washington Conference

The National Security Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference on Monday, March 11, and Wednesday, March 13, 2002. The following is a summary of their three sessions.

Morning Session, March 11, 2002

The Commission met jointly with the Foreign Relations Commission to hear several speakers of mutual interest. The Honorable Richard L. Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, gave an address on the Department's role in the war on terrorism as well as a masterful presentation on six trends which will affect U.S. foreign policy in the decades ahead. He also fielded a variety of questions from members of both Commissions. As the number two man at the Department of State, Secretary Armitage oversees many of the day to day operations around the globe.

The second speaker was the Honorable Dov S. Zakheim, Undersecretary of the

Defense (Comptroller) who is the Pentagon's Chief Financial Officer. He gave a highly informative and detailed account of the Department's spending and resource needs as well as detailing the proposed increases for FY 2003. He answered a dozen questions on all aspects of the $350 billion appropriations budget of the Defense Department.

Afternoon Session, March 11

Both Commissions joined with the Special POW/MIA Committee for an update. Mr. Jerry Jennings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Director of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) led off the afternoon session with a restatement of the Administration's policies on achieving the fullest possible accounting. Mr. Jennings also gave an interesting historical presentation on accounting for our missing since the founding of the Republic.

Ms. Ann Mills Griffith, Executive Director of the National League of Families of American Prisoners Missing in Southeast Asia gave the group updates on developments in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. She also answered a variety of questions. Past National Commander and Special POW/MIA Committee Chairman Bob Turner chaired the update session.

Morning Session, March 13

The National Security Commission met in a business session on Wednesday morning. The Commission heard remarks from the Auxiliary's Security Chairman JoAnn Cronin. They also reviewed plans for the 84th National Convention in Charlotte including a proposed pre-convention trip to Ft. Bragg.

George Wehrli, Law and Order Committee Chairman, reported on the initial judging for the National Law Officer of the Year. The staff provided an update on Military Funeral Honors and copies of written testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. Two resolutions were discussed and recommended for adoption. One dealt with a Firefighters' Award Program and the second was an update defense policy resolution. Both will be properly transmitted to the National Executive Committee for their consideration.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Spring 2002

Two register resolutions were received from the Department of Illinois DEC which are similar in wording and intent to two positions recommended for adoption the March meeting in Washington, D.C. These will be reflected in the earlier resolutions. A third resolution is recommended for further study awaiting a request for documentation. A resolution supporting the reduction of Reserve retirement age from age 60 to 55 is also recommended for approval.

The Commission also discussed the upcoming 84th National Convention. A pre-Convention visit to FT Bragg is proposed for the Commission members. Also the Speakers Program as well as renewal year resolutions were addressed. Numerous defense topics were discussed and policies reviewed on the war against terrorism, defense resourcing, homeland security as well as problems with Reserve and National Guard mobilizations.

During our review of the defense budget, a recent article on our defense needs which appeared in the Wall Street Journal in April was discussed. The editorial page piece written by military historian Fred Kagan articulated our defense needs:

"America is at war, and we deserve a wartime budget…While the president has proposed what is being called the largest defense spending increase in decades, the $48

billion will not expand the force. Most of the increase will instead go to funding the current war, restocking critical supplies, and paying for already mandated quality of life improvements. It is not enough, not remotely enough...This is not the time for half measures or for defense increases impressive on paper but inadequate in the field. It is the time to address critical defense shortfalls before the gap between our needs and our capabilities grows too wide—and before we lose control of the most dangerous world situation we have faced in many years."

National Security—Foreign Relations Division

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security—Foreign Relations Division located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; John C. Petersen, Assistant Director; Angela L. Rose, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Tina T. Hines, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The duties have consisted of answering correspondence and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. These contacts related to a variety of matters, some of which involved members of the armed forces.

Liaison also is maintained with a host of military and quasi-military organizations with whom common goals are shared. Among these are: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; The Retired Officers Association; Association of the U.S. Army; and the National Guard Association of the United States. Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, is also a duty of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as The Dispatch, The American Legion Magazine and the American Legion News Service, the principal means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign affairs. The internet is rapidly becoming the primary mode of communicating responses both within and outside The American Legion. National Security and Foreign Relations Web sites are being developed.

Committee Reports

The following reports, received with grateful appreciation, were prepared under the leadership and guidance of the following Committee and Council Chairmen: Robert C. Gabrielson–Aerospace; Erwin Gus Williams–Defense Civil Preparedness; George Wehrli–Law and Order; Charles F. Moreland–Merchant Marine; Norman C. Schlemmer–Military Affairs; Joyce Brown-Cooper–National Security Council; and Gerard W. Cheffer–Naval Affairs.

AEROSPACE COMMITTEE
Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman

During the past year, the Aerospace Committee continued its efforts to ensure that the United States does not become a second-rate power in modern air power or advanced aerospace technology. The authority for the Committee's efforts are the resolutions adopted at the 82nd National Convention. The effort to implement these positions required both administrative and legislative activities.

Legislative Activities. Implementation of these policies necessitates correspondence and testimony to the Armed Services/National Security and Appropriations Committees of both the Senate and House in coordination with our Legislative Division. In addition to correspondence, principal presentations were before the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees. Testimony and resolutions on aerospace and other issues were presented to the Subcommittee in their consideration of Fiscal Year 2002 and 2003 defense appropriations bills. Of particular emphasis was continued support of the National Space program and adequate provision for research and development, the strategic airlift, and aircraft production and development to include the C-17, F-22 fighter, and the Joint Strike Fighter.

DEFENSE CIVIL PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut, Chairman

The American Legion continues to advocate adequate staffing, adequate budgeting and adequate technical and research support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In an era when Russian civil defense efforts are far greater than those of the United States, it becomes imperative that planning for emergencies to include, for example, potential chemical, biological or cyberspace attacks be enhanced.

Disaster Relief Assistance: The Defense Civil Preparedness Committee, under direction of the National Security Commission, will continue to review and monitor the progress and after-action reports of FEMA as well as legislation affecting disaster relief assistance. In 2000-2001, 1,298 Posts were involved in disaster relief and other emergency assistance programs.

Energy: War in the Middle East with Israel and Palestine has refocused the attention of The American Legion on America's continued reliance on foreign sources of energy. Unquestionably, Iraq's ability to shut off aid to America could again endanger our national security interests and economic well-being. The American Legion lobbied in support of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration in 2002.

The energy crisis in 1973 prompted a series of energy-oriented resolutions in the 1980s and 1990s which addressed, primarily, nuclear energy and nuclear waste, energy recovery and conservation. At its Fall meetings in 1989, the National Executive Committee mandated that the Chairman of the National Security Commission annually appoint a Subcommittee on the Conservation of Natural Resources, which included energy issues. Over 722 American Legion posts have appointed Energy Chairmen.

The American Legion at its 73rd National Convention adopted a comprehensive National Energy Strategy resolution which collectively addressed energy conservation and efficiency, energy recovery and development, and alternative sources of energy such as nuclear electricity. Many of these recommendations were incorporated in the National Energy Act. Energy resolutions have also been proposed in 2001 for The American Legion's National Convention.

Blood Donor Activities: The American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary continue to be principal sources of blood donors in the United States. Through our vast network of Posts and Units organized into Department programs, Legionnaires and Auxiliary members continue to supply the blood needs of their own members, hospitalized veterans and through cooperative agreements, to patients in civilian hospitals. During 2000-2001, a total of 95,686 pints of blood were donated by 43,756 American Legion donors.

National Commander Awards: To stimulate activities on the part of Departments and Posts, annual awards are made by the National Commander. During the period from July 1, 2000 through June 15, 2001, many Departments of The American Legion actively participated in the Blood Donor program. The winning Departments included Florida, Georgia Hawaii, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Each winning Department received a Certificate of Recognition signed by the National Commander and National Adjutant.

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE
George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

The Law and Order Committee continued this year to emphasize crime prevention by promoting the distribution of the Crime Prevention booklet across the nation. Liaison was maintained with the National Crime Prevention Coalition in order to keep the committee up-to-date on the latest developments in the field of crime prevention.
American Legion Departments, Posts and individual citizens have been overwhelmingly responsive to the Legion's Crime Prevention program. Requests for this booklet have come from state and local law enforcement officials; from senior citizen groups; from libraries; and from school children. This program is viable, ongoing and important to our National interest. The Law and Order Committee has continued to promote its goals in this area. Over 1,263 Posts had crime resistance programs in 2000-2001.

Fire Protection/Prevention: The National Executive Committee authorized the American Legion Fire Protection and Prevention programs. An information booklet on this subject was published in the Spring of 1986, and was the basis of a slide show production. Over 1,177 Posts had Fire Prevention programs in 2000-2001.

Junior Law Cadet Program: The American Legion, in its efforts to better educate our young people in regard to laws which govern our society, and the agencies which enforce those laws, has developed several programs which feature law enforcement training. Fifteen Departments, in cooperation with state law enforcement agencies, sponsored youth programs designed to acquaint the participants with methods of basic law enforcement.

National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Program: Based on its published criteria, the Law and Order Committee annually select Regional winners who contend for the prestigious honor of being selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. State Highway Patrolman Jeffrey Goldsmith from Minnesota was selected and presented with the fifth awarding of the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at the 83rd National Convention at San Antonio, Texas.

MERCHANT MARINE COMMITTEE
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Since its founding, The American Legion has realized the importance of a strong American merchant marine and the indispensable role of this "fifth arm of defense."

Today, the ever increasing dependence of the U.S. economy on raw materials from Third World countries and overseas areas demand renewed efforts to build up our merchant fleet.

Retaining American merchant marine independence in supplying our economy and the added demands of military sealift, spurred this Committee's support for expanding the Merchant Marine during the past year. The effort to inform its membership, the general public and the Congress of our views were guided by resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the 82nd National Convention.

Maritime Power: Throughout our history, maritime power has been a key element in the growth and strength of America. Moreover, the new sealift demands of the United States make the Merchant Marine even more imperative in our strategic planning. We must rebuild the merchant marine if we are to maintain free use of the seas in the face of potential challenges presented by regional conflicts.

For the seventh consecutive year, the National Organization of The American Legion presented its award to an outstanding midshipman at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The American Legion presents awards at all the Service Academies.

MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Norman C. Schlemmer, Indiana, Chairman

During the year, the Military Affairs Committee has directed its major efforts toward maintaining a strong and modern United States armed forces, second to none in the world. We believe the times deserve no less. Our activities have been guided by the resolutions adopted by the 82nd and 83rd National Conventions and subsequent National Executive Committee actions. Wide dissemination was given those resolutions to Congressional, government, military and industry leaders to inform them of our mandates for supporting a strong and modern military forces to include the Reserve Components. Bound volumes of the resolutions were presented to the President, Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Maintaining a strong national defense was designated as a legislative priority by the National Commander.

Press Conference/Legislative Activities: The staff has kept up-to-date by attending press conferences on various subjects of interest, including the press conferences sponsored by the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation (Coast Guard) and several Congressional press conferences.

The Department of Defense presented a special briefing on the Quadrennial Defense Review to which The American Legion and other veterans service organizations were invited.

Through the Legislative Division, correspondence with Members of Congress and Congressional staff was initiated and followed through in other areas as follows: War on Terrorism; Homeland Security; Military funeral honors; military absentee balloting; military health care; military commissaries and impact aid for military school children; military pay and allowances; and other military quality of life incentives, to include the concurrent receipt issue. Additionally, testimony was presented before the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense in support of military readiness, quality of life features and continued modernization of the Armed Forces. Emphasis was also placed on revising the national military strategy so as to better match military resources with continued overseas deployments which are beginning to impact on the morale and well-being of the Armed Forces.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Joyce Brown-Cooper, New Jersey, Chairman

Selective Service System: The American Legion, over the past year, has continued to support the Selective Service System by strongly advocating the maintenance of the Selective Service Registration Program as a viable preparedness measure.

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Criterion for judging the winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy is based on Departments giving the greatest degree of support to ROTC programs to include the number of medals presented and Legion participation in award ceremonies this year. The winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are the Departments of Alaska, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine and Minnesota. The American Legion presented 14,455 ROTC Medals to ROTC students in 2000-2001.

NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Gerard W. Cheffer, Ohio, Chairman

Guided by resolutions adopted at the 82nd National Convention, the Naval Affairs Committee has worked to strengthen the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard during the past year. It begins with the premise that sea lanes are the life lines of America, both in peacetime and war. The United States is no longer hesitant about sending powerful signals to aggressors that it will not stand idly by and watch while they conduct violent takeovers of legitimate governments, particularly when those takeovers are contrary to the national interests of the United States. This new diplomacy requires a mobile, flexible and capable and deployable United States Navy and Marine Corps.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMISSION
Robert L. Morrill, New York, Chairman
Joseph H. March, Maryland, Director

The Public Relations Commission communicates the organizational image, goals, programs and legislative positions of The American Legion to national, regional and specialized media, corporate America, and the public. Proactive marketing of news releases, editorials and electronic media products are distributed using modern public relations strategies and technologies.

The terrorist attacks on America prompted The American Legion to quickly engage programs directly supporting U.S. Forces and their families as they deployed to conduct the war overseas. In keeping with Resolution 107 passed at the 83rd National Convention in San Antonio just two weeks prior to the attack, the Commission launched a national publicity campaign to distribute Blue Star Service Banners to families having loved ones serving in the armed forces. The public service campaign supports the corporate goal of promoting "the honorable nature of military service." Materials include three thirty-second television spots, a CD of radio spots, ad slicks and a PR campaign guide. A national AP story and coverage by CNN, Fox News and MSNBC garnered national interest followed by increasing local coverage by city newspapers and electronic media. Staff conducted nearly a hundred interviews with media around the country. A March 7 press conference on Capitol Hill with Senators Hatch and Clinton and National Commander Santos covered the Legion presentation of Blue Star Service Banners to every member of the U.S. Senate. Through press releases, radio and television public service announcements, ad slicks and media contact by Posts around the nation, the return of the tradition skyrocketed in neighborhoods across America. A corporate 3 X 5 foot Blue Star Service Flag was designed to be flown by corporate America, honoring the

men and women employees called to active duty in Operation Enduring Freedom. Both the banner and flag will play a prominent role in annual American Legion Sept. 11 commemorations by Posts in their communities.

Family Support Network ad slicks were distributed for internal and external media use. The September 11 American Legion Memorial Scholarship fund was included as a major talking point in media interviews regarding the Legion's post-attack "battle plan."

The Public Relations Commission continued to provide significant support to the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA). Driven by technology, the membership roles for NALPA were integrated into individual member records maintained by The American Legion for all Legion family organizations. This enabled national Public Relations staff to prepare accurate mailing lists for NALPA and reduce significantly the amount of postage for the NALPA Newsletter.

Media Relations

Throughout the year, Public Relations Commission staff continued to develop a strong rapport with major media and national media, making The American Legion a leading source on matters pertaining to veterans rehabilitation, veterans employment, national security and foreign relations. The American Legion, either through editorial-page submissions, national and major-market electronic media interviews or interviews with major print media has achieved widespread coverage of the organization's agenda. Topics include:

- Burial requirements at Arlington National Cemetery;
- Maintaining the Pledge of Allegiance in schools;
- The Family Support Network;
- Blue Star Service Banner;
- Concurrent receipt of military retired pay and service-connected disability compensation;
- Pay equity for activated members of the Guard and Reserve;
- The veterans health care budget and eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs care;
- Honoring Memorial Day on its traditional May 30 and Veterans Day on Nov. 11;
- Health care for Gulf War veterans with Lou Gehrig's disease;
- POW/MIA full accounting;
- A flag-protection constitutional amendment; and
- Flag etiquette.

PR Tools

The Public Relations Commission continued to develop and distribute media tool kits directly to Departments, Districts and Posts. Using compact disk technology, ad slicks and broadcast spots were distributed capable of being locally customized by individual users. The products included materials supporting the Blue Star Service Banner and Flag, Family Support Network, and "A Day to Remember" Sept. 11 Commemoration Events. Distribution of membership, patriotic holiday and Legion program spots and printed ads continued by Post request.

The value of The American Legion presence on the Internet continued to expand. Increasingly, reporters call for more details on subjects they reviewed on The American Legion website. For the first time, National Commander Santos' video messages and Blue Star Service Banner radio and TV spots were made available on demand on The American Legion website at www.legion.org. Free download of a full color, printable Blue Star Service Banner is available on the site and visitors can also order banners and

other banner materials through the site. Legion public relations officers were able to download media release templates for full localization.

Awards

The National Commander's Public Relations Award was presented to NASCAR for its regular national television airing of the Star Spangled Banner, the prayer and a flyover of military aircraft at each race during the 2001 season. The American Legion has for many years encouraged such patriotic performances at national sporting events.

During the 84th National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, National Commander Richard J. Santos will present The American Legion Fourth Estate Award for outstanding journalism to the *Dayton Daily News* for its outstanding investigative journalism series, "The Foreign Game." The series revealed how young athletes are actually victims of what amounts to an international 'smuggling ring' where rules are ignored and broken to bring them to the playing fields of America's high schools and universities. This report broke ground on a problem that is finally getting wide national attention.

The Future

The National Public Relations Commission will continue to embrace new communication strategies and technologies to transmit to the American media and the public The American Legion's strong and enduring commitment to our nation's military forces, veterans, their families and the youth of our country.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE
Dennis J. Henkemeyer, Minnesota, Chairman
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, Editor-in-Chief

America's leaders continue to speak to America through the pages of The American Legion Magazine. Noted authors and other distinguished Americans who have been published in the magazine during the past year include Charlton Heston, Sarah Brady, Alan Keyes, Georgie Anne Geyer, Ralph Nader, Scott Harshbarger, Alan Dershowitz, Steve Forbes, Bradley Smith, William Bennett, Balint Vazsonyi, Rowan Scarborough, Donald Lambro, Adrian Cronauer and L. Brent Bozell III.

The American Legion Magazine has undergone a redesign, featuring better graphics, cleaner covers, concise sidebars and reader-friendly departments.

The 2002 theme issue delivers loud and clear a message of strength and resolve. Medal of Honor recipient Maj. Gen. Patrick Brady, Teamster President James P. Hoffa, Ret. Navy Adm. Bill Owens, former New York Police Commissioner Howard Safir and author Dinesh D'Souza are just some of the noted Americans who answer the question "What Makes America Strong?" in the September issue.

The American Legion Magazine will continue to monitor national veterans' issues, particularly regarding VA health care, Medicare reimbursement, CARES and concurrent receipt. Articles will remind readers of the need for a strong national defense, a flag-protection amendment and homeland security.

Automobile advertising has returned to the magazine, with Jeep purchasing pages in the May and June issues. Pharmaceuticals continue to be loyal advertisers, and the magazine has made progress in attracting clients from the entertainment industry. Through the first three quarters of 2002 the magazine sold $6.1 million in advertising,

exceeding its goal by more than $564,000. It has endured a major postal increase.

The American Legion Magazine has kept up with technology, publishing its first all-digital issue in April 2002.

Ranked No. 1 nationally in core readership (Doublebase/MRI), more than 83 percent of The American Legion Magazine's subscribers read three out of four issues.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Chairman
Carol J. Rutherford, Maryland, Director

The Eighty-third Annual National Convention in San Antonio, Texas and the Summer, Fall and Spring Meetings of the National Executive Committee approved certain positions expressed in resolutions submitted to those bodies through the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

The following report covers the activities of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff during the year ending June 30, 2002. The first section of the report describes the action taken on all resolutions assigned to the Commission for consideration, and the status shown as of June 30, 2002, the date of this report.

Beginning with the 2001 National Convention, the Commission received a total of 36 resolutions for appropriate action and consideration. There follows a breakdown of these resolutions by source and type:

15 Approved
2 Consolidated with Resolutions Approved
5 Referred to Standing Commission
5 Received and Recorded
9 Rejected

There was one resolution from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee Meeting of October 10-11, 2001.

There was one resolution from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee Meeting of May 8-9, 2002.

The status of these resolutions is set forth as follows, beginning with those covering the 2001 National Convention, followed by those presented and referred by the National Executive Committee.

2001 National Convention Approved Resolutions

The Director informed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on October 22, 2001, of The American Legion official policy based on these resolutions.

Resolution No. 1: (MI) Support Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C
Resolution No. 23: (NJ) Support the Automatic Waiver of VA Debts of $250 or Less
Resolution No. 47: (CO) Relocate Denver VAMC to the Former Fitzsimmons Army Hospital
Resolution No. 58: (MD) Remove 30-Year Delimiting Date for Agent Orange Claims
Resolution No. 59: (MD) The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
Resolution No. 84: (IL) Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Remove the Specific Date for the Award of DIC Benefits for Surviving Spouses of Former POWs
Resolution No. 85: (IL) Allow Veterans to Retain $90 of Their Compensation while in Medicaid-Covered Homes

Resolution No. 109: (NY) The Operations in Lebanon, Grenada and Panama as "Periods of War"
Resolution No. 120: (IN) Reduce Disability Requirements for Nonservice-Connected Pension
Resolution No. 121:(IN) Special Pension for World War I Veterans
Resolution No. 131: (FL) Additional National Cemeteries in Florida
Resolution No. 156: (MI) Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program
Resolution No. 160: (OR) The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration
Resolution No. 161: (OR) The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones
Resolution No. 168: (VA&R Convention Committee) Oppose Consolidation Regionalization of Claims Processing

National Executive Committee Meeting
August 27, 2001

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolution:
Resolution No. 1: (VA&R Commission) Quality Care for Mentally Ill Veterans

National Executive Committee Meeting
October 10-11, 2001

The National Executive Committee adopted the following resolutions:
Resolution No. 15: (Origin: Res. 87 (IL)(2001 National Convention) Restore and Increase Government Headstone Allowance
Resolution No. 16: (Origin: Res. 82 (IL)(2001 National Convention) Restore and Increase Burial and Plot Allowance
Resolution No. 17: (VA&R Commission) The American Legion Policy on Former POWs

National Executive Committee Meeting
May 8-9, 2002

Resolution No. 5: (VA&R Commission) Support Medicare Reimbursement for the Department of Veterans Affairs
Resolution No. 8: (VA&R Commission) VA Role in National Emergency Preparedness
Resolution No. 12: (Res. 127 (MT) (2001 National Convention) Project "Shipboard Hazard and Defense"
Resolution No. 18: (VA&R Commission) The Policy on the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Service (CARES) to Veterans
Resolution No. 22: (VA&R Commission) The Establishment of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) as a Gulf War Presumptive Disease
Resolution No. 24: (VA&R Commission) Opposition to Any Initiative to Establish a Deductible for Priority Group 7 Veterans as a Provision to Receive VA Health Care
Resolution No. 25: (VA&R Commission) The American Legion Policy on the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical School Affiliations

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held four meetings during the period August 25, 2001, through May 7, 2002. The VA&R Commission met on August 25, 2001, during the National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, and a report was subsequently made to the National Executive Committee relative to the Commission's meeting.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the VA&R Commission met at National Headquarters, October 8-9, 2001, for the purpose of considering those matters, which had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a broad range of other veterans related matters. A report of that meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on October 10, 2001.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 79th consecutive year in Washington, DC, on March 13, 2002, in conjunction with the 42nd Annual Washington Conference. The actions taken by the Commission were reported to the National Executive Committee on May 8, 2002, in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the Spring NEC Meetings

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met on May 6-7, 2002, at National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana. Chairman Thomas P. Cadmus (MI), chaired the Subcommittee meeting and encouraged those present to continue their efforts on behalf of the nation's veterans. A report of this meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on May 8, 2002.

National Leadership and Information Conferences
The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary

Two National Information Conferences were conducted during the month of September 2001, and six newly formatted and renamed National Leadership and Information Conferences were conducted during March and April of 2002. The meetings were held in the following cities:

Region 1—Nashua, NH - March 22-24, 2002
Region 2—Cherry Hill, NJ - April 19-21, 2002
Region 3—Macon, GA - April 5-7, 2002
Region 4—Dallas, TX - September 28-30, 2001
Region 5—Indianapolis, IN - April 5-7, 2002
Region 6—Sioux City, IA - March 22-24, 2002
Region 7—Las Vegas, NV - April 5-7, 2002
Region 8—Boise, ID - September 21-23, 2001

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary provided specialized training and had the opportunity for joint Saturday afternoon sessions to discuss issues of mutual interest. For the ninth consecutive year, a Post Service Officers School was conducted. Claims, ratings, and benefits were discussed. This school will continue on an annual basis.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the VA&R Commission attended the Conferences in their respective regions. The Regional Chairpersons were in attendance at all Conferences. Staff members of the VA&R Commission were present at each Conference providing those present with an overview of the VA&R program as well as significant VA&R issues. Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Small Business Administration also attended the Conferences and provided updates and presentations about various veterans programs.

Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference

The 79th National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference was held March 10-13, 2002, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Participants included members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, Department and County Service Officers and Rehabilitation Directors, members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and various National, Department, and Post officials.

Mr. Thomas P. Cadmus (MI), Chairman of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and Michael D'Arco (NM), Vice Chairman, presided at the sessions of the Conference. Addressing the Conferees were National Commander Richard J. Santos; Sherry McLaughlin, National President of the American Legion Auxiliary; Katherine Morris, Chairperson, VA&R Commission, American Legion Auxiliary and the Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, presentations were also made by the following officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs: Dr. Frances M. Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health; the Honorable E. Dane Clark, Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals; the Honorable Robin L. Higgins, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs; Ron Henke, Director of Compensation and Pension Services; and R. Keith Pedigo, Director, Loan Guaranty Service. The attendees also heard remarks from the Honorable Constance Morella, United States House of Representatives, 8th District (R-MD).

National Commander Santos made a presentation to Mr. John A. Grill of Maryland, National VAVS Worker of the Year.

Prior to the Conference, for the twenty-first year, the Chairman and members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation staff met with Department Service Officers for the Annual Department Service Officers Seminar. Topics discussed included current VA programs and staff operations.

Conference Recommendations

The members of the Recommendations Committee met on March 11, 2002, in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, DC. No recommendations were submitted from the 2001 National Information Conferences. Four recommendations were received during the 2002 Washington Conference.

Recommendation 1

The VA&R Commission should develop a resolution to oppose the proposed $1500 deductible.

This recommendation was "approved."

Recommendation 2

Permit VA to be an authorized health care provider under all duly licensed health maintenance organizations (HMOs), Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs) and other similar plans.

Explanation: Resolution 260 (NY) passed by the 80th National Convention in September 1998 addressed this matter. This was a legislative resolution that expired with the closing of the 106th Congress.

There is currently nothing on the Congressional docket regarding this matter. VA has discussed this issue and developed a proposal that is subject to review at the Office of Management and Budget.

Action: The originating Department should resubmit another resolution for consideration.

Recommendation 3

VA&R Bulletins should be made available on the Legion web site.

This recommendation was "approved."

Recommendation 4

The Veterans Benefits Administration should establish an 800 FAX number to facilitate their receipt of information.

Action: Staff will inquire and have the Veterans Benefits Administration respond to this recommendation.

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Legislative Activities

During the past year, the staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission was actively involved with legislative issues affecting the programs and services administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Activities included drafting legislation pursuant to the mandates adopted by the National Convention and National Executive Committee and the presentation of such testimony at hearings scheduled before various Congressional Committees. Active liaison is maintained with the staff of The American Legion Legislative Commission, officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congressional Committee staff, and with elected Congressional officials.

The following is a synopsis of the Congressional hearings held from July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002, relative to the deliberation of Congress on matters pertaining to the programs of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

- On July 10, 2001, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on various veterans benefits matters.
- On September 6, 2001, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives on health related issues.
- On September 11, 2001, the National Commander, Richard J. Santos, prepared to testify before the Veterans Affairs Committees, United States Congress, on the legislative priorities of The American Legion; however, due to the terrorist attacks, he was unable to present his testimony.
- On September 20, 2001, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on improvement of homeless veterans programs.
- On February 13, 2002, the Director testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2003 for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- On February 14, 2002, the Director testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, on the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2003 for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- On April 11, 2002, the Director testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Benefits, United States House of Representatives, on benefits issues.
- On May 2, 2002, the Director testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, on numerous veterans legislative proposals.
- On June 6, 2002, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the implementation of the VA Claims Processing Task Force's recommendations.
- On June 11, 2002, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits,

Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on veterans benefits issues.

- On June 13, 2002, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on health care for Filipino World War II veterans.

Informational Services

To further strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs health care delivery system, The American Legion has several pamphlets and brochures: *The American Legion Guide To: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—What Is It? Who Gets It? What Can Be Done?* This brochure is still very much in demand and is widely distributed. *The American Legion Guide: Women Veterans—Identifying Risks, Services, and Prevention.* This handbook is in demand among our women veterans. *The Gulf War Veterans Guide to Benefits* is also an extremely helpful publication. Other publications available upon request are: *What To Do Before A Veteran Dies* and *The American Legion Handbook of Veterans Benefits—Know Your Benefits—Learn What You Have Earned.* This Handbook is used as a handout at seminars, conferences, and Department Conventions. Supplies of these and other VA&R pamphlets are maintained and distributed upon request.

Report On the National Cemetery System

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is charged with meeting the interment needs of the nation's veterans and their dependents. NCA is striving to meet its accessibility goal of 90 percent of all veterans living within 75 miles of open national or state veterans cemeteries.

The NCA's budget proposal totaled $138 million and 1, 519 FTE for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. Of this $138 million, $5 million is a shift of funds to account for employees retirement and health benefit accrual. In reality, NCA's proposed budget to take care of veterans burials is $133 million. This is an increase of $12 million and 59 FTE over the current year estimate.

Total burials for NCA in 2001 was 86,000, with 15,000 of those burials taking place in state veterans cemeteries. NCA expects veterans deaths to peak in 2006 at 687,000 followed by a gradual decrease to 548,000 in 2020.

Burial space is constantly being sought. Currently, of the 120 national cemeteries, 62 are open for full service, 27 allow only cremations and the remaining 31 are closed.

The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (P.L. 106-117) required NCA to establish six new national cemeteries. Fort Sill opened in 2001 under the fast-track program, while the remaining five, Atlanta, Detroit, South Florida, Pittsburgh and Sacramento are in various stages of completion.

The National Shrine Commitment again was one of the top priorities of the NCA. Funding has been provided to six National Cemeteries in FY 2002.

Long Island National Cemetery
Golden Gate National Cemetery
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
Willamette National Cemetery
Memphis National Cemetery
Wood National Cemetery

Work at these cemeteries includes raising, realigning and cleaning headstones and markers to renovate gravesites. Additionally, the FY 2003 budget proposes $10 million

for the continuation of the commitment.

The State Veterans Cemetery Grant Program is very robust. The FY 2003 budget requested $32 million for this program. This is "no-year money" and so any monies not spent in the previous FY can be carried over into the next fiscal year. This program is not intended to replace national cemeteries, but to complement them. Grants for state-owned and operated cemeteries can be used to establish, expand and improve on existing cemeteries. Currently there are 48 operating state cemeteries around the country in 26 states. Burials in state cemeteries are up 7% over 1999, again with a total of over 15,000 burials in FY 01. Six new state cemeteries were dedicated in 2001 in Miles City, MT; Agawam, MA; Northern, WI; Augusta, ME; Little Rock, AR; and Milledgeville, GA. There are three more under construction in Colorado, Arizona and Kansas. NCA anticipates a total of 39 "states" (includes Guam, Saipan, Puerto Rico, and USVI), in the program by the end of FY 2002. The following state cemeteries have opened in 2002:

Agawam, Massachusetts

Miles City, Montana

Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery at Mt. Vernon Road, Augusta, Maine

Beaver Brook, near Spooner in northern Wisconsin

Since the NCA concentrates its construction resources on large metropolitan areas, it is unlikely that new national cemeteries will be constructed in all states. Therefore, individual states are encouraged to pursue applications for the State Cemetery Grants Program. Fiscal commitment from the state is essential to keep the operation of the cemetery on track. NCA estimates it takes about $300,000 a year to operate a state cemetery.

The NCA has an estimated 800 monuments and memorials throughout their system of 120 national cemeteries and affiliated soldiers', Government, and Confederate lots. Burials at more than two-thirds of these properties date to the Civil War or earlier. To document the largest and most significant category of its monuments and memorials, NCA is partnering with Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!), a program within Heritage Conservation Inc., a non-profit organization devoted to the preservation and care of many types of historic resources, with 10 years' experience in volunteers' surveys of public outdoor sculpture nationwide. NCA estimates this project will document about 300 monuments and memorials located in more than 100 NCA cemetery properties across the country.

When this project is complete, the inventory data will reside at NCA as well as be publicly accessible on-line through another SOS! partner, the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The project started in the spring of 2002.

On December 27, 2001, President Bush signed Public Law 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001. This law includes a provision that allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish an appropriate headstone or marker for the graves of eligible veterans buried in private cemeteries, whose deaths occur on or after December 27, 2001, regardless of whether the grave is already marked with a non-government marker. This new provision will be codified at 38 U.S.C. § 2306(d).

Annual Report of the Medical Consultant

Dr. Ann Marie Gordon joined the Staff as the Senior Medical Consultant on September 18, 2000. She is a practicing physician with experience in occupational medicine.

The Medical Consultant acts as a source of medical and technical knowledge to the Appeals Representatives at the Appeals and Special Claims Unit at the Board of Veterans

Appeals and the Claims Representatives at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office, Washington, D.C. These representatives submit inquiries to the Medical Consultant with the VA claims folder for review and evaluation as to the appropriate course of action in presenting the case to either the Board of Veterans Appeals, the VA Regional Office, or the Director, Compensation and Pension Service. The Medical Consultant after reviewing and evaluating the case may (1) discuss the case with the representative or (2) prepare a statement explaining the case, including providing medical references and a medical opinion relative to the issues.

In some cases, American Legion Service Officers in the field will submit difficult cases for review and evaluation to the Medical Consultant. This is accomplished by requesting that the case be called-in for an administrative review or by submitting copies of appropriate portions of the VA claims folder. The Medical Consultant will then respond directly to the Service Officer.

The Medical Consultant is an advisor to the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical matters. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and discussed among several key VA&R staff members.

A laptop personal computer as well as Internet services have been purchased for the Medical Consultant's use to enable her to keep in touch with daily operations.

During the past year, the Medical Consultant has discussed medical questions with individual Appeals Representatives and Claims Representatives for about 51 cases. She has reviewed and submitted written reports on 30 of these cases. The research and medical opinions provided by the Medical Consultant have resulted in numerous grants and remands for additional development.

Government Life Insurance Activities

The United States Government, acting through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), directly administers four life insurance programs for veterans of the World War I, World War II and Korean War periods, as well as two special on-going programs for veterans in certain service-connected disabled categories. These programs are administered under the titles of United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI) for World War I era veterans, National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) for World War II era, Korean War era and Service-Disabled veterans, and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) for totally disabled veterans who are approved grants for specially adapted housing purposes by VA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 2 million policies in force as of May 31, 2002, with a combined life insurance coverage of some $ 20.5 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately $700 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 100,000-120,000 claims annually in addition to a very high number of other policy transactions as the program's policies are individual in nature and are composed of diverse plans of insurance. The VMLI program insures some 3300 veterans with over $188 million dollars of coverage in force. Currently these programs are operated out of the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA.

In addition to the life insurance programs directly operated by VA, the Department also has supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs. These programs have provided insurance protection, since 1965 and 1970 respectively, to active duty and reserve military personnel (SGLI), and to separated veterans and (recently) to retired and

separated reservists (VGLI). The SGLI and VGLI programs are administered by the Prudential Insurance Company at a center in Newark, NJ, with all administration and other program expenses being paid by the policyholders from a portion of their insurance premiums, save for the extra hazard mortality experience of wartime periods when general tax revenues take over. These insurance issues are solely group Term insurance without dividends, disability benefits, or diverse types of permanent plans with equity values such as the individual policy contracts contained in VA's NSLI program. On May 31, 2002, SGLI provided some 2.4 million active duty and reserve personnel with more than $701 billion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 387,000 veterans with insurance in excess of $37.5 billion dollars. Of these policy accounts the OSGLI center in Newark, NJ maintains only VGLI, with the various military service departments maintaining the rest. The OSGLI center processes between 2,500-3,500 death claims annually with minimal other transactions due to the very limited nature of the coverage as group term insurance only. In 1992 the face amount of SGLI coverage was increased to $100,000 with an additional $100,000 permitted as an option, and VGLI became renewable instead of the single five year term previously in effect. The amount of VGLI a veteran can hold cannot be in excess of the amount of SGLI he or she held in service. In 1997 Retired Reservists, instead of being insured under the SGLI program until age 60 or the receipt of their first retired pay check, were merged into the VGLI program to allow them the option of retaining their coverage as long as desired. Reservists leaving reserve service without the amount of time needed for full retirement may now also be covered under VGLI if desired. In addition, veterans are now permitted to convert their SGLI/VGLI insurance, in partial amounts at different times or in whole, to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial insurance carrier as they leave service, or at any time they are in the VGLI program, without having to wait a stipulated period as was previously the case. Effective April 1, 2001 those entering active duty are now automatically covered for a full $250,000 under SGLI as authorized by Public Law 106-419, and members of the Individual Ready Reserve who have volunteered for assignment to a mobilization category were also made eligible for SGLI coverage under that law. In addition, Public Law 107-14 has authorized other program enhancements to the SGLI program, effective November 1, 2001, which allows up to $100,000 in spousal coverage on a paid premium basis, and provides $10,000 free life insurance coverage for a member's children. These dependent coverages cannot, at present, be carried over into the VGLI program and cannot be doubled in the case of both parents being in service. However, while the member's SGLI is in force, spousal coverage can be converted to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial company upon written application in the same manner as a VGLI policy may be so converted. The American Legion insurance unit presented supporting testimony on these legislative changes as they improved greatly the range of financial options available to veterans in these programs, not only at the time of their separation from service, but in later years as their life situation changed as well, and as they permit the SGLI and VGLI programs to more effectively compete with private insurers who have the privilege of excluding applicants as desired and who may, in the case of certain military associations, be co-located on military bases.

The American Legion's National VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA center has been working with VA insurance management staff to provide added protection to those veterans leaving service in a totally disabled and life threatening status, to attempt to ensure these veterans do not lose coverage (as happens periodically) due to misunderstanding certain requirements of the SGLI to VGLI transfer system stemming from inconsistencies in the manner these are explained to them as they

outprocess from various military facilities, or failing to respond in a timely manner to initial insurance invitations and premium billings, etc. Recommended safeguards included such items as automatic coverage and premium deduction start-ups from military retired pay or VA disability compensation (recommendations have been made for an American Legion legislative Resolution on this point), policy liens for past due premiums, and closer contacts between the SGLI/VGLI administering office and veterans in this category. To date VA insurance management has completed a staff study through the military service departments, the Defense Manpower Data Center, DPC Austin and OSGLI on the methods such individuals can be identified, and is attempting to contact by telephone veterans in this class and advise them of their VGLI options as needed. An on-line SGLI/VGLI manual is available now to all military outprocessing centers to ensure these have immediate access to correct information concerning the requirements for veterans being separated to convert their in-service SGLI coverage to VGLI coverage. For all programs the Department of Veterans Affairs administers and/or supervises some 4.8 million life insurance policies for military personnel and veterans, with a total in-force coverage of over $759 billion dollars.

In the NSLI program many disabled veterans annually continue to take advantage of the new supplemental Service-Disabled insurance provided in the legislative changes of 1992, whereby an additional $20,000 of coverage may be purchased by those veterans having a basic Service-Disabled policy and who become totally disabled before age 65. The American Legion VA&R office continues to maintain a special notification system for those veterans who choose The American Legion as their representative and who are applying for Service-Disabled NSLI coverage to ensure they are informed as early as possible of these additional benefits. This is particularly needful as the current VA system may, in certain areas such as during the time period while a disability compensation claim is awaiting adjudication in a VA Regional Office, be faulty in communicating information on benefits such as disability premium waivers and supplemental coverage to veterans who may qualify for it and who may very well be in life threatening (and therefore time constrained) conditions.

The VA Insurance Center continues its on-going effort to provide better service and program enhancements to its veteran policyholders by periodically updating its computer and communication systems, both as part of the overall VA area networks and through the Internet, and placing ever more records and transaction activities, previously done on paper, into their on-line computer systems. Beginning in Summer 2001, the VA Insurance Center accelerated a planned program of transforming its insurance operation into a wholly computerized system no longer utilizing paper insurance files, but using imaging technology instead to replace paper files with electronic ones. The impetus for this was to create space in the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center for one of the three regional Pension Centers which have been organized to assist in the reduction of the national backlog in compensation and pension cases. The new insurance system, known as VICTARS (Veterans Insurance Claims Tracking and Response System) permits on-screen display of all file documents that would previously have been maintained in a paper insurance folder, and gives VA insurance specialists the ability to input and process claims, transactions and responses to inquiries with far greater speed than any earlier system used to date, and to maintain a full history of such in the policyholder's new electronic file. In connection with this completely new software package, VA employees have been provided with large screen display monitors and updated capacity high speed computers required by the new programming. All previous paper insurance folders have now been retired to a nearby Federal Records Center, but are still available for recall as may be needed on certain cases. Insurance services are

further augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit has been completed to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries and transaction requests received at the VA insurance Internet address **http://www.insurance.va.gov/**, and by providing insurance information through links to VA's Home Page and VA's insurance Home Page. Additionally, in accordance with the federal initiative to have all or most government disbursements done by Direct Deposit (Electronic Transfer of Funds) the VA Insurance Center has completed actions for the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. All monthly insurance award/annuity payments are by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees unless otherwise requested by the payee. In this vein, all policy loan, dividend refund and cash surrender payments are also sent to an insured's bank account if VA benefits are or were on direct deposit, or if an insured is paying premiums by automatic deduction from a checking account, unless requested otherwise. New settlement claim forms for death settlements will contain blocks for beneficiaries to include bank information should they wish insurance settlement checks transferred to them electronically.

VA continues to seek authorization for several new initiatives in both the NSLI and VMLI programs at this time through pending legislation, introduced in the House of Representatives on June 19th, 2001 under **H.R. 2222**. Regarding NSLI, authority to pay claims to the next best (contingent) beneficiary is being sought for those rare cases where a primary beneficiary cannot be found by the end of a two year period; in the Service-Disabled (RH) NSLI program, to effect a significant reduction in RH premium rates generally by switching to a different, more updated, mortality table (the 1980 Commissioners Standard Ordinary Basic Table of Mortality) on which to base these rates, rather than the current 1941 table. VA desires this change be made available to those already in the program, and not just to new entrants, under the principle that veterans should not have to subsidize their own service-connected disabilities. The initiative ensures that service-connected veterans have the ability to obtain life insurance at standard premium rates without regard to their physical service-connected disabilities. This change, if enacted, produces a significant drop in RH premium rates, because of the increased life expectancy values inherent in the 1980 table versus the previous 1941 table. However, increases of approximately $15-20 million per year in the government subsidy here will be needed to cover the cost of the reduced premiums. For the VMLI program, VA is seeking approval to increase the present maximum face value of coverage from $90,000 to $200,000, and to permit coverage to be retained past the current age 70 limit until the mortgage ends. A further VA initiative to have government life insurance proceeds exempted from being counted as income for federal income asset limitation programs, for purposes of determining eligibility for, or the amount of, benefits under any federal or federally-assisted program, has not yet been addressed in legislation, but continues as a VA legislative objective.

In response to the results of a private sector study, the 2001 Program Evaluation of Benefits for Survivors of Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities, released in the Spring of 2001, a bill has been introduced into the Senate (S.2209) for the creation of a new, additional, issue of Service-Disabled Life Insurance. If approved by appropriate legislation, this would provide life insurance coverage of up to a maximum face value of $50,000 for veterans applying for such within ten years of release from active service, and who meet the same qualifying criteria as is required for regular service-disabled (RH Prefix) insurance. This issue would be exclusionary with regular RH insurance, and

would be under one type of plan only; a Level Permanent Term plan. A waiver of premiums for disability would not be permitted due to budgetary considerations. Insurance under this issue would reduce at age 70 to a face value of $10,000, but the coverage would then become a paid-up policy no longer requiring premiums to be paid.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Service Units:
VA Insurance Centers At Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Staff at Philadelphia consists of a Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative and one Secretary. An associated office at the St. Paul center has one Supervisor/VA&R Representative and one Secretary.

The Chief of Insurance Activities and the Insurance Representative must have a thorough knowledge of government life insurance laws, regulations, and transaction and adjudication procedures, and be able to analyze them correctly in order to properly represent insured veterans and their beneficiaries. The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Director and other interested personnel are kept informed on policy matters, changes in VA administrative procedures and all related areas to include new legislative initiatives. NSLI re-open periods for service-disabled and nonservice-disabled veterans with increased face value coverages continues to be an American Legion legislative effort. In connection with the milestone change in insurance operations in Philadelphia to a paperless office as described earlier, The American Legion VA&R unit there has obtained new computer equipment equivalent in capacity to that used in the VA Insurance Center, to process casework with the new imaged electronic files and to respond to a wide variety of inquiries with far greater rapidity than previously possible. Coordination has also been effected with the VA Pension Center management in both Philadelphia and St. Paul for the creation of a system whereby the national VA&R staff personnel can process pension inquiries from Department and Veterans Service Officers as they may require. These efforts will also include training in VA Pension Center operations and the on-site VA&R staff will continue to monitor and report to the VA&R Director changes in these new VA procedures as they occur. In the area of pending legislation for a new issue of service-disabled life insurance, the Chief of Insurance Activities provided draft testimony and background input to the VA&R Director. The American Legion generally supports this concept, and would also like to see an open period provided for Viet-Nam era veterans, with a more appropriate eligibility period after active service than the ten years specified in the proposed legislation.

Daily operations involve a full range of insurance services to include the representation of insured veterans and their beneficiaries, the review of insurance case files and supporting evidence and Claims files as required, the furnishing of status reports and account assistance to insureds, beneficiaries, accredited field representatives and VA adjudicative and accounts personnel, close liaison with Department Service Officers and other field personnel to ensure prompt and complete service, and the input to, review of, and where necessary the correction of VA actions and records both on cases involving disability and death claims, and on those involving any of a wide variety of insurance accounting and financial transactions that occur on active and matured accounts. General insurance information and guidance is provided to field service officers across the United States, along with assistance in the preparation of insurance appeals and claims submittals. Coordination with VA executive and program management personnel is conducted on both individual cases and broad policy/administrative matters. A telephone fax capability added to the Philadelphia office has greatly expedited claims processing by

enabling rapid receipt of documents needed to complete transactions and claims that would otherwise be significantly delayed due to mailing times.

The Philadelphia office has been provided with newer computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the VA networks and the Internet. These are operational and have Internet (E-Mail at **AMGLAVE@VBA.VA.GOV**) and VA Benefits Delivery Network access. The St. Paul office provides similar operations, staff representation and nationwide veteran's service in the field of VA Debt Management operations, which now comprise its mission as transfer of all insurance accounts to Philadelphia has been completed. VA's Debt Management Center is located at the VA St. Paul center.

For the period July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002, the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported:

Insurance & Debt Management

Letters Received	4,471
Letters Written	5,684
Disability Insurance Claims	1,314
Death Insurance Claims	2,521
Insurance Folders Reviewed	3,186
In-Force Policy Accounts Reviewed	4,353
Telephone Contacts	4,308
Personal Contacts	3,553
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	3,260
DVA Case Responses Mailed; Insurance and Debt Management Cases	6,659
*Live Claims, Evidence and Other Submittals Presented	9,526

***Excludes death claims and includes policy transactions such as dividend, loan and premium actions, plan conversions, cash surrenders, refunds, beneficiary changes, disability claims with related medical and legal evidence, Wills, estate documents, check tracers, master record data changes, disability questionnaires processing general inquiries, and debt management case supporting documents.**

Debt Management (St. Paul Only):
(DMC = Debt Management Center)

DMC Original Claims:	1,135
DMC Case Audits:	2,681
DMC Debt Waiver Cases:	1,772

Claims Service

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission provides assistance and representation to all veterans and their survivors in claims and appeals before the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as, appeals for upgrade of military and naval discharges and the correction of military and naval records through a staff of seventeen Appeals Representatives.

Within the Table of Organization, the Principal Deputy Director is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Board Unit, Debt Management Office in St. Paul, and the Insurance Activities Unit in Philadelphia.

Cases at the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted on the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a member

of the Board of Veterans Appeals with the appellant. The Board of Veterans Appeals Unit consists of an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, three secretaries, and thirteen Appeals Representatives. The staff has been augmented by service officers from across the country participating in The American Legion/National Veterans Legal Services Program Veterans Law Internship Program. This intense veterans law training program provides hands-on education for interested service officers.

Two Appeals Representatives and one secretary are assigned to provide claims service to individuals residing under the jurisdiction of the Washington, DC VA Regional Office which includes the District of Columbia, as well as those residing overseas.

The Military Review Boards Unit reviews records, prepares written briefs and appears at personal hearings with an applicant before the Discharge Review Board and the Board for the Correction of Military or Naval Records of the various armed services. One Supervisor and one Appeals Representatives are assigned.

Board of Veterans Appeals

This report reflects the activities of The American Legion's Board of Appeals and Special Claims Unit for the period July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002. During these twelve months, the Appeals Representatives reviewed a total of 4,280 cases. Included in the above total were 264 scheduled hearings in Washington, DC and 299 United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims remands.

During this reporting period, the Board of Veterans Appeals rendered a total of 17,303 decisions, which included 3,537 with American Legion representation. These decisions consisted of 933 (26.4%) approvals, 1,172 (33.1%) remands, 1,360 (38.5%) denials, and 72 (2.0%) "other." The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases, and dismissals. Effective February 25, 2002, the Board of Veterans Appeals established a development section tasked to obtain evidence and add it to the claims folder so that a decision may be made rather than remanding the claims folder for development at the VA Regional Office.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed and disposed of 14 cases involving requests by Department Service Officers of The American Legion for advisory and/or medical opinions or assistance in obtaining Administrative Review by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office, Compensation and Pension Service.

Military And Naval Review Boards

Title 10, United States Code, sections 1552-1554, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Military Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for Correction of Military Records.

During the period July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002, the staff of the Military Review Boards Unit provided advice, assistance, representation and other services to applicants and petitioners seeking consideration by the Department of Defense review and correction boards in more than 1500 instances. These involved such issues as upgrade of discharge, change of narrative reason for discharge, entitlement or amendment of physical disability severance or retirement, issuance or reissuance of military awards or decorations and other corrections to military records. Of these actions, 75 personal hearings were held and documentary review briefs were submitted in 467 cases.

The following is a breakdown of actions by the respective service boards:

Board for Correction Of Military Records

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of the Air Force	22	3	13
Department of the Army	125	20	16
Department of the Navy	52	6	12
DOT Coast Guard	0	0	0

Military Discharge Review Boards

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of the Air Force	39	14	35
Department of the Army	57	38	66
Department of the Navy	172	19	11
DOT Coast Guard	1	0	0

The various boards are having continuing success in their efforts to reduce the processing time for an individual's application. This action was in response to problems with the increased Congressional oversight and concern regarding the Boards' problems with timeliness of review, questions of independence from active components, and a lack of satisfaction by many applicants. The following are current projected timeframes:

Air Force Discharge Review Board:
Documentary review ..... 6-12 months
Hearing review-Washington, DC ..... 6-12 months
Hearing review-travel panel ..... 12-18 months

Air Force Correction Board:
Documentary review ..... 12-18 months

Army Discharge Review Board:
Documentary review ..... 6-8 months
Hearing review-Washington, DC ..... 6-8 months
Hearing review-travel panel ..... 12-18 months

Army Correction Board:
Documentary review ..... 12-18 months

Navy/Marine Corps Discharge Review Board:
Documentary review ..... 10-12 months
Hearing review-Washington, DC ..... 12-14 months

Navy/Marine Corps Correction Board:
Documentary review ..... 12-36 months

DOT Coast Guard Discharge Review Board:
Documentary review ..... 10-12 months
Hearing review-Washington, DC ..... 10-12 months

DOT Coast Guard Correction Board:
Documentary review ..... 10-12 months

The Military Review Board Unit staff also produce and supply training materials for service officers and applicants, and are currently participating in cross training with BVA regional office staff members.

Staff Workload

Part of the overall activity of the various offices of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is reflected in the annual volume of incoming and outgoing correspondence. During this period, approximately 40,000 letters, E-mails

and Faxes were received from claimants, service officers, and VA officials. Correspondence received by the VA Insurance Activities Units in Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN, was in excess of 4,450 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 5,650 pieces.

The combined workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards Unit, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 10,500 cases.

Department Service Officers School

The National Commander continues to authorize the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission to conduct two three and one-half day training programs for Department Service Officers and other accredited representatives of The American Legion.

The purpose of the Department Service Officers School is to provide current technical information on a variety of issues relating to the development and presentation of claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The program of instruction includes basic information and updates on subjects such as veterans benefits, claims processing, disability evaluations, rating procedures, the conduct of personal hearings, the development of appeals, interpretation of decisions of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and advocacy skills. Instruction is provided by Mr. Ron Abrams, Director of Training, National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and members of their legal staff, as well as staff to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

The goal of this formal training is to improve the proficiency and effectiveness of American Legion Service Officers in their effort to represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Another goal is to enable participants to share the knowledge, information, and material received with other service officers in their respective departments.

This School represents a major commitment by The American Legion to develop a network of highly trained and experienced service officers to carry out the VA&R program. The cooperation and participation of the Departments continues at a very high level.

The Thirtieth session of the Department Service Officers School was held July 25-28, 2001, at the Radisson Hotel Centre in Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 118 service officer attendees. The Thirty-first session was held March 6-9, 2002, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. There were 96 service officer participants. This was followed on March 10, 2002, by the Department Service Officers Seminar and National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference.

National Field Service

The National Field Service (NFS) mission is to promote universal access to high quality health care for veterans and their families through advocacy, service, and support. The objectives of the NFS are to:

- Measure Veterans Health Administration (VHA) performance in areas of importance to veterans, over time;
- Monitor network and facility performance in relation to one another to ensure equity of health care delivery across the system;
- Identify the contributing factors to any variations in health care delivery;
- Track over time the impact of legislative, policy or structural change on VHA,

and

- Provide veterans with important and easy-to-read information about their health care.

The NFS continues to address these objectives by conducting site visits, tracking the performance data of Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN), conducting patient focus groups, and making recommendations to VHA and Congress based on comparative analysis of our findings.

The NFS continued to report 2 Field Representative vacancies for the entire reporting period of July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002. There was considerable turnover in personnel and the period ended with one representative and no Deputy Director for Health Care due to a resignation in January, 2002. Each Field Service Representative is assigned oversight responsibility for a number of VHA's 21 VISNs. They are also participants on several Committees, Councils and Advisory Boards at both the National and VISN levels. They prepared testimony for Congressional field hearings in Kansas, West Virginia and Massachusetts. Site visits were conducted in VISNs 1,3,4,5,11 and 16. Most importantly, the NFS provided case management assistance to hundreds of veterans who otherwise would have gone without needed health care.

Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

The Fifty-sixth National Advisory Committee meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was held in Portland, Oregon May 15-18, 2002. VAVS is the largest volunteer program in the Federal Government. More than 350 national and community organizations support VAVS. The VAVS program is assisted by a VAVS National Advisory Committee, reporting to the Under Secretary of Health, composed of 59 major veteran, civic and service organizations.

The American Legion representative on the National Advisory Committee is the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. This year, the Director and Assistant Director for Program Management were present at the VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting.

The 2002 winner of the James H. Parke Scholarship Award was Adam Brown, Eastern Kansas Health Care System ($12,000). Runner-up awards went to Gabriel Anzueto, South Texas Health Care System ($8,000); and, Wendy Koegel, VA Northern Indiana Health Care System ($6,000). The Parke Memorial Scholarship Award was established in honor of the first Director of VA Voluntary Service, who is also the founding father of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. Each medical center nominates one VAVS student volunteer for receipt of the award.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Chairman, Thomas P. Cadmus, views The American Legion Volunteer Program as a high priority. The American Legion's goal is to increase both the number of hospitals and community-based volunteers and the number of voluntary hours contributed each year. Representatives of VA Voluntary Service provide overviews of the various volunteer programs at each of the eight VA&R workshops held in conjunction with the annual National Leadership and Information Conferences.

Accredited Representatives

In completing VA Form 21-22, "Power of Attorney", the claimant appoints The American Legion as accredited representative in a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is the duty of the organization to provide

assistance, advice, and counsel to veterans, survivors and dependents so as to ensure their rights are protected and they receive all benefits to which they may be entitled under the law. The American Legion, as a Congressionally chartered organization, conducts this service program through the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Accredited Representatives of The American Legion provide formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals. Their respective Departments have recommended these representatives for accreditation because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of federal benefit programs, especially those provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To become an Accredited Representative of The American Legion, a formal application (VA Form 21-22) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, with an accompanying endorsement signed by the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. The Director, as the National Certifying Officer, or the Principal Deputy Director, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of VA for action. This form is never sent directly to the General Counsel, as accreditation will not be granted unless the request has been certified by the organization. Upon approval of the application, the individual is recognized by VA as an Accredited Representative of The American Legion and will receive official notification of this action from VA. The accreditation will remain in effect until such time as the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission receives a written request from the Department Commander or Department Adjutant to cancel the individual's accreditation due to death, retirement, or resignation. The Director will then notify the General Counsel that the accreditation should be canceled.

New accreditations and cancellations are reported monthly on VA's General List of Accredited Representatives - VA Information Bulletin IB 2-51. During the reporting period 131 requests for accreditation and 134 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 2002, there were 1,161 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion with 44 pending accreditation. Any questions concerning the proper procedure or regulations pertaining to accreditation of individuals or their activities should be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission in the Washington office.

Distribution of VA Releases

To ensure that the staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, service officers in the field, members of the VA&R Commission, and other interested parties are kept advised and informed about American Legion policies, recent legislative action, changes in VA regulations, policies and procedures, the Administrative section of the Director's office receives and distributes VA news releases, printed changes in VA regulations and manuals, and other informational material to all VA&R staff. This information is then disseminated through VA&R Bulletins and Memoranda. In this reporting period 36 Bulletins and 15 Memoranda were distributed.

Personnel and Organization

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division at the Washington office from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002.

The VA&R Division underwent a number of changes including the promotion of Carol Rutherford to Director, Peter Gaytan to Principal Deputy Director, Joseph Sharpe to Deputy Director of Economics, Mark Regan to Assistant Director of Program Management , Tim Jones to Chief, Field Representative and Earlene Hopkins to Secretary. Placed as Team Leader at the BVA was Jim Fischl.

New hires to the division were Carter Carrington, BVA Appeals Representative, John Zangas, BVA Appeals Representative, Adessa Naylor, BVA Appeals Representative and Monette Fields, Field Representative. Steve Smithson, Assistant Director for Gulf War, was temporarily transferred to Indianapolis Headquarters for a period of 3 years.

Currently there is one vacancy in the BVA Unit, one vacancy in the Veterans and Dependents Claims Unit, one vacancy in the Military Review Boards Unit and two vacancies in the Field Service Unit. Recruitment of qualified individuals to fill the existing vacancies remains one of the Division's top priorities.

The most current table of organization of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 2001, is as follows:

Director	1
Principal Deputy Director	1
Deputy Director for Health Care Issues	1
Field Representatives	2
Secretary	1
Manager, Operations and Training	1
Deputy Manager	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Program Management	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Resource Development	1
Assistant Director for Persian Gulf Task Force	1
Research Analyst	1
Supervisor, Review and Correction Boards	1
Review Board Representative	1
Office Manager, Board of Vets. Appeals Unit	1
Appeals Representatives	12
Case Screener, Court of Veterans Appeals (Part-time)	1
Secretaries	3
Medical Consultant	1
Veterans and Dependents Claims Unit	2
Secretary	1
Total Personnel—Washington office	38
Insurance Field offices:	
Philadelphia, PA	
Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative	1
Secretary/Transcriber	1
St. Paul, MN	
Supervisor of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative	1
Secretary/Transcriber	1

TOTAL PERSONNEL	
Field offices	4
Washington office	8
VA&R TOTAL	**42**

Staff Field Assignments

The staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, including the Director, Principal Deputy Director, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors attended various Legion functions around the country, such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, the Conferences and fact-finding trips. Departments visited included: West Virginia, Indiana, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas, Minnesota, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Oregon, New Mexico, Arizona, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Michigan, South Carolina, Alabama, Idaho, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Florida, Nebraska, and Ohio.

The staff also participated in four National Information Conferences in 2001, and six in Spring 2002.

The Field Service Unit performed visitations to selected VA medical centers in 6 of the 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). The entire Division staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

Certificates of Appreciation

Under authority of May 1958 NEC Resolution, we have continued the program of awarding a Certificate of Appreciation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon their retirement or resignation, For Services Rendered and Cooperation Extended in Connection with The American Legion's Rehabilitation Program. Under criteria established in line with the enabling resolution, nominations for the award are submitted by Department or National officials of The American Legion twice a year. The nominations are considered by a committee of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission at meetings preceding the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, and the National Convention. The Committee recommends to the Commission the names of those considered deserving of the Certificate.

Six Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002, for an overall total of 1,289 since the program was initiated.

Citations for Meritorious Service

This Citation, authorized by the National Executive Committee in May 1956, seeks to recognize the long and faithful service of Post Service Officers and others. Nominations for the Citation are submitted by Department officials to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director at any time; the Director, acting for the Chairman and members of the Commission, issues the award.

Forty "Citations For Meritorious Service And Loyal Cooperation In The American Legion's Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation Program" were presented during the period July 1, 2001 To June 30, 2002. Since this type of recognition and appreciation began, 4,760 Citations For Meritorious Service "have been presented.

Persian Gulf War Task Force

The American Legion created the Persian Gulf Task Force in October 1995. Its mission is to enhance The American Legion's service to our newest generation of war veterans, their families, and their advocates. Additionally, as Congress has not officially ended the Gulf War era and numerous operations and peacekeeping activities have taken place since the end of the Gulf War, the role of the Task Force has been expanded to serve the needs and interests of veterans who served in these operations as well those who participate in such deployments in the future. As U.S.. troops are currently deployed overseas to fight the war on terrorism, this new role is even more significant.

The Task Force has vigorously approached its mission and has undertaken many efforts to accomplish it. These efforts include various forms of outreach, oversight of scientific and clinical studies, oversight of DoD investigations and programs, oversight of VA's compensation system, site visits to VA medical centers and regional offices, the upgrading of our presence on the World Wide Web, and the maintenance of a toll free number for Gulf War veterans.

The Task Force conducted a number of Town Hall Meetings, department & service officer training sessions, and other outreach efforts this past year in Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Michigan, Ohio, North Dakota, Indiana, Illinois and Washington, D.C. These events improved our outreach to Gulf War veterans, and better prepared Legionnaires to serve these veterans within their communities.

Staff members have also traveled extensively within the medical and professional communities to closely follow issues of concern to Gulf War veterans, particularly health issues such as side effects from controversial vaccines and exposure to depleted uranium (DU). The Task Force is significantly involved with the work of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the American Public Health Association, as both explore matters of interest to our Gulf War community.

Disability compensation remains a top priority for the Task Force. During the past seven years, nearly 75% of claims filed for undiagnosed illnesses (Gulf War veterans' illnesses) have been denied by VA. The Task Force identified the major reasons for this extraordinarily high denial rate and worked directly with members of Congress to develop legislation to correct and further clarify ambiguous language in the undiagnosed illness law in order to enable scores of ill Gulf War veterans, many of whose claims were previously denied, to receive the benefits to which they are rightfully entitled. To this end, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (PL 107-103) was signed into law by the President on December 27, 2001.

The lack of baseline data on various exposures due to improper record keeping during the Gulf War has resulted in roadblocks and impediments to Gulf War-related research. Earlier this year the Assistant Director for the Task Force was appointed to a newly established VA research advisory committee on Gulf War veterans' illnesses. This 12-person committee, comprised of medical doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans, and VSO representatives, is charged with advising the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the future of Gulf War-related research. This panel will be considering areas of research that have not been thoroughly explored in the past. The American Legion's direct participation in this process enhances our ability to represent the interests of the Gulf War veteran community.

The Task Force has continued its steady oversight of the Department of Defense's efforts to investigate exposures of troops in the Gulf to environmental agents, and the implementation of "lessons learned" from the Gulf War. DoD has made some progress

in these efforts, but it has not found any clear causes of these illnesses.

Additionally, all of the recommended changes to DoD doctrine in the wake of the Gulf experience have not occurred as quickly as we would like, particularly as they relate to medical surveillance and depleted uranium training. Moreover, recent reports from the Institute of Medicine and the U.S. General Accounting Office, as well as testimony before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health in January 2002, have revealed that "lessons learned" are not being fully implemented, a major breakdown being at the field level. The Task Force has testified before both the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees regarding this issue and will continue to monitor DoD's efforts in this regard.

During the past year, the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illness, Medical Readiness and Military Deployments (OSAGWIMRMD) has continued to transition into the realm of deployment health support. The new office, which will continue to investigate and monitor issues pertaining to Gulf War veterans' illness, as well as deployment-related health concerns in general, was recently renamed the Deployment Health Support Directorate and falls under the Under Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. The Task Force will monitor this transition to ensure that Gulf War veterans' issues are not treated as a secondary matter.

Several thousand brochures and pamphlets pertaining to Gulf War and Vietnam veteran issues have been distributed as part of our wide-scale outreach effort. The Task Force is also in the process of revising the "Decade of Service Sourcebook for Military Personnel and Veterans" to ensure relevance for all Gulf War era veterans, including those fighting the war on terrorism.

The Task Force is working closely with other staff members of VA&R to heighten awareness of women veterans' issues. Of the almost 700,000 service members deployed to the Gulf during the war, nearly 35,000 were women, composing most of the same positions as their male counterparts. There is an increasing interest in the role of women in our services, as well as their care within VA. The Task Force remains a strong advocate for those women who so honorably served and continue to serve our country. We will continue to follow these matters closely.

The Task Force has expanded its scope to include environmental hazards, such as Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and Operation Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD), experienced by veterans of past wars and operations. It works closely with other divisions in the National Headquarters in order to provide the best service possible to these veterans, their families, and the service officers helping them.

The Task Force has also continued its efforts of cooperation with the Membership Division in order to encourage those we serve to join the Legion family. As part of this effort, the assistant director for the Task Force was temporarily transferred to the Indianapolis Headquarters in July 2001 to work closer with the Membership Division by providing information and expertise to Division staff regarding issues and concerns important to Gulf War era veterans and their families. The assistant director coordinates all Task Force efforts and activities with the health policy analyst located in the Washington Office.

This past year the Assistant Director has traveled extensively with membership staff providing a VA&R presence to membership activities. The Assistant Director has also participated in several membership events briefing attendees on the importance of The American Legion's veteran focused programs and services in relation to membership goals.

American Legion Auxiliary
Katherine Morris, Chairman, Texas

There truly is magic in America's dreams and that has been evidenced by the work of the VA&R Committee and the American Legion Auxiliary members who spent many unselfish hours volunteering their time to help our veterans.

We are very proud of our volunteers, regular, occasional, non-affiliated volunteers that gave of themselves and made life a little brighter for our veterans and their families.

The magic spell was certainly felt at the National Leadership and Information Conferences as we reached out and helped give our members who attend the opportunity to participate in the exchange of ideas and offer suggestions. We were able to inform them of pending legislation regarding VA matters..

Junior members and Sons of the American Legion came together to cast their magic spell on our VA&R program as they assisted in providing many hours of service to our veterans. They made tray favors and placemats, baked cookies, sent cards, visited and read to the patients, sang to them and helped pass out goody bags.

22,692 regular and occasional volunteers provided a variety of recreational programs. They held bingo games, birthday parties, card games, popcorn and pizza parties, ice cream and watermelon socials, bazaars and carnivals. Special parties were held at Christmas, Easter, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day and Valentine's Day as well as visiting patients during the national salute to hospitalized veterans week. 4,254 newly recruited volunteers joined in helping to provide these services.

39,217 home service volunteers spent 957,917 hours and spent $916,671.00 as they worked in their homes for our veterans. They made tray favors, holiday decorations, lap robes, ditty bags, wheel chair bags, pillows, afghans, sweaters, mittens, scarves, shawls, booties, bibs and slippers for hospitalized veterans.

Reports revealed that the Christmas gift shops continue to be an outstanding program. Gift shops provide gifts for the families of our hospitalized veterans and were operated by the Auxiliary senior and junior members as well as members of The American Legion and The Sons Of The American Legion. Hours of shopping, assisting the veterans to select the right gift for their family members, packaging and wrapping for mailing brought the Christmas spirit to both the veterans and the volunteers.

Field service reports reflected that 50,134 volunteers set forth to help 238,926 veterans wherever they could locate them. The volunteers donated 931,992 hours of service at a cost of $1,091,054.00.

During the year, many activities were carried out by our field service volunteers. They prepared meals in the veteran's home, drove them to various appointments, visited veterans in state hospitals and nursing homes, assisted with writing checks and filling out forms, read to the blind, visited homeless shelters, donated food baskets at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, sponsored bingo parties, adopted veterans in nursing homes, remembering them on their birthday and other holidays with cards and gifts.

Volunteers donated food baskets, worked in soup kitchens and conducted clothing and food collection drives for the homeless. Volunteers assisted with the stand down programs which provided job and substance abuse counseling, job placement, medical and legal assistance, access to date on Social Security and service records and they provided food, shelter, clothing and hygiene items.

Volunteer time of 3,893 hours and contributions of $27,696.90 were donated to

Fisher Houses. At all National Leadership and Information Conferences the Foster House video was shown.

202 units reported adopting a ward. Many held bingo games with canteen books as prizes, held ice cream socials, decorated the adopted ward for the different holidays as well as serving them refreshments. They furnished the wards with books, clothing, games, etc. And also, supplied toilet articles.

Volunteers have been honored for their special services at special meetings, luncheons, and banquets where they were presented certificate and/or gifts.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, co-sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, continues to amaze us with the extraordinary talents of our veterans. Contributions continue to come in support of this program. Donations have totaled more than $33,000.00.

As always, our volunteers maintained the quality care our veterans deserve. We welcome the 4,254 new volunteers who were recruited this year. May God bless our volunteers for their caring service to our veterans.

	Volunteers	Total Hours	Expenditures
VA Facilities	22,692	767,543	$2,370,401
Field service	50,134	931,992	$1,091,054
Home service	39,217	957,917	916,671
Totals	112,043	2,657,452	$4,378,126

American Legion Auxiliary
National President Sherry McLaughlin

Magic was evident everywhere in my travels this year as Departments carried out my theme "There's Magic in America's Dreams." Dedicated members of every American Legion Auxiliary Department, District, County and Unit welcomed me with such warmth and true affection. Thank you to all my "magical" hosts and I will never forget your kindness.

Exactly 11 days after taking office, life in America changed due to the terrorist attacks in New York. Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. One year ago today we were a nation at peace—today we are a nation at war!

Department visits did not begin as scheduled and the first visit to Ohio was postponed. My first official Department visit took place in Arkansas, Sept. 21-22 and my last, to Louisiana Girls State earlier this month.

Following the attacks I fully supported creation of a special 9-11 Fund and urged our members to supplement any donations they could spare by supporting local relief and mobilization efforts in their communities. By the time we stopped taking contributions on April 15, Auxiliary members had contributed $94,239.

Three grants totaling $48,739.50 were given to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), a support group for families of military personnel killed in the line of duty. Other grants in the amount of $13,500 each were given to local USO organizations in New York City and Washington D.C. and to Comfort Zone Camp.

Comfort Zone Camp is a non-profit group who offers bereavement camps for children who experience the death of a parent, sibling or care giver. Special sessions have been developed this summer for children of those killed at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Funds also went to the Bayonne, New Jersey Fire Canteen. The canteen provided vital relief services to hundreds of emergency workers at Staten Island and Ground Zero in the days immediately following the terrorist attacks.

In October, I attended the National Veterans Creative Art's Festival in Prescott, Ariz. Through the Auxiliary's role as a cosponsor we have made it possible for hundreds of talented veterans to fulfill the need we all have for self-expression and provide much needed therapy.

There were so many wonderful events I was privileged to be part of this past year and I wish I could share all of them with you. The Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Ill., and visits to CMN hospitals and VA medical centers.

Pearl Harbor Day in Hawaii, Fleet Week on the *USS Intrepid* in New York. Attending the British Royal Legion Conference in England, dedicating the Fisher House at Bay Pines, Fla., and visiting the one at Landstuhl, Germany.

American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, attending Department Girls State sessions and Girls Nation, helping feed 150 kids in Manchers, N.H., receiving the first ever "Patriot Award" from the Fisher Foundation, my Homecoming—the list goes on and on., but whatever event I attended in your Department please rest assured that I have wonderful memories of this eventful year.

I will carry memories forever of the words of encouragement, the memorials and most of all your caring at the time that I lost my friend and husband, Art. Auxiliary members are very special women and the words thank you seem so inadequate. My family and I are overwhelmed!

My visits all seemed like a homecoming to me as you welcomed me to your Department. I was privileged to share in the dreams of so many caring women in 2001-2002 while I lived my own dreams. Dreams do come true!

Sometimes it is disheartening to read a newspaper or listen to the news. Life is uncertain but the United States remains strong and like Americans past and present we will defend our freedom against all its' enemies.

I firmly believe that "There **IS** Magic in America's Dreams," and as long as we remain true to our Founders' principles, our dreams will not die.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

The American Legion takes pride in its volunteers, regular, occasional, non-affiliated and "volunteers." They all gave of themselves and made life a little brighter for our veterans and their families.

A reported 22,692 Regular and Occasional volunteers provided a variety of recreational programs. They held bingo games, birthday parties, card games, popcorn and pizza parties, ice cream and watermelon socials, bazaars and carnivals.

Special parties were held at Christmas, Easter, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day and Valentine's Day, and patients saluted during "National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week." New volunteers to this vital work numbered 4,254.

Some 39,217 Home Service volunteers spent 957,917 hours and spent $916,671 as they worked in their homes for our veterans. They made tray favors, holiday decorations, lap robes, ditty bags, wheel chair bags, pillows, afghan, sweaters, mittens, scarves, shawls, booties, bibs and slippers for hospitalized veterans.

Reports revealed that the Christmas Gift Shops continue to be an outstanding program. Gift Shops provides gifts for the families of our hospitalized veterans and were operated by the Auxiliary, as well as Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion.

Field Service reports reflected that 50,134 volunteers set forth to help 238,926 veterans nationwide. The volunteers donated 931,992 hours of service valued at $1,091,054.

During the year, many activities were carried out by our Field Service volunteers. They prepared meals in the veteran's home, drove them to various appointments, visited veterans in state hospitals and nursing homes, assisted with writing checks and filling out forms, read to the blind and visited homeless shelters.

These tireless helpers also donated food baskets at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, sponsored bingo parties, adopted veterans in nursing homes remembering them on their birthday and other holidays with cards and gifts.

Volunteers donated food baskets, worked in soup kitchens and conducted clothing and food collection drives for the homeless. Our members assisted with the "Stand Down" programs, which provided job and substance abuse counseling, job placement, medical and legal assistance, access to date on social security and service records and they provided food, shelter, clothing and hygiene items.

Volunteer time of 3,893 hours and contributions of $27,696.90 were donated to Fisher Houses. At all National Leadership and Information Conferences the Foster House video was shown.

202 Units reported adopting a ward.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival continues to amaze us with the extraordinary talents of our veterans. The American Legion Auxiliary is a national sponsor of this event, and our members continue showing their enthusiasm for these talented veterans. Donations this year exceeded $33,000.

	Volunteers	**Total Hours**	**Expenditures**
VA Facilities	22,692	767,543	$2,370,401
Field Service	50,134	931,992	$1,091,054
Home Service	39,217	957,917	$916,671
TOTALS	112,043	2,657,452	$4,378,126

Children & Youth

There **IS** "Magic in America's Dreams" and there's magic in America's youth!

The members of the American Legion Auxiliary worked tirelessly on our Children & Youth programs this year.

The Children's Miracle Network (CMN), Josh, April is Children & Youth Month, National Family Week, Make Halloween A Safe and Fun Night, Spinoza, Teen Court, these and any other project involving children received our caring attention.

The Children's Miracle Network was embraced by our members and was at the forefront of our accomplishments this year!

Each Department chairman was asked to arrange tours of the CMN hospitals in their states. And many did just that. Our members saw first hand the great work being done at these facilities!

Walk-A-Thons to benefit CMN were conducted throughout the country. Our members enjoyed the opportunity to participate, to get some exercise and to have fun with one another while supporting a worthwhile program. Media coverage was extensive and really shined a spotlight on our work for CMN.

Josh has joined the homes of many children who were facing the fear and anxiety of surgery or hospitalization. This loving golden retriever carried a message of caring and comfort. Accompanying Josh was the "**I'll be O.K.**" hardcover book and his own unique "Dog House" carrying case. A percentage of the sale of each JOSH package was donated to the CMN hospital in the purchaser's area.

Supporting the Children's Miracle Network was a top priority. Our members made a concerted effort for CMN and it really paid off in a big way!

In celebration of April being Children & Youth Month, Units sponsored functions in Post homes, at local malls and throughout their communities. Youth advocates were recognized, brochures were distributed, school patrols thanked and essay winners were honored.

Information was distributed to the public to increase awareness of the program. Proclamations were issued proclaiming Nov. 18-24, 2001 as "National Family Week" in many cities, towns and a few states. Several Units invited family counselors and clergy to their Unit meetings.

Keeping our children safe and protected is among our most important our goals. We included Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Drug Abuse Prevention, Teenage Suicide Prevention, Protecting Children from the Unrestricted Media, Halloween Safety, Missing Children and Immunization.

Departments, Units and individuals were very generous with their donations to the National Child Welfare Foundation. The Foundation awarded grants totaling $547,375 to 20 non-profit organizations this year. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored four of the grant recipients.

Contributions were made Ronald McDonald House, Christian homes, TAPS, Kids Camps, Toys for Tots, SADD, school bands and choirs, Special Olympics, Muscular Dystrophy and Jerry's Kids.

Thirty-seven Departments reported on behalf of 5,180 Units who worked diligently on the Children & Youth program. Our members were excited and inspired and used enthusiasm as they made a difference in the lives of thousands of children.

5,180 Units Reported Participating in the following Children & Youth Program Objectives

Family Emphasis	1,220 Units
Children's Miracle Network	1,989 Units
Missing Children	989 Units
April is Children & Youth Month	2,214 Units
Halloween Safety	2,361 Units
Child Safety	1,774 Units

CHILDREN & YOUTH EXPENDITURES

Direct Aid

Cash aid given to needy children	$471,759
Value of goods given to children	$ 839,855
TOTAL DIRECT AID	**$1,311,614**

Contributions

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	$82,953
Children's Miracle Network	$177,229

Other Contributions

Local Level	$700,099
County Level	$150,584

State Level	$329,667
National Level	$212,575
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	**$1,392,925**

Special Programs
Cost of parties, gifts, educational programs, etc. $1,835,955

TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$4,800,676**

CHILDREN AIDED
Direct Aid

Number of children given cash aid	49,913
Number of children helped with good	168,201
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN DIRECTLY AIDED	**218,114**

Special Programs

Number of children served	1,123,081
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN AIDED	**1,341,195**
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED	**708,050**

Americanism

"There's Magic in America's Dreams" and this magic was evident in the Americanism efforts of Units and Departments across the nation.

In the wake of Sept. 11th, patriotism was once again in vogue and Auxiliary Units were there to answer the need and lead the way as Americans, young and old sought their assistance.

This chairman is proud to report the following efforts from across the country.

Fifty Units reported recruiting participants for the National Youth Conference held at Freedom's Foundation in Valley Forge, Pa.

This conference is a shining example of our efforts as an organization to educate America's youth in citizenship and our country's rich history.

The National Essay Contest was divided into five classes, entitled, "What Makes America Great." This program kept Auxiliary members busy, judging 22,875 entries.

Eighty-six Units reported active participation with the Girls State Achievement Award program spending $3,350.

Some 6,283 Units spent $62,589 and 21,310 hours sponsoring Americanism programs and activities in schools.

The "Spirit of Youth Fund" was the National President's Special Project. As of June 30, 2002, $64,481.27 has been donated.

The Auxiliary was again instrumental in offering assistance to The American Legion for their National High School Oratorical Contest, as well as the Junior Shooting Sports and Baseball programs.

Nationwide, Units contributed a combined total of $72,841 and volunteered 11,834 hours to these youth programs.

Flag promotion activities were a large part of the Americanism activities, of Units reporting. This table indicates the level of activity reported.

Focus on the Flag Activity	Units	Dollars	Hours
Flag Education	3,023	$13,559	8,570
Show Your Colors America Activity	1,895	$17,520	16,198
Capitol Flags Ordered	769	$11,686	4,204
Flag Certificates of Appreciation Presented	7,192	$2,304	720
Flags Presented	140,926	$103,595	10,331

Other traditional Americanism activities included participation in "Get Out the Vote" campaigns and naturalization activities.

The list could go on and on as Units answered the Americanism needs of their schools, communities and fellow members, continuing to provide the entire nation with educational materials, a strong sense of patriotic values and valuable programs to enable our youth to be good Americans.

Poppy

The dreams of the American Legion Auxiliary National Poppy Committee were tri-fold this year.

First, was the recruiting and training of new poppy makers. One Department chairman worked with the VA&R chairman to get names of veterans who may be interested in helping.

Another put messages in the Department bulletin and found she doubled her poppy makers for the year. Poppy workshops were held throughout the country and hundreds of veterans worked vigorously to fill the orders on time.

Awareness is the other purpose of this committee. Units built floats that took part in local Memorial Day parades. One had their Juniors enter a poppy float and members earned third place.

Poppies were used on apples and distributed to teachers for National Education Week. Poppy bouquets were placed in old Army boots for decorations for Veterans Day. Another unit made 3,095 small poppy wreaths, using five poppies in each, and placed them on graves at five cemeteries.

Here's a rundown of our members' generous accomplishments this year:

Number of Units ordering poppies:	5,229
Number of poppies ordered by Units	5,987,925
Amount received in donations	$1,865,443.18
Number of poppy makers	756
Amount paid to poppy makers	$244,353.91

Juniors

This year's areas of emphasis were; Make the Junior Program Fun as well as Educational; Junior Involvement in All Auxiliary Programs; Promotion of Juniors Giving to Juniors ...*Spirit of Youth Fund*; Department Junior Auxiliary Member of the Year nominees.

Thirty-three (33) Departments provided the following information as reported by 3, 281 Units; Active Junior Groups 1,093; New Junior Groups 71; Reorganized Junior Groups 55. There were 1,078 Units that volunteered 46, 232 hours in 1,239 various Community Service Projects.

There were 891 Volunteers from 384 Units that provided 16,898 hours of service

to our Veterans. Juniors in 341 Units provided 27,205 hours to 799 other Department programs. The Junior Leadership Course was completed by 252 Juniors.

Juniors received plaques, trophies, citations, certificates, recognition at meetings and gifts of appreciation for their many accomplishments from grateful Departments.

New this year were patches awarded for completion of assigned activities in five Auxiliary programs. The overwhelming response and number of earned patches were Americanism 470; Community Service 780; Leadership 530; Membership 420 and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation 540.

Donations to the *Spirit of Youth Fund* by May 31, totaled $59,344.01 and helped provide the financial assistance for 30 Department Junior Auxiliary Members of the Year to attend the National Junior Meeting. This truly is a magical number that fulfilled the dream of National President Sherry McLaughlin.

Departments reported a renewed interest in the Junior Activities Program this year and encouraged participation regardless of where the Junior resides.

Yes, "Thank Heaven for Little Girls"... Our Juniors. They are growing up in a most delightful way thanks to the commitment and dedication of advisor and senior members who give of themselves as mentors and positive roll models.

They found a multitude of innovative ways to increase Junior knowledge of the Auxiliary programs and enhance the value of "for God and Country."

Girls State

By fax, e-mail and snail mail, diligent Girls State chairmen and Girls State directors from 31 Departments submitted their annual reports in time for this publication. POTS, our mascot, was an owl who reminded us to appropriately **P**lan, **O**rient, **T**rain, and **S**hare results.

Planning began early in the Departments and with an exchange of ideas at the National Girls State Information Conference in Indianapolis, Oct. 26-28, 2001. Sixty-seven participants from 30 Departments joined in the discussion of pertinent issues and policies.

A slide show of the history of Girls Nation, knowledgeable speakers, pair sharing, and breakout sessions rounded out the agenda.

When the planning was well under way, **O**rientation sessions were held in the various Departments. Approximately 7,300 delegates attended an orientation session. The formats included one-on-one sessions, face-to-face or by phone; formal and informal banquets, teas, and luncheons; question and answer sessions; presentations by staff and former citizens; town hall meetings; and sharing of videos, slides, overhead transparencies, yearbooks, and texts. Orientations were done at Unit, County, and District levels.

As the citizens were prepared for Girls State, Girls State staff members were being prepared for them. **T**raining of staff took place in many ways.

Handbooks were distributed throughout the year and some Departments provided several workshops during the year. Onsite training lasted from several hours to three and a half days. **T**raining of the citizens took place in their cities and in plenary sessions, through hands-on experience and participation, lectures, power point presentations, law enforcement officers and judges, ROTC presentations, military academy personnel, and staff example.

Length of Girls State sessions ranged from six to nine days, and were conducted on college and university campuses; Rhode Island held their session on the New Port Navy Base and Nevada held theirs at the Clear Creek Youth Center. Fees ranged from

$100 to $350.

Fee increases were necessary in seven Departments. The overall average delegate fee increased by $4.50. A reported 11,582 citizens attended Girls State, up 647 for the Departments included in this report. Individual program registration ranged from 27 to 950 delegates. 4,680 high schools were represented; this was an increase of 69 over last year.

Of the 6,547 Units in the reporting Departments, 3,833 Units (18 more than last year) or 59 percent, supported this program. 86 percent of the sponsoring Units asked the citizens to report back.

Community Service

The purpose of this committee is to create projects that make a difference in people's lives so they would know someone special had touched them. Across our nation members of the American Legion Auxiliary have done just that.

More people than ever are now familiar with the organ donation program as donor cards by the thousands have been put into the hands of old and young alike. A reported 1,271 Units reported participating in this activity; and 16,078 Senior members and six hundred eighty Junior members got involved.

Donor cards were handed out in shopping malls, during Unit and Post activities, and by sponsoring sign up drives. Units invited guest speakers to their meetings and conventions and special seminars were hosted to increase public awareness.

In addition to signing up donors, dinners, raffles, auctions and other fund-raisers were held to help provide necessary funds for transplant patients. Some 4,150 hours were contributed to this activity.

Seven hundred twenty-five Units supported this program and donated $50,260. One thousand eight hundred four Senior members and 264 Junior members worked 14,222 One Junior volunteered in an 'Habitat' office, while others served food to workers, assisted applicants with paperwork and volunteered on local boards.

The Blood Donor Program has always been a major focus of any active community but it was really thrust into the limelight after Sept. 11. Members of the American Legion Auxiliary took up the call and 1,061 Units sponsored community blood drives.

A reported 2,081 Units participated in other ways by serving breakfast to donors, making phone calls to get donations, transporting donors to sites, and assisting in setting up temporary facilities.

Cancer Awareness is another point of emphasis that continues to exceed all expectations of what innovative ideas can produce. Bowl-a-thons, walk-a-thons and Fun-Runs were just some of the numerous activities Auxiliary members participated in to raise funds.

Donations to cancer research were $225,297, and other donations given to assist patients with bills, transportation and other needs equaled $125,266. In all, 2,363 Units participated in some way.

Auxiliary members are kind people and putting others before themselves is a natural thing. With emphasis this year on "Random Acts of Kindness" our members spent $2,128,340.00 to bring touches of magic into every community.

A reported 2,110 Units promoted this program and reported 438,065 hours were spent in being kind to our fellow citizens. Participation by 19,464 Senior members and 2,689 Junior members helped better the lives of those they encountered.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army were major recipients but local community centers is where most of the members opened their hearts and pocketbooks to give

over and above what anyone could have expected.
Community activities that also included youth centers, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, food banks, drug abuse clinics, schools, libraries, and domestic violence centers accounted for 1,665,444 hours volunteered by our members.

In addition, 144,908 members opened their purses and gave $2,128,340 to better their communities.
Auxiliary members have helped to make this country a better place to live by opening their hearts to others in need and make thousands of dreams come true. We now know without a doubt that there **IS** "Magic in America's Dreams!"

Liaison to The American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation

Generosity toward the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (ALCWF) continued with a total of $651,000 contributed for the 2002 award year. Again this year, the Sons of The American Legion were the leading organizational contributor at $268,000.

The American Legion was second in contributions with the American Legion Auxiliary falling to third place in contributions. This placement stems from the enhanced promotion by The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

Special thanks go to the Departments of Florida, Illinois, Ohio, and Texas, each of which contributed over $5,000 during the award year.

While the American Legion Auxiliary will be recognized as a $100,000 contributor to the foundation, our efforts would be even more formidable if all Departments contributed. This year, for example, three Departments made no contribution and another six Departments made contributions of $50 or less.

Our contributions enable the ALCWF to make grants to organizations in support of the mental and physical well being of children. The grants awarded at the October 2001 board of directors meeting of the American Legion CWF numbered 20 for a total of $547,375.

This grant total was the largest amount awarded for one year, and represented 47 percent of the grants requested. The four grants approved on recommendation of the American Legion Auxiliary totaled $146,000.

These grants were given to: The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in New York, New York; Kuddle Kids of Payson, Utah; WETA, an Arlington, Virginia public television station; and TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors in Washington, DC.

American Legion CWF grants have supported groups recognized by the American Legion Auxiliary, such as TAPS and "Songs of Love."

The foundation has also provided grants for projects developed within our organization, like "The Secret of Animal Island."

Our continuing support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation has been vital throughout the foundation's history, and continues to be an important partner in furthering its future.

Independent Accountants' Report

Mr. Richard J. Santos, National Commander
and Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statements of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly owned subsidiary (collectively, the Legion) as of December 31, 2001 and 2000, and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of the Legion's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We did not audit the December 31, 2001 and 2000 financial statements of Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC), a wholly owned subsidiary, which statements reflect total assets of $1,671,958 and $1,328,455 as of December 31, 2001 and 2000, respectively, and total revenues of $6,684,821 and $5,468,061 for the years then ended. Those statements were audited by other auditors whose report has been furnished to us, and our opinion, insofar as it relates to the amounts included for HPC as of December 31, 2001 and 2000, and for the years then ended, is based solely on the report of the other auditors.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, based on our audits and the report of our auditors, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters as of December 31, 2001 and 2000, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic consolidated financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the basic consolidated financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

BKD, LLP

March 27, 2002

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

December 31	2001	2000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	$2,139,879	$2,769,686
Accounts receivable		
Emblem Division	208,073	47,142
Publications Division	1,265,367	1,131,974
Other	1,316,986	1,772,111
Prepaid expenses and deposits	617,795	1,218,371
Deferred membership expense	5,741,973	3,362,373
Inventories		
Emblem Division	1,512,033	1,592,210
Publications Division	272,923	404,717
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	127,150	104,185
Prepaid pension expense	15,693,542	14,624,627
	28,895,721	27,027,406
Investments		
Segregated for Restricted and Reserve Funds	19,273,787	17,660,520
Segregated for Washington, D. C. building	1,651,331	1,510,863
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	985,877	975,192
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	40,781,331	42,529,967
Other	36,344,270	33,301,859
Special Account – Endowment Fund	2,179,859	2,124,450
General Account – Endowment Fund	5,954,300	5,778,345
	107,170,755	103,881,196
Property, equipment, and intangible asset		
Washington, D. C. real estate		
Land	80,000	80,000
Building	4,138,918	4,138,918
Indianapolis real estate		
Land	389,264	389,264
Building	3,611,779	3,611,779
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana	4,355,813	4,330,865
Washington, D. C.	1,066,396	1,023,415
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	661,969	706,248
	14,304,139	14,280,489
Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(6,625,744)	(6,288,487)
	7,678,395	7,992,002
Total assets	$143,744,871	$138,900,604

See notes to financial statements.

December 31	2001	2000
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	$3,744,591	$3,202,428
Scholarships payable	288,416	259,999
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	405,979	63,642
Deferred advertising income	79,400	77,144
Deferred dues income	20,409,632	19,481,261
Deferred income-direct membership solicitation	1,507,936	992,306
Accrued vacation benefits	589,574	620,195
Other liabilities	3,954,214	3,718,132
Line of credit	3,202,891	3,260,223
Deferred dues income-Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	37,872,772	38,642,383
Total liabilities	72,055,405	70,317,813
Net Assets		
Unrestricted-general	21,811,714	20,969,964
Unrestricted-designated		
Citizens Flag Alliance	127,150	104,185
Computer reserve	500,000	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	100,000
Convention stabilization	415,733	354,216
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	100,000
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	2,913,559	3,892,584
Real estate reserve	1,651,331	1,510,863
Reserve Fund	2,312,945	2,268,704
Restricted Fund	16,937,705	15,356,554
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	5,506,037	5,972,812
Veterans' rehabilitation/child welfare (Special Account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Others	1,062,544	30,367
	55,438,718	53,160,249
Temporarily restricted		
Buick scholarship	667,857	647,079
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	988,025	980,689
Samsung scholarship	2,597,824	2,260,515
National Emergency Fund	895,811	597,668
Others	109,846	109,641
	5,259,363	4,595,592
Permanently restricted		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	5,991,385	5,826,950
	10,991,385	10,826,950
Total net assets	71,689,466	68,582,791
Total liabilities and net assets	$143,744,871	$138,900,604

The American Legion National Headquarters

	Year Ended December 31, 2001					
	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, Gains and Other Support						
National member dues	$21,356,199	$1,808,937	$23,165,136			$23,165,136
Direct membership solicitation	2,658,217		2,658,217			2,658,217
Member service fees income	1,722,035		1,722,035			1,722,035
Financial program income	212,085		212,085			212,085
Sales of Emblem Items	9,669,588		9,669,588			9,669,588
Advertising	7,732,223		7,732,223			7,732,223
Contributions	65,456		65,456	$460,521	$37,885	563,862
Label and printing fees	1,966,499		1,966,499			1,966,499
Sales-HPC	846,542		846,542			846,542
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of $139,276	1,281,098	1,444,278	2,725,376	914,997		3,640,373
Net realized gains		88,675	88,675	5,044	53,228	146,947
Other	1,830,399	1,033,251	2,863,650			2,863,650
	49,340,371	4,375,141	53,715,512	1,380,562	101,113	55,197,187
Net assets released from restriction	932,978		932,978	(932,978)		
Net assets released from designation	3,480,598	(3,480,598)				
Total revenues, gains and other support	53,753,947	894,543	54,648,490	447,584	101,113	55,197,187
Expenses						
Salaries	10,643,361		10,643,361			10,643,361
Employee benefits	1,366,642		1,366,642			1,366,642
Cost of sales	7,108,608		7,108,608			7,108,608
Direct publication	12,047,203		12,047,203			12,047,203
Executive and staff travel	1,059,841		1,059,841			1,059,841
Commission and committee	1,322,140		1,322,140			1,322,140
Printing and postage	2,778,108		2,778,108			2,778,108
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,209,063		1,209,063			1,209,063
Office and other operating	9,527,447		9,527,447			9,527,447
Occupancy and usage	1,779,207		1,779,207			1,779,207
Special projects and programs	2,544,232		2,544,232			2,544,232
Total expenses	51,377,852		51,377,852			51,377,852
Change in Net Assets Before Net Unrealized Gains (Losses)	2,376,095	894,543	3,270,638	447,584	101,113	3,819,335
Net Unrealized Gains (Losses)	(54,870)	(837,299)	(892,169)	216,187	63,322	(712,660)
Change in Net Assets	2,321,225	(42,756)	2,278,469	663,771	164,435	3,106,675
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	20,969,964	32,190,285	53,160,249	4,595,592	10,826,950	68,582,791
Transfer of funds	(1,479,475)	1,479,475				
Net Assets, End of Year	$21,811,714	$33,627,004	$55,438,718	$5,259,363	$10,991,385	$71,689,466

	Year Ended December 31, 2000					
	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, Gains and Other Support						
National member dues	$21,780,036	$1,696,158	$23,476,194			$23,476,194
Direct membership solicitation	1,828,903		1,828,903			1,828,903
Member service fees income	1,666,558		1,666,558			1,666,558
Financial program income	1,759,003		1,759,003			1,759,003
Sales of Emblem Items	8,268,037		8,268,037			8,268,037
Advertising	8,022,099		8,022,099			8,022,099
Contributions	1,102,844		1,102,844	$342,271	$79,857	1,524,972
Label and printing fees	2,042,830		2,042,830			2,042,830
Sales-HPC	871,649		871,649			871,649
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of $126,519	1,309,865	1,304,495	2,614,160	934,152		3,548,312
Net realized gains (losses)		(49,086)	(49,086)	735,345	(32,239)	654,020
Other	1,544,628	1,068,415	2,613,043			2,613,043
	50,196,243	4,019,982	54,216,225	2,011,768	47,618	56,275,611
Net assets released from restriction	930,561		930,561	(930,561)		
Net assets released from designation	3,062,016	(3,062,016)				
Total revenues, gains and other support	54,188,810	957,966	55,146,776	1,081,217	47,618	56,275,611
Expenses						
Salaries	10,268,909		10,268,909			10,268,909
Employee benefits	656,832		656,832			656,832
Cost of sales	6,851,135		6,851,135			6,851,135
Direct publication	10,908,309		10,908,309			10,908,309
Executive and staff travel	1,033,402		1,033,402			1,033,402
Commission and committee	1,292,063		1,292,063			1,292,063
Printing and postage	3,150,897		3,150,897			3,150,897
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,266,087		1,266,087			1,266,087
Office and other operating	9,173,017		9,173,017			9,173,017
Occupancy and usage	1,751,643		1,751,643			1,751,643
Special projects and programs	2,359,085		2,359,085			2,359,085
Total expenses	48,711,359		48,711,359			48,711,359
Change in Net Assets Before Net Unrealized Gains	5,477,451	957,966	6,435,417	1,081,217	47,618	7,564,252
Net Unrealized Gains (Losses)	85,540	119,005	204,545	(417,648)	208,952	(6,151)
Change in Net Assets	5,562,991	1,076,971	6,639,962	663,569	254,570	7,558,101
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	15,915,282	30,605,005	46,520,287	3,932,023	10,572,380	61,024,690
Transfer of funds	(508,309)	508,309				
Net Assets, End of Year	$20,969,964	$32,190,285	$53,160,249	$4,595,592	$10,826,950	$68,582,791

See notes to financial statements.

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Year Ended December 31	2001	2000
Operating Activities		
Change in net assets	**$3,106,675**	$7,558,101
Items not requiring (providing) cash		
Depreciation expense	**739,041**	706,726
Loss on sale of fixed assets	**2,754**	62,892
(Gain) loss on sale of investments	**1,336,068**	(1,414,936)
Unrealized losses on investments	**712,660**	6,151
Contributions restricted for long-term investment	**37,885**	79,857
Non-cash contributions		(580,298)
Changes in		
Accounts receivable	**160,801**	661,157
Prepaid expenses and deposits	**(468,339)**	(2,326,960)
Deferred membership expense	**(2,379,600)**	519,738
Inventories	**211,971**	(281,633)
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	**(22,965)**	(1,477)
Accounts and scholarships payable	**570,580**	(102,026)
Deferred income	**1,018,883**	1,870,940
Other accrued liabilities	**205,461**	1,006,018
Net cash provided by operating activities	**5,231,875**	7,764,250
Investing Activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	**(428,188)**	(779,785)
Purchase of investments	**(82,370,377)**	(76,581,787)
Sales and maturities of investments	**77,032,090**	72,023,405
Net cash used in investing activities	**(5,766,475)**	(5,338,167)
Financing Activities		
Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment	**(37,885)**	(79,857)
Payments on line of credit	**(57,332)**	(9,025)
Net cash used in financing activities	**(95,217)**	(88,882)
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	**(629,817)**	2,337,201
Cash and Cash Equivalents, Beginning of Year	**2,769,696**	432,495
Cash and Cash Equivalents, End of Year	**$2,139,879**	$ 2,769,696
Supplemental Cash Flows Information		
Income taxes paid	**$77,578**	$127,889
Interest paid	**229,861**	234,553

See notes to financial statements.

NOTE 1 — NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General

The American Legion National Headquarters (Legion) is a national veterans organization which was declared to be a corporate body by an Act of the United States Congress on September 16, 1919.

According to the Original Act and Subsequent Amendments, the purpose of the Legion is: "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and goodwill among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country."

Approximately 50% of the Legion's income is derived from membership dues (including amounts allocated for magazine subscriptions). An additional 15% is generated through advertising for the American Legion Magazine. Another significant source of income is Emblem sales, which includes the sale of apparel, jewelry, and other items bearing the American Legion Emblem. Income is expended by the Legion on several different programs including The American Legion Magazine, Emblem sales, veterans assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs, and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion baseball, oratorical contests, and Boys' Nation.

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses, gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Principles of Consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of The American Legion National Headquarters, and its wholly owned subsidiary, Haynes and Partners Communications Inc. (HPC); the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (ALEF); and the National Emergency Fund (NEF) (collectively, the Legion). All material inter-organizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation. Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc., an Indiana corporation, is a full-service, direct marketing and advertising agency whose services include innovative marketing and creative automated mailing. The majority of its sales are to the Legion. The remaining sales are made primarily within the State of Indiana. American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, a tax-exempt Indiana corporation, was created to provide permanent funding for the rehabilitation of American veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans. The National Emergency Fund is a tax-exempt trust established to provide gifts and grants to relieve suffering and ameliorate financial hardship incurred by American Legion members, families, and Posts.

Net Asset Classifications

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations. SFAS No. 117 requires, among other things, that the financial statements report the changes in and total of each of the net asset classes, based upon donor restrictions, as applicable. Net assets are to be classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted.

The following classes of net assets are maintained:

Unrestricted Net Assets

The unrestricted net asset class includes general assets and liabilities of the Legion, as well as assets and liabilities designated by the National Executive Committee, the governing body of the Legion. The unrestricted net assets of the Legion may be used at the discretion of management to support the Legion's purposes and operations.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets

The temporarily restricted net asset class includes assets of the Legion related to gifts with explicit donor-imposed restrictions that have not been met as to specified purpose, or to later periods of time or after specified dates. Unconditional promises to give that are due in future periods and are not permanently restricted are classified as temporarily restricted net assets.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets

The permanently restricted net asset class includes assets of the Legion for which the donor has stipulated that the contribution be maintained in perpetuity. Donor-imposed restrictions limiting the use of the assets or its economic benefit neither expire with the passage of time nor can be removed by satisfying a specific purpose.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

For purposes of reporting cash flows, the Legion considers all liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents, except for those investments held as part of a managed portfolio. At December 31, 2001, the Legion's cash accounts exceeded federally insured limits by approximately $2,400,000. However, all of these amounts were collateralized by overnight repurchase agreements.

Inventory

Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market. Inventory items are valued at average cost. Supplies which are not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

Investments

Investments are carried at fair value. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the consolidated statement of activities. Premiums or discounts on investments are generally recognized at the time of disposal or maturity.

Property and Equipment

Expenditures for property and equipment and items which substantially increase the useful lives of existing assets are capitalized at cost. The Legion provides for depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designed to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives.

Depreciation on buildings is computed on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from three to seven years.

Support and Revenue

The Legion reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restriction.

Dues Income and Expense

Dues are recognized as income over the applicable membership period, which is on a calendar-year basis.

In addition to other methods of obtaining new members, the Legion uses direct mail and other direct marketing approaches. The income generated from direct membership solicitation is recognized over the applicable membership period (calendar year). The direct-response expenses incurred in obtaining new members are deferred and written off in the subsequent year.

Income Taxes

The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(19) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. ALEF and NEF are exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. None of these organizations is considered to be a private foundation. The Legion is subject to income tax on unrelated business income. However, due to net operating loss carryforwards, the Legion paid no taxes for the years ended December 31, 2001, and 2000.

Federal and state income tax expense is recorded for HPC, a for-profit corporation, as incurred.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments

The carrying amount of all financial instruments of the Legion approximate their fair values, with the exception of the line of credit as disclosed in Note 8.

Expense Allocation

Expenses have been classified as program services, management and general, member development and fund raising based on actual direct expenditures. Additionally, some expenses are allocated among departments based upon estimates of the amount of time historically spent by Legion employees performing services for these departments.

Reclassifications

Certain information for 2000 has been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

NOTE 2 — INVESTMENT IN AFFILIATE

The Legion, in conjunction with approximately 120 other organizations, has created a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. (CFA) for the purpose of aiding in the campaign to secure a constitutional amendment empowering the Congress and the States to enact legislation to protect the Flag of the United States of America from physical desecration.

CFA recognized a net loss of $22,965 for 2001 and a net loss of $1,477 for 2000. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been reduced by this amount and a corresponding charge has been reflected in unrestricted designated net assets.

NOTE 3 — INVESTMENTS

The Legion's market value of investments is as follows:

	2001 Market					
	Segregated for Restricted and Reserve Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$18,607,371	$1,492,121	$536,695	$5,901,067	$16,188,686	$42,725,940
State and municipal bonds				1,425,933		1,425,933
Corporate bonds				10,755,655	2,242,199	12,997,854
Common and preferred stocks				19,186,408		19,186,408
Mutual funds					2,492,627	2,492,627
Money market accounts	460,528	132,000	439,879	3,190,092	23,245,761	27,468,260
Accrued interest	205,888	27,210	9,303	322,176	309,156	873,733
	$19,273,787	$1,651,331	$985,877	$40,781,331	$44,478,429	$107,170,755

	Market
Unrestricted	$22,770,756
Unrestricted—designated	68,208,258
Temporarily restricted	5,237,441
Permanently restricted	10,954,300
	$107,170,755

	2000 Market					
	Segregated for Restricted and Reserve Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$16,862,537	$1,333,030	$927,447	$12,214,432	$25,264,335	$56,601,781
State and municipal bonds				1,395,864		1,395,864
Corporate bonds				7,766,289	1,109,187	8,875,476
Common and preferred stocks				19,687,151		19,687,151
Mutual funds					2,678,658	2,678,658
Money market accounts	543,275	147,410	33,468	1,114,879	11,758,655	13,597,687
Accrued interest	254,708	30,423	14,277	351,352	393,819	1,044,579
	$17,660,520	$1,510,863	$975,192	$42,529,967	$41,204,654	$103,881,196

	Market
Unrestricted	$21,343,831
Unrestricted—designated	67,201,259
Temporarily restricted	4,557,761
Permanently restricted	10,778,345
	$103,881,196

NOTE 4 — PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND

The National Executive Committee approved the establishment of a life membership plan available to any member of a participating department. In accordance with the plan, the assets of the Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund are segregated in a trust account from which funds equal to the annual dues of life members are withdrawn for current operations each year. The trust agreement provides that the Legion has the right to withdraw part or all of the assets of the trust account and to modify or terminate the trust agreement at its discretion.

NOTE 5 — RESTRICTED AND RESERVE FUNDS

The Restricted Fund is designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee of the American Legion. Earnings of the Restricted Fund, along with the principal, can be expended only upon recommendation of the National Finance Commission and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee at two successive meetings. It is the policy of the Legion to transfer 10% of the prior year's defined net income to the Restricted Fund. The Legion transferred $380,191 and $343,570 in 2001 and 2000, respectively.

The Reserve Fund is also designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee. However, earnings of the Reserve Fund may be used for the general operations of the Legion. The principal can be expended only by action of the Legion at its national convention, or by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee in two successive meetings not less than 60 days apart.

NOTE 6 — LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

During October 1992, the National Executive Committee approved a resolution to terminate the Legion's Life Insurance Trust. Upon dissolution in April 1993, funds remaining in the Trust totaling $4,285,984 were transferred to a segregated bank trust account (named The American Legion Life Insurance Plan) under control of the Legion for use in youth programs.

The Legion's National Executive Committee has directed that monies within The American Legion Life Insurance Plan be used to fund oratorical contests, Boys' Nation, American Legion Baseball, and other youth programs of the Legion. At December 31, 2001, $1,100,000 in funds had been approved for use in designated programs during 2002.

NOTE 7 — PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

The Legion received $5,000,000 from The Samsung Group during 1996. The principal is to be permanently endowed and the income is to be used to fund undergraduate scholarships for descendents of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U. S. servicemen and servicewomen participated. Such scholarships will be administered by the Legion.

Contributions to The American Legion Endowment Fund are recorded as increases in permanently restricted net assets, the income from which is to be used to support the veterans affairs and rehabilitation and children and youth activities of the Legion.

NOTE 8 — LINE OF CREDIT

During 1999, the Legion signed a line of credit agreement for $3,600,000 to fund construction of a new facility for emblem sales, information technology, member benefits, and HPC. This line of credit is payable in monthly installments of $24,388, including interest, beginning May 1, 2000, with a stated rate of 7.18% and final payment due April 1, 2010. At December 31, 2001, the outstanding balance on this line of credit is $3,202,891.

The future maturities for the line of credit are as follows:

2002	$67,450
2003	72,456
2004	77,833
2005	83,609
2006	89,814
Thereafter	2,811,729
	$3,202,891

The fair value of the line of credit at December 31, 2001 was $3,644,630, based on a discounted cash flow analysis using current rates offered for debt of the same remaining maturities.

NOTE 9 — LEASES

The Legion has several noncancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, copiers and cash registers, that expire over the next five years. Rental expense for these leases aggregated $744,654 in 2001 and $710,221 in 2000.

Future minimum lease payments under operating leases are as follows:

2002	$770,411
2003	622,088
2004	604,925
2005	328,063
2006	235,568
Total mimimum lease payments	$2,561,055

In addition, the Legion has a lease with the State of Indiana for rental of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis through June 30, 2002. The lease can be renewed at the option of the Legion for nine additional four-year periods. According to the terms of the lease, the Legion is required to maintain the interior of the building, and provide adequate insurance on the building in lieu of lease payments. The cost of maintenance approximated $422,000 and $393,000 in 2001 and 2000, respectively. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

NOTE 10 — INCOME TAXES

The following is a reconciliation of income taxes at the federal statutory rate to actual income tax recorded by HPC:

	2001	2000
Income tax expense		
Currently payable		
Federal	**$167,898**	$57,978
State	**53,180**	30,611
Deferred		
Federal	**7,000**	12,300
Total income tax expense	**$228,078**	$100,889
Reconciliation of federal statutory to actual tax expense		
Federal income tax at statutory rates	**$192,955**	$82,555
Nondeductible expenses	**1,500**	2,602
Effect of state income taxes	**44,377**	17,907
Change in valuation allowance and other	**(10,754)**	(2,175)
Actual tax expense	**$228,078**	$100,889

The components of the net deferred tax (liability) asset are as follows:

	2001	2000
Asset		
Net operating loss carryforward	**$23,700**	$25,400
Liability		
Other	**(17,000)**	(11,700)
	$6,700	$13,700

The deferred tax asset and liability are included in other accounts receivable and other liabilities, respectively, in the statement of financial position.

NOTE 11 — NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

	2001	2000
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Overseas graves decoration	**$53,546**	$48,988
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	**458,642**	493,018
Veterans affairs and rehabilitation and children and youth programs	**368,257**	298,655
Other	**52,533**	89,890
Total net assets released from restriction	**$932,978**	$930,551

NOTE 12 — NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DESIGNATION

Net assets were released from designations by satisfying the designations previously established.

	2001	2000
Purpose designations accomplished		
Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	**$2,446,541**	$2,355,711
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	**1,014,319**	696,878
Other	**19,738**	9,427
Total net assets released from designations	**$3,480,598**	$3,062,016

NOTE 13 — EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Legion has a defined-benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees as well as those of certain affiliated and subordinated groups. The plan was established in 1944 by vote of the Legion's National Convention. Contributions to the plan are made by the Legion and other participating groups on the basis of annual actuarial valuations. The following table sets forth the Legion's portion of the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in the Legion's consolidated statement of financial position at December 31, 2001 and 2000.

	2001	2000
Benefit obligation	**$(29,109,345)**	$(25,843,364)
Fair value of plan assets	**45,761,001**	46,827,067
Funded status	**$16,651,656**	$20,983,703
Prepaid benefit cost recognized in the statement of financial position	**$15,693,542**	$14,624,627

	2001	2000
Benefit cost	**$(902,957)**	$(1,516,800)
Employer contribution	**165,554**	159,004
Benefits paid	**1,394,063**	2,131,459

	2001	2000
Weighted-average assumptions		
Discount rate	**7%**	7.75%
Expected return on plan assets	**7.5**	7.5
Rate of compensation increase	**2.5**	3

During 2000, an amendment to the plan was made to adjust the benefit formula which had the effect of increasing the pension benefit obligations by $2,443,767.

HPC maintains a defined-contribution plan under Section 401(k) of the Internal Revenue Code. Elective deferrals are available to employees twenty-one and a half years of age who have completed one year of eligible service. HPC may make discretionary contributions to this plan.

NOTE 14 — FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

The following represents a functional breakdown of the American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

	2001	2000
Program Services		
Veterans programs and services	**$29,641,463**	$27,249,531
Americanism and children and youth activities	**2,092,445**	2,362,351
Flag education and legislation	**1,251,752**	1,617,667
Total program services	**32,885,060**	31,229,549
Supporting Services		
Management and general	**12,484,923**	11,617,266
Member development	**5,885,698**	5,794,831
Fund raising	**21,571**	69,713
Total expenses	**$51,377,852**	$48,711,359

Member development includes direct response advertising expense of $3,400,883 and $3,481,533 for the years ended December 31, 2001 and 2000, respectively.

NOTE 15 — LITIGATION

The Legion is currently involved in and/or has been mentioned as a defendant or co-defendant in several legal actions. It is the opinion of the National Judge Advocate that these claims are without merit and any ultimate liability of the Legion with respect to these actions will not materially affect the financial position of the Legion.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

RECONCILIATION OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO INTERNAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2001	2000
Change in Net Assets-Internal Financial Statements	**$2,376,095**	$4,769,220
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains not included in internal financials		
Unrestricted designated	**894,543**	957,966
Temporarily restricted	**447,584**	1,081,217
Permanently restricted	**101,113**	47,618
Audit adjustment to recognize bequest as unrestricted, undesignated contribution revenue		943,838
Audit adjustment to accrue litigation settlement		(235,607)
	3,819,335	7,564,252
Net unrealized gains (losses)		
General	**(54,870)**	85,540
Unrestricted designated	**(937,299)**	119,005
Temporarily restricted	**216,187**	(417,648)
Permanently restricted	**63,322**	206,952
Change in Net Assets-Audited Financial Statements	**$3,106,675**	$7,558,101

American Legion Endowment Fund

Foreseeing the necessity of a recurring income source for funding its war veterans rehabilitation and child welfare programs, The American Legion conducted a national campaign in 1925 which raised approximately $5 million for this purpose. The funds contributed were entrusted to the custody of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation.

The Corporation was incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware in 1925 and a trust agreement between The American Legion and the Corporation was signed. Funds are administered by the Corporation in accordance with the trust agreement and annual net investment income is paid to The American Legion for use in the aforementioned programs.

The results of operations and financial condition of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation for each of the last five years is summarized below (taken from the annual audit report prepared by BKD LLP, Indianapolis, Indiana).

December 31	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Total assets (1)	**$8,149,465**	$7,920,880	$7,596,793	$8,035,988	$7,927,268
Investments (1)	**$8,011,345**	$7,773,049	$7,459,097	$7,918,724	$7,823,846
Interest income	**$499,833**	$511,306	$489,427	$503,588	$519,819
Contributions (4)	**37,885**	79,857	26,167	27,964	(744,754)
Net realized gains (losses)	**62,712**	(33,723)	(1,371)	5,596	9,739
Net unrealized gains (losses)	**115,842**	282,086	(439,448)	133,672	39,724
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children and Youth Programs of The American Legion National Headquarters (2)	**(482,923)**	(509,535)	(435,859)	(459,669)	(487,152)
Other expenses	**(32,370)**	(43,837)	(53,568)	(53,252)	(32,667)
Change in net assets	**$200,979**	$286,154	($414,652)	$157,899	($695,291)
Funds transferred to The American Legion (3)	**$529,735**	$429,535	$455,814	$508,886	$502,072
Average yield on value of investments at market	**7.13%**	6.27%	6.35%	6.47%	6.77%

(1) Investments are included at fair value in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124.

(2) Accrual basis

(3) Cash basis

(4) 1997 amount includes adjustments to write off contribution receivable of $759,000.