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107th Congress, 1st Session - - - - - - - - - - - - House Document 107–37

PROCEEDINGS OF 82*nd* NATIONAL CONVENTION *of the* AMERICAN LEGION

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

September 5–7, 2000

107th Congress, 1st Session - - - - - - - - - - - - House Document 107–37

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 82ND NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, FROM SEPTEMBER 5, 6, AND 7, 2000, AS WELL AS A REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49

JANUARY 31, 2001.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, January 31, 2001.

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 82nd annual National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from September 5, 6, and 7, 2000, 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-Second Annual National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5-7, 2000.

The final report of the National Organization, for the period ending December 31, 1999, and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 1999 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 1999 to December 31, 1999 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: James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan; Robert Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert F. Neville, New York; L. Harry Easley, Washington.

IX

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,* Washington—Resigned 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 , Resigned—Succeeded 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 6-24-31—Succeeded 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)—Succeeded 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)—Succeeded 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)—Succeeded 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

XIX

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)—Succeeded 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

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, New York
Historian: Robert L. Klipstine, Ohio
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana
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

PROCEEDINGS

of the

82nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

of

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Tuesday, September 5, 2000

...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 82nd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted:

NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN G. LANCE: The 82nd National Convention will now come to order. The National State Champion Color Guard from The American Legion Post 86 in Silver Springs, Maryland presents the colors of our nation. Call to the Colors will be sounded by Don Arne from the Department of Wisconsin. The singing of the National Anthem will be by Miss America 2000, Heather Renee French of Kentucky. Color Guard advance.

...Silver Springs, Maryland Color Guard of American Legion Post 86, presented the Colors, following which Miss America 2000, Heather Renee French, sang the National Anthem.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: For the Invocation, Post Everlasting and lighting of the Peace Candle, I call upon our National Chaplain, Bishop David Brown of Post 16 in Covington, Louisiana.

Invocation
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplain

Almighty Father, God of all the nations, as we begin this 82nd National Convention, we pause to thank You for blessing and guiding The American Legion through the years. We thank You Lord for the good works performed by our great organization to help communities across America. Lord, we ask that You bless and guide the work of this convention. May the decisions made here be in accordance with the principles set down by the founders of our organization. Lord, may You always have first place in our thoughts and deeds as we strive to serve God and country. Amen.

Post Everlasting Ceremony and
Lighting of the Peace Candle

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BROWN: Here in Milwaukee, we pause to remember two distinguished men who served The American Legion as National Commander for a year and now have transferred to Post Everlasting. Roger Munson, Department of Ohio, National Commander 1992-1993, a World War II Veteran and member of Heights Hillcrest Post 104 in Cleveland passed away April 19, 2000.Erle Cocke, Jr., Department of Georgia, National Commander 1950-1951, a World War II Veteran and member of Davis Daniel Post 133 in Dawson, Georgia passed away April 23, 2000.

Our time on earth is short, yet these men and many others lived to serve others. Through that service to mankind they influenced the future. I now ask National Sergeant-at-Arms, Charles F. Price, Sr. of Idaho to light the Peace Candle.

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

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Now we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, Korea and Viet Nam. There are thousands of names in this category. Names, not just numbers. 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 for all missing service personnel. Let us pause now as Past National Commander, Robert Turner of Georgia, Chairman of the special POW/MIA Committee and Bill Bishop of Alaska, Chairman of our Foreign Relations Commission, place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Legionnaires, please join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principals 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 LANCE: Welcome to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, home of Harley-Davidson Post 400. We all survived the Y-2-K scare. No longer must we face the coming of a new millennium, it's here, and The American Legion, I am glad to report is alive and well. Nearly 362 days ago, I said that I planned to travel to see America's fighting men and women on active duty. I have done that. And this morning I can tell you from first hand observance and experience, these young men and women share The American Legion's core of values. They are dedicated to God and country, they are not failing those for whom they serve. They are our sons, our daughters, our grandsons, and our granddaughters. They in essence are simply a younger version of us. As we begin the 82nd National Convention of The American Legion, let us do so by meeting those men and women on active duty in Bosnia. We meet them through the on scene reporting of Legionnaire, Jack Martin of NBC affiliate, WTHR, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Video: *Our Future is Now*

INTRODUCTION OF VIDEO, UNIDENTIFIED: You are American. Not old guys like me that do a lot of talking or diplomatic or folks you see on TV. You are American. Whether they see you on this camp, whether they see you down this range on patrol. You keep that on your mind at all times.

JACK MARTIN: This is a land that seems to have grown sorrow, as if it were a weed, born from the madness and the destruction of war. That is what struck me and my fellow soldiers first. The destruction here is on a scale of mass proportion, unimaginable to most of us in America. That it is this evident, five years after the Bosnian War ended as perhaps

equally striking. But, not as much as the accounts of ethnic cleansing which is a polite sounding euphemism for mass murder.

Within a month of my arrival in Bosnia, I found myself video graphing the remnants of a mass grave during a military intelligence mission. Forensic investigators had to remove of the human remains for identification. About a thousand men and boys were buried here. They were Bosnian Moslems slaughtered more than likely at this nearby warehouse. It is ghostly dark, but speaks profoundly to this fellow Hoosier.

Captain Elizabeth Sweeney is from Indianapolis. She is now a Transportation Officer with the 10th Mountain Division. She, like myself and all the peacekeepers, are trained to fight and defend ourselves and preserve of the peace. But, it is hard to imagine the slaughter of unarmed people.

CAPTAIN ELIZABETH SWEENEY: Because we are here, it is hard to believe that these things went on because we are stabilizing force. It is just hard to imagine that as soon as we leave, that this is what can potentially happen again.

JACK MARTIN: This is the city where many of the victims lived, Srebrenica, in all 10,000 people are missing. All of them are presumed dead. Most of them are boys and men. Srebrenica was once a jewel of a city. Its prewar majority was Bosnian Moslem. It is now ninety-nine Bosnian Serb and seventy-five percent destroyed.

COLIN NESBIT: It is really sad that something like this is allowed to happen again. After what happened in World War II, it took so much for us to find reason to intervene. It took, three or four years for us to intervene, and in all this time, two hundred thousand people were killed. It is kind of sad this kind of thing happened again.

JACK MARTIN: The streets of Srebrenica are a long way from those of Greenwood, Indiana. But Specialist Colin Nesbit, a Military Intelligence Troop with the 3rd Army Calvary Regiment, knows these streets and those people whose hearts we peacekeepers are hoping to change from the rage and hate that led to all of this.

COLIN NESBIT: At least they are not fighting any more. We managed to stop the fighting so that they can at least get on with working and rebuilding what they can.

JACK MARTIN: There are signs of hope as Bosnians rebuild and construct their future away from a millennium old history punctuated with periods of collective madness. But, it is with Bosnian's children, myself and fellow peacekeepers, found our greatest joy. It is our feeling that through these children, these hearts were touched, that Bosnia and Herzegovina may find its greatest peace. [People talking in foreign language.]

CAPTAIN ELIZABETH SWEENEY: ... the people have been through a lot. It is better now than it was. It's good to see all the kids playing. I guess it's getting better.

JACK MARTIN: But before these young Americans think of leaving for home, they are ever mindful of their mission here, which is, of course, to strengthen a fragile peace and to help nurture a generation away from the ravages of war. But they must also protect themselves in the process and there is no duty greater in that regard than standing guard.

UNKNOWN SOLDIER 1: The mission is what we signed up for, regardless of what it is. I think a while back they caught workman at the gate and if we can pick them up, and help these people in any way, then we're doing our job, anyone needing help.

UNKNOWN SOLDIER 2: Let me tell you about the most important thing, more than being a member of the American Army or specific unit, you are representing our Republic and its people. The International community, people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. You are America.

...End of video.

JACK MARTIN: Reporting to the 82nd National Convention of The American Legion, I am Jack Martin, member of the United States Army Reserve, a Veteran of the United States Navy, and a proud Legionnaire. I realize that I am a very lucky man.

I served in the Navy right after the Vietnam War. I was called up with the Reserves for the Gulf War as a member of the Indiana National Guard, I returned recently from a nine month appointment to Bosnia where one of my duties was to report on those in uniform for military and civilian audiences around the world. Today, I have reached the pinnacle as a Blue Cap Legionnaire. I stand before you, the delegates of this National Convention, to re-enforce a single message that our future is indeed now.

Our future is in the hands of young Americans, some in uniform, some not quite not old enough to become veterans. Yet, each and everyone help us understand that while much has changed since The American Legion was founded, there is a single important constant and that is pride and serving America. You know what I am talking about. Part of it as we know as what I have experienced in Bosnia, that unexplained lump that you feel in your throat when you are serving others. A lump that suddenly arises as you look into the tearful eyes of another one of God's children across this world. And you hear those simple words, 'thank you.' It makes no difference what language it is spoken in because the words are sincere and they are heartfelt and they are said in a level that is just universal and we all understand.

Introduction of Spirit of Service Awards
Jack Martin

Now it seems appropriate as we begin this convention to introduce you to a select group of young Americans. This year The American Legion is presenting the first Spirit of Service Awards. Newly conceived by our National Commander, Al Lance, it is an award that will grow in stature in the future. In cooperation with each military branch, one individual is selected to receive this award based on his or her off-duty community involvement.

As a newsman, everyday I see the positive impact that individuals and organizations like ours have on a community. This impact is, unfortunately, seldom reported as we all know. As a military veteran I know that serving others is not something that we do for publicity. It is something that we do simply because it is our duty. It is the right thing to do.

Now while these awards will be presented later this morning with Commander Lance's approval, it is now my honor to introduce these individuals winners to you now. From the United States Navy, Crypologic Technical Technician, 2nd Class, Annette French; from the United States Marine Corps, Sergeant Evellis Smith; from the United States Army, Sergeant Laura Jaragin; from the United States Coast Guard, Marine Science Technical, 2nd Class, Cory King; and from the United States Air Force, Staff Sergeant, Billy Fly.

Each of these individuals, Legionnaires, I proudly add, are doing today what the founders of The American Legion did way back in 1919. They are serving others in a very special way. Ladies and gentlemen, your fellow Legionnaires salute you.

Introduction of Youth Champions
Jack Martin

I see some other young faces here that have this glow of achievement or something special. There are young guys all dressed up and look like one of the old guys around here. Hi, how you doing? I'm Jack Martin, and your name is?

MAX MILLER: I'm Max Miller, from Mackinee Island and I am the National American Legion Oratorical Champion.

JACK MARTIN: That means that means you can give a speech. You want to come up here and give a speech for us? I would, but I don't have any memorized at this time. Are you a future politician?

MAX MILLER: Well, I hope so, if the people would elect me.

JACK MARTIN: Look at this face. Could you elect this guy? You elect him now, you do better than some of these other folks we have.

And your name sir?

JUSTIN CHAPA: Sir, I'm Justin Chapa, from Arlington, Texas, and I'm the President of The American Legion Boys' Nation.

JACK MARTIN: So you are a president, already? From Texas."

JUSTIN CHAPA: Yes, sir.

JACK MARTIN: You know someone else that has a chance for being a president from Texas?

JUSTIN CHAPA: Yes sir, Governor George Bush.

JACK MARTIN: Have you met the good governor from Texas?

JUSTIN CHAPA: No sir, but I hope to.

JACK MARTIN: You just might get a chance tomorrow because he is going to be here. Well, I hope to see two presidents from Texas in the White House soon.

And your name?

JEREMY ROBERTS: My name is Jeremy Roberts and I'm from Rison, Arkansas and I'm the 1999 Baseball Player of the Year for The American Legion.

JACK MARTIN: All right, what position do you play?

JEREMY ROBERTS: I play pitcher. I'm a righty. I've got a combination slider. It is pretty good.

JACK MARTIN: You sound dangerous. Future Major Leaguer?

JEREMY ROBERTS: Oh, I would like to. Texas Rangers?

JACK MARTIN: No, I think the Yankees. Nice meeting you. Now here we have another young man in uniform. How you doing?

ERIK SWENSON: Great, my name is Erik Swenson, I'm from Smithfield, Utah, and I'm The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year.

JACK MARTIN: Congratulations. Now, what is your favorite aspect of Scouting, Erik?

ERIK Swenson: For sure, it would be service and respect. Scouting incorporates both. We get to serve our fellow man, do Eagle projects, to get to the rank of our Eagle, we get to respect our flag and respect our country, all those wonderful values we all embrace.

JACK MARTIN: Now, as a young man, do you get a hard time among your peer group for being this kind of leader?

ERIK SWENSON: No, they look up leaders in our community, especially scouting. It is very big where I am from and the young people are in good hands and scouting is very

strong; it is the best thing you could do. So get your kids involved, get your grand kids involved. There is where we need them.

That is a good spiel. Thank you.

Last, but not least, who are you?

DANIEL CRUISE: Daniel Cruise, from Winston, Georgia. I shot a 24-49 to win the Junior American Legion Shooting Sport Championship, top spot.

JACK MARTIN: So, you're a marksmen among marksmen. Now, in the military they teach us the proper techniques to shooting and all that, but it sounds like you have gone a step further. So what is the proper way to shoot that effectively?

DANIEL CRUISE: It just takes a lot of hard work and practice. It is the Olympic style shooting.

JACK MARTIN: Are you a future Olympian?

DANIEL CRUISE: I hope so, it's a goal.

Well, we're there with you. So these are our Youth Champions and our first Spirit of Service Military Awardees.

Now I ask you for having met these fine young people, is there any doubt in your mind that the future is now? And I am happy to add, that's because of young people; you heard what came out of their mouths. The future is secure because they share our values. Like so many other younger people that we need to get into the Legion eventually, right? These share our values, they share our love country, they share our zeal and our passion to keep America, the land of the free, home of the brave.

Now they stand before you, they are not used to the limelight, they're a little shy and I don't blame them. You are going to meet someone now who is not only used to the limelight, but she uses it very wisely and that sense of selfish devotion of duty. You already met her because she gave us that stirring rendition of the *National Anthem*. She wears the crown of Miss America, but she wears that crown to make a difference for America's homeless veterans. Welcome to a life member of the American Legion Auxiliary and Miss America 2000, Heather Renee French.

Address: Heather Renee French
Miss America 2000

Let me first begin by apologizing for the kick up in the *National Anthem*. It is interesting what you think of when you singing the *National Anthem* and with your hand over your heart. You think about many things. I think about my father, my brother, my aunts and uncles who served. But, halfway through the *National Anthem* it dawned on me that this was probably going to be the last time I was going to sing the *National Anthem* as Miss America and that I am very proud to be doing it before The American Legion.

This year has been a tremendous year for me. It has been a tremendous year of growth for me as well as for the nation, for bringing the awareness about for homeless veterans initiatives and for going into partnerships with our American population to our veterans population.

As I began my tour on September 18th of 1999 as Miss America 2000, I was a bold advocate for homeless veterans everywhere. What I did not know was that I was about to embark upon a multifaceted veterans advocacy, beginning by working on hepatitis C among veterans, homes for homeless veterans, health care and benefit issues. And right by my side, every step of the way was The American Legion, with the National Commander and the

Madam President. I was so proud to walk on Capitol Hill with the Commander on protection of our American flag to lobby Representatives and Senators, to make a bold stand to say, "We will not take less than the best for our American veterans."

My father took me into my first VA hospital when I was four years old and I was very fortunate at that time to know the price of freedom, the price that came for this country, the millions of men and women who never made it home. And I had dedicated this year to those men and women, their families and their children who never saw them again. This is especially for the four men whose names are on Panel 32E on the Vietnam wall in Washington, D.C. who died so that my father could home to raise a future Miss America to dedicate her year of service to you, our greatest American population, our veterans.

I have carried a crown with me this year that I feel doesn't belong to me. Many people think when Miss America is coming to visit that she is going to come riding on a wave, with a crown on her head. I didn't want to disappoint anyone so I brought it with me. This crown is not as a decoration for Heather French's purpose, believe me, twenty thousand miles each month that I travel is not for Heather French's purpose. But every stone and every sparkle represents who you are. It represents the possibilities of a better way of life for millions of American veterans, especially those 275,000 of your brothers and sisters who every night sleep on the streets because they need not a hand out, but a hand up to a better way of life. This crown belongs to you. I did not win for my purpose, but for yours. And this is to show America that the veterans deserve a spotlight, a national spotlight. You deserve the best that our country has to offer.

For traveling twenty thousand miles each month, I have visited your communities across your states, spreading that awareness to your state, to your local and national government about your issues. That's what the spotlight of Miss America has meant this year. It has meant the veteran's pride, it has meant that we teach our young people the sacrifices that made this country great.

In closing, I would like to share something with you. I have been with you this year; it is sort of like a homecoming for me. A gentlemen and a guest from Kentucky gave me a very special present and asked me to present this to every group I speak to this year as Miss America. He said this box contains the price of freedom so that you can connect the veterans' lives with those Americans out there who did not serve. This achievement was this Purple Heart. This gentlemen was wounded, not once, not twice, but three times. And he bestowed upon me this gift to share with you why we continue to fight every day. When we know that everyday is not easy, not every day the sun rises and some days when it rains it begins to pour and sometimes it overflows to a flood. But this box contains hope. Because when we can remember the sacrifices that you made and that your brothers and sisters made, that makes the fight, the good fight, worthwhile. Because one more day that we have a veteran in need is one more day to work, one more hour to give, so that we can show the nation that everyday should be Veterans' Day, your day.

In speaking of young people, there is another group of young citizens waiting right now in the wings. They have watched everything transpire this morning, gaining a new understanding of veterans and what it means to be an American. They are also blessed with the talents and boundless energy. Ah, the days of youth. Please welcome a lively group of students from Milwaukee's Roosevelt School of the Arts, who understand that the future begins with us.

...At this time music is played.

Youth Choral Group
Roosevelt School of the Arts

We are the Roosevelt Middle School of the Arts Concert Choir. We are all very honored to be here. Today we will be performing five pieces.

...At this time the Delegates listened to the choir sing *We are the People of the Twenty-first Century, Our Future Begins With Us; When You Believe*, and The Theme Song From the Motion Picture, *The Prince of Egypt*; *Sing America, Sing*; and *God Bless America.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: What an inspiring program. Before Miss America, Heather French, leaves us to take a slight break from the lights I would like to present her with a little gift on behalf of The American Legion family. This young lady is a lady of substance. She didn't only talk about the veterans and homeless veterans, she got down there with them and talked to them with her arm around them. She opened doors to veterans' advocacy groups that we had not had opened before and when it comes to the issue of flag desecration, she spent a whole day of her own time on Capitol Hill with me, knocking on doors. And remember the name, because this is not the last we are going to see of this young lady. She has spent a lot of time with The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary and family. On behalf of Mel Napier, my aide and myself and the entire American Legion, Heather, there is a little gift to show our appreciation. Thank you so much for what you have done.

Now I ask National Executive Committeeman of Wisconsin, Bob Zukowski, to introduce our next special guest.

Robert K. Zukowski, Wisconsin
National Executive Committeeman

It is indeed a great honor for me to introduce our governor today. Our governor is a Legionnaire, a member of the Post in Thorp, Wisconsin. During my term, when I served in the Assembly, I served on the Military Affairs Committee. Wisconsin is very proud of our Department of Veterans Affairs. We have some of the best programs and benefits, I believe, in the nation. And it is all because of our governor. He is there all the time and is truly a veteran's governor. Please give an American Legion welcome to the governor of the great state of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson.

Address: Tommy Thompson
Governor of the State of Wisconsin

Thank you, Bob, for your years of service in The American Legion and especially your years of service in the State Legislature, where I truly miss your counsel, your advocacy for veterans, and your other strong leadership talents. I am also delighted to be here with your National Commander, Attorney General from Idaho, who has done an outstanding job. I think that you have been well served by his leadership. I had the privilege of serving with him at the National Convention a few weeks ago and he truly is an outstanding leader.

And what about Heather, Miss America? If you didn't have a lump in your throat, a smile on your face, and a tear in your eye, when she sang the *National Anthem*, you are not alive. She did a wonderful job. She whispered to me that this was the last time she was

going to sing the *National Anthem* as Miss America. So, she put her whole heart and soul into it and did a wonderful job.

I also am delighted that you are honoring my very good friend and I think probably the most outstanding United States Senator in America today, Orrin Hatch. It is delightful that he is in Wisconsin today and I thank him so very much.

But today, I am here to welcome you. I am honored to be with you today at the first American Legion Convention of the new century. And it has taken you fifty-nine years to come back from being here in 1941. We don't want you to stay away that long again. So we really are rolling out the carpet and want you to have a great time. And if anybody doesn't have a smile on their face when they welcome you, you tell me and we will banish them from Wisconsin forever. I also want to tell you and to admonish you to spend lots of money while you are here. Help our economy and please come back in the near future.

Admittedly, I am a little bias because I believe you have chosen the best place in the nation in order to hold your convention. You will surely receive a warm Wisconsin welcome here. We have a strong and vibrant American Legion tradition, with 76,000 members and 527 Posts throughout Wisconsin. Since 1920, the local Legion Post has truly been the focus of civic and social and patriotic activity in our Wisconsin communities.

I grew up in a small town of Elroy, so small you call somebody, get a wrong number and you still talk for a half hour. That is how small it is. I have very fond memories of our American Legion hall post. But, I have an even fonder appreciation for the veterans who made the Legion such an intricate part of our community. They marched in our parades, decorated the graves on Memorial Day and donated generously to every cause in our city. But they were more than that. They, like each of you, are heros. You truly are American patriots. Mark Twain once said, "In the beginning of a change, the patriotic is a scarce man and brave and hated and scorned. But when his cause succeeds, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot."

You, my friends were American patriots from day one. You were the American patriots during times of unrest abroad and at home and continue to be, the great American patriots and citizens to this day. You answered the call to defend this nation and its principles during history's darkest hours. You gave us the gift of liberty, the gift of democracy. And we pause today to celebrate the legacy that each of you have established.

In recognition of the achievements and the sacrifices of the men and women who served in our nation's armed forces, the United States Congress recently declared the American GI as the person of the century. The Congressional Resolution states that the American GI kept the flame of freedom burning brightly through the grim and the dark skies, through blood, sweat and tears, through times of adulation and, sadly, through times of unreasonable contempt. All of you former GIs can be proud of your accomplishments. The worldwide crusade for freedom is truly your legacy and the triumphant of democracy is your victory. All of you could have rightfully have rested on your laurels when the fighting ended. But, no, that is not your style. When you returned home you continued to serve your nation, your state, your communities in so many different ways. Each day, Legionnaires and Auxiliary members perform acts of service that go unnoticed and unthanked. You visit the sick in VA hospitals, you speak to school children about patriotism, and you teach them the appreciation of the American flag and what it stands for.

For all that you have done while you wore the military uniform and for all that you have done when you have been home and donned the Blue Cap of the Legionnaire, I personally salute you. With the support of The American Legion I am working as one of the

leaders with my fellow governors to form a veteran's agenda for everyone of our fifty states. Here in Wisconsin I am very proud to say we have a time honored tradition of providing numerous benefits and services for our state's veterans. And we are continuing to improve our veterans programs through the efforts of my secretary. He has been recognized by all of the secretaries of Veterans Affairs as the number one in America, Ray Bowlin.

We are building veterans long-term health care facilities. We are constructing new veterans cemeteries, when other states have not. And we are providing military funeral honors to every veteran that dies in Wisconsin. We continue to offer low interest rate home loans and grants for education and job training. We set out in Wisconsin to set up the nation's first—and I am very proud of that—and best program to help homeless veterans begin productive citizens of the nation they once defended. I have been in Washington, D.C. and have testified with Heather and Ray Bowlin. We will continue to go back till every homeless veteran gets the opportunity, the service, the awards, the opportunity to live a quality of life.

We have accomplished much in Wisconsin. But we have much to do. We can reach our lofty goals because of organizations like yours, The American Legion, and veterans just like each of you. When called to serve, you took a solemn oath. You pledged to give your own life, if necessary, to protect the lives of your fellow citizens and the freedom loving people everywhere. That experience taught you to understand why freedom is so darn important. You saw friends give their lives in battlefields around the world while fighting to preserve the ideals of this wonderful, great country.

We must take a moment to celebrate our fallen heros. As General George Patton once said, "It is foolish, it is wrong to mourn the men who die. Rather, we should thank God that such men lived. Those that gave their lives." Those that have given their lives would be proud of the work that each of you have done and are doing. To continue to fight for the cause that they gave their last breath trying to defend. Now you work tirelessly on behalf of your fellow veterans and your communities. Because of you, what you did years ago, and what you are doing here today, we are a better nation and a better world. God bless all of you. God bless The American Legion and God bless America. Let's keep making this the greatest country it possibly can be.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Thank you for all the innovative veterans' programs that you have been instrumental in for the Department and the State of Wisconsin.

Please welcome the Chief of Staff for the Mayor of Milwaukee, Michael Soika.

Address: Michael Soika, Chief of Staff for the Mayor
City of Milwaukee

The mayor is on a plane from Boston, so he regrets he could not be here. He sends his warmest regards and we hope that you come back next year and he will be here personally.

I thank the National Committee, the National Chairman, Commander Alan Lance for choosing Milwaukee as the convention site for the first convention in the Millennium. Milwaukee is a wonderful city and we are strong and proud that we are warm and friendly and I guarantee you will touch that warm and friendliness as you enjoy your stay with us.

But, mostly today I want to spend my time thanking you, the individual members of The American Legion. I want to thank you for your commitment to service to our country. Many people don't realize how service oriented The American Legion really is. I want to thank you for your education programs, for your youth programs, for your police cadet and

crime prevention programs. I want to thank you for your advocacy on behalf on all veterans. In this age of dot-com millionaires, of reality shows that pit one contestant against another, it is comforting to know that there is an organization like The American Legion that stands up for different values, for community values. The American Legion Preamble talks about individual sacrifice for the common good. And that is important.

I will beg your indulgence here for a second. In the bible, in the *Book of Revelations*, it talks about the end of the world. Most of you might be familiar with that. It talks about how each person we believe will be judged for his or her activities on earth. But, if you read that passage closely, it does not say that individuals will be judged. It says that nations will be judged on their values and how they treated the poor and the powerless. I believe America will be fairly judged. I believe America is stronger because of you. America is better because of you. And for that we thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: We met and heard from state and local leaders. Now it is time to introduce to you the leaders in the Department of Wisconsin who made this National Convention possible. Wisconsin's immediate Past Department Commander led the campaign to assemble the volunteers necessary for our successful gathering here. He is proud to have us in his home state and we are proud to be here. Welcome immediate Past Department Commander of Wisconsin, Art Herbison.

Arthur D. Herbison, Past Department Commander
The American Legion of Wisconsin

It is indeed a pleasure for me, the immediate Past Commander of the Department of Wisconsin to welcome you here. It has been a long time. In fact, at the last convention held here in Wisconsin, the only Delegates that attended were World War I Veterans. It took place in August of 1941, just a few months before World War II started. As you are all aware, a great deal has happened since then. But it is indeed a pleasure to have you here.

The great state of Wisconsin has a lot to offer and we hope that you would take part, especially if you have a few days to see the rest of our state. It goes from the Great Lakes, Michigan on the east, Superior on the north and the Mississippi River on the west. It is a vacation land for everyone. Great hunting, great fishing, and great hospitality. We have some special areas called Door County which is above Green Bay, over to The Dells in Wisconsin, and in the central part we hope that you would take some time to enjoy yourselves there. And we would certainly hope that this will be a very productive convention for The Legion. We would hope that the hospitality here would be one that you go back with and remember and wish to return to in the very near future. With that I say thank you for coming.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The second Legion leader served as president of the corporation of Wisconsin. He is well known to many of you. He has served for many years as the Wisconsin Department Adjutant, Rick Barnett.

Rick Barnett, President
The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Wisconsin

It is indeed a pleasure for me to bring greetings and to welcome you on behalf of the 2000 Milwaukee National American Legion Corporation, the Chairman and volunteers who

make up the committees and who have given up their time and talent to hopefully to make this a memorable convention for all of you.

It has been mentioned several times that the last time there was a convention in Milwaukee was 1941. Well we are very happy and pleased that after fifty-nine years that you are able again to come back the City of Milwaukee, the genuine American city for your National Convention. I'd be remiss if I didn't publicly recognize the greater Milwaukee Convention and Visitors' Bureau. We made three bids for the National Convention, we made it on the third time, and the Convention Bureau was with us every step of the way. And without their expertise and knowledge and reputation in the Milwaukee community, I'm sure that we might have had a little more problem than we had.

I hope you are enjoying your stay in Milwaukee. We feel that there is a lot to do in this city and there is something for everybody. Commander Lance, I hope this convention is everything you want it to be. And I hope all of you Delegates have a great convention in Milwaukee.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Many of you know that Harley-Davidson Motorcycles is headquartered right here in Milwaukee. But, you probably do not know that they have a very active American Legion Post right among their employees. I visited the Harley-Davidson Plant the other day on Capitol Drive, which flies the POW/MIA flag. And on the plaque at the base of the flag pole spells out their understanding of contributions of the American veterans. It reads, "Harley-Davidson salutes the veterans and their families, not just today, but everyday." The American Legion is absolutely proud to be holding its 82nd National Convention here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Award
The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch, United States Senate

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The highest award The American Legion can bestow on any individual is the Distinguished Service Medal. The qualifications for receiving this award are simple to write, yet very difficult to achieve. To be considered for the Distinguished Service Medal, one must demonstrate understanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion. The recipient for 2000 is a man who meets every aspect of those qualifications many times over. As a member of the United States Senate for the past sixteen years, he has been an advocate for a strong national defense. He believes that America's national security is best maintained by focused involvement in world affairs. This great American leader often serves as a voice employing Congress to do what is right for America. That is what he has done when it comes to protecting the American flag from physical desecration. He has been a co-sponsor of legislation through two Senate votes. He agrees that those two narrow defeats for the Flag Protection Amendment do not mean the campaign is over. He is ready, willing, and able to lead the lead the charge in the 107th Congress for The American Legion.

It is with pride and gratitude that I present the Distinguished Service Medal to Senator Orrin G. Hatch from the great state of Utah.

SENATOR ORRIN G. HATCH: Thank all of you for this warm welcome. It is a high honor for me to receive The American Legion's highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal. And one reason why I am so pleased to be here today to receive this Distinguished Service Medal is because I know a lot of people back in Washington who think I ought to

be 'extinguished.' Let me tell you, if fighting for America, our flag, our military men and women, our veterans, our land, and our freedom makes me an enemy, so be it!

I have such respect for The American Legion and all of you. I have always appreciated the input and the assistance I have received from The American Legion members in Utah, particularly our leaders: Bill Christoffersen, Dale Smith, Randy Knight, Duane Willis, and Terry Schow. What great people they are. One of the greatest things we had in the great flag fight this last year was having Miss America, Heather French, come and testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I really love her and appreciate her and I want you to know how much she has meant to all of us.

You have done so much for America, you members of The American Legion. Your scholarships, your speaking contests, Boys and Girls State and Nation programs, baseball games, youth activities, and your support for the Boys Scouts and ROTC are lifting our people of this country to higher and higher levels of achievement and helping to instill in them an appreciation of the importance of everyday citizenship and the price that has to be paid over the years.

I was thrilled with this middle school choir. Wasn't that something here today? It was great. I'm glad you are recognizing one of our great Utah leaders, Erik Swenson, Eagle Scout of the Year. He is something, isn't he? I also met the Oratorical Champion, Max Miller, and, of course Justin Chapa, Jeremy Roberts, Daniel Cruise, a group of young men you had before you this morning. You made it possible for these young men to have these blessings. So it is a wonderful thing.

The American Legion's effort to shape legislation in Washington, especially your leadership in the Citizens Flag Alliance and its work for the Constitutional Amendment to protect the flag. Our great influence is on the law and the policies of our country. We continue to need your voice heard in Washington. We need your voice to drown out those who believe the act of desecrating our flag is an acceptable form of protest. Do you agree? We need your voice to drown those who think the best national defense is a weak national defense. Let's drown them out, do you agree?

We need your voice to drown out the voice in the current administration who year after year, until this election year, has given lip service only to the needs of veterans. Let's drown them out, do you agree? And we need your voice who have become too jaded or too politically correct, to participate in simple acts of patriotism. Knowing all the words and singing the *National Anthem*, flying the flag, or shedding a tear at a grave site at the Arlington National Cemetery, I know you agree with that, as well.

I am proud to be associated with your great organization. This is a blessing in my life. This is the greatest award I have received in my twenty-four years in the United States Senate among the many awards I have received. This one I value the most and I really appreciate you. I know, if my mom and dad were alive and could see this, they would be proud, too. And maybe a little amazed that their son could wind up on such a list along with Marshall Ferdinand Foch of France, Dwight Eisenhower, Dr. Jonas Salk, Henry Ford, John F. Kennedy, Henry Kissinger, and Ronald Reagan. They knew my shortcomings. I was not born into privilege or wealth. My father was a skilled tradesman, he was a metal lather. And that is how I started out, too. I learned that trade as a young boy. In fact, I worked as a janitor all the way through my college years. When Ted Kennedy found out that I once worked as a janitor he said," Orrin, you should have stuck with it." After Elaine and I married, we went to law school living in an old converted chicken coop, where I used to

raise chickens and sell eggs. So I've had to earn everything I have. This great country has given me the opportunity to do that.

This is a great country. Let me just divert for a second and tell you a story that helps us to know that Democrats and Republicans can get along, that we can work together, that we can do some great things.

I get up every morning at 5:00 a.m. That is the only way I can get into the office and get things done because I am busy all the rest of the day. So when I get at home at night at 7:30 to 9:00 I am really tired and I don't want the phone to ring. I just hate the phone at home so I walked in this one evening and it was 9:00 p.m. and I was dead tired, and I was hungry and the phone rang right as I walked into the kitchen. So I picked it up with a groan and guess who was on the phone? None other than the President himself, Bill Clinton. He started talking to me—we are friends—kept talking and talking about almost nothing. I had the distinct feeling in my mind that this fellow has nothing to do. I will be a little more gracious than that. Finally, after about twenty minutes he said, "Senator, can I ask a personal favor of you?" and I said "Sure, Mr. President. I will be happy to do what I can if I can." Then he said, "You have the greatest political button collection in the world today. Do you think you could find one of your Hatch for President buttons?" I started to laugh. I said that I didn't think I could. We didn't have much money so we didn't print many of them up. But, I told him that I would look for one.

But I did, I found one and I sent it to him. About a week later at the White House in a big meeting, it happened to be with the administration's desire to control guns and I was the skunk at the picnic. They had it all set up. They were putting pressure to try and make some to give in to gun control approaches that they had. But, I am one of the strongest supporters of the Second Amendment in the country today and I didn't give in. So he realized that he couldn't persuade me and, of course, they had all the media out there waiting to jump me. But it was fine with me, I didn't care. I do what I think is right, no matter what happens. And finally, after it was all over, he was late as usual and he said, "Come with me". I had been to the White House, but I had never been in this one section. He took me down this little short hallway off the Oval Office, a place which will be forever remembered for some of the things that occurred there. And as we walked down that hallway there were two great big frames of political buttons and one of them had three Hatch buttons right in the middle. One for President, two for Senate. They were the only ones we'd ever done. And he said, "See, see!" It was really marvelous that he had done all this. In fact, he had a coin from George Washington's time. They didn't have buttons at that time, but they had a coin and he had one of those. It had to be worth a million dollars. Well, he was so proud of that button collection and this country. And I respected him for it.

Finally, he said, "Come around here." So we went around the corner and he had a letter that Harry Truman sent to the *New York Times* reporter who panned the singing of his daughter, Margaret, threatening to beat him up. I asked him where he got that? He said, "Well, Steve Forbes gave it to me." I said, "Gee, that's got to be worth a lot of money." He said, "Well, I told Steve that and Steve said, 'Look, my father was a Democrat, this belongs in the hands of a Democrat, I want you to have it.'"

That says about as much about America, in many respects, as we could say. Because it says that even though Steve Forbes, who was running against President Clinton and felt very deeply that he should be removed from office and that we should get a Republican in the next election, that he could turn around and befriend the President like that, in a way that is so meaningful to President Clinton and to me.

This is a great country. This is the greatest country in the world. I wrote a song not too long ago about my brother, who was killed when I was about nine years old. He flew in the oil raids. They were shot down three times out of Forli, Italy on air raids. Twice they got back to enemy lines, but the third time he was listed as missing in action. Two years later, they found his remains, what was there. I never let my mother see the materials I gathered about him. It would have broken her heart. They brought him back two years later and we went all through it again. He and I guess eighty percent of our young men died that day, knocking out the Vienna, Austrian, and the Romanian oil fields and helping to end the war shortly.

I decided then to spend my lifetime doing two missions; one for my brother, Jesse, and one for me. The most important possession that I have is something that I never really wanted to have, and that's the flag that draped my brother's coffin as they brought him home. My brother loved this country and so do I. He gave his life for you and me, as many of your comrades did for this great country and for freedom. And he believed that the national symbol is important, important for our young people to see, for our young people to respect, for everybody in America to see and respect.

One last story. John McCain told this and it is wonderful. There was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike Christian never had a pair of shoes before twelve years of age. They were so poor. I think he was living in Georgia as a young boy. His life was hard, but somehow or other he made it through and become a flyer and was shot down in Vietnam. He happened to be thrown in the Hanoi Hilton and, of course, he believed in our country. What he did was fashion a bamboo needle and he got little bits of red, white and blue cloth and he sewed together an American flag. It was only maybe about so big. He would put it inside his shirt and pull it out every night and put it on the wall. He would salute it and then they would pledge allegiance to the American flag. John said it was one of the things that kept him sane.

One day his captors found that flag on him. They took him outside and beat him within an inch of his life. They broke his ribs, his face was all beaten up, his eyes were shut closed from the puffing and they threw his broken and bloody body into this compound room where there was a concrete slab in the middle. There were four incandescent bulbs in there that burned day and night. John said his buddies cleaned hi up as best they could and then they all tried to go to sleep.

In the middle of night for some reason, John awakened. He looked over at this concrete slab and there was Mike Christian with his bamboo needle starting to sew out of little bits of cloth red, white and blue another flag. Think about it.

We have people in this country who ridicule our efforts to try to sustain, support and uphold the greatest symbol the country could have, our American flag. And you are the people who are going to change that. We didn't succeed this last time. At lease two people who had always voted for us switched at the last minute. But, in this next Congress, with your help, with the help of God Almighty, we're going to pass the Constitutional Amendment to protect our flag from acts of physical desecration and we are going to create the greatest debate on values this country has ever seen and when we do, you're the reason we will succeed.

I want you to know that I am really moved by this great honor you have shown me and how much you all mean to me. As a citizen of this great country, I want you to know that this country depends on you. I want you to know as long as I am here, I'm going to be fighting for veterans, for your health care, for your needs, and for the American flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: During my year as National Commander, I've had the privilege and pleasure of working side by side with another great leader who set an ambitious course for the American Legion Auxiliary and then worked tirelessly to revitalize units, raise funds for the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., twist arms in the Senate, seeking support for the Flag Protection Amendment. Welcome the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, from Otis D. Green, Unit 155 in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, Elizabeth 'Lib' Stewart.

Mrs. Elizabeth Stewart, North Carolina, National President
The American Legion Auxiliary

How delighted I am to be here this morning to bring greetings from the nearly one million members of the American Legion Auxiliary to this 82nd National Convention of The American Legion. First of all, I would like to thank the members of The American Legion for electing Alan Lance as National Commander.

This has been a superb year for The American Legion under the leadership of Commander Lance. I want to take this opportunity to thank him publicly and also to thank each of you from your home Posts or your Squadrons and your local communities for all that you do for our veterans and their families, our children and youth, the community. This has just been a tremendous year of celebrating America 2000 and I thank you all so very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: At this time I am going to take a point of personal privilege to introduce to you members of my family: my wife, Sherrie, my daughter, Lisa. Lisa just graduated from law school last May so America has one more lawyer. My son, Alan Jr., my fishing buddy, my son Luke, from Ohio, my older sister, Jane Newlove, also from Ohio, my younger sister, Donna Powell, and my niece, Brooke Powell, a student at Ohio State University.

Now it is my privilege to introduce a great and a true American hero. He is an articulate advocate for the ongoing campaign to provide Constitutional protection for the flag of the United States of America. A retired Army Major General and recipient of our nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor. Please rise and render a proper salute, to a fellow Legionnaire, General Patrick Brady.

...At this time Delegates gave a proper salute.

Report: Retired Major General Patrick H. Brady, U.S. Army
Chairman, The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.

I enjoy always being with veterans' groups. It gives me a chance to tell a war story. And you all know the difference between a war story and a fairy tale? A fairy tale begins, "Once upon a time." A war story begins "This is no shoot." It reminds me as the campaign for the flag, the kinds of things that you go through. The story I will tell you at the end.

In Vietnam I was a helicopter pilot. My job was to go in and get the wounded. Oftentimes when we went in to get the wounded, it was during a battle. So if you have ever had been in a situation like that, you shot a nice approach up a river bed, over the trees, set down in the area, turned our tail to the fire: a lot of confusion always. There is much shooting, a lot of noise, trying to get the patients on, trying to get out of there as quickly as we could. If you have ever been in a situation like that, you know what pucker means. And

what pucker means is when the cheeks from the lower part of your body slowly begin to envelop your ears.

So we were set there, puckered up, me and my co-pilot. I looked over at him, and not only had he shrunk—you shrink to make yourself as small as you can—but his head was sitting up there. You got a little protection below, but there sits your head. And there is my buddy and his head is going like this, just all over the cockpit. And so back we get back to the patients, get them on, let's get out of here and then back to my buddy and there he is. I couldn't help myself, I broke down and just laughed out loud. But he didn't miss a stroke, his head is going like this and he said, "Laugh, you s-o-b, but it is harder to hit a moving target." That, by the way, is a true story.

It is a lot like this campaign for the flag, you dodge the media and some of these folks during the campaign. But, we are now in the middle of the first major election of the new millennium and like elections in millenniums past, we hear that this election is crucial to the future of our country. Every election is crucial in the sense that the candidates hear from the people who vote. Thomas Jefferson said, "Democracy is cumbersome, slow and inefficient, but in due time the voice of the people will be heard and their latent wisdom will prevail."

But we must vote in order to be heard. Voting, I think, is especially for veterans. Your voice reflects more than any other voice the values of America. It is very important that we vote. I don't know how crucial this election is in many ways, but I do know it is absolutely vital returning to the people the right to protect our flag. Our voices will someday be heard on that issue as long as we have men like Senator Hatch and others fighting this battle. It will be heard. I firmly believe that if we don't pass the Flag Amendment in this 107th Congress, the issue is going to fade until such time as the composition of the Congress changes. The people have cleaned house in the House and we got all kinds of support there. But we don't have the same support in the Senate. We are within maybe one or two votes there, maybe less. It is hard to say at this time.

This election brings with a deluge of Santa Claus candidates who have stacks of handouts, a maze of issues, and much talk of litmus tests. We truly need litmus tests. We can't possibly despair all the issues, but if we elect candidates with character, they will. Santa Claus doesn't lie. Some candidates do. Our veterans would not have the needs that they have if the promises were kept. Candidates with character will give more to those in need and to our country, no matter how much they are out-promised by a candidate without character. So we have got to elect people with character who share our values. These people will not make false promises and they will keep the promises they make. That is our first litmus test, I think, a person with character. If that person is a veteran there is a good chance he is a person with character.

A litmus test on presidential selection of judges is the one we hear the most about and I think that is nonsense. President Eisenhower said he made two major mistakes in his administration and they were both sitting on the Supreme Court. The President has no control over how his choices will vote. One justice on the Supreme Court said something about himself and his fellow judges. He said that the Court must be living in another world, day by day, case by case; it is busy designing a Constitution for a country that they do not recognize. He says that he and his colleagues don't know what John Q. Public thinks. Why would you leave that to nine lawyers to decide, for heaven sakes. It is better to let the people decide. The Court seldom, if ever, agrees in what the Constitution says. The papers are full of judicial scandals. They override the will of the people and the will of the president who

appointed them. The courts are redefining against our will, our personal morality and taking away from us the right to choose what is right, or wrong.

The Bill of Rights was designed for the people from the government. The courts have been using this to deface the values of the people. The Supreme Court in respond to a flag burning by a Communist in 1989, bypassed the people and took our flag away. They defaced our constitution by declaring that flag burning was speech. Now here is what that communist, Gregory Johnson said, "The American flag is a symbol of oppression, international murder, and symbol of a sick and dying empire". He also said it is an unmistakable statement of contempt for a government to allow its flag to be burnt. What he said, was speech; what he did, was conduct.

James Madison who wrote the free speech clause in the Constitution condemned flag burning as a crime and so did Thomas Jefferson. To distort the beliefs of these great men, who are now unable to defend themselves, to put flag burning side by side with pornography as protected speech, is disgraceful. We need to elect new people who will recapture our Constitution. And to do this we don't need to elect candidates who will protect and not change the character of our Constitution. We need a Congress who will challenge the Court and not cower to it. So I think that should be our second litmus test, that is, candidates who believe that the freedoms in the Constitution are to be interrupted or amended only according to the intent of the founding fathers.

I have a third litmus test and I truly believe this one. If we ask a candidate where he stands on the right of the people to protect their flag, we will learn a lot about that person. Would that person, that candidate, deny that right? It has been the birth right of our nation. Does he agree, does he really believe that the flag is just a piece of cloth? Does he actually think that flag burning is speech? Does he know more than Daniel Webster, or that he is wiser than the founding fathers, or more astute than eighty percent of our people, forty-nine states and seventy percent of the Congress? Can he tell us what is said when you burn the American flag? Does he believe that pornography should be protected speech, but not prayer and not Old Glory? Does he believe that our freedom depends on whether or not we tolerate conduct which the majority find to be evil or offensive? Does he think that certain crimes are hate crimes, but the burning the American flag is not? Does he tell you that he loves the flag, but it is Constitutional goodness to be able to burn it? Does he agree with some Senators that the Supreme Court made a mistake by calling flag burning speech, but still refuses to correct that mistake? Does he think that a majority of nine judges is more important than a majority of our entire people? Does he hide behind a statute? Does he agree with Jefferson who said, "I readily suppose my opinion is wrong when opposed by the majority. It is my principle that the majority should always prevail."

Or does he agree with one Senator who said, he doesn't care what the majority wants, that he is in the Senate to do his will and not theirs? Does he agree with Pearl Buck who wrote about the treasures that are our children and how the flag is such a precious symbol, such a great companion, to their development? Would he tell our young warriors, people in uniform today, face-to-face, that they are fighting for the right to burn Old Glory? Would he tell that to America's nobility, to you, to our veterans? Would he compare a protected American flag, protected by the will of a free people, to the flags protected according to the wills of tyrants, as some have done? How would say a pledge to the flag of a tyranny? "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the Communist Party, and to a totalitarianism Government, for which it stands, one dictatorship without a God, with oppression and injustice for all." How can they make such a comparison? Has anyone ever heard of a POW of a Communist

regime, creating from any scrapes available, as did Mike Christian, the flag and their dictator their inspiration? American POWs in every war have done so with the Stars and Stripes? Does he understand how important symbols are in a democracy? I believe that candidates who stand for the right of the people to be able to protect their flag will likely be on the right side of most issues that are right for America. I think they are likely to be persons with character who respect the wisdom, the will and the values of the people. This is certainly not true in all cases, but I firmly believe it is a great litmus test. They will agree with that Supreme Court Justice who said that it is better to let the people decide. It will teach that it is not true to say that the flag amendment criminalizes flag burning and amends the Bill of Rights, that it changes the Constitution. It does none of those things. It simply restores our Constitution.

Candidates with character, I think, realize that when they raise their right hand and swear to protect and defend the Constitution, that oath carries with it an obligation to correct the errors of the Supreme Court. So the Flag Amendment is a great way to get the people involved in what is happening to our Constitution, or what is speech. It is the single most important definition of freedom and we just can't seem to define it. That is why I think the flag terrifies so many of those who have been bypassing the democratic process and executing their agenda through the courts.

I think, too, that the candidates with character will understand above all else that this is a values issue. The entire debate over values is centered on what we teach our children. Flag burning is wrong, but what it teaches is worse. It teaches our children disrespect. It teaches that the hateful conduct of a minority is more important than the will of the majority and it teaches that our laws need not reflect our values and that the courts, not the people, own the Constitution. These candidates will understand the importance of symbols in our life and in our country. They will know that symbols house the treasures of our lives, our hopes, our dreams, our ideals. They enshrine our memories, the one enduring pearl that we all own. They are also the mausoleum of all we have that have been symbols, a wedding ring, an old boot, a uniform, a triangular flag. They warm us, they inspire us, they ring every bell in our being. They will understand whether they are veterans or not by the horrors of combat, the noise, the confusion, the fear, the fatigue, the terrifying unmistakable, undescribable smell of blood. They will understand that of all the horrors of combat, none is worse than the loneliness. With death and near death experiences, the warriors is ultimately alone. Just him, with his hopes and his fears. In their loneliness, soldiers look to symbols for comfort, a letter, a photograph, a holy medal, or a lock of hair. They will understand that the greatest conqueror of fear and loneliness, the greatest symbol of hope, the constant companion of our troops and their supreme inspiration is Old Glory. No other symbol, nothing, says better that one is not alone.

So it sounds so trite, but I think it is so important that when we vote we look at what is in a candidate's heart, not what is in his hand. I hope that you all vote and that when you do, you will vote for candidates of character, who are dedicated to the Constitution of our founders, who respect the will of the people. And if you do that, we will recapture our flag.

Whether we win or lose in this Congress—but I am confident that we are going to win—it is a great comfort to me that you are never going to give up doing what is right, no matter how long that takes, because that is why you exist. You exist simply to do what is right for this country.

I want you to know how much I enjoy every time I am with you and how much I appreciate your kindnesses to me. You are family, and for folks like you and your America,

I would gladly give my life. For the other America, the cultural aliens, many in the media, I would not shed one drop of blood. America desperately needs people like you and me, who have been and who are truly to be cannon water for the forces of freedom. But we need to realize it, before it is too late.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The status of our men in uniform has been a top concern of The American Legion since our founding in 1919. The man in Washington, D.C. who has daily control over their lives, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, joins us by a video.

...The video begins.

Three years ago, I had the pleasure of addressing many of you at your annual convention in Orlando. At that time I spoke with you about a great challenge and opportunity for America abroad; reaching out to welcome three new European democracies into the NATO alliance in order to build a safer and more secure world.

In recent months I have spoken to many of you again, by video at your National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions here in Washington and at your State Conventions and Legion Posts across the nation. And I spoke about another great challenge and opportunity for America, this time here at home. Reaching out to our fellow Americans to help them better appreciate those of our men and women in uniform who ensure a safer, more secure world. As I have said before, there was a time not so long along when most Americans knew someone in the military, family member or a friend. Today, a smaller all-volunteer force means fewer Americans have direct personal experience with the Armed Forces. Fewer Americans understand who our military men and women are and what they do. As a nation we simply could not afford a public that fails to appreciate the unique struggles of our military. Nor can we afford a military that is isolated from the citizens that it serves.

That is why my wife, Janet and I, are leading a campaign to revitalize this critical link by talking to the American people about their Armed Forces. That is why in recent months I have encouraged the Legion to our efforts. So I want to take this occasion to thank you for answering that call. I want to thank you for embarking on a whole series of initiatives and events across the country. By visiting our forces on ships and bases around the nation, you are becoming powerful advocates for their quality of life. And you are encouraging them to be part of the communities in which they are based. By joining hands with the Army, and soon the other services, you will be able to assist the recruiters in your cities and towns. And by using this convention to recognize soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and Coast Guardsmen who have dedicated their times and talents to local communities you remind all Americans that this a campaign that begins with each of us.

For eight-two years now The American Legion has been a proud and powerful voice for American veterans. Today you are lending your voices and hands to another great cause. Indeed, when it comes to America and its military, The American Legion is a bridge like no other. As proud veterans you can remind your neighbors and communities what it means to wear this nation's uniform and why we do, need America's support. As respected voices within your communities, you can help convey America's appreciation to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen.

On behalf of the entire Department of Defense and our men and women in uniform, thank you. Thank you for your enduring service on behalf of God and country. Thank you in joining us in this great effort to strengthen the bonds between America and its military.

...The video ends.

Presentation: Spirit of Service Awards
Alan G. Lance, Sr., National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: It is now time to make the first ever presentations of the Spirit of Service Awards. As The American Legion looked at the reconnect program, our partnership with the Department of Defense, we wanted to honor men and women who reflect the great spirit of service to others that our founders of our organization considered to be essential. Each of the services selected a single individual to receive this recognition. These five young American military members have been with us this weekend. They are all new members of The American Legion. They, like the rest of us reflect a strong commitment to serving others, a spirit of service that deserves the highest recognition that The American Legion can provide.

You briefly met the five individuals during the opening ceremony, now I would like to take them to join at the lectern a little bit later. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Annette Marie French, Marine Sergeant Evella Smith, Air Force Sergeant Billy Fly, Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Corey King, and Army Sergeant Laura Jernigan. Each of the them will receive an impressive award which will include their name, branch of service and is inscribed as follows: 2000 Spirit of Service Award for exemplary service to God, country and to the community.

Let me begin by introducing Evella Smith of the United States Marine Corp. She is stationed at Twenty-nine Palms California. As a full time Marine, a wife of a Marine, and a mother of a three year old future Marine, her off duty service is remarkable. She spearheads a Sunday School Service at her church. She also works the church's hotline for teens of the community. The goal is to keep teens out of trouble with socially responsible activities on the weekends. She also serves the elderly community through a project that provides services, such a yard work, household chores, and grocery shopping for those older citizens who cannot do these things for themselves. She also works with the elderly in Bible study programs. Finally, she has taken a keen interest in the area's Red Cross Blood Drives. Her efforts have increased blood donations by three hundred percent. The recommendation for Evella for this award closed with the following comment,"We have come to expect as soon as Sergeant Smith finds anymore time to volunteer in Twenty-nine Palms community, she will gladly do that". I would like to add, in an age when we all seem to blame the lack of time for not being involved, this remarkable Marine puts all to shame.

SERGEANT EVELLA SMITH: They took me because there wasn't a speaking part. I want to thank The American Legion for such a prestigious award. It definitely has been an honor to be recognized, not only in the Marine Corps, but among the citizens here that I truly help. I truly want to help on a daily basis. I want to thank my husband and my son for tagging along with me because it has been tough for them but it has been the best and I truly thank everyone for this award.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Next let me tell you about the young man from the United States Air Force, Billy Fly. He is a member of the 625th Air Mobility Support Squadron stationed at Navigation Station, Rota, Spain. His off duty volunteer of efforts not only mirror the spirit of service of The American Legion founders, but it also speaks volumes by reflecting the best of all American citizens. He organizes charity drives, tutors in an elementary school, sponsors efforts to assist underprivileged children. His on-duty performance has not suffered. He was the air mobility command nominee for one of twelve

Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 1999. It is a pleasure to recognize a spirit of service by including him in the first group of recipients of our awards.

SERGEANT BILLY FLY: I thank The American Legion for honoring me for such an honorable award. I had great kinship throughout the Air Force and throughout my family. Coming from a small town, The American Legion played a big role in our community which fostered me all the way up to the Air Force. I had great mentors, like Master Sergeant Sodo, my wife, my father, my God and my country. It is a great honor to be recognized by this award.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The United States Navy recipient of our 2000 Spirit of Service Award is Annette French. This young lady has an important and a stressful military job. Yet, she finds time to volunteer again and again. Some of the agencies in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia that she has included: The Special Olympics, Partners in Education, Youth Cheerleading Coach, Urban League of Hampton Roads, Norfolk State University' Scholarship Fund-raising, more than ten thousand dollars raised by this young person, Neptune Festival, and Kids Voting Day. In working with these organizations, she has given more than one thousand hours of time in the past few years. And finally, she did it all while completing her Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Leo University. Petty Office French most certainly deserves to be the first sailor to receive this award.

PETTY OFFICER ANNETTE FRENCH: Thank you very much. I really appreciate this award. I will continue to strive to help others and as a Legionnaire I will bring fellowship mates into the legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The next recipient of the Spirit of Service Award is Petty Officer Corey King of the United States Coast Guard. Petty Officer King had the shortest trip to come to Milwaukee because he is stationed in Sturgeon Bay about one hundred miles from here. Yet his volunteer accomplishments began in Anchorage, Alaska. There he volunteered more than two thousand hours by taking special needs children into his home. He provided a stable and safe home for them, as well as a model family structure. It is my pleasure to present to you the first Spirit of Service Award ever to a member of the United States Coast Guard.

PETTY OFFICER COREY KING: I wish to thank my wife, who unfortunately could not be here, but she was the sole inspiration for getting me involved in organizations such as this. She is always joking because I always get the recognition, and she doesn't. So I just wanted to make sure that she gets some of this as well. I thank The American Legion for this high honor and I will use this as my inspiration for the future to do something as this again.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Our fifth recipient of Spirit of Service Award is Sergeant Laura Jernigan, United States Army. Sergeant Jernigan is a solid presence in the lives of my teenagers in Hawaii. In fact, they probably miss her right now because she is serving with the U.S. Border Patrol in Texas for a few months. Sergeant Jernigan is a strong mentor with two local high schools. She is active in drug and alcohol awareness education for students. She is also a Big Sister where she works with two fifteen year olds with a history of drug abuse. Since she started working with them, they have been drug free. Last year Sergeant Jernigan developed the Wires Against Drugs Program. It is a program designed to give teenagers something to do during the summer months. Fifty-six students enrolled in 1999. Fifty-six students remain drug and alcohol free during their summer vacation. To top it all off, Sergeant Jernigan is active member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. My congratulations to you Sergeant Jernigan for being the first soldier to receive the Spirit of Service Award.

SERGEANT LAURA JERNIGAN: To my former Army people Whoa! Some of you might laugh, but the biggest thanks I have to give is to my dog. He is my partner. Without him I could not get through to the children of the United States of America. You can talk through a dog better than you can through a human being. So I use him and I use him a lot. I have to thank my father, who is in the audience because he raised me to know what is right and what to stand for, and what to stand up for and that is the United States of America. We will teach the children of today to stand up for the United States of America and we won't have to worry about all the problems of tomorrow.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I would invite all of our recipients to join us along with General Brady, General Maude to congratulate these fine folks.

Delegates to this Convention I believe these proud Legionnaires have set a standard that we all can aspire to, they truly do have a spirit of service commitment that deserves our recognition.

Our next guest this morning is a solid supporter of Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen's Reconnect Program. As the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel he is vitally concerned about recruitment and retainment in the modern Army. We in The American Legion are committed to helping the military reach more potential volunteers. And we are committed in helping those in uniform to stay connected with the communities in which they live. Welcome a member of the Department of Indiana, Post 777, Major General Timothy Maude.

Address: Major General Timothy Maude, Department of the Army
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel

I could not tell you how truly honored I am to stand before you today and have an opportunity to report out to you on the state of affairs on your United States Army. Without question, the contributions of the men and women of The American Legion and veterans across America have made it possible for me to stand before here today that I am so proud to be part of the strongest, most formidable Army in the world. It is because of your work and your legacy that we remain a strong and respected nation and I am truly honored to be with you today.

I would like to talk to you about two things, readiness and the soldiers that serve in your Army. As most of you know there, is a statute, a law, called Title 10 of the United States Code, that mandates that each of our service chiefs have a responsibly to man, equip, and train the force and to provide the respected forces to the war fighting sinks around the nation. Our goal is simple: to be ready to meet the national security needs all the time. Now, this is a complicated and challenging task that requires a varied approach by each of the services depending on their unique capabilities and the environment in which that service chief sees his forces operating. So if you can understand the perspective of the service chief, then you can better understand why each service approaches its role of service just a little bit differently.

Today I will give you the perspective of the United States Army. I am here to talk to you about how we do things in Washington, D.C. from my perspective as the Army's Personnel Chief. Now, I understand where you come from, and I know that you probably have referred mostly to people like me as, "Who's stupid idea was this?" Well, I am the current architect of all of the stupid ideas affecting personnel policy. Just last week I was walking through Arlington Cemetery, which is just adjacent to Fort Myer where my wife

and I live. And I overheard a young mother and her son as they were walking among the tombstones. One of the tombstones read: Here lies a great Army Staff General and an honest man. And the little boy looked at this mother and said to her, "Mom, why did they bury two men in that grave?"

I plead guilty, I am a Washington bureaucrat for the time being. So let me give you a little bit of a bureaucratic take on what we have going on.

I think you will find while I talk about the Army there is a common theme that applies to the challenges that all the services are facing today. Our challenge is to remain relevant and prepared for all of the challenges that await us in the 21st century. The sustained growth of the economy, changing world security challenges, and the technological boom have presented us with new and dynamic environment and, we think, in the Army some historic opportunities. I would like to tell you about our plan to take your Army into the next century.

Our Chief of Staff, with the full support of the Army, has embarked on what I believe to be a very courageous campaign to break a dangerous cycle we have followed in the Army throughout our history. He has correctly observed that America has a sad and costly tradition of being unprepared for war. Some of you have learned that first hand. The reasons vary, but chief among them is as a nation we generally become complacent during times of peace. Despite having to relearn those lessons over throughout our history, and thanks in large part to your accomplishments, our American military is clearly the most powerful and respected in the world today. We continue to answer our nation's call in a variety of circumstances in every corner of the earth. Now the complexion of the threats that we prepare for today are different than they were five years or ten years ago. And they certainly are not the same, in our view, that they will be five years from now or ten years from now. The threat extends from disaster relief and firefighting in the United States, to humanitarian assistance on one end of the spectrum, and to global war on the other. And we have to be ready for all.

Now for the past half century our Army formations have been structured for operations on the high end of the spectrum, for general warfare, that is, what are traditionally considered our war fighting units. Clearly, war fighting is that part of our contract with you, the American people, that is not negotiable. We must, and always remain, prepared to fight and win our nation's wars. Remaining organized, trained, and equipped properly is our primary focus and that will not change, even as we attend to those missions on the lower end of the spectrum of warfare, humanitarian assistance and peace keeping. The question then becomes, as the world environment changes and the military role in that environment has changed and our forces have been downsized, are we organized as best we can be? Are we manning our formations in the proper manner and are we properly equipped to continue to do your bidding in a much more diverse environment?

We in the Army have done an analysis and think we are probably not. The strategic environment and realities of the Army's current condition necessities, we believe, a time for profound change. We recognize what our future shortcomings are, and we know that we have real operational deficiencies in what we expect to be the future challenges. So the Army has embarked on a transformation. General Shinseki, our Chief, and Secretary Caldera have chartered a course that involves developing a force for the future, while at the same time being cognizant of our today's responsibilities, capitalizing and re-engineering our current formation as we plan for the future. It is a very ambitious plan and will affect every aspect and every organization of the Army. It will be continually, and the Army will be continually measured against our ability to provide capable effective resource forces across

the entire spectrum of operation. Now as we do this transformation we understand there is no time out. We do not take a tactical break. Today we have 120,000 soldiers stationed around the world. We have over 22,596 soldiers today as we sit here in Milwaukee on operational deployments in eighty-nine countries throughout the world.

Over the past several weeks we had 3,974 soldiers deployed in the western part of the United States assisting in firefighting. Since 1989, the average frequency of your Army's contingency deployments has increased from once every four years to once every fourteen weeks. And while your soldiers are busy doing that, I am proud to tell you eighteen Army Olympians are on their way to Sydney to show just how fine we are across the whole spectrum.

This transformation we are in the process of is to meet the missions that await us in the future and we think it is the most significant transformation we have made in over a hundred years. Over periods of transformation, our periods of transformation have been forged as a result of conflict, World War I and II, Korea , Vietnam. Even Desert Shield and Desert Storm provide numerous examples of military innovation under the stress of eminent combat. This transformation will be different. We are attempting to do this in a period of relative peace. Now let me give you an honest assessment of where we are in our personnel readiness.

Our soldiers are in the right formations and in the right grade of skills. We recently completed, as I know you all well know, a reduction in our active guard and reserve forces. On the active side, in the past seven years, we have gone from 780,000 soldiers on active duty to 480,000 and now nearly sixty percent of all of our formations are in the Army National Guard and the United States Army Reserve. Now that this draw-down is complete, we have examined the manor in which we have resourced our formation and, in particular, I would like to talk to you about how we have been manning them.

As we completed the draw-down, we found that most of our formations were fully manned in that portion of the Army that was working draw-down, the institutional Army, the training base, the infrastructure. As a result of those efforts, our war fighting units were being manned at only an average of ninety-three percent of their authorized strength, while those other formations were well over one hundred percent. That is as it should have been during that period in our history. But during that period, let me assure you, we were not at risk of being able to do our job. Our war fighting formations and our Army divisions were capable of mobilizing and employing within the time frame required. We did however recognize that now is the time to shift our priorities, so we have. So starting last October, the Chief of Staff and the Secretary directed that we put the sharp point back on the tip of the spear and we have begun redistributing our soldiers into our war fighting formations to focus back on our core competency which is not drawing down, but being prepared to fight and win our nation's wars.

So today as I stand before you, our Army divisions are all at, or nearly at one hundred percent strength and today I can report to you that the ten divisions are at their highest personnel priority level that they have been in several years. Now we think this will pay in huge dividends as we provide to our commanders and full formation for training. And those commanders can place their emphasis on being ready to deploy and being ready to meet any threat to the force. In subsequent years, in this fiscal year index, we will then focus our energies now that we have our divisions reconstituted with full person compliment of personnel to do the same for the other war fighting formations and for the institutional Army. While the downsizing was coming to a close, now we experienced another challenge.

A number of independent, but not unrelated things, came to work to make it hard for us to get where we wanted to be. The strength in the economy, which we all think is great, a more transient workforce, and a dot-com generation, have opportunities ties and distractions that frankly, when I began serving and when you served, were never issues for the Army leadership to have to worry about. All these things have changed things dramatically as to how we recruit and retain our forces, how we attract young men and women to join to the Army. And our readiness is directly impacted by the number of people we have on board.

So let me talk for a few seconds about recruiting because I know you have read a lot about that the last couple of years. The fact is we have been struggling. But this year, for example we started expecting to be as many as 10,000 short in our recruiting efforts. That is a light infantry division. Well, don't panic, we have creative solutions for this. So if I can ask you to all rise and raise your right hand and repeat after me!? Probably a bad idea, I think you are all right. It would not be good for the recruits to be 50 years younger than the drill sergeants!

We turned this around. This has been a great recruiting year for your Army and for the Department of Defense. This year we will achieve our recruiting goals in the active component, in the Army National Guard, and the United States Army Reserve. We will have achieved those goals measured in quality of high school diploma grads, aptitude area scores, and intelligence levels. There was no comprising in quality as we have reconstituted your Army. Now don't get me wrong. This has not been easy. We have instituted numerous programs during the year that have helped. I would like to tell you about a couple of them.

Certainly, we have increased bonuses and certainly we have expanded our bonus programs so we can reach different parts of the market. But we have been successful because we relied on that resource that has served us most throughout our history, the noncommissioned officer, the sergeant of the United States Army, who has been out in the trenches, working day and night, away from their family, away from their loved ones, inviting young men and women to join the ranks of this great Army and because of their hard work. Because of the hard work of sergeants, we have been successful in turning this around.

Now I am here today to ask you for your help to make these NCOs have in front of them next year and the year after as we continue to compete in a very strong economy. I need your help and your support for them to be successful. You are the most the respected citizens in your community. In the recruiting business we call you influencer. An influencer is a person of credibility who others in the community look to pass judgement on whether something is good or is bad. As you speak about your experiences in the service, as you speak about other people's experiences in the service, if you do that in a positive way, it influences young people in a positive way. If you do it in less than a positive way, it has a negative effect, it makes our recruiting sergeants work that much harder.

Now I know I stand before today a very friendly audience because I know your National Commander and the Commander of the United States Army Recruiting Command just recently signed an agreement that pledges mutual support and cooperation of The American Legion and recruiters all across the nation. And I wanted to personally thank you today for that commitment and personally today to ask you continue with that commitment as we move in the coming year.

Serving this nation is the absolute right thing to do. If you are between seventeen and twenty-four years old, in my opinion, you cannot afford to walk past a United States Army recruiting station and not join. There is no better opportunity, no better way, to get a jump

start on life. It is not just the cash bonuses, and it is not just the opportunities for fun and travel, it is the offer for being part of a valued based organization. It is the opportunity to learn discipline, it's the opportunity to mature in a difficult and challenging job.

Let me tell you what else we have to offer because these are exciting programs I want you to know about. This past summer we signed an agreement with many corporations, like Pepsi Cola and General Dynamics, called Partnership for Youth Success. These companies and hundreds others like them, are signing employment agreements with America's youth simultaneously with them joining the United States Army. The way it works is simple. A young man or woman signs up with the United States Army and they also sign up to go with the Pepsi Cola or General Dynamics after they finish their two or three year commitment. This is good for that soldier, this is good for the United States Army, this is good for that company, this is good for America. Because we are then giving to that company a trained, disciplined, motivated young person that an employer knows that they will be able to count on to be present for duty on Monday morning.

We have also begun another program that the Secretary just announced three weeks ago. It is called the Army University Online. And this initiative a partnership between the United States Army and hundreds of educational institutions across America to empower our soldiers to obtain a college degree or professional technical credentials while they are in the service, no matter where they serve, no matter how often we move them. We will provide them computers, we will provide them access to these colleges, and we will provide them time while they are training and while they are working, and we will provide them a guarantee of an opportunity if they put in the effort to leave the Army after their commitment with a minimum of a two year degree. But more than that, we will offer them a valuable life experience, doing something that matters. Just as you did, doing something they can be proud of, just as you have. These opportunities are open to young men and women today and just like they were open to me thirty-four years ago and just like they were open to you many years before that.

I would like to tell you about my experience as a high school graduate in Indianapolis, Indiana, almost thirty-four years ago and joined the United States Army. After I finished just one semester in college, and not very brilliantly, I dropped out and had no focus. And my dad said I know where you can get some focus, son. And I joined the Army and the Army trained me, and it taught me discipline, it gave me an opportunity to finish my Bachelor's Degree through about nine years of night school. It gave me an opportunity to finish my Master's Degree through about four more years of night school. It gave me responsibility, it gave me increasing jobs that mattered, it gave me a sense of pride and of focus. So here I stand before you today, as the Personnel Officer for the largest, greatest, strongest Army in the world, managing a 22 billion dollar payroll just for the active component alone. Is this a great country, or what?

This is a great Army and I say to you, just like I have said to people across the nation, please give us your sons and daughters, your grandsons and granddaughters, we will treat them with dignity and respect and we will train them and help mold them into responsible citizens and we will train them and return them to you to be responsible citizens in their communities.

You all represent the legacy of patriots, citizens, soldiers, and American heros. Tom Brokaw a couple of years ago wrote about those who fought in World War II, "the greatest generation." I am honored to be with members of the greatest generation and I am also honored to be with members today who are marking the fiftieth anniversary of their service

in the Korean War. I had an opportunity just a while ago to talk to one of those great leaders who fought, three times he reminded me, on Pork Chop Hill. Tomorrow, I know you will officially recognize those veterans. I pay tribute to them, I pay tribute to the other great Americans who have fought along with me, my fellow vets from Vietnam, those who served in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, in Kosovo and in Bosnia.

I talked earlier about the perspective from this soldier's point of view. I would like to close by reading a passage written by another soldier, not unlike you, who despite tremendous sacrifices and certain danger, answered his nation's call. From his perspective there was no other choice. It was written on the 14th of July, 1861, just outside Manassas, Virginia. Major Sullivan Ballou, of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry volunteers wrote the following to his wife.

> Dear Sarah, indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days, perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write to you again, I feel impelled to write a few lines, that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more. ... I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans upon the triumph of government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution, and I am willing, perfectly willing to lay down all of my joys in this life to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.

Major Ballou was killed a week later in the Battle of Bull Run.

The 1.2 million men and women of your United States Army and the millions of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and the Department of the Defense are working hard everyday to honor the legacy of Major Ballou. We are all working hard everyday to honor your legacy. We remain focused, your armed forces, and your Army remains ready and I think you can be proud of what we are doing.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I ask General Brady to please join me at the podium. General Brady yesterday was selected by the Past Commanders Club to receive the Good Guy Award. He certainly is. We all know that. I would also ask Al Ford, Past National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Michigan to come forward. He is also the Chairman of the CFA for the Department of Michigan and Al Ford also chairs the Michigan New Post and Revitalization Committee. They have started twenty-five new posts in the last year of so.

Al Ford, Department of Michigan
Past National Executive Committeeman

On behalf of our Delegation Chairman, Norbert Schollett and our Department Commander, Ken Dittenber, and all of the other ninety plus thousand Legionnaires from Michigan, I am pleased to present you a check for the Citizens Flag Alliance in the amount of $2,000.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: We would invite similar donations at this time if you have money.

Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplain

The man who has served as our National Chaplain this year is truly dedicated to the principals of God and country. Bishop David R. Brown is a member of Robert H. Burns Post 16 in Covington, Louisiana. The Bishop is a U.S. Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War. He joined The American Legion in 1993. It is with great pleasure that I present Bishop Brown a Certificate of Appreciation for his caring and devoted service to The American Legion. The certificate reads: The Certificate of Appreciation presented to Bishop David R. Brown, appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion 1999-2000. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BROWN: Commander, I thank you for this award. It has been a great honor for me to serve with you this year. With God's grace, I plan to continue to serve our veterans through The American Legion. I am a veteran, I like being with veterans, I like ministering to veterans and with God's grace I will continue to do so.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The chair recognizes Stanley Gold, representing the only Post Office Post in the United States.

STANLEY GOLD: I present this check for $500 from our Post. We are a small Post, 157 members and we are ninety-eight percent paid.

Presentation: Plaque of Appreciation
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Past National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The next order of business is to recognize Anaheim, California for hosting the 81st National Convention of The American Legion. To help with this order of business I call upon immediate Past National Commander Butch Miller of Virginia. Butch please make this presentation and tell us, is morale still high?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I have to follow my Commander's orders. Morale is high! On behalf of the national organization, particularly the Department of Virginia, and myself and all of the other folks who happen to be there last year in Anaheim, we had a great convention. That convention was no accident. It was because of the hard work of many, many people in the Department of California. The corporation for that convention was headed up by Past National Commander Bruce Thiesen. Bruce obviously did a wonderful job because since that time the governor has appointed him as acting Secretary of the Veterans Affairs for the State of California and I hope he goes on to get that job permanently. Bruce, it is with great pleasure that I present to you this certificate that says: In appreciation of the hospitality of the City of Anaheim, commemorating the 81st National Convention of The American Legion given in Anaheim, California in 1999. Signed by myself, attested by Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant, signed by yourself.

BRUCE THIESEN: t is indeed a pleasure to receive that plaque from you. And on behalf of the many Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion of the Department of California, we appreciated the opportunity to put on that convention. We tried to take heed of what many convention commissions have asked earlier and that is to keep everything in a close proximity. You made sure we did that. With your help as National Commander and with the National Organization, we feel we put on a very

successful convention. And thanks to the many Legionnaires from throughout the country. We appreciate your support and your endeavor and patience as we put on that convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: This time the Chair recognizes the Department Commander of Pennsylvania for purposes of a presentation.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER COCCIMIGLIO: On behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania, we would like to present this check in the sum of $515 for the Citizens Flag Alliance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I call upon our National Adjutant, Robert W. Spanogle of the Department of Michigan to issue to the Call for Convention.

Call for Convention
Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutant

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The call for the 82nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 82nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5-7, 2000. The convention business sessions will be held in the Midwest Express Center, Halls A and B on the third 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, September 7th, 2000, 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 August 7th 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 the 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 within 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

Convention Committee	**No. of Members to which each Dept. is entitled:**
Americanism	One Delegate
Children & Youth	One Delegate
Constitutional Amendments	One Delegate
Credentials and Internal Affairs	
Credentials and Other Internal Matters, (Sections I & II)	One Delegate
Membership (Section III)	One Delegate
Economic	
Employment & Veterans Preference	One Delegate
Other Economic Matters	One Delegate
Finance	One Delegate
Foreign Relations	One Delegate
Legislation & Rules	One Delegate

National Security Committee; Joint Meeting (Includes Aerospace, Defense, Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs)	One Delegate
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	
Claims Rating	One Delegate
Hospital and Medical Services	One Delegate

Mr. Commander, that concludes the call for the 82nd Annual National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I now declare the 82nd National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened.

This time at the program I make my report to the Delegates.

Report: National Commander's Report to the Convention
Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
National Commander

Three hundred and sixty-two days ago I stood before you in Anaheim, California to accept your nomination and election as National Commander of The American Legion. Today, I humbly stand before you, grateful for the opportunity that you gave me to serve. I am satisfied with what we accomplished, mindful of the challenges we continue to face and confident in our ability, determination and fortitude to get the job done. I want to thank the entire American Legion family for their support and their encouragement.

In every department that I visited, the hospitality was warm, genuine and deeply appreciated. Often as I recited the Preamble to our Constitution I found myself reflecting upon what a vibrant organization we represent. Each tenet address an important aspect of citizenship. Nearly every day I saw these principles and beliefs put into action by men and women and young people of The American Legion family. But I was equally proud to see the end result of these unselfish acts, the strengthening of America.

As my year draws to a close, I am often asked, what will you remember most about your year? Well, the whole year was memorable. So many wonderful people, so many wonderful unforgettable opportunities, so many incredible moments. It is truly hard to narrow them all down. Having traveled all over the United States and fifteen foreign countries and aboard naval vessels, I tried to serve as the eyes, the ears, heart of The American Legion.

I remember my visit to Omaha Beach, where about a thousand young Americans turned the sea read over a half a century ago. Blood that was shed for the freedoms that we enjoy today. I visited a cemetery that overlooks Omaha Beach, at Colleville Sur Mer. I had the distinct honor to participate in a wreath laying ceremony there. There was a small group of Europeans on hand watching the ceremony itself. As the band played the National Anthem, I felt my body swell with pride, then the somber notes of taps pierced the air. That was truly one of the most profound experiences of my entire life. Following the wreath laying, the Europeans who had watched the ceremony, tearfully and enthusiastically thanked me. These comments were addressed to me, but they were thanking veterans of the United States of

America for saving the world. Standing there with my Legion cap on, I just happened to be the American veteran who whom they shared their gratitude for the unselfish and heroic acts of other veterans, another generation of veterans, the greatest generation of Americans.

Another memorable experience was the opening of the D-Day Museum in New Orleans. Thousands of veterans and legionnaires attended that ceremony. I had a chance to visit with many of the men who actually stormed beaches in Normandy. I stood in awe of these genuine American heros I had the privilege of talking with them about their experiences. As in the case with most combat vets, they spoke little of their personal roles, but focused instead of the heroism of those with whom they had fought and had the privilege of serving with. I also couldn't help but notice the thousand of family members of deceased D-Day veterans. Too many fine young Americans paid the ultimate price in foreign soil. Others returned home to their families and resumed their civilian lives. Their legacy and sacrifice lives on in the hearts and minds of their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. So great was the impact of what they had done, that I found myself profoundly moved and humbled to be in the presence of so many members of this greatest generation.

Finally, I will never forget visiting the men and women aboard the Armed Forces of the United States. These patriotic men and women represent the heart and soul of America. These are the Minutemen, the Yanks, the Rough Riders, the Dough Boys, the GI Joes and GI Janes of America's past. Young men and women who have volunteered to serve their country and wear its military uniform proudly. They have taken the same soldier's oath that we did. They are our sons, our daughters, our grandkids, nieces and nephews, the best of America's best.

This year marks a beginning of a three year commemoration of the Korean War. Back then, of course, it was called a police action. But if you ask the veterans who were there, they will tell you that it was war, pure and simple. This year I traveled to Korea. I could not forget an event that occurred in August of 1976. American soldiers stationed in South Korea were detailed to the De-militarized Zone to trim trees for security purposes. Unprovoked North Koreans grabbed the soldiers axes and implements and then killed a Major and American Lieutenant and injured two additional troops.

At that time I was stationed with 172nd Infantry Brigade in Alaska. I received the call, got my TA 50 gear, my copy of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, my 45 caliber pistol, my M-16 rifle, and I waited. I was sequestered with three battalion of troops ready to go into action in Korea. The Air Force put some B-52s in the air for support and then the Army sent in a crew with a chain saw and forget about trimming the tree, let's cut it down. They cut down that tree and waited for the North Koreans who had killed unarmed and unprepared Americans, to respond to prepared and determined Americans. That operation was code named, Operation Paul Bunyan. Nearly twenty-four years later, during my visit to Korea, I was there where this tree was cut down and those officers were killed. You cannot imagine how it felt for me to be at the very spot where that tree had once stood. I reflected on the lives that were lost as a handful of Americans did their duty and how close I came to being right there, twenty-four years earlier.

I remember walking into a building that closes the DMZ, as I walked in I was in South Korea, after a few steps across the room I was in North Korea. While I was standing in the North Korean end of the room, armed North Korean soldiers kept a very close eye on me. When they saw my red cap and my American Legion Emblem, they kept a close eye on me. But then they saw the word Idaho on my cap, and they became very concerned. They must

have heard that all people from Idaho deserve very careful watching. Little do they know that I have a picture of them looking over my shoulder.

The work of The American Legion family is immensely important. There are four million of us, all working toward a common goal. Individually as we physically carry out daily tasks it may be hard to understand just how important our role is to the big picture. Let me highlight your accomplishments of this last year. The American Legion once again made its mark on Capitol Hill. The American Legion lobbied Congress for adequate appropriation for VA health care. Currently, Congress is working on funding for the VA fiscal year 2002 budget. It appears that the VA will receive a 1.3 billion dollar increase in veterans health care spending from the last fiscal year. That makes a 3 billion dollar increase in federal spending for veterans health care over the last two years as a result of your direct efforts and with the help of Congress.

Last year President Clinton wanted to freeze the VA budget at its 1997 level. But The American Legion challenged that decision. Thanks to your grassroots lobbying efforts, Congress increased the President's recommendation by 1.7 billion dollars. This year President Clinton requested an 1.3 billion dollar increase. Both the White House and Congress understood your previous message very loudly and very clearly. Last year The American Legion alerted Congress about the quality of life issues faced by military service personnel. Among the concerns were pay, retirement benefits, food stamps for military service personnel, and health care. For the first time in decades, nearly all of the branches of the service failed to meet the recruiting and retention goals. The American Legion continues to advocate quality of life improvements for our troops. Thanks to your lobbying efforts, the Armed Forces received a 4.8 percent military pay raise on January 1. They can expect another targeted 3.7 percent pay raise in the fiscal year 2001.

Congress also took action to restore retirement pay to fifty percent, instead of forty percent of active duty base pay. Now The American Legion is asking Congress to address an array of health care issues faced by military retirees and their dependents. The American Legion believes that the Department of Veterans Affairs could and should pay a much larger role in the delivery of quality health care to military retirees and their families.

The American Legion had a huge role in the passage of the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act. Among the provisions contained in this landmark legislation were mandatory health care for certain veterans, the construction of six new national cemeteries, authorization for the VA to treat military retirees, and new enforceable veterans preference laws.

Congress redirected the Department of Defense to develop a plan to provide military honors at funeral for all honorably discharged veterans. The American Legion worked closely with Congress and Department of Defense to achieve this objective. Late in July, the House of Representatives passed without an opposing vote, a bill which would reaffirm and clarify the Department of Veterans Affairs responsibility and its duty to assist veterans in developing their benefits claims. The bill known as the Duty to Assist Bill, now moves to the Senate for further consideration. The provisions of the bill place several important requirements directly on the lap of the VA. We at The American Legion believe the Duty to Assist Bill is the best approach available to assist veterans, many of whom have waited too long to receive benefits. Each of you would do your fellow veterans a service by letting your Senators know that you support HR4864 and urge them to support the measure when it arrives in the United States Senate.

Another major achievement was getting the Senate to vote on our Flag Protection Amendment. Although the vast majority of Senators supported the amendment, we failed to muster the necessary two-thirds vote for passage. There is an old saying, "Forgive your advisories, but never forget their names". In November voters will have an opportunity to exercise their voice. For thirty-seven United States Senators who believe they are smarter or mor knowledgeable than their constituents or their state legislatures. Some are seeking re-election, some are seeking higher office. The outcome of the Congressional races will determine the fate of the Flag Protection Amendment in the 107th Congress. We are still fighting for Old Glory and we will not quit until this nation's magnificent symbol gets the protection that it deserves. We will continue to educate others about the United States flag and how it represents more cloth and colors and how it led us into battle, how it comforts us in far away lands, how it embraces over fallen brothers and sisters, how it marks the resting place of heros, how it leads us home with parades and pageantry, and it unites us as no other symbol can. Throughout my overseas travels the most beautiful sight, I saw was Old Glory. Those stars and stripes reassured me of my safety, of my freedom, and reminded me of my country's pride contribution to the world. My fellow Legionnaires, Flag Protection Amendment will pass and when it does it will be due to your dedication and perseverance.

We achieved a major breakthrough this year when The American Legion focused national attention on the status of Armed Forces and current national security policies. When my term began on September 9, 1999, nobody in America was writing about the status or the weakness of the American Armed Forces. Few people knew that thousands of service personnel and their families were on food stamps. Few people knew that the National Guard units were being sent half way around the world on routine peace keeping missions or humanitarian deployments, involuntary deployments on short notice for extended periods of time. Few people knew that the United States Navy was cross decking crew members and sending sailors on back to back deployments. The national media appeared to be unaware of these dire conditions and circumstances. Rarely did any national publication publish letters to the editor concerning any national shortfalls. But in September of 1999, no one outside of the beltway was talking about the plight of our military men and women, the pathetic state of our nation's military and real problems confronting this nation on national defense and sporadic foreign policy. No there are stories daily in the national media on these issues.

This morning if you read the *USA Today* you will find three stories about national preparedness issues and one leader to the editor from a captain in the United States Army, Combat Engineer, who is getting out because there is not enough money in the budget to have life fire exercises and he doesn't want to be responsible for the death of his troops because they are not trained well enough to take into combat. But don't be mislead, the problems are still there. They have not been corrected or totally addressed. Anyone who tells you differently is either misinformed, denying responsibility for his or her complicity in those fails or is lying for political survival or promotion at the cost of our national security. I have spoken candidly with numerous commanders, admirals, generals, company commanders, first sergeants, real troops, real sailors, real airmen, not as a representative as some political official or officer who wanted to hear only the good news, but as the National Commander seeking the truth, seeking the facts, seeking the real story, unvarnished and untainted. I got it straight and I am going to give it you the same way. We are over deployed. We are under funded. We are undermanned. We are undertrained. We are ill

prepared to defend ourselves or to go to war. We don't have a lot of time to correct this failed shortcomings. The longer and certain Pollyannas or political pawns are in denial trying to cover up these shortcomings, the more the danger increases. According to the CIA, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea will all have nuclear capability and the means of delivery to the North America continent by the year 2015.

Our defense spending is a percentage of gross domestic product is now lower then it was just prior to World War II. Think about that. The threats are as great or greater today as they were in 1940. Now thanks to your efforts, the national media is printing three to five national syndicated articles and scores of letters each week on this vital issue and it a campaign issue in this presidential election year. Thanks to the grassroots efforts of The American Legion family, the plight of servicemen and their families are now being addressed at the Pentagon, in Congress, and in State Capitals. Now America is beginning to realize that we do have a crisis and action must be taken now. In 1999 the question was, "Who would take the leadership role to make these changes and to bring this to America's attention?" The current administration inherited a military that won the Persian Gulf War in a matter of hours, but has transformed that greatest fighting force into the world's largest police force. Thirty-six deployments in the last seven years as the General told us this morning, one deployment every fourteen weeks. The vital interest, the national interest, it fails to support, it fails to get the support of the American people. It fails to muster the support of Congress and many of these deployments have no exit strategy. The people in Washington have failed to properly fund and properly staff the Armed Forces. Downsizing of the Armed Forces has stretched the all-volunteer force and the reserve components to a diminishing returns. Over the last twelve months The American Legion has served as served as the voice for GI Joe, GI Jane, and their families. Fortunately that voice was loud enough and persistent enough to be heard.

Finally, national security has become a critical issue in this presidential race. This is another issue on which informed voters can make a difference for generations to come. Our young troops today are just like you and just like me, serving their country because it is the honorable and right thing to do. They have the same concerns and fears as their civilian counterparts, they have families, they are patriotic and motivated. They are smart and they are young Americans who believe that they owe something to their country for the freedoms they enjoy and they are proud to serve. But look at the situation of the young soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine with a the young spouse and the small child. The spouse is trying to take care of that child during the day, get a college education, or work part-time at night just to make ends meet. In addition to this financial strain, that young military member is being sent from Haiti to Macedonia to Bosnia to Kosovo to Germany. What happens to that military family? The reality of the situation is that the military still has 6,300 military families on food stamps. One military family on food stamps in one too many. What kind of a military are we running? What kind of message are we sending to our troops? Whatever happened to the old adage, "Always take care of the troops, and take care of those who take care of America". Last year when the question was, "who is going to do it?", I said, we can do it. The American Legion family can do it. We are big enough, we are strong enough, focused to be the folks that turn the tide. And today I will tell you, it was The American Legion's 2.8 million members' persistence on that issue that has started to make a difference.

The troops in the field from E-1 to O-9, have told me so. They say to me, "You Legionnaires get to say things we would like to be able to say and tell America about, but we can't." They said to me, "Keep up the good work and go out there and get them." Who

takes the credit for turning the tide is not what is important. What is important is that we reverse direction on the number of deployments. What is important is that we are fully manned and equipped to win wars, not just participate in them. What is important is that military families do not suffer financial, medical, housing, or educational hardships due to their honorable military service to their country. What is important is that we take care of those who take care of our nation, those in the military who are willing to die to protect the freedom and lifestyle that we enjoy.

The American Legion knows plenty about family and family values. The very essence of The American Legion is based upon family and its values. They are second and third generations of Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, and Sons of The American Legion. Just look at the Americanism and Children & Youth programs. Together, our American Legion family is still America and adding value to our communities, to our states and to our nation. We teach the tenants of government through American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation. This year nearly seventeen thousand young men participated in Boys State at a cost of 3.3 million dollars. Of those participants, ninety-six who went on to participate in Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. We encourage young people to study and learn about our Constitution through the National High School Oratorical Contest. This year's contest had more than five thousand young people competing. The top three finishers received the total of $40,000 in scholarships. We sponsor scouting units and America Legion baseball teams, that foster team work and dedication to duty. The American Legion sponsored nearly 60,000 boy scouts this year at a cost of 1.7 million dollars. We sponsored more than 2,500 Legion baseball teams at a cost of 7.8 million dollars. We gave medals to Junior ROTC cadets, young people that demonstrate the leadership potential in high schools across the country. Nearly 8,000 cadets have received medals from The American Legion this year.

The American Legion family is for real and The American Legion, like any other family, goes through periods of dynamic change. Over the past few years its membership has experienced a gradual decline except for the Sons of The American Legion. It is easy to understand why. We are an organization of wartime veterans that contains a strong core of men and women who served during World War II, a war that ended fifty-five years ago. Our nation loses more than eleven hundred World War II veterans each and every day. Naturally, that is going to impact on our numbers. However, we must also realize that even with our nation's declining World War II population, we live in a country with more than 18 million Legion eligible veterans. This 2.8 million organization can be several times its current size. How do we make it happen?

Well, it is happening right now. Thanks to the recommendations of the Legionnaires on the 21st Century Committee, our organization is making strides to ensure that The American Legion will continue to stay strong in a manner consistent with the vision of our founders. The Reconnect Program started this year by Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen, at the suggestion of The American Legion, offers unprecedented opportunities for direct interface with the fine young men and women in our nation's Armed Forces.

Legionnaires through Reconnect can now see first hand today's military members at their installation. You will be able to see the conditions in which today active duty veterans are working. You will have the chance to talk with them one on one. You will get to hear some of their complaints and concerns and let them know they have a friend and an advocate in The American Legion. Then you can offer them an opportunity to join our ranks. Every sailor, soldier, airman, coast guardsman, or Marine on active duty today is eligible for membership in The American Legion. Most of them don't even know it.

And the most recent gallop poll conducted for The American Legion last year, one of the main reasons given to veterans not joining The American Legion was, "No one ever asked me." We must start asking the question. That is one avenue that today fellow Legionnaires are using to bolster the numbers of veterans in our rank. Another key to maintaining and promoting growth within our organization is the Post Development and Revitalization Programs. These programs involve a team of Legionnaires working with community officials to promote the ideals and principles of The American Legion and to stimulate the activity at an existing post or inspire the creation of a new post.

Let me share with you one of those success stories in these programs. A post in Forest City, North Carolina, was experiencing declining membership and inactivity. No one at the post was attending meetings or even running for office. A group of Legionnaires from North Carolina and our National Headquarters converged on that small town. After discussing the problem with existing post members they opened a membership booth, spoke with community leaders and elected officials, the county veterans service officer, and other civic organizations. The team ran press releases and conducted interviews with local media. They went door to door, talking to every eligible veteran and telling them about The American Legion. This group basically did everything under the sun to revitalize interest in The American Legion post in Forest City. The fruits of this effort are already apparent. The Forest City Post District went from last place to first place in membership this year. The post has already surpassed membership goals for this year and expectations are that post membership will hit an all time high in the coming months. This is just one example, but it is happening all over the nation.

The Post Revitalization and Development Program can work for you as well. We will continue to strengthen our American Legion family. And as we continue to strengthen our American Legion family, we will continue to fight on the front lines for the future of this country.

This year you once again made an impact, from the communities from which you serve, to the upcoming national election debates and issues. I thank you for your service and dedication. There are no finer men and women than those in this hall today and those that you represent. You, the Legionnaires are who are will forever remember. You Legionnaires who welcome me so heartily at every post that I visited. I am the richest man in America because I have 2.8 million comrades, brothers and sisters, and 15,000 posts across this great nation. I know that no matter where I travel I will never be too far from home.

I was recently asked what I wanted to be remembered for as your National Commander, and my response quite simply is, I want to be remembered as the guy from Idaho, who is lucky enough to be standing under the National Commander's cap, when The American Legion again made a huge difference in the direction of this nation, specifically regarding foreign policy and national defense. And each of the three hundred and sixty-two days, if I made any one of you proud to be a Legionnaire, if you said to yourself, "I'm glad that guy said that," or "it's about time somebody said that for the little guy," then my mission has been successful, my year worthwhile.

My thanks to all of my national officers and commission chairmen for their extraordinary efforts to the NEC and Staff for their cooperation, to Department officers for their loyalty and support, to Blue Cap Legionnaires, to The American Legion family of Idaho, to my professional staff in Idaho, Office of the Attorney General, Lawrence Wasden, my Chief of Staff; Janet Carter, my executive assistant; Matt McKeown and Shellie

McKeown who are here with us tonight from Idaho; and to my family, who sustained me and supported me in every turn.

Some of you may have done things differently, or thought that I should have approached issues a little bit differently. But, I will assure you for the past three hundred and sixty-two days I have given you and The American Legion everything I had in me, everyday. I gave the office, the organization, and each of you, my best shot. Yes, I will remember you and I will remember all of your support and I will remember through it all you were there with me and nothing is impossible. What will I remember most, without a doubt? I will remember you; my friends, my comrades, my American Legion family. Thank you for all you have done for me, *Vaya con dios,* go with God.

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

The section on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs met at 9:00 a.m., September 3, 2000, in Room 102D, 1st Level of the Midwest Express Center.

Herman G. Harrington of New York was elected Chairman, and Larry J. Besson of Illinois 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 (August 7, 2000); 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 follow.)

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 August 7, 2000, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 3,054 allocated as follows:

Alabama	31	Montana	18
Alaska	15	Nebraska	63
Arizona	45	Nevada	13
Arkansas	27	New Hampshire	30
California	143	New Jersey	82

Colorado	30	New Mexico	19
Connecticut	27	New York	196
Delaware	16	North Carolina	52
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	31
Florida	125	Ohio	158
France	8	Oklahoma	36
Georgia	52	Oregon	33
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	247
Idaho	17	Philippines	8
Illinois	148	Puerto Rico	14
Indiana	135	Rhode Island	16
Iowa	78	South Carolina	32
Kansas	55	South Dakota	33
Kentucky	36	Tennessee	38
Louisiana	44	Texas	93
Maine	34	Utah	15
Maryland	84	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	71	Virginia	58
Mexico	7	Washington	44
Michigan	99	West Virginia	34
Minnesota	126	Wisconsin	80
Mississippi	25	Wyoming	14
Missouri	68		

As a duly elected and registered Delegate, from the Department of New York, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The Report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs, Section I is adopted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER: During much of the past ten years, members of The American Legion have worked long and hard to secure proper recognition for several military figures of past wars. The focus of this extended effort was in the farm of a commemorative United States postage stamp.

After approving several resolutions, contacting government, agencies and writing many letters; I am proud to stand before you today and say that a special series of distinguished soldiers stamps has been issued by the United States Postal Service. Since the Postal Service received nearly 40,000 proposals recommending subjects for stamps each year, it is no small task to get this accomplished. Only a few commemorative stamps can be issued each year. It is easy to see why it can take so long any stamp to get authorized. The postage stamps approved are a part of a four stamp series and they include a distinctive stamp to honor World War I soldiers, General John I. Hines and Sergeant Alvin York. The final stamps pay tribute to two World War II heros: General Omar Bradley and Lieutenant Audie Murphy. The American Legion was not the only group working toward this goal. But through our steadfast efforts we feel we had an important part in getting it accomplished.

Will the Postmaster Louis Dunning, please join me at the podium?

POSTMASTER LOUIS DUNNING: I would just like to take a few minutes to thank you for inviting us of the Milwaukee Post Office to be part of this tremendous gathering. And I would like to give special thanks to your National Commander, Alan G. Lance, Sr., for the invitation and to Mr. Jack Querfeld, of the Internal Affairs Division, for helping my staff in preparing for this very special unveiling. Also, I would like to thank two special postmasters that I met this morning, from Connecticut for all their help.

Today, we celebrate the work of providing recognition for some very distinguished soldiers. I would like to use this unveiling of this set of stamps as a chance for us gathered here today to honor the Americans for their contributions to our American military and to take a moment to remember those who have fallen in the line of duty. These stamps recognize and salute distinguished soldiers, for their heroism and for their leadership in World War I and in World War II: Sergeant Alvin York, Medal of Honor winner, General John Hines, in World War I, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and a Distinguished Service Medal for his bravery and his leadership in combat. As you know, he went on to become the Army's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Audie Murphy, who received a Medal of Honor, and Omar Bradley, who commanded the 1st Army during 1944Allied landing in Normandy, and who later served as the Army Chief of Staff, and the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

As you also know veterans account for more than 25 million Americans, almost one in every ten adults. And you might or might not know this, 263,000 are postal employees. That's right, over thirty-two percent of the United States Postal Service are veterans. Now you know why we do a good job.

Right here in the Milwaukee, southeast Wisconsin area, over 2,000 of our employees are veterans of the Services. So we very much understand and relate to the service aspect as you do. We have a real big treat for you over the next three days, The American Legion has provided us with some postal cards at our postal booth which is right out in the hallway behind us and we have distinguished soldiers stamps available for sale on those postal cards. We have the special cancellation for each day for the next three days, so you can take home a special memory from your Convention here in Milwaukee. Each day's cancellation salutes a different event. Today we salute the 50th anniversary of the Korean War; tomorrow, we will salute all Armed Forces; and Thursday, we will commemorate the establishment of the World War II Memorial. So if you would take a few minutes, stop out behind us and see us and take something real special home with you.

National Vice Commander, join me with the unveiling of this important stamp.

...Unveiling of the stamp.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER: I thank the Postmaster for honoring and recognizing our heros of the past because by doing that, he honors all veterans.

The Chair recognizes John Brieden of Texas, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules
John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman

The Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 3, 2000 in Room 102A in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Forty-three (43) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus twenty (20) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, John A. Brieden, III, a delegate from the Department of Texas, 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.*

A second unanimously approved motion allows the Permanent President and Permanent Secretary to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate.

A third 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 Carl Commenator, Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, United States House of Representatives. Mr. Commenator discussed recent legislative achievements and issues pending for the remainder of the Second Session of the 106th Congress.

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

On June 21, the House passed HR 4635, a bill to fund the operations of the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and various Independent Agencies for FY 2001. This bill provides enough funding for VA to maintain current services. However, the Senate has not yet completed its work on companion legislation.

On July 27, the President signed the Department of Defense (DoD) FY 2001 appropriations bill into law. Public Law 106-259 provides DoD with $287.5 billion, a $4 billion increase over the President's original request.

Today, Congress returns from its August recess to resume work on the remaining appropriations bills for FY 2001 budget. The American Legion will continue to close monitor bills and provide assistance to lawmakers throughout the remainder of the process.

On September 26, 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 Lance, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Texas, 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.*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER: I have heard a second. All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? By the same sign. The Report of the 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-three (43) members met at the Midwest Express Center, Ballroom B, 1st floor at 9:00 a.m., September 3, 2000 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 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 that the stock market generated a negative 2.66% rate of return for the second quarter of year 2000, more than offsetting the positive performance generated in the year's first quarter. Despite continued earnings growth and revenue gains from several key companies, equity markets struggled during most of the quarter based on apprehension over future federal reserve interest rate increases.

Alarmed by too rapid economic growth and an increased potential for inflation, the federal reserve increased interest rates six times since June of 1999. Also, federal reserve policy makers have not ruled out the possibility of another interest rate increase due to the continued strong advance of equity markets throughout the 2nd quarter.

Wall Street now predicts a slowdown of the U.S. economy for year end 2000. Higher oil and gas prices moderate inflation and higher interest rates will cause a flat stock market going forward for the next few months. As 2001 begins, a new administration in the White House may or may not force a new set of economic priorities as the new year begins.

Treasurer Buskirk then recommended that national dues be set at $9.00. A motion from Tony Riley (Indiana), was made that the 2001 per capita dues remain at $9.00. Neil Boatwright (Georgia), seconded the motion and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chairman then recognized Dennis Henkemeyer, (Minnesota), Vice Chairman of *The American Legion Magazine* Commission and Dick McNally (Wisconsin), the Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of *The American Legion Magazine.* Mr. McNally reported that *The American Legion Magazine* is experiencing a solid financial year and he is projecting a year end surplus of $2,269,000.

Through the October issue, advertising stands at $6.3 million or $239,000 down from their revenue goal of $6,539,000 but $40,000 more than last year. Paper costs increased nearly 6% this year and our supplier indicates that in 2001 they could go up another 9%. Postage prices have been stable this year but we are expecting a 9% increase in January. This increase has the potential to take $500,000 from our bottom line surplus.

The American Legion signed a new contract with our printers, R.R. Donnelley, January 1, 2000. Under this new contract, we negotiated prices from $200,000 to $300,000 below what they were under in the old two year contract. The Magazine is exploring the possibility of other price reductions.

National Finance Director Paul M. Allen, reported that the 1999 Olive & Company's 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 $122,998,515, an I 1% increase over last year. He also informed the committee that our 1999 year end surplus was $5,185,587 and that we are anticipating about a $3,000,000 year end surplus in 2000. 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. Anthony Minei, (New York), seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Mr. Commander, as Delegate to this Convention for Iowa, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Motion has been made and seconded. All in favor, please indicate by saying Aye. Any opposed? The motion carries.

Now it is my distinct pleasure to present to you the newly elected, National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. The new commander has been active with the Sons since 1981, and has held many positions at the Squadron, the Department, and National levels. Active in his church, his community, his Squadron 654, of the Detachment of Texas, I present to you Commander Kevin Winkelmann..

Kevin Winkelmann, Texas, National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

On behalf of the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion, especially myself, I extend greeting to The American Legion, and wish you well, and continuing success and a great Convention. What a year the Sons of The American Legion has just completed. Our membership continued to grow, obtaining a seventeenth consecutive all-time high of 230,000 plus members. This total puts us at 104% of goal. Our Child Welfare donations also came in at a new-all time high, and by the cut-off date of May 31, 2000, we had raised $230,594 which finally met our goal, one dollar per member.

Our VA&R participation also sets a new height. With more than 30,000 hours of volunteer time and over $1,250,000 of donations, I can tell you our VA&R program is on the right track. We have also continued to increase donations, hours donated, and functions in our Americanism program and various areas of our Children & Youth programs.

By the figures you have just heard, it tells that the 1999-2000 was a banner year. But we are not stopping there. We have set new goals and higher standards for the upcoming year 2000-2001. Our goal for membership is year is 250,000 members. We have also set

our eyes upon a new goal of $250,000 in donations to the Child Welfare donation foundation. Our increasing efforts to get more and more squadrons to submit reports should increase our totals in VA&R, Children & Youth, and Americanism programs. This year we will continue to make donations and support the World War II Memorial. My father served in the Navy during World War II and is the sole reason I stand here as a member of the Sons of The American Legion and should have had the opportunity to see this memorial completed. I believe this memorial is important to the Americans of this country and it is long overdue to the veterans of World War II.

We will also continue to make donations to the National Emergency Fund and support all of The American Legion programs. My main focus this year will be on the Children & Youth program. Having three children of my own, it is important that we do everything in our power to not only protect but teach our children, and our future leaders. We will also strive to better support Boys State and American Legion Baseball.

Finally, I would like to thank The American Legion, not only for its continuing education, but also for its support to the Sons of The American Legion. I know as we work together. The American Legion family will continue to grow and prosper. I would personally like to thank the Department of Texas for their support. Most of all, I would like to say thanks to my wife, Debbie. It is her dedication to this campaign that put me in this spot here today.

I introduce some of my special friends who are here with me today: our immediate Past National Commander, from the department of Oklahoma, Mr. Rick Cook and his wife, Jacqueline, and also our National Adjutant, from the department of Massachusetts, Mr. Brian O'Hearne.

Before I close, I would like to share a poem with you. I believe this poem shows how we feel about our American flag and where we stand on the flag burning issue.

It is a soldier, not a report
who has given us
the freedom of the Press.
It is the soldier, not the poet
who has given us
the freedom of speech.
It is the soldier, not the campus organizer
who has given us
the freedom to demonstrate.
It is the soldier, who salutes the flag
who serves beneath the flag
and whose coffin is draped by the flag
who allows the protester
to burn the flag.

...The Commander is presented with a new Commander's pin.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I think we can all see that the Sons of The American Legion is in great hands, as it was this last year. It was an absolute privilege serving with Commander Rick Cook and the Sons of The American Legion. I owe Rick one member, because when he was attending a Legion and Sons event down in the Department of Missouri, a Legionnaire began to choke. Rick went to the rescue, applied the Heimlich

Maneuver and resuscitated the individual Legionnaire until the emergency unit arrived and who then took over. So Rick, thank you very much. So the Sons help us in more ways than one.

I call upon our National Adjutant for purposes of administrative announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Be sure to pick up your free copies of the *Daily Dispatch* and share them with your Legion family members at home. Each edition includes a comprehensive news report from the previous day's convention activities. Make it a point to subscribe to the Legion's only national newspaper. You can subscribe at the publications' office in the National Headquarters office area here in the Convention center. When you do, believe it not, from National you get a special discount rate and commemorative pin.

Also, all of the parade and convention photographs will be on display in the exhibit hall through this Wednesday.

Tomorrow, on the agenda that you should have received from your Delegation Secretary, we will have a special address at 10:00, by the Honorable George W. Bush, the Governor of the State of Texas. He is the Republican candidate for the office of the President of the United States. There will not be magnetometers at the door of the Convention when you come through like you come through when you board an airplane. But basically the security force will do some random kind of hand-held magnetometer. They will have to sweep this hall with the team of Secret Service agents and the hall doors will not open until 8:30 a.m. for the start of our 9:00 session. The hall doors behind us where I am pointing there, will be the only ones that will be open. And for the first time in my memory, the American Legion Auxiliary will be joining us here in the hall, so the entire American Legion family will be here to hear Governor W. Bush's address.

Just a reminder that the Western Caucus will be meeting in this hall immediately after we recess today's session.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: If there be no further business before the Convention today, Delegates, join me in the saluting the flag of our country. Right hand salute. One. Two! Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

...The Convention recessed to convene the following day, Wednesday, September 6, 2000, at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
SECOND DAY

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

...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 82nd Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: One of the highlights for the National Convention is for me to come and listen to Peter play. Thank you for all years of service in The American Legion.

The Convention will come to order. Delegates will please raise and render a right hand salute to the flag of our country. One. Two!

For the invocation, I will call upon our National Chaplain, Bishop David Brown, of the Department of Louisiana.

Invocation
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplain

Lord, God. You are the source of all good things. Without Your guidance we could not achieve any worthwhile goal. Therefore, we ask for Your wisdom and guidance, so that we may handle the matters for discussion today. Lord, help us to please You and all that we do this day. May the decisions we make today continue in The American Legion tradition of service to God and country, and pray this Father, in Your all holy name. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Please remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our nation.

...The Delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I declare the Convention now in session with the quorum present.

Our first distinguished guest this morning has been an active American Legion volunteer for many years. He has served as Department Adjutant. He is a Marine Corps veteran serving two terms in Vietnam. Today, he is the acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Welcome to Milwaukee this morning, a member of Post 2 in his hometown of Monticello, Arkansas, the Honorable Hershel Gober.

Address: The Honorable Hershel W. Gober
Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs

I want to thank The American Legion and the Auxiliary for all that you do for veterans across the nation. I owe my current job to The American Legion. In 1953, I attended Boys State in the state of Arkansas. At that time I became interested in government, trying to understand how government works. Then, while serving as a Department Adjutant in 1985, the then Governor Clinton appointed me as a Director of Veterans Affairs in 1988. And, as they say, the rest is history.

But I also would not be here if it were not for The American Legion and the members of the American Legion Auxiliary for getting me involved in veterans issues and keeping me involved. I want to thank the Legion and also the Auxiliary for the affect they have had on the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 1930, The American Legion helped to create the Veterans Administration and in 1989, the Department of Veterans Affairs. You helped build the compensation and pension system for service-connected disabilities. You were prime movers in the passage of the first GI Bill in 1944, which helped those returning veterans attend colleges, start businesses and purchase homes. You have been strong advocates for veterans exposed to atomic radiation, asbestos-related illnesses, Agent Orange illnesses related to the Gulf War. Your tradition of advocacy continues today with your support for the GI Bill of Health.

Volunteers of The American Legion and Auxiliary contributed more than 1.4 million hours of service in 1999. The VA voluntary service is the largest volunteer program in the federal government. I thank each of you who helped volunteer and for those who will volunteer in the future.

The Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission provides important oversight for the VA for our health care benefits and national cemetery programs. Your work with the VA, Congressional committees, and other federal agencies helps us to better accomplish our mission of serving America's veterans. Your trained service offices help thousands of veterans each year to obtain the benefits they have earned through their service. Also, I thank the Legion and the Auxiliary for your work with Boys State, Boys Nation, Girls State, and Girls Nation. I have already said that I participated in The Boys State program. So too, President Clinton and Vice President Gore took part in these programs when they were young.

Also, I like the way you teach good sportsmanship and physical fitness through The American Legion Baseball program, serving as a major sponsor of the Boy Scout program and sponsoring scholarships, essays, and oratorical contests. You do a great job and you continue to be strong advocates for our American youth.

I am also pleased that the Auxiliary has agreed to become a sponsor of the VA's Creative Art Festival, which shows off the best work done by patients in VA hospitals each year. In sponsoring the Creative Art Festival, you will help improve many of the lives of our hospitalized veterans and you will assist in the creation of arts that will benefit all Americans. The Auxiliary donates thousands of hours to programs such as crime prevention, and other programs that affect the elderly and all Americans across the country.

When I came to Washington seven and a half years ago, I had one goal in mind, and that was to improve the way the VA served veterans. That has not changed. I want to open doors for veterans, not close doors. We haven't always had a perfect set of directions, but I can assure you we are on the right road. We want to increase the quality of veterans health care and increase veterans access to it. We need to fix the way we process benefit plans, make national cemeteries more available to veterans and their families, and make sure that every taxpayer dollar that is provided for veterans is spent wisely.

Today, one thing is certain, we as veterans in this country are better off than we were seven and a half years ago. Today, our department provides greater access to health care to more veterans than ever. In 1993, when we arrived, VA treated 2.7 million patients. This year we will treat 3.6 million. Then we operated 182 outpatient clinics across this country. We now have 693, we are putting in a new one every week. More than four million veterans are enrolled in VA's health care benefit plan, a plan that did not exist in 1998.

Here is a goal I know we all had, you all remember. In 1986 when the Omnibus Reconciliation Budget Act was passed, it classified us as A, B, or C. 'A' was service-connected, POWs and other categories, and the 'C' veterans were considered to have too much money, over $20,000. We no longer do that. We now have seven priories, but every honorably discharged veteran, in this audience and across this nation, now has access to the VA system and can enroll.

Here is something many of you may not know. You all heard about the prescription drug crisis in this country? You can enroll in the VA, even if you are a category 'C' veteran and can get your medicine for $2.00. So we have many people enrolled in the medical system just to get their prescription because they are on Medicare, or using some other program. I am not letting the cat out of the bag. This is your benefit and you should take advantage of it.

A recent survey of veterans shows that 80% approve and think that VA health care system is better today than it was two short years ago. In the civilian sector, the civilian hospitals and health care systems, that rating is 69% approval rating. We've created an unparalleled system of long term care services for our aging veterans. The Veteran Millennium Health Care Act has required us to focus on this issue, especially for veterans with service- connected disabilities that require them to enter nursing homes or veterans with disabilities ratings of 70% or greater that are guaranteed long term health care. This is a very important issue for many of you, and for many of us. I wish I could report the same level of success in our claims processing system. Unfortunately, I cannot. There are many reasons for this.

Claims filed today have more issues or conditions than in any other time in our history. Complexity of claims has also increased dramatically. The level of effort required to evaluate a claim for benefits is greater than it was eight years ago. But we are going to fix that. I won't be around in this job to see that and that bothers me. But it takes a long time to do some of these things. I predict in two years, that you will see a dramatic improvement in the time that it takes to process claims and the veterans deserve that.

Improvements are in the national cemetery system. Last year, unfortunately, 561,000 veterans died; that is more than 1,500 each day. It is critical that our national cemeteries meet the expanding need for additional burial space for veterans. In the last two years, the VA has opened three new national cemeteries and we are going to dedicate another one next Sunday in Ohio. And we are planning six cemeteries in six states: Georgia, Michigan, Florida, California, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania. When these cemeteries are completed, this will be the latest cemetery expansion since Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States. We have a new goal to maintain these cemeteries as shrines dedicated to preserving our nation's history, nurturing patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice our veterans have made. We want them to look like the cemeteries that the American Battlefield Monument System has charge of.

Our budget for 2001 is good. Our 1.5 billion dollar increase has been sent by the President to the Hill. It is the largest discretionary dollar increase ever proposed for veterans programs, and while Congress has not yet approved it, we expect that we will receive most of the money.

There are many other ways that the status of veterans has improved in the past eight years. We worked hard to reduce the problem of homelessness among veterans. In 2000, we will spend more than 150 million dollars in support of our own VA homeless programs.

Since 1994, we have made seventy-nine grants totaling more than 41 million dollars toward organizations in forty-two states and the District of Columbia.

We made great strides in caring for our Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. For the first time in history, the VA is compensating the veterans for undiagnosed illnesses. The reason we want to do that is because while we may not know what is wrong with these veterans, we do know that there is something wrong with them. They can not work nor can they support their families. So we feel like they suffered something, some illness, in the Gulf War. The VA, in fact, the federal government, has an obligation to see that they can have a livelihood as least.

We now service-connect thirteen illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. In 1993, there were only four illnesses recognized. Right now, I am waiting for the report from the Institute of Medicine to come back to me regarding diabetes. When that comes back, and if there is evidence there that diabetes is service-connected, then I will not hesitate to service-connect it.

Children of Vietnam veterans, for the first time ever, who suffer from spinal bifida, also receive compensation and medical care. We revised and expanded the evaluation criteria for cold weather exposure for service-connection disability, the residual affects from injuries from exposure to intense cold. When I first got there, one of the first groups that met with me was a group called, "The Chosin few" who were in the Chosin reservoir in Korea. They were complaining about the way they were being diagnosed in our hospitals. They would go in with complaints of losing circulation, losing toes, and in some cases, other extremities. The doctors would tell them it was because they were getting old and their circulation was bad. Well, we got experts and put together a new protocol to teach our doctors how to diagnose cold weather injuries. It has resulted in a marked improvement on how these veterans are treated.

We have service-connected more than two thousand veterans with illnesses that veterans have said were as a result of radiation exposure. We provide special examinations, including a complete physicals and all necessary tests for qualified veterans. Even the front pages of newspapers have news about radiation exposure among workers who were located in New Mexico. The Department of Energy and the Department of Justice are compensating civilians who live downwind from the test. I had a meeting with my staff yesterday and told them that I wanted them to get with the people who they have to—the Administration, Office of Means and Budget— and I wanted them to tell those others that I am leaning towards doing the same thing for veterans what civilians get. So here is what I want you to know. We are looking at the possibility of presumptive service-connecting four additional illnesses for atomic veterans: lung cancer, brain and central nervous system tumors, colon cancers, and ovarian cancers. I believe these conditions deserve serious consideration in light of our increasing knowledge about the effect of radiation. I have asked my staff to look into this matter and I anticipate making a decision very soon. If it is a coin toss, if it can go either way, that coin will always have two heads on it, in favor of the veteran.

I started a program also called One VA. I want every veteran to be able to go into any facility and received information on benefits, medical care, or cemeteries. That program is working good in your state, we are One VA. We are no longer the cemetery system, the hospital system, the benefit system. We are One VA for veterans.

I am also happy to tell you that I just authorized the other day, a smart card for every veteran enrolled, and this card is going to help you eliminate having the need for you fill out a form when you move from one hospital to another hospital. You walk in the medical

facility and that card will go in that machine, it will tell them your name, your social security number, it will give them your blood type, it will tell them if you are service-connected, what you are service-connected for, what percentage your service-connection is for, and also any allergies or POW or Purple Heart status. It will also be a handy device for you to use for benefits and for medical services, but it lets you travel from one part of the country to another, without having to fill out those 1010 forms every time you go in. So when the veteran passes away, the spouse will be able to take it to the cemetery and just swipe it through the machine and it will read it and it will say, yes, this veteran is eligible for burial in this cemetery. I think this is something that all veterans will like. It will simplify the process.

In conclusion, I want to tell you that serving in this position as Acting Secretary has been one of the most rewarding things in my life. If someone would have told me when I was in Boys State in 1953, that I would be standing here addressing this body, or that I would be standing close to the President of the United States and had the opportunity to change the lives of people like I have had to do, I would have said he was crazy, there is no way that a guy from Monticello, Arkansas, who picks and chops cotton in the summer will ever be standing there. But thanks to you, The American Legion, particularly you World War II veterans out there, you are my heros because you gave this to me. You made it possible for me to do this. I will never forget the opportunity that I have had to serve in this great nation, the greatest nation and the most powerful nation in the world, with some of the greatest people. I am not going to fade away. I am still on standby with the Legion, I will probably be one of the ones throwing spears again, but I will be with you watching out and making sure that this nation remembers its solemn obligation that was given to us by the man who founded the VA, "To care for him, who should have borne the battle, for his widow and for his orphans." The only thing that should have been changed from what Mr. Lincoln said, was today we should not say for him, we should say for those because we have so many women serving and they have served our country honorably also.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: In this nation, there are many influential individuals who accomplished a lot of great things without a lot of fanfare. Our next guest is such an individual. Since graduating from college he has raised more money for the March of Dimes, for a comprehensive system for caring for high risk pregnancies and babies in my home state and for the Children's Miracle Network, than you could ever imagine. For the past two years The American Legion family has worked on behalf on CMN, contributing nearly two million dollars. Welcome a man who makes a difference for millions and most do not know his name, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Miracle Network, Mike Shannon.

Address: Mike Shannon, President and CEO
Children's Miracle Network

I am thrilled to be in this room with you and just on a personal note; I have to take advantage to say thank you for all you have done to make this the greatest country in the world and to give all of us the quality of life that we enjoy today. We should never forget how we got where we got today. Your continuing service and this new relationship you have with the Children's Miracle Network, which has raised two million dollars already, is incredible. We thought, maybe, we could do a quarter of a million dollars in the first year, but you don't do things that way.

This last year Children's Miracle Network, with your help and the help of so many others, raised just over $210 million for our hospitals. Now, that sounds like a lot of money. But the need is so much greater than that. We have 170 children's hospitals that are part of Children's Miracle Network, places like Johns Hopkins, Duke, Vanderbilt, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (that has been serving kids for two hundred years), Children's Hospital and National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the Children's Hospital in Wisconsin, right here in Milwaukee. They are in every community. They serve fourteen million kids a year, over a million, nine hundred thousand kids who are victims of accidents, forty-five thousand kids with cancer, forty thousand kids with heart disease, and kids with AIDS, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia. There is a series that *ABC* has done now called "Hopkins 24/7," where the network is in Johns Hopkins, shooting and then airing the program in prime time. These hospitals are there, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, whenever our children need them. That is an expensive endeavor, to provide the very best health care in the world to our kids on that kind of a basis.

At our hospitals kids come first, all the time, every day. Forty-seven percent of these kids can't pay for the care they get. They have no insurance, they don't have the ability to cover the cost of the care that is being given to them. Nearly three million of these kids are African-Americans. Over a million of them are Hispanic. No kids are ever turned away, regardless of their inability to pay. These hospitals were there for the kids of Columbian High School, they were there when the Federal Building blew up in Oklahoma City. They were there in south Florida when Hurricane Andrew struck. They were there in Los Angeles when the shooting took place in the Jewish Day Care Center. They were there when United 232 crashed in Sioux City. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, they are there to pick up the pieces and take care of our children. My kids, your kids, our grandkids, our neighbor kids. They really are our hospitals taking care of our kids.

With Children's Miracle Network, 100% of the money you raise, and that everyone contributes, goes directly to the local children's hospital. There is no percentages, no formulas, no games. We don't see it or we touch it, it doesn't all come to Salt Lake City, where we are headquartered. It goes right directly to the local children's hospital to serve the kids in your community. In our business, integrity is the most important feature and that is my job in our organization. My first responsibility is to see to it that we always put kids first, everyday, and that your money goes where it is supposed to go, directly to take care of kids. You directly improve the quality of life for kids and save the lives of kids with your efforts in conjunction with Children's Miracle Network.

Every decision we make at Children's Miracle Network and every action we take is predicated on one simple principle, and that is what is in the best interest of the kids? We have seventy-five corporate sponsors, we have organizations like yours, we have celebrities, everyone we work with adheres to and gets excited about that principle of everything we do is in the best interest of kids.

Just one quick story. The best part of my job is getting to know so many of these kids over the years. Several years ago there was a young man in Dayton, Ohio, by the name of Hahad Israel [phonetics]. Hahad worked in a pizza shop. One night the shop was robbed. As the assailant was fleeing the store, the manager grabbed a pistol he had put away and chased him. As the manager returned he went to put the pistol up on the refrigerator and it fired and struck a Hahran right in the head. Hahad was immediately taken to our hospital in Dayton and through the course of his treatment wound up losing the right side of his brain. If you had seen the video, the pictures of Hahad you would question what you were seeing.

It was a scary sight, a big gaping hole in his entire side of his head. They evidently put a breast implant in there and skin grafted to get him the full head physically. Hahad has gone on to function fairly normally with the left side of his brain, he calls from time to time. I will pick up the phone and say, "Hahad, what's going on?" Well, Hahad reports that he has graduated from high school. A couple of years later Hahad calls, "Hadad, what's up partner?" Well, I just graduated from Dayton Community College. Well, what are you going to Hahad? I am going to be a diesel mechanic, he says. A little while later the phone rings, I pick it up, Hahad says, "Mike I just got my driver's license." After graduating from Dayton Community College he finally got his driver's license. I jokingly said to Hahad, I am sure glad I don't live in Dayton.

Thank you again for all you do. You have so many community service programs that you have conducted over the years to improving the quality of life for millions of Americans in so many ways. We are thrilled that we are now partners and that we can serve our children who so desperately need these hospitals. Together we will be with you supporting you. We have people in everyone of those markets who will be calling on you, working with you and supporting your efforts to raise money for our hospitals.

In closing, I just have a short little video that tells a story better than anybody else could. These are three little miracles where lives have impacted each other very dramatically. I will let that video speak for itself.

...At this time the video is shown.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: What a great partnership The American Legion family has with the Children's Miracle Network and what wonderful work they do.

The Chair recognizes Elmer Furhop, former Mayor of Hamler, Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children & Youth for the purposes of making his 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, September 3, 2000, in the Milwaukee Hilton, Mitchell Room, 4th level, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio as Chairman and delegate Robert D. Scott of Oregon as Secretary. There were 50 members of the committee present.

Twelve (12) resolutions were considered by the committee.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 301: Admission of Children of United States Citizens
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 302: Children in Pornographic Literature
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 303: Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 304: Reaffirming Immunization Program
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 305: Violence and Vandalism in the Schools
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 306: National Family Week
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 307: School Nutrition Program
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 308: Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 309: Catastrophic Illness among Children
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 310: Drug Trafficking
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 311: Protect Children from the Unrestricted Media
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 312: Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth
Origin: Children & Youth
Submitted By: Children & 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected Delegate for the Department of Ohio, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: You have had the motion and the second. All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Any opposed? Hearing none, motion carries and the report is adopted.

Presentation: Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award
Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I have the pleasure of presenting the Garland E. 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 Florida. The wording is as follows:

"The Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and to the Department of Florida for the program year 1999-2000. 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, and emotional 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 by William Keys, the foundation's Executive Secretary.

Accepting the award is Dennis Bowland, Department of Florida.

Presentation: The Child Welfare Legacy Award
Alan G. Lance, Sr., National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: A new Child Welfare Foundation Award was adopted at the Fall Meeting of the Board of Directors. The Child Welfare Legacy Award is presented to the top department based upon combine totals of The American Legion family for a contribution year. The department earning the honor of the first recipient of the Child Welfare Foundation Legacy Award, donating $52,801 is the Department of Indiana.

Accepting the award is Jim Miller for the Department of Indiana.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: 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 8&40, Department of Indiana.

...At this time, there was a short musical intermission.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NEVILLE: Now I invite our Boys Nation President, from the Department of Texas, Justin Chapa.

Presentation: Representation of The American Legion Youth Program

2000 Boys Nation President
Justin Chapa, Arlington, Texas

I am Justin Chapa, President of Boys Nation from the great state of Texas. I thank The American Legion as a whole for giving me this opportunity, not only for the programs they put together, such as Boys State and Boys Nation, but for all that it does as an organization for children and youth. It is a great honor today and a bit terrifying to be in front of so many of you. But I only hope that you can understand that these programs need to continue and that I am behind you. I am going to do as much as I can in my position to insure that The

American Legion programs get the attention that they need and that I serve you in a capacity that will only make you proud.

2000 lst Place Winner National Oratorical Contest
Max Miller, Ankeny, Iowa

I am Max Miller from Ankeny, Iowa, right around the great metropolitan area of Des Moines, Iowa. First I would like to give thanks to Iowa which has helped me during these last two years. The whole department has been great to me and I consider The American Legion family of Iowa to be family of my own. Thank you Iowa. I also thank The American Legion at the National level because without sponsoring the Oratorical Contest I never would have been able to have as much fun as I have had in the last two years, competing in that contest. And as Justin said, I would like to thank you for all the other youth programs you support. Without those programs the children of this nation would not be able to compete in these contests and be able to develop the skills that are necessary for success in this nation. I know you are probably waiting for a more interesting speaker than myself, so now I will turn the microphone over to the other youth champions here.

2000 Eagle Scout of the Year
Erik Swensen, Smithfield, Utah

I am from the great state of Utah and my name is Erik Swensen. Right now in this room there are more people sitting here than there are in my entire city. So I am a little nervous. I thank all you Legionnaires. My grandfather was also a member of The American Legion and very active. He got me involved in scouting and had taught me many life lessons that would be important forever. I thank you for all your great sacrifices you made for this great country and for the great programs that you carry on and the traditions you hold dear. I also hold many values that you hold the same way, such as God and country. Scouting is based upon those and so are you.

2000 Junior Shooting Sports Program
Daniel Crew, Winston, Georgia

I'm from Winston, Georgia. I thank The American Legion for us. The youth programs are really the backbone of the country. I really appreciate all the help you have given us. We will do our best to represent you in any way we can and anything we can do for you, let us know. You have done a lot for us.

2000 Baseball Player of the Year
Jeremy Roberts, Rison, Arkansas

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NEVILLE: Jeremy Roberts, Baseball Player of the Year from Arkansas could not be with us this morning. But I would just like to mention his name and the Department of Arkansas. Each day we read in the newspapers about the youth of our nation, such as the shootings in Columbine and elsewhere. We really do not see too much about the youth we have here this morning. Looking at the youth and the youth

programs in The American Legion, I think that United States has a bright future. We in The American Legion celebrate our youth.

...At this time, there was a short musical intermission.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: This is a special announcement. For more than eighty years, presidential candidates have recognized the importance of sharing their views on the issues that concern America with America's veterans. Those that invested body and soul defending their right to speak. The American Legion has always been pleased to provide a public platform to each presidential candidate at each of our National Conventions occurring during a presidential election year. While we did not always agree with every candidate's position on issues of importance to us, we have always extended to them the courtesy of them explaining their positions to a polite, thoughtful, and always interested audience. For some, it had taken great courage to appear before you. I vividly recall Jimmy Carter proposing to an American Legion National Convention that amnesty be granted to those young men who dodged the draft in Vietnam. We did not agree with him, but we could not fault his integrity. He told us face-to-face what he intended to do if he was elected President of the United States.

I remember Governor Bill Clinton coming before us and explaining the circumstances surrounding his failure to serve in the armed forces during the Vietnam War. That was a genuine ordeal by fire before this audience. Yet, he was respectfully and warmly received. Even President George Bush was applauded and forgiven when he declared that September 7th was the 50th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor. I think the record shows clearly that we are indeed a non-partisan organization. We are not an audience of Republicans, nor an audience of Democrats. We are an audience of Americans who have earned the right by our service at time of war to hear directly from any man or woman who desires to lead our nation as Commander-in-Chief.

We listen to John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, to Ronald Reagan and Michael Dukakis, to Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson and through the years we have hear them all. Through the years, and with every single presidential election year, candidates have appeared before you. But this year, unlike in the past, we are prepared to video screen both candidates remarks on our website so that every one of America's veterans and active duty personnel will have a chance to hear what they have to say about issues that affect our lives, our nation and our nation's Armed Forces. They have been given an opportunity to not only reach the 7,000 people in this convention center today, but also to potentially reach more than 25 million concerned voting American veterans. This event has been publicized in major media across the nation. It promised to be a momentous event and an unprecedented public service. I could not tell you how excited I was when I approved the plans for this veterans' straw poll event.

Governor George W. Bush has agreed to participate and he is here to address this Convention today. However, Vice-President Albert Gore, Jr., who was extended the same opportunity as George W. Bush at the same time, on May 23, 2000, and again on August 2, 2000, has declined to speak to you this week at your National Convention. Although his staff had more than three months to put The American Legion National Convention on the Vice-President's schedule for this unprecedented opportunity to reach a worldwide audience of veterans and service personnel, they did not do so. We have been notified that the Vice-President has a scheduling conflict. In the entire history of The American Legion, this has never happened before and I cannot express to you how disappointed I am that you will not hear the Democratic presidential nominee in person. As an alternative, their staff did offer

to send a substitute to speak in Mr. Gore's place. But it is Al Gore, Jr. who is running for the presidency of the United States, not a substitute, no matter how well qualified. So I declined that offer. I believe you deserve better than that and America deserves better than that.

I believe The American Legion, the world's largest war-time veterans' organization, deserves to hear directly from the man himself, the man who would be Commander-in-Chief of all of our armed forces. On the upside, our straw poll will continue as scheduled. Your staff has done extensive research on Vice President Gore's public statements regarding issues and questions. They have reproduced those statements honestly, accurately, and fairly for the entire world to see.

I ask you to listen in a moment to Governor Bush and consider the statements of Vice President Gore and cast your ballot in the veterans' straw poll for whomever you believe best qualified to lead the United States as our next President, our next Commander-in-Chief.

On behalf of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Lib Stewart and myself, I introduce the Governor of the great state of Texas, the Honorable George W. Bush and his wife Laura.

Every four years, Americans go to the polls to elect a president, someone who will serve as our Commander-in-Chief. This morning it is my privilege and honor to introduce to you a man who seeks this high office. He is currently serving his second term as the Governor of the great state of Texas. He served in the Texas National Guard as a F-102 pilot in the early '70s. And he is a very proud member of The American Legion Post 77 in Houston, Texas. Our guest is with us today to share his vision for America and to address issues of vital importance to our nation's vast military and veterans communities. I present to you the Honorable George W. Bush, Governor of Texas.

Address: The Honorable George W. Bush, Jr.
Governor of Texas
Presidential Republican Candidate

George Bush, Post 77 reporting for duty. Commander Lance, thank you for your hospitality and for the chance to be here with my fellow Legionnaires to talk about something that is important to me, a priority should I become the president.

Before I begin my talk, though, I want to recognize some of my friends who are here. First, thanks to the Governor of the great state of Wisconsin, my friend, a friend of veterans, a man who has done a fantastic job as the governor of this state, Governor Tommy Thompson. They still love you here, Tommy. Thanks to two great Americans who serve as leaders of the veterans committee around the country. Thanks to a former Democratic Congressman from Mississippi, a close friend of mine, a close friend of veterans, Congressman Sonny Montgomery. Thanks to a former commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak. I am so honored to have the support of these two strong Americans. Finally, traveling with me today, is a fantastic person. I think you can judge the nature of a man by the company he keeps. I keep really good company with the First Lady of Texas, my great wife—and if all goes well she is going to be a fabulous First Lady for America—Laura Bush.

It is such an honor to be here in the presence of so many America's veterans. It is an honor to be here with the members of The American Legion. And it is an honor to be here

with the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary. Before proceeding further, I want to say something to my fellow Texans. Behave yourselves!

Some of you here today served in the recent past and others in the more distant times. Some served for a few years, others for an entire career. But what you have in common is duty fulfilled. In America's hours of need you answered the call. I respect what you did for our country. I respect what you do today through this organization's many good works. You helped fellow veterans maintain and understand their benefit claims. You come to each other's aid in times of disaster. You care for the young through the Child Welfare Foundation and the Children's Miracle Network.

One of the things I am making as a focus of my campaign is education; it is my number one top priority, improving schools with higher standards and local control of schools and stronger accountability. The American Legion is helping to build knowledge and character in our young people and this nation should be grateful for your service. You introduce students to the best tradition of our country in programs like Boys and Girls State and Boys and Girls Nation. I am so honored that the President of Boys Nation 2000 is Justin Chapa from the great state of Texas.

I am here to talk about what is owed to the Armed Forces of the United States: past, present and future. To the veteran we owe gratitude, shown not just in words of tribute but in acts of care and acts of attention. To those who serve today and in the future, this country owes the best in training and equipment and leadership.

Yesterday in Pennsylvania I spoke of our nation's commitment to the elderly, commitments that are a special concern to million of veterans who are at retirement age and beyond. Should I become President, I will see that our commitments to the elderly are kept. I will lead a bipartisan effort to save and strengthen social security. I will lead the effort to make long term care available and affordable. Taxpayers should be able to deduct every dollar they spend on long-term care insurance. We will provide additional tax exemption for people caring at home for a spouse or a parent. And I will lead Medicare reform. It is time to have new leadership in Washington, D.C. that puts aside the politics of Medicare and gets a President who makes sure the elderly have prescription drugs once and for all.

But no discussion of health care is complete without addressing the concerns of the veteran. Too often in Washington those who serve in the military are only remembered on Veteran's Day. That must change. Daily advocacy is what veterans deserve and so when I become the President, daily advocacy is what veterans will have not, only in the VA but in the White House.

The VA health care system must be a source of pride and of peace of mind. In many ways the health care system has worked. There are advances in medicine that helped not only veterans but all Americans. From the veterans health care system came the CAT scan, artificial limbs and the cure for tuberculosis. But the system has problems today. And when these problems are neglected, veterans and their families suffer. As President I will work with Congress to raise the standard of service, not just for veterans, but for all military retirees. All of them must be treated with the care they have been promised and the dignity they have earned.

The general accounting office has documented that the VA spends one million dollars a day maintaining empty hospital wards at a time when the VA health care budget is stretched to the breaking point. Health care for veterans has become a complicated, bureaucratic process with long delays and unfair denials in coverage. That will be changed. Resolving a disability claim can be an ordeal, taking an average of 205 days to complete.

So chaotic is the process that there is a back log of nearly one half million claims, one quarter of them involving the appeals process. A veteran who appeals a decision can expect to wait 745 days, close to two years. This isn't right. The present administration often claims to have reinvented and organized government, but what they have not done is improve the way our veterans are treated. They have had their chance, they have not led on this issue and I will. The veterans health care system and claims process will be modernized should I become the President so that our veterans are well treated, claims are handled in a fair and friendly way.

To set a new standard I announced two new proposals. First, I will return the VA to the principle that it has a duty to assist veterans with service related benefits. The old policy required the VA to assist veterans with their claims. That policy has changed. Should I become President that will be our policy once again. In my administration the VA will act as an advocate for veterans seeking veteran claims. The VA will not act as an adversary. Veterans who once stood in line to protect our freedom should not have to stand in line for a bureaucracy that is unwilling to help in their claims. Secondly, I will convene a veterans health care task force made up of VA officials, leaders of veterans groups, and doctors. Their job will be to see that laws such as the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act are being fully implemented. As the veteran population grows older we must make long-term care a high priority.

Wherever possible, we should place unused facilities back into service for our veterans who need assisted living wherever possible. We ought to use empty facilities to house the homeless veterans across America. Our veterans deserve our nation's full respect and gratitude. We show that respect and gratitude is not just in keeping promises to those who have come before, but in preserving the memory of their service. We often speak of the greatest generation, for those are the greatest generation who fought in World War II. What a great generation you are and we owe you our thanks.

And yet, even as the World War II generation passes from our midst, there is still no national memorial to honor your commitment. I commended the distinguished American Senator Bob Dole for leading the effort to build a World War II Memorial where it belongs in the heart of our nation's capitol. Further along, the Washington Mall where the World War II Memorial should be, is the other memorial, the Vietnam Memorial and we must never forget there are places for names of those for whom we have yet no accountability. We must do everything in our power to obtain the fullest accounting for those still missing in action in the Pacific theaters. All who served this country must know they will never be abandoned by America. You and I share a commitment to the veterans who wrote America's proud record of defending freedom.

You and I also share a commitment to our nation's symbol, our flag. We should not allow for the desecration of the American flag. And we also share a commitment to the veterans of the future, those serving now and those who will be serving in the years to come.

Two weeks ago, in this very city—I'll say what I said again—the current administration inherited the military ready for the dangers and challenges facing our nation. The next President will inherit a military in decline. Legionnaires understand this problem and many Legionnaires have spoken out. And this Legionnaire is here to make this pledge, should I become the President. I will rebuilt the military power of the United States of America. I will have an able partner, a man who led the Pentagon with distinction and honor, my running mate Secretary of State, Dick Chaney.

There is no question that our military today is the strongest in the world. It is confident and proud and willing to carry out the mission that we give them. They have never failed us and we must never fail them. But the best intentions and the highest morale are undermined by back-to-back deployments but poor pay, by storage of spare parts and equipment and of rapidly declining readiness. As the percentage of the GNP, our investment in national security is at the lowest level since World War II. Overall, in the armed services, commitments around the world have tripled while our Forces have been reduced by forty percent. The administration's own chairman of Joint Chiefs recently said, we are doing much more than we were ten years ago and we are doing it with much less.

The military has begun to feel the strain. Last Tuesday it was reported that more than one half of our training centers are at the lowest level of readiness. Last week we learned that the Marines were forced to suspend operations for three different aircrafts, partly because of defective rotary blades. At the start of this administration eighty-five percent of all combat units in the Air Force were fully ready for their mission. At the start of this year only sixty-five percent of the units were ready. We were reminded of readiness problems last May when a guided missile destroyer, *USS Decatur*, returned to port a month earlier than planned because there was not enough money for fuel. And the Pacific fleet training exercises have been cut back for the same reason. They have had to wait for the next fiscal year for training and the Atlantic fleet maintenance has been delayed or canceled for twenty-one warships.

Over the last several years the services have found it more and more difficult to retain our best people. Our men and women in uniform and their families are the foundation of America's readiness. Yet a survey last year had more than a thousand officers and more than half of the enlisted personnel saying that they were dissatisfied and intended to leave service when their current term of enlistment was up. Others have suggested that the problems I have described simply do not exist. They make no effort to dispute the facts you just heard. They say it is something we just shouldn't talk about. As my opponent said, to put out these challenges is to run down the military. But let's get something straight. These are not criticisms of the military. They are criticisms of the current Commander-in-Chief and the Vice President for not providing the necessary leadership for America. I believe the leader has the responsibility to speak out when the Armed Services are short on supporting and short on resources. We have a responsibility to take their side when too much is asked of them and too little is given in return.

Leadership is the responsibility to act and should I become your President; I will act to restore the morale of the United States military. Our soldiers must have confidence when they will be asked to serve and sacrifice. The cause will be worthy and our support for them will be total. We will have to give our forces better pay, better housing, better training. We will increase housing allowances and I will ask the Congress to increase the pay for those men and women who are in uniform by a billion dollars more than the current pay raise. These steps will go a long way in improving morale. But it is only a start, only a start. As Commander-in-Chief I will give our military a clear sense of mission. America will be involved in the world, but that does not mean our military is the answer to every single difficult foreign policy question. I will order immediate review of our overseas commitments in dozens of countries. I will keep our pledges to defend our long standing friends and allies against aggression. But I will make it clear that we can't put troops on the ground to keep warring parties apart all around the world. We will let our friends be the peacekeepers. The great country called America will be called the pacemakers. I will replace uncertain missions

with well-defined objectives should I become the Commander-in-Chief. The mission of the United States military will be to be fully prepared to fight and win war and therefore prevent war from happening in the first place.

An administration that has not adequately cared for our military is not well suited to prepare for the challenges of the new century. Should I become the President, I will use this window of opportunity to create the military for the future. Today, our military is organized more along the threats we used to have in the Cold War than a military ready to meet the challenges of a new century. It is organized for the industrial age operations rather than information age battles. There is almost no relationship between our budget priorities and long term strategic vision of what the military ought to look like. Now is the time to shape the future of the military with new concepts, new strategies, new resolves. As President I will begin an immediate and comprehensive review of our military, the structure of its forces, the state of its strategy, the priories of the procurement program. Conducted by a leadership team of defense, we will status the status quo and envision a new architecture for American defense for decades to come. Our forces must be able to project power over great distances and do it quickly. It must be agile and harder to find, easier to move and lethal in action. They must have the technology to detonate information as well the technology to detonate the skies and the seas in order to keep the peace. And whenever America uses force in the world, whenever we commit our troops, the cause must be just, the goal must be clear and the victory must be overwhelming. I will also end the confusion and chaos in handling top secret nuclear information and our nation's other most vital secrets. In my administration America's nuclear labs will be secure again.

This nation has been blessed by those who have been willing to serve a cause greater than themselves. The American cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach stands as a memorial inscribed with these words, "These endured all and gave all that justice among nations might prevail and that mankind might enjoy freedom and inherit peace." The veterans of the United States represent the best of the American tradition of preserving freedom. The veterans in this hall represent the best of the American tradition of serving a cause greater than self. America is a great nation because of our people and the veterans of America are the best people this nation has ever produced.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: We come at a very important time on our agenda, a time when we pause from the business of this body to reflect and remember. History continually proves that 20/20 hindsight is wonderful and useful, but right now I want each of us to travel back in time about fifty years. This is the reality of the Korean War and how it was reported to Americans in newsreels.

...At this time a video plays.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I hope you caught those key words just before the end of the newsreel, the site of the US Air Force plane dropping supplies to our trapped troops feeling that they were not forgotten and they were not alone. Those were ironic or prophetic words. The American Legion has not forgotten Korea and those veterans who suffered so much in the cause of freedom. Today, our remembrance of those long ago years becomes a commemoration. Now it is my pleasure to introduce to you Delegates the Director of the Korean War 50th Anniversary Committee, Retired Air Force Major General Nels Running.

Address: Retired Air Force Major General Nels Running
Director of the Korean War 50th Anniversary Committee

But I am thrilled, honored and pleased to be here with a brief message. The Department of the Defense 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee is faced with a huge challenge. There are twenty-five of us individuals in an office high above beautiful downtown Crystal City, Virginia, across the freeway from the Pentagon. Authorized by the Congress of the United States to fulfill a national mission, we lead America's commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. That was the first war of violence in the long Cold War which followed World War II. The challenge is multifaceted largely to overcome an American habit of forgetting that which is not immediately viewable on the TV screen over dinner. It cost so many of us so dearly, yet faded in importance from the national scene. In overcoming that habit it is our purpose, the mission assigned us, to seek out each and everyone of the 1.8 million American veterans who served the cause of freedom during those three bloody years in Korea.

A police action it was not. But that was the politically acceptable term the leadership of the United States used in engaging in that war. I know there are many of you in this audience right now who are Korean War veterans and many of those who are Korean War veterans who also served in World War II or subsequently in Vietnam or other theaters of war. The nation then tried to put that war behind us, setting it aside and getting back to the business of building our economy and pounding those swords into plow shares that America might thrive again economically, boost that gross economic product and become the world economic power that it was. The veterans, by and large of the Korean War, found themselves, as I am told by so many, felt rejected, or neglected or, as they call it, forgotten in that forgotten war.

So I am here to ask for your help, from the Posts, the Auxiliaries, and the Departments because twenty-five individuals in Washington, D.C., no matter how many places we can visit, how many words we can use, how many times we can wave the flag, cannot get the message across to the grassroots. So we have a program called 'commemorative communities' and we ask any two or more people gathered together, in the name of remembering the Korean War, to become commemorative communities. Commemorative communities does not mean a city of a certain size, it does not even mean a ranger station of fourteen people where I grew up in Montana, but it is in fact, any two or more people who can organize to fulfill a mission of helping us reach out, to identify, to recognize the veterans.

A couple of weeks ago you were preceded in this city by another national veterans' service organization, beginning with a 'V' and I am pleased to say that over six hundred commemorative communities have been formed. Already I know in reviewing the books last week, before I started a current trip, that The American Legion has over two hundred eighty commemorative communities. I was very happy to get my report from Lt. Col. Jim Fisher, who is one of our two individuals here manning the Korean War Anniversary Committee booth in the exhibit hall that as of this morning, that over a thousand application forms had been picked up. I will be really thrilled if I see a thousand of those arriving in the mail over the next several weeks telling us of your intention to become commemorative communities.

There is another aspect in which I ask your help, and no, I see all you Department Commanders reaching for your wallets, I am not here to ask you for money. I am prohibited by law to do that and so I was never good at fund raising, I don't intend to start now. But that help comes in individual effort. I heard the gentleman who precede me say that education will be one of his major initiatives, primary missions, when he is elected

president. If you go to a school library in any of your communities and you look for a book on the Korean War or the history of Korea, more than likely, you will be disappointed. Your effort will be fruitless. If you pull the textbooks that are currently used to educate our current generation, if you open the books and you look through the indexes for information regarding the Korean War, if you are lucky you may find at most a paragraph or just a couple of lines dealing with that war. Yet the price paid for the freedom that exists today, not just in the Republic of Korea, which those of you who fought and shed your blood, purchased with your sacrifices, but indeed because that war a signal to Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong that Communism was not going to succeed in its effort to take over the world. I am pleased to see that those much more qualified to comment, that is, historians, look back and recognize that the significance of that Korean War is the freedom enjoyed and the democratic surge around the world today.

Now World War II was a global war. It touched each and every family in America. It touched fathers, sons, brothers, nephews, cousins, and it touched the women of America. Not just the women and nurses in service, but the women who were called to the factories in the national surge to produce the equipment that was necessary to wage and win that war. One million, eight hundred thousand veterans served in Korea. In comparison, it does not sound like we were that much involved. In World War II, for those of you who were there, as in Korea, measured the war not by the numbers who served but by the individual sacrifice, especially for those of you who wear the Purple Heart. So many were wounded. Those of you who carry those badges of courage, those who received medals of honor and other awards, know that war is damn personal. You have the experiences, you have the knowledge, you have the ability to communicate with this generation of Americans.

I was at my nephew's school two years ago, a fourth grade class. He brought me there for "show 'n tell." This Air Force jet jockey brought his helmet, his mask, his G-suit, his flying suit. As a fourth grader years ago, I know I was probably too embarrassed, too shy to raise my hand and ask a question of anyone. I was overwhelmed and encouraged by the enthusiasm of these kids. They are interested, they want to know and they ask the darnest questions.

So back to the education. What I am asking of you is for an individual commitment. You, the veterans of America, have the ability to teach and to impart to our youngsters your experiences, your values, and the causes for which you fought. I ask you to make contact with your local school system, the principal, the superintendent, and ask how they might grant you the opportunity to meet with a class, to meet with a school assembly. The classroom size is better, I think, because of the individual interface. But if you would do that, you can help us and, in turn, help yourselves. I think it is a cathartic process. We have seen great successes where we have been informed of these efforts. A former prisoner of war in Hawaii, from the Korean War era, saw how enthusiastic the children were to receive that interface with the veteran.

The state of Alabama is one of our first state 'commemorative communities.' The superintendent of education for Alabama has taken the lead and, working with my director of education, has designed a curriculum. Last week at a teacher's conference, we finalized that effort and are now producing lesson plans and hope to have these on CD-ROM. In the near future, we will be sending out to all fifty states, asking the governors and their superintendents of education to get this education formally into all the classrooms. But it will be antidotal and a brief presentation, but it will increase by at least one hundred or one thousand percent the education on the Korean War that currently exists. But I firmly believe

that individual veterans should meet with, interface with, and impart their experience and their instruction, to teach the younger generation. This will take us great strides toward making sure, as the president , leaders of Congress and the nation say, that we are a grateful nation, and we do remember that Korea is no longer the forgotten war.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Continuing our theme of commemoration, it is appropriate to remember that the brave South Korean soldiers were beside us in battlefield operations in Korea and still patrol the DMZ along with American soldiers keeping the peace. Those veterans, as have American veterans, contributed much to the betterment of their nation during the past fifty years. With us today is the president of the Korean Veterans Association, a man with whom I was with just a few months ago in his country as together we marked the anniversary of the invasion from North Korea. It is an honor to introduce to you Retired General Sang-Hoon Lee.

Address: Retired General Sang-Hoon Lee
President of the Korean Veterans Association

On this occasion at your annual National Convention of The American Legion I would like foremost to extend my sincere congratulations to The American Legion for holding such a magnificent convention with foreign veterans in attendance from other parts of the world. I formed a legion of nationality of friends and now as the President of the Korean Veterans Association and on behalf of 6.5 million Korean veterans I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all you Legionnaires for inviting me to this festival in this beautiful city of Milwaukee.

As we are all aware, The American Legion held its festivities in 1919 immediately after the First World War and now has 2.9 million members who served their country especially in the wartime. It has conducted marvelous activities and contributed to the world peace. All Koreans are especially grateful to your organization for adopting this resolution every year expressing undying support for the security of Korea. Letting the U.S. Congress and government know its position promoting International opinion on Korea, thereby helping to maintain stability and peace in Korea. I was deeply impressed with the subscription on Korean War Veterans Monument in Washington, D.C. which reads that, "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who had served in the war to defend the country they never knew and the people they never met. With the precious devotion and effort of 1.2 million American and Korean Veterans, the Republic of Korea could overcome the national crisis half a century ago."

The flow of democracy with economic development has pressed on and Korea is now playing an important role as security guard along western United States for world peace. As American Legionnaires, you will know that there was an important historical event with the meeting between South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and North Korean ruler Kim Jong Il that was held in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, in June this year. The two leaders signed a joint declaration toward peace work, national corporation in economy and other areas. This has resulted in family reunions and other activities for reconciliation. We all sincerely hope that this will forever banish any war from the Korean peninsula and eventually lead to peaceful communication. I am sure that the United States will uphold that joint declaration and stand in the same position with the Republic Korea. There is a lesson learned from history which we should not miss. Only those who are strong now to keep peace are entitled to live with it. I clearly remember Winston Churchill saying that.

The Korean War was not wasted by those persons in European countries. They know that a strong national defense is necessary to ensure the substantial engagement policy toward the North and the true peace on the Peninsula, which the 6.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association had contributed to. We will play a leading role in national security, prosperity, and peaceful communication and for this I would like to ask all the Legionnaires to give unswerving support to the Republic Korea and what we are doing.

Once again, congratulations on your successful National Convention. I have no doubt these will further enhance the bond between The American Legion and Korean Veterans Association and will solidify the mutual alliance between the two countries and will increase friendship between Americans and Koreans.

And now ladies and gentlemen on behalf of 6.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association I would like to take this opportunity to be honored to present the plaque of appreciation to the National Commander Mr. Lance.

...At this time, the plaque is presented. It reads: For our appreciation, Mr. Alan Lance, Sr., National Commander of The American Legion. In grateful recognition of your dedicated contributions to the support of the national security of the Republic of Korea and of the promotion of a friendly relations between the two organizations. September 6, 2000, Lee Sang-Horn General Retired, President of the Korean Veterans Association.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I ask General Lee and his lovely wife, Mrs. Lee to come forward. General Lee, thank you for sharing with us those words from our friends in South Korea and the veterans association there. On behalf of The American Legion, I present you with this gift. Mrs. Lee, thank you very much for gracing our convention here and we appreciate you for being here as well.

I wish I knew how many times during my year as National Commander I found myself deep in thought, seeking just the right words and I simply cannot find them. Preparing for this moment, a solemn time in our agenda I read news stories from fifty years ago. I reviewed books and during my year I took time to walk through the Korean War Memorial grounds in Washington, D.C. Just as many of you have, I stopped and looked deeply into the eyes of many of the stainless steel statues. The statutes symbolize a patrol going toward an objective. In those eyes I see a determination to win, I see the horrors of death and I see compassion. Then turning from the statutes to the 160 foot long black granite wall, I see countless images of Korean veterans looking back at me, watching me and making certain that I remember and that everyone remembers, and that America remembers that freedom is not free.

It is indeed a heavy price which is paid by not only by Americans, but also by thousands of South Koreans and our allies who stood firmly on the Asian Peninsula for freedom. Etched in the granite, near the soldiers as they pushed toward their objectives at the Korean War Memorial are these words, "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend the country they never knew and the people they never met." Forget the Korean War? Forget the sacrifices of so many? Never!

...At this time a video is shown.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I call on our National Chaplain, David Brown for a memorial prayer. Please rise and uncover and pray with us.

Memorial Prayer
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplin

Almighty God and Father of all mankind who has dominion over life and death, grant to us the grace to remember with love and reverence our brave and honored departed comrades of the Korean War. Lord, they paid the ultimate price so that we might enjoy freedom. Grant eternal peace and happiness to their souls and keep them to the hour of final revelry on that day when they are called before the Divine Commander. May all of these men and women be present and accounted for. Heavenly Father keep the families of our departed comrades in Your care. Bless and comfort them. Let us be reminded of life, liberty, justice, freedom and democracy that we may be ever grateful to You for those comrades who gave so much for their country. Lord shelter the prisoners of war and those missing in action in Korea. Oh Lord, those brave men and women who bared so grave a burden must not be forsaken. God of justice, to whom we pray Your compassion, we beseech, lift their burden, give them strength and remove the shackles that deny them freedom. Amen.

I ask Commander Lance to light candles in remembrance of those who died in Korea and that National Sergeant-at-Arms, Charles Price, toll a bell of remembrance as each candle is lit. For the 24,728 Army soldiers who died on the battlefields of Korea, we remember. For the 4,268 Marines killed in Korea, we remember. For the 492 members of the Navy who gave their lives for freedom in Korea, we remember. For the 1,198 members of the Air Force who died in Korea, we remember. For the 7 members of the Coast Guard who also perished during the Korean War, we remember. For the 8,176 still missing or unaccounted for from the Korean War, we remember.

...At this time Taps are played.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: You have heard from one candidate for the office of President of the United States. Now there is time for you to be heard. The American Legion has launched the Veterans Vote 2000 on the Internet. Now Governor Bush's approach to important questions we asked are being complied and the video tape will be edited. You will find the public record of Vice President Gore on these major issues on our Internet website. The American Legion wants every active duty service member and every former service member to know where the candidates stand on the issues concerning national security and quality of life of our military personnel. Visitors to www.mylegion.com will be able to indicate on-line which candidate's response is most in line with their desires. The final question asked is who they believe would be the better Commander-in-Chief.

We have set up twenty computer stations right out side the convention hall. Representatives from mylegion.com will be there to help you review responses so that you can indicate your choices. This service will run through the end of the convention and will remain active and on-line until September 30th. On October 1st, we will release the results of the Veterans Vote 2000. Be sure you stop by the Veterans Vote 2000 area before you leave town. Tell all of your veteran friends at home to take time to visit the website. Read or listen to the candidates responses and decide for yourself who should be entrusted with our national security for the next four years. Veterans Vote 2000 on-line, The American Legion wants everyone to understand America's veterans care about our future and we will vote and make sure before you leave you do vote.

Lately, it seems, a vocal minority has set out to derail the construction of the World War II Memorial on the Mall in our nation's capitol. Thankfully, they have not been successful. The American Legion has been involved from the beginning with fund-raising for the memorial. We have also lent our visual support when important meetings were held,

most recently in late July and early August. This morning we are honored to receive an update on a plan for this memorial from the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission and a Legionnaire from Post 19 in the District of Columbia. Please welcome U.S. Army Major John Herrling, Retired.

Address: General John P. Herrling, U.S. Army, Retired
Secretary of the American Battle Monument Commission

It is a privilege to be with you this morning. I am going to say something that has probably been said many times over the last three days. But Winston Churchill said during World War II that if you repeat something often enough people will believe it. I tell you it has been a pleasure to be associated with one the country's great civic and patriotic organizations, The American Legion. The work that The American Legion does at the national level and within the states and within the communities keeps this great country heading in the right direction. It deserves thanks from all of America.

So for myself personally, thank you for your leadership, your community service, for your support of veterans, and for your great patriotism. I would like to give a special thanks to your National Commander, Al Lance, for the invitation to report today on the National World War II Memorial and for his personal support of our efforts. Also I would like to thank your National President Lib Stewart for the great job the Auxiliary has done in supporting the memorial and in its fund-raising drive. I would be remise if I also didn't thank Past National Commander Butch Miller, along with Jack Querfield and Jeff Wonder for managing the Legion's participation in our national fund-raising campaign.

With your help we have climbed to within $3 million dollars of the total funding requirements in the last four years. Also, I add a special thanks to Herman Harrington, the chairman of your Internal Affairs Committee. Herman has been very helpful to me personally in Washington, appearing before committees and giving us support as a representative of The American Legion. We have come a long way together since I first stood here with hat in hand in 1997. It has been a long journey. The $3.5 million dollars you raised is a superb example of the unselfish support that we have received from veterans across this country. On behalf on the campaign memorial staff and our fund-raising chair, Bob Dole, I extend my personal thanks to each member of The American Legion who made a contribution to help build this memorial and to the many Legion posts that have raised funds over the past three years.

Standing here in the heart of Milwaukee it is also appropriate I recognize the $385,000 donation by the state of Wisconsin. At the beginning, we asked each state to contribute $1.00 for each of its citizens who served in uniform in World War II. That program has been a great success. Forty-six states have passed legislation pledging $16 million in total. We expect the last four states to come on board before we are done. I could spend time this morning sharing with you our fund-raising successes: the $14.7 million raised by Wal-Mart stores across the country; the $44 million donated by corporations and foundations; the $30 million contributed by 400,000 individual donors; and the $500,000 collected from grammar schools, middle schools, and high schools across this country. This totally became a campaign across America, a campaign that we kick-started by the major veterans organizations.

You are familiar with the history of this project. It began in 1987 when a Battle of the Bulge Veteran, Roger Durbin, asked his Ohio Congresswoman, Marcy Kaptur why there

wasn't a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Her six year effort to get the authorization passed was finally realized when the President signed it in 1993. The approval and dedication of the Rainbow Pool, pool site was held on the National Mall in 1995. The design approvals were completed in both concept and preliminary design in 1998 and 1999. This brings me to the fall of 2000. The last battle to clear the way for ground breaking on Veterans' Day, this November.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about that battle. But first, I want to show you a short video that was produced for this year's round of public hearings at which we are seeking approval for our final architectural design.

...At this time the video is shown.

Word War II was the turning point of the 20th Century. What better place to recognize the triumph of democracy over tyranny than directly in line with the other national symbols and democratic ideals, the Capitol, the Washington Monument, and the Lincoln Memorial. But I would tell you there are those who disagree. There is a small, very vocal group in Washington that believes the World War II Memorial does not belong on the National Mall. They do not believe that the World War II generation is worthy of this approved and dedicated site and they have been very vocal at every hearing we have had for the last five years. Also, a few journalists, primarily in Washington, New York and Los Angeles, are trying to convince their readers that the American public has not been heard on this issue.

That is clearly wrong. The merits of the memorial's location and design have been debated in the media and in numerous public forms. A formal open process established by Congress has been scrupulously followed. Since 1995 sixteen public hearings have been held by the bodies charged by law with protecting the public interest on the Mall. No citizen, no organization, no one wanting to be heard has been denied. This is part of the democratic process. But it is time now to move on; the site has been reaffirmed again and again. The final architectural submission was approved unanimously by the Commission of Fine Arts this past July. The National Capitol Planning Commission, the final design approval needed to break ground will meet on September 21st, just two weeks from tomorrow. You have generously given your money to construct this memorial and I am not here asking for money.

I am here to ask that you not allow the majority opinion on this issue to go unheard. If you agree with us that the Memorial is long overdue, that the Memorial design you saw this morning is a beautiful tribute to our victory in World War II, that the Rainbow Pool site is the only appropriate site in America to commemorate the sacrifice and achievement of the World War II generation, then let your voice be heard. Please write letters of support to your local newspaper, write letters of support to the National Capitol Planning Commission, our last approval authority. I am going to give you their address. The National Capitol Planning Commission, 801 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20576.

We continue to loose our World War II veterans at an alarming rate. We lost Roger Durbin, the spark of this national effort in February. How many more will we loose before we complete this memorial to their service and sacrifice? Help us clear the final hurdle on September 21st. Then join us on the Mall on November 11th to break ground for this long overdue memorial.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: General Herrling, thank you very much for being here today to provide our delegates and guests with an updated status report on America's soon to be newest memorial to honor the World War II generation. This tribute has been a long time in coming, too long for too many, as we are losing 1,100 World War

II veterans per day in this country. The American Legion family is very proud to work with the Battle Monuments Commission and to have been a small part in this gigantic undertaking. General Herrling, in March of this year, I presented a check at our Washington conference to Senator Bob Dole, in the amount of $2,000,750. That check represented the amount of money raised by our American Legion family: The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion.

Today I must advise you to void that previous check. I have another check to offer in its place. This replacement check is dated September 6, 2000 and is in the sum and amount of $3,000,500.

...At this time the check is presented.

This new check is an increase of $750,000 over our previous donation. Now that you have all taken a picture of this check, I have a feeling in the next couple of minutes we may need to void this check as well in order to account for some additional funds and contributions that will be made. I would like for any Department which wants to make a donation to the World War II Memorial to come forward. General Herrling and I will gladly accept your money on behalf of our organization and all of America's patriots.

...At this time Departments come forward.

I am Don Schroedl from the Department of Minnesota. On behalf of the generous Legionnaires of the Department of Minnesota I present this check for $16,500. This is in addition to the $70,000 we previously had given. We petitioned the people of the state of Minnesota and received $325,000 that we sent in already. But we are not through yet. Accompanying me are two Post Commanders from the state of Minnesota who would like to make contributions from their posts.

I am Virgil Persing from the Minneapolis Post No. 1 of Minnesota and I present a check of $1,000.

I am Commander Billy Stone, from Post 435, Minneapolis, Richfield, from the Department of Minnesota, with an additional $1,000. This is our second check for $1,000.

I'm Ron Hartman, immediate Past Commander from the great state of Ohio, from the Legion family from the Buckeye state, presenting a check for $13,150, bringing the grand total from the Buckeye state, thus far to $74,000, with more to come. Accompanying me today is our Commander Ron Easter and our World War II chairman, Greg Whitham.

I am Roger Keller from Milwaukee Post 415, Milwaukee. I present $120 in memory of Edward J. Voisard, past Department Commander. I also present you with a check of $100. That completes our Post's $1.00 per member effort.

I am Philip Mayeaux, home of National Chaplin, David Brown, I present to you a check from Louisiana, as the chairman. I am happy to say that supplements of previous donations and we are on the verge of reaching $1.00 per veteran who served from Louisiana. That would take us over $350,041 and we are still working.

I am Ramona Naragon, accompanied by Past National Commander, Anthony Jordan, from the proud state of Maine. We are here to donate $21,787.52 which added to our previous total of $17,000 and gives a large donation.

I am Robert Proctor, Department of Florida, President of the Past Department Commanders Club. With me is Dick Pedro, Department Adjutant of New York, and our Executive Director. It is an honor to me, as a Vietnam veteran representing the Past Department Commanders Club to present a check in the amount of $10,000 to the World War II Memorial.

From the Theodore Van Hassel Post 402 in Whaland, New York, I bring $1,000.

My name is Ray Hendricks from the great department of Georgia, along with my Commander Tracy Powers. We present a check for $1,145 which takes us over $35,000. The governor of the great state of Georgia has already contributed over $324,000.

I am George Brown from the state of Wisconsin, Department of Wisconsin. I present a check for $100 from the Past Commanders Club and the Department of Wisconsin.

Virginia salutes America's greatest generation. The Department of Virginia proudly presents $27,199 to the World War II Memorial, bringing that to a total of $57,399 as of today.

I am Don Simons from the Department of Texas. I have a check for $2,000 to present on behalf of Post 159, which represents fifty percent of our eight hundred members who are World War II Veterans.

I am LeRoy Lebsack, NEC from the great state of Idaho, the home state of our National Commander. I have with me today our immediate Past Commander who pushed this program. Also with us is our newly elected Commander and our immediate Past, Rick Hanni, Our newly elected is Rick Helsley, he is also going to push this and our Memorial Chairman, Don Gunderson will present the check.

On behalf of the Department of Idaho, I have the honor to present $5,023.64 today. I want to make this delegation of the 82nd Convention aware that Idaho has $16,500 donated through the Eagle High School, just outside of Boise. Also our legislation passed that $1.00 per World War II veteran. I have also indicated $66,000 on that behalf. But today it $5,023.64.

I am Bob Thomas from God's country, Department of Wisconsin with $1,365.

On behalf of the Constitution State, Department of Connecticut, we are here to complete and continue on our effort to the World War II Memorial. With that I ask for the presentation of our donations today by our Department Chairman, Frank DeAngelo, Second District Executive Committeeman, Tim Perrotti, and Everett Shepard. I donate this check from Post 89, the Department of Connecticut, the town of East Haven, of $10,000 to the World War II Memorial. In addition we have through the Department another check for $317. This should bring our contributions through the Department of Connecticut to over $35,000.

I am Gene Twiford, the Commander of Nebraska. I also have with me Past Department Commander Ed Farr, who is one of the big pushers in this beautiful donation we have for the World War II Memorial. The first check I have is for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation in the amount of $1,000. The next check is for The American Legion National Emergency Fund in the amount of $4,000. Finally, I have two checks as a tribute and a beautiful thank you to all the men and women who helped preserve that beautiful freedom so we are here today at this beautiful convention. Forever we could never thank them enough for what they have all done. That check is for $10,500 and Ed, here, is one of the big pushers for all of that money.

We are out there in what they call that big red country. We are also one of the first states to get our legislature to donate that $1.00 per member for the World War II Memorial and we thank them for that.

I am Jake Comer, Past National Commander, from Massachusetts. On behalf of John Mulkern, Past National Vice Commander, our state Chairman for the World War II Memorial and myself who served on the Korean Memorial Dedication Board and is still working for the World War II Veteran, here with my Commander, Mark Avis, our National Executive Committeeman, Al Canale, and my alternate National Executive Committeeman,

Jimmy Flattes. I am proud to present to the World War II Memorial a check for $78,611.38 combined with the 1999 total of $73,460.42 presented last year. We have reached our goal of $150,000 to the tune of $152,071.80 and with that the governor two weeks ago signed the bill for a check for $569,000 giving Massachusetts' total to date of $721,071.80.

I am Jim Mareschal, the National Executive Committeeman from the Department of Missouri. I have with me our delegation chairman, Irv Etzold.

General Herrling, last month you came into the Department of Missouri and our governor signed a check for $438,000. This check isn't quite in the same amount, but with the amount of the check we bring to you today, you will not only meet your goal, but you will exceed it. I have a check here for $13,922.19.

I am Clay Lofton, Department of Illinois, fund-raising chairman for the World War II Memorial. I am accompanied by our incoming commander, our outgoing commander, and our NEC man. We present to you our check from the Department of Illinois for $25,000.

I am NEC from West Virginia, William Kile, and proudly donate another $500 to the World War II Memorial Fund. This is from past Department Commander Art Oger and the Legionnaires of West Virginia.

I am Bjarne J. Runchel from the great state of Colorado and with me is Jeff Luginbuel, who is the Chairman for the Memorial. We present the check for $6,300 from the sale of pins.

My name is Rich Keiser. I am the delegation chairman from the Department of New York and with my Commander Richard O'Keefe. On behalf of the Department of New York and our Legionnaires we donate to the World War II Memorial $70,500 which would bring our total for this year $127,000.

I am Val Smith, Commander of Utah and I have three checks. As I was getting ready to leave a couple of individuals came up and handed me more. One was Comrade James Ramsey, one was from Lester Keith Post 190 and then I have the check from the Department of Utah. I totaled them together and we are donating $1,229 for the monument.

I am Keith Burley, Commander of the Department of Hawaii and I have a check for $1,200 for this fund.

I am District One Commander Post 19 in Hawaii. This is my own donation in memory of my mother's cousin, William P. Shelton, Jr., Sergeant U.S. Army. He was age 19, married one year, with one daughter who he never saw. He sent anniversary flowers to his wife. Well, he was in a group of American servicemen who were poisoned in Austria in a restaurant and was the only one who died. The war was just over but the word hadn't gotten around. That same afternoon was a telegraph notifying the family of his death, July 16, 1945. I have a picture of his parents also, the mother lived to be 105. My check is $2,500.

I am Dennis Pierson, Department Commander of New Hampshire. We have previously donated $3,700. I have a check today for $7,652, bringing New Hampshire's grand total to $11,352.

I am Terry D. Lewis, from the Department of Pennsylvania and my Department presents $4,588.40 for the World War II Memorial.

I am Roy Mahoney, Department of Florida, with two checks. One is from is Viola Chipman of Tampa; she is also your platform assistant Sergeant-at-Arms. She collected the in past couple of days the amount of $60 for this particular fund. The next check is from Post 180, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida for $450.

On behalf of the four corners Departments of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah, we collected money in conjunction with the USO, with the Milwaukee War Memorial

on Monday morning at our Four Corners party. We have some petty cash here in the amount of $300.

I am Lawrence Roy, NEC of Oklahoma. I have some checks to add to Oklahoma's contribution previously from our Past National Commander's Fund, $100 from our Post 129 in Stillwater, Oklahoma, $220 and, from our state of Oklahoma, $100.

GENERAL JOHN P. HERRLING: National President Stewart and Mr. Cooke. This is just a tangible example of the type of support we have from The American Legion during these last four years. And I just can't tell the Department heads and all of you individually how much we really appreciate it. It is this type of support that is going to make the National World War II Memorial a reality in the not too distant future.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The contributions today totaled $376,766.63. Well done, Legionnaires!

General Herrling, as you can see, our American Legion family is always committed to recognizing all our veterans who served during an extraordinary period of world history. On my last official visit to a post, I was given donations amounting to $2,500 from Post 305, Custer, Ohio which is a community of less than two hundred persons with a total membership of thirty-eight members. I was deeply touched by the mother of Post Commander, Leda Cass, who took it upon herself to spearhead the fund-raising efforts in the small community. When she was $150 short of where she wanted to be, she just wrote a check for it.

It is donations by individuals which continue to add up. They are donations that will ensure the construction of the World War II Memorial. We owe that generation of Americans a debt that can never be fully paid. But this memorial will forever remind everyone what was done in the name of freedom.

Before we move on I want to provide a forum of recognition for several posts for the amount of money their members contributed to this project.

First, making the largest single donation to the Memorial Fund was a gift of $50,000 from Mohawk Post 308 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

...At this time the check was presented.

The next are the awards for The American Legion Posts according to records at National Headquarters, which made the highest average donation per member. Two small posts were so close that we decided to recognize each. Both are in the Department of Ohio. Strongsville Post 795 with thirty members contributed $1,000. Custer, Ohio Post 305 donated more than $37 per member, for $1,500 for the 38 members. Would the representatives of Ohio please come forward.

...At this time the representatives came forward.

Our next recognition is for a post of more than 600 which donated more than $20,000. This award goes to Lt. P.R. Kim Lu, Chinese Memorial Post 1291, New York City, New York. New York delegation please come forward.

I acknowledge the individual contribution of Mario DeCarlo from the Department of Massachusetts. He wrote a personal check for $15,000. A special plaque and certificate will be presented later by the Department of Massachusetts.

I express my gratitude to all members, Posts, Units and those individual Squadrons and Departments that so fully embraced this campaign to do the right thing for our World War II veterans. When the Memorial is constructed I hope all of you get the opportunity to visit it and see what your contributions have done to forever honor those that endured battle and those that supported them.

Our next guest is the President of the board of directors of Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation. She is a woman who knows how to get things done. She has for several years led the nation's effort to build the memorial for all women of military service. She is a member of American Legion Post 477 in Chrisman, Illinois. Welcome Retired U.S. Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

Address: Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, Retired
President, Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc.

It is an honor for me to be here today as a life member of the world's largest wartime veterans organization and to bring you greetings from the world's largest organization of women; veteran and active duty members. And we are very proud of that. We have 200,000 members now. I came today because I want to thank the Legion for the support of this memorial. When I was here last year, we were about $5 million in debt. So I wanted to report that we have resolved that problem, thanks to the Congress and the Legion which has donated some $200,070 to us. I thank you for that donation. That is over the twelve year period you have been helping us.

I will read to you some words an Army Mail Specialist wrote when he visited the memorial. He said, "Here in this most fitting of places they are remembered, the daughters of adversity, sisters of battle, and mothers of compassion. In honor and duty they served and with diligence they are remembered. The sacrifices and hard work of these soldiers can never be overlooked. They are here revered. Let silence be reflection, reflection contemplation, and from contemplation may come thankfulness." And as I said I thank you for the support that you have given.

We have been doing a number of things since the memorial opened. We have been trying to get the records all scanned in of the women who served. We have gotten most of their pictures in now. We still have much data to be entered. And that is one of our main efforts at the present time.

The memorial has become a key place for retirements, promotion ceremonies, and re-enlistment ceremonies, and even a few memorial services have been held there. We are very proud to offer that venue there at the main gate at Arlington National Cemetery. We also, this past June 24th, opened our Korean War exhibit honoring the some 2,000 nurses who served in Vietnam during that war as well as all of the women who served during that era. We continue to work on books. We sell more books written by and about women who served in the military than anybody or any place in the world.

We have an aggressive educational program for children. From kindergarten to the 12th grade, we teach them about the symbols of patriotism, about Cadence Calls and about patriotism itself. That goes on once or twice every month for children in the area. And, of course, we continue to operate and maintain the educational center. We also have a series of house seminars concentrating on women's health. We have considered such subjects as osteoporosis and mental health. We have an upcoming one on headaches and I have to say that through my period of time in life I think a good share of my headaches came from people not from here. I don't know, Commander, whether you have experienced that or not, but I sure have! We will continue to do that and I continue to need your support because we will continue to be responsible for the education center. I thank you for your donations and I hope you won't stop.

I would be remise if I didn't speak to you in some of the words of the women who have been registered. In October of 1997 when we dedicated the memorial, we were fortunate to have one World War I woman who was able to be there and speak to the assembled group. She said this, "In my 101 years of living I have observed many wonderful achievements, but none as important or as meaningful as the progress of women in taking their rightful place in society. When I served in the Navy women were not even allowed to vote. Now women occupy important leadership positions, not only in the military but also in business, government, education and in almost every form of human activity." And she is so right. I regret to inform you that about two or three weeks ago Frieda Harten died at age 103. On September the 8th she will be buried, or her ashes will be placed in the column barium at Arlington National Cemetery. If you are in Washington at that time, I would welcome your attendance at that. Helen spoke of women being involved in every form of activity.

I have been very pleased this year to note the increasing number of women wearing Legionnaires caps. Not only are they wearing them but some of them are white and I even saw one that was the red burgundy color which says that women are beginning to be more active in The American Legion. I could only tell you that I will not be satisfied until I see the same percentage of women active in The American Legion as are active in the military service today, some 14%.

Another woman came to the memorial and she said, "I love my memorial. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to be recognized and to go down in history for my children and great grandchildren to see forever. I immigrated to this country in 1960 and have faithfully served in the United States Air Force." If any of you have any women who are not registered for the memorial, please come to our booth over in the education hall and get one of these brochures. Take it back and see that she gets registered so she takes her place in history.

I think about the upcoming dedication of the World War II Memorial and of the many stories I heard from World War II veterans throughout the years. I was so elated the other day when I read one of the comments written in the book that visitors can write in. It finally straightened out for me who won the war. This was written by Jodie Silverburg, a granddaughter who said, "I am so proud there is a memorial here for my grandma who won World War II single handedly." So for all of you World War II veterans , when you tell me your stories, I will just smile. Because I know who won World War II single handedly. It was her grandmother, a woman.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I would like to report that when I was in Bosnia and Kosovo, nine percent of our forces who were serving in those theaters are females. One of the proud heritages of The American Legion is since they were founded in 1919, women who honorably served their country during periods of conflict, as that term has been defined by Congress, have been eligible to join The American Legion. That was two years before this country gave them the right to vote. So The American Legion is proud of our female members and of our heritage and our tradition. We are proud of those young ladies in uniform today as well.

For purposes of a report the Chair recognizes Robert Jack David of South Carolina, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics for his report.

Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference
and
Other Economic Matters
Robert E. David, South Carolina, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m. on September 3, 2000, a total of 85 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in Room 102C of the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to consider 107 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. Robert E. David of South Carolina was elected general chairman and Albert Robotti of New Jersey was appointed general secretary. Leonard Shaw of Iowa was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and Paul Evenson of South Dakota was appointed secretary. Paul A. Morin of Massachusetts was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Margaret Malone of New Jersey was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of Robert E. "Jack" David (SC), Len Shaw (IA), Paul Morin (MA), Al Robotti (NJ), and Bill Christoffersen (UT), met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 1, 2000, in the Oak Room of the Milwaukee (WI) Hilton City Center, 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 Resolution 12 set aside for separate consideration. Resolution 12 was amended and given a technical correction regarding length of service and citing two titles of the U.S. Code; the amendment was adopted.

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 9:55 a.m.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 12: Amend Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As Amended and Consolidated with 139 (MD), 252 (UT))

WHEREAS, The 105 Congress passed the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 and limited the 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 PL 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, This would bring the statute into conformity with the definitions of Title 38, United States Code; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That an amendment to Public Law 105-339 be made to include all those who honorably served the United States, who served at least 179 days, under the provisions of either Title 10, United States Code, or Title 32, United States Code.

Resolution No. 20: Hire a Veteran Week
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 150 (MD), 264 (UT))

WHEREAS, The United States of America recognizes the importance of "Hire a Veteran Week" to promote the betterment of veterans; and

WHEREAS, It is known that of the unemployed, the percentage of unemployed veterans is greater than the non-veterans; and

WHEREAS, There is presently no national "Hire a Veteran Week" program targeted only to veterans; and

WHEREAS, By having a national "Hire a Veteran Week" the United States of America publicly encourages the hiring of veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion goes on record to have the United States of America institute a national "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year, and urge all citizens, and especially those charged with the responsibility for hiring personnel, to recognize and support the hiring of veterans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be submitted to the President of the United States, members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Labor.

Resolution No. 26: Assign Local Veterans Employment Representatives as Required by Law
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 25 (MA), 156 (MD), 217 (ND), 258 (UT))

WHEREAS, Under Title 38, Chapter 41, U.S. Code, Section 2004a(2)(A), the regulation states that at least one LVER shall be assigned to each local employment office having at least 1,100 veterans registered and an additional LVER 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, there are inadequate appropriations to several states because of policies and practices which cause these states to receive fewer positions and/or less funding; and

WHEREAS, This procedure caused a deterioration of the available services provided to veterans in those states, and adversely impacts the level of services provided; and

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law 100-323, the level of funding for these 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion petition the

Secretary of Labor to adhere to the requirements of Title 38, Chapter 41, Section 2004 and assign Local Veterans Employment Representative positions on the basis required by law.

Resolution No. 35: Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA)
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, In 1992, Congress enacted the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA), which became PL 102-484; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA is a transitional tool designed to provide job training and employment to certain veterans discharged from the military after August 1, 1990; and

WHEREAS, To be eligible for participation in the SMOCTA program, the veteran must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have a primary or secondary military occupational specialty that the Department of Defense has determined is not readily transferable to the civilian work force; or
- 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
- Be unemployed and have been unemployed for at least eight of the last 15 work weeks before filing an application; and

WHEREAS, The veterans eligible for job training under SMOCTA are precisely those individuals who need the most assistance in making a successful transition to the civilian work force; and

WHEREAS, The Departments of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA) and Labor (DOL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March of 1993 which defined their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SMOCTA; and

WHEREAS, DOD provides funding for SMOCTA while the VA and DOL are responsible for administering the program; and

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the MOU, the SMOCTA program will terminate when all the funds provided by DOD are expended or at such time as agreed upon by all parties; and

WHEREAS, This country's unemployment problem is being exacerbated by the drastic downsizing of the military; and

WHEREAS, The SMOCTA can help alleviate the employment problems faced by many veterans who are being separated from the military; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion seek continuation of the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek adequate funding for Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act so that it can achieve what it was designed to do.

Resolution No. 40: Preserve Priority of Service to Veterans in All One-Stop Centers
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Veterans Preference & Employment)
(Consolidated with 132 (MD), 213 (OK), 245 (UT), 274 (UT))

WHEREAS, "Priority" has been a practice prescribed by the Department of Labor (DOL) as one means of fulfilling the mandate of Title 38 United States Code to provide veterans with the maximum of employment and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, "Priority" has been defined and practiced as "the provision of services to veterans before the provision of such services to non-veterans"; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor is moving toward a One-Stop Center operation in the states; and

WHEREAS, Once DOL awards grants to the states, the governor of each state will decide who will operate the One-Stop Centers, thus placing the policy of priority of service in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, The centers might continue with the State Employment Security Agencies, known as the Job Service, or the funding may take another direction and be operated by the counties under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or even be sub-contracted out to private corporations; and

WHEREAS, The former JTPA was historically deaf to veterans' needs and opposed veterans' priority in most states; and

WHEREAS, If the funds are sub-contracted out to the private sector, the motivation to assist veterans with employment issues will be driven strictly by profits; and

WHEREAS, These actions will eventually lead to cutting corners and ultimately be detrimental to veterans; 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, no matter whom the governors select, so that each veteran or eligible is afforded the full array of services for which she or he is eligible in order to gain advantages in the labor market; 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 recommendations; training; career counseling; job placement; employer information; case management; skills enhancement; selective placement; job development; child care information; temporary housing; transportation assistance and discharge upgrade assistance; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the majority of these services are provided by the staff in the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs), both programs operated by the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA); and

WHEREAS, If the SESA is not the service provider the staff, including LVERs and DVOPs, stand to lose their jobs or be transitioned into the evolving system as county employees; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, that The American Legion in National Convention assembled affirm the practice and definition of "priority" as herein defined, and ask that such definition and practice be formally codified by the Congress in Title 38 United States Code, Chapter 41, and that the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training require and extend the policy and practice of priority of service to all service providers in America's system of workforce development through the authority granted them under Section 4102 of Title 38 United States Code; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose federal funding for any employment service provider unless they adopt as a policy that eligible veterans receive maximum priority of the above noted services; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative staff remain state employees, that they will work within the evolving system and that they will operate and maintain services to veterans as mandated by statute; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the One-Stop Centers work with the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to ensure the operations of the One-Stop Centers meet or exceed the federally mandated service to veterans.

Resolution No. 43: Tax Credits for Certain Employers
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference
(Consolidated with 136 (MD), 250 (UT))

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, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 52: Recognition of Military Service and Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries
Origin: DC
Submitted By: Economics

(Consolidated with 42 (MA), 135 (MD), 248 (UT))

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, One scenario that illustrates this point is as follows: Employee A has worked for the same agency for 10 years and has a pay rating of GS-11, Step 10 ($52,927 per year). That employee subsequently transfers to a GS-10, Step 1 ($37,057 per year) position in another agency. Under current law, the hiring agency may, at its discretion, adjust Employee A's Step level upward from Step 1 to Step 2 through Step 10 ($38,292-$48,173); and

WHEREAS, Employee B leaves the Armed Forces as a Major after 10 years of service and accepts a GS-10, Step 1 position at a Federal agency. No matter how pertinent this employee's military experience may be to the civilian job for which they have been hired, the only way his/her starting pay can be increased is if they have "outstanding qualifications" or if the hiring agency "has special needs for a candidate's service." Thus, it is unlikely that Employee B's starting salary will be adjusted unless there is a substantial shortage of qualified applicants; and

WHEREAS, In the above scenario, it is entirely possible that Employee A and Employee B could be hired by the same agency, to do the same job, with Employee A having the potential of being paid as much as $11,116 more per year than Employee B; 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, Another thing that makes this situation discriminatory is that while in the military, the veteran was in fact, in the service of this country's Federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that requires Federal agencies to take a candidate's military experience and military pay history into consideration when computing that applicant's starting salary.

Resolution No. 54: Make TAP Training Available to All Personnel Separating or Retiring from the Military

Origin: DC

Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 38 (MA), 129 (MD), 242 (UT))

WHEREAS, At the end of the Cold War the military was drastically downsized as a way of reducing the national budget; and

WHEREAS, In an attempt to assist separating service members, including retirees, in making a successful transition back into the civilian workforce, Congress enacted Public Law 101-510; and

WHEREAS, That legislation authorized the creation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which provides three days of comprehensive training to separatees with emphasis on such topics as how to conduct a job search; career decision-making, current occupational and labor market conditions, as well as resume and cover letter preparation; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is currently conducting a survey to assess the success of TAP in reaching its goal; and

WHEREAS, By 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; and

WHEREAS, While commanding officers are encouraged to release their troops from duty so they can receive TAP training, many do not understand the importance of the training and thus are reluctant to comply with the result that in FY 99 only 56% of those separating from the military received TAP training; and

WHEREAS, Some commanding officers have not allowed their troops to take TAP training at least 180 days prior to discharge thus impeding the trainee's job search; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion reiterate its strong support of the Transition Assistance Program by seeking legislation that will make it permanent and require that all service members be given an opportunity to participate in training not less than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the military.

Resolution No. 64: Adequate Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Service
Origin: SD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 27 (MA))

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor, presented the Fiscal Year 2001 budget to Congress in February 2000 which will fund the various employment programs administered by the VETS; and

WHEREAS, The funding of such programs includes the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), the Transition Assistance Program, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (One Stop) Program, new initiatives, i.e., development of Transition Assistance Programs overseas, Internet information and strengthening the relationships between federal contractors for placement of veterans into federal jobs; and

WHEREAS, The funding proposed by the VETS falls short of what The American Legion would consider a sufficient budget to support all the programs the Department of Labor administers for veterans in need of economic and labor assistance; and

WHEREAS, The funding for the DVOP and LVER programs due to the cost of living increases, in each state, supports far fewer positions than congressionally mandated. These programs should be fully funded to the extent called for under the congressional intent; and

WHEREAS, With the implementation of the WIA, there will be an additional 2500 one-stop centers where veterans will go for employment assistance. By law, there must be 1600 fully funded LVER positions and 2000 DVOP positions. The proposed VETS funding will only support about 2400 positions annually. This is 600 staff short that must provide services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The VETS is to advocate employment programs for veterans, yet has bowed to the wishes of the Administration, which has ignored veteran employment issues or has chosen to remove veteran programs by contracting the VETS services to private contractors or move these services to another agency, i.e., the Department of Veterans Affairs (HR 606); and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has no existing employment delivery system nor does it have the necessary staff to operate such a program and the DVA would ultimately contract out these services; and

WHEREAS, The result would be to put all employment staff (more than 2,500 veterans, most of whom are disabled veterans) on the unemployment rolls and the cost would exceed the current budget with low-end contractors; and

WHEREAS, The men and women who served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America are getting a clear message, "The United States does not care for its veterans;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion lobby Congress and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service for a budget that will adequately address the needs of the veterans, and the active duty members who receive Transition Assistance Program assistance, and veterans who receive other assistance by the Department of Labor.

Resolution No. 131: Support Reinvention of Veterans' Employment and Training Service
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 22 (MA), 244 (UT))

WHEREAS, In recent years there has been an ongoing effort to reinvent federal government by making it more effective, efficient and responsive to this country's needs; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service is an agency within the Department of Labor which exists for the purpose of providing America's veterans with quality employment services; and

WHEREAS, The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training is responsible for ensuring that the agency continues to meet its mission despite increasing reluctance by Congress to fund it properly; and

WHEREAS, In response to the reinvention initiative, the Assistant Secretary appointed a Reinvention Team to analyze VETS and determine how it could restructure and streamline itself for the purpose of improving the services it provides to its veteran clients; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion fully supports the Assistant Secretary's efforts to make the agency even more responsive to the needs of the veterans it serves; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support reorganization of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to make it more effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of America's veterans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support all other efforts that will improve and expand the employment assistance this country provides to former members of the Armed Forces.

Resolution No. 133: Support Further Study of Licensure and Certification Requirements
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 41 (MA), 246 (UT))

WHEREAS, One of the most common reasons that people enter the military is to obtain job training that may be unavailable elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Another attractive feature of military service is that it offers enlistees an opportunity to learn, develop and refine job skills; and

WHEREAS, Many men and women leave the service believing that the training and skills they acquired through military service will guarantee them a smooth transition into the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, Service personnel are not routinely informed at the time of training that they may be required to meet licensure and certification requirements if they choose to work in the same field when they enter the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, Because of the employment barriers created by civilian credentialing requirements, transitioning service members are often stunned to learn that the civilian labor market accepts neither their military training nor their job skills; and

WHEREAS, The inability of a transitioning service member to meet civilian credentialing requirements standards can, among other things, delay their entry into the civilian workforce, hinder their chances for achieving their full civilian employment potential, and retard their career advancement; and

WHEREAS, A recent study by The American Legion identified credentialing barriers in the aircraft and health care fields; and

WHEREAS, A follow-up study by the Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 professions where military training is provided and civilian credentialing is required; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that additional studies must be conducted to determine the extent to which civilian licensure and certification requirements adversely affect the remaining occupational specialties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 Armed Forces and the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that at the time of training, service members are informed about any licensure

or certification they may be required to meet when they enter the civilian workforce; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress, the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor to fund a study of the effect of civilian licensure and certification requirements on all military occupational specialties identified by the study undertaken by the Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance.

Resolution No. 148: Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 34 (MA), 45 (MA), 81 (CO), 268 (UT))

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, and 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 the 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, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, The term "veteran" includes every category of society—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 Act 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 preference is "discriminatory," who ignore the many judicial determinations upholding veterans preference, who blatantly overemphasize the advantages of veterans preference although presumably aware of the fact that approximately 28 million veterans in our population have not chosen or been successful in obtaining a federal or state position; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the President of the United States, the Congress, the governor of each state, and the state legislatures be informed that The American Legion deplores each and every attempt to degrade, dilute, or modify the historical precedent of giving job eligibility and retention preference to those who were taken from their communities to serve their country in time of war or armed conflict, and that the President and governors reject any and all proposed legislation that would reduce the employment opportunities for veterans in the federal or state workforce.

Resolution No. 149: Disabled Veterans as Priority Under Americans With Disabilities Act
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Economics & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 21 (MA), 265 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge 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. 151: Job Protection for Service Connected Veterans Requiring Visits at VA Facilities
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 19 (MA), 263 (UT))

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, Veterans or disabled veterans who are required to report for mandatory compensation or pension physical examinations are considered as a "standard" or "regular" absence from work; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge state and federal legislators 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 or service aggravated condition, that is being treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 163: Urge State Employment Security Agencies to Report Veterans' Wages at Placement
Origin: VA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As amended)

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 U.S. Department of Labor to arrange for such reporting by state and nationwide, through federal law or executive action.

Resolution No. 222: Oppose the Transfer of Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs
Origin: ND

Submitted By Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 37 (MA), 157 (MD), 257 (UT))

WHEREAS, Veterans' employment programs began after World War I when the U.S. Employment Service helped place returning veterans in civilian jobs; and

WHEREAS, Since 1980 the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL/VETS) has been headed by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training; and

WHEREAS, DOL/VETS' primary responsibilities include the following:

- Administering veterans' employment program grants totaling $157 million in fiscal year 1998, that fund nearly 3,000 state employment service Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives;
- Administering Job Training Partnership Act IV-C grants totaling $7.3 million in FY 1998 and, after July 1, 2000, successor veterans' workforce investment programs. The successor programs, established by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, will serve recently separated and service-connected disabled veterans, veterans with significant barriers to employment, and veterans of a war, campaign, or expedition. WIA directs DOL/VETS to coordinate veterans' workforce investment programs with related Department of Veterans Affairs programs and activities, and authorizes not less than $7.3 million for each FY from 1999 through 2003;
- Administering homeless veterans' reintegration project grants ($3 million) in FY 1998);
- Facilitating Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for separating service members (DOL/VETS currently authorizes states to allocate up to five percent of their veterans' employment state grants for TAP workshop facilities and augments this allocation with a national contract for supplemental facilitation ($1.5 million for FY 1998), as well as funding to purchase and ship TAP materials (approximately $400,000 annually));
- Monitoring veterans' preference for federal employment, in cooperation with the United States Office of Personnel Management. The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 requires that Secretary of Labor to investigate complaints of alleged violations of veterans' preference rights to federal employment and attempt to resolve them;
- Supervising the listing of jobs by federal contractors and the subsequent referrals of qualified veterans;
- Administering 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, DOL/VETS is organized with a national, seven regional, and 52 state-level offices by statute; and

WHEREAS, DOL would continue providing employment related services to non-veterans, creating a duplication of services detrimental to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion opposes all legislative efforts to transfer the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 231: Credit Service of Military Retirees Towards Federal Employment Benefits
Origin: WA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As amended)

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 251: Support Revision of Veterans' Employment and Training Service Performance Standards
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 11 (MA), 138 (MD))

WHEREAS, Federal law required the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) to establish performance standards for evaluating state employment services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, At a 1997 hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) 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 Employment Service 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 259: The National Veterans' Training Institute

Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 24 (MA), 155 (MD))

WHEREAS, Public Law 100-323 established the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) as the primary training center for veteran 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 has had an immeasurable impact on the quality of services provided the veterans of this nation by improving the level and quality of services provided, thus improving job opportunities for veterans; and

WHEREAS, The downsizing of the military, federal government, and corporate America has increased the number of veterans who need the services of those individuals currently trained by NVTI; and

WHEREAS, Despite its proven track record NVTI has never been adequately funded; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion petition Congress to continue full funding of the National Veterans' Training Institute as required by Public Law 100-323.

Resolution No. 269: Veterans Hiring Preference for Federal Contractors
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with 14 (MA), 147 (MD))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 272: Veterans Hiring Preference from Employers with Federal Grants
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
(As Amended and Consolidated with 83 (CO))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Economics

Resolution No. 211: Expenses Paid for Winners of "Employer of the Year" Awards
Origin: OK

Committee on Other Economic Matters

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approval

Resolution No. 44: Reestablish Adjustable Rate Mortgages for Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics
(Consolidated with 152 (MD), 262 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 49: Home Loan Program Extended to Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and Persian Gulf Veterans
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics
(Consolidated with 134 (MD), 247 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 130: Support for Improvements to All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
(As Amended and Consolidated with 39 (MA), 225 (FL), 243 (UT))

WHEREAS, the year 2000 marks the 50 anniversary of the graduation of the first recipients of the educational benefit contained in the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, many experts consider the GI Bill of Rights the greatest piece of social legislation ever enacted; and

WHEREAS, the original GI Bill of Rights educational benefit package returned to the US Treasury in the form of tax dollars many times the initial investment; and

WHEREAS, the GI Bill of Rights educational benefit package was a valuable recruitment tool for the armed forces; but since the benefit package has failed to keep pace with escalating educational costs, its value as a recruitment tool has noticeably diminished; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous other federally funded educational programs that directly compete with the GI Bill of Rights that offer greater monetary benefits with less personal sacrifice and hardship; and

WHEREAS, the GI Bill of Rights is designed as a veteran's readjustment benefit to assist in the successful transition from military service back into the civilian workforce; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports passage of major enhancements to the current All-Volunteer Force Education Assistance Program, better known as the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), statute to include the following:

- The dollar amount of the entitlement should be indexed to the average cost of a college education including tuition, fees, textbooks, and other supplies for a commuter student at a public university. This index should be reviewed and adjusted annually.
- If a veteran enrolled in the MGIB becomes eligible for training and rehabilitation for service-connected disabilities, the veteran should be reimbursed the $1200 deducted from the veteran's military basic pay.
- If a veteran enrolled in the MGIB acquired educational loans prior to enrolling in the armed forces, MGIB benefits may be used to repay existing educational loans.
- Enrollment in the MGIB shall be open throughout the term of enlistment; however, benefits will not be awarded until the eligibility criteria have been met.
- The military payroll deduction ($1200) requirement for enrollment in the MGIB must be terminated.
- A veteran may request an accelerated payment of all educational monthly benefits at any time after meeting the criteria for eligibility for financial payments.
- Veterans seeking a license or credential must be able to use educational benefits to pay for the cost of taking any written or practical test or other measuring device.
- If a service member fails to enroll in the program at the time of enlistment and later wishes to participate in the GI educational benefits program, that veteran shall have 180 days after discharge to make an election to participate.

- Select Reservists should have up to five years from their date of separation to use their GI educational benefits.

Resolution No. 142: Preference for Veterans in Housing and Urban Development
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
(Consolidated with 16 (MA), 254 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 143: Home Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
(Consolidated with 15 (MA), 255 (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 our nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty limit be raised to $227,150.

Resolution No. 144: Funding for Homeless Programs
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
(As Amended and Consolidated with 10 (MA), 17 (MA), 59 (DC), 137 (MD), 249 (UT), 256 (CT), 279 (IL))

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has passed legislation to fund the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill (HCMI) 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 HCMI 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill 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. 145: Support Improved Small Business Services For America's Veteran Entrepreneurs

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

(As Amended and Consolidated with 31 (MA), 32 (MA), 36 (MA), 46 (MA), 47 (MA), 48 (MA), 153 (MD), 154 (MD), 260 (UT), 261 (UT), 271 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the Small Business Administration's efforts to provide entrepreneurial information to all servicemembers who are separating or retiring from the military.

Resolution No. 146: Reimbursement for Correspondence and Distance Learning Courses
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
(As Amended and Consolidated with 18 (MA), 270 (UT))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 253: Homestead Privilege to Veterans
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics
(Consolidated with 13 (MA), 140 (MD))

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, that Congress be petitioned to open up homestead privileges to United States military veterans on a priority basis.

Mr. Commander, this concludes the report of the Convention Committee on Economics. As a delegate from the Department of South Carolina, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The report is adopted.

A corporate partner of The American Legion is MBNA American Bank Since 1987 MBNA has contributed over $20 million to our Legion programs. This was accomplished by all Legionnaires who proudly use their American Legion credit cards. MBNA has also donated $45,000 to the National Emergency Fund and pledged $50,000 in matching funds for Legion credit cardholders to the Citizens Flag Alliance. You might also be interested to know that Legionnaires have over $418 million at MBNA in CDS, Money Market Accounts because of their superior interest rates paid on those deposits. Once again your American Legion membership does work for you.

With us today is Senior Vice President of MBNA, Michelle Matthis, a decorated Gulf War veteran and a proud member of The American Legion in Wilmington, Delaware, to determine the winners of three $1,000 CDS.

Let me also introduce the 31st Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, General Krulak.

Presentation: General Charles C. Krulak
Senior Vice Chairman of MBNA

First, it is an honor it is to be here with you this afternoon and I mean that sincerely. I spent thirty-five years in the Marine Corps. My father spent thirty-five years in the Marine Corps. There was a period of time were we had a Marine in the uniform of the United States for seventy years. And to come into this auditorium and be surrounded by veterans who feel the same way I do and think the same way I do and treasure the things that are so important, it is indeed an honor. I was here earlier with Governor Bush and I want to thank you for your warm reception, no matter what your politics are. I think we as a veterans organization showed our true colors by the professionalism of which we handled that entire affair.

Now I will switch over to my other hat which is Senior Vice Chairman of MBNA. We have had thirteen years of a wonderful association with The American Legion and the first thing I would like to do today is distribute some money. The first is a $5,000 check for your National Emergency Fund.

Second, we've had a drawing for names for $1,000 Certificates of Deposit. The winners are: Mr. Andrew Mason, of Mount Aerie, Maryland, Patty Pierce of Bayview, Idaho, and Lee Murray of Sussex, Wisconsin.

And finally on the 4th and 5th of August, MBNA came out here for the races. We brought Bobbi LaBontti, the points leader in NASCAR to drive in the Brickyard 400. On the deck plate of Bobbi LaBontti's car was The American Legion emblem. Bobbi LaBontti won the Brickyard 400 powered by the soul, the heart and the blood, sweat and tears of the veterans of The American Legion. So we thought it was only justified to return to The Legion and to the outgoing Commander that deck plate so it can be placed in an appropriate location in your museum.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans

It is now time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making it a priority to hire veterans. That special recognition comes in a form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organizations as 1999 Employers of the Year. The awards are given in three categories. One for companies employing 50 or fewer people, another for companies employing 51 to 200 people, and a third for companies with more than 200 workers. Each is nominated by a Post and advances through the Department and National competition level.

The 1999 Employer of the Year Award in the under 50 category goes Garlic Helicopters, Inc. of Hamilton, Montana. The company's director of marketing and safety and a member of The American Legion Post 47 in Hamilton, Robert Wolf, is here to accept.

ROBERT WOLF: It is said that the mind can endure what the rear end can absorb. Most of you are probably past the absorption process. I am going to forego my carefully crafted thirty minutes acceptance speech and say to you on behalf of our 22 employees, most of whom are obviously veterans, most of who are obviously Legion members, we accept this with pride and with gratitude.

SPEAKER: In 51 to 200 category, the award goes to ITS Medical Systems, ITS of Tomah, Wisconsin. Here to accept the award are Al Wesselmann, Project Manager and Bob Carpenter of Norcross, Georgia.

AL WESSELMANN: ITS Medical Systems is a small company with a presence in three states. We highly prize the capabilities and potential of the servicemen and servicewomen of the United States because we are them. On behalf of the 160 colleagues

that we have in the company; thank you for this honor and thank you, Steve Crogur, for helping making it possible.

SPEAKER: The American Legion National Outstanding Employer for the Year 1999 is presented to Boeing Aerospace Operations, Midwest City, Oklahoma. This is for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans presented at the 82nd National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this date.

GARY MOORE: They didn't have a name because there was a last minute switch. So I happened to be the one who got elected to come here today. It is certainly a privilege and an honor to represent Boeing Aerospace Operations and to receive this award today. My name is Gary Moore and I am the Director of People Organization for Boeing Aerospace Operations. Being here today is something that is extremely important to our company because we employ veterans, not because it is charitable thing to do, because it makes good sound business. Being here means that we are accepting an award for doing what I believe to be right.

I was talking to a few folks earlier today and told them I felt somewhat guilty for being here and accepting an award for what makes good sound business. As a result of that the $1,600 check that we received to help defray costs for coming here today, we have elected to donate to the Children's Welfare Fund for The American Legion. So without further ado and without a long speech, on behalf of Boeing Aerospace Operations I thank you, the veterans of America and also The American Legion, for this prestigious award.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The award itself reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 1999, presented to Boeing Aerospace Operations, Midwest City, Oklahoma for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at this 82nd Annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5-7, 2000." Signed by our National Adjutant and myself as National Commander.

For this particular recipient, let me share with you a phrase that we have in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in Boise, Idaho when you are looking at the aircraft configuration and what you are going to be flying on. Our saying is, "if it ain't Boein, I ain't goin."

On behalf of the 2.8 million members of The American Legion and all of our nation's veterans, I extend to all of you our congratulations. Please keep hiring veterans and tell other businesses about the reliability and the work ethic of veterans, that those companies might follow your example.

Presentation: Employment Service Award for Local Office of the Year

We have another employment award to present this year. It is the Employment Service Award for Local Office of the Year. This is an award normally presented at the Department Convention but I wanted to make a little change this year. Since the outstanding Local Office winner just happens to be the same office that nominated the large size Employer of the Year Award winner I felt we should present the awards on this stage. Here to accept the award is the program's manager for the Oklahoma City Metro South office of the Oklahoma State Employment Service; and a Legionnaire from Oklahoma City, Edward Manuel.

This reads, "The American Legion National Award Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year 1999. Presented to Oklahoma City Metro South Office Oklahoma State Employment Service, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Oklahoma presented at the 82nd Annual Department Convention, Oklahoma

City, Oklahoma, July 2000. Presented here at our National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Signed by myself and your National Adjutant.

Edward Emmanuel, Program Manager
Oklahoma City Metro South Office

This is a pretty awesome experience for me to stand in front of you. When I was young and foolish, my heroes were people like Flash Gordon and Hopalong Cassidy, and the Lone Ranger and Zorro. Then I did a tour in the Navy during the mid 1960s. I realized that the real heroes of this nation are the men and women who serve to defend the values of our country. To stand before you, brings great pride.

There are thirty-five employment offices in the state of Oklahoma and other satellites and access points where veterans can gain employment, training, and education opportunities. There are over 1,800 employment offices around the United States. To be chosen as the best employment office by the best in this country is an honor that you cannot begin to phantom how we feel.

The goal of the Oklahoma State Employment Service is that every veteran who wants a job, gets a job. The mission of the Oklahoma City Metro South Office is quality service, every customer, every time. I recognize one individual, Mr. Bill Jobe, who is our local veterans employment representative of the Oklahoma Metro City South Office. It is his driving determination and that of his staff, that keeps us going and helped us to acquire this award. Through their dedication to the service of veterans, to help them gain employment and training. I am extremely proud to be associated with him.

You have the gratitude of the state of Oklahoma for this recognition, the gratitude of the Oklahoma Employee Security Commission, the staff and management of the Oklahoma City Metro South Office, and without reservation, you have the gratitude of myself, Edward Manuell. Go Navy. Go Sooners.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Team work is what it is all about. The Chair now recognizes Philip Hutchins, of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, for the purposes of an award.

Presentation: Philip Hutchins
The Chapel of the Four Chaplains

I am so proud to be a trustee of the chapel and I have been with them for over twenty-one years. I am also just as proud to wear this blue cap, the greatest force in the world, The American Legion. On a cold, cold morning on February 3, 1943, the *USAT Dorchester* was steaming through a part of the North Atlantic, called Torpedo Junction when suddenly an enemy torpedo hit her in the flank. It knocked out the boiler room, knocked out her electrical system. Dangerous ammonia gas went out through the ship and men died immediately. Some were trapped below deck, but those that weren't got to the top deck, where the super structure was iced up and cold. They were frozen, not from the ice, but from fear.

But four chaplains, these four men, circulated among them, they joked with them, they sang hymns with them, and they prayed with them. They were Alexander D. Goode, George L. Fox, John P. Washington, and Clark V. Poling. They passed out life preservers until the supply was exhausted. Then they took off their own life preservers and forced them on the other young men, proving what the good book says, "Greater love hath no man then this,

that he laid down his life for his friend." And the outstanding fact as this ship was going down, these four chaplains, two Protestants, one Catholic, and one Jew stood arm and arm as they sunk beneath the waves. Then was formed the Chaplain of the Four Chaplains on the preface that we can unify without uniformity.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains then started the Legion of Honor for the Bronze Medallion Program. It signifies a person at the national or world level who has done most for his neighbors in need, to give all he has got. That is why this year the recipient is our own Commander, Al Lance. He deserves it. I am proud to present to the Commander this medal, the Legion of Honor, Bronze Medallion, and along with it are our prayers for him, our prayers for his family, our prayers for this group, The American Legion, and our prayers for the United States of America.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Thank you. I except it on behalf of all Legionnaires who keep the memory of the Four Chaplains alive in the minds and hearts of countless Americans.

The Chair recognizes National Vice Commander, Jim Fraughnaugh, to accept responsibility for the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER FRAUGHNAUGH: The next order of business is to honor an individual for setting an example and community service as a law enforcement officer. The 2000 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year has dedicated himself to the betterment of police service, to leadership, and integrity, training and education, and concern for mankind. His lists of community service efforts fill more than a page in very small print. For more than thirty years he has dedicated himself to helping Alabama citizens. He even managed to put in four years in the Air Force during the Vietnam War. I present to you The American Legion Police Office of the Year, and member of Morgan County Post 15, in Decatur, Alabama, Tom Little.

The inscription reads, "America's finest. The American Legion National Law Officer of the Year Award presented to Thomas Little for distinguished service above and beyond your assigned duties. Granted through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievements. By your demonstrative performance you have personified the police officer who represents America's finest. The American Legion congratulates you and wishes you continued success in your career. Award this September 6, 2000 at 82nd Annual National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

Presentation: Thomas Little
The American Legion National Law Officer of the Year Award

I am indeed honored to stand before you today to be recognized. In the state of Alabama alone, I learned this past week, there exists 11,600 sworn police officers. That doesn't include the retired officers and inactive officers. So today I stand before you I very humbled and very honored to be recognized. Today, I am operating outside the box, as one of my favorite authors says. I am outside of normality, outside of usualness, outside of routine. I heard a number of years ago former Alabama football coach, Gene Stallings say "Now it is time to perform." He was speaking to a couple of his football players to go to the pros and perform.

You bestowed upon me a great honor today. It is indescribable, it is a pinnacle, it is a rare arena to stand and represent so many. And as I stand before you, I considered what I might say as I was receiving the honor. I am fortunate that I have accomplished many things

in my law enforcement career, through my college, through my law degree, through my FBI Academy, and the experience. The training and education was great. You must be prepared for this service because people put a lot of confidence in you, a lot of public trust. Ken Blanchard, one of my favorite authors says that, "Authorship, ownership, and recognition are important in business." And the latter, what I am receiving today, is that recognition.

I am grateful. It makes me proud. There are men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice, just as those in the military service. Tom Little alone did not receive this honor today. Many, many people are responsible for Tom Little standing before you here today. Those significant people in our lives, that old white-headed grandmother who taught those values, those leaders I have experienced along life's journey. Leadership deals with direction, management deals with speed. Leadership deals with vision and mission, management with structure and systems. We formulate our character throughout our years through those people we come in contact with. Our ethics must be right, our integrity, our fairness, our compassion in the business that I am in, that is, he service to others. Actions are derived from these formations of that character. I relate this experience as pieces of the torch. We hear in the Olympics of the passing of the torch. We must experience that passing of the torch. We have a grave responsibility as law enforcement officers. We have the ability to take liberty and under certain circumstances to take life. It is a grave responsibility. Much is given and much is expected, so we should prepare ourselves. We must be good listeners. Talking comes by nature, silence by wisdom.

I want to say a little bit about our God and country. It is a great foundation for The American Legion. I was just reading in the September issue of *The American Legion Magazine* as we flew here on Saturday about a guy by the name of Stanley Way. In the article, "Walking With God,"he told of how he and only one guy, a corporal, went ahead about three hundred yards of the troops on the hill [during action during the Korean War]. Then they were pinned down and the radio went out. He turned to the corporal and told him to go back and get a good radio but he immediately realized that that was an impossible instruction. But a clear firm voice spoke to Wray, "Do not send that man to his death. You go. Nothing can hurt you." Now he was the one in fear. But the voice again said, "Do not be afraid. Nothing can hurt you." And then he said that all terror subsided. He himself went back with a hail of bullets, even at times, according to the article, with dirt thrown over his shoes from the bullets. When he got back to the men across the way they said that he must have been crazy to walk back like that.

But he had to return with the radio. He said the event still haunts him, but he went back across the way, under a hail of bullets, but none of them ever hit him. He says even today, some forty-nine years later, he knows it had to be a miracle from God. How could there possibly be any other answer? Stanley Wray was outside the box. He had to rely on someone and he relied on God. That same God who guided those bullets is still in charge today, still with us, still very much alive, still blessing America. He is still looking out for us, I truly believe, He is still in charge, the same yesterday, today and forever.

In closing, I must thank my sheriff who nominated me, Sheriff Steve Crabbe for this nomination locally; it has grown to this. I would like to thank The American Legion Post 15 in Alabama for submitting me for consideration to the Department, the Southern Region, and all the way to the National. My friend Mr. O.J.. Hyde is not here, but Mr. O.J. Hyde had a great deal to do with that submission. I thank the selection committee, Mr. George Wehrli, who is one of those sitting with me today, and my wife Pat Little who is also here. Seventy-

five percent belongs to her for all the years. And I praise my God today, I praise His holy name. I am satisfied when God created the heavens and the earth, He created America first.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER FRAUGHNAUGH: I now return the gavel to National Commander Lance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Now I introduce some corporate partners, Mike Bruner, Vice President of Seaberry and Smith, an American Legion corporate partner.

Michael G. Bruner, Vice President
Seaberry and Smith

The American Legion provides support to a great many fine youth and child programs that you heard about throughout the day. They also offer a vast array of valuable and tangible member benefits. In our role as broker administrator for those products, it is an honor for Seaberry and Smith to be a strategic partner with The American Legion in delivering high quality life insurance and health insurance products to your members on a national basis. We would like to do our part to support The American Legion's efforts and in doing so Seaberry and Smith donates $5,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Now I introduce Bruce Henderson, Vice President of Marsh Advantage America.

Bruce Henderson, Vice President
Marsh Advantage America

It probably isn't very often that someone comes up here and announces to you that you saved $23 million. I have happy to report that that is exactly what I am here to tell you today. Legionnaires and their families have saved $23,527,177 on The American Legion discount prescription program. This is from August 1999 to July 2000. The American Legion has also realized revenue totaling $1,554,325 for the same period. That includes revenue for the participating Departments. I also express my thanks to all of you out there who have used the program and have helped spread the word to other Legion, SAL, Auxiliary members, and potential members. The subject of prescription drugs and their ever rising costs has gained national interest. The American Legion discount prescription program is becoming a very important benefit and recruiting tool to attract and retain members. Despite the substantial savings that can be realized, there are many members who do not know about the member benefit. Please help us continue to communicate and promote the program. From savings generated one can see the benefits of being a member of The American Legion family.

A network update: CVS is no longer a participating pharmacy. Also, a few things for you to remember. You are already enrolled simply by being a member of The American Legion, SAL, or Auxiliary. There are thousands of participating pharmacies across the country. Call the toll-free number to inquire about the participating pharmacy in your area. The average overall savings is approximately 17%. However, the range of savings is between 0 and 83%. The biggest savings will be on the use of generic drugs. So be sure to ask your doctor, or pharmacist if a generic is available. Our Rx-America has a convenient mail order service with a state-of-the-art facility. You can have a 90 day supply sent directly to your home. Spouses of deceased members are still eligible. However, since the addition of the Auxiliary, requests for these cards have diminished greatly. If there is a need, please

call your Department headquarters. And finally, if your pharmacists has any questions, please ask the pharmacist to call the toll-free number.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Tim-Cor Financial, one of our corporate partners, offers a tax deferred annuity through the Indianapolis Life Annuity Company. The current first year interest is 8% and Legionnaires have invested approximately $5 million in annuities today. This is just another example of the benefit of your American Legion membership. With us today is Jim Luther, President of Tim-Cor Financial, and a member of the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 155 in Carmel, Indiana, who will conduct the drawing for a television set.

Jim Luther, President
Tim-Cor Financial Corporation

On behalf on Tim-Cor Financial Corporation, IU Annuity Company, thank all of you for visiting at the booth. Each year we get to meet a lot of new friends and a lot of old friends and I appreciate it very much. We will have the Commander draw now and after the drawing I will notify the winner and ship you the TV.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The winner of the tv is Lillian Mullen of Post No. 41, Kaukauna, Wisconsin.

I am always honored to share the lectern with men and women who share our zeal for helping our fellow veterans. The Dominion President of the Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans in Canada is a man who has a passion for service. A veteran of World War II, serving first in the Canadian Army and then transferring to the Royal Canadian Air Force, please welcome a great leader from Canada, Bert Pritchard.

Address: H.J. (Bert) Pritchard
Dominion President
ANAVIC

On behalf of ANAVIC and all members of the Army, Navy, and Air Force veterans in Canada, I bring you greetings and friendship. It is a friendship that began between our association during the early years after World War II which led to the establishment of ANAVIC, the United States unit is ANAVICUS, a friendship like that of our countries, partly founded on history of military conflict over the years. The history of our two countries shows that we have forged the friendship, often through stormy times. Our long history of military service together is a timely reminder to all of our close association as neighbors. Today we stand here in Milwaukee, shoulder to shoulder, to commemorate the sacrifices of our comrades who gave their lives so that we may enjoy, as your Declaration of Independence proudly puts it. These rights have to be protected and, as being the role of the warrior to do so, it is a role not very well understood by our political masters during times of peace. Let us work together in reminding our governments of the folly of forgetting about the need to keep strong and well equipped forces in sufficient numbers to ensure that protection.

As veterans organizations, we have another challenge of succeeding generations of American and citizens of the values of which our brothers and sisters have made this supreme sacrifice and tell them that those that gave their youth and vigor in the service of

our countries and did so for our well being. Our fallen comrades are counting on us to tell their stories and to never forget.

This year, we commemorated our tribute in Canada to the Unknown Soldier. It was my privilege to go to France to assist and bring back the remains. The ceremony was a very moving experience. On May the 28th, a State Funeral was held in Ottawa, where the remains were entombed at the base of a National War Memorial. It was a very proud moment as we honored our fighting men missing in action who had served in the wars in the past century.

I wish to thank you for the invitation to join with you at this Convention and to say thank you for your great hospitality that was extended to me and my wife.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Over the years, American veterans have served side by side with members of the Armed Forces of Canada; the service forms a bond of friendship which continue to this day. The American Legion support and appreciation of the Royal Canadian Legion is a natural extension of our mutual service and friendship. We are honored to have with us today, Dominion President of the Royal Canadian, Bill Barkley.

Address: Bill Barclay, Dominion President
The Royal Canadian Legion

It is an honor for me to be here to address the 82nd Annual National Convention of your great organization. It is also a pleasure for me to bring you greetings from your allies to the north, the Executive and the 480,000 members of The Royal Canadian Legion. I have just recently been elected to the office of Dominion President of the Legion in Canada. This visit is one of my first official duties. May I say that it is also one of the least onerous. It is indeed a pleasure to be here in the city that the brewers made famous, those in baseball uniforms as well as those who make the fine beer that flows from Milwaukee. We in Canada do know our beers and this city stands with the best of them for making a fine brew. The sales across the border should be an indication of that. Of course, when it comes to baseball, we happen to know a bit about that, too. There are a couple of World Series Pennants hanging in Toronto to bear witness to that fact.

Through my years in The Royal Canadian Legion, I have been fortunate enough to have been in the United States of America many times. In most cases, it has been to enjoy the hospitality of your Posts in the Department of Montana and Department of North Dakota. Both of these great western states border on my home Providence of Saskatchewan. It is common place for our Branches and your Posts to hold joint events across the border. This creates a very harmonious atmosphere that can only be appreciated by those that have a history of service. I have noted in my travels the considerable amount of programs and projects that we both have in common as we pursue our goals in the cause of veterans' service and to perpetuation of remembrance. We are continually pressing our government for improvements to our veterans benefits and we have made some great headway in the past two years. I wish you continued success in your efforts to ensure your veterans get the care and benefits that they deserve.

In the area of ensuring the remembrance of past sacrifices by those who have served, the Royal Canadian Legion has enjoyed a great deal of success in the past year. Millions of Canadians stopped work no matter where they were at 11:00 a.m. local time on the 11th of November past as we reintroduced the two minute wave of silence to pay tribute to our war dead. Buses stopped, factories stopped their production lines, computers and phones went silent, TV and radio networks shut down for a full two minutes. It was the greatest out-

pouring of remembrance in years and its effectiveness has been marked by the calls of our members and the public to make sure that we continue to lead the wave of silence across Canada's time zones. That success processed one of the great moments in our history.

Just prior to opening our 75th Anniversary Convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia, last June, the Royal Canadian Legion was able to finalize a major millennium project, the return to Canada of an unknown World War I solider from the battlefields of France. On the 28th of May this year, he was interred with full military honors in a granite sarcophagus. This event captivated the nation for a full four days, beginning with the remains laying in state in our Parliament buildings and culminating with the internment of those remains at the base of the National War Memorial in Ottawa. We all should be justifiably proud of the fact that Canada now has a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This tomb will become the real and tangible evidence of the human sacrifice made by Canadians in all the wars of the 20th Century. We, the members of The Royal Canadian Legion, remain committed to our veterans and the perpetuation of remembrance for those who did not survive. That is the legacy we wish to pass on to those who will come behind us to lead our organization through its next seventy-five years and beyond. We remain proud of our nation and its symbols and like you we, too, are leading the call for stiff penalties for flag desecration. But I think what we really have in common is our depth of commitment. That is something of which neither of our organizations can ever let go. Our commitment to remain strong voices in our individual nations is our strength. The progress that we have attained has been accomplished by our strength in numbers, and may it always be so, less we forget.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Please send our regards to the Royal Canadian Legion. Recently I visited the Republic of China during my travels. President Chin is an impressive individual and a new president of that country. He and I spent a full hour together addressing vital issues important to The American Legion as well as Taiwan. The Republic of China is a strong ally and always a faithful friend. Our next greetings comes from our friends in the Veterans Affairs Commission for the Republic of China. We are deeply honored to have with us in Milwaukee a man, who since 1964, has dedicated his life to serving his country, his fellow soldiers, his fellow veterans, and the people of Taiwan. His distinguished military career spanned two decades. Today, he is the Secretary General of Veterans Affairs Commission for the Republic of China. In spite of his impressive resume and as busy as he has been, he has developed a three handicap in his golf game and was trying to hustle me in a golf game when I was there. And I have dubbed him the Tiger Woods of Taiwan, Lt. General Chi-liang Wu.

Address: Lt. General Chi-liang Wu, Secretary General
Veterans Affairs Commission

I feel greatly honored to be invited to attend and address your 82nd Annual National Convention on behalf of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. It seems only a little while ago that the National Convention was just over. Now another year has gone and you are holding your Convention here in Milwaukee. In the past year we have been happy about our gains and yet we could not but feel sad for some loses. September 21st last year, less than two weeks after I went back to Taiwan, after your Anaheim convention, the island was hit by an earthquake, registered 7.3 on the Richter scale. In less than one minute, more than 2,000 lives were lost and the damage was over one billion U.S. dollars. My countrymen in Taiwan will not forget the terrible misery and the horrifying

picture. But our committeemen, especially the veterans of our commission, will always be appreciative of the concern from our veteran friends everywhere in the world, just like you in The American Legion.

From the second day after the earthquake, we received the call for assistance from our veteran friends. In organizations and countries they were talking about the friend in need. We mark with a salute The American Legion for your precious assistance on behalf of all the Chinese veterans because you are a similar one. In this past year, we have also politically active in elections. *[tape break]* And some of our own countrymen have been pessimistic toward the post election results. It has been almost been six months after our president received his election. Our new our new cabinet has been in operation for over three and a half months. The majority of us in Taiwan are still hopeful for our future on the island. Your National Commander, Mr. Lance and the Madame President of the American Legion Auxiliary have already met our new President Chen Shui-bian and exchange of views for over one hour.

I want to take this opportunity once again to express our gratitude for your support in the past and I hope that you will maintain this tradition and support. We will also continue to hold this veteran's spirit to pick up the security of our country. We will stay together for the peace and freedom of mankind.

I wish you success for your national convention.

SPOKESMAN FOR GENERAL WU: Howdy! As the Secretary-General of my organization just mentioned, the National Commander and Madame President just visited our country. They had met with our newly elected president and enjoyed conversations for over one hour. Our new president is very much impressed. And therefore the general would like to present a Medal of Cloud and Banner on behalf of our newly elected president. The Certificate of the Medal of Cloud and Banner reads: "Mr. Alan Lance, National Commander of The American Legion, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China and to the support of the Republic of China's re-entry to the United Nations; in appreciation of his meritorious service, National Commander Lance is presented the Medal of Cloud and Banner, Cravat, by the government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations; signed by Mr. Chen Shui-bian, the President, co-signed by General Tang Fei, the Premier and General Wu Shih-wen, Minister of National Defense."

In addition to that, in appreciation of the strong bond between The American Legion the Veterans Affairs Commission, the chairman of my organization also asks the Secretary General Wu to present a plaque on his behalf. The inscription of the plaque reads: "Presented to Mr. Alan Lance, National Commander of The American Legion in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Signed by General Yang Te-chih, Chairman Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China and presented by Lt. General Chi-liang Wu, Secretary General."

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: At this time the Chair will ask to chairman of our Foreign Relations Commission, Bill Bishop to come forward.

Presentation: International Amity Award
William M. Bishop, Alaska, Chairman

Foreign Relations Commission

This is the International Amity Award. It reads "In grateful recognition of 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 on the Veterans Affairs Commission, the Republic of China. Awarded by the National Commander of The American Legion with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee to Lt. General Chi-Liang Wu, National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr., National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle."

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: While we were there we visited several veterans care facilities in Taiwan. Some of the most modern hospitals that you ever want to see are there and the way they treat their veterans; I think our VA ought to take a lesson from these folks. They treat their veterans with respect that they earned.

The Chair recognizes Joe Caouette of New Hampshire, Chairman of our National Convention Committee on Americanism for the purpose of a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Americanism
Joseph Caouette, New Hampshire, Chairman

Fifty Six (56) members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 3, 2000, in the Milwaukee Hilton Hotel, to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the Committee.

The Committee organized by electing Joseph E. Caouette, Jr. (NH), Chairman; Sam Yancey, (MO), Vice Chairman; and Melvin Chapman (OH) as the Secretary.

The Committee discussed thirty-three (33) resolutions that were assigned to the Committee. The resolutions that were considered continue to reflect the desire by Departments of The American Legion to address matters of patriotism and government, and to maintain strong general Americanism programs that compliment the organization and benefit the Nation.

A motion was made and seconded that the Convention Committee on Americanism authorize the chairman and secretary to sign and deliver the report, on behalf of the Committee, to the National Convention. Motion carried.

Thirty-Three (33) resolutions were considered with 5 being approved and consolidated, 15 approved, 3 received and recorded, 5 rejected, and 5 referred to the Standing Americanism Commission.

Mr. Commander, in communities across this nation young men stand at attention, right hand raised, eyes straight ahead, and in unison with other youngsters offer these words, "On my honor I will do my best to my duty to God and country and to obey the scout law. To help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Anyone who has been there would recognize these words. They reflect a commitment to America values. They are words to grow by and to live by. They are the Boy Scout oath. So important are they in the development of character in young men, it is a pledge made not just for entry to the organization, but time and again, at every scout meeting and event. For more than ninety years that oath has echoed across the nation and around the globe as people

of the world came to recognize, respect and honor the high ideals that characterize the Boys Scouts of America.

Today, sadly in a number of cities and a number of corporate board rooms and in some neighborhoods, there are those who would rewrite that oath. There are those who believe that being physically strong is a worthy attribute, that being mentally awake is a commendable quality. But being morally straight is no longer a trait to be developed in young boys. For more than twenty years the Boys Scouts of America has defended its membership standards. And in June of this year, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Boy Scouts. The court reaffirmed the Scout standing as a private organization with the right to set its own membership and leadership standards. They said the Scouts had a Constitutional right to exclude gays because opposition to homosexuality is part of the Boy Scouts expressive message.

We of The American Legion stand with Scouting and believe as they do that homosexual behavior is not a role value for the values as found in the Scout oath and laws. To no one's surprise, the Court's decision raised the hackles on the neck of some corporate giants, on whole city councils, and among groups whose efforts are social engineering and political correctness which have overridden their sense of good judgment and the perspective of what is right and what is wrong. The small band of detractors are well characterized in the words of a spokesman for Chase Manhattan Bank, "The Boy Scouts position is, on the face of it, in conflict with our commitment and our values on diversity." Here again, as our opponents to the Flag Protection Amendment would have us do, the Boy Scouts are being told to tolerate the intolerable. In the name of toleration and political correctness, and anti-discrimination laws, Boy Scout troops are being told that they may no longer use parks, schools, and municipal sites because they 'discriminate' in their membership and their leadership.

Those who deny access to Scouts ignore the reality that Scouting is an American institution, a natural element in most communities. Scouts exemplify the values as found in the Scout oath and law and dedicate themselves to serving their communities. Scouting always has, apparently does, and always will reflect the values held by nearly all Americans. And just as other student and community groups are permitted to have access to public school facilities, the Boy Scouts of America must have the same access.

In the name of toleration and political correctness, the state of Connecticut has banned contributions to Scouts by state employees through a state run charity because they 'discriminate' their membership and leadership. In the name of tolerance and political correctness, according to the *New York Times*, "Dozens of United Ways for Massachusetts through San Francisco have cut off money amounting to millions of dollars each year." This is particularly ironic because the Boy Scouts of America was a founding agency of the United Way. Quite honestly, these are the folks who are unwilling to tolerate or respect the values of others. They speak of diversity, but tolerate only the large step cadence of political correctness. With the Boy Scouts, as with The American Legion, in efforts to protect the flag of the United States, once again the values of main stream America are being challenged.

Once again, we are told that we must tolerate and accept the perverted version of right and wrong. And once again the values that we deem important and that we live by are being twisted, torn, and thrown in our face by the American Civil Liberties Union. We need don't need corporate giants and a hand full of individuals who have a very different vision for America than you and I. Opponents need to know and understand that Boys Scouts of America expect its members to subscribe to the tenant of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

The process of instilling moral and religious values in young people benefit all of society. Scouts come from all walks of life and are exposed to diversity in Scouting that they may not otherwise experience. The Boy Scouts of America aims to allow youth to live and learn as children and enjoy Scouting without immersing them in the politics of the day.

If you are a regular contributor to the United Way you should be made aware that United Way organizations operate as independent charities. As such they have the authority to direct monies received. You can and you should specify that your contribution, or any part of it, go to the Boy Scouts of America. If you get no satisfaction; you might want to consider a direct contribution to your local Boy Scout Council. And finally, do all you can to make your support to Boy Scouts of America vocal as well as financial. They need our help right now. Boy Scouting makes no effort to discover the sexual orientation of any person but Scouting's message is comprised when prospective leaders present themselves as role models who are inconsistent with Boy Scouting understanding of the Scout oath and Scout law. And certainly, such role models clash with the individual's pledge to keep themselves physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

Mr. Commander, The American Legion has maintained a position of cooperation and support for the Boy Scouts of America since its 1st National Convention in 1919. That support continues today and is as strong as ever. With these recent attacks on Scouting's membership standards, it is the desire of the Convention Committee on Americanism to reiterate The American Legion support for Scouting at this Convention. With your permission, I offer to the delegates for their consideration a resolution reiterating The American Legion's support and I will read the resolution in its entirety.

Recommended Action on Resolutions Were Approved and Consolidated

Resolution No. 334: Support of Boy Scouts of America
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism
(Consolidated with Resolution 297 (NV) 2000 NC)

WHEREAS, The Boy Scouts of America is an organization that was incorporated in 1910 and recognized by Federal charter in 1916 to provide an educational program for boys and young men to build character, train in the responsibilities of participatory citizenship, and develop personal fitness; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion voiced its support of the Boy Scouts of America at its first national convention in 1919, making it the first recognized national youth activity of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The Boy Scouts of America teaches the core values of duty to God and country, personal honor, respect for the beliefs of others, volunteerism, and interdependence with the environment, principles which are conducive to good character, citizenship, and health; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion encourages its Posts to continue their support for Scouting as a primary part of their service to God and country, their community, their state and their nation; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the Boy Scouts of America, as a private, voluntary, nonbusiness organization, has the right to set its own standards for membership and leadership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion does hereby support the Boy Scouts of America in its efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to their membership and their leadership standards.

Resolution No. 300: Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism
(Consolidated with Res. No. 82 (CO) 2000 NC and 282 (IL) 2000 NC)

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 135 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 forty-nine states have indicated by memorial resolutions to the U.S. Congress that such an amendment to the U.S. 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 106th Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a proposed flag protection amendment, 305-124 the U.S. Senate failed, 63-36, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion continue to urge the Congress of the United States to propose and approve an amendment to the U.S. 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 grassroots campaign to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in order to provide protection of the Flag from acts of physical desecration.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 299: 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 for testing citizenship applicants within the INS and that many applicants become United States citizens without having the ability to speak the English language or possess 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion encourage Members of Congress to conduct oversight hearings of the INS naturalization process to insure comprehensive background checks are made on all applicants for U.S. citizenship; and, be it further

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; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be provided to all members of Congress, the U.S. Attorney General and the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Resolution No. 320: Illegal Aliens
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, Current law, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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, unemployment, and other types of public assistance programs; 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 current laws; 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. 321: 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, Our Congress 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 these 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 322: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion is opposed to legislation that would give conscientious objectors a voice in diverting monies from military spending.

Resolution No. 323: Opposition to a Constitutional Convention
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion remains committed to the defense of the Constitution of the United States of America, including any legal defense against those who intend to change the document's intent or expand its purpose; and

WHEREAS, The integrity of the Constitution is being challenged by persons who state that it does not meet the requirements or demands of modern society; and

WHEREAS, Efforts are underway to convene a Constitutional Convention ostensibly to mandate a balanced federal budget, although convening such a convention could result in radical Constitutional changes that would go far beyond budgetary matters; and

WHEREAS, The potential exists for any Constitutional Convention to yield to the demands of varied special interests, and, in so doing, to fundamentally alter the basic provisions of our nation's government document; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion express firm opposition to convening a Constitutional Convention and to any efforts seeking to rewrite the U. S. Constitution beyond the existing procedures required for amending the document.

Resolution No. 324: 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 U. S. Office of Personnel Management has virtually abandoned any investigation of government employment applicants for subversive activities, or membership in subversive organizations, to include membership in the Communist Party, which

contributes 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges all U. S. Congressmen to support and co-sponsor House legislation to restore the U. S. House Internal Security Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and the Congress of the United States to immediately take such action as may be appropriate and necessary to significantly strengthen both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and all other 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 executive action necessary to deny subversive individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate and subsequently destroy our government agencies and institutions through federal employment.

Resolution No. 325: School Prayer
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The majority of 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion reaffirms 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 insure that our Nation's public school children have a daily opportunity to pray.

Resolution No. 326: Pledge of Allegiance
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives begin each daily session acknowledging the presence and guidance of a Supreme Being through prayer; and

WHEREAS, It is customary in the opening of public meetings to recite the Pledge of Allegiance following the prayer; and

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives of the 104th Congress began its sessions with the Pledge of Allegiance while the Senate did not; and

WHEREAS, By Act of Congress, dated August 3, 1949, June 14 of each year was designated "National Flag Day" and the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Association in

Baltimore, Maryland, has been the official sponsor since 1952 of National Flag Day for the United States; and

WHEREAS, On June 14, 1980, the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Association developed a national campaign to encourage all Americans to Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of National Flag Day ceremonies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion encourage the President of the U. S. Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives or their designee to lead the members of their respective House in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of each daily session; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to designate the Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of the celebration of National Flag Day throughout the Nation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all Americans be urged to participate in Flag Day observances by reciting in unison, the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nation's Flag on June 14 of each year.

Resolution No. 327: 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 the 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 traditional Memorial Day, May 30, in remembrance of the servicemen and women who died defending our Nation and our freedom.

Resolution No. 328: *Star Spangled Banner*
Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, *The Star Spangled Banner* became our National Anthem on March 3, 1931, when President Herbert Hoover signed Public Law 823; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that many millions of Americans cherish and respect the currently accepted version, both words and music, of *The Star-Spangled Banner*such version being the "Service Version" prepared in 1918 by the War Department for use in Army and Navy song books; and

WHEREAS, It has become customary and traditional to sing or play *The Star Spangled Banner* before sporting events and other large gatherings of people in this country in a traditional manner reflecting a solemn pride, dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, Many American Legionnaires have been offended by disrespectful and unconventional playing and singing of the National Anthem at sporting events; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, by action of the 78th National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, went on record supporting establishment of a national day of observance for *The Star Spangled Banner;* now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion encourage and recommend the playing of the National Anthem at all sporting events and that it be performed in its original, customary and traditional rendition; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge radio and television networks and stations to desist from pre-preempting with commercial advertisements the singing and playing of our National Anthem and the raising and/or lowering of our Flag; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is opposed to any changes in the words and music of the National Anthem as adopted under Public Law 823 of the 71st Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion promote the establishment of March 3 of each year as a national day of observance for *The Star Spangled Banner* and that the patriotic observance of this day stress the origin of *The Star Spangled Banner* and that of the Flag of the United States.

Resolution No. 329: Award Medal of Honor to the Four Chaplains
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Maryland has received a resolution proposed by American Legion Arick Lore Post No. 274 and supported unanimously by their county and district organization, the object being the awarding of the Medal of Honor, posthumously, to U. S. Army Chaplains, Lt. John P. Washington, Lt. Clark V. Poling, Lt. George L. Fox, and Lt. Alexander D. Goode, based on the following; and

WHEREAS, On a 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 blast of the ship; and

WHEREAS, The Four Chaplains 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, the 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, The actions and at the personal sacrifice of their own lives they have become a beacon of faith for the young 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 330: 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 36, United States Code, Chapter 10, subsection 176(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 have begun 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 331: 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 of preferred visitors 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 332: 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 in this country; and

WHEREAS, It has been estimated and reported in testimony in Congress that about one-fourth of criminals incarcerated in federal prisons are illegal immigrants costing the criminal justice system more than $800 million a year; and

WHEREAS, It has been reported that the smuggling of illegal immigrants by crime syndicates has increased dramatically and that terrorist acts by illegal immigrants has caused loss of life and millions of dollars in property damage; and

WHEREAS, The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) apprehended and returned 1.3 million illegal aliens in 1997 and, in addition, deported more than 76,400 illegal aliens without formal proceedings; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, INS removed a record number of over 110,000 criminal and other deportable aliens from the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion is unalterably opposed to illegal immigration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress and the states, the United States Justice Department and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service to

take necessary action to stop the invasion of illegal immigration in this country by means which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Hire and train additional border patrol agents with employment preference afforded former military personnel
2. Urge Congress to pass legislation to empower all our nation's law enforcement personnel to apprehend, hold and incarcerate those individuals who are in this country illegally
3. Initiate immediate deportation proceedings at major points of embarkation for those arriving in this country without valid passport visas
4. Require that all legal aliens carry a counterfeit resistant registration card and that they be required to report, in a specified length of time, to local officials their location and place of employment
5. Petition the President of the United States and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration Services 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
6. That as appropriate, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the 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 further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to seek ways in which to ease the strain on federal, state and local forms of public assistance by reducing or eliminating demands on these services by illegal immigrants; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the following INS programs: the IDENT system—an automated fingerprint ID system that accurately identifies criminal aliens and repeat crossers and allows the Border Patrol to track changes in crossing patterns; ENFORCE—an automated case processing system that allows Border Patrol agents to reduce paperwork processing time, enabling more agent staff hours to be applied to front-line enforcement activities; and IBIS—the Interagency Border Inspection System that is a joint U.S. Customs/INS "look out" system used at ports of entry to identify criminals and reduces the time to check databases for criminal records; 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 invasion of the country by illegal immigrants which has reached crisis proportions.

Resolution No. 333: Filipino Veterans Citizenship Interview Requirement
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The intent behind the citizenship act for Filipino Veterans is to ease the stringent requirements of the U. S. Naturalization law; and

WHEREAS, One of the difficulties of said act is the requirement that interviews for Filipino Veterans applicants shall be held in the U. S. which entails heavy extra-ordinary expense for them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion help the Philippine Department to get a ruling from the U.S. Government that the interview for

Filipino Veteran applicants for U. S. Citizenship shall be done in the Philippines with mutual helpfulness extended to them.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 33 (MA): Oppose Foreign Manufacture of American Flags
Resolution No. 198 (OH): The English Language Be Declared As The Official U.S. Language
Resolution No. 291 (NY): English Be Declared As The Official U.S. Language

Referred to the Standing Americanism Commission

Resolution No. 79 (CO): Prayer in Public Places
Resolution No. 169 (NH): Oppose Delineation of the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act
Resolution No. 172 (MT): Encourage Education on U.S. Constitution During National Constitution Week
Resolution No. 175 (CA): Flag Code/Flag Education
Resolution No. 226 (GA): National JSSP Champion be Awarded a Scholarship

Rejected

Resolution No. 5 (AK): Department Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen at National Information Conferences
Resolution No. 7 (RI): Department Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen at National Information Conferences
Resolution No. 180 (CA): Rescind National Convention Resolutions 281 (1942), 545 (1943), 146 (1944)
Resolution No. 181 (CA): Conduct Study of Subversive, Autocratic Monopoly of Special Interests
Resolution No. 203 (AZ): Department Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen at National Information Conferences

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate, from the Department of New Hampshire, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The Report of Americanism is adopted.

Chair recognizes National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle for purposes of announcement.

Robert W. Spanogle, National Adjutant

There is a special opportunity being afforded the delegates and guests of this National Convention by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. Senator Bob Dole and Dr. Mike Magee of Pfizer are

conducting a healthy living seminar for seniors in the Convention Center if you care to attend that seminar.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: With the adoption of the Americanism report it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Award is given annually to the Department rendering the most outstanding service during a twelve month period beginning August 1st to the Boy Scout of America Program. This year's winner is the Department of Illinois.

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Award 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 and involved organization. The winner this year is the Department of Arizona.

Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy
Gordon Hall, Publisher
Midland Daily News

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Among the impressive awards that The American Legion presents during each National Convention is the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. It is named in honor of one of America'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 and as well as financial capital devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year. With us today to announce the winner of the 2000 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is Gordon Hall, publisher of the *Midland Daily News* of Midland Michigan.

GORDON HALL: I am going to keep my comments very brief today. I understand the reason we are a little behind schedule is because Governor Bush's comments lasted a little longer than what was expected. And as a member of the print media, I can say the Governor is a major league asset to his party. I guess you didn't hear the problem over the weekend.

On behalf of the Hearst Corporation and the Hearst newspapers it is my pleasure to present the 61st William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. Since 1939 the Hearst Corporation has presented this award to The American Legion and to all of you to honor your outstanding contributions to your country. I am sure that if Mr. Hearst was still alive he would be very proud that his company has continued that tradition by presenting this award for the last 61 years.

I was pleased that I was here earlier to see the presentation on the World War II Memorial. My father who was a World War II veteran passed away this summer. I know he would have been very honored and proud to see this project coming close to being a reality. So as a personal thanks from me, I want to congratulate you for your contributions and also your leadership to see this project to creation.

This year the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy goes to a Department that has never won it before. It is nice we now have a first time winner. It is my privilege to present the trophy this year to the Department of Alaska.

VICE COMMANDER: The Chair recognizes Ken Sercerchi of Maine, Convention Committee on Membership and Post Activities for purposes 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
Kenneth A. Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman

The meeting of the Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section III (Membership), was called to order by Liaison Representative, Billy R. Johnson (AR). Thirty-eight members of the Committee met on Sunday, September 3, 2000, at 9:00 a.m., in Room 102C, of the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Kenneth A. Sercerchi of Maine was elected Chairman (nomination by Gerald Goetzinger (SD); second by Roselynn Utech (OK); and carried).

Chairman Sercerchi approached the podium, at which time, Gerald Goetzinger of South Dakota was elected Secretary (nomination by Myron Kirby of Illinois; second by John Scott of Florida; and carried).

Staff reports were presented to the Committee by National Headquarters staff on current activities and future strategies on the following topics: The 2001 Membership Year; 2000 M&PA Committee Recommendations; National Legion College; Reconnect and Post Development Programs, and National Emergency Fund. Written staff reports were distributed and also consisted of: World War II Memorial and Korean War Commemoration; Paid-Up-For-Life; and, National Information Conferences.

Two resolutions were received and reviewed by the Committee. The actions taken are as follows:

Approved

Resolution No. 23 (MA): Newfoundland American Legion Post No. CN09 of Massachusetts Transfer to Department of Maine

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, Hereby accepts the request of the Newfoundland American Legion Post No. CN09 to transfer its membership to the Department of Maine.

Resolution No. 190 (ME): Newfoundland American Legion Post No. CN09 Transfer from the Department of Massachusetts to the Department of Maine

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000. That American Legion Post No. 9, St. John's Newfoundland, Canada be transferred from the Department of Massachusetts to the Department of Maine.

It was regularly moved by Myron Kirby (IL); second by Lee Simmons (WY); that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was regularly moved by Myron Kirby (IL); second by Dennis Kelemen (NY); that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to edit the Committee report on technical changes without changing the content.

There being no further business, Billy Johnson offered the benediction, followed by the Salute to Colors. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

As of Friday, September 1, 2000 membership for 2000 year stood at 2,693,534 which is 64,000 down from this time last year. The DMS for 2000 however has exceeded our 88,000 projected goal for the total of 91,566 new members thus far. The 2001 membership now stands at 1,197,749. As of right now, we are 9,373 ahead of this same time last year. Next Wednesday, September the 13th will be the 45% target date for 2001. Twenty Departments thus far have reached this target. The Departments of Arizona, Delaware, and Nevada have attained all time highs in 2000 membership year. The Departments of Georgia, France, and South Carolina also attained 100% plus of the goal for 2000.

The National Commander Steak and Potato Program provided a much needed boost in membership with 580 individuals receiving a steak and potato dinner, having created at least ten new members each into the organization, thus strengthening our voice with an additional 5,800 Legionnaires.

The National Membership Workshop this year was an outstanding success, with more than 450 Legionnaires in attendance, receiving training in leadership development, sales and marketing, and Post development. In addition, our drawing was held from among the Gold Brigade Members, five winners received $1,000 gift certificate. Even though the overall totals for the 2000 membership don't reflect it, several programs remain successful. The Post Development Program, in its four year history, has revitalized and developed 243 Posts. These efforts include new member recruitment, renewals, and headquarters Posts transfers.

Earlier this year we entered into a partnership with the Department of Defense which includes work with recruiting commands and several military installations. For example, over 60 Legionnaires will be participating in a two day event at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma this October. Ten Departments will be represented and we are sure to have more with efforts similar to this one. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Department secretary and chairman be authorized to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate, from the Department of Maine, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The Report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Membership is adopted.

NATIONAL VICE-COMMANDER: Without an active growing membership, our programs will loose strength and our voice will be weakened. Membership is our strength. This year will have seen partnerships develop which will pay great dividends in the years to come, partnerships such as the one with the Department of Defense and the United States recruiting commands which are part of the reconnect initiative. The partnership expands the opportunity for The American Legion to reach out to younger veterans and their families. Our continued commitment of service to veterans, their families, and our communities will continue to grow through their initiatives. I know all of you and the millions of American Legion members you represent feel as I do. America today needs the values represented by The American Legion.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards

During the past year three Departments took their membership efforts to an all time high. I would like Joseph McDonnell, Department Commander of Nevada, Thomas Burns, Department Commander of Delaware, and Mahlon Roun, Department Commander of Arizona to join me at the lectern.

Joseph, Tom and Mahlon, the efforts you represent of your respective Departments are to be commended through determination, hard work, and commitment. Your membership grew to its highest level ever. It is with sincere gratitude I present you with these gifts.

I will read the plaque, "The American Legion. The American Legion presented to the Department of Delaware for outstanding membership performance in 1999-2000 exceeding 100% of the department membership goal. And witnessed thereof this testimonial this personal gratitude is given under the hand of the National Commander and duly attested at Indianapolis, Indiana." Signed by National Commander Al Lance and attested to by National Adjutant Robert Spanogle.

I won't read the other plagues. Would the Department Commander of Georgia, Charles Wessinger and the Department Commander from South Carolina, Frank Ward please come forward. Will the Department Adjutant from France, Bill West, along with the Membership Chairman from Nevada, Delaware, South Carolina, Arizona, and Georgia please join me. These six departments have met or exceeded 100% of their 1999-2000 goal. It is with great pleasure I present also to the Departments of Georgia, France, and South Carolina a plaque reflecting their 100% membership goal accomplishment. Also, as a token of my appreciation I would like for each of you along with your Department Adjutant and National Executive Committeeman to have this American Legion watch and jacket. In addition to these items the polo shirt was presented earlier.

In was also the pleasure of the National Commander to host a reception recognizing the efforts of these individuals on Monday. Thank you and the members of your department for a job well done. I expect to see you on stage next year. I know that this is just a beginning I know has become a tradition in the Departments of Delaware, Georgia, Arizona, South Carolina, France, and Nevada. Better yet, next year we would like to make this presentation to all fifty-five departments.

The next award is to a man who set a standard for recruiting this membership year. The national recruiter gathered 329 new members to The American Legion fold. He was the runner-up last year for this award. Since then he has proven that commitment and persistence brings membership dividends. Welcome K.W. Ole from the Department of Indiana.

K.W., this is but a small token of appreciation for the job you have done. I know that you are a member of the Gold Brigade and have been for many years. Without a doubt you are one of the most outstanding recruiters. I would like to present a plaque and American Legion cap, an autographed basketball from Gene Keady, head coach of the Purdue Boilermakers Basketball Team and this Goals Coat for earning the title of the Recruiter of the Year for 1999-2000.

The plaque reads, "The American Legion 1999-2000 National Recruiter Membership of the Year K.W. Ole, Department of Indiana. In recognition and appreciation of exemplary achievement by recruiting 329 new members for our great organization which is more than any other legionnaire in The American Legion for 1999-2000. In witness hereof this act is hereby attested to by the hands by the duly authorized office of The American Legion National Headquarters at Indianapolis, Indiana." Signed by National Commander, Al Lance and attested by Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant.

Membership is critical to The American Legion. Remember without an active growing membership and efforts from individuals like K.W. our programs will loose strength and our voice will be weakened. Our commitment to veterans, their families, and communities will suffer. My congratulations to those individuals and departments we honored today. A new membership year is under way. You are off to a good start in renewals. I ask that you keep up the good effort. I want to see another group of deserving volunteers on this stage next year in San Antonia next year.

The Chair recognizes Thomas Cadmus of Michigan, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Chairman

Eighty-eight members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on September 3, 2000 in the Milwaukee Hilton, Crystal Ballroom, and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Carroll Williams (MD), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Philip Wilkerson (MD), 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, and Lee Stolfus (KS), Chairman of the Medical and Hospital Subcommittee and Philip Youngblood (GA), Secretary; Michael D'Arco (NM), Chairman of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee and John Nelson (MI), Secretary.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Carroll Williams (MD), Director, and Joseph Sharpe (MD), Assistant Director, to Medical and Hospital; and Philip Wilkerson (MD), Deputy Director, to Claims and Ratings.

As has been the custom for the 56 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolutions, in a three-day pre-convention 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 8—Eldon Jones (WY)
REGION 1—Kent Davis (NH)
REGION 5—Gary Jones (MO)
REGION 6—Steve Meyer (MN), Vice Chairman
REGION 7—Terry Tracy (CA), Chairman

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Eighty-Third National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 50 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 as Amended	35
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	8
Referred to the Standing Commission	2
Rejected	1

A report of action taken on the 2 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, and, in addition, will be contained in the National Adjutant's report to the Eighty-Third Annual National Convention.

Recommend Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 50: The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans' Home Program
Origin: Vermont
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolutions No. 6 (RI), 8 (MA), 235 (WA))

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 89 State Veterans' Home facilities in 42 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' Homes 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 $228 million in unfunded new construction projects pending; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes per diem payments for veterans residing in State Homes which covers only about twenty percent of the cost of domiciliary care and twenty five percent of the cost of nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, veterans who are paid increased compensation or pension at the aid and attendance (A&A) rate while a patient in a State Veterans' Home are 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 home A&A veterans; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports increasing the amount of authorized per diem payments (33 1/3 percent) for nursing home and domiciliary care provided to veterans in State Veterans' Homes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the provision of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medication to state home aid & attendance patients, along with the payment of authorized per diem to State Veterans' Homes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress be urged to fully fund approved State Veterans' Home priority one construction grant applications; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the President and the Congress be urged to pledge their full support to the State Veterans' Home Program as the most cost-effective alternative available to VA; 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. 51: Protect Disability Rating after Ten Years
Origin: Vermont
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Section 110 of title 38, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion recommend that section 110 of title 38, USC, 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. 58: Special Pension for World War I Veterans
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The median age of the surviving veterans of World War I is approximately 100 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Their numbers have declined rapidly over the past eight years from 63,000 in 1990 to less than 4,800 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 460 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, so as to provide that:

a. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay to each veteran of World War I, who meets the service requirements set forth in 38, USC, 1521(j), a special pension in the amount of $150 per month;
b. Such special pension shall be paid without regard to (1) any income of any kind
c. payable to the veteran's spouse, and (2) the corpus of the veteran's estate; and
d. Any eligible veteran in receipt of pension under 38, USC, 1512 may also receive such special pension.

Resolution No. 61: Former Prisoners-of-War Be Elevated to The Priority One Eligibility Classification

Origin: South Dakota

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262, "The Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996" liberalized VA health care eligibility rules making inpatient and outpatient requirements the same; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 105-262 created seven VA health care priority groups; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-177, "The Veterans Millennium Health Care Benefits Act of 1999" was signed into law on November 30, 1999; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-177 addressed several VA health care issues; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-177 made any veteran who has been awarded the Purple Heart for war injuries a Priority Three veteran for VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Purple Heart recipients certainly deserve some special consideration; and

WHEREAS, It is a shame that VA has to single out certain groups of veterans for the purpose of establishing who gets medical treatment before whom; and

WHEREAS, It appears the only way to change the way VA prioritizes veterans for medical treatment is through legislation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is and always has been the premier veterans' advocate; and

WHEREAS, Former POWs still hold a special place in society, especially the veteran's community, because of their unique sacrifice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That former POWs be elevated to their rightful position of Priority 1 of VA's health care eligibility system.

Resolution No. 68: The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones
Origin: Oregon
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, A proud nation should be willing to identify and memorialize for posterity each of its veterans; and

WHEREAS, Each and every veteran should equally be remembered and identified in their final place of rest; and

WHEREAS, Current provisions indiscriminately provide a means of identifying and honoring only those veterans who do not already have any other form of monument; and

WHEREAS, Monuments provided by family many times do not identify a grave as that of a veteran when interred in a non-government cemetery; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support entitlement for all honorably discharged veterans to an appropriate grave marker provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, without regard to whatever other private monument or headstone that may already be in place at the time of application.

Resolution No. 69: The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration
Origin: Oregon
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Res. No. 30 (MA))

WHEREAS, VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) comprises 117 cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monuments. It 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, The system has been under the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs since 1973, when Public Law 93-43 transferred 82 national cemeteries (except Arlington) from the Department of the Army. Another 21 were already part of VA. In 1978, VA established the National Cemetery Administration to administer the cemeteries and related programs; and

WHEREAS, Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the Armed Forces and veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, as well as spouses, unremarried widows or widowers, minor children and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children. The first decedent to be buried need not be the veteran. Also eligible for burial are members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, the Army and Air National Guard, and the Reserve Officers Training Corps who die while on active duty for

training or performing full-time service. Public Law 103-240, signed by the President on May 4, 1994, approved legislation that extends eligibility for burial in a national cemetery to any member or former member of the Armed Forces (and his or her dependents) who has performed at least 20 years of service as members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces under honorable conditions and who is eligible for retired pay; and

WHEREAS, Since 1973, annual interments in NCA have increased from 36,400 to over 78,000 in 1999. Annual burials will increase to more than 115,000 in the year 2010 as the veteran population ages; and

WHEREAS, Of the 117 national cemeteries, 54 are closed, having reached capacity 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 would close by the year 2000, 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 $30 million in 68 grants have been awarded to 18 states and the Territory of Guam; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned that the predicted increase in veteran burials will overwhelm the capacity of the system. Also, new eligibility entitlement may be extended to retired members and eligible dependents of the Selected Reserves, further increasing the demands placed on the NCA; and

WHEREAS, Funding for maintenance and renovations of the current National Cemetery Administration, staff levels, cemetery expansions, and equipment procurement has been consistently inadequate since the heavy demands on the NCA began in the early 1980s. Through the periods 1990-2000, Congress has provided the NCA some necessary funding relief. Although operations funding has increased to respectable levels, significant funding shortfalls still exist with regard to equipment and both major and minor construction projects; and

WHEREAS, Operations and maintenance and renovations 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 VA to permit the 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 place of burial by VA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and to petition the 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 the pre-1981 burial allowance and an increase of the burial benefit to $400. We also support the 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 from $150 to $300; 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. 78: Delay the Transfer of the Ft. Lyon VAMC
Origin: Colorado
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Ft. Lyon Medical Center currently provides care for 210 veteran patients, of which 78 are classified as high risk based on severity of illness and difficulty in placing the veteran in other care settings; and

WHEREAS, This unique class of veteran patient will continue to exist in the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, No other VA facility exists in VISN 19 to provide this special care for these veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, A special volunteer corps of givers has been established in the Southern Colorado Health Care System during the history of the Ft. Lyon VA Center and it would be extremely difficult to replace this special breed of volunteers in another location; and

WHEREAS, The proposed expansion of VA Outpatient Clinics in Lamar, Alamosa, La Junta, Colorado Springs and Pueblo will not provide the specialized care needed by these veterans; and

WHEREAS, The inefficiencies in operating the Ft. Lyon campus is the result of managing a 500+ acre campus rather than maintaining appropriate medical care for these veterans; and

WHEREAS, The entire physical plant and grounds at Ft. Lyon are not required to provide care for these special veterans; and

WHEREAS, Completely closing the VA Ft. Lyon Medical Center and transferring it to the Colorado Department of Corrections would, in effect, sacrifice the care of these veterans for the care of convicts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the Department of Veterans Affairs retain adequate health care facilities at the Ft. Lyon Medical Center to provide long-term care for chronically mentally ill veterans until such time adequate care facilities can be provided at an alternative site; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to sponsor and support legislation that will provide fast track funding to identify replacement care facilities to care for this unique classification of veterans.

Resolution No. 85: Support Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C for Veterans

Origin: Maryland

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is a potentially fatal virus carried in the blood; and

WHEREAS, Because of 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 have Hepatitis C, compared to a rate of under 2 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 in Vietnam 25 to 30 years ago would only now be showing signs of severe liver disease and 52 percent of liver transplants in the VA medical system have the Hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, In 85 percent of the cases, no acute symptoms would have shown up at the time of infection with the Hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, Military training and combat offer many opportunities for transmitting blood-borne viral hepatitis through blood to blood contact; and

WHEREAS, Recent United States wars have been fought in Asia, where the Hepatitis C rates are particularly high; and

WHEREAS, It is difficult for a veteran to get service-connected status for Hepatitis C because it is often impossible to prove the infection was acquired during military service; and

WHEREAS, No effective test for Hepatitis C was available until 1992; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C-infected veterans who were treated for acute hepatitis during their military service and who made a claim for establishing service connection are generally turned down by VA because they cannot prove the current infection is related to a prior hepatitis exposure; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Veterans Appeals often rejects a service-connected claim because the veteran's medical record does not show the presence of Hepatitis C at the time of military discharge; and

WHEREAS, Because of the lengthy latency period, Congress should establish a presumptive service connection for Hepatitis C for any veteran meeting certain conditions related to military service; and

WHEREAS, It is important to establish service connection for Hepatitis C so the veteran can receive necessary health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion strongly encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously study the issue of presumptive service connection for Hepatitis C; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide regular notifications to Congress and to the veterans service organizations on progress made toward resolving the issue of presumptive service connection for Hepatitis C.

Resolution No. 86: The American Legion Policy on Prostate Cancer Research and Treatment
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer afflicts nearly 200,000 American men each year and almost 40,000 lives are lost; and

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer strikes one in eight American men, twenty-five percent under the age of 65, with increasing numbers of men in their 40s and 50s afflicted with prostate cancer; and

WHEREAS, African-American men have the highest prostate cancer incidence and mortality rates in the world, being 35-50% more likely to be diagnosed than Caucasian men and are twice as likely to die of the disease; and

WHEREAS, The cost of and impact of cancer is deleterious to the economy and if the cost of cancer were solved, it is estimated the economic value to the country would be $46 trillion—more than the entire financial assets of the United States and about 15,000 times the nation's investment in cancer research; and

WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research are leading to new treatments, and cures for all forms of cancer, and will lower long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer has been demonstrated to be service-connected to Agent Orange exposure and pursuant to the Agent Orange Act of 1991, the Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that a presumption of service connection based on exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam is warranted for prostate cancer in that VA has found a positive association between the condition and such exposure; and

WHEREAS, VA is very productive in advancing medical knowledge, improving health care for veterans and all other citizens, and has invested $12 million for FY 2000 for prostate cancer research, a large portion of which is dedicated to medical trials; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That federal funding for prostate cancer research, treatment, and therapies at NIH, DoD, and VA be increased and that Congress and the Administration re-double its efforts to find a cure for prostate cancer; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Veterans Health Administration increase its investment in prostate cancer clinical research by improving and accelerating clinical trials at VA hospitals and affiliated university medical centers and research programs.

Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill of Health
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & 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 healthcare 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 last five years through restructuring and legislative initiatives, which has resulted in the implementation of several of the original provisions of the GI Bill of Health. The components already enacted include:

—Portability

—An equitable standardization resource distribution method

—Extension of health care access to all veterans

—A defined benefits package

—Long-term care for veterans rated 70 percent or higher or for service- connected conditions

These measures were all accomplished under Eligibility Reform in 1996 and the Millennium Bill in 1999; 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, "GI Bill of Health —Dependents in VA," and the second as, "GI Bill of Health—Medicare Subvention." 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support enacting additional components of the GI Bill of Health through the "GI Bill of Health—Dependents in VA" and the "GI Bill of Health—Medicare Subvention."

Resolution No. 165: Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program
Origin: Virginia
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Res. No. 296 (CO))

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 Persian 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 for 1998, the annual benefit rate for a surviving spouse with no income and no dependents is $5,808 or sixty-seven percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income and no dependents; and

WHEREAS, 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 at or 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 $1,476 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 38, USC, 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 $11,349 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 $8,246, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 166: The American Legion Policy on VA-NSLI Insurance
Origin: Virginia
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 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 167: The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
Origin: Virginia
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Res. Nos. 28 (MA), 215 (ND))

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 150 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 has completed, and is currently preparing reports, that evaluate the nature, the likely causes, and the Federal Government's response to 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, 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 and fibromyalgia; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 further

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 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 consider offering healthcare and compensation to disabled Gulf War veterans who suffer from unexplained physical symptoms, or medically unexplained symptom syndromes similar to chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia; 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. 168: Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits To Those Who Served in Israel and Turkey
Origin: Virginia
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Priority health care has been approved for Gulf War Veterans assigned in the past to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Veterans assigned to Israel or Turkey during the Gulf War have not received such recognition for priority health care; and

WHEREAS, These veterans were exposed to most of the same environmental hazards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to provide authority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to extend priority health care to veterans who served during the Persian Gulf War in Israel or Turkey.

Resolution No. 176: The American Legion Policy on Former POWs
Origin: California
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In its concern 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 all 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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;
4. Chronic pulmonary disease (where there is a history of forced labor in mines during internment);

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. 177: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange
Origin: California
Submitted: 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the findings of the U.S. Air Force Ranch Hand study suggesting a relationship between diabetes and exposure to Agent Orange; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to add diabetes to the list of diseases for which VA allows a presumption of service connection if the soon-to-be-released National Academy of Sciences report on Agent Orange and diabetes—which will be based on a thorough review of the Ranch Hand study and other sound medical and scientific evidence—supports such a relationship.

Resolution No. 178: 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, USC; and

WHEREAS, Although under provision of title 10, USC, 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 Senate and DoD are supporting enactment of section 538 of the Defense Appropriations Act of 1996 to overturn the Court's decision that this Act applied to military proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Such an enactment would effectively change the time of commencement of the limitation from the date of discovery to the date of occurrence; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 10, USC, so as to eliminate all time limitations.

Resolution No. 192: Health Care for World War II Veterans
Origin: Texas
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, World War II ended fifty five years ago; and

WHEREAS, Most surviving World War II veterans are over 80 years old and in need of increasing medical care; and

WHEREAS, The cost of adequate medical care is beyond their ability to pay, with over 1000 dying every day; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion National Convention in Orlando, FL in 1997 and New Orleans, LA in 1998 passed resolutions granting priority care to World War II veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion does hereby

re-affirm that Congress amend Priority 6 of Public Law 104-262—Veterans Health Care Act of 1996—to grant Priority 6 health care to World War II veterans.

Resolution No. 205: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 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. 206: The American Legion Policy on Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
Origin: Indiana
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly supports improvements which enhance and protect veterans' compensation benefits and programs; and

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 (DIC) 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 Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) who are in nursing homes under Medicaid; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 207: Seek Legislation to Pay Accrued Benefits In a Pending Claim to the Date the Deceased Veteran's Claim Was Filed

Origin: Indiana

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to service to the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran should die while a claim is pending, including an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals or the Court of Veterans Appeals under 38, USC, 5121, the surviving spouse, dependents, or other eligibles are limited to two years retroactive accrued benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who have filed a benefit claim are having to wait six months to a year or more for a decision by the regional office and following that, wait over three years or more for a decision by the Board of Veterans Appeals and another year or more on their case by the Court of Veterans Appeals; and

WHEREAS, Given the fact that a claim can be in a pending status for upwards of 4 or more years, many veterans whose cases are in this category will die before a final decision is rendered; and

WHEREAS, The families of these deceased veterans receive only a small portion of the benefits that would have been due and otherwise payable to the veteran had he or she remained alive; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to amend 38, USC, 5121 to provide that, where the veteran's claim was pending at the time of death, the payment in a claim for accrued benefits, including an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals or the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, shall be back to the date the veteran's claim was originally filed.

Resolution No. 208: 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 during the day, therefore leaving them alone for that period of time; and

WHEREAS, A veteran might need to summon help during this period of being alone and independent living; and

WHEREAS, There is a National Network provided by several companies such as Life Line, that helps insure and preserve the independent living of the veteran by providing the veteran with a Personal Response Service that is activated when the veteran presses a personal help button that can be worn as a pendant or on a wristband; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion call upon the Congress of the United States to approve the appropriate funding for VA to authorize the set-up of full payment or partial payment of a Personal Response Service.

Resolution No. 216: Support an Increase in Incompetent Veterans Estate Limitations
Origin: North Dakota
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, 3.353, an individual may be determined to be incompetent if, because of injury or disease, the person lacks the mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including the disbursement of funds without limitation; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, section 5502(b)(1)(A), in the case of an incompetent veteran with no spouse or child who is being furnished hospital treatment or institutional or domiciliary care without charge by the Federal Government or any political subdivision thereof, including state veterans homes, and whose estate (excluding the value of the veteran's home unless there is no reasonable likelihood that the veteran will again reside in such home) exceeds $1500, further payments of compensation or pension will not be made until the estate is reduced to $500; and

WHEREAS, This provision was originally enacted by Public Law 86-146 in 1959 and has not been updated since then; and

WHEREAS, Some of these hospitalized incompetent veterans may have acquired outside monthly expenses for their home, auto, or other personal debts, for which they are liable, and their ability to meet such outside financial obligations can be adversely affected by the $1500 limit on their receipt of compensation or pension benefits; and

WHEREAS, These severe limits may require frequent adjustment to an incompetent veteran's award, which is a time-consuming process for VA and requires resources that could otherwise be used to improve service to veterans with pending benefits claims; and

WHEREAS, These outdated estate limitations are not only unfair, but now act as a deterrent for hospitals and institutions in placing such veterans in more appropriate community-based facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA has informally expressed support for some increase in the estate limitations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 5503, to increase the incompetent veteran's estate limitation from $1500 and $500 to $4000 and $2000.

Resolution No. 220: Exempt VA Benefits and Services from Pay-Go Provisions
Origin: North Dakota
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

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 is an extension of the costs 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, The benefits and services provided to America's veterans, dependents and survivors have not caused this nation's deficit problems; and

WHEREAS, The so-called "pay-go" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act require any new benefits or services to be paid out of existing benefits or programs, in effect, requiring one group of disabled veterans to give up a benefit or service so that another worthy group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War veterans suffering from ailments associated with their service to the Gulf War are compensated from funds generated by cutting the benefits of other service-connected veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, The benefits and services provided to wartime disabled veterans are unique and are not a "welfare benefit;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 Budget Enforcement Act.

Resolution No. 224: Provide Full Funding for VA Construction Program
Origin: Florida
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 modernization, as well as reconfiguration to meet the demands of the advances of medicine and improvements relating to fire, safety and privacy standards; and

WHEREAS, The increasing demands placed upon the outpatient/ambulatory care facilities of VA require substantial alterations to meet space needs; 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, No health care delivery system can be expected to deliver quality care if the physical settings charged with providing that care are allowed to deteriorate to a state which places them beyond redemption; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge the

Congress in its annual appropriations, to sufficiently fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction program to allow it to carry out a program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a rational system for setting construction priorities, 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 the necessary funding to carry out VA's transition from hospital based care to enhanced primary care and increase access to a modern VA health care system.

Resolution No. 233: Remove 30-Year Delimiting Date for Agent Orange Claims
Origin: Washington
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Paragraph 3.307(6)(ii), indicates that for a veteran to receive compensation for any respiratory cancers caused by Agent Orange, he/she must have made application for these benefits within 30 years after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange continue to seek compensation for this disease after the 30 year time limit; and

WHEREAS, In the past several years more information has been learned about Agent Orange and the effects it has on the men and women who were exposed to it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion fully supports the removal of the 30-year delimiting date on all veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Resolution No. 236: Extend Presumptive Period for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) To Seven Years
Origin: Washington
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 and 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 is currently provided for ALS under title 38, USC, section 1112(a) is inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 239: The American Legion Policy on a Federal Settlement with United States Tobacco Companies
Origin: Michigan
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Res. No. 273 (UT))

WHEREAS, Currently under the provisions of title 38, United States Code, service connection can be granted for disability or death from various diseases, including those related to nicotine addiction which develop during an individual's period of military service as a result of the use of tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, The President's Fiscal Year 1999 VA budget included legislation to preclude in any future VA claims the grant of service connection for disability or death due in whole or in part to tobacco use, including entitlement to VA medical care for such disability; and

WHEREAS, The stated "need" for such restrictive, anti-veteran legislation is predicated upon estimates by VA and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of future budget costs totaling $10.5 to $17 billion over the next five years; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes VA's and CBO's estimates are overstated and unrealistic and is on record strongly as opposing this legislative and budgetary action; and

WHEREAS, Regardless of the volume of tobacco-related claims, Congress is obliged by law to annually appropriate sufficient funds for all VA mandatory benefit payments which include disability compensation and DIC benefits for a service-connected disability and death due to tobacco-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Rather than penalizing certain disabled veterans and stripping them of their rights to federal benefits and medical care as a matter of budgetary expediency, the President and Congress should acknowledge the Federal Government's historic partnership with the tobacco companies in providing tobacco products to members of the Armed Forces and the resultant shared liability for disability and death due to the use of such tobacco products during their period of military service; and

WHEREAS, Congress is currently reviewing the out-of-court product liability cases between the tobacco companies and the states' attorney generals; and

WHEREAS, The scope of the states' settlement is limited and was not intended to address the larger issue of reimbursement to the various federal agencies for current and future overall costs resulting from tobacco-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly believes the President, the Federal Government and the Congress have a responsibility to protect the interests of veterans as well as the fiscal stability and integrity of VA benefit and medical care programs for service disabled veterans by aggressively pursuing a comprehensive, "global" settlement with the

tobacco companies that will specifically address the long-term funding needs of VA for the payment of compensation and the provision of medical care to veterans who develop illnesses related to their tobacco use in service; and

WHEREAS, A "Sense of the Congress" resolution was introduced by Congressmen Evans (IL) and Smith (NJ) that VA should receive part of the proceeds from any federal settlement with the tobacco companies; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently disapproved the Department of Justice's request for $20 million to fund the ongoing federal lawsuit against the tobacco companies and that such funds be taken from the FY 2000 budgets of VA, DoD, HHS and OPM; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge the President and the Congress to undertake a comprehensive, "global" settlement with the tobacco companies that will ensure that adequate funding can be attained for VA benefit and medical care programs for those veterans who suffer or die from illnesses related to their use of tobacco products during military service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion go on record as opposing any effort by any federal agency or the Congress to divert funds from VA's budget to support the federal tobacco suit.

Resolution No. 240: Reduce Disability Requirements for Nonservice-Connected Pension
Origin: Michigan
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The concept of special consideration of age as it relates to a determination of total disability for nonservice-connected pension purposes was originally incorporated into the 1945 revision of the VA **Schedule for Rating Disabilities** in Paragraph 17; and

WHEREAS, Specific percentage requirements for a total disability rating based on unemployability of the individual were set forth in Paragraph 16 of the **1945 Rating Schedule** (if there is a single disability, it must be rated at 60 percent or more; or if there are two or more disabilities, one must be rated at 40 percent or more with a combined rating of 70 percent or more) were reduced for nonservice-connected pension purposes by 10 percent at age 60 and by an additional 10 percent at age 65; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, Congress enacted legislation liberalizing this concept of special consideration of age to provide that permanent and total disability would be presumed at age 65 in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension; and

WHEREAS, The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA), PL 101-508, repealed the presumption of permanent and total disability at age 65; and

WHEREAS, VA implemented regulations stipulating that the same percentage disability requirements which apply to total disability ratings for compensation based on individual unemployability (if there is a single disability, it must be rated 60 percent or more; or if there are two or more disabilities, one must be rated at 40 percent or more with a combined rating of 70 percent or more) would also apply to total disability ratings for nonservice-connected pension without regard to the veteran's age; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are now required to submit medical evidence of total disability in support of a claim for nonservice-connected pension and undergo a VA examination; and

WHEREAS, It is a well accepted scientific and medical principle in geriatric medicine that the complex effects of injuries and diseases become more disabling as a result of the general aging process; and

WHEREAS, From a practical standpoint, few employers will employ an elderly individual (one who is 65 years of age or older) even if they are in relatively good health; and

WHEREAS, The current requirement has eliminated the traditional "safety net" for those older veterans who may not have disabilities which meet the percentage requirement of title 38, CFR 4.16, but who are unable to work and have little or no income, making them otherwise entitled to nonservice-connected pension; and

WHEREAS, These OBRA requirements have also added significantly to the adjudication workload of the regional offices as well as the medical centers at a time when the case backlog nationwide is of crisis proportions and VA is increasingly unable to process all types of claims in a timely manner; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1501 to restore the special consideration of age in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension by providing that the disability requirement at age 55 shall be 60 percent; at age 60, the requirement shall be reduced to 50 percent; and at age 65, the disability requirement shall be presumed to have been met.

Resolution No. 241: The American Legion Policy on Tobacco-Related Disabilities
Origin: Michigan
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, For the last 78 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; and

WHEREAS, The VA General Counsel Opinion concluded that, providing these 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 $17 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 the President as PL 105-178 on June 9, 1998, made the veterans' use of tobacco products in service synonymous with willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, According to current VA data, in the period 1993 to June 1998, VA received approximately 8,830 tobacco-related claims and, of these, approximately 4,977 have been adjudicated with benefits granted in 359 cases and 3,718 are still in process; and

WHEREAS, Certain technical corrections were made to PL 105-178 by the TEA Restoration Act signed by the President on July 9, 1998 as PL 105-206 which affirmed the bar to VA benefits for tobacco-related illnesses, but deleted the reference to willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, Several Members of Congress have subsequently introduced legislation seeking repeal of the current bar to VA benefits for tobacco-related illnesses; however, it is anticipated that no action will be taken on such legislation before the 105th Congress adjourns sine die; and

WHEREAS, New legislation will have to be introduced in the 106th Congress; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes action taken by the President and the Congress has been clearly anti-veteran and a violation of 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 288: All Veterans Receive "Wartime" Benefits For Active Military Service Between 28 February 1961 and 5 August 1964

Origin: New York

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 5 August 1964 through 7 May 1975; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served from 28 February 1961 through 5 August 1964 shall be considered as serving during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, On 10 November 1997, Public Act 105-110 was signed into law by President Clinton; and

WHEREAS, This Public Act amended Section 5 of the act entitled "An Act to Incorporate The American Legion" approved 16 September 1919 (41 Stat 285; 36 USC 45) by striking the date 22 December 1961 and inserting the date 28 February 1961; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion bring to the attention of the Federal Government and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs that its members feel they should not discriminate against those veterans who did not serve "In Country" from 28 February 1961 through 5 August 1964; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That these service people be entitled to the same wartime benefits as those veterans who served from 5 August 1964 through 17 May 1975 during the Vietnam War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That they be all equal in the eyes of the Federal Government and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as they are in the eyes of the American people, regardless of cost; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all Vietnam veterans who served during the Vietnam War be treated as equals, wherever they served.

Resolution No. 292: Request VA Establish Policy of Enrollment in VA Health Care System at the Time of Separation from Active Military Service

Origin: New York

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Congress directed the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a National Enrollment Policy for health care in the Veterans Health Care Administration by October 1, 1999; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of this enrollment policy was to standardize Veterans Health Administration guidelines, procedures and eligibility criteria for veterans who use Department of Veterans Affairs health care; and

WHEREAS, American Legion Posts and American Legion Accredited Service Officers have assisted eligible veterans to ensure they have the opportunity to take part in this enrollment policy; and

WHEREAS, No specific policy exists within the Department of Defense to enroll active duty personnel at the time of their discharge out processing; and

WHEREAS, Many active duty military personnel are without health insurance at discharge time and Department of Veterans Affairs health care could fill an immediate need as well as be helpful in claims with the Veterans Benefits Administration in the future; and

WHEREAS, Discharge out processing would be the appropriate time and place for enrollment before these personnel are home seeking jobs and establishing their civilian life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs be requested to establish a policy for enrollment in Department of Veterans Affairs health care at the time of separation from active duty for all personnel on active military duty.

Resolution No. 293: Request Congress Provide VA Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research Activities

Origin: New York

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, 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, 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, Advances in biomedical research leads to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and serves as a successful model in lowering long-term health care costs; 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, 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; and

WHEREAS, In 1996 the Department of Veterans Affairs' Research Realignment and Advisory Committee recommended that VA realign research priorities to serve the needs of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, The Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is a new venture undertaken by the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Service that will create and implement 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 that VHA provides medical care: in-patient, outpatient, and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Specific areas of investigative research under QUERI include:

- Chronic Heart Failure
- Mental Health
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Stroke
- HIV/AIDS
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Substance Abuse
- Ischemic Heart Disease; and

WHEREAS, QUERI will be a coordinated effort by researchers, clinicians and managers in Headquarters, Networks and VHA facilities to use research results to continuously improve the care provided to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support adequate funding for VA biomedical research activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress and the Administration encourage 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. 294: 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

a fair and impartial individual that the claim is well grounded. All federal departments or agencies are prohibited from imposing any charge for providing information to VA for purposes of determining benefit eligibility.

- Allowing all veterans whose claims were denied since last year's *Morton v. West* court case, because their cases were not considered well-grounded, to request a VA review of their cases.

The duty to assist veterans seeking legitimate benefits from VA must be an integral part of VA's mission as the agency for veterans' affairs. Yet, many claimants argue that VA's role has recently been more as an obstructionist than that of an advocate. Therefore, VA's duty to assist appears extremely passive. Consequently, there are constant backlogs of claims waiting for adjudication, and most have not been properly developed due to lack of assistance from VA.

During consideration of **S 2549**, the FY 2001 DoD authorization bill, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced an amendment to clarify VA's duty to assist veterans. The amendment passed by unanimous consent. However, the amendment did not gain the same support among veterans service organizations as **HR 4864** and **HR 3193**.

The American Legion believes that **HR 4864** is an effective solution to assist deserving veterans in the processing of their service-connected disability claims. Without passage of this measure, VA's current backlog problem will only get worse. America's heroes deserve the dutiful assistance of VA in the "timely" adjudication of their claims. This legislation is the best approach available to assist veterans, many who have waited too long to receive their benefits.

On July 27, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved by a voice vote **S 1810**, an omnibus veterans bill. Originally drafted and introduced by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., as a companion to **HR 3193**, the bill has attracted a host of other veterans' provisions. In addition to the language requiring VA to help veterans find information to back up a benefits claim, then help them file the claim, **S 1810** would:

- Provide benefits to female Vietnam veterans' children born with birth defects;
- Provide medical compensation for veterans who require a mastectomy for service-connected reasons;
- Provide copayments for prescription pharmaceuticals;
- Create a physician's assistant position within VA;
- Allow VA to make several land transfers; and
- Eliminate inconsistencies in federal programs by requiring VA to provide medical coverage for colon, lung, brain and ovarian cancers in veterans who were exposed to radiation.

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), the successor to the original 1944 GI Bill of Rights, is one of the major reasons many young people today are joining the military. However, recent statistics show that MGIB benefits pay for only about half of the educational costs incurred by veterans. Moreover, since only about half of veterans use even part of their MGIB benefits, this proves the program does not meet their needs, and is in dire need of major improvements.

On March 1, a press conference was held on the steps of the US Capitol, calling for a restoration of the higher education purchasing power that once made the MGIB program a strong recruiting tool. Various speakers from the veterans, uniformed services, and higher education communities repeated their commitment to closing the gap between the current MGIB allowance and the cost of higher education. House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee Chairman Jack Quinn, R-N.Y., and Ranking Member Bob Filner, D-Calif.,

spoke at the event, as did former House VA Committee Chairman G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery, the author of the MGIB program.

On May 23, by a vote of 417-0 the House of Representatives passed **S 1402**, legislation to upgrade the MGIB program by bringing its benefits closer to the rising cost of higher education. The House passed the bill after substituting the language of a companion measure, **HR 4268**, for the Senate-passed text.

The measure would raise the monthly MGIB education benefit from $536 per month to $600 per month effective October 1, 2000, with a second increase to $720 per month occurring in two years. The bill would also provide another opportunity for servicemembers still on active duty to convert from the Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP) to the MGIB program. It would also allow a veteran to use MGIB benefits for a civilian occupational licensing or certification examination.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said, "...this increase was realistic in view of other demands and priorities. This was the first step. A fully updated Montgomery GI Bill would not only ease the transition from military to civilian life, it would help all branches of the military meet their recruiting goals." Final details of **S 1402** must now be worked out by the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees before it can be signed into law by the President.

This nation cannot keep a promise it made to veterans unless the MGIB program is brought into line with today's burgeoning cost of education. The American Legion supports improvements in the MGIB program that will continue its work as one of the premier recruiting tools of this country's armed forces.

On July 25, the House passed by voice vote an omnibus measure, **HR 4850**, which incorporated the provisions of four separate measures. This action is usually taken when time is short at the end of a congressional session, and the chances of passage are greater for a single bill instead of several bills.

The bill would authorize cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on disability compensation for service-connected disabled veterans and for the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans. The percentage of the increase will be the same as the COLA provided for Social Security recipients. Another provision of **HR 4850** would permit certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to participate in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program.

The bill would also provide veterans' disability compensation benefits for National Guard or Reserve members who suffer a heart attack or stroke while performing inactive duty training. Finally, **HR 4850** would provide a monthly rate of special compensation for certain female veterans for the service-connected loss of one or both breasts due to a radical or modified radical mastectomy.

As the year 2000 is a presidential election year, The American Legion developed a platform statement outlining the organization's goals for the U.S. for the 21st century. During the month of July, the Legion provided the platform statement to the political parties.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 7, 1999 through August 10, 2000. During this period, the Commission met five 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. It 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 representatives. There is one council member for each member of Congress. A National 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. This 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.

106th Congress, First Session

As the First Session of the 106th Congress moved toward its winter recess, the top priority was passage of FY 2000 funding bills. Many measures had been vetoed by President Clinton, because he thought Congress had ignored his spending requests in such areas as housing, education and law enforcement. President Clinton, on November 29, 1999, signed **Public Law 106-113**, an omnibus spending bill that funded federal government programs for the District of Columbia, foreign aid, and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, Labor, State and the federal judiciary.

Children & Youth

PL 106-113 provided funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2000. Under its provisions, the Justice Department will receive $18.6 billion; the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will receive $3 billion; and, $280 million will be given to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program which has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

Economics

With enactment of **PL 106-113**, FY 2000 funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education was finalized. This measure appropriates $184.3 million for programs under the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET).

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), which seeks disabled veterans, conducts job development with employers and provides case management services to customers, received $80.2 million. The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) program coordinates local employment service office efforts to provide priority of service, with emphasis on federal contractor job listings. This program received $77.3 million.

The federal administration account, which received $26.9 million, provides the funding for the VETS staff and also supports Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for servicemembers leaving the armed forces to allow them to make a smooth transition to the civilian workplace. The Veterans Workforce Development Program (formerly JTPA Part IV-C), which provides training opportunities and supportive services designed to help veterans get jobs, was funded at $7.3 million.

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project, which helps homeless veterans find jobs, received $9.3 million (a nearly $6 million increase over the President's original proposal). Finally, the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), trains veteran service providers through a contract with the University of Colorado. It was funded at $2 million.

On November 30, 1999 the President enacted **PL 106-117**, the "Veterans Millennium Health Care Act." (Other provisions of this measure are outlined in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section below.) Several provisions of the bill seek to help homeless veterans. One provision would help homeless veterans find jobs by authorizing a four-year increase in Labor Department funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. The measure would double the current authorization for similar programs to $10 million in FY 2000 and increase that amount by $5 million each year until it tops out at $20 million in FY 2003.

Another provision would extend VA's authority to furnish assistance to homeless veterans through December 31, 2003. Finally, **PL 106-117** would extend through September 30, 2003 VA's authority to make grants, under the Comprehensive Service Program Act of 1992, for new programs to combat veteran homelessness, authorize grants to assist in expanding existing programs, and authorize annual appropriations of $50 million to carry out the act.

Foreign Relations

Funding for this country's foreign operations in FY 2000 is included in **PL 106-113**, the omnibus funding bill. The measure includes $15.3 billion in economic and military aid to a variety of foreign nations. The bill continues to assign large amounts of military and economic assistance to Egypt and Israel—$2.2 billion to Israel and $1.3 billion to Egypt. In addition, Jordan received $175 million in military assistance, in recognition of that country's role in the Middle East peace process. Both chambers agreed to the administration's request for $1.8 billion to bolster the 1998 Wye River peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

In addition, $839 million in bilateral economic aid will be given to states of the former Soviet Union, including $180 million to Ukraine, $108 million to Georgia, and $101 million to Armenia. However, this aid has a proviso: 50 percent of the money will be withheld until such time as Russia stops assisting Iran with its nuclear or ballistic missile technology. In a related area, Congress agreed to pay $926 million in the U.S. overdue funds for the United Nations. If the U.S. had not paid a portion of that amount, our nation could have faced the possibility of losing its seat in the UN General Assembly.

Internal Affairs

One of the provisions of **PL 106-117**, the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act, deals with the World War II Memorial, slated for construction on the Mall in Washington, DC. This provision would expand the fundraising authorities of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to expedite the establishment of the Memorial and ensure that adequate funds are available for the repair and long-term maintenance of the Memorial. To assure that groundbreaking, construction, and dedication of the Memorial are completed on a timely basis, the ABMC would be authorized to borrow up to $65 million from the U.S. Treasury.

National Security

On October 5, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization measure. Approximately $8.3 billion was added to the President's request for defense programs, for a total of $288.8 billion. Most of the additions were spread across a wide range of accounts reflecting the views of many members of Congress that President Clinton has run down U.S. forces by giving them too little money and too many missions.

This measure provides a 4.8 percent military pay raise effective January 1, 2000. It requires that future annual military pay raises through FY 2006 be one-half percent higher than the average increase in civilian pay. During early debate on this measure, the Senate rejected, by a 60-40 vote, the Clinton Administration's call for two more rounds of base closings and realignments.

On October 25, 1999 the President signed **PL 106-79**, the FY 2000 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill. The House passed the bill on October 13 by a 372-55 vote, and the Senate the next day by an 87-11 count. Below is a breakdown of the major accounts funding for FY 1999, the White House proposal for FY 2000, the House and Senate versions, and the final funding figures.

Table 9

	FY 1999 Funding	FY 2000 Proposal	Senate S 1122	House HR 2561	Final PL 106-79
Military personnel	$70.6 bil.	$73.7 bil.	$73.9 bil.	$72.0 bil.	$73.9 bil.
Operations & maintenance	84.0 bil.	91.3 bil.	91.9 bil.	93.7 bil.	92.2 bil.
Procurement	48.6 bil.	51.9 bil.	54.6 bil.	53.0 bil.	53.0 bil.
Research & development	36.8 bil.	34.4 bil.	36.4 bil.	37.2 bil.	37.6 bil.
Other DoD programs	11.8 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.3 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.2 bil.
Various budget cuts	1.2 bil.	.9 bil.	5.4 bil.	1.9 bil.	2.1 bil.
GRAND TOTAL	**$250.6 bil.**	**$263.3 bil.**	**$264.7 bil.**	**$268.7 bil.**	**$267.8 bil.**

A major change is that the White House's request for $3.1 billion to begin production of the F-22 fighter plane was modified. Instead, $2.5 billion was approved to continue development of the plane and to begin construction of six of the planes. Some of the money denied for the F-22 would go to other areas, including:

- $77 million to buy an additional KC-130J tanker plane;
- $275 million for 5 F-15s, which were not originally requested by the White House; and,
- $110 million for bonuses to stem the exodus of pilots from the Air Force.
- Funding for various DoD accounts, as provided by each chamber, are presented below:

Table 10

	House Version	Senate Version	Final PL 106-79
Joint Strike Fighter	$577 mil.	$492 mil.	$492 mil.
F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet (36 planes funded)	$3.03 bil.	$3.00 bil.	$2.99 bil.
V-22 Osprey (11 Marine Corps tilt-rotor troop	$1.15 bil.	$1.22 bil.	$1.15 bil.
F-15 (5 planes funded)	$593 mil.	$333 mil.	$428 mil.
F-16 Falcon (10 planes funded)	$502 mil.	$421 mil.	$361 mil.
DDG-51 (3 *Arleigh Burke* destroyers funded)	$2.88 bil.	$2.86 bil.	$2.88 bil.
New Attack Submarine (SSN-774)	$1.12 bil.	$1.11 bil.	$1.12 bil.
CVN-77 (last *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier)	$752 mil.	$752 mil.	$752 mil.
RAH-66 Comanche helicopters (R & D)	$427 mil.	$483 mil.	$467 mil.
UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters (19 requested)	$224 mil.	$224 mil.	$219 mil.

The bill appropriates $3.98 billion in funding for ballistic missile defense programs (BMD) for FY 2000. Finally, the measure contains $461 million for cooperative threat reduction. This aid goes to states of the former Soviet Union for destroying nuclear and chemical weapons, and supports various measures aimed at preventing the smuggling of these weapons to terrorist or rogue states or individuals.

On October 9, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-69**, the FY 2000 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in the bill. The Coast Guard received $4 billion, which is $128 million more than it received for FY 1999 but $61 million less than requested by the White House.

The American Legion has achieved a significant victory to address the problem of concurrent receipt, which penalizes certain servicemen who receive military retired pay along with VA disability compensation. Current law requires these retirees to forego a portion of their retired pay equal to the amount of their VA disability compensation payments. Military retirees are the only federal retirees required to do this, and The American Legion feels this is patently unfair. Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., has introduced bills to address this inequity since 1985.

HR 44 would authorize special compensation for the most severely disabled retired veterans – those who have served for at least 20 years and who have disability ratings of between 70 and 100 percent. Specifically, it would authorize monthly payments of $300 for totally disabled retired veterans; $200 for retirees rated as 90 percent disabled; and, $100 for retirees with disability ratings of 70-80 percent. In the Senate, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced similar legislation, **S 789**. When the President signed **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization bill, provisions from Sen. McCain's bill were included in the final version. Passage of this change applies to veterans rated at 70 percent or higher. It is a good first step.

Funding for the Selective Service System was retained in **PL 106-74**, the FY 2000 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. . The American Legion supports retention of Selective Service as an inexpensive alternative to national conscription. The House sought to eliminate the program by providing only token funding of $7 million for program termination costs. Thanks in part to active lobbying by The American Legion, funding was restored to the agency, at last year's figure of $24 million. U.S. forces are being stretched too thin by budget-driven base closures, personnel cuts, peacekeeping missions and the continued threat of rogue and terrorist nations.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On October 20, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-74**, legislation to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for FY 2000. Presented below are the funding amounts approved for VA for FY 1999, the President's budget proposal for FY 2000, the final funding amounts contained in PL 106-74, and The American Legion's FY 2000 proposal.

Table 11

	FY 1999 Actual	**President's Proposal**	**FY 2000 PL 106-74**	**Legion's Proposal**
Veterans Benefits Administration	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	
Medical care	$17.3 bil.	$17.3 bil.	$19.0 bil.	$19.5 bil.
Medical/prosthetic research	$316 mil.	$316 mil.	$321 mil.	$335 mil.
Medical administration	$63 mil.	$61 mil.	$60 mil.	
General operating expenses	$856 mil.	$912 mil.	$913 mil.	$877 mil.
Inspector General	$36 mil.	$43 mil.	$43 mil.	
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$92 mil.	$97 mil.	$97 mil.	$105 mil.
Major construction	$142 mil.	$60 mil.	$65 mil.	$200 mil.
Minor construction	$175 mil.	$175 mil.	$160 mil.	$200 mil.
State home construction grants	$90 mil.	$40 mil.	$90 mil.	$100 mil.
State cemetery construction grants	$10 mil.	$11 mil.	$25 mil.	
Total VA funding	**$42.7 billion**	**$42.5 billion**	**$44.3 billion**	

On November 30, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-117**, the *Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act*, legislation introduced by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla. This measure, among other provisions, is designed to overhaul long-term veterans' care, realign VA facilities, and change current eligibility requirements for VA health care. The American Legion praised the passage of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act.

The bill creates a four-year pilot program that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide institutional care, mostly nursing home services, to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 70 percent and higher. This would include geriatric evaluations, VA and community-based nursing home care, domiciliary care, adult day health care, respite care, and such alternatives to institutional care, as the Secretary may consider reasonable and appropriate. Currently, VA is not required to provide such care to any enrolled veteran. Congress will review the plan after three years and determine before the program expires whether to eliminate it, expand it, or to leave it as is. House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said it is unlikely that, once the program is under way, that it would be eliminated.

The measure required VA to expand non-institutional care for all enrolled veterans. It would also allow VA to offset many of the costs of expanded care by setting co-payments on some services. As much as $200 million a year could be brought in under this provision. These copayments would be put into a revolving fund in the U.S. Treasury to be used to expand extended care services.

The measure removed the six-month limit on VA providing adult day health care, and authorizes VA to furnish respite care services under contract in veterans' homes or in any other setting. In addition, VA would be authorized to expand the scope of the State home program to encompass all extended care services. The VA Secretary would be required to conduct pilot programs to determine the effectiveness of different models of providing all-inclusive care to reduce the need for institutionalizing patients. **PL 106-117** would also

establish a pilot program that would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assisted living services through contract arrangements.

Other provisions of **PL 106-117** would:

- Authorize the VA Secretary to make payments for emergency care on behalf of uninsured enrolled veterans and require that a veteran has received VA care within a two-year period of a medical emergency to be eligible.
- Extend the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans through December 31, 2003.
- Require the VA Secretary to report and provide justification to Congress on, and defer for a period, plans to close within any fiscal year more than one-half the beds within certain bed sections of VA medical centers.
- Require the VA Under Secretary for Health, in consultation with chiropractors, to establish a policy regarding chiropractic treatment.
- Authorize renovations and construction to VA facilities in Orlando, Fla., Kansas City, Mo.; Lebanon, Pa.; Fargo, N.D., and Atlanta, Ga.; and demolition of buildings at the Leavenworth, Kan., VAMC; and authorize appropriations for FYs 2000 and 2001 of $57.5 million for construction.
- Authorize the payment of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) to the surviving spouses of certain former prisoners of war who were rated totally disabled due to any service-connected cause for a period of one or more years immediately prior to death.
- Restore eligibility for CHAMPVA medical care, education, and housing loans to surviving spouses who lost eligibility for these benefits as the result of remarriage (these same spouses regained DIC eligibility, but not these related benefits, as the result of legislation enacted in 1998).
- Add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma, a rare form of lung cancer not associated with tobacco use, to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected and thus compensable for certain radiation-exposed veterans.
- Extend for four years the requirement that VA operate a program to evaluate the health status of Gulf War veterans' dependents and continue to provide outreach to these veterans through a newsletter.
- Establish a new fund in the Treasury in which VA is to deposit receipts and collections under the new authorities in the bill and provide that, of the monies collected and recovered by VA, each facility is to receive that amount collected or recovered on behalf of that facility.
- Extend to December 31, 2003 Vietnam-era veterans' eligibility for readjustment counseling services.
- Require the VA Secretary to operate a sexual trauma program through December 31, 2004.
- Reestablish a VA Committee on post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Establish a specific eligibility for VA health care for a) veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart, and b) subject to the terms of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, for veterans who retired from military service, are eligible for care under the TRICARE program, and not otherwise eligible for priority VA care.
- Revise the priority system for the award of grants under the State home construction program: (a) to provide a higher priority for renovation projects than accorded under current law; and (b) priority based on the relative need for adding new beds (with higher priority to States with great

will make a contribution to the National Emergency Fund in the name of the Southern Block. I am pleased to present this to you, Commander.

Mr. Commander, in addition to that reward goes a check in the amount of $7,000 which was taken up this morning, in dollar bills mostly. We took the cash fund directly to the Finance Officer and it is now in deposit in the name of the National Emergency Fund, in the honor of Commander Al Lance, Jr.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Thank you, Claude and all the members of the Southern Block. National Adjutant has just advised us that we have taken in $47,930.26 for the National Emergency Fund and that includes the 25 bucks that I owe.

The Chair recognizes Judge Vince Gaughn of Illinois, Chairman of our National Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments for purposes of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 3, 2000 at the Walker Room, Milwaukee 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 by motion of Cathy Gorst (WI) and seconded by Charles Mills (NY). Next Cathy J. Gorst (WI) was elected Recording Secretary by motion of Karl Oltmanns (OK) and seconded by Thomas Moe (ND). The Chairman and Recording 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.

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.

A motion was made by Charles Mills (NY) and duly seconded 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 was carried by the members.

The Chair then stated, based upon the National Judge Advocate's report to the Committee regarding the requirements for consideration of resolutions to amend, that 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. 62 (SD), 63 (SD), 191 (ME), 227 (MN) and 230 (WA) were out of order.

The meeting then proceeded to consider Resolution No. 1 (NEC).

Resolution No. 1: Change in Eligibility of Membership in The American Legion (Origin: National Executive Committee, Res. No. 3, May 2000)

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 has been reviewed 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 honorably during or after that period."; and, be it finally

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."

The resolution was considered by all of the Committee and a motion was made by E. Roy Stone, Jr. (SC) and seconded by Tom Moe (ND) to recommend adoption. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 158 (NE) was next considered by all Committee members. A motion was made to reject Resolution No. 158 by David L. King (KY) and seconded by Delbert Lennie (CO). The motion to reject was unanimously carried.

The Chair then asked for a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be permitted to sign the Report to the Convention on behalf of the members of the Committee. Karl Oltmanns (OK) made the motion and it was seconded by Henry Bradley (MA). The motion carried unanimously.

Donald Neil (DE) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chairman. The motion was seconded by T. Les Galloway (OR). The Chairman then thanked the Committee for its cooperation and productive meeting. The meeting was then declared in recess pending a call from the Chairman of the Committee.

Commander, this report contains a Constitutional Amendment so the report would have to be adopted by two-thirds majority. As an elected delegate to this Convention, I make a motion that the report be accepted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The motion carries by a greater majority of two-thirds.

The Chair at this time recognizes the delegation Chairman from the Department of Idaho, Rick Hanni.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER HANNI: As Immediate Past Commander, Department of Idaho, in response to the Southern Delegation, the Department of Idaho will gladly contribute $250 in the Southern Delegation's name to bail Commander Lance out.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: They only wanted $25.00 and we are giving them $250. That's okay.

Delegates, please come to a position of attention and join me in a salute to the Flag of the United States of America. One, two. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

...The Convention recessed to convene the following day, Thursday, September 7, 2000, at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
THIRD DAY

Thursday, September 7, 2000

...At 8:30 a.m., the delegates were entertained Mr. Peter Ole.

...At 9:00 a.m., the delegates assembled for the third day of the 82nd Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The 82nd Convention of The American Legion will come to order. Delegates, stand and join with me in a right-hand salute to the colors.

I ask David Brown, the National Chaplain, to give us the invocation.

Invocation
David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplain

Almighty God, creator of the universe to whom every knee must bend. We thank You for blessing our National Convention, we thank You for all the blessings You bestow upon us each day. Lord, help us always to be mindful of Your blessings and grateful for them. As our Convention draws to a close, we ask that You continue to bless us and the work of this Convention so that it may be happily concluded. We ask these things, Lord. in Your all holy name. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Remain uncovered for the Pledge of Allegiance.

... The delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Convention is now in session.

Maintaining a short national defense is a key component in the foundation in The American Legion. As your National Commander, I have tried to bring our nation's focus to the serious needs of our American men and women. This morning our first guest is responsible that our Air Force can meet its current and future missions. He is a graduate of Harvard University. He has served three years in the United States Navy Reserve, Fleet Intelligence Center, and he has a distinguished career in law. Please give a warm American Legion welcome to the Secretary of the Air Force, Whit Peters.

Address: Honorable F. Whitten Peters
Secretary of the Air Force

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you on the very important issue of national security and readiness. Not only does it give me a great chance to rub elbows with all of you in Milwaukee, but it brings me back to my hometown roots of Great Lakes, Illinois, just south of here. I also love to get out of Washington and get a sense of perspective. Everything looks better from here than from inside the beltway. Of course, being in Milwaukee does give someone in my position reason to worry because one of the hometown heros here, Billy Mitchell, who is not know for pulling his punches, said of one of my predecessors, "He was most incompetent and almost treasonable administration of national defense." And I trust no matter what I say here today, perhaps my reviews will be slightly better than that.

The Legion continues to do so much to promote the notion of public and patriotic service within our communities and within our nation. No one exemplifies that concept more than, Staff Sergeant Billy Fly, who is here today. He is the Air Force recipient of the Legion Spirit of Service Award this year. In just a single year, Sergeant Fly performed over 450 hours of volunteer work at his home base and , Spain, where we have tenancy on the Naval Air Station. This is truly a remarkable record. I am happy to say that is almost matched and surpassed by many of the young men and women of the Air Force. It is truly wonderful to be part of a force that has so many volunteers and it is equally wonderful to have them be recognized by a group like The American Legion. So congratulations Sergeant Fly, and thank you again, The American Legion, for recognizing the many ways in which the members of the Air Force serve our communities.

Of course, the men and women of our armed forces deeply appreciate all of the work you do on their behalf to Congress. There isn't a Senator, Congressman, or staffer on either side of the aisle, who doesn't know the Legion's position on key issues of national security and, believe me, they listen. Sometimes I wish I had your access and hope that someone will share some of their secrets while I am here today. Seriously, your strong voice and clear message was one of the most significant contributors to the 4.8 % pay raise to went into effect the beginning of this year. That is the largest single pay raise for the military in twenty years. In addition you have supported our mid-year pay raise and 3.7% pay raise that is going to happen on the 1st of July next year.

I am also grateful for the work that the Legion and the whole military coalition does that keeps the military readiness in the forefront. In the past few weeks, and indeed in every article in the Early Bird clipping service this morning, readiness was mentioned. That is obviously a good thing for the nation and for the DoD. We who care so deeply about our nation and welcome a debate on national defense. We should also be wary, however, that the debate not become polarized on political lines because politics is a strong prism and often bend facts that you and I might see as a departure from what we call as the straight truth.

Military readiness is not a Democratic issue, it is not a Republican issue. Military readiness is an American issue and, for that reason, it is a Legion issue. We must also be aware of those who want to debate readiness solely by using statistics. We all know the old line about lies, damn lies, and statistics. It applies in spades to the national debate we are currently having. The truth is that by selectively using the mountainous statistics containing the endless stream of reports that flows across my desk, I can prove without a shadow of doubt that today's Air Force is either the best of the world or severely crippled. But I submit to you that by focusing today on only today's statistics we really miss some of the fundamentals points.

To have a meaningful discourse on defense and on readiness you have to get behind the numbers. You need to ask the questions like: ready for what, at what costs, and at what risks? When you do that, you will find an Air Force that is strong and ready to respond to the missions it is likely to be asked to carry out in this Cold War organization and involving in important ways to meet the challenges of the next century. The undeniable truth is this. We are prepared for fly, fight, and win against any enemy on the face of the globe. At the risk of straining a little bit out of my portfolio, let me also assert that the same can be said about all of our sister services.

Now, before discussing some of the details of readiness, let us recall how we got from the Cold War through today. Shortly after we banqueted Iraq on the battlefield, our

implacable Soviet foes practically folded before our eyes, like the wicked witch in the *Wizard of Oz*. This left us in a historic opportunity to reclaim some of the enormous sums that we had spent on defense during the Cold War. So was born the so-called Peace Dividend. President Bush, President Clinton, and successive Congresses, both Democratic and Republican, all approved stiff declines in defense spending in an effort that were plaguing the century in the beginning of the last decade. Overall, the budgets for DoD fell about 40% and the Air Force and sister services began a massive draw down of about 40% of the force. That reduction did not happen over night.

When I came to the Air Force in the late 1997, active duty men and women were still being offered early outs. Indeed, in the medical career field we are still offering them to this date. While these cuts were the right thing to do, they created real turmoil across all of the services and released an enormous amount of talent, experience, and dedication. And in our desire to make these cuts as humanly as possible, we relied on volunteers, early retirements and voluntary discharges, as opposed to outright layoffs.

This of course was the right thing to do, but it ended up with some broken glass. Today in the Air Force, for example we still have broken career fields that span the gambit from security forces to crew chiefs, to public affairs, to pilots. To give you an example of what I am talking about, we have captains filling Lt. Colonels's billets, in the PA career field. And in the mid-1990s, because we had an excess of pilots, we count training from many thousands a year to 550 new pilots a year when we knew and know today that the minimum sustainable rate is about 1,100 pilots a year. We desired for a peace dividend across the field with base closure rounds ending in 1995 but continuing to this day as the bases continue to go through the closing process.

Base closures are necessary, but painful events. Indeed, we need more of them. Directly relative to readiness is the closure of two of the five Air Force depots. Each of these depots are the latest employers in the state in which they are located. Closing a depot is a major effort. The work of closing depots does not go away. It must move. We started these moves in 1997 and they continue today. Indeed the most single aircraft readiness problem we had last year was not caused by the lack of money but was caused by our inability to move depot work on schedule as we had planned.

There are a lot of reasons we could not move the depot work, but the primary one was that we could not hire the skilled manpower to the receiving locations because we live in a fabulous economy at this time. We also need to recall the bi-partisan balance budget acts that ended decades of deficit spending and fueled our robust economy, locked DoD into budgets that had a top line of just under $260 million. And all the while we were executing under a constraining top line, we were also executing the steps needed to reap the peace dividend and were supporting combat operations in Northern Watch, Southern Watch, and over Bosnia, and over Kosovo, and over Serbia, and we were delivering humanitarian supplies around the world, to Turkey, to Africa, to our own country, to Central and South America. Indeed our aircraft typically operate in 130 countries every single year.

So where are we today? Since 1997 General Mike Ryan, the Chief of Staff, and I have been taking steps to try and end the turmoil that came out of getting the peace dividend and implementing that dividend across the Air Force. So by some standards, Air Force readiness is lower today than at the end of the Cold War. But it is about the same as it was in the mid-1980s. For example in May, 1991, the aggregate aircraft mission capable rate was about 83%. That is, 83% on any given day were ready to perform their mission. Today that rate stands at 73%. But the same figure in 1985 was also about 73%. In 1995 the average age of

equipment was fairly high. What changed between 1985 and 1995 was the rapid build up of equipment, equipment that is requiring extensive maintenance and ultimately replacement.

I want to assure you that no one in DoD has been standing idly by while readiness is going down. We have been working hard to stabilize readiness. In the past three years, with the vibrant economy generating budget surpluses, under the leadership of Secretary Cohen the DoD budget has gone up by $20 billion a year. It is $112 billion over our planning period and more is on the way for our FYO2. These amounts are well above the budget levels subscribed by the balance budget acts which provided the fuel for this great economy. We are also making to the program added changes that are necessary to stabilize readiness. Let me give you some examples. In the Air Force we have doubled new pilot production from its level in the mid 1990s, getting back to producing 1,100 new pilots a year, just this year. We have also exceeded the active duty service commitment from those pilots from eight years to ten years and as a result, as time passes and as we go toward that ten year mark, these two changes alone will create a pilot force that meets all of our long term requirements.

We have also invested in the last eighteen months over $2 billion in additional inventory of spare parts. We have completely reorganized the way the Air Force supports the peacetime operations. In time, these steps will improve readiness. But this process is much more like turning a large ship, than maneuvering a fighter aircraft. It happens gradually and results take a long time to appear.

The good news is that we are beginning to see some of those results, even as I speak today. I mention the spare parts spending. Let me tell you what that has done for us. Spare parts back orders are down by 50% from what they were this time last year. The number of aircraft engines for which we do not have war readiness supply has dropped from 11 to 6. I mention the issue of risk. Of the six engines that don't meet the wartime requirements, most never have, most never will, because this is an area that our military commanders have decided to make some risks and not spend the money. During the last ten months, the mission capable rate for Air Force aircraft has increased and today stands 4% higher than it did just at the end of last year. So we are making progress.

It is worth noting too that even before the budget increases kicked in last year we were able to boost mission capable rates for aircrafts supporting the air operations over Siberia to 90%. That means that 9 out of every 10 aircraft will be ready to fly on any given day and some units, 100% of the aircrafts were ready to fly essentially everyday if we did flight operations. That level of readiness is not sustainable over the long term, it never has been. We are not budgeted to be sustainable at that level, but it is a level that shows where we can go when we surge for wartime which is of course is the basic plan America has had for many years. That is why we have had our reserve forces to give us surge capacity when we need to go to war.

Equally important, there are great people who fuel our Air Force and we are doing better both recruiting and retaining those great people. About a year ago much was made of the fact that the Air Force missed its recruiting goal for the first time in twenty years. We were used to making our recruiting goals and when we missed it, I will tell you, alarm bells went off big time. Interestingly, what was not mentioned in the press at that time was that we actually recruited more men and women in 1999 than in 1998. Of course, recruiting, even though we have been somewhat successful, remains a very tough business. We have a booming economy, increase of a percentage of young people going to college, and dot com

fortunes for every able body fifteen year old who has a computer. So not withstanding these obstacles, Air Force recruiting is back on track.

The pundits said we could not get there without lowering our requirements or lowering our quality and we have proved them wrong. After missing the mark last year, we actually raised our recruiting goal for the fiscal year 2000 and by early last month, only ten months into the fiscal year, we had made that goal. We have kept that target, we will make it again, I think for 2001. And we have done it without lowering our standards. As General Mike Ryan, our plain speaking Chief of Staff, said recently, "I would rather go short than stupid." As it turned out we didn't need to go short or stupid. Today over 99% of the recruits who raised their right hand and take the oath of enlistment in the Air Force are high school graduates, and fully 3/4 of them will have scored in the top half of the qualifying test.

If you want to be absolutely blown away, I suggest you go to Lackland Air Force Base on a Friday morning and attend the graduation for new airmen from our basic training school down there. I will tell you that you will not be able to find anywhere in the United States a more impressive group of young adults. So how do we confound the experts? Well this is the Air Force, but the confounding the experts was not rocket science.

Once we put more recruiters on the street, just as the police chief puts more police when it is necessary to stop a crime wave, we moved a lot of people out of our recruiting headquarters and put them on the street to do the line work. We found another 100 recruiters among them who had been recruiters at one time, who were doing other jobs. We sent them back and we delayed the departure of the recruiters who were going out to other jobs. So there is no surprise here; additional recruiters on the street, yielded additional recruits. Early last year we also had a brilliant flash of the obvious. We purchased television advertising during prime time for the first time ever. In the past all of our TV advertising had been done through public service announcements; those ads that come on after the late, late movies, just before the National Anthem. Now we suppose there is value in advertising at 4:00 a.m. but we also figured out there were probably more people watching television in prime time than at 4 in the morning. So in addition to buying television time, and for the first time and buying it smarter, we also are advertising in theaters because even those who are in our '50s have noticed that young kids tend to hang out in theaters and they are the kids we want to recruit. So just this last weekend we started advertising in theaters. We have a new set of ads going up on television.

I also think it is very important that we have spent over a year talking to America about what is attractive and what is not attractive about military service. And we have taken that knowledge and put it into our new recruiting ads in a way all of you will appreciate. Our new ads which started airing this weekend no longer appeal to would be recruits on the basis of what's in it for me. Instead they speak to our core values; the nobility of service, excellence, and integrity. I am pleased to say that despite what many would have you believe the message before service before self still resonates with our nation's young people, just as it did with each of you when you joined the service.

And just consider the results. In ten months we recruited more than 34,000 of America's best young people into the Air Force. And that is just active duty. Thousands more joined the Air Force Reserve, the Air National Guard, which are more important today than at any time perhaps in the history given the pace of international operations. Add to that the recruiting efforts of our sisters services and well over 200,000 members of a generation that has been characterized in the press as self-absorbed, or Generation X, have entered public service through the military just this year. I strongly suspect another 200,000 will do

it next year. We make the effort to tell the story about our military services and that we includes The American Legion who is helping across the nation in reaching out to America's youth. American young people respond positively. It should make us all very competent about the work we do in the community and very confident about the future of America.

Another important measure of readiness is our success in retaining our young men and women after their first and second tours are up. The Air Force indeed, more than the other services, is a retaining force. We spend a lot of money to train people and frankly we must retain them to have our added investment to pay off. On this score, much has been made recently of our pilot shortage. Right now we are nearly 1,200 pilots short of being fully manned. But let me put that in perspective. Everyone of our active flying units, everyone, is fully manned. We have intentionally taken hit of the pilot shortage in our staffs and to eliminate the impact of our staffs we have augmented their operations with Guard and Reserve volunteers and with recent retirees hired back as civilians under legislation the Air Force was given by Congress last year. This is not a perfect arrangement. But we were in this posture during Kosovo and as you saw on your television sets we were able to fight and win decisively in the skies over Serbia. So we think we are ready with this arrangement. Even we feel we will be ready with a full compliment over the next several years.

There is actually some other good news here. Last year President Clinton in Congress worked with us to change the structure of pilot bonuses. With that new authority we have 600 more pilots today than we projected we would have just a year ago. And indeed we are projecting the pilot shortage will end two years earlier than it would have just a year ago. Retention rates for our enlistment men are up, but remain stubbornly below desired levels. Our mid-level NCO and commissioned officers are the foundation of both our technical expertise and more importantly the leadership that makes the Air Force work. Our retention problem is most difficult in areas like computers and communications, where industry relentlessly recruits from our people, offering salaries often three and four times what we can offer. Therefore, we are doing everything we can to retain our people and to fight off all of you in the civilian economy who want to hire them.

First, with the help of the Legion and with the military coalition, the administration, and with Congress, we have increased pay and benefits and fixed the retirement system. Indeed with promotions and longevity raises, by next January some military members will see as many as five pay raises in 365 days. Not a bad record. Second, we have targeted a number of quality life issues, in particular medical care, housing, and food. And we are extremely pleased to see that the Legion again has resolved to call on our legislative partners to help us in all of these area. We are very proud of our record on some key quality of life issues. For instance, DoD quality of life spending is up nearly 25% in real terms, not inflated dollars, since 1990. Our DoD schools have been held up as a model for our nation to emulate, and our child development centers are also a model for our nation with 95% of our centers nationally accredited versus a national of just 8%. Obviously we still have work to do on many fronts.

Many of you, I know, are well familiar with the health care issues that apply to veterans, but there are health care issues in the active duty area as well. But we have gone to TRICARE, a managed care system which is critical to curtail the cost of medical care while providing good medical care. But we simply must make TRICARE less cumbersome for patients and more doctor friendly for providers so that more physicians join and stay with us. It is not just the right thing to do for a retention stand point, it is the right thing to do from a moral stand point.

How can we send our young men to deployments and say to their families, when it comes to medical care, fend for yourself? We just simply can't do that. That is just wrong. So we need to fix this. Likewise we need to find an affordable solution to the question of military retiree health care. This is going to be extremely hard, the department is working with Congress, but this is something that is simply got to work. It is too important to be allowed to continue in limbo. Furthermore we are absolutely committed to providing a compensation assistance package that enables every military family to have a healthy diet without resorting to food stamps. And again, we are making progress. Measured as a proportion of the force, in 1990, 1% of the force qualified for food stamps. That number today is ½ of 1 percent. Actually slightly less than ½ of 1 percent. Though we are proud of the progress we have made over the last ten years, we will not rest until we achieve the only acceptable level, which is no one on food stamps.

Third, after improving quality of life and pay we are bringing greater stability for the lives of the men and women who are America's Air Force. Everyone of us who has worn the uniform understands that he or she may be called away from home to remote lands to protect the United States and its interests. But in a force that is more married and family oriented than at any time in history, we simply have to find a better way to handle rotations during peace time and we think we have done it. When there is no war and if we can bring some practicably to the deployment process, then we must do that. To accomplish this, the Air Force worked hard over the last two years to develop the Expeditionary Aerospace Concept or EAF. EAF brings forth all of the combat support and service elements quickly provided to sustain in superiority in an area about half the size of Texas while striking at about 200 targets a day.

We call this force package, an Aerospace Expeditionary Force, AEF, and we have ten of them. These force practices are similar to a carrier battle group, or a Marine Expeditionary Force. Over time and indeed at any time, two of the ten units are ready to deploy. Airmen assigned to a Aerospace Expeditionary Force can be expect to be deployed or on the bubble to deploy for ninety days every fifteen months. And in the twelve months that they are home, they can expect to be near home training, preparing, or recovering, and most importantly spending that time with their families and preparing for their wartime missions. On top of that, under our new schedule, our airmen will know a year in advance when they must be available, and they can actually build a life around that schedule.

Not only does AEF bring greater stability to the lives of our airmen, they also give us greater flexibly to respond to contingency across the spectrum of conflict. They allow us to make greater use of our reserve forces and they allow us to train effectively for our wartime missions. To give you another example, the EAF, our flying squadrons, will actually be able to fly almost 100% of the program flying training hours this year, whereas last year we were in the lower 90% and that has been true the last several years because of the impact of the contingency operations on wartime training. We have now straightened that out and over time this means that we will have a force much more equipped for its major wartime missions.

So if you ask me if the Air Force and the other armed forces ready today, my answer is unequivocally yes. There are those that doubt that, but you won't find Saddam Hussein, or Sloban Milosevic among them. In the final analyze the best proof of readiness is what happens when we go from theoretical measures to war and we show that just last year in Kosovo. Let us look at what this force did, a force which supposedly is in decline.

For seventy-eight days, America's Air Force led a joint coalition force that brought Milosevic to heel and forced him to stop using his military forces to brutalize ethnic minorities within his own borders. Last year you and I watched on television as our NATO airmen flew more than 38,000 sorties and our training and precision weapons allowed historically low levels of collateral damage. In the process, we in the Air Force opened twenty-one bases where there had been no bases before, twenty-one wartime bases in a period of less than a month. We also flew combat missions for the first time directly from Missouri to downtown Belgrade. We also were able to get our spare parts to theater in 3.7 days, a world record. And finally, and perhaps most importantly we had no combat deaths and lost only two aircraft in combat. These are absolutely remarkable achievements. Nothing like this has been seen before or since the history of warfare. I think it shows just how ready America's Air Force and America's armed forces are to meet the missions we are likely to meet over the next decade.

As our new ads say, "No one comes close." But as good as we are, we can never take our readiness for granted. If the years of declining budgets have taught us anything, it is that readiness is fragile and once broken takes a long time to repair. Unfortunately, the ongoing readiness debate focuses entirely on comparing 1990 to the present and doesn't look forward to where we need to be in 2010 and 2020 and beyond. Although an important job for the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force is looking out to 2050 to make sure we have programs on the books that will leave a robust force fifty years from now as well as five days from now. We must return to the real questions.

What kind of defense does America want? What can we afford? What is an acceptable level of risk? I will tell you on these three questions there are no easy answers. As one analyst noted recently, the cost of military personnel has gone up in real terms by 1-1/2 to 2 % per year in recent years as we have devoted dollars to pay raises, retirement benefits, medical care, and quality of life initiatives. Given a robust economy, we will have to continue these increases if we are going to be competitive for the young men and women of America. Operations and maintenance funding, the fuel that actually makes our training programs go and pays our many civilians and contractors are already at a historic high and go up several percentage points per year on a per capita basis in real terms and that is going to continue as well.

In fact, one of the most important things we are doing is computerizing our forces so we can make use of the increased unmanned aircrafts and coming from our new manned aircrafts like Joint Stars. The cost of computerizing all of the services is high, but it is one that is absolutely essential if we are going to transform into a 21st and 22nd century military.

Many analysts also believe that the modernization funds are underfunded. My personal view is that is true, but the under-funding today is not the issue. It really is the under-funding of the next ten years and the next twenty years as all of our weapon systems begin to age out. One of the fundamental problems we have is that we have over 600 tankers, all of which will go out of service sometime between 2030 and 2040 and we have no replacement program. We have a bomber fleet with B-52s that will age out in 2037 at 80 years old and we have no good replacement program on the books. Indeed if you execute all of the modernization programs on the books today, the average age of our forces will go from 20-½ years today to 30 years in calendar year 2015. This is obviously not acceptable. We are going to need to put more money into modernization over the next decade.

Finally, the truth is that every readiness initiative I mentioned has a cost and those costs are growing. Everyone requires a trade off, every dollar we spend on recruiting is a dollar

not spent on modernization. Every dollar we spend on maintaining acceptable readiness levels in aging aircrafts is a dollar not spent on modernization. Every dollar we spend on increasing quality of life for our troops, dollars we morally obligated to spend, in my judgement, is a dollar not spent on modernization. And of course every dollar spent on defense is a dollar not spent on any critical and worthy domestic programs, debt reduction, and tax relief. Clearly, down the line something has to give. We need a national debate, we need to make choices. If we don't, we will have a difficult time over the next decade maintaining the current readiness.

So have only fairly stark choices. We may accept reduce readiness, we may adjust our military strategy, which calls for us to be prepared to fight two nearly simultaneous, major theater wars. We may reduce our global commitments but that is easier said than done, or finally we may choose to pay more for our defense. I think we have already started down the last of those courses and I would suggest to you the course that we ought to be on for the next decade. My hope is that the upcoming debate on the Quadrillion Defense Review, the national security study group, all of which will be working in the early administration, will focus on some of these issues. But in the end this is not a military decision. It is an American decision, one that deserves a serious discussion and one that should not get bogged down in the war of statistics comparing ten years ago with today. And it is important to understand that even though we may not get to that discussion, that if any decision not to discuss it, simply to make no decision, is in fact going to continue the status quo and going to do a disservice to our children because a decision to do nothing is in fact a decision our children will pay more money for less security. I am sure you in the audience appreciate a need to have an informed debate on national security and the future of our military.

I again want to thank you for this opportunity to discuss this important issue with you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I understand that there maybe some Departments that would like to make some contributions and donations after we hear from the Mayor of Milwaukee. I will be asking you to come forward so if you can assemble yourselves and get prepared, I would appreciate it.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award
Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Next is the presentation of the 1999 Fourth Estate Award. This award recognizes outstanding journalism creating a positive impact on a community or a state. This year the judges had a difficult time in coming to a decision. In the end they selected *Dateline NBC* for the hour long investigation for finding a critical weakness in our justice system. The program was entitled, "Body of Evidence". Here to accept the award for *Dateline NBC* is Kathy Singer.

The award reads: The American Legion 1999 Fourth Estate Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Journalism. Presented to *Dateline NBC*, "Body of Evidence". Presented at the 82nd National Convention, September 7, 2000, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This time delegates and guests I present Miss Kathy Singer.

KATHY SINGER: *Dateline NBC* is honored to be the recipient of The American Legion's Fourth Estate Award. This distinguished award recognizes reporting on national issues and have a positive outcome on the community. Exactly what did *Dateline* set out and hoped to achieve with our program, "Body of Evidence?" Our report examined what we found to be a critical weakness in our justice system, the reliability of forensic evidence in

our nation's crime labs. *Dateline* found a disturbing number of crime labs across the United States that were in crisis, overworked, underpaid, underfunded, and unregulated.

Our report examined the consequences of shoddy work at one Texas lab which sent a Texas grandmother to prison for life for an arson she apparently did not commit. Another man was in prison for rape and another on death row. The grandmother was released, but others are still in jail. Much remains to be done to protect the basic Constitutional rights of victims of negligent work in crime labs. Your recognition is another step forward toward that goal. Thank you again on behalf of the people at *Dateline* who worked on this program.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: After a great Convention week in Milwaukee I believe our next guest deserves a warm welcome, for the welcome his city has extended to The American Legion. From the Army Reserves of the 1970s to the top elected official in Milwaukee, this man has set an example of leadership and service. He has chaired the national league of the city's task force on federal policy and family poverty. For more than twelve years now he has led our host city of Milwaukee as his mayor. Please join me in welcoming the Honorable John O. Norquist, Mayor of Milwaukee.

Address: Honorable John O. Norquist
Mayor of the City of Milwaukee

It is a great honor and a privilege to be able to welcome you here today. I am proud to have served in the United States Army Reserve from 1971 to 1977. I am also proud to be a member of The American Legion and I am especially proud to be able to welcome you here today. I am also even more proud of my father, who served in World War II and like many of you was draft-induced into joining the military. He thought the draft was coming back in 1941 so he joined the Army, thinking he would get a little better deal by joining rather than by waiting to be drafted. He was assigned to the exotic tropical island of Luzon in the Philippines and was there for a few months. Then all of a sudden, on December 8, 1941, they were in combat and on May 1st he had the horrible experience of watching our flag taken down and replaced with the Japanese flag. He spent the next three and a half years as a prisoner of war.

My father is 80 years old and is still alive and well. And he is very proud to be a veteran. He became a Presbyterian minister and the one thing he always insisted on for his six kids in his family was that we understand American history and love America. I want to thank The American Legion for all that it does to build the understanding that Americans should have about the importance of this country, the importance that this country has had, not just for freedom in the United States, but for freedom in the whole world. Also to understand the role that this organization plays in honor and tribute to veterans, making sure that they get the services they need.

When I was in the 452nd General Hospital Unit in Milwaukee, I had the honor and privilege in working at the Veterans Hospital here in Milwaukee. In doing that, I was able to talk to veterans as I was ministering to them one weekend a month. They were veterans of Vietnam, of Korea, of World War II, and even a veteran of Bella Wood in World War I. I wish I had a tape recorder with me with the gentleman who I was able to talk with for six months, every weekend. The horror and yet the glory of the American victory at Bella Wood in World War I.

It is important for you tell the war stories among yourselves, but it is also important for you to share those experiences you had with your children and your grandchildren and in

some cases your great grandchildren, so that they understand the price you had to pay to maintain the freedom that we enjoy. It is important for people to understand that democracy isn't just some accident that happens. Democracy is something that happens because of your efforts and the efforts of other people like you. Also thank you for your efforts with Boys and Girls State Government Camps, with the educational scholarship programs, public speaking contests, and the sports leagues.

When I was a kid, I played in an American Legion ball team. I had a great fast ball. But I had a friend who taught me how to throw the screwball. That is, where you twist your arm backwards. So at the age of 14, I went from being a great pitcher to being someone who never made it in the major leagues. I might have made it otherwise.

I also want to thank you for coming to Milwaukee. I hope you enjoy yourselves here. There are a couple of places I want to recommend. First, of all you should go look at the lake while you are here. In case you haven't noticed we are right next to Lake Michigan. It is very beautiful. Our lakefront is very beautiful. There is also a place that is owned by a veteran, on 5th and Garfield. If you go there he will probably give you free beer if you tell him I sent you, if he is in right mood. Any cab driver can get you there. It is the best rhythm 'n' blues place this side of Memphis. There is an orchestra called The John Snyder and His Orchestra. And John is known for being able to sing like Fred Astaire and dance like Bing Crosby. He puts the whole package together. So if you end up at one of the clubs where he is, I think you will enjoy it.

Anyway, have a great time and thank you so much for serving this wonderful country, the United States of America.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Mr. Mayor, please advise your father that The American Legion has donated approximately $4 million toward recognition of World War II veterans for World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. On behalf of The American Legion, I present you with this coin in recognition for outstanding performance, bonded through service, committed to excellence. I thank you and the City of Milwaukee, you have earned it. We understand that you have had several conventions here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The American Legion loves Milwaukee and the treatment we have received.

Now the Chair recognizes anyone who has donations for the National Emergency Relief Fund, the World War II Memorial, or to Past National Commanders Retirement Account, or whatever you might want to give!

Chair recognizes delegation chairman, Rick Hanni, from Idaho.

RICK HANNI: On behalf of the Department of Idaho, we collected a little more money here in Milwaukee. We have $150 for the National Children & Youth Foundation and $383.25 for the National Emergency Fund.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Chair recognizes the Department of Arizona.

AL DUNAWAY: I am Al Dunaway, Finance Officer, Post 42, Grand Canyon, Department of Arizona. We have $1,000 for the National Emergency Fund.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Chair recognizes my friend Tiny from the Department of Nevada.

TINY: Yes, we have a golf tournament of the following Departments: Idaho, Nevada, Montana each year. We have had it for over 14 years. This is a tri-state deal. We call it fun days. And this year we have a check presented by the NECman from Montana.

I have two things to present. I have a check for $675 from the auction of our Calcutta Team. Since it is going to be in Idaho next year, I think that the National Commander ought to start making plans to attend.

In defense of the National Commander, he has attended several of these golf tournaments. This year it will be on 10th, 11th, and 12th, in Rigby, Idaho. And every Legionnaire, Auxiliary, Junior Auxiliary, and SAL members are invited to come. We want to see you there.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Chair recognizes Bill Bishop, of the Department of Alaska, Chairman of our National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations for purposes of making his report.

Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
William M. Bishop, Alaska, Chairman

At 8:30 A.M., Sunday, September 3, 2000, 48 Delegates and Alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in Room 103-C, 1st Level of the Milwaukee Midwest Express Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mr. William M. Bishop (AK) was elected Chairman and Mr. Ernie Sohns (DC) was appointed Secretary.

Following this initial meeting, four Ad Hoc Administrative Convention Subcommittees met in separate locations to consider the resolutions that had been assigned to them. The following were appointed Chairmen:

General Foreign Policy	Chairman Robert Bowen, Virginia
European Affairs	Chairman Vinton R. Guy, Colorado
Far Eastern Affairs	Chairman Melvin M. 'Doc' Simon, Vermont
Inter-American Affairs	Chairman Francis 'Arch' Ethun, Texas

At 11:30 a.m. Sunday, September 3, 2000, 48 Delegates met in Midwest Express Center, Room 103-C, 1st Level, for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations. 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. Reports of all Convention Ad Hoc Administrative Subcommittees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 26 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations and 4 resolutions were originated by the Committee.

The Ad Hoc Subcommittee reports contain resolutions, which will, in conjunction with resolutions previously adopted, provide an effective and viable Foreign Relations program of The American Legion. That program will fully support a strong and dynamic U.S. foreign policy to promote democracy around the world and discharge America's responsibility as leader of the free world in the continuing struggle to defend and promote liberty.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on
General Foreign Policy
Robert Bowen, Virginia, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions

Approved

Resolution No. 74: Policy on Cuba
Origin: Mexico
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(As Amended)

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 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 American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to maintain control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continue intelligence over flights 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; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports efforts by the United States government to establish a bipartisan commission to study our relationship with Cuba and make recommendations if our policies should be altered in any way to further the goal of bringing democracy to Cuba.

Resolution No. 87: Priority POW/MIA Actions
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(Consolidated with Res. Nos.: 80 (CO), 214 (CA) and 276 (IL))

WHEREAS, Many Americans are reported as missing in action or otherwise unaccounted for in the area of Korea, Southeast Asia and elsewhere; 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. 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 better than average probability 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 and the Cold War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes the following priority actions should be taken by the U.S. Government:

- Continue to provide sufficient personnel and resources so that investigative efforts of World War II, Cold War, and Korean War POW/MIA situations can be broadened and accelerated.
- Continue to provide necessary resources so field operations can be conducted at a maximum rate of activity with more timely follow-up of live sighting reports.
- Continue to declassify all POW/MIA information (except that revealing intelligence sources or methods) in a form readily available to public review.
- Initiate or strengthen joint commissions with Russia, the People's Republic of China, and North Korea to increase POW/MIA recovery efforts.
- Establish a joint standing congressional committee on POW/MIA affairs to ensure continued action by the executive branch in addressing the POW/MIA issue.
- Take further favorable actions toward Vietnam only after Hanoi provides the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia it controlled during the Vietnam War.
- Take favorable actions toward Laos or Cambodia only after those nations provide the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs.
- "Fullest possible accounting" is defined as turning over live prisoners, repatriating remains of those who were killed in action or died in captivity, or providing a valid, conclusive report on why neither is possible.

Resolution No. 88: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion believes that the objectives of U.S. foreign policy must be to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That U.S. foreign policy should embody the following principles:

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. Active promotion of democracy.
4. Support for 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. Use of national resources in critical world regions to achieve U.S. national interests.
7. Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve U.S. national security.
8. Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles to terrorist, communist or aggressor nations.
9. Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking.
10. Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with U.S. sovereignty and serve U.S. national interests.
11. Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices.
12. Recognition that the world basically operates on a national basis; consequently, U.S. sovereignty must not be abridged unless required by important U.S. national security interests.
13. 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.
14. Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests world-wide.

Resolution No. 89: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 the desired ends by such means as withdrawal from ineffective UN agencies and withholding of funds:

- Ratify expeditiously the "UN Convention on the Protection of Peacekeepers" and encourage all other nations to do the same.
- Encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner.
- Encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs.
- Adopt weighted voting procedures in the General Assembly, allotting voting power in relation to funds contributed by each member nation to the United Nations.
- 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. 90: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion call 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 Presidential 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. 91: Vietnam POW/MIA Policy
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(Consolidated with Res. No. 200 (OH))

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 President has lifted the trade embargo and normalized relations with Vietnam, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Administration to follow-up at the policy level 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.

Resolution No. 92: World War II, Cold War and Korean War POW/MIAs
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Over 78,000 Americans from World War II and several hundred from the Cold War remain unaccounted for; and

WHEREAS, Over 8,000 Americans remain unaccounted for after the Korea War (389 were classified as POWs at one time) and very little progress has been made by the U.S. Government in getting the North Koreans to cooperate fully in resolving their fates; and

WHEREAS, It is a prime responsibility of the U.S. Government to exert every effort after each war to obtain the release of all American POWs held by foreign powers; and

WHEREAS, Revelations by President Yeltsin and other evidence reveals that American POWs may still be held in the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, The U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs was established to investigate the POW/MIA issue in Russia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion strongly urges the U.S. Government to make a maximum effort to resolve the fate of unaccounted Americans from World War II, the Cold War, and the Korean War by obtaining the return of any live prisoners, the repatriation of remains and the fullest possible accounting for the missing.

Resolution No. 290: Embargo with Cuba
Origin: New York
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The United States immediately resumed political and economic relations with Germany and Japan after World War II and guided their governments in their national destiny that identify them today as major powers in the world arena; and

WHEREAS, The Soviet Union, a former ally in World War II, was engaged in a cold war with the United States that threatened the very existence and possible extinction of both powers together with their atomic arsenals; and

WHEREAS, The dissolution of the USSR and the weakened posture of its Communist Party, the United States has responded with mass amounts of US aid; and

WHEREAS, American trade with Cuba has the latest approval of the American Congress; and

WHEREAS, American farmers, represented by the U.S. Wheat Associates, are frustrated by the U.S. ban on exports to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, Cuba purchases 1 million tons of wheat from the European Union, Canada and Argentina, profits that might and should find their way to the coffers of the American farmer; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress has permitted the sale of medicines to Cuba as a humanitarian gesture; and

WHEREAS, Removal of the economic ban on Cuba is in the national interest of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge the United States Congress to lift its economic embargo on the Cuban nation and take the necessary political and diplomatic steps for the re-entry of the Republic of Cuba into free trade with the United States and other countries of the world restoring the good trade relations with Cuba, if the Cuban government takes positive action towards a more open and free society.

Resolution No. 319: America's Future
Origin: Foreign Relations
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The major international goals long sought by The American Legion—democracy and deterrence of general war—are closer to realization than ever before; and

WHEREAS, Far-reaching worldwide changes now occurring are altering Americans' perception of the threats to their security and making it imperative for the United States to

adjust its grand strategy in light of new realities and future challenges as we prepare for the new millennium; and

WHEREAS, Ideas of democracy and market economics are gaining increasing acceptance around the world, thereby creating new hopes of peace and prosperity for mankind; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear and regional military threats still confront the Free World and transnational issues such as terrorism and drugs still confront civilization; and

WHEREAS, The collapse of the Soviet-style command economies, demands for democracy in Eastern Europe, ethnic warfare, economic difficulties in Asia, movement toward European unity, and growing international interdependence jointly create a new political and economic situation in the world; and

WHEREAS, As Americans search for a new definition of America's world role, they must forge a bipartisan consensus providing focus, continuity, and wise use of limited national resources for national security-foreign policy purposes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion, as a grassroots organization reaching throughout the land, recognizes the unprecedented changes throughout the world and urges the U.S. government to adopt a bipartisan national security-foreign policy of "Democratic Activism" promoting democratic values, maintaining adequate military strength to deter or defeat aggression, cooperating with allies, encouraging free and fair trade, and assisting developing nations.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Foreign Relations

Resolution No. 228: Flying the POW/MIA Flag
Origin: Minnesota

Received & Recorded

Resolution No. 93: Flying the POW/MIA Flag
Origin: Maryland

Rejected

Resolution No. 182: Oppose the United Nation's Charter for Global Democracy
Origin: California
Resolution No. 184: Reinvestigation of National Security Council (NSC) 68
Origin: California
Resolution No. 229: Opposition to United Nations Control
Origin: Minnesota

European Affairs
Vinton R. Guy, Colorado, Chairman
Approved

Resolution No. 316: Policy on Balkan Deployments
Origin: Foreign Relations

Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991-1992, ethnic warfare has raged as various groups try to control more territory, suppress opposing groups, and settle old scores; and

WHEREAS, History has shown that foreign nations intervening in this region have been unsuccessful in imposing lasting political solutions and that the indigenous people, aided by extremely difficult terrain, have the capacity to wage relentless, costly guerilla warfare against any intervening power; and

WHEREAS, The United States military has been deployed, in some fashion, in the Balkans since December 1995 and hostilities continue with no long-lasting resolution in sight; and

WHEREAS, These deployments to Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania have expended precious military resources of which less are available due to the 10 year Department of Defense budget decline; and

WHEREAS, Recent deployments to the region have utilized large numbers of Reserve and National Guard forces, making them unavailable to local authorities during emergencies and degrading their readiness; and

WHEREAS, An upcoming report to be produced by the Army expanding the role of Army National Guard Divisions will probably increase these units role in Balkan deployments; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Administration to withdraw U.S. military forces deployed in the Balkans as soon as possible and encourage our European Allies to shoulder more of the burden for providing security and economic rehabilitation to the region; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion affirms our unwavering admiration of and support for our American men and women serving in uniform throughout the world and commit our efforts to provide sufficient national assets to them.

Far Eastern Affairs
Melvin M. 'Doc' Simon, Vermont, Chairman
Approved

Resolution No. 2: Relations with the Republic of China
Origin: Alaska
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

Whereas, Under the provision of the Taiwan Relations Act (U.S. Public Law 96-8), the United States has undertaken an obligation to provide defense equipment and defense services to enable the Government of the Republic of China to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Communist regime is a major threat to the nations of the Far East and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity and stability of the Pacific Rim; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports and

encourages the continued sales of sophisticated American weapons systems to the Republic of China, so that it can maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Resolution No. 3: Peace and Democracy in Taiwan
Origin: Alaska
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long-time friend, ally, and the 7th largest trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Republic of China during World War II, closely cooperated with the United States against Japanese Imperialism; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity and stability of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, The Presidential election recently held in the Republic of China demonstrates a commitment to the democratic process and an example to the Chinese mainland and other nations of the Pacific area; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interests of all parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resolve political differences peacefully; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports and encourages the democratic process in Taiwan and urges the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to promote peaceful dialogue to avoid actions which could lead to military conflict.

Resolution No. 317: Trade with the People's Republic of China
Origin: Foreign Relations
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

Whereas, The People's Republic of China seeks to become a member of the World Trade Organization and establish Permanent normal Trade Relations with the United States; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China has been heavily involved in espionage activities that have obtained top secret information about the United States' nuclear weapons programs; and

WHEREAS, Agents of the government of the People's Republic of China have been indited on campaign finance abuses in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China's territorial claims and fortification of the Spratley Islands has threatened stability in East Asia; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China has conducted a brutal campaign of repression against the members of the Falun Gong religious sect, intimidating and imprisoning its members denying them freedom of religion; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China had de-facto control over North Korea during the Korean War, and prisoner of war camps in North Korea were under Chinese control, and thus far the government of the People's Republic of China has not been cooperative with efforts to learn the fate of U.S. POWs and MIAs who became prisoners or missing while under their control; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China continues to escalate their rhetoric and inflammatory statements against the Republic of China (Taiwan), while the Republic of

China has been a strategic partner with the United States in regards to regional Asian security and economic activities; and

WHEREAS, Recent purchase and fielding of modern weapon systems by the People's Liberation Army has increased tensions in the Taiwan Straits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion feels that in light of all these injurious activities by the government of the People's Republic of China, it would be inappropriate to offer favorable trade conditions to the People's Republic of China; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion does not support the United States government maintaining Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the People's Republic of China and we do not support the People's Republic of China entry into the World Trade Organization unless and until the PRC:

- Fully cooperates with efforts to account for missing U.S. servicemembers from the Korean and Cold Wars;
- Retracts from their hostile positions towards the Republic of China (Taiwan) and recognizes the R.O.C.'s right to self-determination;
- Refrains from maintaining policies that would make the PRC the dominant military power in Asia;
- Encourages human right and promotes religious freedom among its own people.

Resolution No. 318: Policy on Support to the Republic of Korea
Origin: Foreign Relations
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 on 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, The government of the Republic of Korea embraces a forward-looking engagement policy toward North Korea based on three principles: 1) deterrence of any armed provocation, 2) denial of unification by absorption and 3) promotion of reconciliation and cooperation. As a result, the first historic Summit Talks were held in Pyong Yang through 13-15 June 2000 between the Presidents of the Republic of Korean and North Korea. On 15 August, moreover, South and North Korea exchanged each 100 separated family members for reunions with relatives in accordance with the South-North joint declaration which was proclaimed in inter-Korean cooperation and reconciliation on 15 June by the leaders of two Koreas; and

WHEREAS, Despite recent positive development in inter-Korean relations, the Koreans are still in a state of military confrontation and a peace mechanism has yet to be established; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Korea President Kim Dae-Jung has emphasized the importance of the role of the U.S. Forces in Korea not only present, but also after the reunification of Korea; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the government of the United States support the South-North Joint Declaration or cooperation and reconciliation between two Koreas with the thought that positive support is important

to the reduction of tensions in the Korean Peninsula as well as North-East Asia; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the U.S. and the Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korean government to resolve the issue of Korean War POW/MIAs.

Inter-American Affairs
Francis 'Arch' Ethun, Texas, Chairman
Approved

Resolution No. 70: Panama Canal
Origin: Mexico
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(As Amended and Consolidated with Res. No. 196 (OH))

WHEREAS, American ingenuity and funds coupled with hard work by thousands of Panamanians and citizens of the Caribbean Islands built the Panama Canal; and

WHEREAS, The Panama Canal is, and will remain, a vital seaway for U.S. commerce and naval operations; and

WHEREAS, The Panama Canal Treaties, signed on September 7, 1977 by the United States and Panama, provide for a gradual transition of the Panama Canal to Panamanian control in 2000 and permanent neutrality of the Canal with the United States retaining freedom of action to maintain the Canal's neutrality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion believes:

1. The United States should take any necessary actions to ensure that the Panama Canal is operated efficiently and in a manner consistent with U.S. national security interests.
2. Construction of a new canal or major improvements in the existing Panama Canal should be consistent with U.S. national security interests.
3. The United States should seek agreement with Panama to continue stationing U.S. forces in Panama after the year 2000 to protect the Panama Canal as well as evolving democratic nations in the region.
4. The United States should encourage democratic evolution in Panama to help provide stability and a better, freer life for Panamanians.
5. The U.S. Congress should conduct timely and comprehensive hearings on insuring U.S. interest in that vital area.

Resolution No. 71: Policy on Central America
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 American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the U.S. government to continue economic aid to friendly, 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. 72: War on Drugs in Latin America
Origin: Mexico
Submitted By: Foreign Relations
(As Amended)

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 American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the U.S. government Executive Branch to continue 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 further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Congress to provide adequate funds to support this program.

Resolution No. 73: Policy on Mexico
Origin: Mexico
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The United States and Mexico are historic neighbors with a common heritage and thousands of miles of common boundary; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress and the Executive Branch have entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico; and

WHEREAS, College scholarships and educational exchanges go a long way in breaking international barriers and promoting good will and understanding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the U.S.

Government to increase its emphasis on Mexican-U.S. cooperative endeavors on all fronts to enhance the prosperity and security of both nations as well as that of the Western Hemisphere; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to provide a greatly expanded number of scholarships to Mexicans, particularly those lacking funds to attend undergraduate and appropriate vocational-technical programs, provided said students promise to return to Mexico after completing their education; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends that a student exchange program between Mexico and the United States be conducted to acquaint the future leaders of both countries with their neighbors.

Resolution No. 76: Enterprise for the America's Initiative
Origin: Mexico
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, On June 27, 1990, the U.S. Government announced a proposed new approach to increase economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean called the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI); and

WHEREAS, The EAI seeks to establish a free trade zone in the Western Hemisphere, increase foreign investment throughout the area, and cancel $12 billion in debts owed to the U.S. Government by Latin American nations that enact free market reforms; and

WHEREAS, The EAI represents a new approach toward stimulating regional prosperity by relying on economic reform and investment rather than monetary aid to accomplish its goals; and

WHEREAS, Some initial steps in the EAI have been accomplished, but much more remains to be done on this long-term program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports participation by the United States in Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, seeking to enhance growth and cooperation throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (except Cuba).

Rejected

Resolution No. 189: Panama Canal
Origin: California
Submitted By: Foreign Relations

Mr. Commander, this concludes the report of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations. As a delegate from the Department of Alaska, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The report is adopted.

Bill, thank you all for a great job for a variety of complex resolutions. Let me amplify on a couple of issues.

You heard our resolution relative to permanent normal trade relations with the People's Republic of China. In July that went shooting through the House of Representatives with bi-partisan support. Basically this recognized the People's Republic of China for purposes

of trading and providing to them, and for them, favorable trade relations and that status. Heretofore, it has been an annual review to find out what the human rights situation is in China. But now there is a move afoot to open that Chinese market, supported by members of both political parties back in Washington. That was due to shoot through the Senate. Our very confident staff with many of our allies back in Washington, D.C., slowed it down enough so that it would be taken up in the next few days and not during the month of August or prior to the August recess. My sources tell me that it probably is going to pass in the United States Senate by about 76 votes to 23 or 24 negatives.

Senator Fred Thompson of the State of Tennessee has an amendment to that which would call upon annual certification by the President of the United States, that Communist China is not engaging in nuclear proliferation. The American Legion would like to see an addition to that amendment calling for China's cooperation with the POW/MIA question. Some folks back in Washington forget it was the Communist Chinese who ran the prison camps in the Korean War. We still have 8,167 Americans unaccounted for from that war. So would like to have an annual certification by the President of the United States that the Communist Chinese are cooperating fully in terms of resolving some of those cases. When you get back home, please call your United States Senator and ask them to support that concept and Senator Fred Thompson's amendment.

In addition, you heard the report and the resolution dealing with Cuba. The United States has maintained an embargo on trade with Cuba since October of 1960. The embargo has basically hurt the people in the country of Cuba and has made a martyr of Fidel Castro. Our resolution says if we are going to forgive Vietnam and trade with them, why shouldn't we do the same with the people of Cuba? That is assuming their leadership opens it up to democratic principles and a little more freedom down there. That is what that resolution is all about and let me thank the Department of New York and specifically Dick Pedro for ram-rodding that one. But back in Washington they need to think if we are treating Cuba differently than China, why is that? And the answer is there are a lot more folks in Communist China than there is in Cuba. And that is no way to run a railroad.

The Chair recognizes for purpose of a report Alan Titus, Department of Indiana, Chairman of our National Convention Committee on National Security for his report.

Report: Convention Committee on National Security Committee
Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 4, 2000, 239 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in Ballroom A of the Midwest Express Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and his Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the delegates and 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. Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) was elected Chairman and Mr. George Harvey (Michigan) was appointed Secretary.

The six authorized Convention Committees (Aerospace, Defense Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, and Naval Affairs) 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
Alexander MacInnes, Secretary, New York
Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke, Chairman, South Dakota
Robert P. McCreery, Secretary, Wyoming
Aerospace
Robert C. Gabrielson, Chairman, South Dakota
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
Clyde Siler, Secretary, Virginia
Merchant Marine
Charles Moreland, Chairman, Florida
Charles Powell, Jr., Secretary, Virginia
Military Affairs
Norman C. Schlemmer, Chairman, Indiana
Stanley D. Nelson, Secretary, Alaska
Naval Affairs
Gerard W. Cheffer, Chairman, Ohio
Daniel Burkhardt, Secretary, Maryland

On Sunday afternoon, September 4, 2000, the delegates again assembled in Ballroom A in the Midwest Express Center for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Security. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 78 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Security or prepared by the Committee to meet problems which were held to be of concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives.

General Security Ad Hoc Committee
Joyce Brown-Cooper, New Jersey, Chairman

Recommended Actions on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 53: National Missile Defense System
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union placed a cap on deploying missile defense systems and limited more advanced research on such defensive systems; and

WHEREAS, Despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia appears to be continuing the modernization of strategic missile systems; and

WHEREAS, Since one of the signatories, the Soviet Union, no longer exists, there is doubt as to whether the treaty is still legally in effect; and

WHEREAS, For many years, The American Legion has been on record in support of a broad interpretation of the treaty to permit maximum research to develop essential missile defenses; 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 for the continental United States has become more urgent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to renegotiate, modify or abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and to develop and deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people.

Resolution No. 97: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 finally

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. 101: Theater Missile Defense Systems
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, The strategic defense of the United States against an intercontinental ballistic missile or conventional hostile attack is based upon a strategy of deterrence using the nuclear triad made up of submarine launched ballistic missiles, land-based intercontinental range ballistic missiles and strategic bomber carried and launched missiles and gravity bomb weapons; and

WHEREAS, The current threat to the continental U.S. from ballistic missiles appears low but growing, and foreign-based American service personnel, their dependents, U.S. security interests overseas and those of our allies are critically vulnerable to short and medium range ballistic missile delivery systems launched from third-world countries and equipped with weapons of mass destruction that include nuclear, chemical and biological warheads; and

WHEREAS, A number of rogue nations now have the capability to manufacture, assemble, use and sell ballistic missiles or their technology thus allowing Third World nations to hold neighboring countries or regions hostage and subject to political-military blackmail; and

WHEREAS, The means to acquire such ballistic missile technology and warhead weapons systems are becoming progressively easier since missile and weapon non-proliferation treaties are increasingly difficult to monitor and enforce, and since these nations are becoming less intimidated and deterred by conventional military power and mobility; and

WHEREAS, The most practical missile defensive system is a theater missile defense and interceptor system positioned on friendly or allied territory near or adjacent to known potentially hostile third world nations and equipped with the ability to neutralize a ballistic missile and its payload while in its boost or mid-course phase so that the aggressors missile can be destroyed while it is still over his territory; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Congress to fund and deploy theater missile defense in high threat theaters of operation to serve as a deterrent to those countries who now possess and are likely to use ballistic missiles on their regional neighbors; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that U.S. arms control negotiating strategy preserve the options for a ground, sea or space-based theater missile defense command, control, communications and intelligence system that could be deployed and used in defense of the continental U.S. as its top priority, or in an overseas high threat theater of operations in which the U.S. has a crucial national security interest to, if necessary, neutralize ballistic missile threat launches equipped with weapons of mass destruction.

Resolution No. 102: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 103: Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Past Defense Budgets have included limited funding for technological research and development but limited production, and it is too late when a conflict develops to determine whether we have the capabilities to produce the requisite technologies for the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Military procurement has fallen more than 70 percent between FY 1985 and FY 2000; and

WHEREAS, The United States is currently the world's leader in the development of new technology but must ensure that it does not become vulnerable to a disruption in material vital to our national security, and that its industrial base can surge when required; and

WHEREAS, This country owes it to the American fighting man that whenever he is put in harm's way that he be equipped and armed with state-of-the-art technology if we expect him to win on the modern battlefield, on and under the sea, and in the air; and

WHEREAS, Much of our defense industrial base, to include weapons production and the ship-building industry has rapidly eroded as evidenced by plant closures and large-scale layoffs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to rebuild America's defense industrial base by continuing

to fund research, development and acquisition budgets so as to retain our technological edge in the 21st century and to assure our military production can surge whenever U.S. military power is committed.

Resolution No. 104: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 110: 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 servicemembers' 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, Although the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 directs the sale of an excess 49 acre parcel of land from the USSAH to the Washington Archdiocese without competitive bids, the AFRH Board has subsequently proposed a long-term lease arrangement of this land to the Archdiocese; 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 servicemembers 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 111: 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 (ABMC), 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. 112: Proposals to Ensure a Strong National Defense
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolutions No. 65 (SD), 185 (CT), 197 (OH), 210 (PA), and 275 (UT))

WHEREAS, With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States on the eve of the 21st Century faces a myriad of worldwide diverse and difficult threats and challenges to include serious 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 remain 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 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 would increasingly respond to worldwide regional and ethnic disputes, while 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 G.I. Bill and reducing the operations tempo.
- Defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product needs to be increased from the current 2.9 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 Quadrennial Defense Review, the national military strategy, should be amended so as to provide the forces and the defense budgets necessary to fight two nearly simultaneously major regional conflicts. Most importantly, 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 finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls 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. 114: Military Recruiters in High Schools
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(As Amended)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 66 (OR))

WHEREAS, High schools have always been an excellent source for military recruiting particularly when, during this period of the strongest economy in 40 years and the lowest unemployment rate since the establishment of the all-volunteer armed forces, recruitment has been especially challenging; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, there were more than 600 schools that denied access to recruiters from three out of four branches of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, The denial of access for armed forces recruiters to students or to directory information ultimately undermines our national defense by making it more difficult for the military to recruit young Americans in the quantity and quality necessary for maintaining the readiness of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, High schools that deny access to military recruiters also prevent students from receiving information about education and training incentives offered by the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported the provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996 which denied federal grants and contracts to those universities and colleges which did not permit military recruiters or ROTC programs on their campuses, and such a law has produced highly successful results; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the NEC in May 2000; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports federal legislation which would encourage high schools to allow access to military recruiters.

Resolution No. 123: National Security Principles
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 219 (ND))

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, The current National Security Strategy calls for the Armed Forces to be capable of fighting and winning two major regional conflicts on the order of the Persian Gulf War and Korean War nearly simultaneously, while also conducting peace operations with a reduced endstrength of 1.37 million and active military force structures composed of 10 Army Divisions, 11 active Navy aircraft carriers and one Reserve carrier, and 13 Air Force fighter wing equivalents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 maintained at an absolute minimum of 1.6 million for the foreseeable future. Twelve full-strength Army Divisions, 12 deployable 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 deployable and maintained at high readiness levels in order to accomplish their 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. 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 to recruit and retain a quality and fully-manned force which is professionally led.

Resolution No. 125: 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 health care professionals who will ensure readiness, retention, force health protection, the medical response to natural and man-made disasters, and medical support to 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 Public Health Service 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 addition to the traditional medical school curriculum, the USUHS educational programs (fully accredited for the maximum allowable period by both the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, a joint activity of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association) include between 784 and 889 hours of initial military education and medical readiness training compared to that provided to the Health Professions Scholarship graduates whose training ranges from 50 to 132 hours, depending upon the Service. The USUHS training includes combat casualty care, trauma, tropical medicine and hygiene, parasitology, combat stress, and the medical response to weapons of mass destruction, courses not found at any other medical school in the nation; USUHS graduates are uniquely trained and ready to deploy with a multi-Service force; and

WHEREAS, In return for their education, USUHS School of Medicine (SOM) graduates must fulfill a service obligation of at least seven years while the service obligation of scholarship graduates is a year of obligated service per year of education, normally on the order of four years; due to their excellent retention rates, the USUHS SOM graduates currently represent 20 percent of all active duty physicians in the Armed Forces; of the first six classes of SOM graduates, 42 percent hold senior operational or leadership positions; and

WHEREAS, Since the first USUHS graduation in 1980, USUHS has graduated 2,952 uniformed medical officers who represent over 20 percent of all active duty physicians in the Army, Navy, and Air Force; in addition, the School of Medicine has conferred 616 Basic Science Degrees to include 335 Masters of Public Health, 25 Masters of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 52 Masters of Science, 2 Masters of Military Medical History, 3 Doctors of Public Health, and 199 Doctors of Philosophy; the Graduate School of Nursing has conferred 133 Master of Science in Nursing Degrees; 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; also 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, The Congress of the United States has strongly endorsed the continuation of USUHS annually through legislative direction since 1993 and has increased the budget of the University during each Fiscal Year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the American Legion urges the Congress to continue its determination to retain and expand the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and 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.

Resolution No. 187: Security of Nuclear Weapons Technology
Origin: Connecticut
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Our nation's nuclear weapons programs have been damaged by security breaches and espionage due to inadequate security measures at our nuclear laboratories; and

WHEREAS, China has been implicated as playing a major role in obtaining this technology and transferring this technology to enemies of our nation; and

WHEREAS, The condition of the security of these systems needs to be upgraded and maintained to the highest level of national security protection; and

WHEREAS, On May 7, 2000, missing hard drives failed to be reported indicating that the security program in place is inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion support transferring the security of the United States nuclear weapons technology and systems from the Department of Energy to the Department of Defense and that this transfer be adequately funded by Congress.

Referred To the Standing Commission on National Security:

Resolution No. 159: Recognize Outstanding JROTC Cadet of the Year Programs
Origin: Louisiana

Rejected

Resolution No. 4: Return of U.S. Forces from Overseas Areas
Origin: Alaska

Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke, South Dakota, Chairman

Recommended Actions on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 266: Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste
Origin: Utah
Submitted By: National Security

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 finally

RESOLVED, That the local government directly affected by interim storage and/or permanent disposal should be involved in planning and providing appropriate benefits from such facilities.

Resolution No. 267: Domestic Energy and Production
Origin: Utah

Submitted By: National Security
(As Amended)

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, War and the continuing threat of conflict in the volatile Persian Gulf region 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, Despite the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, many of its provisions, to include further development of domestic energy resources, need to be more actively pursued in order to reduce our reliance on foreign sources of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urge the Congress and the Department of Energy to implement those provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which call for further development of domestic sources of energy to include:

1. Increasing U.S. petroleum production is an environmentally sensible manner.
2. Building new nuclear energy plants.
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 Policy Act of 1992 be fully implemented and carried out as mandated in the Act.
6. That conservation of energy and natural resources be more actively pursued in the American private and public sectors.

Aerospace Committee
Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 57: Aerospace Production and Research
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, The United States has been the world leader in aeronautics for 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.
3. A renewed national commitment to education involving aeronautical engineering.
4. Overwatch and investigating functions with respect to the transfer of American aerospace technology abroad; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that as we move into the 21st century, we must continue to venture beyond earth and into the promises of space.

Resolution No. 162: Support for Aeronautical Research
Origin: Virginia
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 107 (MD))

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 aircraft, worldwide, 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 appropriations have declined over 37% since FY 1994. The budget further reduces to approximately a mere $650 million out of the agency's $113 plus billion, terminates high-speed research, and terminates advanced subsonic research; 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," (Pillar One—Global Civil Aviation, Pillar Two—Revolutionary Technology Leaps, Pillar Three—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%. 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 advanced. Also of significant concern and according to Company officials, plans call for the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to be 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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, development and testing 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 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: Support for the National Space Program
Origin: Virginia
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 127 (MD))

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 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 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 the 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 finally

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. 338: 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. In order to grow the force of 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 two years, America's Air Force has accelerated its post-Cold War high operations tempo despite a 40 percent force size reduction since 1986. To maintain this pace while minimizing the adverse impact on its people, equipment, and infrastructure, the Air Force is committed to its transformation as an Expeditionary Air Force. It is also committed to providing joint force commanders dominant capabilities in an integrated air and space environment. It proved the decisiveness and flexibility of expeditionary aerospace power when, in Operation ALLIED FORCE, it spearheaded NATO's successful effort to remove Yugoslavian military forces from Kosovo. The Air Force leads America's defense transformation to meet the challenges of the 21st Century; 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. No single modernization program will ensure the Air Force's continued ability to provide this full spectrum of aerospace capability. Rather, a balanced, time-phased modernization program is necessary to upgrade key existing systems and to realize promising technology advances that will help it provide global reach, global power, and global vigilance for America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 modernization program that will maintain America's dominance in air and space well into the 21st Century.

Referred
To the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 171: Modernizing the Bomber Force
Origin: Montana
Submitted By: National Security

Defense Civil Preparedness Committee
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut), Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 94: Combating Potential Biological, Cyberspace and Other Threats in the 21st Century
Origin: Maryland

Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, In May 1998, both India and Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear explosive tests thereby threatening stability in South Asia and challenging the international consensus to stop all nuclear testing; and

WHEREAS, The security of the United States is also being challenged increasingly by non-traditional threats which may extend the fields of battle and terrorism to computer cyberspace and in which inexpensive nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, including disease as a weapon of war, may be employed; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States unveiled the formation of a comprehensive and integrated system of federal agencies, including the Armed Forces, law enforcement, intelligence and public health, to detect, deter and defend against potential biological, cyberspace and other threats to critical government and private infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, The President has appointed a National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism, and the Department of Defense announced the formation of National Guard biological response teams in ten states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Congress to appropriate the necessary funding and resources to combat the potential biological, cyberspace and other threats to the United States in the 21st Century.

Resolution No. 98: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 interdictions functions as well as other essential state roles as required.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 29: Support of Blood Donor Programs
Origin: Massachusetts

Law and Order Committee
George W. Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 100: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.
4. More jail time for certain first-time offenders.
5. Holding parents responsible for fines imposed on youthful offenders, as appropriate.
6. 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. 115: Oppose Pardon for Convicted Spy Jonathan Pollard
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 287 (NY))

WHEREAS, Jonathan Pollard, by giving false job and educational information, obtained employment as an intelligence analyst for the U.S. Navy in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, he began continuing espionage activities against the national security interests of The United States of America; and

WHEREAS, During the 1980's, he passed highly sensitive classified material to agents representing governments with adverse interests to those of The United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Pollard entered in, and continued, espionage activities solely for personal financial gain; and

WHEREAS, By his own admission, when apprehended, this spy admitted that he had passed more than 800 classified publications and more than 1,000 classified cables during the period of 1979-1985 to foreign powers, namely, the Government of Israel; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Jay Pollard was convicted of espionage and sentenced to life in prison and all of his appeals have been exhausted; and

WHEREAS, It was reported in the media that President Clinton had been approached by representatives of Israel, for whom Pollard had spied on a continuing basis, to pardon him; and

WHEREAS, The Jewish War Veterans of the USA voiced its support of this action; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the NEC in May 2000, now; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Office of the President of the United States not to grant a pardon to the convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard under any circumstances and that he be required to serve his full life sentence.

Resolution No. 335: Support for the Second Amendment
Origin: National Security
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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 finally

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.

Merchant Marine Committee
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 108: Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws
Origin: Maryland

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. This number included 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.

Military Affairs Committee
Norman C. Schlemmer, Indiana, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 55: Support for the Selective Service System Registration Program
Origin: District of Columbia
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 mission in Bosnia, Kosovo and enforcing no-fly zones in Iraq and Bosnia; 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 prove cost-effective, essential, and rapid means of reconstituting the required forces to protect our national security interests.

Resolution No. 60: Modernization of the United States Army

Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 128 (MD))

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 warfighting capabilities while developing new capabilities for the future. The Army must provide an array of deployable, 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 deployability of all Army forces. Ultimately, the Army will develop organizations with the deployability 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, deployability, 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 2000 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Congress to provide full funding for the Army to maintain a 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.

Resolution No. 84: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the Department of Defense require Commanders to adequately inform their subordinates 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. 95: Uniformed Services Former Spouses 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, 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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. Currently, former military spouses receive payments for life even when they remarry. This practice should be discontinued. 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. 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.
3. 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 reaffirmed in separation or divorce proceedings. This would require amending 42 United States Code Section 659 to eliminate the inconsistency between that Code and the USFSPA.

Resolution No. 96: 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 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. 99: Total Force Policy and Viable National Guard And Reserve Forces
Origin: Maryland
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 to deal with regional conflicts of short duration and not with extended conflicts or global warfare which could require the full employment of the National Guard and Reserves and, possibly, the reinstatement of conscription to meet manpower needs; and

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 their indispensable missions and roles in our national defense.

Resolution No. 105: Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, There are more than ten countries that have or are suspected of developing biological warfare agents; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration has approved the anthrax vaccination in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Anthrax is considered to be the primary biological warfare threat 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 450,000 servicemembers have received at least one anthrax vaccination shot and the Department of Defense's (DoD) Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program (AVIP) seeks to vaccinate all 2.4 Million active duty and reservists; and

WHEREAS, A human efficacy study has not been conducted on the licensed anthrax vaccine and long term health effects have not been reviewed; 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, Over 1,400 adverse reaction reports have been filed, and some servicemembers are refusing to take the vaccine thus ending military careers 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 the Department of Defense (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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the progress of the Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program (AVIP), urge comprehensive congressional oversight and conduct outreach to servicemembers, 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 Vaccination 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. 106: Contingency Planning for Military Conscription
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Cold War, the United States has deployed its military forces on the order of 300-400 percent more over the past decade than previously; and

WHEREAS, Military force structures, enstrengths and Defense budgets have been reduced by 35 percent since the late 1980s yet the current National Military Strategy calls for military capabilities to fight two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously while also conducting multiple worldwide enforcement peace operations in such environments as Haiti, the Sinai, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo and maintaining forces in the Persian Gulf, Europe and the Far East; and

WHEREAS, Until recently, recruiting for the all-volunteer force has enjoyed unprecedented success as was demonstrated in the mobilization for and conduct of the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, The Army, Navy and even the Air Force have recently been missing recruiting goals, and the Army is considering reducing educational requirements and category levels in order to increase their accessions; and

WHEREAS The decline in military recruiting is attributable to a number of factors which may include the robust economy, non-competitive military salaries, the declining manpower pool, the increased propensity for our youth not to enlist in the Armed Forces, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, From its very onset, The American Legion has given longstanding support to the principle of universal military training and for the maintenance of a Selective Service System registration system which serves as an unqualified and cost-effective insurance policy during these unstable times; and

WHEREAS, A fair and equitable Selective Service System with stringent controls over deferments places the concept of service to the Nation in its proper perspective with the direct involvement of all Americans to provide for the "common defense;" and

WHEREAS, Any implementation of a legislated draft system as a source of military manpower would require at least six months before the first conscripted recruit would emerge from the training pipeline; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Selective Service System to develop contingency plans for implementing a fair and equitable conscription system as a source of military manpower in the event the Military Services are unable to adequately recruit volunteers for the Armed Forces or in the event of mobilization emergencies.

Resolution No. 109: Using Military Personnel for Experimentation Purposes
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces make numerous personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Forces should be accorded our special respect and gratitude; and

WHEREAS, Although they sacrifice and relinquish many personal liberties; they should not have to surrender their own privacy and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, It is unethical to use service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and consent; and

WHEREAS, Our Government has in the past used military members as human guinea pigs to test the effects of harmful and injurious substances on the body; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration plans to make final a temporary ruling allowing administration of experimental drugs to military members without their knowledge and informed consent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion oppose any rule or provision that would authorize the utilization of service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

Resolution No. 117: Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and Va Disability Compensation
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 218 (ND))

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; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act authorized Special Compensation Pays for severely disabled retirees who retired for longevity and were rated 70-100 percent disabled and received this rating within four years of retirement; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the NEC in May 2000; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 that it salutes the current authorized payment of Special Compensation Pays for severely disabled retirees (rated 70-100 percent disabled within 4 years of retirement for longevity); and that The American Legion urges further Congressional action that would achieve incremental adjustments in the amounts of these Special Compensation Pays as well as eliminating the current four-year limitation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the Congressional authorization of Special Compensation Pays for those severely disabled retirees (rated 70-100 percent) who are receiving military disability retirement pay and early retirement pay.

Resolution No. 118: Homosexuals Serving in the Armed Forces
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Based on the administration's original intention to entirely lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the armed forces, the Congress conducted extensive hearings with input from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and many others, and the Congress restated and codified in the National Defense Authorization Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-160) elements of the former policy excluding acknowledged homosexuals from the military with the major exceptions that recruit screening was to be discontinued; more emphasis was to be placed on homosexual conduct rather than homosexual orientation; and criminal investigations conducted solely to determine sexual orientation were also to be discontinued: this Defense policy has become known as "don't ask, don't tell, and don't pursue;" and

WHEREAS, Experienced military and civilian behavioral scientists agree that deviations from the norm, particularly aberrant sexual behavior, can create suspicions and hostilities which can destroy unit cohesion, morale and law and order which are essential ingredients in maintaining discipline and fostering success on the battlefield; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court in past decisions has granted judicial deference to the Armed Forces in matters which impacted on military morale and readiness as the Court has recognized that the military institution is necessarily unique from civilian society, and these differences "...result from the fact that it is the primary business of Armies and Navies to fight or be ready to fight wars should the occasion arise" (Parker vs Levy, 1974); and

WHEREAS, The provisions of Public Law 103-160 regarding service of homosexuals in the Armed Forces have been challenged in the judicial system and have been repeatedly sustained by Appellate Court decisions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion reaffirms its position as being in support of the former policy of the Department of Defense that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service"; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to continue to review and revise, as necessary, the Department of Defense Directives on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces so that these Directives more accurately reflect the intent, spirit and language of the Public Law.

Resolution No. 119: Separate Gender Basic Training
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, The role of women in the armed forces has long been recognized and promoted by The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The sexual scandals in the different branches of the services have led many to question and reevaluate the role of women in the armed forces and the best way to accommodate the integration of the sexes in the military; and

WHEREAS, Decades of experience with separate gender training worked for the veterans of both World Wars, the Korean War, Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War and helped produce the best fighting forces in the world; and

WHEREAS, Only male soldiers are granted combat MOS's and can serve in combat specialties; and

WHEREAS, The demanding pressures of basic training can be exacerbated by the distractions and attractions of mixed gender training. Many veterans believe the services, with the exception of the United States Marine Corps, may be losing their "warrior spirit" and that male physical fitness standards may be lowered as a result of integrated basic training; and

WHEREAS, In separate gender basic training, female drill instructors and officers provide strong positive role models to female trainees without the distractions of sexual attractions; and

WHEREAS, Servicemembers will be afforded the opportunity for mixed gender training in advanced training and in their assigned units; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion go on record as supporting separate gender training and separate gender billeting in basic training; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That if the service chiefs, for whatever reason, do not take such action, then the Congress should take the necessary steps to begin the process of change for the purpose of preserving discipline as well as military traditions, values and standards rather than subjecting basic trainees to the distractions of mixed gender training.

Resolution No. 120: Service of Women in the Armed Forces
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

(Consolidated with Resolutions No. 183 (CA) and 186 (CT))

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 servicemembers in the Armed Forces, and more than 40,000 female servicemembers 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 servicemembers, male and female, will deploy with their units: Pregnancy rates at the onset of the Persian Gulf War significantly affected the deployability of some units, and non-deployability 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion supports the

exclusion of military women from direct ground combat roles including special operations units as well as their service on submarines.

Resolution No. 121: Quality of Life Features
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 and dental 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 concurrently 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. Recommend revamping the current redux military retirement pay system with a more substantial retirement plan.

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 particularly for those survivors who have earned Social Security benefits in their own right. Also, terminating SBP premiums after paying a minimum number of annual premiums; and authorizing full SBP coverage for survivors of servicemembers who die on active duty.
7. Adequate health care treatment for Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors, and regular cost-of-living adjustments to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans.
8. Non-taxation of military allowances to include moving allowances, and the Congressional authorization of tax incentives 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 safeguarding American troops 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 so as to more closely approximate those of the active force to include full commissary privileges for the Reserve Components. Military retirement pay for members of the Reserve Components should be paid promptly at age 60 and not delayed.
12. Military health care 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.

Resolution No. 122: Department of Defense Health Care Reform For Military Beneficiaries
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 113 (MD) and 212 (OK))

WHEREAS, The promise of free health care for life in exchange for 20 or more years of military service was contained in recruiting and retention literature as recently as 1994 and was recognized as such knowledge by military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Military retirees, dependents and military survivors constitute at least 43 percent of the total 8.3 million eligible military medical beneficiaries; and nearly 500,000 retirees have lost or will lose their access to military health care as a result of military treatment facilities' closures; and

WHEREAS, After DoD began closing nearly 40 percent of its military treatment facilities (MTFs), the TRICARE health care system was created in 1995: Not only did military veterans discover that "free health care for life" did not exist but Medicare-eligibles were excluded from TRICARE; and

WHEREAS, Although the DoD does not recognize this promise as a legal contract, The American Legion sees it as a binding moral and ethical obligation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has had a number of concerns with the TRICARE package, for example: Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents have not had access to military health care and a pharmacy benefit; 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; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion also believes that the Department of Veterans Affairs should play a larger role in the treatment of TRICARE and Medicare-eligible patients; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion recommends the following guidelines be incorporated as a coherent part of the Department of Defense TRICARE health care package, or any military health care package, for military retirees, dependents and military survivors:

1. The U.S. Government must honor its obligation to provide free, lifetime health care to military retirees in exchange for their numerous sacrifices made over decades of service to the nation.
2. Timely access to a continuum of quality, comprehensive and equitable health care benefits covering the full array of services ranging from preventive health care and dental treatment plans to prescription services for all military beneficiaries, regardless of age or health care status should be provided.
3. Access, and administrative, barriers to an effective TRICARE system to include inefficient business practices such as benefit portability, claims processing, and delays in claims payments need to be removed.
4. That the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program be availed to Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors so they have access to the national mail order program and retail pharmacies with the full range of prescription pharmaceuticals which can be obtained for minimal copayments.
5. That the TRICARE Senior Prime Medicare subvention demonstration program be made permanent and extended nationwide to all military treatment facilities (MTFs) and availed to all Medicare-eligible military retirees residing stateside as well as outside the continental United States.
6. That the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) demonstration be expanded and extended until 2003.
7. That the Department of Defense and the Congress design and enact a permanent health care benefit for Medicare-eligible military retirees, dependents and military survivors.
8. The American Legion urges that access of military retirees and their dependents be extended to VA and DoD medical facilities for TRICARE and Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents, and that all military beneficiaries have access to VA pharmacies.
9. Finally, 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 no further military medical facilities should be closed or downsized but, rather, military medical resources should be increased. All military teaching hospitals should be retained.

Resolution No. 124: Military Funeral Honors for Veterans
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security

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 warrant a rededication 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, 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. The number of ceremonies rendered is expected to rise over 250,000 per year as veterans' mortality rates continue to increase; 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

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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion urges the Congress to mandate and appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the Military Services, to include the National Guard, 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 The 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 only veterans of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard be authorized to receive military funeral honors.

Resolution No. 201: Manufacturing M-16 Rifles Abroad
Origin: Ohio
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Colt, America's oldest gun maker, has long been a major supplier of arms for America's Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The United States Army recently announced that the Belgian gun manufacturer, FN Hershal will produce the M-16 rifle for U.S. soldiers, a contract worth up to $50 million over five years; and

WHEREAS, American taxpayers are being asked to subsidize a foreign company at the expense of Colt and their employees; and

WHEREAS, The Army, which buys guns for all the services, would not divulge why Colt lost the contract; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That the awarding of the M-16 rifle manufacturing contract to FN Hershal be reviewed by the appropriate authorities of The American Legion; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion prepare and present a letter of inquiry to the appropriate U.S. Government authority asking that a thorough explanation be given as to why a foreign arms manufacturer was selected to produce the M-16 rifle for U.S. soldiers at a cost of up to $50 million to the American taxpayer over a five-year period at the expense of the American gun makers.

Resolution No. 336: Appropriations Oversight for the Selective Service System
Origin: National Security Committee
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, The Selective Service System is the sole, time-tested mechanism available today which is capable of rapidly expanding the volunteer U.S. Armed Forces during a national crisis; and

WHEREAS, A strong and ready Selective Service System must exist to continue providing America with its only validated defense manpower insurance for a future national emergency; and

WHEREAS, The Selective Service System is the only Agency funded under the VA-HUD Appropriation whose statutory mission is immediately and exclusively related to national defense preparedness; and

WHEREAS, The Congress, in recent years, has often and imprudently attempted to enhance the budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs by decreasing the Selective Service System budget or eliminating it entirely; and

WHEREAS The membership of The American Legion believes that enhancing veterans programs and benefits should never be accomplished at the cost of denigrating a strong national defense or any component thereof; and

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives spends an inordinate and unnecessary amount of time conducting frequent budget debates about the relatively small cost of the Selective Service System because its funding under the VA-HUD Appropriation forces the

agency to compete with social and scientific programs, rather than be measured on national security merits; and

WHEREAS, It makes better sense for the Selective Service System, given its defense manpower mission, to retain its independence and be funded under the annual Defense Appropriations Bill; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion strongly urges the Congress to move appropriations oversight for the Selective Service System from the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee of the House and Senate at the start of the FY 2002 budget process, so that future funding for this agency is a part of the annual Defense Appropriations Bill, not the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Resolution No. 337: Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery
Origin: National Security
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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, The American Legion urges the Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery and that such burial be restricted to servicemembers 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.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 161: Universal Military Service
Origin: Virginia
Resolution No. 67: Federal Income Tax for Military Personnel
Origin: Oregon

Rejected

Resolution No. 170: the Order of the Silver Rose Program
Origin: New Hampshire
Resolution No. 173: Military Funeral Honors for Overseas Veterans
Origin: Montana
Resolution No. 179: Banning Depleted Uranium Weaponry
Origin: California
Resolution No. 202: Killed in Action Medal
Origin: Arizona
Resolution No. 223: Purple Hearts for Agent Orange Exposure
Origin: Iowa
Resolution No. 238: Suspending the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program
Origin: Michigan

Naval Affairs Committee
Gerard W. Cheffer, Ohio, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 56: Readiness of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Our national 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 project power, when and where needed to uphold U.S. foreign policy; 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, Equipment and personnel from non-deployed forces are being transferred to Deployed forces to achieve near-term readiness; and there is excessive resource-shifting and cannibalization of equipment from non-deployed forces; and

WHEREAS, Rapid technological advancement in areas of optics, metallurgy, and 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 readiness.

Resolution No. 116: Retention of the Vieques Weapons Range
Origin: Maryland
Submitted By: National Security Committee
(As Amended)

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 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 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; and

WHEREAS, The President has directed that the future of Navy training on Vieques will be determined by a referendum of the registered voters of Vieques. This referendum will occur on May 1, 2001, or 270 days prior to or following May 1 2001. This referendum will present two alternatives: The first shall be that the Navy will cease all training not later than May 1, 2003. The second will permit continued training, to include live fire training, on terms proposed by the Navy; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the NEC in May 2000; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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.

Resolution No. 126: Support for the United States Coast Guard
Origin: Maryland

Submitted By: National Security
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, By public law the United States Coast Guard is at all times one of the Armed Forces of the United States; 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.

WHEREAS, These missions continue during times of inter-national conflict, when the Coast Guard carries out its wartime missions as it 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, 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 national security 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.

Resolution No. 174: *The USS Montana* (SSN-777)
Origin: Montana
Submitted By: National Security

WHEREAS, Of the seven battleships (including Montana BB-51) which were canceled following World War I in accordance with the Washington Treaty on the limitation of Naval Armament, only Montana never had its name redesignated to another battleship; and

WHEREAS, Of the five Montana class battleships and the two Iowa class battleships canceled at the end of World War II, only Montana, Illinois and New Hampshire never subsequently had ships named for them; and

WHEREAS, Of the fourteen battleships that were canceled in 1922, 1943, and 1945, only the Montana's were canceled twice, with Montana being the only one of the 48 States never to have a battleship commissioned in its name; and

WHEREAS, Since the end of the battleship era, state names other than Montana have been used 28 times on battle cruisers, nuclear guided missile cruisers, nuclear ballistic missile submarines, and nuclear attack submarines; and

WHEREAS, Montana is the only state in the union that has not had a ship named for it since 1920 when state names were dedicated for use on the United States Navy's "first line" warships; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion request that the Secretary of the Navy designate the Nuclear Attack Submarine hull number 777 as the *USS Montana* (SSN-777); and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this recognition of past and continued dedicated service by Montana's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, and in honored remembrance of our 56 POW/MIAs of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, is fitting, appropriate, and overdue.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 232: The *USS John W. Finn*
Origin: Washington

Mr. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am particularly pleased to announce the winners of the National Blood Donor Awards for this past year.

Category I—Departments with 100,000 or more members:
Post participation—Department of Florida
Individual Participation—Department of Minnesota
Category II—70,000 to 99,999 members:
Post and Individual participation—Department of Maryland

Category III—40,000 to 69,999 members:
Post and Individual participation—Department of Georgia
Category IV—25,000 to 39,999 members:
Post and Individual participation—Department of Maine
Category V—10,000 to 24,999 members:
Post and Individual participation—Department of Rhode Island
Category VI—less than 10,000 members:
Post and Individual participation—Department of Hawaii

The results of the competition for the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are as follows:

Most of the fifty Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. A total of nearly 10,000 Medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 1999-2000 are the Departments of Alaska, Arkansas, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island, and Tennessee, which speaks well for these Departments and The American Legion in their recognition of the youth of America enrolled in ROTC programs.

Mr. Commander, this concludes the report of the Convention Committee on National Security.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: All in favor, so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed, the same sign. The report is adopted.

One of the benefits of this job this past year is having had the opportunity to serve with some great, dedicated American Legionnaires. Now I would call to the podium, James Fraughnaugh, from the Department of Alabama, National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER FRAUGHNAUGH: First off, I thank the twelve Departments of the Southeast Region for their work for The American Legion this year. They consisted of: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Puerto Rico. Also I would like to remind everyone that the Southeast Region finished number one in membership this year.

And to you National Commander Lance, it has been an honor for me to serve as National Vice Commander under your leadership this year. You have dedicated your life to this organization this past year and you have done an outstanding job. I thank you for your leadership you have demonstrated to us.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Thank you, Jim for the wonderful job that you have done this last year. Let me also take this opportunity to thank our National Security Commission and Counsel, Al Titus and his group. They did a fine job.

At this time the Chair would recognize Mel Lobstein, National Vice Commander, Department of Michigan.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER LOBSTEIN: The Commander who has been gracious throughout the year in sharing with us the honors of Commander and Vice Commanders has allowed the Vice Commanders a little time to say some things. And he said, "Now remember, you can't say it all." And Adjutant Spanogle said, "Don't try!"

It has been truly a great honor to work with the National Staff, the National Officers, and I was blessed with some very fine states that I was allowed to visit. The courtesy extended to me and the gifts and the warm hand shakes from the men and the wonderful hugs from the ladies will be remembered throughout my lifetime. I would like the Michigan Delegation, if you would, please stand. I wish to thank you for your support which allowed me to be at this position and allowed me to have such a wonderful year. I wish Indiana, Illinois, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio, if you would stand.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Now I call to the podium National Vice Commander, Robert Skallerud, 'Buster', from the Department of Minnesota.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SKALLERUD: It has been a year out of my life that I will never forget. It is a year of dedication to The American Legion family, throughout this whole great nation of ours. And I want to tell you that there would be nobody prouder in this whole hall than I am here today. I thank every state I represented and that includes France. But of course as you know I want to go to France, and as you know the Commander said, "If anybody goes to France, it will be me." So I never did get to France, but I want to say God bless each and every state I had visited and God bless The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Buster also volunteered to hug Miss America for me at every opportunity. From the Department of New York, National Vice Commander, Bob Neville.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NEVILLE: I thank the members of the Departments of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and last but not least, my home, the Department of New York. Wherever I traveled throughout the Northeast, your hospitality was gracious and warm. I thank the members of New York and in particular our leader who delivers the class act that I feel New York is, Dick Pedro, my mentor. Thank you for your advice during the year and mainly thank you for being a friend.

What do I think of when I think of Al Lance? I think of what one of our latest American Presidents thought of this country. He said he envisioned a kinder, gentler, nation. I look at Al Lance as a kind and gentle individual. But I would like to add another few adjectives to that, professional, tenacious, and very effective. Al, on behalf of all the Vice Commanders, we thank you for sharing your year with us and for dedicating this year of your life to this great organization of ours, The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: National Vice Commander from my own region, Harry Easley, from the Department of Washington.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER EASLEY: It has been an honor for me to be one of the five National Vice Commanders for this great organization. It has also been a distinct pleasure and privilege for me to work with a great national crew, from the National Vice Commanders, the Staff, and the other National Officers, led by Commander Lance. It has been a great administration.

As I traveled from state to state in the Western Region, I was really impressed with the leadership I found there. Leadership devoted to the veteran and their families; leadership devoted to the principles of The American Legion and the programs for our children and youth; leadership devoted to serving the community, the state, and the nation. I want you all to remember that you are that leadership and with your great leadership, The American Legion will continue to be the greatest veterans organization, in fact, the greatest organization on the face of the earth.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Those five Legionnaires worked exceedingly hard for all of us and our organization. And the guy that was making sure that our spiritual needs were met is our Chaplain from the Department of Louisiana, Bishop David R. Brown.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BISHOP BROWN: It was a great honor and a privilege for me to serve this year with Commander Al Lance and the rest of the National Officers. It was also a great honor and privilege for me to serve you. Now I thank the Department of Louisiana, my home state, for the wonderful support they extended to me this year. Also, I intend in the coming years to continue serving American veterans and their families through the Chaplaincy Program of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Our National Historian this year heralded from the Department of Nebraska, National Historian Bob Mead.

NATIONAL HISTORIAN MEAD: It has been an honor for me to serve as National Historian. Before this, I didn't do a lot of traveling.. And I want to thank all for the help that they have given me. This is one of the best years of my life.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I learned a few things in the Army and through life and in politics. One of the things that I learned was to surround yourself with good people and if you need them, big people. Our National Sergeant-At-Arms, Chuck Price.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS PRICE: What a distinct honor for me to have to have served with him and for you. To my friends from Idaho, my number one supporter, my wife. It is really an honor to serve with a man that really made a difference. And to be there first hand.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: And the guy that hardly anybody knows, Past Department Adjutant, from the Department of Idaho, my traveling aide, Mel Napier.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAPIER: Everyone should know that it has been a real pleasure to serve The American Legion, as well as our National Commander. I think you have probably figured it out that he has been an excellent Commander. It has been a pleasure to help him serve as your Commander.

Commander Al, please come here a moment. I think that for those of you who have visited different departments many times we would spend some time looking at some farms. I kind of found out this guy here, although we recognize him as National Commander and Attorney General and a lawyer, but as a young man he was a farmer. And he is going back to this farming again. All year long he wanted a John Deere B. So, Mr. Commander, here is your John Deere B.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: It is a John Deere B pocket watch. I was thinking of a little bigger one, Mel, but thank you just the same. These officers have served this organization well. At this time I would ask National Vice Commander, Bob Neville, to take the gavel and preside over the next order of business.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NEVILLE: At this time I would like to call the other four Vice Commanders to the podium, please. Commander would you please join us.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER EASLEY: I went to the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame where they wanted me to present a baseball, autographed by Sparky Anderson, a new inductee, to Commander Al Lance, from Bob Teller, Baseball Hall of Fame, at this the 75th Anniversary Baseball Hall of Fame, at Cooperstown. And I also heard that he was quite a hunter. Somewhere down the line, someone told me this. As I was traveling through my states, I found something very deadly. A sling shot. This is from all

us Vice Commanders. Then I also got caught in a tourist trap in northern Minnesota, and if I couldn't get him with a sling shot, I thought I am going to get him a gun. This is a rubber gun.

VICE COMMANDER LOBSTEIN: Knowing the Commander could not even hit anything with a sling shot, even if it were road kill, on the side of a road, we got together with the National Officers and National Staff. On behalf of the National Officers and National Staff and Vice Commanders, included, we would like to present you with a suitable gift, Mr. Commander. Hold it up in the air, please.

At this time I would like to call on our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle, for a few comments.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander, that gift was from the National Vice Commanders, the National Officers, and all of the Division Directors. I personally thank Commander Lance, and on behalf of The American Legion Staff, for his friendship, but more than that, his leadership.

Many of you have sons and daughters in the military today as many of your neighbors and friends do, too. My wife and I have our son in the military. He went to Kosovo with his A-team, just last week to back up the Jordanians and their sector. All of his battle buddies, his comrades, throughout the military force have no voice, but your voice. When our National Commander began the National Security Awareness Campaign, with the concurrence of the National Executive Committee, he provided that voice, because those in service need a voice. And you along with him, the entire American Legion family, provide that voice for all those young men and women in the service. I want to personally thank him, on behalf of Bob Spanogle and staff, and my family, for his leadership, your leadership on that issue. Beyond that, it has been a great year.

Remember to vote at mylegion.com, The American Legion's website. You have a little handout today on your chair explaining this. Please take that handout and go back to your Post and have those Legionnaires vote; have your community vote; and share it with your press when you get back. Because that is the only thing that will give those young men and women the voice that you and I yearned for, back during your generation when you served. You needed a voice, the Legion was your voice, and now that duty is passed to us and Commander Lance, thank you for being the voice of all those young men and women in the service today.

Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
John H. Geiger, Illinois, Past National Commander
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota, Past National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GEIGER: National Commander Alan G. Lance of Idaho, you have demonstrated alert and energetic service to our American Legion throughout your one year term as the National Commander. To the delegates to this 2000 National Convention from The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, join your family and friends in saluting you for the devoted and courageous leadership you have given to the nation.

We are pleased and honored to present this special plaque to you on behalf every member of The American Legion family. Each visitor to your home or office can view it and better appreciate the pride and respect you have achieved through your dedicated service to our God and country. Our bronze message to your family, neighbors and

colleagues, reads as follows: "National Commander, Alan Lance, Sr., elected by the National Convention to serve the high office of National Commander of The American Legion, for the year 1999 to 2000. In appreciation of his dedicated leadership, in recognition to 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, given on the 7th day of September, 2000, before the delegates assembled at the 82nd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Congratulations Past National Commander and welcome to the continuous responsibilities of that title. With our best wishes for many years of good duty, excellent health, and fellowship. God bless Sherri, you, and your family.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LUDWIG: Will the delegates of this National Convention please rise. I now call on the National Champion Color Guard from Henderson Smith, Edmonston Post, in Rockville, Maryland, to present the National Commander's Colors. Color Guard. Right hand salute. Commander, if you join me please.

Commander, one year ago in Anaheim, you embarked on an exciting journey. It was a special time for you, your wonderful wife Sherri, and your children. The theme for that Convention was fight for what is right. You, Commander, have done that and much more this past year as you traveled this nation from border to border and from shore to shore and, indeed, around the world. In a clear voice you have eloquently and accurately brought the needs of our military to everyone's attention. Your leadership has inspired all of us to keep a flame, freedom's light. You have fought the fight for what is right for the GI Bill of Health and for all veterans' issues.

This past year under your able leadership, Commander, The American Legion has continued the people's fight to protect Old Glory. A fight I know we will to continue to champion until we are successful. We will do this because it is the right thing to do.

Commander, I present these Colors, your Colors. On behalf of all the Legionnaires who love and respect you for your courage and commitment to The American Legion, your service and sacrifice to all veterans and your love and loyalty to God and country. My friend, may God always bless you and your family. Commander Al, your Colors.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Color Guard, please retire my Colors. Right hand salute. Please be seated.

Let me thank all who have said kind words about me. It costs me a small fortune to buy them off and make them say nice things about me. And truly, it has been a wonderful year. I met wonderful people during the 364 days in the saddle for The American Legion; we saddled up everyday. I gave you the best shot that was in me. But all good things must come to an end and one of the best things that has ever happened to this farm kid. I had a lot more written, but I will skip it.

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers
National Commander

We now come to a special order of business, the election of National Officers. The National Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk of Maryland will read the rules of the Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PHILIP ONDERDONK: The rules for election of National Officers of The American Legion.

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 the 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 of 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 said 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 the rules pertaining to election of National Officers.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: As Chairman of this Convention, I now appoint as Judge of the election, Terry Niles of Idaho and as tellers of the election, Roy L. Pressley of North Carolina, Tom Davis of Maryland, and Mike Palmquist of Texas. Will the judge and the 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 2000-2001.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: I will precede with the roll call.
Alabama.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GORE: I am J. T. Gore, immediate Department Past Commander, Delegation Chairman at this Convention for the Department of Alabama. Alabama starts another National Commander on his way by yielding to our sister department of North Carolina for a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Alabama yields to North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIS: My name is George Willis, duly authorized Delegate Chairman from the great Tar Heel state of North Carolina and I yield to Past Department Commander, R. Shuford Edmisten from North Carolina for the purpose of this nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Permission is granted to be recognized for that purpose.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN EDMINSTEN: My name is R. Shuford Edminsten, Past Department Commander, and duly elected and registered delegate of the great State of North Carolina. Twelve years ago I had the special opportunity of being the Commander of Post 77 in Hendersville in North Carolina. In doing so, I realized that I would be going to the Department Convention. Sir, I had the pleasure of meeting R.G. Smith, who was then the National Vice Commander of the Southern Division. I thought then that this man is going places. I don't mind saying that when everything around you seems to be changing, it is comforting to know that there is some constant in our society. For the past 82 years, one of those constants has been The American Legion. The other constant has been is Ray G. Smith.

From that first day I met him he has traveled very far across this nation for The American Legion. I truly believe that Ray is the same person who has never changed, always striving, always pledging himself on behalf of veterans. I would like to take this opportunity to explain to you that three years ago, my sister found an official copy of the 9th Annual Convention of The American Legion in Paris, of September of 1927 at a yard sale in Lenore, North Carolina.

As I read this book of 73 years ago, I came upon one section that reminded me of Ray. And I quote. "Throughout the world where there are American communities, the Legion keeps alive the sacred spark of wartime service. The sun never sets on the banner of The American Legion. Around the earth the rays of the morning sun searching ahead and blazing on another Legion's standard, teaching a deeper love of America. A more thorough understanding of American institutions and re-consecration of service to our nation in the days of peace."

As a new Post Commander, I was very impressionable that someday maybe I could follow in this man's footsteps because he was truly my hero if Ray succeeds in becoming our National Commander today on September 7, 2000. This will be 45 years to the day that he signed up in his American Legion Post 109 in Benson, North Carolina. What an accomplishment. But let not think that Ray has done all this by himself because that would not be true. For lots of you out there remember Robert A. 'Bob' Tart, who was North Carolina's National Executive Committeeman for twenty-two years straight. He was certainly my mentor as well as a lot of others out in this audience. And Ray, I am sure that our friend Bob is looking down right now and is very proud of this moment and I am sure he is saying, "Go Ray, go, God speed."

My fellow Legionnaires, look at Old Glory. What does it say to you? If you are like me it says a lot. If you are like me, you want to see this great symbol of America protected for what it truly is to us, the very symbol of who and what America is and who we are. Some of our lawmakers may abandon our flag, but the men and women of The American Legion will toil until Old Glory is protected by the law of the land. The time for action is now and Ray Smith will take us there.

Mr. Commander, most veterans do not see themselves as heros, only as Americans who have answered our nation's call. For me, I can think of no better place than to be in the presence of those men and women who have earned the right to be called a veteran. To those veterans, a generation of leaders who have built this country, I salute you.

As a duly elected and registered Delegate from the Department of North Carolina, it is my honor to place in nomination for the high office of National Commander of The

American Legion for the year 2000-2001, the name of my hero, from Banner Post 107 of North Carolina, Ray G. Smith.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The National Adjutant will continue the roll call.

...The National Adjutant continues the call for each Department in turn.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FOSTER: I am Jimmie Foster, Delegate Chairman of the largest state in the Union, the Department of Alaska and proudly yields to the Department of Pennsylvania for the seconding of the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FOSTER: I respectfully request that you recognize our National Committeeman, Ronald F. Conley for the purpose of seconding.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Chair recognizes Ronald F. Conley for purposes of a second.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CONLEY: My name is Ron Conley. It is a great honor to stand before you to second the nomination of a good friend and a great Legionnaire for the high office of National Commander for The American Legion. To get to this place in your Legion career, you have to be committed with compassion for the work for The American Legion and its programs. Ray has shown that compassion and commitment through the offices he has held in The American Legion.

Upon his discharge from the United States Air Force, he joined the Post 109 in Benson, North Carolina. They saw a potential in a young man and elected him Post Commander for four years. He served as a Post Adjutant for twenty years and on the Board of Directors for twenty-four years. His District saw potential and elected him as their District Commander. He also served as a District Vice Commander. During his ten years as District Commander and working in the District, his Department recognized his ability in leadership and his compassion and his commitment to his fellow veterans in his state of North Carolina. He served on a Membership Committee, the Internal Affairs Committee, the Americanism Committee, and the Children & Youth Committee.

He served as a Department Vice Commander and in 1979-1980 he was elected as the Department Commander of North Carolina. Through his involvement in the Department of North Carolina he was recognized by the National level. He served as the Chairman and a member of the Americanism Commission. He served as a Chairman of the Economics Commission. He served on the Veterans Planning and Coordinating Committee, and the Policy, Coordination and Action Group. He served as a National Vice Commander in 1988-89. It is with great honor that I stand before you as a duly elected Delegate of the Department of Pennsylvania, at this 82nd National Convention of The American Legion to second the nomination of Ray G. Smith for National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The National Adjutant will continue the roll call.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BROWN: I am Dave Brown, Delegation Chairman Department of Arizona. We yield to the Department of Oregon for purposes of a second nomination of Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RAY: I am Harley Ray, Delegation Chairman for the Department of Oregon. I respectively request that you recognize Past Department Commander, Past National Vice Commander, Robert D. 'Bob' Scott, for the purpose of seconding the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BOB SCOTT: I rise with a great feeling of pleasure and excitement to second the nomination of a fine Legionnaire. I have had the pleasure of

knowing Ray Smith for a number of years. We have several things in common. We both served in the United States Air Force, took our training at the same place in Lackland in Texas, and we both served in Guam. However, I am sorry to say we didn't meet during those periods.

Ray received his eligibility through his honorable service in the United States Air Force. Ray enlisted in 1951 and received his basic training as I stated in Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. His advance training in engineering took him to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Upon completion of his training, Ray was assigned to the 20th Air Force, 19th Bomb Wing at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam. His specialized training required him to spend much of his time in the Air Force, traveling throughout the Pacific in Southeast Asia. Once his overseas tour ended he was reassigned to the installation squadron at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, South Carolina, where Ray served the remain of his four year enlistment. His military service did not end there. Ray knew he had obligated himself to eight years of service to his country. So he took a four year enlistment in the Active Reserve and was honorably discharged in 1959.

He became a member of The American Legion in 1955 when he was discharged from the Air Force. Ray has been a member since that time and has never regretted his decision to take an active role for veterans and their families. Ray is also a very solid, caring family man. Ray was born in Johnson County, North Carolina, the seventh of eight children and is married to the former Helen Wallace. Their three children, Anita Norris, Gordon Smith, and Amy Creed, have blessed them with four grandchildren, John Thomas Norris, Morgan and Wesley Smith, and Savannah Creed. Ray owned and operated Benson Electric Company for twenty-six years. He retired from the U.S. Postal Service in 1995.

During those periods he had earned many honors and recognitions. To name just a few, Woodman of the World Outstanding Citizen of the 1983, Benson Citizen of the Year 1988, U.S. Postal Service Volunteer of the Year 1992, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors 1992, and he was elected Town Commissioner in 1995. He has other affiliations such as Veterans of Foreign Wars; ANAVICUS, our own organization; the Lions Club; Charter Member of the Smyrna Free Will Baptist Church since 1950; Chairman Deacon's Board for ten years, served on the Deacon's Board after that for the last fifteen years; superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-two years, and school teacher since 1955.

As a duly registered delegate to this Convention, it is with great pride that I second the nomination of Ray G. Smith of North Carolina, for the high office of National Commander of The American Legion.

...At this time a demonstration ensued in support of the nomination of Ray G. Smith as National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN OF ARKANSAS: Department of Arkansas cast a unanimous vote for Ray Smith, National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARTIN: Floyd Martin, elected Delegate to this Convention, Chairman of the California Delegation, votes 143, 100% for Ray Smith, North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LUGINBUEL: B.J. LUGINBUEL, immediate Past Commander, duly elected Chairman of the delegation from the best little state in the West, called Colorado, seconds the nomination for Ray G. Smith for the high office of National Commander for The American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SHEPHERD: Everett Shepherd, Delegation Chairman and duly registered delegation for this Convention for Connecticut, Home of Pfizer

Pharmaceuticals and we all know what they have given us. We are the home of the Yukon Men's and Women's Huskie Basketball Teams and proudly cast all thirty-seven delegate votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BURNS: Tom Burns, registered Delegate and Chairman from the State of Delaware, 100% for R.G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DANN: Clayton Dann, National Executive Committeeman, proudly casts a unanimous vote for Raymond Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MAHONEY: Roy Mahoney, Delegation Chairman for the Department of Florida, the Sunshine State, proudly cast 125 votes to the next National Commander for The American Legion, Ray Smith of North Carolina.

DELEGATE MALONEY: Mr. Chairman, Department of France, Nola Maloney. France casts 100% of their votes for seconding for Ray G. Smith of North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN POWERS: Tracy Powers, Department Commander for the great State of Georgia, casts 52 votes Ray G. Smith, from the great State of North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BURLEY: Keith Burley, Department Commander, and Delegate Chairman for the State of Hawaii, the land of the rainbow, and hopefully your home for your National Convention in 2005, cast their entire ballot for Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HELSLEY: Rickey L. Helsley, Convention Chairman from the Department of Idaho, home of our National Commander, Alan G. Lance, proudly cast all of its delegates for Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MADDEN: Illinois, Elden Madden, Commander and Delegate, great Department of Illinois in The American Legion, proudly cast 100% of their votes for the nomination of the man who will oversee the end of the memberships slide of this great organization, our next National Commander, Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MILLER: Jim Miller, Chairman for the State of Indiana, cast 100% vote for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN OF IOWA: Department of Iowa proudly seconds the nomination for Ray Smith.

DELEGATE NIELSEN: Dick Nielsen from the delegation of Kansas, proudly cast 100% of our votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Randall Coffman, NEC, Department of Kentucky, home of the greatest two minutes of sports, the first Saturday in each May and proud seven time NCAA Double Basketball Championship, Kentucky Wildcats, but this year more important, proud of one of the greatest veterans' friend, the reigning Miss America, Heather French, proudly endorses and seconds the nomination of our neighboring department North Carolina, Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATE SNYDER: Joe Snyder, Post 16, Covington, Louisiana, elected Delegate. All our votes from Louisiana go to Ray Smith.

DELEGATE OWEN: Bob Owen, Delegate to the 82nd Convention casts its entire voting strength for our next National Commander, Ray Smith.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN BROWNING: Gordon Browning, Department Commander and Delegation Chairman cast a unanimous ballot for Ray G. Smith of North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN AVIS: Department Commander, Mark Avis from the great State of Massachusetts, unanimously casts all of its votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATE HAYES: John Hayes, NEC for the Department of Mexico, a territory of four Latin American countries, famous for majestic volcanic mountains, triple canopy jungle, and shiny, sandy beaches, and its sensationally beautiful for senoritas. We are very proud to second the nomination of Ray Smith for the high office of National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHOLLETT: Norbert Schollett, Delegate Chairman for the great State of Michigan, where shortly in a few months we will also walk on water, cast all 99 votes for Ray Smith as our National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DEZURIK: Ray Dezurik, Department Commander, proudly casts its votes for Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATE FROM MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi proudly seconds the nomination to Ray G. Smith, North Carolina, and honors our next National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ETZOLD: Past Department Commander from Missouri, Delegation Chairman, also the home of the World Champion, St. Louis Rams, cast all 68 delegates for Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SELL: Art Sell, Past Commander and Delegation Chairman for the great State of Montana, the Treasure State, land of the big sky, seconds the nomination of Ray Smith as National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TWIFORD: Gene Twiford, Department Commander of Nebraska, seconds the nomination for Ray Smith for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN: John Stingray, from the great State of Nevada, the land of bright lights, one armed bandits, and a few red lights, cast 13 for our next National Commander, Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN STINGERIE: Past Department Commander, Delegation Chairman, John Stingerie, "To live free or die State", New Hampshire proudly throws all its support behind our next National Commander, Ray Smith.

DELEGATE SICKLE: Frank Sickle, NEC, New Jersey, cast all our votes for the great candidate Ray Smith for the high office of National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ZACH: Bill Zach, Vice Commander, all votes Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN: Richard O'Keefe, Department Commander of the great Department of New York , proudly seconds the nomination of Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN OVERBY: Delegate Chairman, Dean Overby, Department of North Dakota, with 51% of all eligible wartime veterans enrolled in the three Past National Commanders and the only living Past National Commander, seconds its nomination of a true friend, from the other North, Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HARTMAN: Ron Hartman, Delegation Chairman, home of the birthplace of our immediate Past Commander, cast their 158 votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TIENSVOLD: Larry Tiensvold, Past Department Commander of Oklahoma, cast all of our votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GONZALEZ: Miguel Gonzalez, we from the Department of the Philippines who crossed the Pacific Ocean over 70,000 miles, to cast all our votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DIAZ-NEVAL: Arturo Diaz-Neval, Delegation Chairman of Puerto Rico, the shining star, the home of four Congressional Medal of Honor recipients are honored to cast all of its 14 votes to Ray G. Smith for National Commander.

DELEGATE MAKEN: Maken, Lawrence, Department of Rhode Island. We cast all of our votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WARD: Frank Ward, we cast all of our votes for Ray Smith, 32.

DELEGATE MASON: D.R. Mason, NEC South Dakota, birthplace of American Legion Baseball, cast their delegation votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATE UNKNOWN: The great volunteer state of Tennessee cast their 38 votes for Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SIMON: Don Simon, Delegation Chairman, Texas the site of your next National Convention, we second the delegation nomination of Ray G. Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHOW: Delegation Chairman, Terry Schow, Utah. Home of the 2002 Olympics, cast all of our votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: Bill Graham, Chairman of the Vermont delegation, Past Department Commander, Vermont, known as the Green Mountain State, known for its ski areas, maple syrup, the first Boy Scout Troop, the first ski lift in America, and the first postage stamp, and home of one of the founders of The American Legion. Our 23 Green Mountain Boy delegates, vote all 23 votes for Ray G. Smith for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DELLINGER: Dan Dellinger, Commission Delegation Chairman, the old dominion, home of Presidents, Past National Commander, Butch Miller, and soon to be world champion, Washington Redskins, cast all its votes for Ray Smith.

DELEGATE WESTPHAL: Bob Westphal, Delegate Chairman from the Department of Washington, seconds the nomination for Ray Smith for National Commander. Go Ray.

DELEGATE KILE: William Kile, NEC, West Virginia, the almost heaven state, home of Past Commander Miles Epling, casts 34 votes for North Carolina, Ray Smith.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Bob Thomas, duly elected Delegate from the great State of Wisconsin, the host Department of this 82nd National Convention, thanks everyone for attending and casts their Delegates strength for Ray Smith for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BROWN: Jean Brown, immediate Past Department Commander and Wyoming Delegation Chairman. Like no place on earth, wide and wonderful Wyoming, seconds the nomination for Ray G. Smith for the office of National Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander that completes the roll call.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Chair recognizes Delegate O'Keefe.

DELEGATE O'KEEFE: Mr. Commander, 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 delegation at this Convention and that Ray G. Smith, 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.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: There is a motion before us to suspend the rules of the Convention pertaining to the election of National Commander and the nomination and election of National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be automatically be reinstated at the conclusion of the election for the National Vice Commanders.

The motion is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. Those in favor of the motion please signify in the usual manner of aye. Opposed nay? Motion carries. Chair recognizes microphone number 4, Delegate Twiford.

DELEGATE TWIFORD: Gene Twiford, Department Commander of Nebraska, duly elected Delegate and registered. It also happens to be the home of the number one college football team in the nation, Nebraska Corn Huskers. I move the nomination for the office of National Commander be closed.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The motion to close nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. All in favor of the motion, please signify in the normal manner of aye. Those opposed nay. The motion carries. The Chair recognizes microphone number 1. Mr. Olsson.

DELEGATE OLSSON: William Olsson, Department of Georgia, duly elected Delegate for this Convention. I would you like to move that you instruct the National Adjutant to vote a united one vote for the National Commander, Ray Smith.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: And that would be by acclamation, sir? Is that your motion?

DELEGATE OLSSON: Yes, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Thank you. Is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Hearing a second, there is a motion before us that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention and that Ray Smith be elected by National Commander by acclamation. All those in favor, signify by saying aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegation strength of this Convention for the election of Ray Smith of North Carolina as National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I now declare Ray Smith of North Carolina, the National Commander of The American Legion. Ray Smith. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms assist the new National Commander of The American Legion to the podium, please.

The Chair now recognizes Past National Commander E. Roy Stone of South Carolina for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the newly elected National Commander of The American Legion.

Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STONE: As you are standing and while you watch and listen to the National Commander the take the oath of office, may I ask that each Delegate, at his heart and mind solidly rededicate yourselves to the ideals of The American Legion. And to prove your loyalty exercise good judgement and carry out The American Legion programs.

Now Mr. Smith, I ask that you raise your right hand and repeat after me.

...National Commander-elect Ray Smith repeated the Oath of Office, following the lead of Past National Commander Stone.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT RAY SMITH: I, Ray G. Smith, do solemnly pledge myself, to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of 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.

Acceptance Speech by Newly Elected National Commander Ray Smith

I have been looking forward this day for forty-five years. I have finally found it. If I may, I would like to take this moment just to make some introductions. First, I am very proud to have all of my family here with me here today and want to recognize them at this time. My oldest daughter, Anita Norris, please stand with my youngest granddaughter, Kasey Raye Norris, her husband, Pete Art, Jr., and my buddy, John Thomas Norris, my oldest grandson. I introduce next my son, Gordon Smith and my buddy Wesley, who is my grandson and his wife Terry, and my granddaughter Morgan Smith, my youngest daughter, Amy Creed, my son-in-law, Clint Creed, and my sweetheart, Savannah Rose. Thank all of you for being here.

I am blessed to have one other person here with me today and that is the widow of Robert A. 'Bob' Tart, Emily. Bob was my mentor. He is the one that put me on this road and I really, really miss him today. But I have a feeling that he is looking down and he knows exactly what is happening here today.

You see, to me, today is really a special day. Today is September the 7th, 2000. Today, you have honored me by providing me the opportunity to lead the world's greatest veterans service organization. As I look back over my life, September holds an interesting thread of importance because I joined the Air Force in September a few years. I was also discharged from the United States Air Force in September. Still this day, September the 7th, will forever rank as the most memorable day in my years of service to The American Legion.

It was September the 7th, forty-five years ago today, that my neighbor came knocking on my door in North Carolina. The night before I had returned home from four years in the United States Air Force. He was a World War I veteran and he wanted to sign me up as a member of his American Legion post. He was a very persuasive member, but I doubt he had any idea how this great organization would shape my future. As I stand before as your National Commander, I want you to consider how a simple invitation to join The American Legion might very well impact our future.

I am deeply concerned about the slide in The American Legion membership. September 7, 2000 marks a new beginning. I declare before you here today that the membership slide is over. It is time for us once again to make recruiting members into The American Legion fun. It is easy to become enthusiastic about what we are doing because we are doing something good. It should be just as easy to share that enthusiasm with one or two young military veterans. They, too, have a desire to help others. As delegates to this Convention, you have an obligation to return home and share the dream in what is to be with members, potential members, and all of your community. I believe you also have the obligation to involve every member of your Post in membership. You do that by creating

challenges within the Post. You do that by throwing out old line thinking and moving forward knowing that The American Legion does great things. You generate excitement and fun by committing your membership efforts in the bonds with the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion.

When you have fun with everything you do at the Post, when you create a bond with members of The American Legion family, you have success in every program including membership. Hap Klopp, in the book, *The Adventure Of Leadership*, notes "People in organizations overlook the power of fun and relation to productivity." It is just another example of how the embalming fluid has soaked into the fabric of most businesses. Fun is discouraged." Klopp challenges that thinking by noting that fun and effort are related. I could not agree more. There is an old saying, "We attract what we dwell on. And what we dwell on, we become."

It is time to dwell on the fun and friendship that comes with being a member of the greatest veterans organization in the world, The American Legion. It is time to dwell on the benefits to future generations that will come with the infusion of young members. It is time to recruit these men and women so that The American Legion will remain a vibrant organization dedicated to God and country.

While we are working to end the slide in membership, there are two other areas where I will very active and I look forward to your partnership. They are efforts on behalf of the National Emergency Fund and the Child Welfare Foundation. My hometown is Benson, North Carolina, population 3,432, give or take a few. In North Carolina we are no strangers to floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. Believe me, members of The American Legion family in North Carolina know first hand about the National Emergency Fund and how it is a great help in time of turmoil. Just thirteen months ago members of my Post were running ice machines to provide ice for people's coolers. The coolers were keeping milk cold for babies. At a cemetery at the eastern part of our state, the people were tying caskets to trees to keep them from floating away. Three hurricanes and thirty-seven inches of rain in a week, took their toll. Four hundred roads were flooded. People were living in shelters. I saw how the Department of North Carolina responded to needs and how the National Emergency Fund was a key part of that effort, with 109 grants totaling $144,400. Believe me, that is money that made a difference for veterans and their families during a very trying time in their lives. I want to see that fund remain strong. So together the men and women of The American Legion can meet human needs. Taking care of our fellow veterans following a natural disaster is the right thing to do.

Another area of The American Legion, family service to our nation, is through the Child Welfare Foundation. This foundation provides grants to other not-for-profit organizations given direct benefit to Americans. We are proud of the Sons of The American Legion for the leadership they display, for they are the largest contributors to the Child Welfare Foundation, giving more than $230,000 last year. That calculates to about $1.00 per member. Their numbers are relatively small compared to our 2.8 million members. I think it is time Legionnaires at least equal to the contributions of the Sons. Just imagine the good we could do if we in The American Legion provided just $1.00 per member for the Child Welfare Foundation. Who knows how the few dollars we give to the Child Welfare Foundation will affect the life of a young child. I don't, you don't, no one does today. But from my experience, it is money well spent.

Throughout most of my forty-five years in The American Legion, I have been involved with youth programs. I believe in young people. It makes me sad when people

judge all the young people by the bad examples we read about in the newspaper or see on television. Believe me, America does have a bright future. The young men and women involved in The American Legion family programs are excellent citizens. There are millions just like them in high schools coast to coast. And certainly it would not hurt to have an American Legion Post nearby to provide programs to strengthen their development.

I will touch briefly on one other key effort for me and for our American Legion. That is the Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment. I am not a lawyer. I don't have a Ph.D., shucks, I am just an old country boy from North Carolina. People ask me why we keep pushing this amendment. I answer them, from the heart because it is the right thing to do. I don't believe that desecrating the flag is freedom of speech and I never will. I do believe that we truly represent the majority of Americans and that is why I keep pushing the amendment and that is why we will be successful.

I believe it was Teddy Roosevelt who said, "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the great twilight of neither victory nor defeat." We will taste victory for our flag. We will continue to do mighty things. We will increase our membership. We will keep the National Emergency Fund solid. We will take the Child Welfare Foundation to newer heights. And we will have fun doing all this. So join with me in soaring into the new millennium.

The best is yet to come. And you are invited to share the opportunity of tomorrow. Let me share with you this closing thought. It is a poem that I like. I don't know who authored it, but it has kept me focused for many years. The title of the poem is, *A Legionnaire.*

For God and country to serve and care,
that is why I am a Legionnaire.
To make my country a better place,
and to meet my neighbor face to face.
To help the distressed,
their cross to bear,
that is why I am a Legionnaire.
To face with courage the coming day
and teach my children how to pray.
To make my flag
a symbol rare
that is why I am a Legionnaire.
And when our great Commander calls
and taps are sounded for each and all.
Forget not to breath a prayer and
that the Lord I am a Legionnaire.

God bless you and continue to bless America.

Election of National Officers

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Chair recognizes microphone number 3.

DELEGATE POTTER: I am Dewey Potter, a duly elected Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Oregon. Mr. Commander, since the rules of this Convention have been suspended, I move that nominations for the office of National Vice Commander be made from the floor of this Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: You heard the motion, is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Those in favor of the motion signify in the usual manner of aye. Those opposed signify with 'nay.' The motion carries. We will now entertain motions for the offices of National Vice Commander from the floor. Chair recognizes microphone number 2.

DELEGATE AVIS: Department Commander, Mark Avis from the great State of Massachusetts, Delegation Chairman from the state where the shot was heard around the world, proudly yields to whom we consider the great candidate to Past National Commander, Jake Comer, for the purpose of nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Past National Commander, Jake Comer.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: I am honored to nominate a United States Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War stationed in Europe, gentleman who is married to Rose Marie, two daughters, Aliena and Annette, who served as Department of Massachusetts in 1994-95, Alternate NEC, 1995-97, and NEC from 1997-99. He has been the editor of our Department newspaper for the last three to four years, a very thankless task, as most of you would know. He is a Past Commander of Milton Post 114 in Milton, Massachusetts and presently a member of the Cyril P. Morrisette Post West Quincy serving as its Commander in 1985 and 1986. He has also been awarded and privileged to be an Eagle Scout back in 1957.

My candidate has served twenty years as a Quincy police officer and I must relate to you that as a police officer, he was awarded a Medal of Valor by the Department of Massachusetts American Legion when he and his partner, Officer Bob Hanor of Quincy, were confronted in a local cemetery after hearing a gun shot from that cemetery. A Vietnam Vet of the U.S. Marine Corps had a five-shot pump shot gun and tried to get the officers to shoot at him. He wanted to commit suicide and after he fired ten to twelve shots in the air, he tried to escape. My candidate holstered his weapon and blind-sided him to take his weapon and secure the veteran. The District Attorney of Massachusetts reported this to be the first case in the country to use PTSD as a defense. The veteran was sent to the VA and not to jail.

This candidate was a Director of Veterans Services presently in the City of Quincy for the past ten years and in doing so, he established a VA outpatient clinic, a struggle he has maintained for six years to the savior of needy ill veterans of our community where the VA are going in coming up with outpatient clinics. He has been in the community on the Board of Directors on the American Cancer Society, Active in Daffodil Day, and Relay for Life, which this year alone raised $240,000. On the national level he served on the Constitutional Amendment and By-laws, the Law and Order Committee, and the Legislative Committee. And during the floods of the 90s, when that tough flood was in Quincy, Illinois, he led the drive as Chairman of our city and established a Quincy,

Massachusetts to Quincy, Illinois Fund Drive. And he raised and transported seven trailer loads of food, water pumps, and $23,000 in cash to Quincy, Illinois.

A truly humanitarian, a proven leader, and all Massachusetts members led by our Department Commander, Mark Avis, proudly join me in placing the name of Henry J. Bradley, in nomination to the high office of National Vice Commander for the coming year.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The name Henry Bradley has been placed in nomination. Microphone number 2.

DELEGATE MILLER: Jim Miller, Delegate Chairman for the State of Indiana request that you would permit Past National Vice Commander Allen Titus to podium for nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Chair recognizes Allen Titus, Department of Indiana for purposes of a nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TITUS: As a delegate of the great Hoosier State of Indiana, home of our National Headquarters since 1919, I have the honor and privilege of nominating an outstanding Legionnaire and personal friend, from the Department of Indiana for National Vice Commander. James E. Koutz. James earned his eligibility by serving in the United States Army from 1969 to 1971, with an extended tour of duty in Vietnam, from January, 1970 to March, 1971.

Upon his return to hometown of Booneville, Indiana, he joined American Legion Post 200 where he immediately became active. He served on various committees and held most of the offices of his post, including Commander on nine different occasions. His continuous work and leadership resulted in his election as District Commander in 1982. He was appointed Department Membership Chairman in 1989 and was elected Department Commander in 1990. During his tenure as Commander, Indiana obtained an all time high in membership with all districts reaching 100% on the state level. Jim has served on the Distinguished Guest Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. He has been a member of the Legislative Commission since 1991 and is also a member of the Legislative Council. Jim has twenty-nine years of continuous membership in The American Legion.

He was honored by the former governor, Evan Bayh, with a prestigious Sycamore of the Wabash Award, the highest Honor that Indiana Governor can bestow. He was presented a Distinguished Service Award by the Department of Indiana. He was award an Honorary Life Membership by Post 200 in 1991. Jim and his wife Vicki, have one son, Michael. Vicki is an active Auxiliary member and Michael is a member of the SAL. Jim was employed by Amax Coal Company for twenty-one years, prior to the closing of the area mine in 1994. He currently serves in the Warren County as a Service Officer, a position he has held since 1995.

Jim is active in many other civic and fraternal organizations within his community. He has demonstrated outstanding leadership ability and dedication to the programs of The American Legion. We in the Department of Indiana know that with his talent and expertise he will make an excellent National Vice Commander. It is with great pride that I place in nomination, the name of James E. Koutz, National Vice Commander for The American Legion for the year 2000-2001.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The name of James E. Koutz from the Department of Indiana has been placed in nomination. I now recognize microphone number 2. I will now recognize most anyone at microphone number 1.

DELEGATE ELLISON: Commander, Art Ellison, Chairman of the Delegation of Montana, ask the Chair to recognize the Montana Department Commander, Andrew R. Ellis, for the purpose of nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Artie Ellison is recognized for purposes of making a nomination.

ANDREW ELLIS: It is with great pride that I nominate from the big sky country, where hopefully we are not going to have anymore smoke, for National Vice Commander, John Pelllegrini. John was born in Anaconda, Montana, and except for his military duty, has continued to live there. He enlisted in the Army in October 28, 1944, at the age of seventeen and received an honorable discharge November, 1946. Upon his return to Anaconda, he enlisted in the Army Reserve and remained active until his retirement in 1987 as a Chief Warrant Officer, Grade 4. In 1946, he went to work for the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company and retirement as General Manager for the local company in 1992.

He is a twenty-nine year paid-up-for-life member of The American Legion Post Anaconda 21, in Anaconda, Montana. He has held the offices of Post Vice Commander and Post Commander and is presently the Post Finance Officer. He has served as District Chaplain, District Vice Commander, and District Commander, and held the Department of Montana offices of Executive Committeeman for the Western Zone, Department Vice Commander and Department Commander. He also has served as a National Committeeman for Montana and has served on the National Membership and Post Activities Committee and the National Children and Youth Committee.

Believing in making his community a better place to live, he has put out many varied efforts which include, Secretary and Treasurer and President of the Montana Soft Drink Association, a member of the Anaconda School Board for twelve years, and for ten years he was a Chairman. He is a past President of the Anaconda Local Development Corporation. He is a board member of the Anaconda Job Core, past president and board member of the local Kiwanis Club, member of the Goldwest Country Tourism Committee, member of the Elks Club, Knights of Columbus, the Anaconda Historical Society, the Anaconda Art Center, the Anaconda Country Club, and the Anaconda Chamber of Commerce. He was involved in the Boy Scouts of America for thirty years and helped eighteen young men achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. He was awarded the Silver Beaver Award by the Boy Scouts of America, which is the highest honor given to adult scouters. He was named The Citizen of the Year by the Anaconda Chamber of Commerce in 1991.

John is a great Montanan, a great American, and a great Legionnaire. As a duly elected delegate for the big sky country, I take great pride in nominating John Pellegrini, as National Vice Commander, to represent the thirteen Departments in the Western Division.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The name of John C. Pellegrini has been placed in nomination for National Vice Commander. The Chair will recognize microphone 2.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN WAMBLE: Bob Wamble, Chairman of the Delegation of Arkansas, asks the Chair to recognize the National Executive Committeeman of Arkansas, Claude Carpenter.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Claude Carpenter is recognized for the purpose of making a nomination.

CLAUDE CARPENTER: I wish to present to you a man from the State of Arkansas who has earned his way for this high office. He derives his eligibility by serving in the

United States Army with the 88th Division during the Korean Conflict from the years 1949 to 1953. He has served The American Legion well. He has held every office in his Post. He has held every office in his District, even Chaplain. He has held the high office of Adjutant and he was elected Department Commander from the State of Arkansas. After that we had a problem with our passing of our Adjutant and he again served as Department Adjutant and he served us well.

He has been a National President of the National American Legion Press Association and, of course, he has held the high office of President and Judge Advocate for that office. He has been Chairman for the Constitution By-laws Commission in Arkansas and the Public Relations Commission of the National Organization for President. He has many activities on behalf of The American Legion and most of which are too numerous to mention. But I must tell you he is an outstanding Legionnaire. He has served us well in Arkansas. He will serve us well also on a national level. Mr. Commander, it is my high honor to place in nomination the name of Charles Ragsdell from Heber Springs, Arkansas, to serve as National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The name of Charles C. Ragsdell has been placed in nomination for National Vice Commander.

The Chair at this time would recognize microphone number 1.

DELEGATE HAWK: Commander, Jim Hawk, as Delegation Secretary of South Carolina, I ask the Chair to recognize our Delegation Chairman of South Carolina, Frank Ward.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Frank Ward is recognized for the purpose of making a nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WARD: I am Frank Ward, Past Department Commander, 1999-2000 of South Carolina. I am honored to say the great State of South Carolina made their 100% goal this year for the third time. They did it with the help of all the blue cap Legionnaires and now we are going for four.

I am honored to place in nomination William A. 'Bill' Weatherly for National Vice Commander from the Southern District. He is the man of southern heritage, a man that would work fifty-four years in The American Legion, a man who dated and married a southern lady from Pinewood, South Carolina. Her name is Betty. They together started a great Legion family. They have four children; two sons and two daughters. The family runs Weatherly's Insulation Company, Inc. in Sumptners, South Carolina. His wife has served as Past State Auxiliary President, also all offices in her Unit. His oldest son has served in Sons of The American Legion up to State Detachment Commander and National Vice Commander. This daughter, Nancy Gordon, worked her way up to State President in 1998 and 1999 of the Auxiliary and she is presently serving as the National Committee person of the Auxiliary from South Carolina, 1999-2000. A son, Ashley worked his way up to State Detachment Commander of the Sons of The American Legion and to alternate National Committeeman in the Sons of The American Legion.

During all this time, William A. 'Bill' Weatherly served his post as Second Vice Commander, First Vice Commander, and then as Commander of his post. He worked on committees in Scouting. He was a Scout Master. He worked on the Baseball Committee, the Oratorical Committee, the Law Cadet Committee, Boys State and Membership; where he has signed up over one hundred members just in his Post. In the Department of South Carolina, he has served as District 11th Commander for two years, Zone 4 Commander for two years, and then Department Commander in 1978 and 1979. This together with being

a great man and a Legionnaire and active church leader, I nominate William A. 'Bill' Weatherly, as National Vice Commander for the Southern District.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The name of William A. Weatherly has been placed in nomination as National Vice Commander for The American Legion. The Chair recognizes microphone number 4.

DELEGATE DEMAREST: Delegation Secretary Jim Demarest for the Department of Iowa, I move that nominations for offices of National Vice Commander be closed.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Motion has been made and seconded. This is a non-debatable motion. All in favor, please indicate by saying aye. Any opposed? The motion carries. Chair recognizes microphone number 3.

DELEGATE HINKEMEYER: I am Dennis Henkemeyer, duly elected delegate Department of Minnesota. I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this Convention and that Charles C. Ragsdell, Arkansas, James E. Koutz, Indiana, Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts, John C. Pellegrini, Montana, and William A. Weatherly, South Carolina be elected National Vice Commanders by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: You heard the motion. Is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The motion has been made and seconded. All in favor please indicate by saying aye. Any opposed? The motion carries.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote representing the entire delegation strength of the National Convention for Charles C. Ragsdell of Arkansas, James E. Koutz of Indiana, Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts, John C. Pellegrini of Montana, William A. Weatherly of South Carolina for the office of National Vice Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: I now declare Charles C. Ragsdell, James E. Koutz, Henry P. Bradley, John C. Pellegrini, William A. Weatherly elected National Vice Commanders of The American Legion. Congratulations. Please come forward National Vice Commanders.

Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander John Geiger.

PAST NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER GEIGER: Please rise and join me in the presentation of his official set of national Colors to our new National Commander, Ray G. Smith. Color Guard, please present the National Commander's Colors to this station.

...At this time the Color Guard presents the Colors.

National Commander Ray Smith, congratulations on your election as the National Commander of The American Legion at this 82nd National Convention. Your splendid record of service to God and country has been rightfully recognized by your proud North Carolina comrades and the enthusiastic delegates voting today. Commander Ray, I am honored today to present your National Colors to you.

First, the honored flag of the United States, protected by the crimson banner of the National Commander. We know that your commitment to duty, skilled leadership, and love for our nation, will enhance our trust in you and our Legion. On behalf of every member

of The American Legion, I am pleased to present your National Standards to you, National Commander Ray G. Smith, with our very best wishes for a splendid year in great health and spirit.

Color Guard, present the Commander's Colors. Right hand salute! Two!

Commander, I present these Colors to you. They have been posted this afternoon by the Color Guard of Henderson Smith Edwards Post No. 86, of Rockville, Maryland, the National Championship Color Guard of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Past National Vice Commander Geiger, thank you for presenting the Colors to me on behalf of the 2.8 million members of The American Legion. I would like to take an opportunity right now to introduce a very special person. She has been a great supporter of mine for forty-one years. She has been behind mein everything I have ever attempted to do. I would like to present to you, the First Lady of The American Legion, my wife, Helen Smith.

Presentation of Newly Elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: This is a very special time in the business of this Convention, the time when we meet the distinguished lady who will lead the nearly one million patriotic women of the Auxiliary over the next year.

She is a woman who has served veterans and their families as an active volunteer for nearly two decades. Welcome to our stage the newly elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, a member of New London Unit 40 in New Hampshire, Christine West, Madam President.

PRESIDENT WEST: It is an honor and a privilege to serve this great organization, the American Legion Auxiliary. On behalf of the nearly one million members, I commend Commander Lance on a terrific and most successful year as he led the largest veterans organization in the world during this past administration. I pledge to the new elected Commander, Ray G. Smith, 110% support to all the veterans across this country.

I truly believe in the word 'auxiliary' which is to support and aid The American Legion in all your endeavors. I stand before this greatest organization, The American Legion, to offer my full support to you to carry out the aims and purposes of The American Legion. And to Commander Smith, could you please join me? I look forward to this wonderful year we are going to have together as an American Legion family. I pledge to you my love and support as you work for the veterans and youth across this country. God bless you and happy trails to both of us.

Unfinished Business

Is there any other business to come before this Convention? At this time we will ask the National Adjutant to make some administrative announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Pursuant to the National Convention By-Laws of The American Legion, the National Executive Committee must meet within 24 hours following the adjournment of the Convention. The NEC meeting is called immediately upon the adjournment of this National Convention in Rooms 102A and B, Midwest Express Center.

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: Please rise and uncover as National Chaplin Bishop David Brown offers Benediction.

Benediction
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana, National Chaplin

Heavenly Father, as we depart one from another, help us always to be mindful of Your watchful care over us. Lord, we ask that You protect us from all harm and bring us safely to our destinations. We thank You, Lord, for the fellowship we have enjoyed throughout this Convention. We also thank You for guiding the work of the Convention. As we depart now, Lord, we ask that You bless us and help us always to give You the first place in our lives. And Lord we pray these things in Your all holy name. Amen.

Retirement of Colors

NATIONAL COMMANDER LANCE: The Color Guard will retire the flag of the United States. The delegates will stand and will issue a right hand salute. One! Two!

I now declare this 82nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, *sine die.*

...The 82nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned.

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Meridian, Idaho. Membership was strong with more than 2.8 million veterans in more than 14,000 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

E. Roy Stone, Jr., South Carolina
Erle Cocke, Jr., Maryland
J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma
William R. Burke, California
Hon. Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota
William E. Galbraith, Arizona
John H. Geiger, Illinois
Joe L. Matthews, Texas
James M. Wagonseller, Ohio
William J. Rogers, Maine
John M. Cary, Florida
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

National Executive Committeemen

Ray White, Alabama
Joseph T. Craig, Alaska
William C. Bingham, Arizona
Claude B. Carpenter, Arkansas
Michael A. Gombar, California
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut
Robert H. Poore, Delaware
Raymond J. Potocki, District of Columbia
Robert J. Proctor, Florida
Merwyn M. Beavers, France
Horace Borders, Georgia
LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii
LeRoy Lebsack, Idaho
Arthur Rawers, Illinois
John W. Pipher, Indiana
William Rusk, Iowa
U. S. Grant, Kansas
Joe E. Woods, Kentucky
Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana
Robert A. Owen, Maine
Ashby L. Jenkins, Maryland
Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts
John E. Hayes, Mexico
Alton R. Ford, Michigan
Raymond L. Galazen, Minnesota
Hershel O. Ladner, Mississippi
James F. Mareschal, Missouri
John C. Pellegrini, Montana
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska
Archie Pozzi, Jr., Nevada
George V. West, New Hampshire
Joseph F. Ward, New Jersey
Robert L. Crotzer, New Mexico
Franklin C. Ward, New York
Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
Aaron 'Moody' Dalke, North Dakota
Samuel Barney, Ohio
Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma
T. Les Galloway, Oregon
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Ernesto P. Golez, Philippines
Andres Rosario Bordonada, Puerto Rico
Charles J. Zawacki, Rhode Island
E. Roy Stone, South Carolina
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee
John W.J. Richter, Texas
William E. Christoffersen, Utah
Ronald P. Aldrich, Vermont
William R. Bryant, Virginia
Robert W. Wesphal, Washington
Jack T. Gribben, West Virginia
Robert K. Zukowski, Wisconsin
Todd E. White, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

Clarence W. Jacobs, Alabama
Thomas W. Streeper, Alaska
Marco A. Valenzuela, Arizona
Hoy M. Haught, Arkansas
Mae Mitchell., California
Joseph E. Ross, Colorado
Joseph F. Mardu, Connecticut
Carl H. Platner, Delaware
Clayton S. Dann, District of Columbia
Charles Vangorden, Montana

Lawrence Strainge, Florida
Steven J. Pratschler, France
Jimmy C. Hartwick, Georgia
Eugene K. B. Won, Hawaii
Dee Collins, Idaho
Ralph D. Adler, Illinois
Bill Hicks, Indiana
Damon Christensen, Iowa
David O. Warnken, Kansas
Randall Coffman, Kentucky
John A. Bennett, Louisiana
Richard M. Blouin, Maine
Robert M. Johnson, Maryland
Alfred G. Canale, Massachusetts
Jack B. Driscoll, Mexico
Henry J. Sacha, Michigan
Ambrose J. Koll, Minnesota
Charles E. Langley, Mississippi
Sam Yancey, Missouri

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
L. Harry Easley, Washington

To serve The American Legion as a National Vice Commander, has been an honor and a privilege that I will never forget. Beginning with the Post-Convention meeting in Anaheim, California in September 1999, the National American Legion Staff led by Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant, gave an excellent briefing to familiarize us with our duties and with background information reference to The American Legion. Those briefings continued at Indianapolis and Washington, DC, increasing our overall knowledge of what The American Legion and its leadership do for our veterans, our children and our country by serving the community, state and nation on a daily basis.

I traveled, where invited, within the Western Region of the United States, which encompasses 13 western states with Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico on the east and Alaska and Hawaii on the west. This region also has two foreign countries: Mexico and the Philippines. I also have American Legion Posts on Guam, and in the city of Taipei and on the island of Taiwan. A summary of my activities over the last 12 months follows:

September 1999

3-9 The 81st National American Legion Convention at Anaheim, California
19-23 Orientation at The National American Legion Headquarters
24-26 Information Conference, Region 7, Las Vegas, Nevada
27-29 Washington, DC Headquarters orientation and Commander Alan Lance's Testimony before the joint session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees

October 1999

8-9 Commander Lance's homecoming in Boise, Idaho
11-14 The American Legion Executive Committee and Fall meetings, including hosting a Department Commanders' breakfast in Indianapolis

November 1999

5-7O Official visit to Arizona's Mid-Winter Conference at Mesa

January 2000

13-16 Official visit to Idaho's Mid-Winter Conference at Boise
21-22 Official visit to Wyoming's Mid-Winter Conference at Sheridan
28-30 Official visit to Colorado's Mid-Winter Conference at Colorado Springs

February 2000

3-6 Membership visit to Alaska's Southeast District Convention at Klawock

March 2000

3-4 Official visit to Mexico's DEC meeting at Guadalajara, Jalisco
11-12 Official visit to California's spring DEC meeting at Rio Linda
25-29 The American Legion Washington Conference, Washington, DC

March & April 2000

31-2 Information Conference, Region 8, Pendleton, Oregon

May 2000

3-7 Official visit to Alaska's Convention at Sitka
9-11 The American Legion Executive Committee and Spring Meetings in Indianapolis
28-29 Represented Commander Alan Lance at the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado, to present an award to the Outstanding Academic Cadet

June 2000

21 Official visit to Oregon's Convention at Astoria
22-25 Official visit to New Mexico's Convention at Albuquerque

July 2000

14-16 Official visit to Montana's Convention at Butte
19-23 Official visit to Washington's Convention at Yakima

September 2000

1-8 The 82nd National American Legion Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

At the very beginning, during his testimony before the joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Commander Alan Lance exhibited his strong leadership abilities by challenging Congress to do the right thing for our veterans. Those leadership abilities have continued throughout the year and it has been a pleasure to work with him and my peers, the other four National Vice Commanders.

We all know that membership is the life's blood of our organization and during the year we, at National, have continued to encourage everyone to work as hard as they can to increase the membership of all the Departments. I have personally called all District and Department Commanders within my Region several times throughout the year to encourage membership. I also wrote to all of them prior to the holidays and sent numerous cards on an individual basis during the year.

I want to thank Peggy Judd and Michele Steinmetz, my two contacts at National, for all their help and encouragement.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama

It was an honor to serve as National Vice Commander for the 1999-2000 year.

This past year, I had the opportunity to meet a number of dedicated and hard working veterans throughout the Southeast Region. The accomplishments that we achieved in my Region, over the past year were most rewarding. The Southeast Region finished first place in membership on the National Level. My Region included Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Puerto Rico.

September 1999

3-9 81st Annual National Convention, Anaheim, California
20-24 Brainstorming Sessions as Newly Elected National Vice Commander & Membership Phone Calling at Indianapolis Headquarters
24-26 National Information Conference, Region 4, Lafayette, Louisiana
26-28 National Commander's Testimony Before Joint Hearing of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Washington, DC

October 1999

1-3 National Information Conference, Region 3, Huntsville, Alabama
8-10 National Commander's Homecoming, Boise, Idaho
11-14 National Executive Committee, Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana and Host to Department Commanders at Breakfast
16 Guest Speaker at the Reserve Unit Weekend at The American Legion B. W. Howell Post No. 171, Birmingham, Alabama.

November 1999

10-11 National Veterans Day Activities in Birmingham, Alabama

11 Guest Speaker at the Veteran's Day Celebration at The American Legion B. W. Howell Post No. 171 Birmingham, Alabama
18-21 Membership visit to Department of Georgia (LaGrange, Albany, Tifton, Valdosta, Darien, and Macon)

December 1999

None

January 2000

16-19 Official Visit to Department of Mississippi for Mid-Winter Conference at Biloxi
21-23 Official Visit to Department of North Carolina for Mid-Winter Conference at Kingsport

February 2000

4-6 Official Visit to Department of North Carolina for Mid-Winter Conference at Greensboro
14-18 Membership Visit to Department of Oklahoma and Public Relations Tour of Districts and Posts

March 2000

12 Guest Speaker at American Legion's 81st Birthday Celebration at the B. W. Howell Post No. 171, Birmingham, Alabama
27-29 2000 Washington Conference, Washington, DC

April 2000

14-16 Official Visit to Department of Oklahoma, Ponca City, and Guthrie, on Celebration of Children and Youth Weekend

May 2000

8-11 National Executive Committee Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
15-16 U. S. Coast Guard Academy

June 2000

9-11 Official Visit to Department of Louisiana for Convention at Shreveport
17 Installed Post Officers at The American Legion B. W. Howell Post No. 171, Birmingham, Alabama
18 Installed Post Officers at The American Legion Madison County/ Huntsville Post No. 237 Huntsville, Alabama

29-July 1

Home Department Convention at Mobile

July 2000

13-16 Official Visit to Department of Florida for Convention at Kissimmee
20 Installed Post Officers at The American Legion Jacksonville Post No. 57, Jacksonville, Alabama

August 2000

None

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan

It has been a distinct honor and rewarding experience to serve as a National Vice Commander of The American Legion under National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr. during the 1999-2000 Year.

I would like to express my appreciation to National Adjutant Robert Spanogle and his staff at National Headquarters in Indianapolis and Washington, DC for the assistance and support they offered me.

My schedule of activities in the Midwest Region is as follows:

September 1999

3-9 Elected National Vice Commander at 81st Annual National Convention, Anaheim, California

20-24 Brainstorming Sessions as Newly Elected National Vice Commander and Membership phone calling at Indianapolis National Headquarters

24-25 Keynote Speaker at Indiana Fall Conference

26-28 Briefings with divisions of Washington Office, National Commander's Testimony before Joint Hearing of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Washington, DC and Legislative Meetings

October 1999

1-3 National Information Conference, Region 5, Evansville, Indiana

8-10 National Commander's Homecoming, Boise, Idaho

11-14 NEC, Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana & host to Department Commander's at Breakfast

30 Membership Rally, Department of Michigan at St. Helen

November 1999

11 Attended Veterans Day program, Clintongrove Cemetery, Mt. Clemens, Michigan

19-21 Attended Egyptian Past Commanders Club Meeting, Carbondale, Illinois, Visited VA Hospital, Marion, Illinois

December 1999

29 Attended Department of Michigan Membership Meeting in Lansing

January 2000

9 Attended 7th District Meeting, Lapeer, Michigan

16-23 Participated in Department of Illinois Membership Roundup. Visited numerous posts, collected membership and presented awards

26-30 Participated in Department of Ohio Membership Roundup. Visited numerous posts, collected membership, presented awards

February 2000

4-6 Attended Department of West Virginia Mid Winter Conference, Parkersburg as Keynote Speaker

14 Toured USVAMC and homeless shelter with Miss America at Detroit, Michigan

16 Attended National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr's Banquet, Lansing, Michigan

March 2000

4 Attended Post Dedication at Caro, Michigan

7 Attended 7th District Meeting, Millington, Michigan

10-12 Attended Department of Virginia Spring Conference as Keynote Speaker and also addressed Auxiliary

17-20 Participated in Department of Indiana Membership Roundup. Visited numerous posts, collected members, presented awards

26-30 Attended 2000 Washington Conference, Washington, DC

March 31- April 2, 2000

Attended National Information Conference, Region 2, Charleston, West Virginia

April 2000

4-9 Participated in Department of Ohio second Membership Roundup, visiting posts, collecting membership, presenting awards. Attended District Rally

15 Attended Department of Michigan Commander's Testimonial, Caro, Michigan
28 Attended District 5, Department of Michigan Fireman of the Year Award Ceremony in Grand Rapids, as Keynote Speaker

May 2000

1-6 Participated in Department of Virginia Second Membership Roundup, visiting posts, collecting membership, presenting awards
7 Attended Memorial Service and District Meeting, Mt. Clemens, Michigan
8-11 Attended National Spring Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana
17 Presented JROTC Awards, Centerline, Michigan
21-22 and 31 Represented National Commander Lance at U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis presented American Legion Award to Elizabeth McQuinn
Met with Commanding General Thomas Cutler, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, McClemens, Michigan to discuss Legion issues regarding military status and membership perspectives

June 2000

6 Attended 7th District Meeting at Cairo, Michigan as Keynote Speaker
7 Presented American Legion Student Award, St. Clair Shores, Michigan
8-11 Attended Buckeye Boys State, Bowling Green, Ohio. Taught Law Enforcement Session and Keynote Speaker
22-25 Attended Department of Kentucky State Convention at Louisville, as Keynote Speaker and addressed the Auxiliary

July 2000

9 Attended Chesining, Michigan Festival. Marched with The American Legion in parade
20-23 Attended Department of Michigan State Convention
29 Attended my own Homecoming hosted by American Legion Post No. 161, Department of Michigan at Sterling Heights

September 2000

Attended 82nd National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Robert F. 'Bob' Neville, New York

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as National Vice-Commander of the largest Veterans organization in our nation. While representing National Commander Alan Lance, I have witnessed the dedication and sacrifices made by our membership for the principles and ideals of our great organization.

While serving the Northeast, I had the privilege of serving with the following Department Commanders: Connecticut—Everett Shepard; Delaware—Thomas Burns; Washington DC—Dennis Kurre; Maine—Ramona Narragon; Maryland—Alfred Schmidt; Massachusetts—Thomas Shoemaker; New Hampshire—John Neylon; New Jersey—Berley Hanna, Jr.; New York—Richard Kieser; Pennsylvania—Richard Coccimiglio; Rhode Island—Russel Richards, and Vermont—William Graham.

My schedule for the 1999-2000 year was as follows:

September 1999

20-24 Brainstorming Sessions, Indianapolis, Indiana
25-29 Orientation Briefings, Washington, DC

October 1999

8-9 National Commander Alan Lance's Homecoming, Boise, Idaho

10-14 American Legion Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana
16 Past Suffolk County Commander Ed Reiter's Testimonial, Babylon, New York

November 1999

5 Visitation by National President Elizabeth Stewart, Queens, New York
10-11 Veterans' Day Services, Plattsburg, New York
12 Past Queens County Commander Ray Power's Testimonial at Queens Village, New York
19-21 Membership Drive, Department of Connecticut

December 1999

17 Department of New York Christmas Party, Albany, New York

January 2000

14-16 Department of Connecticut Mid-Winter Conference, Trumbull, Connecticut
20-23 Department of New York Mid-Winter Conference, Albany, New York
27-28 Department of Vermont Mid-Winter Conference, Burlington, Vermont
29-30 Department of New Hampshire Mid-Winter Conference, Laconia, New Hampshire

February 2000

3-7 Membership visitations Department of New York—Monroe, Ontario, Livingston and Seneca Counties
10-14 Membership visitations Department of New York—Wyoming, Chattaqua, Cattaraugus and Allegheny
18-20 Department of Maryland Executive Meetings
24-28 Membership visitations Department of New York—Genessee, Erie, Niagara and Orleans

March 2000

18 Installed officers of home post—Griswold Terry Glover Post No. 803, Southold, New York
23-24 Membership dinner Department of Rhode Island, Pawtucket, Rhode Island
26-29 Washington Conference, Washington, DC

April 2000

3 Law & Order/Children & Youth night at Floyd Bennett Post, Brooklyn, New York
7-9 National Informational Conference, Burlington, Vermont
14 National Commander's visit, Queens, New York
15 Testimonial for New Jersey Department Commander Berley Hanna, Scotch Plains, New Jersey
28-30 Testimonial for Pennsylvania Department Commander Richard Coccimiglio, State College, Pennsylvania

May 2000

8-11 National Executive Committee Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana
12-14 Testimonial for Maine Department Commander Ramona Narragon, Bath, Maine
18-20 Membership visits to Western Massachusetts
21-22 Testimonial for New Hampshire Department Commander John Neylon, Mount Washington, New Hampshire
25-26 Presented award to West Point Cadet—U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York
28-29 Ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Vietnam Veterans' Memorial—Washington, DC

June 2000

2-5 Children's Miracle Network Telethon, Orlando, Florida
7-9 Department of Massachusetts Convention, Plymouth, Massachusetts
10 Suffolk County Convention, Lindenhurst, New York

16-18 Department of Maine Convention, Presque Isle, Maine
23 Department of New Hampshire Convention, Manchester, New Hampshire
23-25 Department of Vermont Convention, Rutland, Vermont
29-30 Department of New York Boys' State, Morrisville, New York

July 2000

1 Trail of Remembrance Memorial Dedication, Canadaigua, New York
Parade for French citizens who saved the life of George Tripp after being shot down over occupied France during WW II, Springwater, New York
5-6 Department of Connecticut Convention, Stamford, Connecticut
7-9 Department of Delaware Convention, Dover, Delaware
18-23 Department of New York Convention, Niagara Falls, New York

August 2000

19-20 11th District Parade of Champions Drum and Bugle Corps Show, Scranton, Pennsylvania

September 2000

1-7 National Convention—Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The message of National Commander Alan Lance was heard loud and clear throughout the Northeast. A strong National defense, a higher quality of life for those serving in our military, protection of our glorious flag and enhancement of our community programs. Support for the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC and also soliciting donations for our National Emergency Fund were also vigorously presented.

I'd like to thank Richard Pedro and Robert Spanogle for their guidance and assistance, also Peggy Judd for coordinating my schedule and her dedication to our organization.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Robert 'Buster' Skallerud, Minnesota

This has been a most memorable and rewarding year, having the privilege to work with Commander Lance and all the member of The American Legion Family.

This is a brief report of my year of service as your National Vice Commander for the states of Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri. I have also enjoyed working with the Department of France by e-mail and newsletters. To all of you, I salute you on a job well done. You have made me proud, and keep up the good work.

September 1999

National Convention was at Anaheim, California. We were officially elected and installed. We then went on to Indianapolis for the Fall Meetings, held meetings with National Commander Lance, had photo sessions, and started our membership calling to our assigned states. From Indianapolis, we went to Washington DC. There we witnessed an outstanding Testimony by Commander Lance, and did some work of our own regarding the veterans issues.

October 1999

I attended Commander Lance's Homecoming in Boise, Idaho. Then went to Indianapolis, for more informative meetings. On October 15, I was honored to attend the Eisenhower Pilgrimage at Abilene, Kansas. October 16 & 17th "barnstorming" across the state of Kansas working on membership. On October 26th, I had the honor to present a check for $10,000 from the Richfield, Minnesota Post to "Operation Smile", and October 29-31, I attended Minnesota's Fall Conference.

November 1999

I attended a membership meeting in South Dakota. Participated in the re-dedication of the plaque noting the 1st National American Legion Convention at Minneapolis, along with Commander Lance . I spoke at a Veterans Day program, and dedicated a veterans memorial in Minnesota. Visited Wahpeton, North Dakota for the Department Commanders homecoming. I spoke at two Membership dinners in Minnesota.

December 1999

I attended membership rally's in Minnesota, and enjoyed the holidays at home with family and friends.

January 2000

Attended Mid-Winter Conference at Kearney, Nebraska, and two Mid-Winter's in Minnesota. Also attended a membership meeting in White, South Dakota.

February 2000

Attended several Department Membership Rallies in Minnesota and a Mid-Winter Conference at Minot, North Dakota. Spent a few days in Kansas and Missouri working membership.

March 2000

March was a busy month. I attended several American Legion Birthday Dinners and celebrations around Minnesota, was speaker at a St. Patrick's Day celebration, and dedicated a building addition in honor of a long time friend and great Legionnaire in Minnesota. I also attended functions at Sioux City, Iowa and attended the Washington Conference.

April 2000

The Region Six Leadership Conference was held at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I am proud to say this was well attended and very successful. I attended several of the District testimonial celebrations in Minnesota. I was proud to attend the "Aerial Roundup" Membership Rally in Minnesota.

May 2000

Attended the Minnesota Department Commander's and Auxiliary President's Testimonial. I took part in the Truman Pilgrimage in Missouri, attended the Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, attended the annual American Legion Convention at Kansas.

June 2000

Attended the South Dakota Department Convention, Nebraska Department Convention, and my home District Convention in Minnesota.

July 2000

I was honored to attend a huge 4th of July celebration parade in Minnesota. I also attended the Iowa Department Convention, and the Minnesota Department Convention. It was also a privilege to visit Cooperstown, New York and attend the Baseball Hall of Fame inductions and present the George W. Rulon American Legion Player of the Year Award to Jeremy Roberts from Rison, Arkansas.

August 2000

Attended Minnesota Stand down, where we were honored to have Heather French, Miss America 2000, in attendance. I had the privilege to throw out the first pitch at a baseball game in Milbank, South Dakota honoring the 75th Anniversary of the start of American Legion Baseball. I attended the South Dakota Commander's Homecoming.

Now the end of this wonderful year is in sight, and I'm looking forward to the National Convention in Milwaukee. It has been a most rewarding and memorable experience, working with Commander Lance, the other Vice Commanders, and each and every member

of this great American Legion Family. Thank you for this privilege, keep up the good work, and God Bless Each of You.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
Bishop David R. Brown, Louisiana

On September 9, 1999, at the Post Convention National Executive Committee Meeting held in Anaheim, California, I was appointed by National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr., to be the National Chaplain of The American Legion for the year 1999-2000. To serve the largest veterans organization as National Chaplain, was indeed an honor. As National Chaplain, I attended the following National functions at which I delivered invocations and benedictions:

Oct. 7-9: Attended National Commander's Homecoming in Boise, Idaho.

Oct. 11-13: Attended Fall NEC Conference.

Oct. 22-24: I was Chairperson for the National Chaplain's Conference.

March 26-29: Attended Legislative Rally in Washington, DC. On March 27th, I had the great honor of opening the United States Senate with prayer.

May 9-11: Attended the Spring NEC Conference in Indianapolis.

Sept. 2-7: Attended National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where I preached at the Patriotic Religious Observance.

In addition to the National Events enumerated above, I attended American Legion functions in Louisiana at the request of the Louisiana Departmental Commander and/or District and local Commanders:

Sept. 24-26: Attended Information Workshop conducted by National Staff in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Nov. 11: Conducted Veterans' Day Memorial Service in Covington, Louisiana.

Jan. 27-31: Attended and participated in Departmental Mid-Winter Conference in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Feb. 4: Participated in a Chaplains' Memorial Service (4 Chaplains) also in Shreveport.

March 5: Served as a judge in the State's Oratorical Contest for High School students in Rayne, Louisiana.

April 1: Attended a ceremony in Sulfur, Louisiana, where I blessed a new Legion Post. The Post had burned down and had been rebuilt.

March and April: Attended Spring District Conference in Leesville, Gonzales and Morgan City, Louisiana.

May and June: Attended the Installation of New Officers ceremonies in the following Posts: Slidell, Springfield, Ponchatoula, and Covington.

May 29: Conducted Memorial Day Services in Covington, Louisiana.

June 4-6: Attended ceremonies in New Orleans celebrating the opening of the National D-Day Museum.

June 8-11: Attended and participated in the Louisiana Departmental Summer Conference in Shreveport, Louisiana.

In addition to the above-mentioned functions in which I participated, I had the great honor of blessing the new National office building on the outskirts of Indianapolis on May 9th. Also, I wrote three articles for the *Dispatch*, which is an American Legion National periodical. I was interviewed by *The American Legion Magazine* for an article.

It has indeed been a great honor for me to serve The American Legion as National Chaplain this year (first chaplain of the new millennium). There were many exciting events that transpired during the year, but the two events I will never forgot were those in which I opened the U.S. Senate with prayer and the blessing of the new national office building.

I would like to thank Al Lance, National Commander, Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant, Robert Caudell, my Liaison to National Office, and all the National Staff both in Indianapolis and in Washington, DC for their assistance to me during the year.

It has been a great privilege and honor for me to serve The American Legion this year, and it's an experience that will be forever etched in my memory.

May The American Legion continue to serve veterans and families across our great country, and may the Legion continue, in the new millennium, its great work of serving God and country.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN
Robert W. Mead, Nebraska

At the conclusion of the 81st National Convention in Anaheim, California, the newly elected National Commander of The American Legion, Alan Lance of Idaho, held a National Executive Committee meeting, and I was informed that I was chosen as the National Historian for the year 2000. That was a moment I will never forget. It was a real honor and privilege to be the first National Historian of the 21st century.

The first part of October, I attended Commander Alan Lance's homecoming in Boise, Idaho, and had a great time. We all toured the State Capitol in Boise, took a historical train ride to the mountains, enjoyed an old fashion BBQ outside at the motel, saw a western shootout and had other entertainment.

From Boise, I went directly to Indianapolis for the fall conference where we judged the history books. I had been Department of Nebraska Historian for the last six years and had attended the judging of the history books five of those years, but this time I was not a judge but helped oversee the judging.

I attended the National Executive Committee meeting and gave a report including the results of the contest.

There were fifty entries in the four categories.

There were six entries in the **One Year Department Narrative** History Contest, and the first place winner was the Department of Vermont.

There were eight entries in the **One Year Department Yearbook** History Contest, and the first place winner was the Department of South Dakota.

There were eleven entries in the **One Year Post Narrative** History Contest, and the first place winner was Womens Post No. 118 of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

There were 25 entries in the **One Year Post Yearbook** History Contest, and the first place winner was Santiam Post No. 52 of Lebanon, Oregon.

There were 36 judges and trainees to judge the books.

While at the Fall Conference, there was a reception for Miss America, Heather Rene French, and I had the privilege of attending and meeting her. The next day she addressed the NEC Meeting and stated her platform was helping homeless veterans.

Harry Crow, Department of West Virginia, the President of the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL), hosted a dinner at the National Headquarters Cafeteria. We were disappointed to hear that the cafeteria would close at the end of the year.

On November 11, Veterans Day, I was asked to speak to the kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade classes at Centennial School in Utica, Nebraska. I told them what it was like to be in the Army in combat, and in a POW camp in Germany. A short time later, I spoke to the history class in my hometown of Friend, Nebraska, and told them some of the same things, but mostly what it was like to be in combat and in the POW prison in Germany.

During December, I was invited to many post Christmas parties, and in the first part of January 2000, I attended the Department of Nebraska Mid-Year Conference in Kearney where they held a great homecoming reception for me, which was also my birthday, so I had two parties at the same time.

In March, I attended the Washington Conference in Washington, DC. It was my first visit to our National Capitol except for a short layover on my way to Europe during World War II. We had breakfast with our congressmen from Nebraska, and later met with them in their offices and asked questions of them and talked with them.

While there, we attended a rally for the flag amendment and later the Senate voted on the amendment. We were disappointed that it did not pass.

On Memorial Day I participated in programs at four different cemeteries and was the speaker at one of them.

The last weekend in June was our Department Convention, and our newly elected Department Commander Gene Twiford appointed me Department Historian for the seventh year in a row.

I have made plans for the Historian's Luncheon in Milwaukee during the National Convention. Our speaker will be a congressman from Wisconsin, the Honorable Mark Green.

Being National Historian has been the greatest honor I have received in my 56 years of continuous membership in The American Legion. I would like to thank Commander Alan Lance for appointing me to be the first National Historian of the 21st century.

I could not have managed all my work this year without the help of Commander Lance, Richard Holmes, Joseph Hovish, Harry Crow, Delfo Barabani, Nellie P. DeBaker, and all the others who helped me.

National Judge Advocate
P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

Contracts

The following fifty-five (55) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

(1) Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and The American Legion Department of Missouri National Convention Corporation, covering the convocation of the 2003 Convention of The American Legion in the City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, has been executed.

(2) Agreement by and between The American Legion and R. R. Donnelly & Sons Company, whereby R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company will produce and distribute *The American Legion Magazine*.

(3) Agreement by and between The American Legion and Maxim Group, Inc., whereby Maxim Group, Inc. will provide contract employees for the Management Information Systems Division.

(4) Sales and maintenance Agreements by and between The American Legion and Van Ausdall & Farrar, Inc., whereby Van Ausdall & Farrar, Inc. will install and maintain certain scanning equipment and software updates.

(5) Lease Agreement by and between The American Legion and Dalton Resources, LLC, whereby Dalton Resources, LLC will lease certain scanning and software equipment to the Management Information Systems Division.

(6) State of Understanding by and between The American Legion and Edtech, Inc., whereby Edtech, Inc. will participate in the development of the content of The American Legion's publication *NEED A LIFT* – 50TH Edition.

(7) Lease Agreement by and between The American Legion and Dalton Resources, LLC. for lease of computer equipment.

(8) Housing Contract between The American Legion and Marymount University to provide for lodging and food service for American Legion Boys Nation held on July 21-29, 2000.

(9) Maintenance Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fuller Engineering Service Corporation wherein Fuller Engineering Services will maintain and service the Liebert Equipment located at Bldg. #2, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, Indiana.

(10) Agreement by and between The American Legion and Quality Concepts, whereby Quality Concepts will provide computer room subfloor cleaning and structural services.

(11) Music Library License Agreement by and between The American Legion and Network Music, LLC wherein Network Music, LLC will provide musical themes in accordance with Network's published licensing plans solely for the purpose of synchronizing recordings for use in training or marketing presentations, etc. by The American Legion.

(12) Purchase Agreement and Software License Agreement by and between The American Legion and Oce Printing Systems USA, Inc. wherein Oce Printing Systems USA, Inc. will deliver and install certain computer equipment and software at Bldg. #2, Lee Road, Indianapolis, Indiana.

(13) License Agreement by and between The American Legion and Aldon Computer Group wherein Aldon Computer Group will provide computer hardware and software and training services to Bldg. #2, Lee Road, Indianapolis, Indiana.

(14) Purchase Agreement by and between The American Legion and Telecommunications Concepts, Inc. wherein Telecommunications Concepts, Inc. will provide and install cabling infrastructure at The American Legion, Washington Office.

(15) Memorandum of Understanding by and between The American Legion and the United States Army Recruiting Command for assistance in the recruiting environment for Army Recruiters.

(16) Three (3) Agreements by and between The American Legion and Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., wherein Haynes & Partners will provide certain advertising and marketing with regard to the Honor Guard 2000 Program; will develop and mail creative membership solicitation packages and act as marketing manager and consultant of The American Legion's member benefit programs.

(17) Lease Agreement by and between The American Legion and Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., wherein Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. will lease approximately 15,300 square feet of space in a building located at 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46216 to The American Legion for occupancy of certain Divisions within The American Legion.

(18) Distribution Agreement by and between The American Legion and Donnelly Marketing Group, LLC, as agent of Chicken Soup Enterprises, Inc., wherein Donnelly Marketing Group, LLC will distribute *Chicken Soup for the Soul* booklets to The American Legion Members and related organizations and make donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and the Children's Miracle Network for each booklet distributed.

(19) Affinity Agreement by and between The American Legion and Budget Rent A Car Corporation wherein Budget Rent a Car Corporation will provide discount car rental costs to members, employees and subsidiaries of The American Legion.

(20) Eight (8) Baseball Regional Tournament Contracts and the Contract for The American Legion World Series.

(21) Five (5) 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)
Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.
S. A. VanDyk, Inc.

(22) Twenty (20) 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
Argus Group, Inc.
Dataquick Corporation
Guarantee Trust Life Ins. Co.
Harland, Inc.
Info, USA
MDS
National General Ins. Company
Pacific Communication
VisCom Network
WebTrend Direct
AdSell Companies
Alaniz & Sons, Inc.
Moore Response Marketing Services
R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company
Accudocs, LLC/The Creative Group
SCI Management L.P.
Quincy Sun
Graphic Arts Center
Zipsort

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF SHAWNEE COUNTY, KANSAS
DIVISION 7

JERMAINE ADAMS AND BONNIE ADAMS,
BY AND THROUGH THEIR NATURAL
GUARDIAN AND NEXT FRIEND, LISA FISHER,
Plaintiffs,

Vs. Case No. 99-C-201

THE JORDAN-PATTERSON POST 319 OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, INC.,
KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, THE AMERICAN
LEGION: AND WILLIE JACKSON,
Defendants.

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. It is the second one of the same name. The prior suit was dismissed without prejudice by the Court because plaintiffs' attorney had a conflict of interest.

Decedent Bonnie Dexter Adams allegedly was sitting in his car in the parking lot of American Legion Jordan-Patterson Post No. 319 when he was shot and killed allegedly by another patron of the Post. The natural children of the decedent filed a wrongful death and negligence suit. A motion to dismiss has been filed and scheduled for hearing in September.

North Carolina
Harnett County

In the General Court of Justice
Superior Court Division

File No. 99CV 01054

DENNIS MCNEILL
Administrator of the Estate of
VALENCIA MIRANDA MCNEILL,

Plaintiff,

v.

THE AMERICAN LEGION: AND
CHARLES COOK AMERICAN
LEGION
POST # 193, INC.

Defendants.

This is also a death case. Valencia McNeill allegedly entered Post #193 to attend a dance on April 11, 1998 where two other individuals had an altercation, which resulted in McNeill being shot and killed. The matter has been referred to our insurance company and local counsel. The American Legion has answered. A summary judgment motion will be filed.

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, Plaintiffs, 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. CIVIL DIVISION	)	CIVIL DIVISION No.: 1112 of 1999 GD

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 file an answer. The case is continuing against the Post.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BRISTOL, SS		SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL ACTION NO. A99-01294
THE AMERICAN LEGION Plaintiff v. LEAVENS AWARDS COMPANY, INC. Defendant	)	

The American Legion filed a Complaint and Jury Demand against Leavens alleging that Leavens was unlawfully withholding certain dies and tools belonging to The American Legion used by Leavens in the manufacture of emblem products for The American Legion. A restraining order was issued against Leavens prohibiting it from selling or conveying any of The American Legion's dies and tools in its possession.

After a hearing, the Court entered a preliminary injunction prohibiting Leavens from selling or transferring the dies and tools and ordered Leavens to return the proprietary dies and tools to The American Legion. No attorney or representative of Leavens entered an appearance, although the principal telephoned the Judge in the middle of the hearing.

The American Legion filed a Motion for Default Judgment for collection of all legal fees expended and the Court entered an order of judgment in the amount of $48,376.97. Since Leavens is out of business and in dissolution, this judgment is uncollectible. It was offset against the final two bills for services from Leavens. The case is closed.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

THE AMERICAN LEGION, a United States Corporation, Plaintiff, vs. IMPERIAL VALLEY AMERICAN LEGION HI-PASS CAMP, a California Nonprofit Corporation, Defendant.	)	Case No. 99 CV2614 BTM (LSP)

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 will be reviewed in ninety (90) days to see if defendants have complied.

SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

MICHAEL DOE, a minor, by and through his Guardian ad litem, and DOES 1-20	)	Case No. 734531
Plaintiffs	)	
vs.	)	
HI-PASS CAMP, AMERICAN LEGION, AMERICAN LEGION HI-PASS CAMP CORP, AMERICAN LEGION OF IMPERIAL VALLEY, AND ROES 1-100,	)	
Defendants.	)	

This is a complaint for negligence against the National Organization of The American Legion. Michael Doe, a minor, was attending an overnight camp and was allegedly attacked by his camp counselor. Thereafter, the camp counselor was criminally prosecuted and convicted for sexual assault. The complaint for negligence alleges that each defendant is legally responsible for plaintiff's injuries sustained as a result of the camp counselor's actions.

The American Legion filed a Request for Dismissal with prejudice and the Court entered an order dismissing The American Legion *only*. The case is closed as to the National Organization.

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 has been filed. The case is pending.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF KANAWHA COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

REGINA GRASS, Administratrix
of the Estate of Timothy Ray Moody,
and REGINA GRASS, individually,

Plaintiff,

Civil Action No. 99-C-987

JOHNNY ADKINS; TAMMY STANLEY, Individually
and/or d/b/a WHITEY'S TAVERN; DOT BROWNING,
THE LINCOLN COUNTY POST NO. 111 AMERICAN LEGION,
INC.; AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF WEST
VIRGINIA, INC. (THF); and AMERICAN LEGION,
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, INC.

This is a dram shop case. Plaintiff has filed a complaint for wrongful death of her son, Timothy Ray Moody, on behalf of his estate and herself, individually. The complaint alleges that Johnny Adkins, after being served alcoholic drinks at the Lincoln County Post No. 11, threatened violence and shot and killed Timothy Ray Moody. A Motion to Dismiss has been filed. The case is pending

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

LARRY HILLIS, ET AL	:
Plaintiffs	:
Vs.	: Case No. 00-1306 CV
THE AMERICAN LEGION d/b/a	:
AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL,	
et al, including	:
James Quinlan	
Defendants	

This was a baseball case in Maryland. Plaintiffs' lawyer tried to have the rules changed so plaintiffs could play for a team of their choice despite the fact that this would totally destroy the by-pass rule which is one of the rules that insures teams are local representatives.

When the Department refused to change the National Rules, Plaintiffs sued a number of individuals and the National Organization as well as James Quinlan, the Deputy Director of the program. At an ex parte hearing for a temporary restraining order, the plaintiffs could not convince the judge to grant an order because of defects in the complaint and petition. Plaintiffs then appealed on an emergency basis to the Court of Special Appeals, which dismissed the appeal.

The American Legion was represented on the Appeal by brief. Here, too, plaintiffs violated the local and Maryland Rules of Procedure.

Even though this case was designed to force The American Legion to change the rules and abuse the Court's jurisdiction, local counsel advised the changes of obtaining a favorable decision for our fees was slim and would most likely cost as much as we would receive even if we were successful. Hence, no further action was taken. The case is closed.

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 1014 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 three (3) 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 218 scripts 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 National Judge Advocate has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1999 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 office of the National Judge Advocate has filed all of the necessary Annual Return Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1999 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 prepared 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 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: Administrative Communications, 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS
June 1, 1999—May 31, 2000

Labels ran	149,782
PC (pages)	126,427
Binding	865
Copies made	11,271,428

MAIL
June 1, 1999—May 31, 2000

Incoming Letters/Parcels	942,282
Outgoing Letters/Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales)	9,554,610

FREIGHT AND EXPRESS
June 1, 1999—May 31, 2000

Out (cartons)	9,200
Out (pounds)	322,000
UPS (in)	5,510
UPS (out)	8,955

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. *The American Legion Magazine* index is being continued using our specialized database. Converting the index created before 1980 to machine readable information will be a considerable task.

Requests for information have put a considerable workload on the Library staff. Many individuals who might not have picked up paper and pen have no hesitation to ask questions via e-mail. E-mail comes from many countries, with inquiries about replacing lost military records, researching history of the 1944 GI Bill, and learning details about our nation's 20th Century wars. Requests for genealogical research and pre-20th Century are often referred to other libraries and associations.

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 of the other major projects for publication or higher education requirements included:

- GI Bill, Public Law 16, 1943 (two different researchers)
- Ft. Benjamin Harrison During WW I
- Genealogy
- 1950 Boys State
- Veterans Day Council
- Korean War Photographs
- The Beginning of the Legion in Illinois to Present Time
- Demobilization Politics/Instant Organization of The American Legion and its Continuance
- Bonus March
- Conservation Movement in Indiana during the 1920s and 1930s
- Study of *The American Legion Magazine*—October 1997 through January 1998

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 has donated this past year such items as: *Inside the Foreign Legion, The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB; Unsolved Mysteries of World War II: People & Plots; Betrayal: How the Clinton Administration Undermined American Security; Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America; In Our Own Words; The Victors—Eisenhower and His Boys: The Men of World War II; MacArthur's WAR: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero; The Book of Honor: Covert Lives and Classified Deaths at the CIA; Fortress: The American Military and America, the Consequences of Peace; American Military Patch Guide; Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain; Hitler's Traitor: Martin Bormann and the Defeat of the Reich; A Spy for All Seasons: My Life in the CIA; Our Sacred Honor: Words of Advice from the Founders in Stories, Letters, Poems, and Speeches.*

Among other new books added to The American Legion Library, along with the names of the donors, are the following: *Reports and Resolutions Adopted at the First National Convention of The American Legion* donated by PNC 'Jake' Comer, Quincy, Massachusetts; *The Coast Guard Navy of World War II* donated by William E. Knight, South Whidbey, Washington; *Meet the King: Story of Second A.E.F.s Pilgrimage After Hitting the Paris Trail* donated by Department Adjutant Charles T. Allemann, San Francisco, California;

Air Raid Wardens Instructors Manual donated by Sam and Helen Kalb, Silver Spring, Maryland; *Twentieth Century War Veterans: Pulaski County, Kentucky* donated by Pulaski County Historical Society, Inc., Somerset, Kentucky; *Battle History 532 A. A. A. W. BN. World War II* donated by Bernard Fuertges, Bradford, Illinois; *Passport to Super Leadership* donated by Col. J. Fred Mitchell, USA (Ret.), Brewton, Alabama; 1946 Issue of *The American Legion Magazine* donated by Tony Rabbia, Contoocook, New Hampshire; *The Coast Guard at War: Vietnam 1965-1975* donated in honor of George Robert Grochowski by his wife, Pauline, Wichita, Kansas; *From The Bottom of Gold Mountain: A Biography of Soleng Tom* presented to National Commander Alan G. Lance by William C. Bingham, NECman from Arizona, on behalf of the Tom family; *Basic Field Manual: Soldier's Handbook; Basic Field Manual: Infantry Drill Regulations; Fall-In: Greetings to the Men Who Serve Today from your Comrades of 1917 and 1918* donated by Ms. Jackie Beck, Indianapolis, Indiana; *American Institutions: War Department Education Manual* donated by Steve Wilson, Indianapolis, Indiana; *The American Legion Story* donated by Paul Allen, Indianapolis, Indiana; *Letters from "Somewhere..."* and *The Nightingale's Song* donated by Past National Historian Robert W. Mead; *The Manual of Ceremonies* signed by Henry H. Dudley, National Adjutant and *Fall-In* donated by Ms. Jean W. Steadman, Whittier, California.

General Correspondence Received and Filed	5,296
Subject Correspondence Received and Filed	3,217
Bulletins, Reports, etc. Received and Filed	346
Periodicals Received	9,810
Books, Pamphlets and *The American Legion Magazine* Catalogued	361
Correspondence Written by National Historian	430
Correspondence Written by Librarian	520
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Mailed	529
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Returned	169
Prominent Legionnaire Entries to Membership File	28,580
Photos Indexed	4,751
Requests Answered via Telephone	7,994
Requests Answered via Visits to Library	529
Follow-ups of Correspondence	370
Items Microfilmed	31,304
Requests of Membership Listing	307
Rolls of Microfilm Added to Stock	20
E-mail	9,379

Museum
Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Curator

The Emil A. Blackmore Museum continues to be visited by individuals and groups. Our visitor book also show most states represented. Countries represented include the Philippines, The Netherlands, Canada, Puerto Rico and Greece.

As with a library's book catalog, so too, the museum has begun a better organization of its material. The database should eventually lead to better displays at a reduced cost in time.

Once again, we thank our donors for their contributions to the collection. Significant objects added in the past year, with the donor's name, include the following: *Good Defeats Evil*, a significant sculpture by Zurab Tsereteli, in bronze, number 53 of 160, donated by

Sonia Lyris and Devin Ben-Hur, of Tigard, near Portland, Oregon; 1995 edition of the 1975, 57th National Convention along with the badge and, a badge from the 1930 Boston National Convention donated by Michael G. Mullenix, Funstown, Maryland; 1999 Department Convention Medal donated by Peter E. Pappas, Three Rivers, Massachusetts; Reproduction of *Honolulu Star—Bulletin 1st Extra* dated December 7, 1941 and issues of *Huddle* donated by Henry P. Betsold, Hatfield, Massachusetts; Song entitled, *Follow the Flag* donated by Lt.Col. James A. Ray, Mantua, Ohio; Box of Memorabilia donated by Lew Wood, Indianapolis, Indiana; Evans Flag & Decorating Company American Legion Banner donated by Past National Commander Joe L. Matthews, Fort Worth, Texas; Trophy presented in 1922 to the Charles S. Henry Post donated by R. Lovie Spinelli, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Ballpoint and Fountain Pen Set donated by Col. William Barrett Taylor, III, Arlington, Virginia; Three Convention Delegate Badges, First Division and Fifth Field Artillery material, five copies of *The American Legion Weekly,* a copy of *Stars and Stripes* and newsletter for Middle Georgia Voiture 1145 of the 40/8 donated by Ray E. Rogers, Port Clinton, Ohio; Three photographs from the 1934 National Convention in Miami, Florida donated from her father's collection by Agnes V. Boxrucker, Owen, Wisconsin; National Convention Badges for 1954, 1966, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1989 and Pins for Geiger, Flynt, Lance, Miles (2), Comer, Miller, Turner, and Seattle donated by Charles L. Davis, Falls Church, Virginia; 1932 Past Department Commander Medal, WW II Selective Service Medal and 2 photos donated by Mrs. June Clancy, Bethesda, Maryland from her Deceased Godfather Ferdinand G. Fraser's personal effects; Legion Uniform and Cap, Carnival Raffle Tickets from Cairo, Illinois Post No. 406 donated by Ray E. Rogers, Port Clinton, Ohio, from his deceased father's personal effects; United States Military Insignias and Crests donated by Ms. Estella Lally, Baltimore, Maryland; Persian Gulf Map, Vermont First Town Meeting and the Cheney History Postal Cancellation Events of the Washington, Vermont, and a 1762 survey of portions of Vermont donated by R. Paul Tenney, Washington, Vermont; Brother's W.W. II Personal Mementos donated by Phyllis A. Wilson, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Plaque presented to National Commander Alan G. Lance, by Ed Hearn, Lenexa, Kansas; *Flag Etiquette,* published by the U.S. Navy Recruiting Service, Program of the Official Convention of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War, 19th Annual Department Convention, Akron, Ohio, July 26-18, 1940, *Constitution* of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War, Department of Ohio, December 12, 1938, *Bulletin No. 1,* American Legion National Convention, September 21-24, 1931 donated by the Rainbow Division Veterans Association, Seattle Washington; 1941 and 1999 Milwaukee, Wisconsin papers depicting American Legion National Convention Parades donated by Eleanora Groll, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Mr. Robert H. Barnes donated the following: three copies of First Day of Issue Stamps, New Years 2000; First Day Issue Stamps—Sir Alan Cobham, Flt. Lt. A.W. Beauchamp-Proctor, Air Chief Marshal Sir John Nelson Boothman; The Last Day of 1999; First Day of 2000; First Day Covers—Isle of Man Millennium Midnight—Issue Dates: 31 December 1999—1 January 2000; First Day Cover of the Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota; Package of 20th Century Trains Stamped Postal Card Collection; First Day Covers—No 51 Squadron, Royal Air Force, 20th Anniversary of Comet 2 XK655, 27th August 1973; No 13 (PR) Squadron, Royal Air Force, 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the Squadron, 10th January 1975; No 201 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Guernsey's Own Squadron and No 72 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Commemorating the 55th Operational Anniversary of the Squadron, 2nd March 1973; First Day Covers—Perspectives on Britain; 20 designs of postal stamped cards of different American Flags; 20 designs of The Legends of Baseball; First Day Covers for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the Squadron 1st October 1975, Commemoration of the Belgian Squadron No. 349 Royal Air Force, The Battle of

Britain—Invasion Month, 7 September 1940, 200th Anniversary of the First Manned Aerial Voyage made in a Montgolfier Hot Air Balloon on 21st November 1783 by Pilot Jean Donnet; Stamps depicting four generations of "The House of Windsor"; Three new RAF Tea Towels: Spitfire and Hurricane, Royal Air Forces Association, and Royal Air Force; No. 230 Squadron and No. 3 Squadron of the Royal Air Force.

INTERNET OPERATIONS
Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director

The Internet Operations Center of The American Legion, formerly a function of the Library Division, has been moved to Building #2, at Fort Benjamin Harrison, and now resides in the Member Benefits Division. The American Legion web-site (http://www.legion.org) continues to provide the organization with an efficient and effective means in which to communicate with not only fellow Legionnaires, but also the general public.

The American Legion's web-site provides over 12,000 web pages of information relating to the organization and is divided into easy to navigate areas. Some of the more popular areas include: Flag Education, 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. The CFA web-site provides over 250 pages of the most current flag protection amendment information to the 130 member organizations of the Citizens Flag Alliance, representing over 20 million Americans.

The Internet Operations staff is responsible for reading all incoming e-mail to the organization, through the web-site and forwarding them to the appropriate divisions for response. Over 20,000 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, 1528 new members have signed up via The American Legion's web-site, more than double the number from last year. 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.

Internet Operations also assisted 2 Departments with the hosting and designing of their web-sites this year and completed another successful Veteran's Day card program. Over 21,000 cards were sent via The American Legion web-site to active military and veterans worldwide.

Staff assigned to this area includes one full time manager, a full-time administrator and a summer intern.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)
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.

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 US Postal Services 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' revenue programs, mailing labels for various publications and a variety of letters and fundraising pieces are all printed by IT.

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.

The Americanism Commission participates each year in The American Legion's series of National Information Conferences. These conferences are held at eight locations in different regions of the country during the spring and fall. The Commission uses these workshops 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 1999-2000 American Legion year.

Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its present form of government, it must have a citizenry which 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 65 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, began sponsorship of American Legion Boys Nation. This year, The American Legion celebrated its 55th anniversary session of Boys Nation.

Both Boys State and Boys Nation are unique programs that emphasize participation and personal experience in a respective model. A "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 65 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 2000, the program was again held in Washington, DC, during the month of 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. Justin Chapa (TX) was elected President of the 55th 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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 1-5, 2000.

National High School Oratorical Contest

The American Legion has awarded over three million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual National High School Oratorical Contest. This program, in its 63rd 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 2000-2001.

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 several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of the intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 63rd annual National Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana. The three finalists were: First place—Max Miller, Ankeny, Iowa; second place—Matthew Moon, Anchorage, Alaska; third place— Mai Anh Huynh, Evansville, Indiana.

Boys Scouts of America

The American Legion charters approximately 2,500 Scout Units in communities across the country involving more than 75,000 youth. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion selected Erik Swensen of Smithfield, Utah, as its 2000 Eagle Scout of the Year. His selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive a $10,000 scholarship.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a $2,500 scholarship. They were Robert Markelewicz, Jr., Cranston, Rhode Island; Joshua Davenport, Roper, North Carolina; and Keith Brudnicki, Novato, California.

In addition, an estimated 3,700 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 575 active clubs with almost 10,000 young people participating.

The tenth annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 8-13, 2000, 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 1,300 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in each category, as well as in each of the three positions of prone, kneeling and standing.

The 2000 winners were Daniel Crews of Winston, Georgia (Precision) and Joshua Peters of Richmond, Virginia (Sporter). Both received $1,000 scholarships.

Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund

The American Legion develops, publicizes and administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund. This Fund, established in 1957, was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in either 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 the year 2000-2001, awarded twenty $2,500 scholarships to recipients in sixteen states for one year's study to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 44 years to 737 scholarships, totaling $1,414,500 to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 2001-02 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 our 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* for use in elementary schools. Well over a 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. A total of 49 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions as of August 1, 1995, in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact and enforce 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, honesty and physical fitness.

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 75th season in 2000. Over 95,000 players on 5,500 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. Almost $1.2 million dollars is appropriated by the Legion's National Organization to conduct eight Regional Tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Former American Legion Baseball players Sparky Anderson and Carlton Fisk were elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Forty-four other 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 62 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, respect for the rules, are lessons that are learned for a lifetime. American Legion Baseball also provided $61,000 in scholarships to deserving players. These scholarships are based on scholarship, leadership, character and financial need.

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. This is a program of the Americanism Commission and reports of its activities are given 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 a publication known as *Firing Line,* which began regular dissemination of information on certain groups and organizations participating in activities of a subversive nature.

Every effort is made to maintain a publication which is current and up-to-date. During the past year, *Firing Line* has reported on matters concerning desecration of the U.S. Flag, illegal immigration, espionage and terrorism.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Dr. Charles L. Vawter, Jr., Arizona, Chairman

The National Committee on Education, established in 1976, is the only joint committee comprised of members of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee on Education are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American Legion, 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 which 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 democracy. 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 unless there is the bulwark of 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 every individual to pursue his 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 his potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers which 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 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 of *Need A Lift?*; (3) promotion of involvement 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 this program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is **Children-Teachers-Parents Helping Students Achieve.** The observance will be November 12-18, 2000.

The publication *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains 152 pages of scholarships, grants 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 over 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 handled 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 Scholarships, the Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship and Samsung American Legion Scholarships. Through these scholarship programs, worthy students are able to further their education.

The *PACT* Handbook is the guide for The American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the 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 the 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
Paul B. Phifer, Jr., Richmond, Virginia—Vice-Chairman (Deceased)
Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska—Commander's Representative
Kermit Holtgrewe, Belleville, Illinois—Consultant

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

Since our beginning, The American Legion has actively voiced concerns related to the care, welfare, and education of our Nation's children and youth. As early as November 1919, we were asking local Posts to aid the widows and children of our deceased comrades.

Throughout 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. Our early years were devoted to progressive child care and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations, many states and communities were urged to improve their own child welfare provisions.

This development of new and improved 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.

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.

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:

i. 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.
ii. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provides services for children and youth. Always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
iii. 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:

i. PREVENTION—Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
ii. EDUCATION—Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
iii. 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.
iv. MATERIAL AID—Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past eighty-one 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 continue, its 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

1999-2000 Program

Each year, during the month of May, The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth meets to discuss what programs it wants to emphasize. The National staff is then directed to research these areas of concern and publish materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 1999-00, our Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following quality of life issues, which directly impact our young people on the National level:

Child Health—Children's Hospitals
Child Safety—Youth Violence in the Schools
Child Safety—Teenage Suicide Prevention
Family Preservation—Family Life Education & Parental Responsibilities

Children's Hospitals: Our partnership with the Children's Miracle Network continues to flourish. Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 14 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 made to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

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 1999-2000 program year, National Vice Commander Robert Neville (NY), together with the Auxiliary's National President Elizabeth Stewart and Rick Cook, the National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, made two appearances on the CMN national broadcast June 2-3. During one appearance, they presented a check for a combined American Legion family total of $1,120,000 dollars. 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.

Through the urging of The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth, Youth Violence in the Schools was unanimously approved as one of our major areas of concern. We have developed support materials to be disseminated to communities through our volunteer network of Legion members.

Pennsylvania Legionnaire William 'Billy' Denny designed an innovative youth program entitled "Staying on the Right Side of the Law." Funded by the local American Legion, the program introduces high school students to the inner workings of the criminal justice system with the goal of dispelling common misconceptions, one student at a time. "Staying on the Right Side of the Law" is providing students with unique opportunities to experience various facets of the criminal justice system.

It is gratifying to see Legionnaires directly involved in their communities; helping to make a difference and, by doing so, promoting "A Square Deal for Every Child." They not only bring great credit to themselves and The American Legion, but more importantly, their actions are a force for change. Through proactive programs, like "Staying on the Right Side of the Law," at-risk youth are encouraged to develop a respect for the criminal justice system, thereby broadening their perceptions of the world around them.

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 has committed suicide and as many as 40 others have made 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 go to waste.

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 down 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 mandate, 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 meantime, to conduct our own observance of this important event.

Workshops were conducted for our membership on "Developing Capable Young People" at four regional sites during our 2000 National Information Conferences. Four more workshops will be conducted in the fall. These workshops help prepare adults who work with young people to help them develop the three perceptions (capabilities, significance, and

influence) and the four skills (intrapersonal, interpersonal, systemic and judgment) that determine how effectively people deal with life. Young people who gain strength in these assets normally increase in character, resiliency and knowledge essential for successfully meeting the challenges of life, learning, and relationships.

The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth continues to cultivate their relationships with the National Crime Prevention Council and the Disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

The American Legion, in conjunction with the National Crime Prevention Council, continues The American Legion/McGRUFF Safe Kids Communities Program. A key part of the program is the distribution of the McGRUFF Safe Kids Identification Kits to children ages 4 through 12. These booklets contain safety tips, a child identification record complete with fingerprint ink, and offer families an opportunity to review, in positive and non-threatening ways, personal safety guidelines and procedures.

We continue to be involved with the community distribution of these kits, working in conjunction with local law enforcement, schools and other organizations concerned with protecting children and increasing community safety.

The Disabled Youth Leadership Forums are designed to educate our next generation of disabled leaders. The forums are an outgrowth of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD). Their goal is to continue expanding roles in the disabled work force by providing leadership skills to disabled youth of today to better fill our society's needs of tomorrow.

The Commission urges the Departments to provide leadership, support and to work closely with their respective State Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to assist in the establishment of disabled Youth Leadership Forums. In 1999, the Legion helped establish state level Youth Leadership Forums in ten states, with twenty-five additional states committing for the year 2000. The Commission continues to urge local Posts to encourage and sponsor disabled young people from their communities to actively participate in these disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

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, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. In 1999, the program aided 960 children with over $302,983.00 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 expense 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 the father 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 26th 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 being maimed and drugged by "treats" they had gathered from neighbors 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 during 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 our state organizations and all are encouraged to use them to help protect the well-being of our children.

To supplement the brochure, the Commission produces a project guidebook. This guidebook provides suggestions to local 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."

Regional Children & Youth Award program (VISION): This is a recognition program for our Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units. Each year, we encourage our Posts and Units to submit a project they have conducted during the past year that has benefited the youth of their community. As an incentive, beautiful plaques and dated lapel pins are presented to the winners and awarded in the presence of their peers at their National Information Conferences each year.

Whether it is a Certificate of Participation, a Certificate of Excellence, or a plaque and lapel pin, all Posts are winners. But the true winners in a program such as this are the children and youth of the various communities throughout the country. They are the ones that ultimately benefit from these efforts.

Child Safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920s. 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, which 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. Even in somewhat environmentally controlled homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Our 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 our children 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. Our 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 1999 NICs saw an increase in the number of new attendees for both Legion and Auxiliary members. At these workshops, we share our programs and methods of implementation with the Posts and Units. In 1999, our NIC's were:

Region 1—South Portland, Maine—April 23-25
Region 2—Coraoplis, Pennsylvania—May 22-23
Region 3—Huntsville, Alabama—October 1-3
Region 4—Lafayette, Louisiana—September 24-26
Region 5—Evansville, Indiana—October 1-3
Region 6—Fargo, North Dakota—May 14-16
Region 7—Las Vegas, Nevada—September 24-26
Region 8—Cheyenne, Wyoming—May 14-16

We move our National Information Conferences each year, from city to city within each Region. This gives Posts in each area 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 our annual program.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one of the means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goal during the 1999-2000 program year. At our National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8 - 10, 1998, the following mandates were introduced for our attention during this Congress:

Children in Pornographic Literature: Res. 306-1998. 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. 308-1998. 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. 304-1998. 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 vaccinated. 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. 305-1998. 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 those local school boards, law enforcement agencies and their state organizations 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. 303-1998. One of the basic principles of our 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. Every year we urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

School Nutrition Program: Res. 302-1998. 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.

Catastrophic Illness Among Children: Res. 309-1998. It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well being. Through our 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 assist financially, those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Drug Trafficking: Res. 30 -1998. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution is to urge funding to all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of these 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.

Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 301-1998. 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 progenies 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 created by 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.

Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Res. 310-1998. 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 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. The need to bring the national economy under control cannot overshadow 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.

Oppose the Legalization of Marijuana: Res. 26–1998. The members of The American Legion are committed to protecting the health and safety of our citizens, especially our children. Various states are now under attack by groups of persons who are part of a well-organized and well-financed national movement to legalize marijuana. These groups are targeting specific states by organizing initiative campaigns to place on the ballot for the next general election measures to legalize marijuana. One initiative that is currently being circulated misleads the voters to believe that there are medicinal uses for marijuana, even though the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society and other medical associations have rejected smoking marijuana as the only way to achieve medicinal benefits. Research demonstrates that marijuana actually harms the brain, heart, lungs, and immune system and that it impairs learning, memory, perception, judgement and the ability to operate a motor vehicle. Marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 controlled substance under federal law, indicating that it has a high potential for abuse and that it is recognized as a gateway substance of abuse that frequently leads to abuse of other drugs including cocaine, "crack" cocaine, methamphetamine "speed" and heroin. The Commission feels the legalization of marijuana would decrease the perception of risk associated with the abuse of

drugs, especially in the eyes of our youth. Therefore, The American Legion opposes any effort to describe marijuana as medicine or that the possession and use of it be further decriminalized for medicinal or any other purpose. In addition, any information provided to the general public that attempts to mislead them into believing that marijuana has medicinal uses for which less harmful, legal and medical substitutes could be utilized is hereby rejected.

These are the highlights of our 1999-00 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged its Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances as they deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. Our Children & Youth legislation program is a never-ending process, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children—everywhere.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 76 years, the National Commission on Children & Youth records activities from 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 $19,374,280. To this amount, we proudly add $4,959,956 by the Auxiliary. An additional $200,333 was given to 466 families in need through our Temporary Financial Assistance program. To this we add other contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation in the amount of $277,400. This amounts to a grand total of expenditures and contributions to the total Children & Youth program in 1999-00 of $24,811,969.

Children & Youth Literature

During the 1999-00 program year, hundreds of thousands of pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division as it attempted to further the objectives of our 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 4,388 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 must take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of the Legion and the Auxiliary. Many hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice cannot be repaid. We are indeed thankful that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in The American Legion. Special mention must also go to our National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr., not because of his rank, but because of his sincere dedication and verbal support for our program during this past year. In addition, the Commission sincerely thanks National Adjutant Robert Spanogle for his support and cooperation. The American Legion does 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 Square, New Jersey—Consultant
Talmage C. Carawan, Rockville, Maryland
James P. Holley, Center, Texas
Cletus A. Lehne, North Aurora, 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 what is now called the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted over five 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 1999 the Board of Directors approved grants to 15 non-profit organizations in the amount of $312,900 for projects to be completed in calendar year 2000. The Organizations and amounts are as follows:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grants

American Lung Association	New York, NY $10,500
Access to Respite Care and Help (ARCH)	Chapel Hill, NC $30,000
Batten Disease Support & Research Association	Columbus, OH $2,600
Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA)	Bloomington, IN $25,000

Table No. 1

Region and Department	Reporting Legion	Reporting Auxiliary	Temporary Financial Assistance by National	Contribution s 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 Administrat ive 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	55%	100%	$0	$3,233	$33,771	$121,472	$23,609	$25,350	$556	17477	$207,991
Maine	71%	0%	600	758	71,054	953,235	55,902	0	313	4926	$1,081,862
Massachuse	31%	68%	3,820	1,971	117,648	187,202	75,476	450	542	20075	$387,109
New Hamps	84%	100%	0	2,097	87,164	120,205	132,729	537	859	18594	$343,611
Rhode Island	42%	50%	2,832	0	18,760	10,559	9,440	750	201	1805	$42,532
Vermont	3%	82%	0	800	10,202	22,023	4,127	600	1,087	6682	$38,839
TOTAL:	**46%**	**63%**	**7,252**	**8,859**	**338,609**	**1,304,696**	**301,283**	**27,887**	**3,558**	**69540**	**$2,081,944**
REGION 2											
Delaware	55%	100%	0	200	23,346	35,285	34,004	0	(3)	10499	$92,835
D.C.	38%	17%	0	586	750	920	50	0	0	9	$2,305
Maryland	65%	82%	1,712	2,810	300,399	832,957	269,498	50	1,017	54947	$1,408,443
New Jersey	43%	0%	7,668	1,877	113,663	290,777	78,391	0	2,581	4613	$492,737
New York	67%	94%	13,121	5,552	486,991	1,279,316	629,690	2,600	7,152	56968	$2,424,422
Pennsylvania	60%	89%	700	3,969	205,245	458,108	301,637	5,000	5,334	43628	$976,993
Virginia	93%	73%	300	2,074	314,040	522,724	261,354	2,673	2,103	58646	$1,105,268
West Virgini	82%	38%	3,452	703	103,083	213,909	80,930	0	1,397	12444	$403,474
TOTAL:	**64%**	**75%**	**26,953**	**17,571**	**1,547,517**	**3,630,996**	**1,853,554**	**10,323**	**19,584**	**241854**	**$6,906,478**
REGION 3											
Alabama	23%	29%	9,590	7,572	57,005	129,350	46,374	200	746	25384	$249,837
Florida	78%	100%	3,450	35,481	776,305	272,118	356,886	7,005	3,724	112765	$1,458,969
Georgia	65%	0%	1,000	566	256,568	143,476	126,898	0	(2)	14207	$528,506
Kentucky	57%	34%	9,448	4,158	182,733	383,208	79,074	850	1,391	13335	$660,862
North Caroli	29%	0%	2,176	644	35,440	95,191	27,815	0	(2)	2840	$161,265
South Caroli	28%	8%	0	670	20,702	77,619	19,187	1,300	(2)	7421	$119,478
Tennessee	49%	0%	600	1,375	40,435	67,355	16,329	0	0	3019	$126,094
TOTAL:	**48%**	**36%**	**26,264**	**54,466**	**1,369,188**	**1,168,317**	**671,563**	**9,355**	**5,861**	**178871**	**$3,305,014**
REGION 4											
Arkansas	34%	0%	3,269	1,075	11,095	21,816	17,410	3,000	223	1079	$57,888
Louisiana	28%	94%	1,000	1,436	53,728	139,167	60,782	940	13,002	4876	$270,065
Mississippi	23%	19%	3,250	600	30,297	168,529	20,160	650	403	2518	$223,889
Oklahoma	42%	0%	8,033	736	32,485	51,474	28,388	0	613	2870	$121,729
Texas	36%	0%	500	10,215	50,055	194,414	60,146	0	970	4986	$326,300
TOTAL:	**33%**	**19%**	**16,052**	**14,062**	**187,660**	**575,400**	**186,886**	**4,590**	**15,211**	**18129**	**$999,871**
REGION 5											
Illinois	37%	63%	30,195	13,289	157,349	366,554	114,671	0	4,922	37855	$688,980
Indiana	42%	67%	5,657	7,489	186,104	287,081	247,853	42	4,640	18842	$718,866
Michigan	52%	94%	1,631	6,579	196,067	289,506	114,776	9,861	6,359	49680	$624,779
Missouri	40%	25%	0	2,300	72,743	165,437	79,646	250	9,888	12201	$330,264
Ohio	80%	94%	400	6,916	474,990	1,192,429	378,213	2,440	7,023	118364	$2,062,411
Wisconsin	72%	72%	2,552	3,371	108,553	150,946	122,936	2,000	(2)	14757	$431,360
TOTAL:	**54%**	**62%**	**40,445**	**39,944**	**1,176,819**	**2,491,953**	**1,058,095**	**14,593**	**33,054**	**251999**	**$4,856,660**
REGION 6											
Iowa	54%	60%	1,311	1,521	44,843	133,009	73,500	0	(2)	19792	$254,184
Kansas	53%	56%	600	8,931	36,910	46,216	54,895	8,750	4,166	9653	$160,468
Minnesota	48%	92%	15,081	2,951	268,046	570,957	321,160	1,800	753	45846	$1,179,748
Nebraska	72%	62%	0	3,195	41,821	215,604	90,076	8,950	3,001	48654	$362,347
North Dakot	88%	54%	0	911	105,987	157,724	87,395	200	(2)	16576	$352,197
South Dakot	50%	55%	0	239	25,908	132,095	216,847	1,579	1,717	19603	$378,285
TOTAL:	**58%**	**68%**	**17,992**	**15,748**	**521,395**	**1,257,605**	**843,873**	**20,979**	**9,637**	**159134**	**$2,687,229**
REGION 7											
Arizona	71%	71%	11,185	750	140,300	102,478	148,611	300	10,763	49252	$414,387
California	50%	80%	0	10,105	203,182	323,711	1,209,161	3,341	24,422	72404	$1,773,922
Colorado	41%	38%	2,138	500	35,490	46,239	52,331	0	1,275	3648	$147,963
Hawaii	63%	50%	0	456	7,272	21,893	54,827	0	138	1039	$84,387
Nevada	29%	57%	0	325	7,085	11,557	6,085	0	292	1092	$25,345
New Mexico	48%	40%	6,713	975	90,899	28,205	92,560	8,000	360	4957	$227,712
Utah	45%	46%	1,700	676	34,039	23,380	10,723	0	511	1038	$71,029
TOTAL:	**50%**	**64%**	**21,736**	**13,787**	**518,257**	**557,263**	**1,584,299**	**11,641**	**37,762**	**133430**	**$2,744,745**
REGION 8											
Alaska	67%	0%	0	1,676	39,846	93,623	24,400	200	2,036	1338	$160,781
Idaho	64%	57%	13,473	445	11,069	85,789	14,603	150	452	2775	$109,961
Montana	68%	82%	400	317	5,822	44,440	45,372	25	694	6948	$99,970
Oregon	49%	70%	0	1,509	72,775	85,048	38,881	1,179	587	34696	$202,961
Washington	52%	93%	28,456	3,585	82,578	88,669	30,412	1,200	7,184	28577	$242,064
Wyoming	63%	64%	1,310	112	12,368	35,173	12,063	650	240	2684	$61,916
TOTAL:	**58%**	**72%**	**43,639**	**7,644**	**226,481**	**419,722**	**165,711**	**3,403**	**11,073**	**77048**	**$877,653**
REGION TO	**53%**	**59%**	**200,333**	**172,081**	**5,885,906**	**11,495,952**	**6,455,276**	**102,571**	**135,720**	**1127293**	**$24,457,814**
FOREIGN											
France	58%	0%	0	0	7,950	4,698	6,545	25	0	679	$19,218
Mexico	0%	0%	0	0	21,615	4,550	9,175	0	0	841	$35,340
Philippines	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	$0
Puerto Rico	5%	0%	0	0	370	150	460	0	0	0	$980
TOTAL:	**5%**	**0%**	**0**	**0**	**29,936**	**9,398**	**16,180**	**25**	**0**	**3804**	**$55,538**
SUBTOTAL:	**52%**	**58%**	**200,333**	**172,081**	**5,915,840**	**11,505,350**	**6,481,454**	**102,596**	**135,720**	**1130897**	**$24,513,374**

(2) - Not organized in the Department

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 1999 - MAY 31, 2000

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$10,518
Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary	$20,000
Child Welfare Foundation by National 8/40	$1,849
Children & Youth Division by National 8/40	$1,015
Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary	$180
Child Welfare Foundation by individuals	$26,400
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$9,132
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$230,594
Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	$907
GRAND TOTAL	$24,811,969

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-35	1936-45	1946-55	1956-65	1966-75	1976-90	1990-96	Last 7 mos 99	First 5 mos 00	Grand Total
Alabama	15,261.65	13,899.66	27,466.26	23,700.80	19,672.79	76,536.49	130,997.61	5,207.38	4,362.28	317,144.92
Alaska	0	0	627.56	1,000.00	950	1,200.00	0	0	0	3,777.56
Arizona	17,587.40	8,474.30	5,094.00	3,658.00	250	70,608.25	214,529.36	9,448.88	1,735.65	331,385.84
Arkansas	9,845.20	24,026.00	26,999.22	4,963.00	100	11,731.28	37,384.09	2,596.20	672.39	118,312.36
California	25,558.18	4,547.97	13,231.40	2,795.05	800	1,450.00	8,309.00	0	0	56,691.60
Colorado	26,556.23	14,864.88	17,360.76	5,257.33	770	3,875.25	15,788.90	1,340.00	798.00	86,811.37
Connecticut	160	1,694.00	350	90	0	450	1,052.00	0	0	3,796.00
Delaware	1,025.00	1,010.00	625	175	150	6,723.00	14,502.87	0	0	24,410.87
D. of C.	1,790.00	780	983.5	220	0	800	2,435.00	0	0	6,808.50
Florida	16,807.28	16,734.00	24,207.50	1,313.00	0	4,366.00	34,925.55	2,600.00	650.00	101,603.33
Georgia	14,839.50	55,054.57	51,466.42	34,596.00	4,015.00	3,900.00	4,184.51	1,000.00	0	169,076.00
Hawaii	450	420	0	0	0	900	0	0	0	1,770.00
Idaho	3,641.00	3,952.50	2,721.00	3,050.85	4,071.97	8,716.71	27,159.47	9,738.89	3,734.24	66,786.62
Illinois	11,943.25	18,277.54	3,211.53	1,132.00	1,078.11	14,872.75	180,525.76	19,665.96	10,528.83	261,235.73
Indiana	24,906.08	6,944.00	4,213.40	4,853.00	190	29,098.52	123,175.92	1,905.00	3,751.72	199,025.64
Iowa	15,833.58	1,559.50	407	190	773.45	3,805.00	18,043.62	500	810.68	42,023.03
Kansas	9,552.50	11,214.30	31,565.87	10,498.48	4,273.00	8,354.00	5,537.50	0	600	81,595.65
Kentucky	13,922.00	9,921.50	15,488.90	30,039.00	28,540.66	68,104.30	31,547.66	6,148.00	3,300.00	207,012.02
Louisiana	12,554.00	10,846.50	24,376.30	14,078.00	1,208.00	3,837.00	4,733.20	1,000.00	0	72,633.00
Maine	2,564.94	1,054.00	989.9	1,020.36	0	6,328.55	24,885.50	0	600	37,341.25
Maryland	3,862.00	2,025.00	2,430.57	960	358	4,845.00	28,627.61	1,712.03	0.00	44,620.21
Massachusett	2,064.50	690	465	0	0	1,300.00	1,000.00	1,150.00	2,670.39	9,329.89
Michigan	12,708.48	11,195.85	20,553.85	12,627.39	9,719.46	7,016.69	14,189.71	950.53	670.00	89,732.87
Minnesota	6,516.00	2,094.77	14,908.19	8,414.80	2,327.23	14,435.00	231,446.48	6,319.52	9,761.11	296,222.90
Mississippi	16,509.00	23,764.63	30,843.14	32,411.00	37,592.00	99,937.96	39,475.55	1,750.00	1,500.00	283,783.28
Missouri	18,047.08	35,025.00	33,824.64	13,975.00	7,231.76	6,750.00	17,045.22	0	0.00	131,859.70
Montana	5,099.25	315	744.5	924.35	385	4,046.80	43,017.66	400	0.00	54,912.56
Nebraska	14,091.20	4,378.80	7,479.25	10,316.43	14,111.09	6,196.00	3,196.40	0	0	59,769.24
Nevada	390	195	668	200	1,078.00	5,694.00	1,500.00	0	0	10,723.00
New Hampshir	2,562.00	1,668.50	4,791.50	150	0	7,472.05	36,925.74	0	0.00	53,569.79
New Jersey	7,163.68	1,831.85	1,701.00	245	600	7,822.73	62,787.25	2,279.00	5,389.80	89,820.01
New Mexico	11,473.72	8,600.58	25,666.74	27,433.00	19,145.00	56,834.99	85,070.81	3,364.30	3328.75	240,936.89
New York	4,547.97	3,339.57	3,411.00	1,392.00	300	2,450.00	50,673.57	7,497.69	5,223.56	79,235.36
North Carolina	12,230.50	34,367.00	52,708.00	28,311.60	3,705.00	11,601.00	14,845.07	981.01	1,195.00	159,944.18
North Dakota	13,204.37	12,813.08	8,138.21	3,650.00	2,083.01	7,387.71	4,555.00	0	0.00	51,831.38
Ohio	16,220.00	7,710.43	3,360.50	1,755.75	1,690.00	13,625.54	7,518.53	0	400	52,280.75
Oklahoma	24,955.05	15,503.00	26,118.77	39,287.70	46,836.00	81,298.91	172,653.16	5,078.26	1,955.00	414,684.85
Oregon	855	395.5	6,190.65	7,559.50	3,178.00	26,128.95	35,495.60	0	0.00	79,803.20
Panama	105	570	234	300	0	500	0	0	0	1,809.00
Pennsylvania	19,239.41	3,808.00	434	217	435	39,113.28	16,833.94	0	700	80,580.63
Puerto Rico	5,671.00	11,386.00	27,210.00	30,544.00	49,304.50	17,455.00	40,390.00	300	900	183,160.50
Rhode Island	1,277.00	285	1,641.00	0	760	650	21,142.52	2,832.00	0	28,587.52
South Carolin	29,589.20	36,663.85	16,780.64	9,912.80	2,936.07	2,662.93	2,127.06	0	0	102,802.39
South Dakota	19,555.89	22,874.38	12,405.05	2,997.00	0	36,460.89	38,556.19	0	0	133,809.40
Tennessee	12,211.52	18,933.25	25,403.20	25,210.00	5,604.50	26,107.23	32,807.23	0	600.00	150,876.93
Texas	11,239.50	24,134.00	31,879.35	15,513.08	12,856.00	2,714.74	3,814.74	600	0.00	102,651.41
Utah	3,435.00	7,690.48	3,248.00	0	0	6,815.62	10,239.12	500	1200	33,128.22
Vermont	1,555.50	265	9,026.50	225	0	3,525.00	3,613.00	0	0	18,214.00
Virginia	19,219.86	26,090.45	26,449.78	1,568.00	9,768.00	20,190.00	22,167.00	300.32	0.00	125,773.41
Washington	3,033.00	345	427.5	0	0	75,072.49	132,160.07	12,944.43	15,511.57	239,514.06
West Virginia	20,276.98	7,353.00	5,801.00	5,594.94	650	17,023.65	20,372.11	3,052.00	400.00	80,523.68
Wisconsin	9,561.66	6,320.30	2,542.00	5,525.25	2,116.00	10,098.13	13,581.13	2,562.00	0	52,306.49
Wyoming	6,885.00	1,295.00	793	1,200.00	0	1,079.00	2,853.54	750	660	15,415.54
Other Depts	200	300	173.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	733.50
Miscellaneous	19,499.21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19,499.21
TOTAL	$580,077.34	$541,495.61	$558,946.47	$431,030.26	$302,481.57	$949,884.28	$2,080,418.67	$118,003.39	$83,528.65	5,755,866.24

1) Includes $19,499.21 for the year 1926--Department totals not available
2) Includes first 5 months of 2000

TABLE NO. 3

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request During Period June 1,1999 through May 31,2000

Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	14,783
Children Beware	44,458
April Is Children & Youth Month	49,884
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	8,412
Gateway Drugs	49,429
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night	111,899
National Resource Directory	798
Regional Children & Youth Award (VISION)	15,094
TFA Applications	819
TFA Brochures	17,865
Warning Signs -- Suicide Prevention	38,812
Safety Tips --Indoor	40,977
Safety Tips --Outdoor	39,395
Americanism/Children & Youth Catalog Brochure	7,476
National Family Week	26,524
Parents: For Your Information	28,563
Juvenile Delinquency Prevention	25,956
Citations:	
Annual Children and Youth Citations	3,490
Certificate of Meritorious Service	84
National Achievement Award	20
Special Children & Youth Citation	719
Vision Certificate of Excellence	36
Vision Certificate of Participation	39
Reporting:	
Tally Sheet	0
Unit Report Form	2,685
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	1,985
TOTAL	530,202

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) Foundation, Inc	Avon, CT $23,300
Huntington's Disease Society of America	New York, NY $10,000
International Rett Syndrome	Union, WA $32,000
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Tustin, CA $16,000
The National Exchange Club Foundation	Toledo, OH $20,500
The National Marfan Foundation	Port Washington, NY $23,400
National Multiple Sclerosis Society	Denver, CO $24,000
The NJ Center for Outreach & Services for Autism	Ewing, NJ $6,100
The Sturge-Weber Foundation	Mt. Freedom, NJ $29,500
Tourette Syndrome Association Inc.	Bayside, NY $25,000
WGBH Educational Foundation	Boston, MA $35,000

During the 1999 contribution year, donations exceeded $474,405 with over $230,594 of that amount coming to us from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, 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 2, 1999, 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 81st annual National Convention of The American Legion took place in Anaheim, California, September 3-9, 1999. National Commander Harold L.'Butch' Miller, Virginia, called the opening session to order at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 7, 1999. Commander Miller welcomed the Legionnaires to Anaheim, California and thanked them for their past, present and future service to America. Legionnaires were welcomed to the National Convention by The Honorable Gray Davis, Governor of California, The Honorable Shirley McCracken, Mayor Pro-Tem of Anaheim, California; David L. Eby, Department Commander, The American Legion of California; and Bruce Thiesen, President of the Anaheim in 99' National Convention Corporation. Convention attendees were addressed by The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable John McCain, United States Senator from Arizona; The Honorable Alan Cranston, United States Senator from California; The Honorable William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense; and The Honorable Robert Mallett, Deputy Secretary, Department of Commerce. The Honorable Al Gore, Vice President of the United States of America also addressed the convention.

One of the many highlights for the 1999 National Convention was the National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests that took place in the Grand Ballroom of the Anaheim Hilton and Towers Hotel. Denise Clemente, singer, and Andy Andrews, comedian 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 requests for proposals (RFP) that are sent to cities interested in hosing 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" Legionnaire and their families with a varied and enjoyable convention that can be shared by all on an annual basis.

The commission continues to review and improve the surveying of our attendees during the National Convention. The survey has been improved and will be available to all attendees at future conventions. These surveys will be reviewed and will allow the commission to continue to develop ways of improving the national convention for all attendees.

New Color Guard rules for the three Color Guard contests conducted at the National Convention as well as new monetary awards were approved by the National Convention Commission and will go into effect with the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In addition to the new Color Guard contest rules, the 2000 National Convention will be the first time that an award will be provided to the best marching band participating in the National Convention parade.

Beginning with the 1999 National 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, which will significantly reduce the expenses for badges purchased, by the Convention Corporation. This badge proposal, modified with a "special 2000" convention badge, must be available for the 2001 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas. The National Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that the City of Honolulu, Hawaii be tentatively awarded the National Convention in the year 2005, the dates being August 19–25, 2005. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation.

Dates and future conventions are:

San Antonio, Texas	August 24-30, 2001
Charlotte, North Carolina	August 23-29, 2002
St. Louis, Missouri	August 22-28, 2003
Nashville, Tennessee	August 27-September 2, 2004

DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE
John H. Damman, Wisconsin, 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
Robert E. David, South Carolina, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, 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, 1999, through June 30, 2000. 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.

1999-2000 Meetings

During the period this report covers, the commission met for four regularly scheduled executive sessions. A list of those meetings follows:

(1) Members and guests of the National Economic Commission met on Saturday, September 4, 1999, in the New Orleans Riverside Hilton Hotel, Anaheim, California, in conjunction with the Eighty-first Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, Sept. 6, 1999. The complete text of that report appears in the Proceedings of the National Executive Committee's Pre- and Post-Convention Meetings.

(2) An executive session of the National Economic Commission was held in the headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 13-14, 1999. A complete report on that meeting appears in the *Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 15-16, 1999.*

(3) The National Economic Commission met in conjunction with the Fortieth Annual Washington Conference on Monday and Wednesday, March 27 and 29, 2000. 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.

(4) Members of the commission met on May 8-9, 2000, 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 10-11, 2000.*

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:

September 9, 1999; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits; Credentialing requirements

October 28, 1999; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits; 21st century veterans' employment and training

March 9, 2000; House Veterans' Affairs Committee; Homelessness

March 14, 2000; House Veterans' Affairs Committee; PL 106-50, Small Business and Entrepreneurship

March 16, 2000; House Veterans' Affairs Committee; VA home loan guaranty service

April 11, 2000; House Appropriations Committee, Labor Subcommittee; VETS FY 2001 appropriations.

The Economics staff prepared the commission's portion of the testimony that was presented in September 1999 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, as well as the Legion's February and March 2000 appearances before the same committees concerning the administration's proposed FY 2001 budget for the VA and veterans' programs.

Administrative Activities

The commission's staff of three 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 Director and Assistant Director also represent 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 Interstate Conference of Employment Security 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 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 employer 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.

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, Robert E. 'Jack' David (SC), appointed a six-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 1999 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. Those serving on the subcommittee were Paul A. Morin (MA), Chairman; William E. Christoffersen (UT); Leonard E. Shaw (IA); Robert L. Boxdorfer (MO); Albert M. Robotti (NJ); and Wayne Slade (SD).

The members of the Employer of the Year Subcommittee met on March 27, 2000, to consider 48 employer nominations from Departments. Of these nominations, 17 were for

small, 16 were for medium, and 15 were for large employers. None of these nominations were ineligible for the national awards.

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: Boeing Aerospace Operations, Midwest City, Oklahoma

Medium Size Employer: ITS Medical Systems, LLC, Tomah, Wisconsin

Small Employer: Garlick Helicopters, Inc., Hamilton, Montana

The subcommittee also selected three runners-up in the event that one of the winners is unable to accept the award, or is disqualified because of any labor relations or OSHA violations that might be pending against them. The three runners-up are as follows:

Large Employer: Wal-Mart Distribution Center #6071, Winter Haven, Florida

Medium Size Employer: Glass Trucking Inc., Newkirk, Oklahoma

Small Employer: Schwan's Sales Enterprises, Inc., Hudson, New York

Officials of the three winning companies have agreed to come to the 82nd Annual National Convention in Milwaukee 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 27, 2000. Winners are to receive their plaques at their respective Department Conventions with the exception of the ES Office of the Year, whose manager will travel to Milwaukee by special arrangement to receive that award. National winners are the following:

LVER of the Year: Kent Phelps, Blackfoot, Idaho

DVOP of the Year: Willie R. Griffin, Sumter, South Carolina

ES Office of the Year: Oklahoma City Metro South, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, 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.

The National Economic Commission is pleased to report that the study completed in 1997 by The American Legion has resulted in some additional activity in the area of credentialing. That study identified all of the career possibilities in the areas of aircraft maintenance and repair and health care related fields. In each case, former service members

received formal military training and in each case a license or certificate is required to work in that career field in civilian life.

The Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance funded a study which identified ALL of the professions in the civilian workforce which require a license or certificate and for which the military provides training. The Veterans' Employment and Training Service funded a Federal Agency Task Force which is examining how each of the agencies can evaluate and then recognize the military training so as to allow credit for such training toward the license or certificate required by that agency. The Task Force has issued an interim report.

The Benefits Subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on the subject in September 1999. Resolution of this non-recognition of military training by civilian credentialing authorities will provide a more seamless transition for about 85-90 thousand separating service people annually.

In June of 2000, The American Legion co-sponsored a major conference on this subject, attracting participants from military and civilian credentialing and education bodies around the country.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE

Robert L. Boxdorfer, Missouri, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, 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 activities of those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

Department of Labor: Unemployment and underemployment among veterans and non-veterans has continued to decrease over the past year. However, there are still some major problems.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans constitute about 14% of the nation's labor force. The percentage of displaced workers has not been formally tabulated since 1988; at that time, however, about 23% of all dislocated workers were veterans. Many of these veterans lost their jobs because of plant closings, shift abolishment, slack work demand, or because the employer went out of business for one reason or another.

Unfortunately, it is generally very difficult for the dislocated worker to find new employment that is suitable. This is because most of these individuals do not have the financial resources necessary either to obtain job training or to relocate to an area where employment might be available. The problems of these men and women are further exacerbated by many employers' view of them as older workers. About half of dislocated workers find new jobs paying less than they were making before dislocation.

The commission is also concerned about the employment of severely disabled veterans. According to data supplied by the Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, about 85-90 percent of all veterans who are 60% or more compensably disabled have completely dropped out of the labor market. This has occurred partly because many employers in both the public and private sectors have refused to make the necessary accommodations for their employment, and partly because many of the workers have reached retirement age.

Another major concern of the commission and the Department of Labor is homeless veterans. While there seems to be a vast disparity in the estimates of the number of homeless persons in this country, one thing the experts do agree on is that a large percentage are veterans. They also believe that many of the homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. In response to this need, the commission has prepared and widely distributed a pamphlet entitled *A Resource Guide for the Homeless Veteran*, intended to help homeless veterans locate resources and benefits that may be available to them because of their military service.

The American Legion continues to work with the Department of Labor and other federal agencies that have the resources necessary to help homeless veterans to get off the streets and onto payrolls. In the weeks and months ahead, the commission will continue to work with the Labor Department to find solutions to these and other problems that affect veterans economically.

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 loan guaranty program operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs has guaranteed over 16 million loans to veterans since its inception in 1944. In FY 1999, VA guaranteed 396 thousand loans totaling $43 billion. The average home loan amount was $109,000. Over 91 percent of the veterans purchasing a home were able to obtain no-downpayment loans. Approximately 52 percent of veterans purchasing a home were first-time home buyers. VA expects to guarantee about 280 thousand loans in FY 2000.

Defaults and foreclosures continue to be relatively low. There were 116 thousand loans in serious default at the end of FY 1999. This represents 3.7 percent of all loans outstanding. The inventory of acquired properties was 12,044 in September 1999, a decrease of 4 percent from 12 months earlier.

Office of Personnel Management: The federal government is the largest employer in the country as well as the largest employer of veterans. The responsibility for ensuring that veterans receive the preference they have been granted by law is vested in the Office of Personnel Management.

The following statistical summary appeared in OPM's annual report to Congress on veterans' employment in federal government. This summary covers veteran hiring and promotion activities for FY 1998, the latest year for which figures were available to us.

Veterans hired totaled 34,514 (16.3 percent of new hires);
- 11,975 of those were Vietnam era veterans;
- 5,559 were disabled; and
- 2,471 of those were 30% or more disabled.

Veterans promoted totaled 55,682 (22.2%);
- disabled veterans promoted numbered 9,004; and
- 3,353 of those were 30% or more disabled.

11,839 Veterans Readjustment Appointments were made;
- This included 8,667 new hires.

Trends in veterans' employment in the federal service indicate a gradual decline in veterans from 1986 to 1998. This decline is due primarily to the retirements of older veterans (over 47 percent of all retirements over the last six years were veterans), and fewer

new veterans entering the civilian labor force (a shrinking applicant pool). In spite of the overall decline in veterans in the federal work force, the 26.7 percent veterans' representation in the non-Postal federal service is more than double the 11.6 percent in the civilian labor force. Representation of disabled veterans declined from 4.5% in 1986 through the late 1980s and early 1990s until returning to 4.5% in FY 1996, 1997 and 1998. Representation of 30% disabled veterans increased from 1.2% in 1986 to 1.7% in 1997 and 1998.

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 Postal Service is one of the largest employers of veterans in the nation. As of September 10, 1999, the latest statistics available to us, the Postal Service had a career workforce of 796,535 persons. Of this total complement, 251,788 (31.6 percent) were veterans preference eligibles, 83,055 (10.3 percent of workforce) were veterans with disabilities, and 19,715 (2.5 percent) were veterans who are 30-percent or more disabled.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Postal Service.

Small Business Administration: During fiscal year 1998, the latest year for which we have figures, about 13% of the loans guaranteed by SBA were made to veterans, who received 5,912 loans totaling nearly $1.3 billion. Individual figures for Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans, women veterans, and minority veterans were not available.

Through SBA's 8(a) program, under which contracts are awarded to businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, 818 contracts were awarded to 670 veteran-owned firms for a total of $912 million, which represents 13% of the dollars and 9% of the contracts awarded in that program for 1997. These are the latest figures available to us for this program.

Many small business contractors are unable to obtain work because of the unavailability of bonding. During FY 1998, utilizing SBA's surety bond program, 532 veteran-owned firms obtained contracts totaling nearly $130 million, or 7.32% of the total dollar amount awarded.

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 David 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., Illinois, 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 $5,185,587 for 1999. 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 auditor'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 1999 and for the first three months of 2000.

January 1 to December 31, 1999
(12 months)

Gross Sales	$7,654,955
Cost of Goods Sold	4,394,234
Overhead	2,418,851
Operating Profit	841,870

Total number of 1999 orders processed was 75,127.

January 1 to March 31, 2000
(3 months)

Gross Sales	$2,031,935
Cost of Goods Sold	1,161,742
Overhead	557,442
Operating Profit	312,751

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 2000 was 17,275.

THE AMERICAN LEGION INSURANCE COMMITTEE
Steve A. George, Minnesota, 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 2000.

American Legion Baseball $602,105; National Oratorical Contest $294,580; Junior Uniformed Musical Groups $30,000 for participation at the National Convention; Boy's Nation $159,315; 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:

Level Term Life Plan: The American Legion currently offers a Level Term Plan to members, their spouses and dependents. This includes Sons of The American Legions members and spouses. Members can apply up to age 70 and coverage ends at age 75. The Legion-approved Level Term Life Plan is underwritten by **Hartford Life Insurance Company.** The Administrator for the plan is **Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc.** located in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Modern Vets: The American Legion has recently approved a new life insurance plan, which is also underwritten by **Hartford Life Insurance Company.** This plan is designed specifically for members separating or retiring from the military. If you are a member of The American Legion, under age 40, live in the U.S., and have separated from the military in the last 12 months, you are eligible. The LegionLife Modern Vets Plan is a life insurance plan that picks up where your military coverage ends for about HALF the cost of Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

LegionPlus Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement: The American Legion has approved a National Tricare/CHAMPUS 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 the Level Term Life Plan, Simplified Issue Plan, Modern Vets Plan or the Tricare/CHAMPUS 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 Assurance**) located in Trevose, 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.

Requests for information on the Birthday Life Plan should be directed to the Administrator, Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., (now owned by GE Capital Assurance) 4850 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19049; 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 41 years, claims have been paid amounting to more than $178 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 2000, the total benefits paid will be nearly $200 million.

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, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Marketing of plans is underway in those Departments.

Administrative Matters

Requests for information concerning the status of applications, non-receipt of insurance renewal, filing of death claims, status of death claims, amount of premium, inquiries as to whether or not a member is insured, or specific questions pertaining to the terms of coverage should be directed to:

Hartford Plans
Seabury & Smith, Inc.
1776 West Lakes Pkwy.
West Des Moines, IA 50398
1-800-542-5547
Decreasing Term
Level Term
Modern Vets

CHAMPUS Supplement Insurance
For Active Duty and Retired Military
Offered by Allianz Life
1-800-542-5547

Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co.
4850 Street Road
Trevose, PA 19049
1-800-523-5758
Birthday Life

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION
William M. Bishop, Alaska, 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 1999-00 program year ending June 30, 2000.

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 on these matters 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. 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 either directly or through liaison offices at these Agencies or in some cases through the Veterans liaison office at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. William M. Bishop, of Alaska, was appointed in the Fall of 1998 and serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions Adopted at National Convention in Anaheim, California 1999

Of the eight 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 are:

Resolution Number 76, *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 77, *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 national resources in critical world regions to achieve U.S. interests
- participation in 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 that the President is the chief architect of U.S. foreign policy and the Congress performs important support functions.

Six additional resolutions adopted at the 85th National Convention in Anaheim, California on September 3, 1999 are as follows:

GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY

Resolution Number 154: *Support for U.S. Steel Industry*
Resolution Number 159: *House Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs*

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

No resolutions were adopted.

FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Resolution Number 2: *Policy on Support to the Republic of Korea*
Resolution Number 3: *China and Taiwan*
Resolution Number 21: *Trade with the People's Republic of China*
Resolution Number 78: *Chinese Espionage in the United States*

INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

No resolutions were adopted.

MIDDLE EASTERN & AFRICAN AFFAIRS

No resolutions were adopted.

National Executive Committee Meeting, Fall 1999

An executive session of the Commission met on October 11-14 and considered resolutions properly before it. Based upon their recommendation, the NEC adopted Resolution 5, which voices our concern about foreign lobbying activities. The Commission also reviewed progress on a variety of foreign affairs issues and policies.

2000 Washington Conference

On March 26, The Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session. The Commission heard from three speakers.

Mr. Kelly Sharbel, Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), Office of the Secretary of Defense, began by stating that since the end of the Cold War many countries had been trying to emulate the United States, not just our military, but our system of democratic government. Although the Voluntary Force had generally been a success, it was encountering severe challenges in recruiting and retaining a quality force. The Secretary of Defense has been emphasizing the theme in his visits that the military needed to reconnect with the American people and The American Legion was called upon to assist in this endeavor.

Ambassador Michael Sheehan, Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the U.S. Department of State gave an overview on the current state of terrorism in the world. He also outlined what the government is doing to combat these threats.

The final speaker for the morning was **Congressman Michael Bilirakis** who serves on the Veterans Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. Congressman Bilirakis said that now, more than ever, the United States needed to maintain a national defense second to none. Defense budgets have steadily declined since 1985, and the United States is spending only three percent of its gross domestic product on defense. Despite reductions in military strength, military deployments have increased by 300 percent in the past seven years. He also noted that the Defense Department was attempting to trade away modernization in an effort to maintain its readiness but was prevented from doing so by Congress.

At the afternoon session, The Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee presided over by Committee Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

Lieutenant Franklin Childress, USA, of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in Hawaii gave a presentation outlining the current recovery operations conducted by JTF-Full Accounting in Southeast Asia.

Dr. Tim Castle, former member of the Defense POW/MIA Office talked about how accounting can be improved.

Bill Bell, long-time activist in POW/MIA affairs said accounting efforts need more emphasis.

The Commission conducted a business session on Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. Two resolutions were considered and both were adopted. They are *Trade with China* and *America's Future.*

National Executive Committee Meeting, Spring 1999

On the morning of May 8, the Commission participated in the National Security Task Force 2000 meeting. In the afternoon, a business session was held and one resolution was approved for adoption: **Resolution No. 4**, *Trade with the People's Republic of China.*

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, DC office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; John C. Petersen, Assistant Director; Angela L. Venson, 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, 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. 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.

Particularly vigorous activities were conducted during this reporting period to monitor the conflict in Kosovo 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 fullest POW/MIA accounting.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as the *Dispatch*, *The American Legion Magazine* and the principal 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.

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 Administrative 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	55%	100%	30	$3,233	$33,771	$121,472	$23,609	$25,350	8556	17477	$207,991
Maine	71%	0%	600	758	71,054	953,235	55,902	0	313	4926	$1,081,862
Massachuse	31%	68%	3,820	1,971	117,648	187,202	75,476	450	542	20075	$387,109
New Hampsh	84%	100%	0	2,097	67,184	120,205	132,729	537	859	18594	$343,611
Rhode Island	42%	50%	2,832	0	18,750	10,559	9,440	750	201	1806	$42,532
Vermont	3%	82%	0	800	10,202	22,023	4,127	500	1,087	6662	$38,839
TOTAL:	48%	83%	7,252	8,859	338,609	1,394,696	301,283	27,887	3,558	69540	$2,081,944
REGION 2											
Delaware	55%	100%	0	200	23,346	35,285	34,004	0	(2)	10489	$92,835
D.C.	38%	17%	0	586	750	920	50	0	0	8	$2,306
Maryland	65%	82%	1,712	2,810	300,359	832,957	269,498	50	1,017	54947	$1,408,443
New Jersey	43%	0%	7,668	1,677	113,663	290,777	76,391	0	2,561	4613	$492,737
New York	87%	94%	13,121	5,552	485,991	1,279,316	629,690	2,600	7,152	58968	$2,424,422
Pennsylvania	60%	89%	700	3,969	205,245	455,108	901,637	5,000	5,334	43828	$576,993
Virginia	93%	73%	300	2,074	314,040	522,724	261,354	2,673	2,103	58546	$1,105,268
West Virgini	82%	38%	3,452	703	103,063	213,909	80,830	0	1,397	12444	$403,474
TOTAL:	64%	74%	26,953	17,571	1,547,517	3,630,996	1,853,554	10,323	19,564	241954	$6,506,478
REGION 3											
Alabama	23%	29%	9,590	7,572	57,005	129,350	45,374	200	745	25384	$249,837
Florida	78%	100%	3,450	39,481	776,305	272,118	356,886	7,005	3,724	112785	$1,458,969
Georgia	65%	0%	1,000	566	256,568	143,476	126,898	0	(2)	14207	$528,508
Kentucky	57%	34%	9,448	4,158	162,733	383,208	79,074	850	1,391	13335	$660,862
North Caroli	29%	0%	2,176	644	35,440	98,191	27,815	0	(2)	2840	$161,266
South Caroli	26%	8%	0	670	20,702	77,819	19,187	1,300	(2)	7421	$119,478
Tennessee	49%	0%	600	1,375	40,435	67,355	16,329	0	0	3019	$126,094
TOTAL:	48%	30%	26,264	54,466	1,389,188	1,168,517	671,563	9,355	5,861	178971	$3,305,014
REGION 4											
Arkansas	34%	0%	3,265	1,075	11,095	21,815	17,410	3,000	223	1079	$57,888
Louisiana	28%	94%	1,000	1,436	53,728	139,167	60,792	840	13,002	4576	$270,065
Mississippi	23%	19%	3,250	600	30,297	168,529	20,160	650	403	2518	$223,889
Oklahoma	42%	0%	8,003	738	32,485	51,474	28,388	0	813	2870	$121,729
Texas	36%	0%	500	10,215	60,065	194,414	60,146	0	970	4986	$326,300
TOTAL:	33%	19%	16,052	14,062	187,660	575,400	186,896	4,590	15,211	18129	$999,871
REGION 5											
Illinois	37%	69%	30,195	13,289	157,349	366,554	114,871	0	4,922	37855	$686,980
Indiana	42%	67%	5,657	7,469	168,104	287,081	247,853	42	4,640	18842	$718,856
Michigan	52%	94%	1,631	6,579	196,067	269,506	114,776	9,861	6,359	49980	$624,779
Missouri	40%	25%	0	2,300	72,743	165,437	79,646	250	9,888	12201	$330,264
Ohio	80%	54%	400	6,916	474,990	1,192,429	378,213	2,440	7,023	118354	$2,062,411
Wisconsin	72%	72%	2,562	3,371	109,565	190,946	122,036	2,000	(2)	14757	$431,380
TOTAL:	54%	62%	40,445	39,944	1,178,818	2,491,953	1,058,095	14,593	33,054	251990	$4,854,680
REGION 6											
Iowa	54%	60%	1,311	1,521	44,843	133,009	73,500	0	(2)	19792	$254,184
Kansas	53%	66%	500	6,531	38,910	48,216	54,895	8,750	4,156	9553	$160,468
Minnesota	48%	92%	16,081	2,951	268,046	570,957	321,160	1,800	753	45846	$1,179,748
Nebraska	72%	62%	0	3,195	41,821	216,804	90,076	8,650	3,001	46694	$362,347
North Dakot	88%	54%	0	911	106,967	157,724	87,395	200	(2)	16576	$352,197
South Dakot	90%	59%	0	239	25,908	132,085	216,847	1,575	1,717	19503	$378,285
TOTAL:	58%	69%	17,992	15,748	521,395	1,257,805	843,873	20,975	9,837	158134	$2,687,229
REGION 7											
Arizona	71%	71%	11,185	750	140,300	102,478	148,611	300	10,783	49252	$414,387
California	50%	80%	0	10,105	203,182	323,711	1,209,161	3,341	24,422	72404	$1,773,922
Colorado	41%	36%	2,138	500	35,480	46,239	62,331	0	1,276	3648	$147,963
Hawaii	63%	50%	0	456	7,272	21,893	54,827	0	139	1039	$84,387
Nevada	25%	57%	0	325	7,085	11,557	6,066	0	292	1092	$25,345
New Mexico	46%	40%	5,713	975	90,899	28,205	92,560	5,000	350	4957	$227,712
Utah	45%	46%	1,700	676	34,939	23,380	10,723	0	511	1038	$71,029
TOTAL:	50%	64%	21,736	13,787	518,257	557,263	1,584,299	11,641	37,762	133430	$2,744,745
REGION 8											
Alaska	67%	0%	0	1,676	39,646	93,823	24,400	200	2,035	1388	$160,781
Idaho	64%	57%	13,473	445	11,069	69,769	14,603	150	452	2775	$109,961
Montana	68%	82%	400	317	8,822	44,440	45,372	25	594	6948	$99,970
Oregon	49%	70%	0	1,509	72,778	88,048	38,861	1,178	587	34566	$202,961
Washington	52%	93%	28,456	3,585	82,578	88,659	30,412	1,200	7,154	28577	$242,064
Wyoming	93%	64%	1,310	112	12,368	35,173	12,063	650	240	2584	$61,916
TOTAL:	58%	72%	43,839	7,644	226,461	419,722	165,711	3,403	11,073	77068	$877,653
REGION TO	53%	58%	200,333	172,081	5,885,905	11,485,352	6,485,274	102,571	135,720	1127203	$24,457,814
FOREIGN											
France	58%	0%	0	0	7,950	4,698	6,545	25	0	679	$19,218
Mexico	0%	0%	0	0	21,615	4,550	9,175	0	9	841	$35,340
Philippines	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	$0
Puerto Rico	9%	0%	0	0	370	150	460	0	0	0	$980
TOTAL:	9%	0%	0	0	29,935	9,398	16,180	25	9	3604	$55,538
SUBTOTAL:	52%	58%	200,333	172,081	5,915,840	11,506,350	6,481,454	102,596	135,720	1130807	$24,513,374

(2) - Not organized in the Department

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$10,518
Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary	$20,000
Child Welfare Foundation by National 8/40	$1,845
Children & Youth Division by National 8/40	$1,015
Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary	$180
Child Welfare Foundation by individuals	$24,400
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$9,132
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$230,596
Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	$907
GRAND TOTAL	$24,811,969

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 1999 - MAY 31, 2000

rapid and dramatic economic, technological, social and political trends that affect the way we conduct business today, and in the years to come.

Conference Instructors are the professional staff of the Organization, and some will be leaders from the volunteer sector. These knowledgeable, dedicated instructors will be covering many programs and activities, providing a blend of experience, educational expertise, sharing of ideas, helping to solve problems, exchanging information, and sharpening individual skills.

Conference Schedules

Region/Year	2000	2001
Region 1	*Burlington, VT; April 7-9*	*Nashua, NH; March 23-25*
Region 2	*Charleston, WV; March 31-April 2*	*Cherry Hill, NJ; April 20-22*
Region 3	*Nashville, TN; Sept. 29-Oct. 1*	*Macon, GA; March 30-April 1*
Region 4	*Houston, TX; October 6-8*	*Dallas, TX; September 28-30*
Region 5	*Toledo, OH; October 6-8*	*Indianapolis, IN; March 23-25*
Region 6	*Sioux Falls, SD; April 7-9*	*Sioux City, IA; April 20-22*
Region 7	*Las Vegas, NV; Sept. 29-Oct. 1*	*Las Vegas, NV; March 30-April 1*
Region 8	Pendleton, OR; March 31-April 2	Boise, ID; September 21-23

The American Legion National College

The first American Legion National College to be held since 1954 took place from November 14-19, 1999 in Indianapolis, Indiana and was held at the National Headquarters. Thirty-four men and women representing thirty one Departments received training in leadership development, communications, sales and marketing, legal management and fundraising.

Many of last year's graduates returned to their Departments and started to make a difference immediately. Some have initiated new partnerships in their communities while others have moved into key positions within their Departments. Many have been active in their Department's Post Development and Revitalization Program.

To be eligible to attend The American Legion National College, candidates had to be veterans of Panama, Grenada, Gulf War, or Desert Storm, have at least two years tenure in the Legion and had demonstrated leadership potential. A National Selection Committee met at the National Convention in Anaheim, California to choose one person per Department. Some Departments elected to send more than one candidate.

Paid-Up-For-Life Program

Each summer, when The American Legion prints and distributes annual membership cards for the coming year, over 250,000 Legionnaires will receive a special card. These are the members who have chosen to pay their dues with one "lump" fee. These members never have to pay another membership payment for as long as they live.

Being a lifetime member of The American Legion is significant to each person and is a valuable asset to the world's greatest veterans' organization. It shows a lifetime of commitment and is an exemplary civic demonstration of **"Still Serving America."**

National Emergency Fund

The National Emergency Fund is continuing in the spirit of veterans helping veterans and their families in need. In 1999, grants totaling $300,600 went to 224 individuals and 11 posts. Most of those grants came from those areas that were ravaged by the floods in North Carolina and New Jersey due to Hurricane Floyd, as well as disasters in Texas, Oklahoma, and other states in the Midwest. Thus far in 2000, over $104,000 in grants have been awarded, mostly due to the fires raging throughout northern New Mexico. It is expected that numerous grant applications will have been processed by the time this report is in print.

National Commander Alan Lance has continued the "Give A Buck" program that PNC Butch Miller established in 1998 to ensure replenishment of the fund. This fundraiser targeted all American Legion posts and asks them if they did not partake in any NEF fundraising this past year that they consider giving to the "Give a Buck" program. Even though the fund is plentiful today, a single disaster can wipe it out very quickly. This is an excellent way to "take care of our own" during a period when they need help.

It 's important that our members realize that each and every dollar contributed to this fund is used for the express purpose of rendering financial assistance to our members who have incurred devastation from wind, rain, fire and earthquakes. Moneys to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and conducting fundraising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

What makes this program so unique is that our members know they can turn to The American Legion for immediate financial assistance without the red tape or repayment requirements normally associated with other federal and state agencies. With the help of all Legion members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the most immediate needs of our Legion family after a local, state or national disaster.

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 over 14,000 Legion Posts. Nearly 51 percent of American Legion Posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 1998-1999 year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit Color Guards, Firing Squads and other uniformed groups was $2,250,000; Legion baseball team support cost $7,800,000; other athletic teams were provided $2,311,000; cash contributions to VA Voluntary Service was $1,800,000 and 1,100,000 hours of volunteer service were provided; 63,000 Boy Scouts were sponsored at a cost of $1,600,000; scholarships valued at $3,510,000 were awarded to 8,193 students.

In addition, over 3 million hours were spent performing community service work, valued at $7,200,000; nearly 92,000 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; if all Posts submitted a report, the information would reflect substantially higher totals.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Vincent M. 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.

RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT
Whit S. LaFon, Tennessee , 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, 300-400 resolutions will be assigned.

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, Zach Fisher, 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.

Other awards that 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.*

MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Kenneth Sercerchi, Maine, 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. Your Membership and Post Activities is please to report a continuing membership of nearly 2.8 million members world-wide.

Membership

Final 1998 membership	2,806,834
Final 1999 membership	2,762,407
2000 membership as of Aug. 7, 2000	2,692,147*

*Estimate. The year-end membership should equal the 1999 final membership.

37th Annual National Membership Workshop

The 37th annual membership meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Friday, July 28, 2000, 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. The continuing theme of "Still Serving America" remains the battle cry for not only the membership program, but permeates throughout the programs of organization. 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

This highly successful grassroots membership movement, set in motion by the Membership and Post Activities Committee in January 1996, continues to grow in sponsorship and new members.

Thirty-seven Departments have received assistance from this effort as compared to twenty-six last year when this report was provided.

The program, which provides training workshops to interested volunteers along with practical field application, resulted in the development of 95 new posts and 130 revitalized posts in just four years. This adds up to a total of 7,748 new, renewed and transferred members. Many of the Departments have been successful in this program without any actual assistance from National Staff.

The guidelines for success in New Post Development and Revitalization can be found in the training—both workshop or on-the-job (field assistance). Any Department can enjoy absolute success if these guidelines are followed. Operation Reconnect, our partnership with the Department of Defense in reconnecting America with the military, will provide many new opportunities to enhance our New Post Development and Revitalization efforts.

All Departments are encouraged to participate in this "train-the-trainer" program. The key to the continued success of this program is support and commitment from every level of leadership.

Membership Campaign Promotion

The National Membership Awards Program distributes over 65,000 various awards annually to recognize membership accomplishments at all levels of the organization. The promotion plan for the National Membership Campaign is

formulated during the annual planning session of the M&PA Committee held in Indianapolis in January.

Unofficial Membership Awards—2000

Contained within this extensive program are a wide variety of prizes ranging from simple certificates and ribbons to valuable gifts and travel. The awards are designed to reward the membership success of dedicated Legionnaires at all levels of the organization and encourage continued growth. Get active in membership recruiting, ask a veteran to join our ranks today, you'll be glad you did—and you can earn one of the many prizes and awards listed below. Contact your Department Membership Chairman for more information.

Early Bird Contest—August 12, 1999:
Forty-six Departments qualified for the 35% awards.

Nef Kickoff—September 15, 1999:
Forty-Eight Departments qualified for the 45% awards with 30 of them qualifying for the 50% bonus awards.

Fall Meetings - October 14, 1999:
Forty-Six Departments qualified for the 55% awards with 17 of them qualifying for the 60% bonus awards.

Veterans Day—November 10, 1999:
Forty-Two Departments qualified for the 65% awards.

Pearl Harbor—December 8, 1999:
Twenty-seven Departments qualified for the 75% awards with (4) of them qualifying for the 80% bonus awards.

Big Twelve Competition—February 9, 2000:
Four Departments qualified for the 90% awards with none qualifying for the 95% bonus awards.

Children & Youth—April 12, 2000
Twenty-four (24) Departments qualified for the 95% award.

Armed Forces Day—May 12, 2000:
By achieving 100% of the Department 's 2000 membership goal, winning Department Commanders and Membership Chairmen will receive a plaque and gift from the National Commander. The 100% Department is Nevada.

Department Commander of the Year:
Any Department Commander who met or exceeds his/her 100% goal for 2000 by May 10, 2000, will receive a plaque recognizing his/her achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Gold Brigade Recruiter Award:

A Legionnaire who recruits 50 or more NEW members by District Competition target date, May 10, 2000, will qualify for enrollment in the elite GOLD BRIGADE of The American Legion.

Gold Brigade Drawing:

All certified members of the Gold Brigade will automatically be entered in a drawing with the five winners to be announced at the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The five winners of the drawing will receive a $1,000.00 Award Certificate.

Flag Day—June 14, 2000:

By meeting 101% of the Department's 2000 membership goal, the Department Commander and Membership Chairman will receive a **$1,500.00** gift certificate. Each Department that qualifies for this award will also receive the **101% National Commander's Plaque,** to be presented at the National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Delegate Strength—August 4, 2000:

Delegate Strength is determined by the membership in the hands of the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the National Convention. Total number of delegates for each Department is based on five delegates at large, one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, and the members of the National Executive Committee.

Post Honor Ribbons:

Post Honor Ribbons were shipped to 1,902 Posts whose 2000 membership as of December 31, 1999 exceeded their final 1999 membership.

Certificate of Meritorious Service:

These certificates were awarded for 250 Posts for attaining a new All-Time-High membership for 2000 by December 31, 1999.

Five Consecutive Years All-time-high:

These citations are awarded to Posts with five or more consecutive years of All-Time High membership in 2000.

District Commanders "Race to the Top"

District Commanders are the lynch pin of The American Legion's Chain of Command, serving as the vital link between the National and Department organizations and all Posts. As we are all aware, the local Post is where the "rubber meets the road." If it doesn't happen at the Post level—it doesn't happen at all. District Commanders are the people charged with insuring that all Posts in their District maintain their vitality.

Consequently, this unique award was created to provide a meaningful incentive for the District Commanders and reward their successful membership efforts. The winning District Commander and guest receive:

- Reserved tickets to the Indianapolis 500, "the greatest spectacle in racing."
- First class hotel accommodations for four nights at the Indianapolis Radisson Hotel.
- Reserved seating for the Indianapolis 500 parade.
- Dinner reservations Friday and Saturday evening at two of Indianapolis ' finest restaurants.
- Tour of the National Headquarters of The American Legion.

Previous winners have reported how much they enjoyed their opportunity to participate in this world renowned racing event and that they have fond memories that will last a lifetime.

The following provides more specific information on how you can win.

District Commanders "Race To The Top"

Competition will be divided into five categories based on the membership of the District without regard to geographic locations. District Commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on the final 1998 totals, and a top District Commander for the National award will be selected from each of the five categories. Second and Third place awards will also be presented in each category.

Category I—Districts of 15 to 1,499 members
Category II—Districts of 1,500 to 2,999 members
Category III—Districts of 3,000 to 4,999 members
Category IV—Districts of 5,000 to 7,499 members
Category V—Districts of 7,500 and above members

The 500 Trip

The 500 Trip will be presented to the Top District Commander and spouse in each category whose District membership for 2000 on March 31, 2000 represents the greatest percentage over the final 1999 membership of the District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. First Place Award entitles you and your guest to attend the 2000 Indianapolis 500 Race, and first-class hotel accommodations.

Second Place Awards

Second Place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 2000 on March 31, 2000 represents the second highest Percentage over the final 1999 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a $500 gift certificate.

Third Place awards

Third Place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 2000 on March 31, 2000 represents the third highest percentage over the final 1999 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a $375 gift certificate.

First Place Winners: Trip to the Indianapolis 500 Race

Category I—Gary Thor	Idaho	119.25%	Dist. 8
Category II—William H. Denny	Pennsylvania	117.52%	Dist. 6
Category III—Carlton Pepper	Delaware	102.63%	Dist. 4
Category IV—No Winner			
Category V—No Winner			

Second Place Winners:

Category I—Charles Schmidt	Oregon	106.45%	Dist. 10
Category II—Lloyd H. Woods	Maine	101.33%	Dist. 9
Category III—Martha Conway	Georgia	100.91%	Dist. 9
Category IV—No one qualified			
Category V—No one qualified			

Third Place Winners:

Category I—James Hudson	Georgia	104.60%	Dist. 8
Category II—No one qualified		100.00%	Dist. 11
Category III—Gerald Blumberg	Florida		
Category IV—No one qualified			
Category V—No one qualified			

District Commander New Post Achievement Award Recipients:

District Commanders who achieve the goal of creating new American Legion Posts in their respective District and have the new Posts' Temporary Charter Application on file in National Headquarters by the Target Date "May Day" May 10, 2000, qualify for a special recognition plaque.

Each American Legion Post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the "Top Recruiter" for that Post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the 2000 membership year by May 10, 2000. Department Adjutants will determine the Top New Member Recruiter for their respective Department and certify their "Department Recruiter" to National Headquarters on or before May 20, 2000.

The "Department Recruiter" properly certified from each Department, will be awarded a Plaque with his/her accomplishment inscribed thereon.

National Recruiter of the Year:

The individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all the Departments will be declared "National Recruiter of the Year". The winner of this award will receive an all expense paid trip to the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Award

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion award is presented annually to the Detachment of the Sons of The American Legion, which on December 31 of each year, has attained the greatest percentage of increase over the previous year 's total membership.

Category I	Oklahoma	170.1%
Category II	Georgia	128.5%
Category III	California	112.9%
Category IV	Illinois	108.3%
Category V	Pennsylvania	108.5%

The Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion will conduct its 29th National Convention at the Convention Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

For the 26th consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion are at an "All Time High" in membership. The S.A.L. closed its membership at the end of 1999 with a record 223, 140 members. This number represents a 5.6 percent increase over the previous year.

Membership figures for the 2000-year have already exceeded the figures for the 1999 membership year. By the National Convention in Milwaukee, the S.A.L. will have surpassed the 1999 final figures by several thousand giving them another "All Time High" for membership year 2000.

The S.A.L. continues its support of American Legion programs and is heavily involved with support to our nation's veterans in the VAVS program. In 1999, the S.A.L. provided over 127,000 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded $514,000 nationwide. This was remarkable considering only than 10% of the Squadron's submitted reports. The S.A.L. also raised over $181,807.00 in 1999 for the Child Welfare Foundation surpassing all previous years. The Sons also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. During 1999, the Sons went over the one million dollars mark in donations given since 1988 when the Sons became a major fundraiser for the Foundation.

The Sons continue to support the Legion programs with major emphasis on VAVS, National Emergency Fund, World War II monument as well as other vital programs. As an integral part of The American Legion family, the Sons continue to serve and provide assistance to Posts and their communities

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 7, 1999 through August 10, 2000. During this period, the Commission met five 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. It 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 representatives. There is one council member for each member of Congress. A National 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. This 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.

106th Congress, First Session

As the First Session of the 106th Congress moved toward its winter recess, the top priority was passage of FY 2000 funding bills. Many measures had been vetoed by President Clinton, because he thought Congress had ignored his spending requests in such areas as housing, education and law enforcement. President Clinton, on November 29, 1999, signed **Public Law 106-113**, an omnibus spending bill that funded federal government programs for the District of Columbia, foreign aid, and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, Labor, State and the federal judiciary.

Children & Youth

PL 106-113 provided funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2000. Under its provisions, the Justice Department will receive $18.6 billion; the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will receive $3 billion; and, $280 million will be given to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program which has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

Economics

With enactment of **PL 106-113**, FY 2000 funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education was finalized. This measure appropriates $184.3 million for programs under the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET).

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), which seeks disabled veterans, conducts job development with employers and provides case management services to customers, received $80.2 million. The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) program coordinates local employment service office efforts to provide priority of service, with emphasis on federal contractor job listings. This program received $77.3 million.

The federal administration account, which received $26.9 million, provides the funding for the VETS staff and also supports Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for servicemembers leaving the armed forces to allow them to make a smooth transition to the civilian workplace. The Veterans Workforce Development Program (formerly JTPA Part IV-C), which provides training opportunities and supportive services designed to help veterans get jobs, was funded at $7.3 million.

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project, which helps homeless veterans find jobs, received $9.3 million (a nearly $6 million increase over the President's original proposal). Finally, the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), trains veteran service providers through a contract with the University of Colorado. It was funded at $2 million.

On November 30, 1999 the President enacted **PL 106-117**, the "Veterans Millennium Health Care Act." (Other provisions of this measure are outlined in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section below.) Several provisions of the bill seek to help homeless veterans. One provision would help homeless veterans find jobs by authorizing a four-year increase in Labor Department funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. The measure would double the current authorization for all similar programs to $10 million in FY 2000 and increase that amount by $5 million each year until it tops out at $20 million in FY 2003.

Another provision would extend VA's authority to furnish assistance to homeless veterans through December 31, 2003. Finally, **PL 106-117** would extend through September 30, 2003 VA's authority to make grants, under the Comprehensive Service Program Act of

1992, for new programs to combat veteran homelessness, authorize grants to assist in expanding existing programs, and authorize annual appropriations of $50 million to carry out the act.

Foreign Relations

Funding for this country's foreign operations in FY 2000 is included in **PL 106-113**, the omnibus funding bill. The measure includes $15.3 billion in economic and military aid to a variety of foreign nations. The bill continues to assign large amounts of military and economic assistance to Egypt and Israel—$2.2 billion to Israel and $1.3 billion to Egypt. In addition, Jordan received $175 million in military assistance, in recognition of that country's role in the Middle East peace process. Both chambers agreed to the administration's request for $1.8 billion to bolster the 1998 Wye River peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

In addition, $839 million in bilateral economic aid will be given to states of the former Soviet Union, including $180 million to Ukraine, $108 million to Georgia, and $101 million to Armenia. However, this aid has a proviso: 50 percent of the money will be withheld until such time as Russia stops assisting Iran with its nuclear or ballistic missile technology. In a related area, Congress agreed to pay $926 million in the U.S. overdue funds for the United Nations. If the U.S. had not paid a portion of that amount, our nation could have faced the possibility of losing its seat in the UN General Assembly.

Internal Affairs

One of the provisions of **PL 106-117**, the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act, deals with the World War II Memorial, slated for construction on the Mall in Washington, DC. This provision would expand the fundraising authorities of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to expedite the establishment of the Memorial and ensure that adequate funds are available for the repair and long-term maintenance of the Memorial. To assure that groundbreaking, construction, and dedication of the Memorial are completed on a timely basis, the ABMC would be authorized to borrow up to $65 million from the U.S. Treasury.

National Security

On October 5, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization measure. Approximately $8.3 billion was added to the President's request for defense programs, for a total of $288.8 billion. Most of the additions were spread across a wide range of accounts reflecting the views of many members of Congress that President Clinton has run down U.S. forces by giving them too little money and too many missions.

This measure provides a 4.8 percent military pay raise effective January 1, 2000. It requires that future annual military pay raises through FY 2006 be one-half percent higher than the average increase in civilian pay. During early debate on this measure, the Senate rejected, by a 60-40 vote, the Clinton Administration's call for two more rounds of base closings and realignments.

On October 25, 1999 the President signed **PL 106-79**, the FY 2000 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill. The House passed the bill on October 13 by a 372-55 vote, and the Senate the next day by an 87-11 count. Below is a breakdown of the major accounts funding for FY 1999, the White House proposal for FY 2000, the House and Senate versions, and the final funding figures.

Table 4

	FY 1999 Funding	FY 2000 Proposal	Senate S 1122	House HR 2561	Final PL 106-79
Military personnel	$70.6 bil.	$73.7 bil.	$73.9 bil.	$72.0 bil.	$73.9 bil.
Operations & maintenance	84.0 bil.	91.3 bil.	91.9 bil.	93.7 bil.	92.2 bil.
Procurement	48.6 bil.	51.9 bil.	54.6 bil.	53.0 bil.	53.0 bil.
Research & development	36.8 bil.	34.4 bil.	36.4 bil.	37.2 bil.	37.6 bil.
Other DoD programs	11.8 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.3 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.2 bil.
Various budget cuts	1.2 bil.	.9 bil.	5.4 bil.	1.9 bil.	2.1 bil.
GRAND TOTAL	**$250.6 bil.**	**$263.3 bil.**	**$264.7 bil.**	**$268.7 bil.**	**$267.8 bil.**

A major change is that the White House's request for $3.1 billion to begin production of the F-22 fighter plane was modified. Instead, $2.5 billion was approved to continue development of the plane and to begin construction of six of the planes. Some of the money denied for the F-22 would go to other areas, including:

- $77 million to buy an additional KC-130J tanker plane;
- $275 million for 5 F-15s, which were not originally requested by the White House; and,
- $110 million for bonuses to stem the exodus of pilots from the Air Force.
- Funding for various DoD accounts, as provided by each chamber, are presented below:

Table 5

	House Version	Senate Version	Final PL 106-79
Joint Strike Fighter	$577 mil.	$492 mil.	$492 mil.
F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet (36 planes funded)	$3.03 bil.	$3.00 bil.	$2.99 bil.
V-22 Osprey (11 Marine Corps tilt-rotor troop	$1.15 bil.	$1.22 bil.	$1.15 bil.
F-15 (5 planes funded)	$593 mil.	$333 mil.	$428 mil.
F-16 Falcon (10 planes funded)	$502 mil.	$421 mil.	$361 mil.
DDG-51 (3 *Arleigh Burke* destroyers funded)	$2.88 bil.	$2.86 bil.	$2.88 bil.
New Attack Submarine (SSN-774)	$1.12 bil.	$1.11 bil.	$1.12 bil.
CVN-77 (last *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier)	$752 mil.	$752 mil.	$752 mil.
RAH-66 Comanche helicopters (R & D)	$427 mil.	$483 mil.	$467 mil.
UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters (19 requested)	$224 mil.	$224 mil.	$219 mil.

The bill appropriates $3.98 billion in funding for ballistic missile defense programs (BMD) for FY 2000. Finally, the measure contains $461 million for cooperative threat reduction. This aid goes to states of the former Soviet Union for destroying nuclear and chemical weapons, and supports various measures aimed at preventing the smuggling of these weapons to terrorist or rogue states or individuals.

On October 9, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-69**, the FY 2000 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in the bill. The Coast Guard received $4 billion, which is $128 million more than it received for FY 1999 but $61 million less than requested by the White House.

The American Legion has achieved a significant victory to address the problem of concurrent receipt, which penalizes certain servicemen who receive military retired pay along with VA disability compensation. Current law requires these retirees to forego a portion of their retired pay equal to the amount of their VA disability compensation

payments. Military retirees are the only federal retirees required to do this, and The American Legion feels this is patently unfair. Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., has introduced bills to address this inequity since 1985.

HR 44 would authorize special compensation for the most severely disabled retired veterans – those who have served for at least 20 years and who have disability ratings of between 70 and 100 percent. Specifically, it would authorize monthly payments of $300 for totally disabled retired veterans; $200 for retirees rated as 90 percent disabled; and, $100 for retirees with disability ratings of 70-80 percent. In the Senate, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced similar legislation, **S 789**. When the President signed **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization bill, provisions from Sen. McCain's bill were included in the final version. Passage of this change applies to veterans rated at 70 percent or higher. It is a good first step.

Funding for the Selective Service System was retained in **PL 106-74**, the FY 2000 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. . The American Legion supports retention of Selective Service as an inexpensive alternative to national conscription. The House sought to eliminate the program by providing only token funding of $7 million for program termination costs. Thanks in part to active lobbying by The American Legion, funding was restored to the agency, at last year's figure of $24 million. U.S. forces are being stretched too thin by budget-driven base closures, personnel cuts, peacekeeping missions and the continued threat of rogue and terrorist nations.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On October 20, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-74**, legislation to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for FY 2000. Presented below are the funding amounts approved for VA for FY 1999, the President's budget proposal for FY 2000, the final funding amounts contained in PL 106-74, and The American Legion's FY 2000 proposal.

Table 6

	FY 1999 Actual	President's Proposal	FY 2000 PL 106-74	Legion's Proposal
Veterans Benefits Administration	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	
Medical care	$17.3 bil.	$17.3 bil.	$19.0 bil.	$19.5 bil.
Medical/prosthetic research	$316 mil.	$316 mil.	$321 mil.	$335 mil.
Medical administration	$63 mil.	$61 mil.	$60 mil.	
General operating expenses	$856 mil.	$912 mil.	$913 mil.	$877 mil.
Inspector General	$36 mil.	$43 mil.	$43 mil.	
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$92 mil.	$97 mil.	$97 mil.	$105 mil.
Major construction	$142 mil.	$60 mil.	$65 mil.	$200 mil.
Minor construction	$175 mil.	$175 mil.	$160 mil.	$200 mil.
State home construction grants	$90 mil.	$40 mil.	$90 mil.	$100 mil.
State cemetery construction grants	$10 mil.	$11 mil.	$25 mil.	
Total VA funding	**$42.7 billion**	**$42.5 billion**	**$44.3 billion**	

On November 30, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-117**, the *Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act*, legislation introduced by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla. This measure, among other provisions, is designed to overhaul long-term veterans' care, realign VA facilities, and change current eligibility requirements for VA health care. The American Legion praised the passage of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act.

The bill creates a four-year pilot program that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide institutional care, mostly nursing home services, to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 70 percent and higher. This would include geriatric evaluations, VA and community-based nursing home care, domiciliary care, adult day health care, respite care, and such alternatives to institutional care, as the Secretary may consider reasonable and appropriate. Currently, VA is not required to provide such care to any enrolled veteran. Congress will review the plan after three years and determine before the program expires whether to eliminate it, expand it, or to leave it as is. House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said it is unlikely that, once the program is under way, that it would be eliminated.

The measure required VA to expand non-institutional care for all enrolled veterans. It would also allow VA to offset many of the costs of expanded care by setting co-payments on some services. As much as $200 million a year could be brought in under this provision. These copayments would be put into a revolving fund in the U.S. Treasury to be used to expand extended care services.

The measure removed the six-month limit on VA providing adult day health care, and authorizes VA to furnish respite care services under contract in veterans' homes or in any other setting. In addition, VA would be authorized to expand the scope of the State home program to encompass all extended care services. The VA Secretary would be required to conduct pilot programs to determine the effectiveness of different models of providing all-inclusive care to reduce the need for institutionalizing patients. **PL 106-117** would also establish a pilot program that would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assisted living services through contract arrangements.

Other provisions of **PL 106-117** would:

- Authorize the VA Secretary to make payments for emergency care on behalf of uninsured enrolled veterans and require that a veteran has received VA care within a two-year period of a medical emergency to be eligible.
- Extend the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans through December 31, 2003.
- Require the VA Secretary to report and provide justification to Congress on, and defer for a period, plans to close within any fiscal year more than one-half the beds within certain bed sections of VA medical centers.
- Require the VA Under Secretary for Health, in consultation with chiropractors, to establish a policy regarding chiropractic treatment.
- Authorize renovations and construction to VA facilities in Orlando, Fla., Kansas City, Mo.; Lebanon, Pa.; Fargo, N.D., and Atlanta, Ga.; and demolition of buildings at the Leavenworth, Kan., VAMC; and authorize appropriations for FYs 2000 and 2001 of $57.5 million for construction.
- Authorize the payment of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) to the surviving spouses of certain former prisoners of war who were rated totally disabled due to any service-connected cause for a period of one or more years immediately prior to death.
- Restore eligibility for CHAMPVA medical care, education, and housing loans to surviving spouses who lost eligibility for these benefits as the result of remarriage (these same spouses regained DIC eligibility, but not these related benefits, as the result of legislation enacted in 1998).
- Add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma, a rare form of lung cancer not associated with tobacco use, to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected and thus compensable for certain radiation-exposed veterans.

- Extend for four years the requirement that VA operate a program to evaluate the health status of Gulf War veterans' dependents and continue to provide outreach to these veterans through a newsletter.
- Establish a new fund in the Treasury in which VA is to deposit receipts and collections under the new authorities in the bill and provide that, of the monies collected and recovered by VA, each facility is to receive that amount collected or recovered on behalf of that facility.
- Extend to December 31, 2003 Vietnam-era veterans' eligibility for readjustment counseling services.
- Require the VA Secretary to operate a sexual trauma program through December 31, 2004.
- Reestablish a VA Committee on post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Establish a specific eligibility for VA health care for a) veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart, and b) subject to the terms of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, for veterans who retired from military service, are eligible for care under the TRICARE program, and not otherwise eligible for priority VA care.
- Revise the priority system for the award of grants under the State home construction program: (a) to provide a higher priority for renovation projects than accorded under current law; and (b) priority based on the relative need for adding new beds (with higher priority to States with great need vs. those with moderate or limited need, and taking into account existing VA and community nursing home beds).
- Clarify certain changes to the "Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998" (**PL 105-338**), to confer competitive status on veterans hired under the Act, thereby allowing them the opportunity to compete for internal vacancies.
- Extend Montgomery GI Bill education benefits eligibility, a) for preparatory courses for college and graduate school entrance examinations, and b) to individuals whose obligated period of service is interrupted in order to accept a commission following successful completion of Officer Training School.
- Provide that VA may not employ a health care professional if a State has terminated for cause that individual's license, registration, or certification.
- Authorize appropriations to the Department of Labor of $10 million for FY 2000, $15 million for FY 2001, $20 million for FY 2002, and $20 million for FY 2003, for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.
- Extend through December 31, 2003 VA's authority to furnish assistance to homeless veterans.
- Extend through September 30, 2003, VA's authority to make grants (under the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Program Act of 1992) for new programs to combat veteran homelessness, authorize grants to assist in expanding existing programs, eliminate the limitation on grant support for programs involving van procurement, and authorize annual appropriations of $50 million.
- Direct the VA Secretary to obligate Advance Planning Funds during FY 2000 to establish six additional national cemeteries for veterans.
- Require the VA Secretary to conduct independent studies on improvements to veterans' cemeteries and burial benefits.

On November 30, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-118,** a bill to increase the rate of disability compensation paid to certain veterans and their survivors. The measure will give service-connected disabled veterans the same cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) afforded Social Security recipients. It will also adjust the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for survivors of those veterans. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Social Security COLA will be 2.7 percent.

The original version of this measure was an omnibus bill addressing health-care reform, medical program changes, benefit and employment matters, education and housing matters, homeless veterans programs, and other related matters. The House originally passed this version of that legislation on July 29 by a 424-0 vote. The Senate passed **S 1393**, which contained only the COLA increase. A conference committee eventually stripped the non-COLA provisions from HR 2280, passed the COLA increase, and appended the remaining provisions the "Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act," **PL 106-117**.

106th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 106th Congress convened on January 24, 2000. Major issues on the agendas of both chambers include campaign finance reform and the Fiscal Year 2001 federal budget. Because 2000 is a Presidential and congressional election year, the Second Session had fewer working days for Congress to conduct its business. As of today, The American Legion has participated in seventeen congressional hearings during the Second Session.

With fewer days to conduct business, both chambers moved quickly to stake out budgets, before the hard work of setting actual dollar amounts for the hundreds of federal programs actually began. However, the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2001 proposed heavy increases in education and other social spending, which would essentially "unbalance" the delicately balanced budget. The House quickly passed 12 of thirteen appropriations bills before the August-Labor Day recess, while the Senate has approved only 8. Two funding measure (for Military Construction and Defense) have been enacted (**Public Laws 106-246** and **106-257**, respectively). Many of the House-passed bills face a presidential veto in their present forms.

The President's recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflected a marked improvement over previous requests. Though $47.6 billion was proposed by the administration for VA, The American Legion has stated that at least $48.1 billion will be needed to keep VA operations at current service levels. In particular, VA medical care would receive $20.3 billion under the President's budget proposal, an increase of $1.3 billion over current funding, but still insufficient to keep the VA medical system functioning at current levels.

On March 15, 2000, the House Budget Committee recommended a $200 million increase over the administration's FY 2001 budget request for VA, for a total of $47.8 billion overall. Part of the increase came as a result of the committee's unwillingness to accept the administration's flat-lined request for medical/prosthetic research and the State Veterans Homes Grant program. The committee was also alarmed by reports that the administration has instructed VA to identify over $1.1 billion in efficiencies, which could include reductions in personnel, programs, services and treatment, as well as rationing of care to veterans. This attempt to continue to dismantle America's largest health care network is absolutely unacceptable to The American Legion. America's veterans have been deeply involved in balancing the federal budget over the past two decades. Now that the budget is balanced, it is time for veterans' programs to receive sufficient funding to allow them to function properly by providing America's veterans with quality care and other services.

Americanism

On March 29, 2000, the Senate defeated **Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res) 14**, the Senate version of **House Joint Resolution (HJ Res) 33**, the flag protection constitutional amendment that passed the House in 1999. The final Senate tally was 63 to 37, four votes short of the 2/3 majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment onto the states. During the rollcall vote, two senators who had previously supported the amendment switched their vote. Senators Richard Bryan (NV) and Robert Byrd (WV) joined 35 others to give the grassroots efforts to protect the American flag a temporary setback.

On May 26, 2000, President Clinton enacted **PL 106-207**. This statute will expedite the naturalization of Hmong tribesmen from Laos, or their spouses, who served in special guerrilla units during the Vietnam War. The English language requirement will be waived and special consideration for the civics requirement will be given to these refugees. The American Legion supports the intent of **PL 106-207**, through Americanism Resolution No. 329 adopted at the 1998 National Convention.

Children & Youth

On June 7 by a vote of 214-195, the House adopted **HR 4690**, a bill to fund the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2001. Under its provisions, the Justice Department will receive overall funding of $20.1 billion. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will receive $4.67 billion to enforce the nation's immigration laws, including additional border patrol agents, increased detention and removal capacity, and continuation of the interior enforcement, naturalization, and other application background reduction. Finally, $287 million will be given to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program that has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on July 18 approved its version of this measure by a 28-0 vote. This version would appropriate $18.7 billion for the Justice Department, $4.6 billion for the INS, and $280 million for OJJDP. An additional $100 million was appropriated by the committee for the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant program. The Senate will take up this legislation when it returns from the August-Labor Day recess.

Economics

On June 30, by a 52-43 recorded vote, the Senate passed **HR 4577**, the FY 2001 funding measure for the Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education. This followed House passage of the bill on June 14 by a 217-214 tally.

Funding for DoL's Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) is contained in **HR 4577**. Each chamber passed differing totals for ASVET accounts, which are outlined in the chart below.

Table 7

	FY 2000 PL 106-113	President's Request	FY 2001 House	FY 2001 Senate
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program	$80.2 mil.	$81.6 mil.	$80.2 mil.	$81.6 mil.
Local Veterans Employment Rep.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.
Federal administration*	$26.9 mil.	$29.0 mil.	$26.9 mil.	$28.0 mil.

Veterans Workforce Investment program	$7.3 mil.#	$7.3 mil.	$7.3 mil.	$7.3 mil.
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project	$9.6 mil.#	$15.0 mil.	$9.6 mil.	$12.5 mil.
Total, ASVET	**$184.4 mil.**	**$210.2 mil.**	**$201.3 mil.**	**$206.7 mil.**

* Funding for the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) is included in this account.
# These programs were not included in the ASVET account in FY 2000.

Foreign Relations

The House on July 13, by a vote of 239-185, passed **HR 4811**, the FY 2001 Foreign Operations funding bill. This measure would allocate $13.3 billion for various economic and military aid to foreign countries and organizations. The bill is about $1.8 billion less than requested by the White House, and $100 million less than the corresponding Senate version, **S 2522**, which passed that body on July 18 by unanimous consent.

HR 4811 contains economic assistance for three Middle East nations: $840 million for Israel ($120 million less than FY 2000), $695 million for Egypt ($40 million less than FY 2000), and $150 million for Jordan (same amount as this year). The bill also includes economic assistance for the Independent States of the former Soviet Union in the amount of $740 million, $99 million less than was appropriated for FY 2000. The funds will assist these nations in the destruction of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Funding for anti-terrorism programs was set at $33 million, the same as FY 2000.

One area of great difference between the two chambers is international debt relief. The House included $225 million to help poor countries pay off loans to international banks and funds, while the Senate would limit the spending to $75 million.

On May 18, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved by voice votes two measures aimed at the POW/MIA issue. The first, **S 1902**, introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., calls for the full disclosure of records on World War II-era experiments conducted by Japan in chemical and biological warfare, many of them were performed on POWs. The bill was then referred to the Senate Intelligence Committee for consideration. Its House companion, **HR 3561**, introduced by Rep. Brian Bilbray, R-Calif., has nine cosponsors.

The second measure approved by the committee, **S 484**, introduced by Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., would grant refugee status in the U.S. to foreign nationals who assist in returning any living Americans still missing or held prisoner from the Korean War or the Vietnam War. Subsequently, S 484 passed the full Senate by unanimous consent on May 24. **HR 1926**, a House companion measure introduced by Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., has 104 cosponsors.

On May 10, The American Legion announced its opposition to the recognition of Permanent Normalized Trade Relations (PNTR) with the People's Republic of China and also against its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). The reasons for the Legion's opposition, in the words of National Commander Al Lance, are "As a Most Favored Nation trading partner, the government of China has antagonized Taiwan, stolen U.S. nuclear-weapon secrets, attempted to influence U.S. elections, trampled on the human rights of its countrymen, and refused to cooperate on the accounting of missing American POW/MIAs."

The American Legion recommended that Congress and the Clinton Administration set forth four preconditions both for China's entry into the WTO and for ending the annual congressional review of its trade status. Those condition include:

- Recognition of Taiwan's right of self-determination;

- Full cooperation on the accounting of American servicemen missing from the Korean War and the Cold War;
- Abandonment of policies aimed at military dominance in Asia; and
- Encouragement and promotion of human rights and religious freedom among the Chinese people.

National Commander Lance issued a statement saying that "China should embrace democratic values before it benefits from unfettered American investment...A something-for-nothing trade arrangement with China—one that severs trade from national security and human rights—threatens stability, rewards antagonism, and strengthens a potential foe of American sons and daughters in the U.S. armed forces. He further stated, "China must turn over a new leaf before the government relinquishes its only non-military leverage. Otherwise, the U.S. will wager—perhaps with the lives of American troops—that China will not finance an arms buildup with the economic benefits of membership in the World Trade Organization. The American Legion strongly discourages such a foolhardy gamble." The American Legion was severely criticized by some members of Congress for its position on this issue.

On May 24, the House voted 237-197 to pass **HR 4444**, legislation to assign PNTR to China, without the annual review. A similar Senate bill, **S 2277**, is expected to be taken up by the Senate when that chamber returns from the August-Labor Day recess.

Internal Affairs

The President, on May 2, signed into law **PL 106-195**, a resolution to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Korean War and the service of American armed forces during that conflict. The House passed the measure on March 8 by a 383-0 vote, with the Senate following suit by unanimous consent on April 13.

On May 11 Reps. Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., and Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., introduced **HR 4434**, 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 be current or former members of the Armed Forces, and substantially all 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 Scouting units are just a few of the programs 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 4434 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). This legislation would recognize

the original intent of Congress, and the fact that more distant relatives of a Legionnaire will come into existence over time. The measure currently has 46 cosponsors.

National Security

On March 29, 2000, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced **S 2322**, the *Remove Servicemembers from Food Stamps Act of 2000*. The bill would establish a special subsistence allowance of $180/month for members of the uniformed services, pay grades E-1 through E-5, who are eligible to receive food stamp assistance. On April 6, the Senate voted 99-0 to add $28 million to the DoD budget for FYs 2001 through 2005 to implement the provisions of **S 2322**. The American Legion supports Sen. McCain's bill as an important effort to allow enlisted personnel to meet their basic needs of military life.

The House on July 19, by a 367-58 vote, passed **HR 4576**, the FY 2001 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations measure. Under the terms of the bill, DoD would receive $287.5 billion, $4 billion more than requested by the White House and $19.8 billion more than was appropriated for FY 2000. The Senate passed its version of **HR 4576** on July 27 by a vote of 91-9. It was signed into law by the President on August 9 as **PL 106-257**.

Some of the highlights of **HR 4576** include:

- $75.8 billion for Personnel. This includes funding for a 3.7 percent pay raise for all servicemembers and for enlistment bonuses. It supports 1.38 million in active-duty forces and 866,900 Selected Reserve and National Guard personnel.
- $59.2 billion for Procurement. Among the various accounts funded are: (1) $294 million for Abrams tank upgrades, (2) $2.8 billion for 42 F-18E/F fighters, (3) $1.1 billion for 16 V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, (4) $4 billion for the CVN-77 aircraft carrier, (5) $2.7 billion for three DDG-51 destroyers, and (6) $2.8 billion for 12 C-17 airlift aircraft.
- $41.4 billion for Research and Development, including (1) $689 million for continued research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter, the next generation of fighter being designed for the US military, (2) $614 million for the Army's Comanche helicopter, and (3) $1.4 billion for F-22 development.
- $1.6 billion to help the Army quickly develop and field two new 4,000-person "medium brigades" that can deploy to a world trouble spot within 96 hours. This also includes $46 million to accelerate the effort to develop a future combat vehicle for use by these brigades.
- $1.8 billion for a national anti-missile defense system. There has been much debate over this proposed system. The House defeated several amendments that would have reduced the administration's requested funding for this program.
- $2.1 billion for continued testing, research and development, and procurement of 10 of the first F-22s requested by the President.
- $12.1 billion to the Defense health program, including an additional $100 million to implement health care enhancements approved by the House in the DoD authorization bill (**HR 4205**) targeted to improve access to care for servicemembers, their dependents and military retirees.
- $433 million intended to help Russia and other former Soviet states dispose of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles that could deliver them.

In early June the Senate began debate on **S 2549**, the FY 2001 DoD authorization bill. This measure sets the budget for defense spending, and is usually the target of lawmakers

seeking to change or make defense policy. Consideration of this measure was put on hold by the Senate leadership because of more than 200 amendments which individual senators are seeking to add to the bill.

One amendment, offered by Sen. John Warner, R-Va., would allow the President to make unilateral arms reductions only after the Pentagon completes a review of nuclear weapons status, a review unlikely to be completed before next year. The amendment passed by a 51-47 vote. President Clinton's recent meeting with new Russian President Vladimir Putin was the spur for this amendment.

Other amendments passed by the Senate include:

- Another Warner amendment to allow military retirees over 65 to remain in DoD's CHAMPUS or TRICARE health plans rather than requiring them to switch to Medicare. A similar revision offered by Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., would allow military retirees with service-connected disabilities to join the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. Johnson's amendment, however, was defeated on a procedural vote of 52-46. The Congressional Budget Office had made cost estimate of both proposals. Johnson's plan was estimated to cost $92 billion over the next ten years, while Warner's plan would cost $40 billion for the same period.
- An amendment offered by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Carl Levin, D-Mich., to authorize two more rounds of base closures. The Senate defeated this amendment by a 63-35 vote.
- Another McCain amendment would create a $180/month allowance for armed forces enlisted personnel who are eligible for food stamps.
- An amendment by Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., which passed by a voice vote, which would extend Montgomery GI Bill education benefits to family members of military members.
- An amendment offered by Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., that would allow military retirees with service-connected disabilities to receive military retired pay concurrently with veterans'' disability compensation. This amendment passed the Senate by a voice vote. The American Legion fully supports this amendment.
- Final passage of **S 2549** is expected in the upcoming weeks. A conference committee will then fashion a version of the legislation that both chambers find acceptable and will then be signed into law by the President.

On May 18, the House of Representatives voted 353-63 to pass **HR 4205**, the Fiscal Year 2001 Department of Defense (DoD) authorization bill. The Senate was debating **S 2549**, the companion measure to **HR 4205.**

Both measures would authorize nearly $310 billion in funding for DoD programs and defense-related programs of the Department of Energy. That amount is $4.6 billion more than was requested by the President and $21.1 billion more than the FY 2000 authorization bill. **HR 4205** and **S 2549** include a 3.7 percent military pay raise as well as providing up to $500 per month in assistance to certain economically strapped servicemembers, including those who depend on food stamps. The House bill would authorize $5.2 billion to develop and field anti-ballistic missile defenses, with $2.2 billion going to the national anti-missile defense program (the Senate measure would authorize $1.9 billion for national anti-missile defense).

During House floor debate, several amendments were added to **HR 4205**. Among the changes adopted were:

- An amendment by Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo., ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, was approved by a 218-201 vote that would

(1) authorize the transfer of a portion of Navy-owned land on Vieques Island near Puerto Rico, (2) provide $40 million in assistance to the inhabitants, and (3) require a referendum by Vieques' inhabitants on whether the Navy can remain on the island;

- An amendment by Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss., that would make permanent a Medicare demonstration project at six military hospitals, with Medicare reimbursing DoD for 95 percent of the cost of coverage. The vote on this amendment was 406-10; and,
- An amendment that would end funds for U.S. ground troops in Kosovo by next April 1 if the President does not certify that European allies are paying their fair share of the peacekeeping mission. The amendment passed by a vote of 264-153.

The two measures seek to improve TRICARE, the HMO-like health care plan for retirees and military dependents. The House bill would eliminate the inequities of service personnel stationed far from military facilities who pay more for their health care than those who are living near a base; covers travel expenses for visits to facilities more than 100 miles from primary car serves; and, reduces limits on catastrophic care expenses. It also makes available to all Medicare-eligible retirees a mail-order prescription service with a modest copayment.

On June 15 the Senate by a 99-0 vote passed **HR 4475**, the FY 2001 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in this measure. Under the Senate-passed version, the Coast Guard would received $4.4 billion for its various operations, $249 million less than requested by the White House. The House version, passed on May 19 by a 395-13 tally, would appropriate $4.6 billion, an increase of $8 million.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill for FY 2001 (outlined below) also contains funding for the Selective Service System. **HR 4635** would fund Selective Service at $23 million, a reduction of $1 million from current year funding. The basic mission of the Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military adequate 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 military manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which men will be brought into 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 April 13, 2000, the full House and Senate passed the conference report to **House Concurrent Resolution (H Con. Res.) 290**, the Fiscal Year 2001 budget resolution. This measure passed the House by a 220-208 recorded vote, after debating and rejecting two alternatives and President Clinton's original budget proposal. Several hours later, the Senate approved the conference report by a 50-48 tally. This is only the fourth time since 1975 that Congress has met their statutory deadline of April 15 to pass a fiscal year budget resolution, and the second year in a row that this feat was accomplished.

Total budget authority for VA contained in **H Con. Res. 290** in FY 2001 is $47.8 billion, which is $200 million above the amount proposed by the administration. The budget resolution proposes $20.7 billion for VA medical care, which is $300 million more than the President's proposal and $1.7 billion above this year's appropriation level. However, Congress accepted the administration's proposed amount projected for the Medical Care Cost Fund (MCCF). To date, the MCCF has not come close to collecting the amounts projected, and those collections could fall as much as $350 million short. This would put an

unacceptable strain on VA medical care. In addition, allocations for veterans' programs will be sufficient to allow legislation to enhance the Montgomery GI Bill program to go forward. These enhancements would raise the monthly benefit to $600 starting in FY 2001 and to $720 in two years.

It should be pointed out that the budget resolution is only the second step in the FY 2001 budget process. It is a blueprint for the Appropriations committees to follow. Each committee will then "fill in the blanks" with dollars for individual programs. Congress is tentatively scheduled to adjourn on October 6, to allow incumbents time to campaign for reelection. Therefore, the appropriations process will be going at a breakneck pace over the next few months.

On June 21, the House by a 256-169 vote approved **HR 4635**, a bill to fund the operations of the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as various independent agencies, for FY 2001.

Table 8

	FY 2000 Actual	**President's Proposal**	**HR 4635 (House passed)**	**Legion's Proposal**
Veterans Benefits Administration	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	$24.6 bil.	
Medical care	$19.0 bil.	$20.3 bil.	$20.3 bil.	$20.5 bil.
Medical / prosthetic research	$321 mil.	$321 mil.	$351 mil.	$375 mil.
General operating expenses	$913 mil.	$1 bil.	$1.01 bil.	$960 mil.
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$97 mil.	$110 mil.	$107 mil.	$110 mil.
Major construction	$65 mil.	$60 mil.	$62 mil.	$200 mil.
Minor construction	$160 mil.	$162 mil.	$100 mil.	$200 mil.
State home construction grants	$90 mil.	$60 mil.	$90 mil.	$150 mil.
State cemetery construction grants	$25 mil.	$25 mil.	$25 mil.	$25 mil.
Total VA funding	**$44.3 billion**	**$46.9 billion**	**$46.8 billion**	

Funding totals for some VA programs give cause for concern. Funding for medical care was pegged at $20.3 billion, equal to the President's request and a $1.3 billion increase over the current year. The American Legion had requested $20.5 billion for health care. The National Cemetery Administration received a $10 million increase over the current year bringing FY 2001 funding to $107 million for current and new cemetery operations, while the Legion asked for $110 million. However, medical and prosthetic research funding was flatlined at $321 million by the White House. During House debate, this account was increased to $351 million. The American Legion had requested minimum funding of $375 million for this account. Finally, the President requested $60 million for the Veterans State Extended Care Facilities Grants program, which the House increased to $90 million, the same amount as current year funding. The Legion had proposed $150 million for this grants program.

The American Legion is deeply concerned about the possibility of spending shortfalls in veterans' programs. Legion staff members have been meeting with members of the House VA subcommittee since April. They have stressed the importance of full funding for VA, especially because the provisions of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act (**PL 106-117**) will go into effect this year. Members of The American Legion Family are asked to contact their congressional officials and urge their support for full funding for VA programs at least equal to FY 2000 funding amounts.

The American Legion continues to seek enactment of the GI Bill of Health. One of the pillars of the GI Bill of Health is Medicare subvention, which would allow Medicare-eligible

veterans to use their Medicare benefits for treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VA facilities.

TRICARE, the for-profit military health care network for active-duty military personnel, military retirees, and dependents, has serious fiscal problems. There are many unserved and underserved communities within the 12 TRICARE operating regions. Due to slow claims processing and payments, many subcontractors are choosing to withdraw from TRICARE. TRICARE requires, at a minimum, annual enrollment fees and co-payments from military retirees and their dependents. Military retirees feel the federal government has failed to fulfill its promise of free health care for life.

The American Legion believes that the key to fixing this problem, and keeping faith with America's military retirees is to offer real, population-based health care. Access to TRICARE should not exclude any military servicemember, military retiree, or their dependents based on age or medical condition. Access to care in TRICARE could be improved through the expanded use of VHA medical facilities and additional VA/DOD Joint Ventures. Use of these federally operated medical facilities would allow greater congressional oversight into the timeliness and quality of care being provided to military servicemembers, military retirees, and dependents. Essentially, TRICARE has not lived up to expectation. Major changes are needed if the system is to survive.

On March 15, 2000, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing to address the health care needs of military personnel within the TRICARE system. National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr. presented The American Legion's views in testimony before the panel. The American Legion recommends that VA, DoD, and HHS reach a fair and equitable agreement concerning Medicare subvention that allows Medicare-eligible veterans and their Medicare-eligible dependents to use their Medicare benefits in VA and DoD. The American Legion strongly recommends that military retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents have access to the VHA pharmaceuticals.

The American Legion would support Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents using their Medicare benefits in the VA health-care system. Access to quality health care for military retirees and their families has steadily eroded over the years as base closures and downsizing have limited space-available care.

There are several bills receiving the greatest amount of attention that The American Legion is interested in:

HR 3573 and S 2003: *Keeping Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act* introduced by Rep. Ronnie Shows, D-Miss. (302 cosponsors), and Sen. Tim Johnson D-S.D (32 cosponsors). If enacted, this legislation would:

- Allow members of the armed forces (1) who began their service before June 7, 1956 and (2) retired after a minimum of 20 years of service or as a result of a service connected disability (as well as the surviving widow or widower of such members) to be considered as federal employees eligible for enrollment under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).
- Direct the Secretary of Defense to make an agreement with the Office of Personnel Management to provide FEHBP coverage to (1) a member or former member entitled to military retired or retainer pay, (2) an unremarried former spouse who was married to a member for at least 20 years, during which the member performed at least 20 years of retirement-creditable service, (3) a dependent of a deceased qualifying member or former member, (4) a dependent of a living member or former member, and (5) a family member of such member.
- Repeal a provision prohibiting coverage under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) for persons

entitled to hospital insurance benefits under Part A of title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act.

S 2013: *Honoring Health Care Commitments to Servicemembers Past and Present Act of 2000* introduced by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., currently has 9 cosponsors. If enacted, this bill would:

- Direct the Secretary of Defense to expand and make permanent a demonstration project which allows CHAMPUS-eligible individuals entitled to hospital insurance benefits under Part A of Medicare to enroll in FEHBP, with a limit of 275,000 persons.
- Eliminates any required copayments, deductibles and other fees for CHAMPUS medical care provided to a dependent of a military retiree who is enrolled in TRICARE Prime.

HR 3655: *Improved Medical Care for Troops and Retirees Act* introduced by Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii (60 cosponsors). If enacted, this bill would:

- Make permanent a demonstration project that includes Medicare subvention for military retirees and their dependents.
- Provide supplemental medical care for family members of servicemembers assigned to certain duty locations far from sources of care.
- Eliminate certain deductibles and copayments for health care services to active duty members or their dependents under TRICARE Prime.
- Requires the DoD Secretary to provide reimbursement for certain travel expenses if a covered TRICARE beneficiary is required to seek specialty care more than 100 miles from where his primary care provider provides service to the member.

S 2087: *Military Health Care Improvement Act of 2000* introduced by Sen. John Warner R-Va. (30 cosponsors). If enacted, this bill would:

- Improve access to benefits under the TRICARE program.
- Extend and improve certain demonstration projects under the Defense Health Program.

For years, the military and VA health care networks coexisted. They have thousands of sharing agreements and even have some shared physical plants. The American Legion believes VA, with adequate funding, could provide quality health care services to military retirees and their dependents. Military retirees are veterans (many service-connected disabled) and are eligible for access to VA health care. These true defenders of democracy deserve timely, accessible, quality health care. VA is capable of meeting that challenge.

Another issue of great debate is Medicare Subvention. Currently, a federal health care provider cannot bill a federal health care insurer. That means if VA treats a Medicare-eligible veteran for a nonservice-connected medical condition, VA cannot bill Medicare for services rendered. In other words, VA and DoD end up subsidizing Medicare. Medicare-eligibility is not a criterion for treatment in a VA or DoD military facility.

The American Legion believes it is time for DoD and VA leadership to sit down and determine what is the best solution for meeting the health care needs of America's veterans and their families. TRICARE is failing to meet the needs of the military community because of infrastructure and financial problems. TRICARE is currently operating with a $3 billion deficit. Problems with network providers, inability to attract and retain qualified health care subcontractors, the difficulty in processing claims and payment delays, and the lack of portability between regions are the major problems plaguing TRICARE. In addition, TRICARE was never designed to treat veterans over 65.

VA can help TRICARE in several ways. All military retirees already have unfettered access to VA health care simply by enrolling. Many are service-connected and have a VA

priority to care. VA has a significant history with DoD through sharing agreements and is designated as back-up for DoD in national emergencies. VA currently treats veterans over 65, and has facilities in every state and many rural communities. These facilities include outpatient clinics, Vet Centers, university hospital affiliations, and extensive inpatient and community-based long-term care capability. VA has demonstrated its ability to treat veterans and their dependents. In addition, VA has many unique specialized care programs, including rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, geriatric care, PTSD and mental health and prosthetics. Finally, VA health-care is portable.

The American Legion recommends that the VA health care system be open to military retirees and their dependents. The U.S. government should no longer operate competing health care systems for the same beneficiaries.

In July, 1999, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims handed down the decision *Morton v. West*, in which VA can only help a veteran establish entitlement to a benefit if it is "well-grounded." This includes producing medical and lay evidence to help the claimant.

On July 25, the House of Representatives by a 414-0 vote, passed a bill, **HR 4864**, which would reaffirm and clarify the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) duty to assist veterans in the development of their benefits claims. The measure now goes to the Senate for further action. The bill, introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., is similar to **HR 3193**, legislation introduced last year by Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., ranking member of the House veterans' panel. After hearings were held on Rep. Evans's measure, clarifying language was added and **HR 4864** was introduced.

The provisions of **HR 4864** include:

- A requirement for VA to notify veteran applicants with incomplete applications of what evidence is necessary to complete the application, including information and medical and lay evidence necessary to substantiate the claim. As part of the notice, VA must indicate which part of the evidence will be provided by the veteran and which VA will attempt to obtain for the veteran.
- A requirement that VA must make reasonable efforts to assist in obtaining evidence necessary to establish a veteran's eligibility for a benefit. However, it allows VA to decide a claim without providing such assistance when no reasonable possibility exists that such assistance will aid in the establishment of eligibility. VA must also obtain relevant records that the veteran identifies to VA and authorizes the department to obtain. Further, VA must inform the veteran applicant whenever the department is unable to obtain such records and to request the claimant to notify VA if he or she intends to obtain such records independently.
- In the case of a veteran's claim for disability compensation, VA is required to obtain the veteran's existing service medical records and other relevant service records, existing records of pertinent medical treatment or examination of the veteran at VA health care facilities or at VA's expense, and specified information to be furnished by other agencies. VA is also required to provide a medical examination or obtain a medical opinion when the evidence of record before VA establishes that the claimant has a current disability or current symptoms and that there was an event, injury, or disease (or combination thereof) during the veteran's active service capable of causing or aggravating the claimant's current disability or symptoms, but is insufficient to establish service-connection.
- Placing on the claimant the burden of proving entitlement to benefits. Under current law, the veteran must submit evidence sufficient to justify a belief by

a fair and impartial individual that the claim is well grounded. All federal departments or agencies are prohibited from imposing any charge for providing information to VA for purposes of determining benefit eligibility.

- Allowing all veterans whose claims were denied since last year's *Morton v. West* court case, because their cases were not considered well-grounded, to request a VA review of their cases.

The duty to assist veterans seeking legitimate benefits from VA must be an integral part of VA's mission as the agency for veterans' affairs. Yet, many claimants argue that VA's role has recently been more as an obstructionist than that of an advocate. Therefore, VA's duty to assist appears extremely passive. Consequently, there are constant backlogs of claims waiting for adjudication, and most have not been properly developed due to lack of assistance from VA.

During consideration of **S 2549**, the FY 2001 DoD authorization bill, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced an amendment to clarify VA's duty to assist veterans. The amendment passed by unanimous consent. However, the amendment did not gain the same support among veterans service organizations as **HR 4864** and **HR 3193**.

The American Legion believes that **HR 4864** is an effective solution to assist deserving veterans in the processing of their service-connected disability claims. Without passage of this measure, VA's current backlog problem will only get worse. America's heroes deserve the dutiful assistance of VA in the "timely" adjudication of their claims. This legislation is the best approach available to assist veterans, many who have waited too long to receive their benefits.

On July 27, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved by a voice vote **S 1810**, an omnibus veterans bill. Originally drafted and introduced by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., as a companion to **HR 3193**, the bill has attracted a host of other veterans' provisions. In addition to the language requiring VA to help veterans find information to back up a benefits claim, then help them file the claim, **S 1810** would:

- Provide benefits to female Vietnam veterans' children born with birth defects;
- Provide medical compensation for veterans who require a mastectomy for service-connected reasons;
- Provide copayments for prescription pharmaceuticals;
- Create a physician's assistant position within VA;
- Allow VA to make several land transfers; and
- Eliminate inconsistencies in federal programs by requiring VA to provide medical coverage for colon, lung, brain and ovarian cancers in veterans who were exposed to radiation.

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), the successor to the original 1944 GI Bill of Rights, is one of the major reasons many young people today are joining the military. However, recent statistics show that MGIB benefits pay for only about half of the educational costs incurred by veterans. Moreover, since only about half of veterans use even part of their MGIB benefits, this proves the program does not meet their needs, and is in dire need of major improvements.

On March 1, a press conference was held on the steps of the US Capitol, calling for a restoration of the higher education purchasing power that once made the MGIB program a strong recruiting tool. Various speakers from the veterans, uniformed services, and higher education communities repeated their commitment to closing the gap between the current MGIB allowance and the cost of higher education. House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee Chairman Jack Quinn, R-N.Y., and Ranking Member Bob Filner, D-Calif.,

spoke at the event, as did former House VA Committee Chairman G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery, the author of the MGIB program.

On May 23, by a vote of 417-0 the House of Representatives passed **S 1402**, legislation to upgrade the MGIB program by bringing its benefits closer to the rising cost of higher education. The House passed the bill after substituting the language of a companion measure, **HR 4268**, for the Senate-passed text.

The measure would raise the monthly MGIB education benefit from $536 per month to $600 per month effective October 1, 2000, with a second increase to $720 per month occurring in two years. The bill would also provide another opportunity for servicemembers still on active duty to convert from the Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP) to the MGIB program. It would also allow a veteran to use MGIB benefits for a civilian occupational licensing or certification examination.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said, "...this increase was realistic in view of other demands and priorities. This was the first step. A fully updated Montgomery GI Bill would not only ease the transition from military to civilian life, it would help all branches of the military meet their recruiting goals." Final details of **S 1402** must now be worked out by the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees before it can be signed into law by the President.

This nation cannot keep a promise it made to veterans unless the MGIB program is brought into line with today's burgeoning cost of education. The American Legion supports improvements in the MGIB program that will continue its work as one of the premier recruiting tools of this country's armed forces.

On July 25, the House passed by voice vote an omnibus measure, **HR 4850**, which incorporated the provisions of four separate measures. This action is usually taken when time is short at the end of a congressional session, and the chances of passage are greater for a single bill instead of several bills.

The bill would authorize cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on disability compensation for service-connected disabled veterans and for the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans. The percentage of the increase will be the same as the COLA provided for Social Security recipients. Another provision of **HR 4850** would permit certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to participate in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program.

The bill would also provide veterans' disability compensation benefits for National Guard or Reserve members who suffer a heart attack or stroke while performing inactive duty training. Finally, **HR 4850** would provide a monthly rate of special compensation for certain female veterans for the service-connected loss of one or both breasts due to a radical or modified radical mastectomy.

As the year 2000 is a presidential election year, The American Legion developed a platform statement outlining the organization's goals for the U.S. for the 21st century. During the month of July, the Legion provided the platform statement to the political parties.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 7, 1999 through August 10, 2000. During this period, the Commission met five 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. It 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 representatives. There is one council member for each member of Congress. A National 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. This 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.

106th Congress, First Session

As the First Session of the 106th Congress moved toward its winter recess, the top priority was passage of FY 2000 funding bills. Many measures had been vetoed by President Clinton, because he thought Congress had ignored his spending requests in such areas as housing, education and law enforcement. President Clinton, on November 29, 1999, signed **Public Law 106-113**, an omnibus spending bill that funded federal government programs for the District of Columbia, foreign aid, and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, Labor, State and the federal judiciary.

Children & Youth

PL 106-113 provided funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2000. Under its provisions, the Justice Department will receive $18.6 billion; the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will receive $3 billion; and, $280 million will be given to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program which has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

Economics

With enactment of **PL 106-113**, FY 2000 funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education was finalized. This measure appropriates $184.3 million for programs under the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET).

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), which seeks disabled veterans, conducts job development with employers and provides case management services to customers, received $80.2 million. The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) program coordinates local employment service office efforts to provide priority of service, with emphasis on federal contractor job listings. This program received $77.3 million.

The federal administration account, which received $26.9 million, provides the funding for the VETS staff and also supports Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for servicemembers leaving the armed forces to allow them to make a smooth transition to the civilian workplace. The Veterans Workforce Development Program (formerly JTPA Part IV-C), which provides training opportunities and supportive services designed to help veterans get jobs, was funded at $7.3 million.

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project, which helps homeless veterans find jobs, received $9.3 million (a nearly $6 million increase over the President's original proposal). Finally, the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), trains veteran service providers through a contract with the University of Colorado. It was funded at $2 million.

On November 30, 1999 the President enacted **PL 106-117**, the "Veterans Millennium Health Care Act." (Other provisions of this measure are outlined in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section below.) Several provisions of the bill seek to help homeless veterans. One provision would help homeless veterans find jobs by authorizing a four-year increase in Labor Department funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. The measure would double the current authorization for similar programs to $10 million in FY 2000 and increase that amount by $5 million each year until it tops out at $20 million in FY 2003.

Another provision would extend VA's authority to furnish assistance to homeless veterans through December 31, 2003. Finally, **PL 106-117** would extend through September 30, 2003 VA's authority to make grants, under the Comprehensive Service Program Act of 1992, for new programs to combat veteran homelessness, authorize grants to assist in expanding existing programs, and authorize annual appropriations of $50 million to carry out the act.

Foreign Relations

Funding for this country's foreign operations in FY 2000 is included in **PL 106-113**, the omnibus funding bill. The measure includes $15.3 billion in economic and military aid to a variety of foreign nations. The bill continues to assign large amounts of military and economic assistance to Egypt and Israel—$2.2 billion to Israel and $1.3 billion to Egypt. In addition, Jordan received $175 million in military assistance, in recognition of that country's role in the Middle East peace process. Both chambers agreed to the administration's request for $1.8 billion to bolster the 1998 Wye River peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

In addition, $839 million in bilateral economic aid will be given to states of the former Soviet Union, including $180 million to Ukraine, $108 million to Georgia, and $101 million to Armenia. However, this aid has a proviso: 50 percent of the money will be withheld until such time as Russia stops assisting Iran with its nuclear or ballistic missile technology. In a related area, Congress agreed to pay $926 million in the U.S. overdue funds for the United Nations. If the U.S. had not paid a portion of that amount, our nation could have faced the possibility of losing its seat in the UN General Assembly.

Internal Affairs

One of the provisions of **PL 106-117**, the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act, deals with the World War II Memorial, slated for construction on the Mall in Washington, DC. This provision would expand the fundraising authorities of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to expedite the establishment of the Memorial and ensure that adequate funds are available for the repair and long-term maintenance of the Memorial. To assure that groundbreaking, construction, and dedication of the Memorial are completed on a timely basis, the ABMC would be authorized to borrow up to $65 million from the U.S. Treasury.

National Security

On October 5, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization measure. Approximately $8.3 billion was added to the President's request for defense programs, for a total of $288.8 billion. Most of the additions were spread across a wide range of accounts reflecting the views of many members of Congress that President Clinton has run down U.S. forces by giving them too little money and too many missions.

This measure provides a 4.8 percent military pay raise effective January 1, 2000. It requires that future annual military pay raises through FY 2006 be one-half percent higher than the average increase in civilian pay. During early debate on this measure, the Senate rejected, by a 60-40 vote, the Clinton Administration's call for two more rounds of base closings and realignments.

On October 25, 1999 the President signed **PL 106-79**, the FY 2000 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill. The House passed the bill on October 13 by a 372-55 vote, and the Senate the next day by an 87-11 count. Below is a breakdown of the major accounts funding for FY 1999, the White House proposal for FY 2000, the House and Senate versions, and the final funding figures.

Table 9

	FY 1999 Funding	FY 2000 Proposal	Senate S 1122	House HR 2561	Final PL 106-79
Military personnel	$70.6 bil.	$73.7 bil.	$73.9 bil.	$72.0 bil.	$73.9 bil.
Operations & maintenance	84.0 bil.	91.3 bil.	91.9 bil.	93.7 bil.	92.2 bil.
Procurement	48.6 bil.	51.9 bil.	54.6 bil.	53.0 bil.	53.0 bil.
Research & development	36.8 bil.	34.4 bil.	36.4 bil.	37.2 bil.	37.6 bil.
Other DoD programs	11.8 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.3 bil.	12.9 bil.	13.2 bil.
Various budget cuts	1.2 bil.	.9 bil.	5.4 bil.	1.9 bil.	2.1 bil.
GRAND TOTAL	**$250.6 bil.**	**$263.3 bil.**	**$264.7 bil.**	**$268.7 bil.**	**$267.8 bil.**

A major change is that the White House's request for $3.1 billion to begin production of the F-22 fighter plane was modified. Instead, $2.5 billion was approved to continue development of the plane and to begin construction of six of the planes. Some of the money denied for the F-22 would go to other areas, including:

- $77 million to buy an additional KC-130J tanker plane;
- $275 million for 5 F-15s, which were not originally requested by the White House; and,
- $110 million for bonuses to stem the exodus of pilots from the Air Force.
- Funding for various DoD accounts, as provided by each chamber, are presented below:

Table 10

	House Version	Senate Version	Final PL 106-79
Joint Strike Fighter	$577 mil.	$492 mil.	$492 mil.
F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet (36 planes funded)	$3.03 bil.	$3.00 bil.	$2.99 bil.
V-22 Osprey (11 Marine Corps tilt-rotor troop	$1.15 bil.	$1.22 bil.	$1.15 bil.
F-15 (5 planes funded)	$593 mil.	$333 mil.	$428 mil.
F-16 Falcon (10 planes funded)	$502 mil.	$421 mil.	$361 mil.
DDG-51 (3 *Arleigh Burke* destroyers funded)	$2.88 bil.	$2.86 bil.	$2.88 bil.
New Attack Submarine (SSN-774)	$1.12 bil.	$1.11 bil.	$1.12 bil.
CVN-77 (last *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier)	$752 mil.	$752 mil.	$752 mil.
RAH-66 Comanche helicopters (R & D)	$427 mil.	$483 mil.	$467 mil.
UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters (19 requested)	$224 mil.	$224 mil.	$219 mil.

The bill appropriates $3.98 billion in funding for ballistic missile defense programs (BMD) for FY 2000. Finally, the measure contains $461 million for cooperative threat reduction. This aid goes to states of the former Soviet Union for destroying nuclear and chemical weapons, and supports various measures aimed at preventing the smuggling of these weapons to terrorist or rogue states or individuals.

On October 9, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-69**, the FY 2000 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in the bill. The Coast Guard received $4 billion, which is $128 million more than it received for FY 1999 but $61 million less than requested by the White House.

The American Legion has achieved a significant victory to address the problem of concurrent receipt, which penalizes certain servicemen who receive military retired pay along with VA disability compensation. Current law requires these retirees to forego a portion of their retired pay equal to the amount of their VA disability compensation payments. Military retirees are the only federal retirees required to do this, and The American Legion feels this is patently unfair. Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., has introduced bills to address this inequity since 1985.

HR 44 would authorize special compensation for the most severely disabled retired veterans – those who have served for at least 20 years and who have disability ratings of between 70 and 100 percent. Specifically, it would authorize monthly payments of $300 for totally disabled retired veterans; $200 for retirees rated as 90 percent disabled; and, $100 for retirees with disability ratings of 70-80 percent. In the Senate, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced similar legislation, **S 789**. When the President signed **PL 106-65**, the FY 2000 DoD authorization bill, provisions from Sen. McCain's bill were included in the final version. Passage of this change applies to veterans rated at 70 percent or higher. It is a good first step.

Funding for the Selective Service System was retained in **PL 106-74**, the FY 2000 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. . The American Legion supports retention of Selective Service as an inexpensive alternative to national conscription. The House sought to eliminate the program by providing only token funding of $7 million for program termination costs. Thanks in part to active lobbying by The American Legion, funding was restored to the agency, at last year's figure of $24 million. U.S. forces are being stretched too thin by budget-driven base closures, personnel cuts, peacekeeping missions and the continued threat of rogue and terrorist nations.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On October 20, 1999 President Clinton enacted **PL 106-74**, legislation to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for FY 2000. Presented below are the funding amounts approved for VA for FY 1999, the President's budget proposal for FY 2000, the final funding amounts contained in PL 106-74, and The American Legion's FY 2000 proposal.

Table 11

	FY 1999 Actual	**President's Proposal**	**FY 2000 PL 106-74**	**Legion's Proposal**
Veterans Benefits Administration	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	
Medical care	$17.3 bil.	$17.3 bil.	$19.0 bil.	$19.5 bil.
Medical/prosthetic research	$316 mil.	$316 mil.	$321 mil.	$335 mil.
Medical administration	$63 mil.	$61 mil.	$60 mil.	
General operating expenses	$856 mil.	$912 mil.	$913 mil.	$877 mil.
Inspector General	$36 mil.	$43 mil.	$43 mil.	
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$92 mil.	$97 mil.	$97 mil.	$105 mil.
Major construction	$142 mil.	$60 mil.	$65 mil.	$200 mil.
Minor construction	$175 mil.	$175 mil.	$160 mil.	$200 mil.
State home construction grants	$90 mil.	$40 mil.	$90 mil.	$100 mil.
State cemetery construction grants	$10 mil.	$11 mil.	$25 mil.	
Total VA funding	**$42.7 billion**	**$42.5 billion**	**$44.3 billion**	

On November 30, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-117**, the *Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act*, legislation introduced by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla. This measure, among other provisions, is designed to overhaul long-term veterans' care, realign VA facilities, and change current eligibility requirements for VA health care. The American Legion praised the passage of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act.

The bill creates a four-year pilot program that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide institutional care, mostly nursing home services, to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 70 percent and higher. This would include geriatric evaluations, VA and community-based nursing home care, domiciliary care, adult day health care, respite care, and such alternatives to institutional care, as the Secretary may consider reasonable and appropriate. Currently, VA is not required to provide such care to any enrolled veteran. Congress will review the plan after three years and determine before the program expires whether to eliminate it, expand it, or to leave it as is. House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said it is unlikely that, once the program is under way, that it would be eliminated.

The measure required VA to expand non-institutional care for all enrolled veterans. It would also allow VA to offset many of the costs of expanded care by setting co-payments on some services. As much as $200 million a year could be brought in under this provision. These copayments would be put into a revolving fund in the U.S. Treasury to be used to expand extended care services.

The measure removed the six-month limit on VA providing adult day health care, and authorizes VA to furnish respite care services under contract in veterans' homes or in any other setting. In addition, VA would be authorized to expand the scope of the State home program to encompass all extended care services. The VA Secretary would be required to conduct pilot programs to determine the effectiveness of different models of providing all-inclusive care to reduce the need for institutionalizing patients. **PL 106-117** would also

establish a pilot program that would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assisted living services through contract arrangements.

Other provisions of **PL 106-117** would:

- Authorize the VA Secretary to make payments for emergency care on behalf of uninsured enrolled veterans and require that a veteran has received VA care within a two-year period of a medical emergency to be eligible.
- Extend the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans through December 31, 2003.
- Require the VA Secretary to report and provide justification to Congress on, and defer for a period, plans to close within any fiscal year more than one-half the beds within certain bed sections of VA medical centers.
- Require the VA Under Secretary for Health, in consultation with chiropractors, to establish a policy regarding chiropractic treatment.
- Authorize renovations and construction to VA facilities in Orlando, Fla., Kansas City, Mo.; Lebanon, Pa.; Fargo, N.D., and Atlanta, Ga.; and demolition of buildings at the Leavenworth, Kan., VAMC; and authorize appropriations for FYs 2000 and 2001 of $57.5 million for construction.
- Authorize the payment of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) to the surviving spouses of certain former prisoners of war who were rated totally disabled due to any service-connected cause for a period of one or more years immediately prior to death.
- Restore eligibility for CHAMPVA medical care, education, and housing loans to surviving spouses who lost eligibility for these benefits as the result of remarriage (these same spouses regained DIC eligibility, but not these related benefits, as the result of legislation enacted in 1998).
- Add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma, a rare form of lung cancer not associated with tobacco use, to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected and thus compensable for certain radiation-exposed veterans.
- Extend for four years the requirement that VA operate a program to evaluate the health status of Gulf War veterans' dependents and continue to provide outreach to these veterans through a newsletter.
- Establish a new fund in the Treasury in which VA is to deposit receipts and collections under the new authorities in the bill and provide that, of the monies collected and recovered by VA, each facility is to receive that amount collected or recovered on behalf of that facility.
- Extend to December 31, 2003 Vietnam-era veterans' eligibility for readjustment counseling services.
- Require the VA Secretary to operate a sexual trauma program through December 31, 2004.
- Reestablish a VA Committee on post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Establish a specific eligibility for VA health care for a) veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart, and b) subject to the terms of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, for veterans who retired from military service, are eligible for care under the TRICARE program, and not otherwise eligible for priority VA care.
- Revise the priority system for the award of grants under the State home construction program: (a) to provide a higher priority for renovation projects than accorded under current law; and (b) priority based on the relative need for adding new beds (with higher priority to States with great

need vs. those with moderate or limited need, and taking into account existing VA and community nursing home beds).

- Clarify certain changes to the "Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998" (**PL 105-338**), to confer competitive status on veterans hired under the Act, thereby allowing them the opportunity to compete for internal vacancies.
- Extend Montgomery GI Bill education benefits eligibility, a) for preparatory courses for college and graduate school entrance examinations, and b) to individuals whose obligated period of service is interrupted in order to accept a commission following successful completion of Officer Training School.
- Provide that VA may not employ a health care professional if a State has terminated for cause that individual's license, registration, or certification.
- Authorize appropriations to the Department of Labor of $10 million for FY 2000, $15 million for FY 2001, $20 million for FY 2002, and $20 million for FY 2003, for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.
- Extend through December 31, 2003 VA's authority to furnish assistance to homeless veterans.
- Extend through September 30, 2003, VA's authority to make grants (under the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Program Act of 1992) for new programs to combat veteran homelessness, authorize grants to assist in expanding existing programs, eliminate the limitation on grant support for programs involving van procurement, and authorize annual appropriations of $50 million.
- Direct the VA Secretary to obligate Advance Planning Funds during FY 2000 to establish six additional national cemeteries for veterans.
- Require the VA Secretary to conduct independent studies on improvements to veterans' cemeteries and burial benefits.

On November 30, 1999, the President signed **PL 106-118,** a bill to increase the rate of disability compensation paid to certain veterans and their survivors. The measure will give service-connected disabled veterans the same cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) afforded Social Security recipients. It will also adjust the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for survivors of those veterans. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Social Security COLA will be 2.7 percent.

The original version of this measure was an omnibus bill addressing health-care reform, medical program changes, benefit and employment matters, education and housing matters, homeless veterans programs, and other related matters. The House originally passed this version of that legislation on July 29 by a 424-0 vote. The Senate passed **S 1393,** which contained only the COLA increase. A conference committee eventually stripped the non-COLA provisions from HR 2280, passed the COLA increase, and appended the remaining provisions the "Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act," **PL 106-117.**

106th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 106th Congress convened on January 24, 2000. Major issues on the agendas of both chambers include campaign finance reform and the Fiscal Year 2001 federal budget. Because 2000 is a Presidential and congressional election year, the Second Session had fewer working days for Congress to conduct its business. As of today, The American Legion has participated in seventeen congressional hearings during the Second Session.

With fewer days to conduct business, both chambers moved quickly to stake out budgets, before the hard work of setting actual dollar amounts for the hundreds of federal programs actually began. However, the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2001 proposed heavy increases in education and other social spending, which would essentially "unbalance" the delicately balanced budget. The House quickly passed 12 of thirteen appropriations bills before the August-Labor Day recess, while the Senate has approved only 8. Two funding measure (for Military Construction and Defense) have been enacted (**Public Laws 106-246** and **106-257**, respectively). Many of the House-passed bills face a presidential veto in their present forms.

The President's recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflected a marked improvement over previous requests. Though $47.6 billion was proposed by the administration for VA, The American Legion has stated that at least $48.1 billion will be needed to keep VA operations at current service levels. In particular, VA medical care would receive $20.3 billion under the President's budget proposal, an increase of $1.3 billion over current funding, but still insufficient to keep the VA medical system functioning at current levels.

On March 15, 2000, the House Budget Committee recommended a $200 million increase over the administration's FY 2001 budget request for VA, for a total of $47.8 billion overall. Part of the increase came as a result of the committee's unwillingness to accept the administration's flat-lined request for medical/prosthetic research and the State Veterans Homes Grant program. The committee was also alarmed by reports that the administration has instructed VA to identify over $1.1 billion in efficiencies, which could include reductions in personnel, programs, services and treatment, as well as rationing of care to veterans. This attempt to continue to dismantle America's largest health care network is absolutely unacceptable to The American Legion. America's veterans have been deeply involved in balancing the federal budget over the past two decades. Now that the budget is balanced, it is time for veterans' programs to receive sufficient funding to allow them to function properly by providing America's veterans with quality care and other services.

Americanism

On March 29, 2000, the Senate defeated **Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res) 14**, the Senate version of **House Joint Resolution (HJ Res) 33**, the flag protection constitutional amendment that passed the House in 1999. The final Senate tally was 63 to 37, four votes short of the 2/3 majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment onto the states. During the rollcall vote, two senators who had previously supported the amendment switched their vote. Senators Richard Bryan (NV) and Robert Byrd (WV) joined 35 others to give the grassroots efforts to protect the American flag a temporary setback.

On May 26, 2000, President Clinton enacted **PL 106-207**. This statute will expedite the naturalization of Hmong tribesmen from Laos, or their spouses, who served in special guerrilla units during the Vietnam War. The English language requirement will be waived and special consideration for the civics requirement will be given to these refugees. The American Legion supports the intent of **PL 106-207**, through Americanism Resolution No. 329 adopted at the 1998 National Convention.

Children & Youth

On June 7 by a vote of 214-195, the House adopted **HR 4690**, a bill to fund the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2001. Under its provisions, the Justice Department will receive overall funding of $20.1 billion. The

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will receive $4.67 billion to enforce the nation's immigration laws, including additional border patrol agents, increased detention and removal capacity, and continuation of the interior enforcement, naturalization, and other application background reduction. Finally, $287 million will be given to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program that has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on July 18 approved its version of this measure by a 28-0 vote. This version would appropriate $18.7 billion for the Justice Department, $4.6 billion for the INS, and $280 million for OJJDP. An additional $100 million was appropriated by the committee for the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant program. The Senate will take up this legislation when it returns from the August-Labor Day recess.

Economics

On June 30, by a 52-43 recorded vote, the Senate passed **HR 4577**, the FY 2001 funding measure for the Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education. This followed House passage of the bill on June 14 by a 217-214 tally.

Funding for DoL's Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) is contained in **HR 4577**. Each chamber passed differing totals for ASVET accounts, which are outlined in the chart below.

Table 12

	FY 2000 PL 106-113	President's Request	FY 2001 House	FY 2001 Senate
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program	$80.2 mil.	$81.6 mil.	$80.2 mil.	$81.6 mil.
Local Veterans Employment Rep.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.	$77.3 mil.
Federal administration*	$26.9 mil.	$29.0 mil.	$26.9 mil.	$28.0 mil.
Veterans Workforce Investment program	$7.3 mil.#	$7.3 mil.	$7.3 mil.	$7.3 mil.
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project	$9.6 mil.#	$15.0 mil.	$9.6 mil.	$12.5 mil.
Total, ASVET	**$184.4 mil.**	**$210.2 mil.**	**$201.3 mil.**	**$206.7 mil.**

* Funding for the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) is included in this account.
# These programs were not included in the ASVET account in FY 2000.

Foreign Relations

The House on July 13, by a vote of 239-185, passed **HR 4811**, the FY 2001 Foreign Operations funding bill. This measure would allocate $13.3 billion for various economic and military aid to foreign countries and organizations. The bill is about $1.8 billion less than requested by the White House, and $100 million less than the corresponding Senate version, **S 2522**, which passed that body on July 18 by unanimous consent.

HR 4811 contains economic assistance for three Middle East nations: $840 million for Israel ($120 million less than FY 2000), $695 million for Egypt ($40 million less than FY 2000), and $150 million for Jordan (same amount as this year). The bill also includes economic assistance for the Independent States of the former Soviet Union in the amount of $740 million, $99 million less than was appropriated for FY 2000. The funds will assist these nations in the destruction of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Funding for anti-terrorism programs was set at $33 million, the same as FY 2000.

One area of great difference between the two chambers is international debt relief. The House included $225 million to help poor countries pay off loans to international banks and funds, while the Senate would limit the spending to $75 million.

On May 18, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved by voice votes two measures aimed at the POW/MIA issue. The first, **S 1902**, introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., calls for the full disclosure of records on World War II-era experiments conducted by Japan in chemical and biological warfare, many of them were performed on POWs. The bill was then referred to the Senate Intelligence Committee for consideration. Its House companion, **HR 3561**, introduced by Rep. Brian Bilbray, R-Calif., has nine cosponsors.

The second measure approved by the committee, **S 484**, introduced by Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., would grant refugee status in the U.S. to foreign nationals who assist in returning any living Americans still missing or held prisoner from the Korean War or the Vietnam War. Subsequently, S 484 passed the full Senate by unanimous consent on May 24. **HR 1926**, a House companion measure introduced by Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., has 104 cosponsors.

On May 10, The American Legion announced its opposition to the recognition of Permanent Normalized Trade Relations (PNTR) with the People's Republic of China and also against its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). The reasons for the Legion's opposition, in the words of National Commander Al Lance, are "As a Most Favored Nation trading partner, the government of China has antagonized Taiwan, stolen U.S. nuclear-weapon secrets, attempted to influence U.S. elections, trampled on the human rights of its countrymen, and refused to cooperate on the accounting of missing American POW/MIAs."

The American Legion recommended that Congress and the Clinton Administration set forth four preconditions both for China's entry into the WTO and for ending the annual congressional review of its trade status. Those condition include:

- Recognition of Taiwan's right of self-determination;
- Full cooperation on the accounting of American servicemen missing from the Korean War and the Cold War;
- Abandonment of policies aimed at military dominance in Asia; and
- Encouragement and promotion of human rights and religious freedom among the Chinese people.

National Commander Lance issued a statement saying that "China should embrace democratic values before it benefits from unfettered American investment...A something-for-nothing trade arrangement with China—one that severs trade from national security and human rights—threatens stability, rewards antagonism, and strengthens a potential foe of American sons and daughters in the U.S. armed forces. He further stated, "China must turn over a new leaf before the government relinquishes its only non-military leverage. Otherwise, the U.S. will wager—perhaps with the lives of American troops—that China will not finance an arms buildup with the economic benefits of membership in the World Trade Organization. The American Legion strongly discourages such a foolhardy gamble." The American Legion was severely criticized by some members of Congress for its position on this issue.

On May 24, the House voted 237-197 to pass **HR 4444**, legislation to assign PNTR to China, without the annual review. A similar Senate bill, **S 2277**, is expected to be taken up by the Senate when that chamber returns from the August-Labor Day recess.

Internal Affairs

The President, on May 2, signed into law **PL 106-195**, a resolution to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Korean War and the service of American armed forces during that conflict. The House passed the measure on March 8 by a 383-0 vote, with the Senate following suit by unanimous consent on April 13.

On May 11 Reps. Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., and Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., introduced **HR 4434**, 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 be current or former members of the Armed Forces, and substantially all 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 Scouting units are just a few of the programs 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 4434 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). This legislation would recognize the original intent of Congress, and the fact that more distant relatives of a Legionnaire will come into existence over time. The measure currently has 46 cosponsors.

National Security

On March 29, 2000, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced **S 2322**, the *Remove Servicemembers from Food Stamps Act of 2000*. The bill would establish a special subsistence allowance of $180/month for members of the uniformed services, pay grades E-1 through E-5, who are eligible to receive food stamp assistance. On April 6, the Senate voted 99-0 to add $28 million to the DoD budget for FYs 2001 through 2005 to implement the provisions of **S 2322**. The American Legion supports Sen. McCain's bill as an important effort to allow enlisted personnel to meet their basic needs of military life.

The House on July 19, by a 367-58 vote, passed **HR 4576**, the FY 2001 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations measure. Under the terms of the bill, DoD would receive $287.5 billion, $4 billion more than requested by the White House and $19.8 billion more than was appropriated for FY 2000. The Senate passed its version of **HR 4576** on July 27 by a vote of 91-9. It was signed into law by the President on August 9 as **PL 106-257**.

Some of the highlights of **HR 4576** include:

- $75.8 billion for Personnel. This includes funding for a 3.7 percent pay raise for all servicemembers and for enlistment bonuses. It supports 1.38 million in active-duty forces and 866,900 Selected Reserve and National Guard personnel.

- $59.2 billion for Procurement. Among the various accounts funded are: (1) $294 million for Abrams tank upgrades, (2) $2.8 billion for 42 F-18E/F fighters, (3) $1.1 billion for 16 V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, (4) $4 billion for the CVN-77 aircraft carrier, (5) $2.7 billion for three DDG-51 destroyers, and (6) $2.8 billion for 12 C-17 airlift aircraft.
- $41.4 billion for Research and Development, including (1) $689 million for continued research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter, the next generation of fighter being designed for the US military, (2) $614 million for the Army's Comanche helicopter, and (3) $1.4 billion for F-22 development.
- $1.6 billion to help the Army quickly develop and field two new 4,000-person "medium brigades" that can deploy to a world trouble spot within 96 hours. This also includes $46 million to accelerate the effort to develop a future combat vehicle for use by these brigades.
- $1.8 billion for a national anti-missile defense system. There has been much debate over this proposed system. The House defeated several amendments that would have reduced the administration's requested funding for this program.
- $2.1 billion for continued testing, research and development, and procurement of 10 of the first F-22s requested by the President.
- $12.1 billion to the Defense health program, including an additional $100 million to implement health care enhancements approved by the House in the DoD authorization bill (**HR 4205**) targeted to improve access to care for servicemembers, their dependents and military retirees.
- $433 million intended to help Russia and other former Soviet states dispose of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles that could deliver them.

In early June the Senate began debate on **S 2549**, the FY 2001 DoD authorization bill. This measure sets the budget for defense spending, and is usually the target of lawmakers seeking to change or make defense policy. Consideration of this measure was put on hold by the Senate leadership because of more than 200 amendments which individual senators are seeking to add to the bill.

One amendment, offered by Sen. John Warner, R-Va., would allow the President to make unilateral arms reductions only after the Pentagon completes a review of nuclear weapons status, a review unlikely to be completed before next year. The amendment passed by a 51-47 vote. President Clinton's recent meeting with new Russian President Vladimir Putin was the spur for this amendment.

Other amendments passed by the Senate include:

- Another Warner amendment to allow military retirees over 65 to remain in DoD's CHAMPUS or TRICARE health plans rather than requiring them to switch to Medicare. A similar revision offered by Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., would allow military retirees with service-connected disabilities to join the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. Johnson's amendment, however, was defeated on a procedural vote of 52-46. The Congressional Budget Office had made cost estimate of both proposals. Johnson's plan was estimated to cost $92 billion over the next ten years, while Warner's plan would cost $40 billion for the same period.
- An amendment offered by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Carl Levin, D-Mich., to authorize two more rounds of base closures. The Senate defeated this amendment by a 63-35 vote.

- Another McCain amendment would create a $180/month allowance for armed forces enlisted personnel who are eligible for food stamps.
- An amendment by Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., which passed by a voice vote, which would extend Montgomery GI Bill education benefits to family members of military members.
- An amendment offered by Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., that would allow military retirees with service-connected disabilities to receive military retired pay concurrently with veterans'' disability compensation. This amendment passed the Senate by a voice vote. The American Legion fully supports this amendment.
- Final passage of **S 2549** is expected in the upcoming weeks. A conference committee will then fashion a version of the legislation that both chambers find acceptable and will then be signed into law by the President.

On May 18, the House of Representatives voted 353-63 to pass **HR 4205**, the Fiscal Year 2001 Department of Defense (DoD) authorization bill. The Senate was debating **S 2549**, the companion measure to **HR 4205.**

Both measures would authorize nearly $310 billion in funding for DoD programs and defense-related programs of the Department of Energy. That amount is $4.6 billion more than was requested by the President and $21.1 billion more than the FY 2000 authorization bill. **HR 4205** and **S 2549** include a 3.7 percent military pay raise as well as providing up to $500 per month in assistance to certain economically strapped servicemembers, including those who depend on food stamps. The House bill would authorize $5.2 billion to develop and field anti-ballistic missile defenses, with $2.2 billion going to the national anti-missile defense program (the Senate measure would authorize $1.9 billion for national anti-missile defense).

During House floor debate, several amendments were added to **HR 4205**. Among the changes adopted were:

- An amendment by Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo., ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, was approved by a 218-201 vote that would (1) authorize the transfer of a portion of Navy-owned land on Vieques Island near Puerto Rico, (2) provide $40 million in assistance to the inhabitants, and (3) require a referendum by Vieques' inhabitants on whether the Navy can remain on the island;
- An amendment by Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss., that would make permanent a Medicare demonstration project at six military hospitals, with Medicare reimbursing DoD for 95 percent of the cost of coverage. The vote on this amendment was 406-10; and,
- An amendment that would end funds for U.S. ground troops in Kosovo by next April 1 if the President does not certify that European allies are paying their fair share of the peacekeeping mission. The amendment passed by a vote of 264-153.

The two measures seek to improve TRICARE, the HMO-like health care plan for retirees and military dependents. The House bill would eliminate the inequities of service personnel stationed far from military facilities who pay more for their health care than those who are living near a base; covers travel expenses for visits to facilities more than 100 miles from primary car serves; and, reduces limits on catastrophic care expenses. It also makes available to all Medicare-eligible retirees a mail-order prescription service with a modest copayment.

On June 15 the Senate by a 99-0 vote passed **HR 4475**, the FY 2001 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in this measure.

Under the Senate-passed version, the Coast Guard would received $4.4 billion for its various operations, $249 million less than requested by the White House. The House version, passed on May 19 by a 395-13 tally, would appropriate $4.6 billion, an increase of $8 million.

The FY 2001 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill for FY 2001 (outlined below) also contains funding for the Selective Service System. **HR 4635** would fund Selective Service at $23 million, a reduction of $1 million from current year funding. The basic mission of the Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military adequate 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 military manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which men will be brought into 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 April 13, 2000, the full House and Senate passed the conference report to **House Concurrent Resolution (H Con. Res.) 290**, the Fiscal Year 2001 budget resolution. This measure passed the House by a 220-208 recorded vote, after debating and rejecting two alternatives and President Clinton's original budget proposal. Several hours later, the Senate approved the conference report by a 50-48 tally. This is only the fourth time since 1975 that Congress has met their statutory deadline of April 15 to pass a fiscal year budget resolution, and the second year in a row that this feat was accomplished.

Total budget authority for VA contained in **H Con. Res. 290** in FY 2001 is $47.8 billion, which is $200 million above the amount proposed by the administration. The budget resolution proposes $20.7 billion for VA medical care, which is $300 million more than the President's proposal and $1.7 billion above this year's appropriation level. However, Congress accepted the administration's proposed amount projected for the Medical Care Cost Fund (MCCF). To date, the MCCF has not come close to collecting the amounts projected, and those collections could fall as much as $350 million short. This would put an unacceptable strain on VA medical care. In addition, allocations for veterans' programs will be sufficient to allow legislation to enhance the Montgomery GI Bill program to go forward. These enhancements would raise the monthly benefit to $600 starting in FY 2001 and to $720 in two years.

It should be pointed out that the budget resolution is only the second step in the FY 2001 budget process. It is a blueprint for the Appropriations committees to follow. Each committee will then "fill in the blanks" with dollars for individual programs. Congress is tentatively scheduled to adjourn on October 6, to allow incumbents time to campaign for reelection. Therefore, the appropriations process will be going at a breakneck pace over the next few months.

On June 21, the House by a 256-169 vote approved **HR 4635**, a bill to fund the operations of the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as various independent agencies, for FY 2001.

Table 13

	FY 2000 Actual	President's Proposal	HR 4635 (House passed)	Legion's Proposal
Veterans Benefits Administration	$23.5 bil.	$23.5 bil.	$24.6 bil.	
Medical care	$19.0 bil.	$20.3 bil.	$20.3 bil.	$20.5 bil.
Medical / prosthetic research	$321 mil.	$321 mil.	$351 mil.	$375 mil.

General operating expenses	$913 mil.	$1 bil.	$1.01 bil.	$960 mil.
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$97 mil.	$110 mil.	$107 mil.	$110 mil.
Major construction	$65 mil.	$60 mil.	$62 mil.	$200 mil.
Minor construction	$160 mil.	$162 mil.	$100 mil.	$200 mil.
State home construction grants	$90 mil.	$60 mil.	$90 mil.	$150 mil.
State cemetery construction grants	$25 mil.	$25 mil.	$25 mil.	$25 mil.
Total VA funding	**$44.3 billion**	**$46.9 billion**	**$46.8 billion**	

Funding totals for some VA programs give cause for concern. Funding for medical care was pegged at $20.3 billion, equal to the President's request and a $1.3 billion increase over the current year. The American Legion had requested $20.5 billion for health care. The National Cemetery Administration received a $10 million increase over the current year bringing FY 2001 funding to $107 million for current and new cemetery operations, while the Legion asked for $110 million. However, medical and prosthetic research funding was flatlined at $321 million by the White House. During House debate, this account was increased to $351 million. The American Legion had requested minimum funding of $375 million for this account. Finally, the President requested $60 million for the Veterans State Extended Care Facilities Grants program, which the House increased to $90 million, the same amount as current year funding. The Legion had proposed $150 million for this grants program.

The American Legion is deeply concerned about the possibility of spending shortfalls in veterans' programs. Legion staff members have been meeting with members of the House VA subcommittee since April. They have stressed the importance of full funding for VA, especially because the provisions of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act (**PL 106-117**) will go into effect this year. Members of The American Legion Family are asked to contact their congressional officials and urge their support for full funding for VA programs at least equal to FY 2000 funding amounts.

The American Legion continues to seek enactment of the GI Bill of Health. One of the pillars of the GI Bill of Health is Medicare subvention, which would allow Medicare-eligible veterans to use their Medicare benefits for treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VA facilities.

TRICARE, the for-profit military health care network for active-duty military personnel, military retirees, and dependents, has serious fiscal problems. There are many unserved and underserved communities within the 12 TRICARE operating regions. Due to slow claims processing and payments, many subcontractors are choosing to withdraw from TRICARE. TRICARE requires, at a minimum, annual enrollment fees and co-payments from military retirees and their dependents. Military retirees feel the federal government has failed to fulfill its promise of free health care for life.

The American Legion believes that the key to fixing this problem, and keeping faith with America's military retirees is to offer real, population-based health care. Access to TRICARE should not exclude any military servicemember, military retiree, or their dependents based on age or medical condition. Access to care in TRICARE could be improved through the expanded use of VHA medical facilities and additional VA/DOD Joint Ventures. Use of these federally operated medical facilities would allow greater congressional oversight into the timeliness and quality of care being provided to military servicemembers, military retirees, and dependents. Essentially, TRICARE has not lived up to expectation. Major changes are needed if the system is to survive.

On March 15, 2000, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing to address the health care needs of military personnel within the TRICARE system. National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr. presented The American Legion's views

in testimony before the panel. The American Legion recommends that VA, DoD, and HHS reach a fair and equitable agreement concerning Medicare subvention that allows Medicare-eligible veterans and their Medicare-eligible dependents to use their Medicare benefits in VA and DoD. The American Legion strongly recommends that military retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents have access to the VHA pharmaceuticals.

The American Legion would support Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents using their Medicare benefits in the VA health-care system. Access to quality health care for military retirees and their families has steadily eroded over the years as base closures and downsizing have limited space-available care.

There are several bills receiving the greatest amount of attention that The American Legion is interested in:

HR 3573 and S 2003: *Keeping Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act* introduced by Rep. Ronnie Shows, D-Miss. (302 cosponsors), and Sen. Tim Johnson D-S.D (32 cosponsors). If enacted, this legislation would:

- Allow members of the armed forces (1) who began their service before June 7, 1956 and (2) retired after a minimum of 20 years of service or as a result of a service connected disability (as well as the surviving widow or widower of such members) to be considered as federal employees eligible for enrollment under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).
- Direct the Secretary of Defense to make an agreement with the Office of Personnel Management to provide FEHBP coverage to (1) a member or former member entitled to military retired or retainer pay, (2) an unremarried former spouse who was married to a member for at least 20 years, during which the member performed at least 20 years of retirement-creditable service, (3) a dependent of a deceased qualifying member or former member, (4) a dependent of a living member or former member, and (5) a family member of such member.
- Repeal a provision prohibiting coverage under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) for persons entitled to hospital insurance benefits under Part A of title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act.

S 2013: *Honoring Health Care Commitments to Servicemembers Past and Present Act of 2000* introduced by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., currently has 9 cosponsors. If enacted, this bill would:

- Direct the Secretary of Defense to expand and make permanent a demonstration project which allows CHAMPUS-eligible individuals entitled to hospital insurance benefits under Part A of Medicare to enroll in FEHBP, with a limit of 275,000 persons.
- Eliminates any required copayments, deductibles and other fees for CHAMPUS medical care provided to a dependent of a military retiree who is enrolled in TRICARE Prime.

HR 3655: *Improved Medical Care for Troops and Retirees Act* introduced by Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii (60 cosponsors). If enacted, this bill would:

- Make permanent a demonstration project that includes Medicare subvention for military retirees and their dependents.
- Provide supplemental medical care for family members of servicemembers assigned to certain duty locations far from sources of care.
- Eliminate certain deductibles and copayments for health care services to active duty members or their dependents under TRICARE Prime.

- Requires the DoD Secretary to provide reimbursement for certain travel expenses if a covered TRICARE beneficiary is required to seek specialty care more than 100 miles from where his primary care provider provides service to the member.

S 2087: *Military Health Care Improvement Act of 2000* introduced by Sen. John Warner R-Va. (30 cosponsors). If enacted, this bill would:

- Improve access to benefits under the TRICARE program.
- Extend and improve certain demonstration projects under the Defense Health Program.

For years, the military and VA health care networks coexisted. They have thousands of sharing agreements and even have some shared physical plants. The American Legion believes VA, with adequate funding, could provide quality health care services to military retirees and their dependents. Military retirees are veterans (many service-connected disabled) and are eligible for access to VA health care. These true defenders of democracy deserve timely, accessible, quality health care. VA is capable of meeting that challenge.

Another issue of great debate is Medicare Subvention. Currently, a federal health care provider cannot bill a federal health care insurer. That means if VA treats a Medicare-eligible veteran for a nonservice-connected medical condition, VA cannot bill Medicare for services rendered. In other words, VA and DoD end up subsidizing Medicare. Medicare-eligibility is not a criterion for treatment in a VA or DoD military facility.

The American Legion believes it is time for DoD and VA leadership to sit down and determine what is the best solution for meeting the health care needs of America's veterans and their families. TRICARE is failing to meet the needs of the military community because of infrastructure and financial problems. TRICARE is currently operating with a $3 billion deficit. Problems with network providers, inability to attract and retain qualified health care subcontractors, the difficulty in processing claims and payment delays, and the lack of portability between regions are the major problems plaguing TRICARE. In addition, TRICARE was never designed to treat veterans over 65.

VA can help TRICARE in several ways. All military retirees already have unfettered access to VA health care simply by enrolling. Many are service-connected and have a VA priority to care. VA has a significant history with DoD through sharing agreements and is designated as back-up for DoD in national emergencies. VA currently treats veterans over 65, and has facilities in every state and many rural communities. These facilities include outpatient clinics, Vet Centers, university hospital affiliations, and extensive inpatient and community-based long-term care capability. VA has demonstrated its ability to treat veterans and their dependents. In addition, VA has many unique specialized care programs, including rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, geriatric care, PTSD and mental health and prosthetics. Finally, VA health-care is portable.

The American Legion recommends that the VA health care system be open to military retirees and their dependents. The U.S. government should no longer operate competing health care systems for the same beneficiaries.

In July, 1999, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims handed down the decision *Morton v. West*, in which VA can only help a veteran establish entitlement to a benefit if it is "well-grounded." This includes producing medical and lay evidence to help the claimant.

On July 25, the House of Representatives by a 414-0 vote, passed a bill, **HR 4864**, which would reaffirm and clarify the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) duty to assist veterans in the development of their benefits claims. The measure now goes to the Senate for further action. The bill, introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., is similar to **HR 3193**, legislation introduced last year by Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill.,

ranking member of the House veterans' panel. After hearings were held on Rep. Evans's measure, clarifying language was added and **HR 4864** was introduced.

The provisions of **HR 4864** include:

- A requirement for VA to notify veteran applicants with incomplete applications of what evidence is necessary to complete the application, including information and medical and lay evidence necessary to substantiate the claim. As part of the notice, VA must indicate which part of the evidence will be provided by the veteran and which VA will attempt to obtain for the veteran.
- A requirement that VA must make reasonable efforts to assist in obtaining evidence necessary to establish a veteran's eligibility for a benefit. However, it allows VA to decide a claim without providing such assistance when no reasonable possibility exists that such assistance will aid in the establishment of eligibility. VA must also obtain relevant records that the veteran identifies to VA and authorizes the department to obtain. Further, VA must inform the veteran applicant whenever the department is unable to obtain such records and to request the claimant to notify VA if he or she intends to obtain such records independently.
- In the case of a veteran's claim for disability compensation, VA is required to obtain the veteran's existing service medical records and other relevant service records, existing records of pertinent medical treatment or examination of the veteran at VA health care facilities or at VA's expense, and specified information to be furnished by other agencies. VA is also required to provide a medical examination or obtain a medical opinion when the evidence of record before VA establishes that the claimant has a current disability or current symptoms and that there was an event, injury, or disease (or combination thereof) during the veteran's active service capable of causing or aggravating the claimant's current disability or symptoms, but is insufficient to establish service-connection.
- Placing on the claimant the burden of proving entitlement to benefits. Under current law, the veteran must submit evidence sufficient to justify a belief by a fair and impartial individual that the claim is well grounded. All federal departments or agencies are prohibited from imposing any charge for providing information to VA for purposes of determining benefit eligibility.
- Allowing all veterans whose claims were denied since last year's *Morton v. West* court case, because their cases were not considered well-grounded, to request a VA review of their cases.

The duty to assist veterans seeking legitimate benefits from VA must be an integral part of VA's mission as the agency for veterans' affairs. Yet, many claimants argue that VA's role has recently been more as an obstructionist than that of an advocate. Therefore, VA's duty to assist appears extremely passive. Consequently, there are constant backlogs of claims waiting for adjudication, and most have not been properly developed due to lack of assistance from VA.

During consideration of **S 2549**, the FY 2001 DoD authorization bill, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced an amendment to clarify VA's duty to assist veterans. The amendment passed by unanimous consent. However, the amendment did not gain the same support among veterans service organizations as **HR 4864** and **HR 3193**.

The American Legion believes that **HR 4864** is an effective solution to assist deserving veterans in the processing of their service-connected disability claims. Without passage of this measure, VA's current backlog problem will only get worse. America's heroes deserve

the dutiful assistance of VA in the "timely" adjudication of their claims. This legislation is the best approach available to assist veterans, many who have waited too long to receive their benefits.

On July 27, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved by a voice vote **S 1810**, an omnibus veterans bill. Originally drafted and introduced by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., as a companion to **HR 3193**, the bill has attracted a host of other veterans' provisions. In addition to the language requiring VA to help veterans find information to back up a benefits claim, then help them file the claim, **S 1810** would:

- Provide benefits to female Vietnam veterans' children born with birth defects;
- Provide medical compensation for veterans who require a mastectomy for service-connected reasons;
- Provide copayments for prescription pharmaceuticals;
- Create a physician's assistant position within VA;
- Allow VA to make several land transfers; and
- Eliminate inconsistencies in federal programs by requiring VA to provide medical coverage for colon, lung, brain and ovarian cancers in veterans who were exposed to radiation.

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), the successor to the original 1944 GI Bill of Rights, is one of the major reasons many young people today are joining the military. However, recent statistics show that MGIB benefits pay for only about half of the educational costs incurred by veterans. Moreover, since only about half of veterans use even part of their MGIB benefits, this proves the program does not meet their needs, and is in dire need of major improvements.

On March 1, a press conference was held on the steps of the US Capitol, calling for a restoration of the higher education purchasing power that once made the MGIB program a strong recruiting tool. Various speakers from the veterans, uniformed services, and higher education communities repeated their commitment to closing the gap between the current MGIB allowance and the cost of higher education. House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee Chairman Jack Quinn, R-N.Y., and Ranking Member Bob Filner, D-Calif., spoke at the event, as did former House VA Committee Chairman G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery, the author of the MGIB program.

On May 23, by a vote of 417-0 the House of Representatives passed **S 1402**, legislation to upgrade the MGIB program by bringing its benefits closer to the rising cost of higher education. The House passed the bill after substituting the language of a companion measure, **HR 4268**, for the Senate-passed text.

The measure would raise the monthly MGIB education benefit from $536 per month to $600 per month effective October 1, 2000, with a second increase to $720 per month occurring in two years. The bill would also provide another opportunity for servicemembers still on active duty to convert from the Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP) to the MGIB program. It would also allow a veteran to use MGIB benefits for a civilian occupational licensing or certification examination.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said, "...this increase was realistic in view of other demands and priorities. This was the first step. A fully updated Montgomery GI Bill would not only ease the transition from military to civilian life, it would help all branches of the military meet their recruiting goals." Final details of **S 1402** must now be worked out by the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees before it can be signed into law by the President.

This nation cannot keep a promise it made to veterans unless the MGIB program is brought into line with today's burgeoning cost of education. The American Legion supports

improvements in the MGIB program that will continue its work as one of the premier recruiting tools of this country's armed forces.

On July 25, the House passed by voice vote an omnibus measure, **HR 4850**, which incorporated the provisions of four separate measures. This action is usually taken when time is short at the end of a congressional session, and the chances of passage are greater for a single bill instead of several bills.

The bill would authorize cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on disability compensation for service-connected disabled veterans and for the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans. The percentage of the increase will be the same as the COLA provided for Social Security recipients. Another provision of **HR 4850** would permit certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to participate in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program.

The bill would also provide veterans' disability compensation benefits for National Guard or Reserve members who suffer a heart attack or stroke while performing inactive duty training. Finally, **HR 4850** would provide a monthly rate of special compensation for certain female veterans for the service-connected loss of one or both breasts due to a radical or modified radical mastectomy.

As the year 2000 is a presidential election year, The American Legion developed a platform statement outlining the organization's goals for the U.S. for the 21st century. During the month of July, the Legion provided the platform statement to the political parties.

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, 1999

During the 80th National Convention of The American Legion in New Orleans, Louisiana, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions convened a joint session at the Anaheim Convention Center. Deputy Director for Defense Community Support Policy Colonel Marcus Beauregard spoke on the newly legislated policy on military funeral honors for veterans. He was followed by psychiatrist and author, Dr. Jonathan Shay, who spoke on military cohesion, leadership and training as combat strength multipliers. The final speaker was Director of the Center for Security Policy Frank Gaffney who gave an informative presentation on the People's Republic of China and its potential sources of conflict with the United States.

The National Security Commission and its Standing Committees conducted a comprehensive review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on Security. Many of the resolutions reviewed were updated versions of previously adopted positions.

National Security Resolutions, 81st National Convention

The following resolutions, listed in Committee order, were unanimously adopted by the delegates to the 81st annual National Convention:

General Security
Resolution No. 17, *Nuclear Security.* Urges the Congress to return nuclear weapons programs to the highest level of security.
Resolution No. 69, *Proposals to Ensure a Strong National Defense.* Recommends that the Congress adopt a series of proposals including increasing defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product to over 3 percent annually.

Aerospace
Resolution No. 94, *Support for Aeronautical Research.* Asserts The American Legion position that it will urge the Congress to rectify the remains decline in aeronautical research.

Merchant Marine
Resolution No. 107, *Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws.* Resolves that The American Legion support legislative measures needed to maintain a more robust U.S. flagged Merchant Marine.
Military Affairs
Resolution No. 60, *Using Military Personnel for Experimentation Purposes.* Opposes any directive or provision that would authorize using service members for experimental purposes without their knowledge and informed consent.
Resolution No. 185, *Contingency Planning for Military Conscription.* Urges the Congress and the Selective Service System to develop contingency plans for implementing a fair and equitable conscription.
Resolution No. 187, *Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program.* Establishes the position that The American Legion closely monitor this program, to urge comprehensive congressional oversight and conduct outreach to service members, veterans and their families.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Fall 1999

An outgrowth of the Policy Coordination and Action Group (PCAG) meeting, held on March 24-25, 2000 in Washington, D.C., was the development of a Task Force National Security 2000 forum in which the National Security Commission participated on the morning of May 8 in the NEC Room of National Headquarters. The purpose of the forum was to focus attention on projecting national security issues into the Presidential campaign in ten "swing" states ranging from California to New York. "Train the trainer" presentations were made by the National Commander, Commission Chairmen and Staff and by a speaker from the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) for Legionnaires representing the ten swing states. These Task Force members are expected to carry national security messages into town hall meetings in their respective states.

On Monday afternoon, the Commission held its business session in the Department of Indiana Building. A total of three resolutions were considered and all were recommended

for adoption. Additionally, three resolutions which had been previously considered by the Commission at the Washington Conference had been forwarded to the National Executive Committee for their approval. The Commission Chairman also discussed some of the highlights of the Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization bill.

Chairman Titus' comments follow:

The President's defense budget request for Fiscal Year 2001 is $291.1, and it reflects a small spending growth and does not appear to be built on a foundation of assumed savings and economic assumptions as was the administration's FY 2000 budget. Unfortunately, serious mismatches between strategy, forces and resources are not improving. The consequent budgetary shortfalls estimated at $15.5 billion for FY 2001 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff are being reflected in debilitating quality of life, readiness and modernization problems that the military forces continue to confront. After years of decline, the administration has under-resourced its defense budgets which, according to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Floyd Spence,"...will take a decade or more of real growth in defense spending to ...catch up."

The President's budget request for FY 2001 totals over $1.89 trillion and allocates 15 percent for defense and well over 50 percent for social programs and entitlement spending. The FY 2001 Defense budget is still 40 percent below the 1985 Reagan budget which eventually led to the end of the Cold War. In 1990, the United States was spending 5.1 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) on defense; today we are spending about 2.9 percent of our GDP on defense.

According to Chairman Spence, the nation is going to need to spend a lot more money than the Administration is requesting and projecting to spend in the future in order to maintain even current military capabilities. Whatever the level of annual operational shortfalls, annual modernization shortfalls will be significantly greater. In this regard, it is important to note that while the Administration's FY 2001 procurement request has been advertised as finally reaching the five-year old $60 billion dollar target, it was only with the help of some new accounting such as the inclusion of submarine overhaul funds in the procurement accounts for the first time.

American Legion National Commander Alan Lance has visited American troops in Europe, Bosnia, Kosovo and on the DMZ in Korea. He also visited sailors aboard the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington.* High operational tempos, manning shortages and inadequate health care head the list of complaints. The American Legion receives numerous letters and emails from military retirees and their dependents citing the string of "broken promises"—mainly access to military health care. Medicare-eligible military retirees are prohibited from enrolling in the TRICARE program. The TRICARE system requires considerable improvement. The American Legion is also supportive of a pharmacy benefit and extending the two pilot programs for Medicare-eligible retirees and dependents, namely, TRICARE Senior Prime and FEHBP 65. The American Legion believes that all military retirees, including Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents, should have access to both military and VA medical facilities and pharmacies.

Washington Conference

The National Security Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference on Monday, March 27 and Wednesday, March 29, 1999. Topics covered during each session follow.

Morning Session, March 27, 2000

On March 27, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session. Mr. Kelly Sharbel, Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), Office of the Secretary of Defense, began by stating that since the end of the Cold War many countries had been trying to emulate the United States, not just our military, but our system of democratic government. Although the Voluntary Force had generally been a success, it was encountering severe challenges in recruiting and retaining a quality force. The Secretary of Defense has been emphasizing the theme in his visits that the military needed to reconnect with the American people and The American Legion was called upon to assist in this endeavor.

Ambassador Michael Sheehan, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State was the second speaker. He gave an overview of the federal government's efforts to combat terrorist activities directed against American citizens and institutions overseas and here at home. He emphasized that terrorist groups do not necessarily have the political agendas that they had in the past and they are becoming more decentralized. These factors make countering the terrorist threat even more difficult. He thanked The American Legion for its interest in this issue and for the opportunity to speak before the commissions.

The final speaker for the morning was Congressman Michael Bilirakis who serves on the Veterans Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. Congressman Bilirakis said that now, more than ever, the United States needed to maintain a national defense second to none. Defense budgets have steadily declined since 1985, and the United States is spending only three percent of its gross domestic product on defense. Despite reductions in military strength, military deployments have increased by 300 percent in the past seven years. He also noted that the Defense Department was attempting to trade away modernization in an effort to maintain its readiness but was prevented from doing so by Congress.

Afternoon Session, March 27, 2000

At the afternoon session, the Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee and presided over by Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

The first speaker was Lieutenant Colonel Franklin F. Childress, USA, who is the Chief of Public Relations at Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, Camp Smith, Hawaii. LTC Childress gave a presentation on the recent Joint Task Force recovery operations in Southeast Asia. Currently there are 2029 Americans still missing from the Vietnam War. Since 1973, 554 American remains have been repatriated to the United States. LTC Childress also thanked The American Legion for its efforts to secure hazardous duty pay for servicemembers while on recovery missions in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Dr. Timothy Castle, professor at the Air War College Maxwell AFB, Alabama, talked about his years of experience involved in POW/MIA issues. While applauding the work of Joint Task Force – Full Accounting, Dr. Castle took issue with the level of commitment that some personnel in DPMO have to the accounting mission. He said that there is a multitude of important information held in Vietnamese archives, and efforts to gain access to these records are not strong enough. Dr. Castle also discussed his research into the case of USAF Secret Site 85 in Laos in which U.S. airmen were bombed by North Vietnamese aircraft and many of the participants remain missing.

Mr. Bill Bell, who is retired from the U.S. Army and spent the majority of his military career dealing with recovery of POW/MIAs from Southeast Asia gave the final presentation. He echoed many of Dr. Castle's concerns about the priority of the POW/MIA accounting issue among those in the U.S. government tasked to perform this mission. He also raised questions about the Vietnamese government cooperation with accounting efforts. While

progress has been made with personnel recoveries, Vietnamese cooperation with and the U.S. pursuit of live sighting investigations needed more emphasis.

National Security Commission Business Session, March 29, 2000

The National Security Commission conducted a business session on Wednesday morning. Commission Chairman Allen Titus mentioned that plans were underway for a Pre-Convention trip on Lake Michigan aboard the United States Coast Guard icebreaker Mackinaw after embarking at Convention City Milwaukee. Three resolutions were considered and approved for submission to the National Executive Committee (NEC). The Commission also discussed the denial of access for military recruiters at over 600 public high schools across the country, and it was decided that the Commission should develop a resolution for submission to the NEC which would eventually deny federal funding for those states which disallowed military recruiters access to high schools and student directories.

Policy Coordination and Action Group (PCAG) Meeting March 24-25, 2000

The American Legion convened a PCAG meeting in March 2000 which was prompted by DoD and media reports regarding declining military quality of life features and readiness as well as the impact of increased operating tempos and under-resourced defense budgets on recruiting, retention and readiness. Based on briefings by senior DoD officials, Congressional staffers and others, the PCAG directed that a National Security Task Force forum be formulated with the aim of carrying national security messages into key states during the Presidential and Congressional campaigns.

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. Venson, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Cheryl L. Henson, 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 81st 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 2000 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 1998-1999, 1,349 Posts were involved in disaster relief and other emergency assistance programs.

Energy: War in the Persian Gulf had refocused the attention of The American Legion on America's continued reliance on foreign sources of energy. Unquestionably, Iraq's

seizure of Kuwait and the threat to Saudi Arabia could again endanger our national security interests and economic well-being.

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 759 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.

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 1998-1999, a total of 91,473 pints of blood were donated by 44,375 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, 1998 through June 15, 1999, many Departments of The American Legion actively participated in the Blood Donor program. The winning Departments included Florida, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Nebraska, and Rhode Island.

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 1,236 Posts had crime resistance programs in 1998-99.

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 1,184 Posts had Fire Prevention programs in 1998-99.

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 selected five Regional winners who contended for the prestigious honor of being selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Police Officer Ronald Tookes from Florida was selected and presented with the third award of the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at the 81st National Convention at Anaheim, California.

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 "fourth 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 80th 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 sixth 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 80th and 81st 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: Military

funeral honors; 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 revamping the military retirement pay system, and funding the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home. 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, 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, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia.

NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Gerard W. Cheffer, Ohio, Chairman

Guided by resolutions adopted at the 80th 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.

During this year, the Commission saw the realization of a long-term goal with the installation of a digital television and audio production facility. Within the first months, specialized audio and video products were made available to Departments and Posts in support of the National Security Awareness Campaign and Operation Reconnect. A training video for oratorical judges has been completed and will be distributed in October. The

Commission anticipates increasing distribution of specialized materials directly to Departments and Posts in a cooperative effort to increase membership and awareness of The American Legion's corporate goals.

The Commission worked tirelessly in support of the Flag Protection Amendment as the measure moved to a vote in the U.S. Senate. Letters to the Editor, interviews on talk radio, editorial boards and other opportunities were used as The American Legion, a member of the Citizens Flag Alliance, countered consistent misinformation from a variety of sources.

PR Tools

Continuing to provide useful public relations tools directly to Posts, the Public Relations Commission created products in support of the National Security Awareness Campaign. Each urged candidate discussion of weakened national defense as an issue in the November election and stressed the need for all Americans to vote. Among the tools: A newspaper ad slick, a brochure, radio and television public service announcements and talking points to assist Legionnaires in explaining the need for a national dialogue.

The Public Relations Commission and the Americanism Commission released the "America's Veterans" classroom package. The package, with a Teacher's Guide, a Volunteer Presenter's Guide and a 23-minute videotape, is receiving wide acceptance and early applause from teachers reviewing and using the materials. A grant from IPALCO Enterprises, a multi-state energy company based in Indianapolis, provided needed funding for wider distribution.

A new Public Relations Handbook was published. It provides the corporate goals of The American Legion and presents ideas on how public relations volunteers can impact achievement of these goals through hometown efforts.

While routine, suggested speeches for holidays continued to be made available. In many instances, newspapers use quotes from them. The Veterans Media Data Bank continues to be a resource for news media. Currently, names of veterans are being provided to "Veterans.com," a web-based arm of *The History Channel.* These names are being considered for featured stories on the website in the coming months.

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. This trend follows the rapidly advancing use of the Internet as a major communications link and source of news.

Media Relations

Public Relations Commission staff worked at an increased pace with members of the news media. A primary goal for the Public Relations Commission has been to develop solid relationships with news media professionals that The American Legion is THE source when a veteran's perspective is needed. This on-going effort is paying dividends. From national security, to veterans health care, to flag protection, to school programs and more, reporters ask for Legion input. Major issues of the past year included: China Trade, Vieques, Puerto Rico Naval/Marine Assault Training, military recruiting problems, and the complex healthcare issue for veterans.

Awards

The National Commander's Public Relations Award was presented to Heather Renee French, Miss America 2000, for her efforts on behalf of homeless veterans.

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award will be presented during the 82nd National Convention to *Dateline NBC* for "Body of Evidence." The panel of judges, comprised of professional journalists and educators, recommended the NBC program saying: "There are few journalistic stories more powerful than those, which demonstrate someone has been wrongly convicted. Even more compelling than the main thread of the story is the trail of questions about other Texas cases."

The Future

The National Public Relations Commission continues to explore the communication potential of emerging technologies. As new opportunities emerge, they will be embraced to transmit The American Legion story to the media and the public. We look to the future with excitement and anticipation.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION
Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Chairman
Carroll Williams, Maryland, Director

The Eighty-first Annual National Convention in Anaheim, California and the 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, 2000. 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, 2000, the date of this report.

The Commission received a total of 42 resolutions at the 1999 National Convention for appropriate action and consideration. The following is a breakdown of these resolutions by source and type:

18 Approved or Approved as Amended
4 Consolidated with Resolutions Approved
7 Referred to Resolutions Standing Commission
11 Received and Recorded
2 Rejected

There were three resolutions from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee meeting of October 13-14, 1999.

There were four resolutions from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee meeting of May 8-9, 2000.

The status of these resolutions is set forth as follows, beginning with those covering the 1999 National Convention, followed by those presented and referred by the National Executive Committee.

1999 National Convention Approved Resolutions

The Director informed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on September 18, 1999, of The American Legion official policy on the following resolutions:

Resolution No. 6 (DC): Special Pension for World War I Veterans.

Resolution No. 29 (MA): VA Provide Appropriate Care for Gulf War Related Illnesses.
Resolution No. 58 (ND): Protect Disability Rating After Ten Years.
Resolution No. 62 (ND): Urge Congress to Provide Adequate Current and Future Financial Assistance for Veterans Health Care and Oppose Further Reductions in VA Health Care Personnel.
Resolution No. 87 (MD): Support Increase in Claims Personnel for VA.
Resolution No. 88 (MD): Eliminate all Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records.
Resolution No. 89 (MD): The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation.
Resolution No. 90 (IA): Maintain Adequate VA Hospital Bed Capacity and Staffing Levels.
Resolution No. 95 (VA): The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange.
Resolution No. 97 (VA): Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits to Those who Served in Israel and Turkey.
Resolution No. 98 (VA): Gulf War Veterans Illnesses.
Resolution No. 106 (IL): Urge VA to Make Organization-Specific Information Available to Veterans Service Organizations.
Resolution No. 118 (NJ): The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones.
Resolution No. 141 (IL): The GI Bill of Health.
Resolution No. 153 (NY): Request VA to Establish Policy of Enrollment in VA Health Care System at the Time of Separation from Active Military Service.
Resolution No. 171 (MI): Support Improved Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Services.
Resolution No. 179 (CA): Support the Consolidation of VA Home Loan Guaranty Program for the Southwest Region in California.
Resolution No. 181 (CA): Indirect Cost Reimbursement to VA by non-VA and Collaborative Studies Research.

National Executive Committee Meeting
October 14-15, 1999

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:
Resolution No. 1: Advocate to Congress that VA make a Special Treatment Category for Military Retirees.
Resolution No. 2: Support the Dependent Care Pilot Provisions of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act.
Resolution No. 3: Oppose the Systematic Closing of VA Medical Centers.

National Executive Committee Meeting
May 8-9, 2000

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:
Resolution No. 16: VA's Duty to Assist.
Resolution No. 17: The American Legion Policy on VA Formulary.
Resolution No. 18: Increase Beneficiary Travel Pay for Eligible Beneficiaries.
Resolution No. 19: Extend Presumptive Period for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) to Five Years.

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held three meetings during the period September 3, 1999 through May 6, 2000. The VA&R Commission met on September 4, 1999 during the National Convention in Anaheim, California. 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 11-12, 1999, 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 13, 1999.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 77th consecutive year in Washington, DC, on March 27, 2000, in conjunction with the 40th Annual Washington Conference. The actions taken by the Commission were reported to the National Executive Committee on May 8-9, 2000, 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, 2000, 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, 2000.

National Information Conferences
The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary

For the 21st consecutive year, eight National Information Conferences were conducted throughout the months of September and October of 1999, and March and April of 2000. The meetings were held in the following cities:

Region 1—Burlington, VT, April 7-9, 2000
Region 2—Charleston, WV, March 31-April 2, 2000
Region 3—Huntsville, AL, October 1-3, 1999
Region 4—Lafayette, LA, September 24-26, 1999
Region 5—Evansville, IN, October 1-3, 1999
Region 6—Sioux Falls, SD, April 7-9, 2000
Region 7—Las Vegas, NV, September 24-26, 2000
Region 8—Pendleton, OR, March 31-April 2, 2000

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary met jointly at each Saturday session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Commission attended the Conference 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 overviews of various topics relative to the VA&R program. Representatives of the Department of Veterans Affairs attended the Conferences and provided an overview of various veterans programs. A significant number of questions were posed concerning veterans' access to medical care and benefit programs.

For the seventh consecutive year, a Post Service Officers School was conducted. Claims, ratings, and benefits were discussed. This school will continue on an annual basis.

Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference

The 77th National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference was held March 27-29, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Participants included members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, Department Service Officers and Rehabilitation Directors, County and Post Service Officers, 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 Alan G. Lance, Sr., Elizabeth Stewart, National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, presentations were also made by the following officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies: E. Dane Clark, Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals; Colonel Marcus J. Beauregard, USAF, Acting Director of Community Support Policy, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families and Education; Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, Deputy Under Secretary for Health; Joseph Thompson, Under Secretary for Benefits; Robert M. Walker, Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs; Carl Commenator, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs; and, William F. Tuerk, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

National Commander Lance made a presentation to Mr. Ron Olk of Iowa, National VAVS Worker of the Year.

Prior to the Conference, for the nineteenth 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 27, 2000 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, DC. No recommendations were submitted from the 1999 National Information Conferences. One was received during the 2000 Washington Conference.

Recommendation No. 1

The Department Service Officers School, to be held in Washington, DC next year, should include a one-day visit to the Adjudication Academy in Baltimore, MD.

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, 1999, to June 30, 2000, relative to the deliberation of Congress on matters pertaining to the programs of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

(1) On September 28, 1999, National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr. testified before a Joint Session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees on The American Legion's legislative priorities.

(2) On October 26, 1999, the Assistant Director for the Gulf War Task Force testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, United States House of Representatives, on Gulf War veterans' issues.

(3) On February 17, 2000, the Deputy Director for Operations presented testimony on the Fiscal Year 2001 budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(4) On March 15, 2000, National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr. testified on Removing Barriers to the Department of Defense Tricare Medical System before the Subcommittee on Personnel, Armed Services Committee, United States House of Representatives.

(5) On March 23, 2000, the Director testified on The Duty to Assist Veterans Act of 1999 before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(6) On April 5, 2000, the Deputy Director for Health Care presented testimony on VA Capital Assets before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(7) On April 13, 2000, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified on VA's Fiscal Year 2001 budget before the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives.

(8) On April 13, 2000, the Deputy Director for Operations testified on various health care matters before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(9) On May 18, 2000, the Deputy Director for Operations presented testimony on the operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(10) On June 8, 2000, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified on VA Services for Women Veterans before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

Informational Services

Each year, through its informational services, the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff endeavors to keep Legion officials and other parties informed of our program's activities and functions. Preparation and distribution of various publications consumes considerable research, time and effort. These publications, based on various topics, are disseminated routinely to Department Service Officers, members of the VA&R Commission, and others interested in The American Legion's rehabilitation program.

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 Gulf War Veterans' Guide to Benefits* is also an extremely helpful publication. Other publications available upon request are: *Things To Do Before A Veterans Dies* and *The American Legion Handbook of Veterans Benefits—Get What You Deserve.* 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.

On an annual basis, the staff revises *The American Legion Post Service Officers Guidebook (PSO)* to reflect legislative and program changes. This Guidebook is widely distributed. Sufficient copies are mailed to all Department Headquarters equal to one half the number of Posts. The PSO Guidebook is an indispensable research tool for Post Service Officers in providing assistance to veterans and their dependents. Also updated frequently is *The American Legion Voluntary Service Handbook* which is furnished to new VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives who volunteer their time and services in VA medical centers.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff strive to provide as much information as possible concerning our program to the various Divisions of the National Organization, Departments, individual Legionnaires and the general public.

Report on the National Cemetery System

The current cemetery budget is sufficient to meet priority obligations. The National Cemetery Administration is highly satisfied with the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2001. Overall, the cemetery administration is forecast to receive a $33 million increase for Fiscal Year 2001. This includes increased appropriations for:

+ $12.6 million for operational costs
+ $11.6 million for graveliners and crypts
+ $900,000 for the headstone/marker program
+ $7 million for major construction projects
+ $900,000 for minor construction projects

Total National Cemetery Administration funding for Fiscal Year is forecast at $230.7 million.

This year, for the first time in its 135-year history, national cemetery interments are projected to exceed 80,000 burials. The main challenge facing the National Cemetery Administration today is maintaining the progress of the past decade in which six new national cemeteries were constructed. The Veterans Millennium Health Care Act of 1999 directs VA to establish six additional national cemeteries over the next seven years. These sites include:

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Miami, Florida
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Detroit, Michigan
Atlanta, Georgia
Sacramento, California

The Millennium Act also directs VA to conduct an independent study to determine additional areas with the largest number of under served veterans and the number of new cemeteries needed. With the World War II veterans' population decreasing by approximately 1,300 per day, the National Cemetery Administration faces an unprecedented challenge in future years.

This year, the last two national cemeteries from the expansion of the 1990s are scheduled to open. The dedication of the new Dallas/Forth Worth National Cemetery is scheduled for May 12, 2000. The Western Reserve National Cemetery near Cleveland, Ohio is expected to open for burials in early June, with the actual dedication occurring in late summer or early fall.

The State Cemetery Grants Program continues to expand. Seven additional state veterans' cemeteries are currently under construction and fifteen more are approved for development. By the end of the current expansion cycle, 32 states will be participating in the program. Through the involvement of National Commander Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho, will soon be approved for a state veterans' cemetery. The western states remain the most under represented within the State Cemetery Grants Program.

The Burial Honors Program, under the auspices of the Department of Defense is in its initial stages of development and thus far, the number of reported problems are minimal. The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs encourages continued participation in the provision of burial honors by the veterans' service organizations. DoD is currently finalizing a training video for the provision of proper burial honors.

Annual Report of the Medical Consultant

There have been no significant changes in the duties and activities other than the retirement of Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Senior Medical Consultant during the past year. As mentioned, efforts are ongoing to hire a staff medical consultant.

The primary duty assigned to the medical consultant is to act as a source of medical/technical knowledge to the appeals and claims representatives of The American Legion at the Board of Veterans Appeals. The caseworkers refer the claims folders to the medical consultant for evaluation and advice as to the appropriate course to pursue in presenting the case. They may take place in the form of guidance, but more frequently it will involve a written memorandum to the appeals representative who refers the case. Certain cases are medically and technically difficult for a non-physician to present and such cases are presented directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals by the medical consultant.

In some cases, the medical consultant is directly contacted by American Legion Service Officers in the field asking specific questions. Department Service Officers are encouraged to refer difficult cases to the Washington office and to call or discuss them with the medical consultant. This year, again, there was an increase in requests for consultations from the field. It is strongly felt that having more contact with the representatives in the field will benefit the veterans as well as the representatives in the field. The requests were answered within days, usually requesting additional information and records. In some cases, a formal request for a disability rating is subsequently initiated.

The Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission uses the medical consultant in an advisory capacity for the work conducted by his office. This can be in the form of policy with regard to the operations of the Department of Veterans Affairs' medical care system, or it might be in an advisory capacity on legislative proposals and testimony before Congressional Committees. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and is discussed among several key members of the VA&R Division. Occasionally, perceived administrative problems within VA have been drawn to the attention of the Director who calls upon the Medical Consultant for a solution to these problems. This year, more requests from the various sections of VA&R have been received. Some of the requests dealt with the issue of individual veterans and some were of a general nature. Several of those requests required additional information not available at the time of the request. Fortunately, the availability of multiple medical libraries in the area helped to gather the required information and present it to the requester. These requests are welcome and give the medical consultant an opportunity to have input in the decision-making process of the various departments of The American Legion.

The medical consultant represents the Director at the monthly meetings with the Chief Medical Director, along with other veterans' service organization representatives, to gain

information concerning the recent operation and direction of the Veterans Health Administration. These meetings are to express concern over the changes in the course of treatment being offered by the Veterans Health Administration.

During the past year the medical consultant has screened/evaluated 65 appeals referred by staff.

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 the VA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 2.2 million policies in force as of May 31, 2000, with a combined life insurance coverage of some $13.9 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately $800-900 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 110,000-120,000 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 3,500 veterans with over $200 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 has supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the Servicemember's 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 the VA's NSLI program. On May 31, 2000, SGLI provided some 2.33 million active duty and reserve personnel with more than $428 billion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 373,000 veterans with insurance in excess of $33.8 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. 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. Those entering active duty are now automatically covered for a full $200,000 under SGLI. 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. Currently, the VA Insurance Management staff at Philadelphia is pursuing authorization to increase the coverage amount of SGLI to $250,000, and to also include dependent coverage options for spouses to a maximum of $50,000, with a free $5,000 coverage for children. The coverage rules for VGLI would remain the same in that a veteran could not have more VGLI coverage than the amount of SGLI held in service.

The American Legion's National VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA center has been working with the 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, but has not instituted any specific system whereby these cases can be separated out from the main body of those leaving service and targeted for appropriate further actions, evidently due to cost considerations arising both from the added expense of such identification procedures and from increased claims. However, a system of individual telephone contacts may be initiated in the near future for veterans in this category. 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 4.93 million life insurance policies for military personnel and veterans, with a total in-force coverage of over $484 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 waiting 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 their on-going effort to provide better service and program enhancements to their veteran policyholders by periodically updating their 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. In this vein, the VA Insurance Center is now preparing to embark on an initiative to achieve a paperless office in the near future. Final steps are being taken to begin a test project to create electronic folders in lieu of paper ones through document scanning techniques, with the goal of retiring all paper case folders in upcoming years. This will necessitate veterans' service organizations having inquiry status into the NSLI insurance system for the first time. It is hoped this initiative will assist in both cost reduction by elimination of file maintenance and movement costs, and increase efficiency in processing insurance actions by allowing insurance specialists immediate access to records and the direct processing of them in a real time mode, without waiting for paper records or batch processing of transactions. Insurance services are augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit will be underway shortly to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries received at the VA insurance Internet address **(Vainsurance@VBA.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 pursued actions for the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. All monthly insurance award/annuity payments will be by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees unless requested by the payee.

VA is also seeking authorization for several new initiatives in both the NSLI and VMLI programs at this time. In 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, VA is exploring the possibility of capping premium rates for RH Term policies at the age 70 rate as has been done with WWII and Korean War period issues, and to effect a reduction in RH premium rates generally by switching to a different, more updated, mortality table on which to base these rates. In the area of WWII period V prefixed Term policies, VA insurance will shortly be activating an option which will give a cash surrender value to these policies where none existed before until an insured attained age 96. Veterans with these Term policies will have an option to cash surrender them or to use the cash surrender value to buy a Reduced Paid-Up policy as they desire. VA presently has a target date of July 15, 2000 to begin this program addition. 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. Lastly, VA is seeking to have government life insurance proceeds exempted from being counted as income for federal income asset limitation programs.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Service Units: VA Insurance Centers at Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN

The American Legion Veterans Affairs and 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 and 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 non-service disabled veterans with increased face value coverage's continues to be an American Legion legislative effort. In relation to the insurance initiatives described previously, coordination with VA and national organization representation was conducted at a VA Insurance Stakeholders meeting in March 2000 in Washington, DC, and at VAROIC Philadelphia. A VAROIC initiated proposal to eliminate Service-Disabled Life Insurance for all those entering service after December 31, 2000 was discussed and is presently being held in abeyance pending further study and due to the opposition of veterans' service organizations, primarily The American Legion. The reasons for this proposal are ostensibly to obtain trade-off benefits for the SGLI/VGLI programs (marginal at best as subsidy levels for the population of future veterans affected would most likely be quite low given present expectations of the absence of any large scale conflicts in the foreseeable future), and to pursue a benefits philosophy such that veteran's deserve one and only one chance at government life insurance coverage, later service-connected disability status notwithstanding. Arguments were presented against this position, and the closure proposal will continue to be monitored by the National VA&R staff for any VA actions in this area.

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 now been provided with two new computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the VA networks and the Internet. These are now operational and have Internet (E-Mail at **AMGLAVE@VBA.VA.GOV**) and VA Benefits Delivery Network access. It is expected that inquiry access to the insurance system will be provided in the future. 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. The VA's Debt Management Center is located in the VA St. Paul center.

For the period July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000, the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported:

Letters Received	4,432
Letters Written	6,097
Disability Insurance Claims	710
Death Insurance Claims	2,448
Insurance Folders Reviewed	3,498
In-Force Policy Accounts Reviewed	4,400
Telephone Contacts	3,679
Personal Contacts	3,515
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	3,222
VA Case Responses Mailed; Insurance and Debt Management Cases	3,516
* Live Claims, Evidence and other Submittals Presented	8,890

* 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 and general inquiries.

Debt Management (St. Paul Only):
(DMC=Debt Management Center)

DMC Claims	1,031
DMC Case Audits	2,820
DMC Debt Waiver Cases	1,857

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 sixteen Appeals Representatives.

Within the Table of Organization, the Deputy Director for Operations is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Board Unit, and the Insurance Activities Unit.

Cases at the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted or the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a member of the Board of Veterans Appeals with the appellant. There is an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, three secretaries, and twelve Appeals Representatives assigned. During the period, 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.

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 and files written briefs or 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 two 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, 1999, through June 30, 2000. During this twelve months, the Appeals Representatives reviewed a total of 7,911 cases. Included in the above total were 311 scheduled hearings in Washington, DC and 235 United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims remands.

Assisting in the review and presentation of complex medical cases was Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Senior Medical Consultant from July 1999 to June 2000. A total of 65 cases were referred to the doctor for advisory opinions, including a significant number of cases where he provided nexus opinions in order to make a claim for VA benefits well-grounded. This position is currently vacant.

During this reporting period, the Board of Veterans' Appeals rendered a total of 35,562 decisions, which included 8,093 with American Legion representation. These decisions consisted of 2,040 (25.2%) approvals, 2,502 (30.91%) remands, 3,385 (41.82%) denials, and 166 (2.05%) others. The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases, and dismissals.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed and disposed of 11 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 Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for the Correction of Military and Naval Records.

During the period July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000, the staff of the Military Review Boards Unit provided advice, assistance, and representation and other services to applicants seeking consideration by the Department of Defense review boards in 2,500 cases. These involved such issues as changes of narrative reasons for discharge, upgrade of discharge, entitlement or changes to military disability retirement, reserve retirement payment, issuance or reissuance of military awards or decorations, and other corrections to military and naval records. Of these actions, 45 personal hearings were held and documentary review briefs were submitted in 440 cases.

The following is a breakdown of actions by the respective service boards:

Board for the Correction of Military and Naval Records

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of the Air Force	40	6	15
Department of the Army	150	35	35
Department of the Navy	65	10	15
DOT Coast Guard	2	0	0

Military and Naval Discharge Review Boards

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of the Air Force	30	6	20
Department of the Army	60	25	41
Department of the Navy	92	92	17
DOT Coast Guard	1	0	0

The various Boards have been successful in their efforts to substantially reduce the processing time for an individual's application. This action has been in response to increased Congressional oversight and concern regarding the Boards problems with timeliness of review, questions independent from active components, and a lack of satisfaction by many applicants. The following are current projected timeframes:

Air Force Discharge Review Board:	
With personal hearing	6-12 months
Record review	6-12 months
Air Force Correction Board:	
Record review	12-18 months
Army Discharge Review Board:	
Personal hearing in Washington, DC	6-8 months
Personal hearing with Travel Board	12-18 months
Record review	6-9 months
Record review	12-18 months
Navy/Marine Discharge Review Board:	
Record review	10-12 months
Navy/Marine Correction Board:	
Record review	12-36 months
DOT Coast Guard Discharge Review Board:	
Record review	10-12 months
DOT Coast Guard Correction Board:	
Record review	10-12 months

The Military Review Board Unit staff also traveled to sites to provide training to service officers in form preparation, development of supporting evidence, and presentation of Discharge Review and Correction Board cases.

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 11,200 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 2,500 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 3,000 pieces.

The combined workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards Unit, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 13,500 cases.

Department Service Officers School

The National Commander continues to authorize the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission to conduct two separate 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 Veterans Appeals 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 proficiency of American Legion Service Officers in their effort to represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors. A subgoal is to enable participants to share the knowledge, information, and material with the 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 Twenty-eighth session of the Department Service Officers School was held July 28-31, 1999 at the Radisson Hotel Centre in Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 100 Service Officer attendees. The Twenty-seventh session was held March 22-26, 2000 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. There were 117 Service Officer participants. This was followed immediately by the Department Service Officers Seminar and National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference.

National Field Service

The National Field Service (NFS), under the supervision of the Deputy Director for Health Care, has been in the process of a major reorganization. As a result of the Veterans Affairs Local User Evaluation (VALUE) workbook and report card development, NFS has issued a mission statement, which is "To promote universal access to quality health care for veterans and their families through advocacy, service, and support." The objectives of the NFS are to:

- Quantify and qualify VHA performance in areas of importance to veterans, over time,
- Monitor network performance in relation to one another to ensure equity of health care delivery across the system,
- Identify variations and contributing factors,
- Track impact of legislative, policy or structural changes in VHA over time, and
- Provide veterans with easy to read and important information about their health care.

The NFS, through the institution of the VALUE book methodology, has begun to achieve these goals by using a standard instrument to perform comparative analysis, tracking VISN performance data, conducting town hall meetings and focus groups with veterans, and make recommendations to VHA and Congress. Final reports from the site visits were distributed to approximately 50 sources to include VHA leadership, Congressional delegations, other VSOs and professional organizations, and, of course, local American Legion officials.

NFS representatives are assigned specific areas of the 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) to cover. During the period of June 30, 1999 to July 1, 2000, site visits

were conducted in VISNs 2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, and 22. This was accomplished in spite of being one Field Service Representative short for half of the reporting year as a result of his deployment to Bosnia with the US Army Reserves in March 1999.

In addition to their usual duties, Field Service Representatives, as a result of their compelling reports, have been called upon to testify before Congress, attend VISN director meetings, and have been invited to MAC and other special committee meetings. A brochure has been published highlighting the role and functions of the NFS and it has been distributed at a variety of conferences and meetings.

Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

The Fifty-fourth National Advisory Committee meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was held in Orlando, Florida, May 31–June 3, 2000. 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 60 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 who serves as the National VAVS representative. This year, John Vitikacs, Assistant Director for Resource Development, represented the Director at the VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting.

The 2000 winner of the James H. Parke Scholarship Award was Anna Richardson, Tuscaloosa, AL ($11,000). Runner-up awards went to Christin Reece, Seattle WA, ($5,000); and, Philip Nordhturft, Tampa, FL ($2,000). 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 hospital 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 Information Conferences.

Accredited Representatives

In completing VA Form 21-22, Power of Attorney, the claimant appoints The American Legion as their 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. Formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals is provided by Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. These representatives have been recommended for accreditation by their respective Departments 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 2-21) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, with an accompanying endorsement signed by the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. The Director, as the National Certifying Officer, or the Assistant Director for Information Management, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of the 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 the 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, 144 requests for accreditation and 179 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 2000, there were 1,057 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. 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 others 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 26 *Bulletins* and 28 Memoranda were distributed.

Special requests from the field for VA publications and material can be submitted to the Director's office and an attempt will be made to provide the requested material. However, an attempt should first be made to obtain the material through the Publications Officer at the nearest VA regional office.

Personnel and Organization

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division at the Washington office from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000.

The VA&R Division accepted the resignations of Assistant Director for Gulf War Task Force, Matthew Puglisi and the retirements of Harold Kelly, Assistant Director for Program Management, and Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Staff Medical Consultant. Mrs. Kimberly Mitchell was hired as the Secretary to the Deputy Director for Health Care Issues. Robert Hite, formerly of the Field Service Unit also tenured his resignation. Steve Smithson and Joseph Sharpe were promoted to the positions of Assistant Directors for Gulf War Task Force and Program Management, respectively. Efforts are underway to retain a medical consultant

whose specialty is environmental and occupational medicine. The Division sees a need for this type of qualification in a physician based on the types of claims, appeals and ongoing research studies The American Legion is involved with as a major advocate for veterans and claimants alike. The Division anticipates the retention of a physician with these qualifications very soon.

Three new Appeals Representatives were hired and assigned to the Board of Veterans Appeals: Cathleen Wiblemo, Melvin Oehlert, and Donald Mooney. Mrs. Sylvia Evans resigned and Ms. Yolanda Sanders was hired in her place as a Secretary and assigned to the Board of Veterans Appeals. Currently, there are four vacancies 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 table of organization of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 2000 is as follows:

Director	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Deputy Director for Health Care Issues	1
Field Representatives	2
Secretary	1
Deputy Director for Operations	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Program Management	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Information 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	9
Case Screener, Court of Veterans Appeals	0
Secretaries	3
Medical Consultant	0
Veterans and Dependents Claims Unit	2
Secretary	1
Total Personnel—Washington Office	33
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/Transcrber	1
TOTAL PERSONNEL	
Field Offices	4
Washington Office	33
VA&R TOTAL	37

Staff Field Assignments

The staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, including the Director, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors attended various Legion functions around the nation such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, Conferences and fact-finding trips. Departments visited included: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, and Wyoming. The staff also participated in four National Information Conferences in 1999, and four in Spring 2000.

The Field Service Unit performed visitations to selected VA medical centers in all 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). The entire Division staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

In addition, the Director received official visits from representatives of the Governments of Russia, China, Australia and South Korea. The purpose of these visits was to discuss the benefit programs provided for U.S. veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the service program of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

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..

Five Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000, for an overall total of 1,253 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.

One-hundred-thirty Citations For Meritorious Service and Loyal Cooperation in The American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program were presented during the period July 1, 1999—June 30, 2000. Since this type of recognition and appreciation began, 4,545 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. The Task Force has vigorously approached this mission, and has undertaken many efforts to accomplish it. These efforts include Town Hall Meetings, oversight of scientific and clinical studies, 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, service officer training, and outreach efforts this year in Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington State. These events improved our outreach to Gulf War veterans, and better prepared Legionnaires to serve these veterans within their communities.

Staff members also have traveled extensively within the medical and professional communities to closely follow issues of concern to Gulf War veterans, particularly health issues such as vaccination side effects. 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 communities.

Disability compensation remains a top priority for the Task Force. To-date, 73% of claims filed for undiagnosed illnesses (Gulf War veterans' illnesses) are denied by VA. We are looking forward to the release of an IOM report late this summer, which may influence the way claims are adjudicated. IOM is currently evaluating exposures from the Gulf and calculating the possibility of those exposures causing various symptoms or illnesses we see in our veterans. This work is mirrored to that IOM completed on Agent Orange, which has changed the way claims were granted. Until that time, the Task Force will continue to closely monitor the claims adjudication process and lobby for more favorable outcomes on behalf of Gulf War veterans.

The Task Force has continued its steady oversight of the Department of Defense's efforts to investigate exposures to troops in the Gulf of environmental agents, and the implementation of lessons learned from the Gulf War. DoD has made steady progress in these efforts, but it has not found any clear causes of these illnesses. The Task Force, for its part, has found DoD's efforts to be credible and part of a successful effort to improve its relationship with The American Legion and those in the veterans' community. 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.

In the Fall of 2000, the Office of the Special Assistant to Gulf War Illnesses will modify its mission to include all deployment matters, not only those specific to the Gulf War. The new office will be named the Office of the Special Assistant to Deployment Matters. The Task Force will monitor the transition of this office to ensure that Gulf War veterans' issues are not treated as a secondary matter.

More than 10,000 *Gulf War Guides to Benefits,* the publication of the Task Force, were printed to meet this demand this year. As well, more than 10,000 other materials pertaining to Gulf War veterans issues have been distributed as part of our wide-scale outreach effort. The Guide has proven to be a great success, and the Task Force is creating a revised edition for all Gulf War era veterans in order to provide a more comprehensive outreach tool to the Departments.

The Task Force is working closely with other staff members of VA&R to heighten awareness of women veterans' issues. Nearly 35,000 servicemembers in the Gulf War were women, composing most of the same positions as their male counterparts. A hearing was held June 8, 2000 by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to better understand the needs and accomplishments of women veterans. There appears to be 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 Gulf War era issues such as depleted uranium, anthrax and environmental hazards of wars past, particularly Agent Orange. It works closely with other divisions in the National Headquarters in order to provide the best service to these veterans, their families, and the service officers helping them. It has also cooperated with the Membership Division in order to encourage those we serve to join the Legion family.

American Legion Auxiliary
Sherry McLaughlin, National Chairperson, Iowa

A Department VA&R Chairperson wrote, "I have learned so much about the complexity of this program and how very important our work is not only to our veterans and their families but also to the country." As veterans lose their entitlements and freedoms, it becomes that much easier for the freedoms and rights of us all to be diminished. This thought is one reason that members worked so hard by volunteering to help America's veterans as they Celebrated America which was National President Elizabeth Stewart's theme. Volunteers in Units, Counties, Districts and Departments cared for veterans in many ways.

The eight National Information Conferences were a great opportunity to share the goals and objectives of the program. VA Voluntary Services personnel, volunteers at Vet Centers and Out Based Clinics, and the National VA&R staff out of Washington, DC provided much information for those members in attendance. Sharing of ideas was a part of each Conference and we all learned much from each other. Field Service Orientation courses were conducted at all of the NICs and those in attendance received certification.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee joined the National President, Vice President and National Secretary in Washington, DC to meet with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr. Meeting with his staff and receiving updated information on veterans affairs and benefits, as well as an update on national cemeteries, was very helpful as we began to formulate the Auxiliary's program for the new administrative year.

Reports from the Departments spoke of many activities being done to help veterans in America. We learned that volunteers come in all shapes and sizes and one report spoke of Dixie, a one year old beagle pet therapy volunteer. Many Departments reported increased interest by Junior members in volunteering for the veteran. Field Orientation courses were held for SAL members and many of them joined the ranks as a VA volunteer. One Unit reported recruiting 8 young female cadets who came to the VA medical facility once a month to host bingo and visit with the patients.

Many parties were held as well as outings to restaurants, museums, community activities, horse and dog races and sporting events. More focus was placed on helping the female veteran and 24 dozen roses and cosmetics were donated for their use.

Miss America, Heather French, made visits to homeless veterans and many VA medical facilities. She became the voice speaking out for America's veterans to Congressmen and American Legion and Auxiliary members. Members donated clothing, food and furniture to homeless veterans. Numerous stand downs were held where all services were available in one location for veterans. One Department even purchased and outfitted a van where all services are provided.

Manufacture coupons and phone cards were distributed. Thousands of canceled stamps were collected for veteran's stamp clubs. Housing Associations were opened on closed VA

medical facilities grounds with priority for housing given to veterans. It was reported that closed rooms in some VA medical facilities have been opened to patients' families.

Over 85,000 Veterans Day cards as well as Valentines, Memorial Day and Birthday cards were sent to veterans throughout America. Floral arrangements donated by local businesses were placed at veteran's monuments, parks and in County courthouses. A patriotic wall in a local church was dedicated to the memory and honor of all veterans regardless of their service.

Many volunteer hours and contributions totaling $17,703 were given to Fisher Houses. Units hosted showers where personal care and kitchen items were donated to the 26 homes. Cooking meals, baby-sitting, landscaping and doing household chores were a few of the activities that Auxiliary members performed. Contributions were given to the USO as well as providing USO parties and dances. One Unit hosted a 59th Anniversary of the USO at a local airport with refreshments and baby-sitting services.

During the week of February 14, most facilities held special activities to salute veterans. Parties were held, cards were sent, many members visited veterans. School children made many Valentines and some schools took students to VA medical facilities and Veterans' Homes to distribute them and visit with veterans.

Fifteen entries were received for the J.C. Penny (now Aetna) and the National Organization on Disabilities Award of $1,000. They reported many projects which enhanced the quality of life for disabled veterans in their communities.

The American Legion Auxiliary was very proud when Mrs. Madeline Antonicic was named the VAVS Volunteer of the Year. Mrs. Antonicic is a volunteer at the Palo Alto, California Health Care System with over 44,000 hours. She was presented at the NAC Convention in Orlando, Florida in June. We have selected Ms. Delores Scheep as the American Legion Auxiliary VAVS Volunteer of the Year for this administrative year. She is a volunteer at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona where she has volunteered for 24 years. Ms. Scheep's nomination will be submitted to the NAC for consideration as the National VAVS Volunteer of the Year for their 2001 Convention. Both of these ladies will be presented to the Delegates at the Convention in Milwaukee.

An Auxiliary letter opener and a letter from National President Elizabeth Stewart was sent to each VAVS Representative during Volunteer Week as a small thanks for the tremendous amount of work they do.

Reports were received from 92% of the Departments which indicated that we truly are "Celebrating America" in our service to over 1,600,000 veterans.

Table 14

	Volunteers	**Hours**	**Expenditures**
VA Facilities	26,895	651,906	$2,671,311
Field Service	48,069	854,576	1,079,348
Home Service	29,613	971,895	817,757
GRAND TOTAL	**104,577**	**2,481,377**	**$4,568,416**

One goal was that of recruiting new volunteers and these figures show that there were 13,000 more volunteers than a year ago. Most of the increase in volunteer numbers was in the Field Service area. This indicates that the American Legion Auxiliary is responding to the change in the care of veterans and we shall continue to provide care wherever it is needed.

These reports only tell a portion of the volunteer story as helping veterans is all the credit many volunteers desire! Many members do not feel that it is necessary to report their

volunteer hours but we know they will continue to serve our veterans as they "Celebrate America" in a new century!

American Legion Auxiliary
National President Elizabeth Stewart

National President Elizabeth 'Lib' Stewart of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, was sworn into office at the organization's National Convention in September of 1999. Her theme, "Celebrate America 2000" was the inspiration for celebrating not only the new century and millennium, but the 80th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary as well.

Special projects this year included breast cancer awareness, continued fund raising for the World War II Memorial, Children's Miracle Network, Habitat for Humanity, hospice care, and Unit Revitalization.

Americanism

Our areas of concern were flag education and etiquette, "Get Out the Vote 2000", Americanism youth programs, and proper respect for traditional holidays. Units continued to support the efforts of the Citizens Flag Alliance up to and through the defeat vote with letters, calls, and personal contact to their senators. The major objective of a flag education program is to build an understanding of proper flag display and courtesy. More than 6,000 flag education programs were presented and 3,000 flag pins purchased. To recognize individuals who participated in or assisted with flag education, 9,000 certificates of appreciation were awarded. The number of American Flags presented to schools, churches, and other organizations totaled more than 130,000.

More than 2,000 Units reported participation in "Get Out the Vote" campaigns. Activities ranged from personal contact, voter registration, forums, rides to the polls, baby-sitting, and phone call reminders.

Donations received from 43 Departments, as of May 31, 2000, for the Spirit of Youth Fund totaled $19,851. These donations were used to educate our youth by awarding scholarships to the Girls Nation President, Honorary National Junior President, Girl Scout Achievement winner and those selected to attend the Americanism Youth Conference.

The Americanism Essay Contest was divided into five classes with two titles: "Why I am Proud to be an American?" and "What Kind of an American am I?". There were 68,500 essays submitted to Units for judging.

From the 104 entries submitted for the Girls Scout Achievement Award, 30 were forwarded by Departments to National. The winner receives a $1,000 scholarship and a trip to National Convention.

The commitment of our members, as reported by 42 Departments, reflects a willingness to perpetuate these American ideals and desire to uphold the principles that has made America great.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary have shown an overwhelming display of love and concern for fellow members through their generous contributions to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF).

As of May 31, 2000, National records indicated the AEF provided 39 emergency grants and one Displaced Homemaker grant to Auxiliary members in 20 Departments. Temporary financial assistance of $37,455 was provided. "Women Helping Women" not only provided

financial assistance, but emotional support as well. Of the 53 Departments, 44 contributed $132,281.

Funds were raised throughout Departments in various and unique ways. Units held bakeless bake sales, raffles, auctions, special dinners, yard sales, and other fundraisers. The National AEF Committee offered membership in the "Celebrate America" Club. Club cards with National President, Elizabeth Stewart, pictured on the card were offered to Departments. The Club card made it possible for even the smallest Unit to participate. For a $2 donation to the AEF, each donor received membership.

Anyone donating $15 or more to the AEF is eligible to receive recognition in the form of a lapel pin which depicts our motto—"Women Helping Women". Special citations were available for Units amassing total contributions of $100, $250, or $500.

Continued support of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and the Displaced Homemaker Fund, which are often the last ray of hope for many of our members facing a financial crisis, will keep the Fund sound for the future needs of our American Legion Family.

Children and Youth

"Touch a child and you touch the future" was the challenge of the Children and Youth program as a year to "Celebrate America" began. Thirty-seven Department Chairmen reported that members from 6,000 Units volunteered 830,000 hours and spent nearly $5,000,000 to enhance the lives of almost 200,000 kids—tomorrow's adult leaders.

Supporting programs of The American Legion was a high priority. Unit participation was reported in the following: Family Emphasis Week, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, Missing Children, April is Children and Youth Month Observance, Halloween Safety, McGruff Program, Child Safety, and Children's Miracle Network.

This was the third year that The American Legion Family worked together to raise funds in support of the Children's Miracle Network (CMN). As a result of fundraising by The American Legion Family, during the national broadcast in May, National President Stewart, Children and Youth Chairman Elsie Bailey, National Vice Commander Bob Neville and Sons of The American Legion Commander Rick Cook presented a check to CMN in the amount of $1,120,000.

Almost $45,000 benefited CMN Champions through "Miracle Miles for Kids." Sixty-five members of The American Legion Family, Department of New Jersey joined the walk and raised $7,335. California collected $11,206; Pennsylvania $5,224, and Nebraska $5,000. One thousand tots were elated with Josh kits (the plush Golden Retriever together with his doghouse and the book, *I'll Be OK*) that gave them the opportunity to hug Josh and feel his warmth and to read his story to alleviate their fear of a hospital stay. Nine hundred children were overjoyed with their forever friend, the Spinoza Buddy Bear.

The challenge to members and to the Regional Action Team members (RATS) was to realize more donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation than ever before. Although contributions fell short, it was reported that as of May 31, 2000, $85,762 was given by Departments and $10,000 was donated by the National Organization to assist the Foundation to continue to issue grants to organizations focusing on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual welfare of children and youth.

Thousands of dollars were spent to support Special Olympics, local sports teams, teen clubs, March of Dimes, cancer research, children's camps, various youth programs, and helping needy children. Gratitude is extended to all members who volunteered so diligently in the program of Children and Youth. The right to "Celebrate America" has been earned.

Community Service

The Community Service program focused on three areas of emphasis: heightening awareness, enhancing resources, and increasing support. Goals excelled with volunteers serving communities and participating in programs that made a difference in countless lives.

The volunteer work performed by our Junior members was tremendous and should never go unnoticed and most importantly, unrecognized. These dynamic and enthusiastic Junior volunteers, representing 1,594 Units, accepted the challenge and gave their usual best to "Celebrate America."

One thousand one hundred forty-two Units accepted the challenge to organize or participate in "Make A Difference Day" with 8,720 members serving a total of 167,007 hours. Community agencies assisted included churches, schools, libraries, hospitals and nursing homes, day care centers, scout troops, city waste, refuge and emergency crews, immunization clinics, and museums.

The National President elected as her special project Breast Cancer Awareness. The goal this year has been simple: to help create a greater understanding of breast cancer and its impact; to encourage the need for periodic health appraisals, and the importance of self examinations and participation in health screening clinics. Together with special speakers, adoption of Tell a Friend and Buddy Programs, support of Daffodil Days, participation in fundraising activities, button chair displays, and wearing the pink ribbon, members continued to help save lives. Reports indicated monetary contributions in the amount of $181,597.

For the third consecutive year, the Auxiliary reaffirmed its support of the Taste of the NFL. On behalf of all members, a $10,000 check was presented at the Taste's pre-Super Bowl party. Addressing the issue of hunger, members located food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens offering assistance, and 1,013 Units participated in fundraising for local hunger relief programs with contributions of $194,847. Necessities representing a dollar value of $306,231 were distributed to needy areas.

A new award incentive was introduced this year as the American Legion Auxiliary accepted the invitation of the American Institute for Public Service to become a national partner in the President's Student Service Challenge. This program recognized youth, ages 5-25, who performed at least 100 hours of service within a 12-month period.

As members continued to "Celebrate America", they rededicated themselves toward improving conditions in the lives of many and "turned caring into action."

Education

Reports were received from 5,482 Units, showing that 2,697 scholarships in the amount of $918,750 were awarded; 404 Department scholarships totaled $278,660 and the 25 National scholarships amounted to $52,000. There were 505 applications for the National President's Scholarship; 173 applications for the Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior members, and 63 entries for the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship. A grand total of 3,126 scholarships in the amount of $1,249,910 were awarded.

Four hundred sixty-two Units participated in "America Reads Challenge" with 1,239 volunteers giving 18,990 hours to help 5,842 students. Some Unit members helped preschoolers with their ABCs, took children to the library, read to children in the park, collected and distributed thousands of books, recorded books on tape, and helped with Accelerated Reader programs.

Eight thousand five hundred twenty-four children were tutored in reading, math, ESL, and computers by 1,156 volunteers from 586 Units. A program to distribute books to new mothers and fathers was instituted; these books were delivered to the hospital so the parents

would begin reading to their newborn as soon as possible. Parenting classes were provided for teen parents.

Adult tutoring programs were instituted by 218 Units that served 1,210 adults. Five hundred six volunteers tutored adults. They assisted inmates at a correctional facility, homeless veterans, blind students, Spanish-speaking migrant workers, nursing home residents, those in search of GEDs, people pursing United States citizenship, and those needing assistance with personal finances and job search skills.

Juniors were involved in all phases of the Education Program. Assistance with scholarship programs was reported for 276 young ladies; 202 helped with tutoring; 180 assisted with school appreciation programs, and 247 aided in keeping our schools safe.

Brochures and pamphlets related to curriculum, educational assistance, school safety, and personal safety were distributed; the total number was 59,500.

Girls State

The turn of the century marked another successful year for the Auxiliary's Girls State program once again indicating the commitment of our volunteers. This year, the national committee focused on three areas of emphasis. Two traditional points of interest included Unit involvement in the selection process and orientations. Something new this year was the promotion of Department participation in the Freedom's Foundation National Award program. Six Departments answered the call with submissions.

A reported 4,128 Units across the country encouraged America's young women to embrace local, county, and state government and to explore their potential by participating in Girls State programs nationwide.

Departments also sent their selected representatives to attend Girls Nation in July at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. As Senators, these young women passed legislation, elected federal leaders, and experienced the sites and sounds of Washington, DC and the surrounding area. Arizona's Emma Tendick was elected President. Her Vice President is Noelle Killoren of Wisconsin.

Whether at Girls State or Girls Nation, America's young women had an experience of a lifetime due to the efforts of Auxiliary volunteers.

Junior Activities

Individual Junior members and groups celebrated America this year through the service they have given to veterans, to children and youth, and to their communities. Juniors have participated in Standowns for homeless veterans; made and stuffed ditty bags for hospitalized veterans; adopted VA Medical Center and nursing home veterans as grandfathers; created tray favors, Christmas ornaments, and Easter gifts for patients, and sent letters and Valentines to service personnel in Bosnia.

Children and youth activities included collecting hundreds of buckets of toys for Ronald McDonald homes, giving Spinoza bears, making craft projects for children's hospitals, and filling Love Boxes with personal items, puzzles, and books for homeless children shelters. In their communities, Juniors collected grocery receipts to assist schools in purchasing computer equipment and canned goods for food shelters. They cleaned Post Home grounds, planted trees, and adopted highways.

Approximately 800 Juniors participated in activity sheet #1 and more than 600 participated in activity sheet #2. Senior members did their part to provide training for our future members by offering training from a leadership corporation to teach teamwork and

cooperation. Sessions for flag education, parliamentary procedures, and programs of our organization and even the ROTC program were made available to Juniors.

As a final touch to "Celebrate America", 2,000 Juniors in grades 9-12 completed 100 hours of service to America's Promise for the past years. Four thousand three hundred sixty-seven communities were served as Junior members gave 82,310 hours toward our commitment to this endeavor.

Legislative

Units and Departments met with their elected officials both on a local level and in Washington, DC, during the Awareness Assembly. Several Departments held "Legislative Day" at their state capitols jointly with The American Legion. Some Units met with local officials and others sponsored "Meet the Candidates" night with their Posts.

Subscribing to the *Dispatch* afforded us the opportunity to keep up-to-date on key legislation. Through the *Dispatch*, Department Legislative Chairmen kept members abreast of happenings with reports at DEC meetings, columns in their Department bulletins and with letters to Unit Legislative Chairmen. New this year was the "hot button" on The American Legion's homepage. This section allowed us to check on how a member voted on key legislation, receive up-to-date information on legislative issues and provided us with an easy method of contacting our representatives.

The new brochure, *How to Make a Difference through Effective Grassroots Lobbying*, was well received. Departments and Units used this tool to enhance their Legislative programs, and it proved to be very beneficial.

Membership

Through the wisdom of then President Virginia Hobbs, future leaders and the 2000 Membership Committee worked on long-range planning. Many membership program changes were embraced by this administration. The membership booklet was streamlined into two sections: Department and Unit. We standardized and simplified with emphasis on Departments to follow suit. If members spend less time learning a new plan every year, they have more time to focus on doing membership.

Unit Development and Revitalization was started. Great effort was put into communications with many Departments to help guide them toward a program. Five team trips produced success every trip out: two revitalized Units and four new Units, one Department workshop and one District workshop. Volunteers trained and enthusiastically awaited opportunities to help show others in their area or state.

As of June 7, 2000, we were behind the figures of last year. The decline, however, was only about half of recent year-end trends. It appears we might be in the process of reversing the tide of membership.

Poppy

The theme "Celebrate America" was evident as Units across the nation promoted poppies while raising funds to assist veterans. The Poppy Committee's emphasis this year was to encourage Unit members to incorporate the poppy into every program and event throughout the year, to use alternative methods of distribution, and to educate members and the public regarding the meaning of the poppy.

An aggressive campaign was held by members to educate the public about our memorial poppy. Booklets about the poppy's origin were made and given to elementary

school teachers so they could teach their students. Our Auxiliary members made everyone aware that the poppy is the flower of remembrance. Through our poppies, we honored and remembered the sacrifice our veterans made for us!

Five thousand five hundred forty-eight Units ordered 7,311,152 poppies. Six hundred ninety-nine Units held Poppy Poster Contests, and Miss Poppy programs were held in 387 Units for the age 6-12 group and 67 Units for the 12-18 age group.

Independent Auditor's Report

Olive

Mr. Alan G. Lance Sr., National Commander
and Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statement of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly owned subsidiary (collectively, the Legion) as of December 31, 1999 and 1998, 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, 1999, financial statements of Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC), a wholly owned subsidiary, whose statements reflect total assets of $1,456,132 as of December 31, 1999, and total revenues of $6,379,770 for the year 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, 1999, and for the year then ended, is based solely on the report of the other auditors.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. 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 and subsidiary as of December 31, 1999 and 1998, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audits were performed for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The reconciliation of audited financial statements to internal financial statements is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

Olive LLP

Indianapolis, Indiana
March 29, 2000

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND SUBSIDIARY

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	December 31 1999	1998
Cash and cash equivalents	$393,353	$1,607,309
Restricted cash	25,000	58,118
Due from The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (Special Account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Accounts receivable		
Emblem Division	72,938	125,152
Publications Division	1,542,842	1,745,820
Other	1,902,815	1,734,259
Prepaid expenses and deposits	556,705	652,546
Deferred membership expense	3,882,111	3,910,895
Inventories		
Emblem Division	1,261,832	1,352,573
Publications Division	453,482	798,894
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	102,708	203,676
Prepaid pension expense	12,949,883	11,199,193
	25,142,049	25,388,435
Investments		
Segregated for Designated Funds	15,858,532	15,793,240
Segregated for Washington, D.C. building	1,354,216	1,268,400
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	940,788	960,083
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	41,176,931	39,506,413
Other	30,544,167	23,672,670
	89,874,634	81,200,806
Property, equipment, and intangible asset		
Land—Indianapolis parking lot	389,264	238,359
Washington, D.C. real estate		
Land	80,000	80,000
Building	4,440,453	4,172,718
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis, IN	6,260,033	8,832,184
Washington, D.C.	1,116,747	1,547,095
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	682,204	694,233
	12,968,701	15,564,589
Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(6,266,602)	(11,020,918)
	4,702,099	4,543,671
Construction in progress (including capitalized interest of $82,757)	3,279,736	
	7,981,835	4,543,671
Total assets	$122,998,518	$111,132,912

Liabilities	December 31 1999	1998
Accounts payable	$3,299,096	$2,662,498
Scholarships available	285,357	306,690
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	85,646	97,498
Deferred advertising income	49,809	71,828
Deferred dues income	19,696,789	20,138,838
Deferred income—direct membership solicitation	784,771	854,102
Accrued vacation benefits	592,248	619,191
Other liabilities	2,740,061	1,561,277
Line of credit	3,269,248	
Deferred dues income—Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	36,798,761	30,627,517
Total liabilities	67,551,906	56,939,439
Net Assets		
Unrestricted—general	15,915,282	11,423,800
Unrestricted—designated		
Citizens Flag Alliance	102,708	203,676
Computer reserve	500,000	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	100,000
Convention stabilization	312,439	257,699
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	100,000
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	4,383,170	8,870,171
Real estate reserve	1,316,884	1,268,400
Reserve Fund	2,186,975	2,316,653
Restricted Fund	13,642,844	13,447,879
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	5,929,485	5,440,343
Veterans' rehabilitation/child welfare (Special Account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Others	30,000	30,298
	45,519,787	45,958,919
Temporarily Restricted		
Buick scholarship	623,626	601,540
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	960,144	992,722
Samsung scholarship	1,822,997	1,469,959
National Emergency Fund	470,107	103,414
Others	50,049	46,919
	3,926,925	3,234,554
Permanently restricted		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
Total net assets	55,446,612	54,913,473
Total liabilities and net assets	$122,998,518	$111,132,912

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

	Year Ended December 31, 1999					
	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, Gains and Other Support						
National member dues	$23,415,571	$1,590,948	$24,006,519			$24,006,519
Sales of Emblem Items	7,643,961		7,643,961			7,643,961
Sales—HPC	965,074		965,074			965,074
Advertising	8,385,882		8,385,882			8,385,882
Direct membership solicitation	1,954,605		1,954,605			1,954,605
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation support	462,809		462,809			462,809
Contributions	943,055		943,055	$899,675		1,842,730
MBNA financial program income	1,836,024		1,836,024			1,836,024
Label and printing fees	1,992,077		1,992,077			1,992,077
Member service fees income	1,848,726		1,848,726			1,848,726
Investment income, net of trustee fees	829,711	1,219,449	2,049,160	368,550		2,417,710
Net realized gains		40,874	40,874	236,368		277,243
Other	1,379,425	1,389,411	2,768,836			2,768,836
	50,459,926	4,240,682	54,697,602	1,504,594		56,202,196
Net assets released from restriction	838,202		838,202	(838,202)		
Net assets released from designation	3,383,120	(3,383,120)				
Total revenues, gains and other support	54,678,242	857,562	55,535,804	666,392		56,202,196
Expenses						
Salaries	10,272,019		10,272,019			10,272,019
Employee benefits	600,683		600,683			600,683
Cost of sales	6,387,598		6,387,598			6,387,598
Direct publication	11,392,076		11,392,076			11,392,076
Executive and staff travel	984,756		984,756			984,756
Commission and committee	1,338,212		1,338,212			1,338,212
Printing and postage	3,704,451		3,704,451			3,704,451
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,307,630		1,307,630			1,307,630
Office and other operating	9,191,536		9,191,536			9,191,536
Occupancy and usage	1,754,615		1,754,615			1,754,615
Special projects and programs	2,661,079		2,661,079			2,661,079
Total expenses	49,492,655		49,492,655			49,492,655
Change in Net Assets Before Net Unrealized Gains	5,185,587	$57,562	6,043,149	666,392		6,708,541
Net Unrealized Gains (Losses)	(134,400)	(5,347,881)	(5,482,281)	25,879		(5,456,402)
Change in Net Assets	5,051,187	(4,490,319)	560,868	692,271		1,253,139
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	11,423,806	34,535,119	45,958,919	3,234,554	$5,000,000	54,193,473
Transfer of funds	(559,705)	559,705				
Net Assets, End of Year	$15,915,288	$30,604,505	$46,519,787	$3,926,825	$5,000,000	$55,446,612

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

	Year Ended December 31, 1998					
	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, Gains and Other Support						
National member dues	$22,946,958	$1,429,611	$24,376,569			$24,376,569
Sales of Emblem Items	8,112,800		8,112,800			8,112,800
Sales—HPC	1,112,357		1,112,357			1,112,357
Advertising	8,547,502		8,547,502			8,547,502
Direct membership solicitation	1,986,017		1,986,017			1,986,017
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation support	508,886		508,886			508,886
Contributions	743,326		743,326	$816,936		1,560,262
MBNA financial program income	1,720,137		1,720,137			1,720,137
Label and printing fees	1,905,983		1,905,983			1,905,983
Member service fees income	1,870,035		1,870,035			1,870,035
Investment income, net of trustee fees	742,393	1,215,716	1,958,109	369,113		2,327,222
Net realized gains		85,483	85,483	273,260		359,743
Other	159,838	2,312,740	2,482,578			2,482,578
	50,366,212	5,044,550	55,410,762	1,459,309		56,870,071
Net assets released from restriction	1,306,768		1,306,768	(1,306,768)		
Net assets released from designation	4,992,948	(4,992,948)				
Total revenues, gains and other support	56,665,928	51,602	56,717,530	152,541		56,870,071
Expenses						
Salaries	10,034,987		10,034,987			10,034,987
Employee benefits	787,695		787,695			787,695
Cost of sales	6,499,244		6,499,244			6,499,244
Direct publication	12,476,667		12,476,667			12,476,667
Executive and staff travel	981,534		981,534			981,534
Commission and committee	1,303,619		1,303,619			1,303,619
Printing and postage	3,927,315		3,927,315			3,927,315
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,412,996		1,412,996			1,412,996
Office and other operating	8,724,468		8,724,468			8,724,468
Occupancy and usage	2,033,524		2,033,524			2,033,524
Special projects and programs	4,526,757		4,526,757			4,526,757
Total expenses	52,708,806		52,708,806			52,708,806
Change in Net Assets Before Net Unrealized Gains	3,957,122	51,602	4,008,724	152,541		4,161,265
Net Unrealized Gains	64,809	1,462,750	1,527,559	145,613		1,673,172
Change in Net Assets	4,021,931	1,514,352	5,536,283	298,154		5,834,437
Net Assets, Beginning of Year, as previously reported	8,972,187	31,757,139	40,729,326	2,936,400	$5,000,000	48,665,726
Prior period adjustment		(306,690)	(306,690)			(305,690)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year, as restated	8,972,187	31,450,449	40,422,636	2,936,400	$5,000,000	48,359,036
Transfer of funds	(1,570,318)	1,570,318				
Net Assets, End of Year	$11,423,800	$34,535,119	$45,958,919	$3,234,554	$5,000,000	$54,193,473

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Operating Activities		
Change in net assets	$1,253,139	$5,834,437
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities		
Depreciation and amortization	768,624	1,062,017
Loss on sale of investments	(280,328)	12,658
(Gain) loss on sale of fixed assets	6,423	(33,424)
Unrealized gains on investments	5,456,402	(1,673,172)
Changes in		
Restricted cash	33,118	(1,646)
Accounts receivable	87,436	(307,994)
Prepaid expenses and deposits	95,841	(102,385)
Deferred expenses	28,784	66,106
Investment in CFA	100,968	23,886
Inventories	436,173	(504,995)
Prepaid pension expense	(1,749,890)	(1,499,329)
Accounts payable	595,265	(254,645)
Deferred income	5,596,113	4,286,228
Accrued vacation	(26,943)	19,548
Other liabilities	1,178,784	197,502
Net cash provided by operating activities	13,579,909	7,124,792
Investing Activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(4,213,211)	(315,917)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment		20,537
Purchase of investments	(71,766,577)	(69,604,829)
Sales and maturities of investments	57,916,675	63,322,902
Net cash used by investing activities	(18,063,113)	(6,577,307)
Financing Activity—proceeds from line of credit	3,269,248	
Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(1,213,956)	547,485
Cash and Cash Equivalents, Beginning of Year	1,607,309	1,059,824
Cash and Cash Equivalents, End of Year	$393,353	$1,607,309
Supplemental Cash Flows Information		
Income taxes paid	$104,435	$382,572

See notes to consolidated 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. An additional 15% is generated through subscriptions and 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 generally accepted accounting principles 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), as well as the National Emergency Fund. 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. The National Emergency Fund is a tax-exempt organization as defined by Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) whose purpose is 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. At December 31, 1999, the Legion's cash accounts exceeded federally insured limits by approximately $294,000 However, all of these amounts were collateralized by overnight repurchase agreements.

Unbilled Production Costs

HPC records time incurred on approved projects each day at standard billing rates (based on the employees' years of experience, job quote, market conditions, etc.). Production time is accumulated daily and is recorded as either unbilled production time, accounts receivable (when billed) or written off as uncollectible. Production costs also include the cost, plus a standard mark-up, for purchases from outside vendors.

Inventory

Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market. 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 the Washington, D. C.building is computed on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from five 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 restrictions.

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 the 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. The Legion is not 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, 1999 and 1998.

Federal and state income tax expense is recorded for HPC as incurred.

The National Emergency Fund is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments

The carrying amount of all financial instruments of the Legion approximate their fair values.

Expense Allocation

Expenses have been classified as program services, management and general, member development and fundraising 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 1998 has been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT

An adjustment of $306,690 was made to net assets at the beginning of 1998. This amount was reclassified to a liability to be properly reflected as scholarships payable.

NOTE 2 – Investment in Affiliate

During 1994, the Legion, in conjunction with approximately 120 other organizations, 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.

To support these efforts, the Legion invested $1,425,000 in CFA during 1998. CFA recognized net losses of $100,968 for 1999 and $1,448,886 for 1998. 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:

	Market					
December 31, 1999	Segregated for Designated Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$15,019,365	$1,311,789	$916,108	$14,528,931	$9,851,861	$41,628,054
Corporate bonds				4,302,656		4,302,656
Common and preferred stocks				20,842,155		20,842,155
Mutual funds					6,285,708	6,285,708
Money market accounts	599,721	4,719	10,403	1,187,906	14,302,248	16,104,997
Accrued interest	239,446	37,708	14,277	315,283	104,350	711,064
	$15,858,532	$1,354,216	$940,788	$41,176,931	$30,544,167	$89,874,634

	Market
Unrestricted	$17,160,924
Unrestricted—designated	63,616,922
Temporarily restricted	3,894,788
Permanently restricted	5,000,000
	$89,874,634

	Market					
December 31, 1998	Segregated for Designated Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$15,403,304	$1,294,774	$946,394	$14,673,926	$10,471,280	$42,729,678
Corporate bonds				4,845,300		4,845,300
Common and preferred stocks				18,337,495		18,337,495
Mutual funds					4,655,367	4,655,367
Money market accounts	179,796			1,311,358	8,424,334	9,915,488
Accrued interest	210,140	33,626	13,749	338,334	121,689	717,538
	$15,793,240	$1,268,400	$960,083	$39,506,413	$23,672,670	$81,200,806

	Market
Unrestricted	$11,986,595
Unrestricted—designated	61,110,470
Temporarily restricted	3,103,741
Permanently restricted	5,000,000
	$81,200,806

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 $105,000 and $0 in 1999 and 1998, 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 non-trust sub-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, 1999, $1,103,500 in funds had been approved for use in designated programs during 2000.

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 descendants of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U.S. servicemen and servicewomen participated. Such scholarships will be administered by the Legion.

NOTE 8 – American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation

The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (Corporation) was incorporated in 1925 as a not-for-profit corporation with perpetual existence to act as trustee for the American Legion Endowment Fund (the Endowment Fund), which was created to provide permanent funding for rehabilitation of American veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans. In August 1946, the Legion transferred securities having a market value of $2,000,000 to the Endowment Fund. The assets transferred have been held seg-

regated by the Endowment Fund and the principal related to the 1946 transfer, which had a market value of $2,025,830 and $2,131,470 at December 31, 1999 and 1998, may be withdrawn by the Legion, if needed, for rehabilitation of veterans or assistance to orphans of veterans.

Income earned on the investments of the Endowment Fund, net of administrative expenses, is payable to the Legion to support its programs for the above-mentioned purposes. Income from the Endowment Fund amounted to $455,814 and $508,886 in 1999 and 1998.

NOTE 9 – 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 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, 1999, the outstanding balance on this line of credit is $3,269,248

The future maturities for the line of credit are as follows:

Years Ending December 31	
2000	$39,432
2001	62,791
2002	67,450
2003	72,456
2004	77,833
Thereafter	2,949,286
	$3,269,248

NOTE 10 – Leases

The Legion and HPC have several non-cancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, copiers and cash registers that expire over the next six years. Rental expense for these leases aggregated $590,233 in 1999 and $505,824 in 1998.

Future minimum lease payments under operating leases are as follows:

Years Ending December 31	Operating Leases
2000	$472,674
2001	437,789
2002	357,342
2003	46,000
2004	14,000
Total minimum lease payments	$1,327,805

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 $369,000 and $368,000 in 1999 and 1998, respectively. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

NOTE 11 - Income Taxes

The following is a reconciliation of income taxes at the federal statutory rate to actual income tax recorded by HPC:

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Income tax expense:		
Currently payable:		
Federal	$97,588	$299,146
State	36,894	73,211
Deferred:		
Federal	(19,266)	(101,925)
	$115,216	$270,432
Reconciliation of federal statutory to actual tax expense:		
Federal statutory income tax at 34%	$ 94,165	$191,882
Nondeductible expenses	2,199	3,982
Effect of state income taxes	21,578	48,319
Change in valuation allowance and other	(2,726)	26,249
Actual tax expense	$115,216	$270,432

The components of the net deferred tax (liability) assets are as follows:

December 31	1999	1998
Asset		
Net operating loss carryforward	$32,100	$15,447
Liability		
Other	(6,100)	(8,713)
	$26,000	$6,734

The deferred tax asset and liability are included in other accounts receivable and other liabilities, respectively, in the statement of financial position.

NOTE 12 – 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.

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Purpose restrictions accomplished:		
Overseas graves decoration	$56,291	$289,765
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	599,120	562,551
Other	182,791	454,452
Total net assets released from restrictions	$838,202	$1,306,768

NOTE 13 – Net Assets Released From Designation

Net assets were released from designations by satisfying the designations previously established.

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Purpose designations accomplished:		
Flag education	$100,968	$1,448,886
Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	2,170,055	2,019,064
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	1,101,500	1,100,000
Other	10,597	424,998
Total net assets released from designations	$3,383,120	$4,992,948

NOTE 14 - 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, 1999 and 1998.

December 31	1999	1998
Benefit obligation	$(23,201,560)	$(22,059,554)
Fair value of plan assets	46,304,793	45,634,005
Funded status	$23,103,233	$23,564,451
Prepaid benefit cost recognized in the balance sheet	$12,949,083	$11,199,193

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Benefit cost	$(1,590,256)	$(1,344,191)
Employer contribution	159,543	154,553
Benefits paid	1,492,192	1,222,593

December 31	1999	1998
Weighted-average assumptions:		
Discount rate	6.75%	7%
Expected return on plan assets	7.5	7.5
Rate of compensation increase	3	3

NOTE 15 – Functional Expenses

The following represents a functional breakdown of the American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

December 31	1999	1998
Program Services		
Veterans affairs	$26,299,124	$28,120,652
Americanism and children and youth activities	3,337,870	3,552,204
Flag education and legislation	1,470,292	2,879,708
Direct response advertising and marketing	561,211	538,801
Total program services	31,668,497	35,091,365
Supporting Services		
Management and general	10,984,596	10,945,237
Membership	5,668,561	5,830,306
Fundraising	1,171,001	841,898
Total expenses	$49,492,655	$52,708,806

NOTE 16 – 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.

Reconciliation of Audited Financial Statements to Internal Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31	1999	1998
Change in Net Assets – Internal Financial Statements	**$5,185,587**	$3,957,122
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains not included in internal financials		
Unrestricted designated	**857,562**	51,602
Temporarily restricted	**666,392**	152,541
	6,709,541	4,161,265
Net unrealized gains (losses)		
General	**(134,400)**	64,809
Unrestricted designated	**(5,347,881)**	1,462,750
Temporarily restricted	**25,879**	145,613
Change in Net Assets – Audited Financial Statements	**$1,253,139**	$5,834,437

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 aggreement 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 Olive LLP, Indianapolis, Indiana).

December 31	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995
Total assets (1)	$7,596,793	$8,035,988	$7,927,268	$8,694,667	$8,162,289
Investments (1)	$7,459,097	$7,918,724	$7,823,846	$7,830,853	$7,991,301
Interest income	$489,427	$503,588	$519,619	$539,900	$575,688
Contributions (4)	26,167	27,964	(744,754)	765,598	7,552
Net realized gains (losses)	(1,371)	5,596	9,739	48,948	60,891
Net unrealized gains (losses)	(439,448)	133,672	39,724	(258,531)	424,307
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children and Youth Programs of The American Legion National Headquarters (2)	(435,859)	(459,669)	(487,152)	(500,367)	(496,538)
Other expenses	(53,568)	(53,252)	(32,667)	(39,533)	(48,226)
Change in net assets	($414,652)	$157,899	($695,291)	$556,015	$523,674
Funds transferred to The American Legion (3)	$455,814	$508,886	$502,072	$524,339	$550,057
Average yield on value of investments at market	6.35%	6.47%	6.77%	7.44%	8.14%

(1) Beginning in 1995, 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.

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