

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 92ND NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, PROCEEDINGS OF THE 92ND ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN FROM AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 2, 2010, AND A REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, February 22, 2011.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
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 92nd annual National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from August 27–September 2, 2010 and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

For God and Country,

TIM TETZ,
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 résumé of what took place at the Ninety-Second Annual National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1-2, 2010.

The final report of the National Organization for the period ending December 31, 2009, and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2009, and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 2009, to December 31, 2009, 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 *resolve clause(s)* be used when a quotation from a resolution is required for publication.

Daniel S. Wheeler
National Adjutant

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: Mark A. Avis, Massachusetts; Morris M. Bentley, Idaho; Dr. Gordon B. Browning, Maryland; James 'Jim' Morris, Ohio; Eugene A. Schumacher, South Dakota.

**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 of the Armies of the United States John J. Pershing*
Marshall of France 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 and 1958 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 (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention)

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 (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)

Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado

1st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10 to 12, 1919

Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas, Past National Commander

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
Milton Foreman*, Illinois, Past
National Commander

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. Loneragan*, 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
Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri, Past National Commander
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. Curtiss*, 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
Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. *, New York, Past National Commander
Vice Commanders: James Lane, Alabama; Leonard W. Moody*, Arkansas; James Annin*, Montana;

Walter E. Alessandrini*, 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

Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania,
Past National Commander

Vice Commanders: Leonard L.
Jackson*, Louisiana; Patrick H.
Mangan*, Jr., Vermont; Howard C.
Kingdom*, Ohio; Dr. Carl J. Rees*,
Delaware; Robert L. Shelby*, Utah
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*,
Nebraska

Chaplain: Rev. Albert J. Hoffman*,
Iowa

Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South
Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*,
Indiana

38th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Los Angeles, California, September 3
to 6, 1956

Commander: J. Addington Wagner*,
Michigan

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

39th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Atlantic City, New Jersey, September
16 to 19, 1957

Commander: W. C. 'Dan' Daniel*,
Virginia

Vice Commanders: Gaylor M.
Brown*, Iowa; George T. Lewis*, Jr.,
Tennessee; Carl R. Moser*, Oregon;
John E. Stay, Pennsylvania; J. Edward
Walter*, Maryland

Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore*,
Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Bernard W. Gerdon*,
Indiana

Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South
Carolina

Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*,
Indiana

40th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Chicago, Illinois, September 1 to 4,
1958

Commander: John S. Gleason, Jr. *,
Illinois

Vice Commanders: William A.
Cottrell*, Hawaii; Ramon R. Guas*,
Puerto Rico; Harry W. Miller*, West
Virginia; Leo A. Lemos*, Rhode
Island; Isadore E. Levine*, Indiana

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*,
Wyoming

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Feltham S. James*,
South Carolina

Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily)
Herbert*, New Jersey

Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*,
Indiana

41st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24 to
27, 1959

Commander: Preston J. Moore*,
Oklahoma

Vice Commanders: C. D. DeLoach,
District of Columbia; John W.
Collins*, Pennsylvania; James B.
Kerrigan*, Missouri; Robert Charles
Smith*, Louisiana; James C. Bangs*,
Idaho

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*,
Wyoming

Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J.
Twiss*, Massachusetts

Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily)
Herbert*, New Jersey

Treasurer: William Francis Polen*,
Indiana

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*,
Indiana

42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Miami Beach, Florida, October 15 to
20, 1960

Commander: Martin B. McKneally*,
New York

Vice Commanders: William A.
Brennan, Jr. *, Indiana; A. Layman
Harman*, South Carolina; Nate V.
Keller*, Minnesota; (died 7-25-60);
Succeeded by Irvan Frank Gianotti*,
Minnesota (appointed 9-14-60);
Willard W. Brandt, North Dakota;
Charles McGonegal*, California;
(died 1-27-60); Succeeded by
Corydon T. Hill*, California
(appointed 5-4-60)

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; Tom Soleng *,
Arizona
Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore*,
Wyoming (died 4-21-67); Succeeded
by Earnest N. Schmit, North Dakota
(Appointed 5-4-67)
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
Thomas W. Miller*, Nevada, Past
National Commander
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

Maurice Stember*, New York, Past National Commander

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
Hamilton Fish*, New York, Past
National Commander
Vice Commanders: L. Max Connolly*,
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. Koguttek,
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-Vazquez*, 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
E. Roy Stone, Jr. *, South Carolina, Past National Commander
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; F. Leon Reed*, Arkansas

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Jerry Salvesson*, 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*, Arkansas;
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. Groseknick*, Wisconsin

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle,
Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor*, South
Carolina

Historian: M. LaReine Maxey*,
Nevada, (died 10-7-94); Succeeded by
Carl S. Wipperman, Washington
(appointed 10-19-94)

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B.
Onderdonk, Maryland

78th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30 to
September 5, 1996

Commander: Daniel A. Ludwig,
Minnesota

Vice Commanders: Keith Baker,
Iowa; William L. Ciciotte, Maine;
Robert D. Scott, Oregon; C. Darrel
Haskell, South Dakota; Ralph J. Reel,
Tennessee

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle,
Michigan

Chaplain: Joseph E. Reynolds*, Texas
Historian: R. Paul Tenney, Vermont

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B.
Onderdonk, Maryland

79th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Orlando, Florida, August 29 to
September 4, 1997

Commander: Joseph J. Frank,
Missouri

Vice Commanders: Wilson R.
Timmons*, Florida; Orland H.
Taylor*, Hawaii; Roger L. Wild,

Nebraska; Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey; Robert L. Bowen, Virginia
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Charles H. Richmond*, Oklahoma
Historian: Barbara 'Bobbe' Stuvengen, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

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

81st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Anaheim, California, September 3 to 9, 1999
Commander: Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Leo P. Burke*, California; Roger L. Tingler, Georgia; James W. Gravenstein, Kansas; Fernando M. Goulart, Rhode Island; John D. Morris, Texas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. Sweeney, 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

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

84th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Charlotte, North Carolina, August 27-29, 2002
Commander: Richard J. Santos, Maryland

Vice Commanders: Russell H. Hanseter, Wisconsin; Charles R. John*, Oklahoma; Terry D. Lewis, Pennsylvania; James F. Mareschal, Missouri; Dale R. Salmen, Nevada
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: David F. Russell, Virginia
Historian: Walter L. Davis, Michigan
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

85th NATIONAL CONVENTION

St. Louis, Missouri, August 26-28, 2003
Commander: Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: Jefferson 'Jeff' Luginbuel; Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana;
Robert M. Johnson, Maryland; Robert G. Bournival, New Hampshire;
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Norris A. Keirn, Indiana
Historian: Donald F. Simons, Texas
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

86th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Nashville, Tennessee, August 31, September 1, 2, 2004
Commander: John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Vice Commanders: Richard G. Denbow, Iowa; Michael Dennis Helm, Kansas;
Fang A. Wong, New York; Clinton E. Thompson, North Carolina; Todd E. White, Wyoming
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Dr. William J. P. Doubek, III, Missouri

Historian: Fae Casper, Georgia
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

87th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23-25, 2005
Commander: Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan
Vice Commanders: Marco A. Valenzuela, Arizona; Charles W. Barrett, Georgia; Samuel Barney*, Ohio; Wayne B. Richey, South Carolina; Linda M. Thayer, Vermont
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. James T. Akers, Kansas
Historian: W. Frazier Brinley, Connecticut
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

88th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29-31, 2006
Commander: Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Vice Commanders: Willard F. Coffey, Michigan; James H. Hall, New Jersey; Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico; Sebastian T. Roll*, North Dakota; Michael E. Harris, Virginia
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Steven E. Wright, Utah
Historian: Johnny B. Keel, Louisiana
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

89th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Reno, Nevada, August 28-30, 2007
Commander: Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts

Vice Commanders: Bryon W. White, Alabama; Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas; Lloyd H. Woods, Maine; Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee; Allan C. Setterberg, Utah
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Stanley Gruneich, South Dakota
Historian: Michael J. Miskell, Pennsylvania
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

90th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Phoenix, Arizona, August 26-28, 2008
Commander: Martin F. Conatser
Vice Commanders: Peggy G. Dettori, Alaska; Thomas L. Burns, Jr., Delaware; Randall A. Fisher, Kentucky; Donald Hayden, Minnesota; David A. Korth, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan (Voted title of Past National Commander, effective 10/16/2008)
Chaplain: Rev. Elliott L. Foss, Jr. Georgia
Historian: James M. Holmes, Indiana
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

91st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky, August 25-27, 2009
Commander: David K. Rehbein, Iowa
Vice Commanders: James A. LaCoursiere, Jr., Connecticut
Michael J. Landkamer, Nebraska
James W. Davis, West Virginia
Harley W. Ray, Oregon; Dellan ‘Shorty’ T. Simmons, Texas
National Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Rev. Lawrence ‘Larry’ Vollink, Michigan
Historian: Charles J. Zelinsky, Illinois
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

92nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Milwaukee Wisconsin, August 30, September 1, 2, 2010
Commander: Clarence E. Hill, Florida
Vice Commanders: Morris M. Bentley, Idaho, Dr. Gordon B. Browning, Maryland, Mark A. Avis, Massachusetts, James C. Morris, Ohio, Eugene Schumacher, South Dakota
National Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Rev. John L. Beaver, Alabama
Historian: James T. Higuera, California
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

PROCEEDINGS
of the
92nd Annual Convention
of
The American Legion
Tuesday, August 31, 2010

... At 8:00 a.m., delegates were entertained by organist, Mr. Peter Ole.

... At 8:30 a.m., the delegates assembled for the 92nd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: As we are about to begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for Peter Ole. *(Applause)*

Call to Order
Clarence E. Hill, Florida, National Commander

The 92nd National Convention of The American Legion will come to order. Ladies and Gentlemen, please rise as the National Champion Color Guard from Post 472 Houston, Texas, presents the Colors. Remain standing for the singing of the National Anthem by Anna Ruzinski, Chief of Police for Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

... The National Champion Color Guard, Post 472, Houston, Texas, presented the Colors, following which the National Anthem was sung by Anna Ruzinski of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Color Guard, you may retire. Thank you. Please give another round of applause for our Color Guard from Post 472 in Texas. *(Applause)* For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain John L. Beaver of Mobile, Alabama. Ladies and gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation
John L. Beaver, Alabama, National Chaplain

We pray for strength O gracious God — strength to do our duty and to accomplish the work of The American Legion with justice and mercy. We thank You, Lord, for our national commander, Clarence Hill for his leadership with integrity, boldness and compassion that he's demonstrated during his year of service. Keep us ever mindful of the needs of our military, their families, our veterans and their families, our homeless and our nation. We especially remember those who gave all for the freedom we cherish today. May we reach out in this prayer with the spirit of love and compassion for all those who need strength and encouragement. Give us the feeling of unity that we may praise You and serve the people committed to our care. This we pray. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you, Chaplain Beaver.

Pledge of Allegiance

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ladies and gentlemen, National Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Martel will lead us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. ... *At this time the Delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony

Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman, National Security Commission
'Doc' Simon, Vermont, Vice Chairman, Foreign Relations Commission

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: At this time we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from wars in which we have been engaged.

We in The American Legion will never forget them. We will not ease the pressure on our government to do the right thing and continue to work for an accounting of all those who are missing.

I now call on the Chairman the National Security Commission, Daniel M. Dellinger of Virginia, and Doc Simon of Vermont, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission, to place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair. ... *At this time the POW/MIA flag was placed on the Empty Chair.*

Preamble to The American Legion Constitution **Clarence E. Hill, Florida, National Commander**

Legionnaires, please join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals on which our great American Legion was founded by reciting the Preamble to the Constitution. Cover. ...*At this time the Delegation recited the Preamble to the Constitution.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Please be seated.

Post Everlasting Ceremony **Joe Matthews, Texas, Past National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Adlai Stevenson once said, "Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."

This is how we can describe many of our members who have joined Post Everlasting this year, and certainly how we can describe Past National Commander Joe Matthews. It is my sad duty to report that Joe's beloved wife, Pinky, joined him in the afterlife on Wednesday. She was his partner, and he would tell you, a big reason for his success.

Past National Commander Joe was a patriot who, fortunately for The American Legion, dedicated most of his 97-year life to our organization. My interactions with him have been very special and meaningful.

But I am just the most recent commander. To reflect on what Past National Commander Joe has given us over the years, I call on one of his longest friends within the Legion, Past National Commander Clarence Bacon of Maryland, who has known him since 1954. *(Applause)*

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BACON: Thank you. Commander Hill, Past National Commanders, members of the Department of Texas, delegates to this 92nd National Convention, and guests.

Today we pause to reflect, remember, and celebrate the many good deeds of Past National Commander Joe L. Matthews, one of our great stalwarts of The American Legion, for his sublime accomplishments. They are many and noteworthy.

My first recollection of Joe dates to 1954, more than 50 years ago, the place was Washington, D.C., at the 36th National Convention — my first convention — At that time I had been a member of The American Legion for about a year, and was just getting active in Navy Department Post 57 of the District of Columbia. One of the first people that I remember being introduced to was Joe Matthews, who spoke about what the Legion was doing, such as helping veterans, maintaining a strong and adequately funded and staffed national defense, and educating our youth.

Today, to say the least, I was most impressed. Joe had a friendly outreaching personality, and always had time to stop and chat with those with whom he came in contact. Many Legionnaires in leadership positions or those planning to seek a higher office would come to Joe for advice, which he was always willing to give. I am proud to say that Joe was one of my respected mentors, and over the years I benefited greatly from his sage advice and counsel.

Joe was a highly decorated hero as a Navy Seabee Chief Boatswain Mate. Joe and his Seabee battalion landed on the beaches of Okinawa, Japan, on April 4, 1945, with a mission to build roads, bridges, roadways, runways and housing and messing facilities. The Marines had landed there just four days earlier on April 1st. History tells us that it took some 89 days for American forces to secure Okinawa from the Japanese.

In addition to growing a fledgling business, growing into a nationally recognized company, Joe found time to raise a family, and serve in many volunteer positions of The Legion at the post, department and national levels. His leadership qualities were quickly recognized, and he rapidly rose through the ranks, taking on increasingly more responsible positions at both the state and national levels.

Joe Matthews was elected national commander of The American Legion in 1972 at Chicago, Illinois, during the closing ceremonies of the 54th National Convention, John Geiger's convention. During his acceptance speech, he announced that his theme for the year 1972-1973 would be "Reach Out In Service To America."

Joe Matthews is the only sitting national commander of any veterans' organization that I'm aware of, who, at the request of the President of the United States, travelled as a goodwill ambassador to the Cold War countries of Hungary, Poland and Russia, and upon return visited the White House to report on the results of his trip.

Joe Matthews left us with a lasting legacy of many fond memories, and a record of service that few will ever achieve or exceed. Joe Matthews earned a special and respected place here on earth, and now we wish for him the well earned blessing of the Lord for eternal rest and peace. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you, Past National Commander Bacon. To put a little perspective on my relationship with him, I graduated from the Naval Academy on June 7, 1972, and just a little bit later he was elected National Commander. And we had many conversations about his career. And he's just a super mentor, and I would appreciate it if you would all join me in a moment of silence. ...*At this time the Delegation observed a moment of silence.*

Convention Opening

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: To begin our opening ceremonies, there's a group of entertainers many of you met last night in a special concert. I understand there were over 2,000 attendees last night.

This is a group of veterans who all served in the United States Army in either Iraq or Afghanistan, and in one case, both locations. They have partnered with The American Legion and other veterans groups to donate a portion of the proceeds from their album and merchandise to benefit the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Sony Recording artists, 4Troops. (*Applause*)

... At this time the musical selection of "For Freedom" was sung by 4Troops.

ANNOUNCER: As we gather for our 92nd National Convention, we begin by looking at the impact you have made in the past year. Once again, you have worked hard in your departments and posts and communities to support our Four Pillars. You have proven once again that The American Legion is a powerful force for our nation — taking care of our fellow veterans, working to ensure a strong national defense, promoting Americanism and supporting our children and youth. Our Four Pillars of service. The very core of what we do.

Through these Four Pillars, there is virtually no aspect of American life that goes untouched by the great work that you do. You care for our comrades through your post, department and national service officers. You help America's veterans get the care they deserve from the Department of Veterans Affairs. You help them get jobs by supporting nearly 100 job fairs across the country this year. Veteran homelessness is steadily declining, partly due to your relentless efforts to address the issue at the local and national level. Your national staff has testified more than 20 times before Congress on a wide range of veterans' issues.

But we still have much to do. We volunteer nearly a million hours a year at medical center facilities across the nation with the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program. You fought for and finally saw passage of the Advance Appropriation Bill to strengthen the VA medical system.

Through your support of our troops and their families with Reconnect and Operation Outreach in National Guard Armories, Reserve centers and military installations all across the country, you have proven us to be a force multiplier in the defense of our country. Not a day goes by that you aren't involved in reaching out to our troops and their families. Our leaders on Capitol Hill and the Pentagon respect you and count on you and listen to you. And with programs like Operation Comfort Warriors, you have raised nearly \$400,000 just in the past 12 months to purchase and distribute items to wounded warriors across the country.

You have been a powerful force in your communities, supporting our Americanism programs, instilling pride and respect for our Constitution, our flag, and our country. Nearly 225,000 young people benefit from our various youth programs each year, learning sportsmanship and civic responsibility. And you provided millions of dollars in scholarships to help them receive an education. In the past year, at the national level alone, your American Legion programs have given nearly one and a half million dollars in support and scholarships. Conservative estimates for 2010 show nearly \$52 million in scholarships and donations, and over five million hours of service and volunteerism at the

local level. The amount of time and money you devote in your communities is staggering. You have quietly contributed to the well-being of so many lives all across the country as we have done since our beginning in 1919. You continue to serve this great nation long after you removed the uniform we have all so proudly worn. You do this because our nation needs us. Our comrades and their families need our support. Our leaders need our wisdom. Our children need our guidance.

Let us vow to continue our great work in the coming years. Let us renew our commitment to the Four Pillars of service to America. Let us continue to be a powerful force for our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to our stage, author, actor, economist, lawyer, teacher, columnist, commentator, comedian, speechwriter and a man with a special love for our troops and America's veterans, Mr. Ben Stein. (*Applause*)

MR. STEIN: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very, very much. Thank you very, very much. It's a great honor to be among you. My father was a proud member of The American Legion. He served in the Navy during World War II. Father-in-law, West Point grad. So many medals it would take all day to tell them all. Proud member of The American Legion. They've passed on to The American Legion in the sky.

When I came in here last night, a whole bunch of people said, "Ben, I hope you're going to make us laugh." So, before I make you cry, I will make you laugh. There's an ornithologist looking for rare birds in the Ozarks. And he walks into a valley, a secluded holler in Arkansas, and he sees an old moonshiner working at his still. And he says, "I'm so sorry to interrupt you." And the moonshiner points his shotgun at him and says, "You come over here and take a drink from my still." And the ornithologist said, "No, no, no. I'm from New York. I don't drink. Especially I don't drink moonshine whiskey." And the moonshiner says, "You come over and have a drink or I'll blow your head off." And so the man comes over and he has a drink, and it tastes like battery fluid. He drinks it down, coughs, and then the moonshiner hands him the shotgun and says, "Now you hold the gun on me and make me take a drink." (*Laughter*)

I'm just going to tell you one more, because it's long but it's very funny and you all will forget it. There is -- how many people live in Texas? Lots, yeah. So, there's an airplane taking off from Amarillo flying all the way to Port Arthur, and even though it's all within Texas, it's a long way because Texas is a big state. They get on the airplane and the pilot says, "We're on an all-weather, very rugged Embraer Regional Jet, and we want you to know that we are going to run into some very heavy thunderstorms near Dallas, but don't worry, this is a rugged Brazilian-made Embraer jet." They get on the plane. They run into very heavy thunderstorms. Lightning bolts streaks out of the sky, hits the port engine -- left -- knocks it out, and the pilot comes on and says, "Don't worry about a thing, this plane could fly all day and all night on one engine. Just enjoy the flight."

They fly on about another 10 minutes. Another lightning bolt streaks out of the sky, knocks out the starboard engine. There's an awkward pause coming from the cockpit, and the pilot comes on and he says, "Well, we were designed to fly on one or two engines. We weren't really designed to fly on no engines, and therefore, we are really sorry because we know you have a choice in air travel, we really appreciate that you chose American Eagle but we are going to crash." And he says, "We're really sorry, but we have two pieces of good news. We're at 33,000 feet. I'm going to the plane on manual

into a glide, the hydraulics are shot and it will be about eight or nine minutes before we hit the ground. So, if you have anything you want to do in the eight or nine minutes that you've always wanted to do, go ahead and do it. And the second piece of good news is that the bar is open and the drinks are on American Airlines." So, a beautiful statuesque woman in the first row stands up and says, "We're all going to die, we're all going to die. Is there any man on this plane to make me feel like a real Texas woman before I die?" And a handsome strapping cowboy, who rode behind her, stands up, takes off his cowboy hat, rips off his shirt and says, "You want to feel like a real Texas woman, honey?" She says, "I sure do, cowboy." He hands her his shirt and says "Iron this and get me a beer." (*Laughter*).

Anyway. I'm just going to make this part very quick. I spend a lot of time complaining about things like the service at restaurants. I spend a lot of time thanking God for the incredible life I get to lead.

Without the soldiers, Marines, sailors, Air Force, National Guard, Reserves, Coast Guard, fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan; the ones who fought in the Hürtgen Forest with Nazi eighty-eights shattering trees all around them and killing them with giant splinters; without the Americans freezing in the Ardennes with SS snipers shooting them and Panzers rolling over them; without the men and women, the brave men and women of the Marines crawling around and fighting like mad in the jungles in Tarawa and Peleliu with Japanese mortars raining down on them; without them we would have nothing, nothing but ashes.

Without the men and women who fought in Korea, getting ambushed by millions of screaming Chinese Red Army volunteers at the Chosin Reservoir while the Americans feet were getting frostbite, and they were exhausted and starving, and they still kept fighting, perhaps the most impressive fighting retreat in history, we would have nothing.

What about the men and women who were shelled day and night at Anzio or the firebases in Vietnam? What about the prisoners who were being tortured night and day in the Hanoi Hilton? What about being in a German stalag; or what about the most horrible imaginable fate, being in the belly of the infernal, reeking, steaming Japanese prison ship without food or water, and death and cruelty all around you? Without those people, we would have nothing but ashes.

What about being sick with exhaustion while on patrol near the DMZ in I Corps, or getting pinned down in Pusan? What about crawling around and fighting for months on end without a decent meal in Okinawa or Iwo Jima?

What about training some Afghani man to be soldier, only to have him turn his AK-47 on you and cripple you and your buddies in the mess hall where you were just having lunch? What about being on patrol in Fallujah; suddenly having an immense bomb blow up your pals right in front of you?

This is what American soldiers and fighting men and women do for us.

What about spending years in the hospital recovering? What about never recovering? What about losing your family; losing your peace of mind; your health; living the rest of your life with wounds that cannot be treated? What about these men and women? What about you men and women in this room? The price you have paid, the price you have paid for going to work for us with your lives, your spirit, and your sacrifice. Everything you do for us, it is all appreciated. We as a nation are on our hands and knees day and night. Until the last day of my life I will say nothing is more precious

in the entire world than the American fighting man and woman, and American military wife is the backbone of the whole nation. God bless every one of them. (*Applause*)

Now, I want to thank the national adjutant for the invitation to speak at the convention. Dan Wheeler, where are you? Wheeler. Wheeler. Wheeler. Wheeler. Wheeler. God bless you for being here. (*Laughter*)

The American Legion Youth Champions

MR. STEIN: One of the many, many things I admire about The American Legion and what you do, is the way you mentor and teach the children of America about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship through your many youth programs. Your many fine youth programs. One of the highlight of participating in these programs for kids, is a chance to be here at the convention, the National Convention, as a youth champion. We're going to meet them right now. Commander Hill. Hill. Hill. Hill. (*Laughter*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you, sir.

MR. STEIN: Commander Hill, will you please join me in welcoming our first youth champion onto the stage. Would the youth champions start getting ready. Okay.

The 2009 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year is Tyler Jacobson of nearby Oneida, Wisconsin. (*Applause*)

Tyler played for the Pulaski, Wisconsin American Legion Post 337. He was honored prior to the annual 2010 Baseball Hall of Fame Game. He is attending and playing baseball at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, and they're very lucky to have him. And he's pursuing a degree in electrical engineering, where I think he will get a job. Please welcome Tyler Jacobson, your 2009 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year.

2009 Baseball Player of the Year Tyler Jacobson, Oneida, Wisconsin

Good morning. You know, I thought I had it rough on Saturday when they made me follow Tori, the Oratorical Champion, and now I've just found out I have to follow Ben Stein, so I don't know how this is going to go. (*Laughter*).

I would like to thank The American Legion for inviting me to this wonderful conference. The last five days have been really great. I would especially like to thank Colin Short. He made sure we knew what we were doing, and he had stuff for us to do all the time, and he drove us all over this beautiful city, so thank you, Colin.

I'm very honored to be here and your sponsorship of American Legion Baseball has been a blessing to me. I have played Legion Baseball for the last four years, and this year is the first summer that I've had to go without it, and I really miss it a lot. Even though some of my friends don't because it was the first summer they actually got to see me outside of a baseball uniform.

My experiences in Legion Baseball allowed me the opportunity to form friendships and memories that will last forever, while the scores faded into the distance. Actually that's not true. I remember most of those. (*Laughter*).

I would like to thank my Legion coach, Brett Zavernik, for nominating me for the award. And my mom for encouraging and kind of making me fill out the scholarship application. When I found out it was a state and national award, I was a little leery about filling it out because I thought it was a long shot, but I guess it pays off.

I would like to thank LeRoy Holl and Dick Blasczyk back at Post 337 in Pulaski for their support and for filling out my scholarship letter of recommendation. And Stan Torstenson and the rest of the selection committee.

I would like to thank The American Legion for flying me out to Cooperstown. That was some of the greatest couple days of my life. I had the opportunity to tour the Hall of Fame and attend the Hall of Fame Classic, and I was actually able to meet seven different Hall of Fame baseball players, and that was a really great experience.

And I would also like to thank Gordon Browning, Jim Quinlan, Bill Haas and Joan Clark for making that trip one of the greatest experiences of my life. They were with me through that, so that was great of them.

And I would like to thank my dad. He coached me since I was six years old, and he taught me the game well before that. In fact, when I was three, he taught me to keep my glove up. I was pitching to him and I left one up and away, and he lined the tennis ball back into my face, and I haven't been hit by a ball since. *(Laughter)*

I would like to thank The American Legion and all the soldiers for everything they have done, are doing, and will continue to do, to make this the greatest country in the world. Thank you. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: Very good. Good work, Tyler. The 2010 Boys Nation President, sponsored by American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park, Florida, is an incoming senior at Avon Park High School, and is considering attending Harvard University. He was elected by his fellow citizens at Boys Nation last month in Washington, D.C. Please welcome your 2010 Boys Nation President, Charlie Brown. *(Applause)*

**2010 Boys Nation President
Charles Brown, Avon Park, Florida**

Oh man. I would like to get all my thank-yous out of the way right off the bat. First off I would like to thank The American Legion as a national organization. I cannot explain how wonderful and how great y'all are. Excuse my y'all. I'm from Florida. I would like to thank my Florida Delegation for supporting me through Boys State and also going to Boys Nation. *(Cheers)* There they are, way in the back. They got us in the back, it's all right.

I would also like to thank our director of Boys Nation, Miss Jill Druskis. She kept us in line. A wonderful lady. I would like to thank our director of activities there, Mr. Bob Turner, past national commander. He taught us all our songs, he made the experience great. I would like to thank my mom for supporting me in all the things that I do. Everywhere I go I have to stick my hand out and say, "Mom, I need some more money." I also would like to thank Colin Short for taking care of us this whole trip. And I would thank for all my new moms and my new dads that I met this week. We had to take over 6,000 pictures, believe it or not, but it's just been a great week.

But what I would like to address now is how great the Boys Nation and the Girls Nation programs are. I never thought that I would experience something that would more prepare me for a future in government, than the experience of Boys Nation. It truly embodies what Americanism is, and what many of you have fought for, and for which your friends have died for. It's a beautiful thing. *(Applause)*

When attending Nation you have two from every state and so you get all the different ideas and ideologies. You see the liberal side and the conservative view and all the different walks of life. They separated us and brought us together at the same time because we had to build party platforms together. And I think if Congress and different branches of our government would come and watch our experience of Boys Nation, I think they would do a better job for the country. *(Applause)*

Most of all what I believe is the best thing about American Legion and all its programs, Boys Nation, Oratorical competition and all them, is that it's bringing us together. You know, back home in Highlands County, Post 69, Avon Park, thank you to them as well. You're either in high school or you're retired. There's not really an in between. *(Laughter)*

So, they said they're going to kill me for that joke. There was a rift, but now I believe that the younger people can now better understand that we all work together to make this country better. Y'all have worked hard work and we have to come behind you to make it even better, and so we can keep going up and up, and not to the next level, but to the next dimension. And I just want to support The American Legion. Keep doing what you're doing. You're really helping the youth. Everyone in the community understands. College admissions guys, they will really love us. And what you do through The American Legion.

I once again would like to thank you, thank you, thank you, for all you've done for me and all the other youth champions. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: Very, very nicely done. And good advice about the government.

The 2010 Eagle Scout of the Year is Joe Phillips of Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin. The award recognizes Joe's practical citizenship at school, scouting, and his passion and commitment to the U.S. flag and all that it represents. It is hard work being an Eagle Scout. It is ridiculously hard work and he did it beautifully. His project including planning, coordinating and executing a community drive for unserviceable U.S. flags, culminating in a formal flag retirement of 2,900 flags in a ceremony. Please welcome Joe Phillips, the 2010 Eagle Scout of the Year. *(Applause)*

2010 Eagle Scout of the Year
Joe Phillips, Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin

Good morning. I believe I hear the Wisconsin delegation over there. And I could definitely get used to that theme music.

When I found out that I had been chosen the 2010 American Legion National Eagle Scout of the Year, I remember being speechless. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I would receive such a prestigious award.

My Eagle Scout project consisted of planning, coordinating, and executing a community drive for unserviceable U.S. flags, culminating in a formal retirement ceremony on Flag Day, June 14th. I organized, publicized and set up collection points for a three week drive that resulted in the acquisition of 2,900 U. S. flags. Working with my local American Legion post, I coordinated the formal flag retirement ceremony at which U.S. Congressman Tom Petri, Wisconsin State Assemblyman John Townsend, and Fond du Lac City Manager Tom Herre, made remarks.

In all, 57 people helped to make this three hundred plus hour project a reality. In particular, I would like to thank American Legion Post 75, of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, which participated in my retirement ceremony, especially Past Commander Marcus Oksa, and Troop 701's leaders Doug and Linda Schultz, and John Shimo. Their help was essential in the completion of this project.

Scouting has given so much to me. It has given me many life skills and has prepared me well for the challenges ahead. It has given me a tremendous amount of leadership skills, and it has helped to reinforce the good morals and principles of my daily life. More instances of how Scouting has helped me grow as I progressed along the trail to Eagle of promoting service to others, a love of our country, perseverance and team work.

I'm so thrilled and humbled to be standing before you. The American Legion Convention and activities that I have attended have been nothing less than exceptional. This Convention has been filled with beautiful ceremonies, and especially I remember the patriotic religious service, and the wonderful entertainment, such as 4Troops.

It is at this time that I would like to formally thank The American Legion, in particular the Americanism and Children and Youth Division for awarding me this generous scholarship. Your commitment to Scouting and youth is commendable.

My parents have always stressed the importance of higher education, and this extremely generous scholarship puts me well on my way to achieving my future ambitions. My goal is to become a high school choral director, and eventually obtain my graduate degree and teach on a college level.

I'm taking an initial step in this direction by attending the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire this fall, double majoring in choral and general music education. Let it be known that your generosity has had a huge impact on my future.

Again, thank you. May God bless you, and may God bless America. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: You know, when I see these wonderful young people I'm reminded of something my old boss, Mr. Nixon, used to say, which is that our best days lie ahead. All they emphasize in the news media is the slobs and the drug addicts and the people that have cocaine falling out of their pockets when they drive along the Strip in Las Vegas. And these guys are the future. Those people, those movie stars are the past. This is the future. *(Applause)*

Now, this one appeals to me because I'm a tiny little bit of a shooter, and I mean tiny little bit, but in competition in Colorado Springs just a few weeks ago, Catherine Green of Coventry, Rhode Island, captured the 2010 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Championship, and get this, with a score of 2460 out of 2509. Unfortunately, she could not be with us today. That is fantastic, fantastic shooting.

The 2010 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion is from Yorktown, Virginia. She shoots for the Lafayette Gun Club, and is sponsored by American Legion Post 273. Her final score was 2312 out of 2509. Please welcome Hannah Black. *(Applause)*

**2010 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion
Hannah Black, Yorktown, Virginia**

Good morning. First, I would like to thank The American Legion for inviting me here this weekend. Post 273 of Poquoson, Virginia, the Sons of The American Legion for their most generous scholarship, Jim Crawford, Mike Buss and Colin Short and my

parents for all their support. Other than the birth of my brother, being here is the greatest event in my life. My mom made me say that. *(Laughter and applause)*

About three years ago I learned how to shoot a rifle at our local gun club. I entered a junior program where you can move up through the different ranks of marksman and expert as your skills improve. I enjoyed it very much, and enjoyed a variety of different challenges through this program. So, I looked forward to other shooting opportunities such as sporter air rifle, international air rifle and air pistol. This gave me the opportunity to do a lot of competing. What I learned was not always a happy lesson, but I kept learning.

This is an incredible sport. Instead of how fast you move, it's how little you move instead of getting excited, you have to be calm. Instead of your heart pounding, you have to have a slow, calm demeanor to be successful. It goes against all your instincts for competition. So what you practice and the lessons you learn involve self-control, peace of mind, and overcoming failure. Some things that seem as simple as a little pressure on a trigger is so incredibly difficult. I didn't know what frustration was until I shot rifle competitively. I find this challenge fascinating. It has forced me to look into myself and into others.

The American Legion National Championship for those who aren't familiar with it, it's four separate matches in two days, and then a final at eight in the morning on the third day. In most sports it would be a roller coaster of emotions and energy, but not shooting. The fifteen sporter shooters that I lined up against were greatly skilled, and I know they trained hard and we shared something very special that weekend.

The importance of the lessons I have learned so far through shooting, are not just about shooting. I have seen how much work top shooters put into their sport, and how hard shooting volunteers work to successfully put on the matches that I have been privileged to compete in. When I reflect on these people and these lessons, I think that I really want to be good shooter some day, but I also want to be a good student, a good dancer, a good friend, a good person. I intend to take what I have learned from shooting and the people I have met through shooting so far, and use these lessons in all aspects of my life.

I again want to thank you for allowing me to be here this weekend, because I see that the people of The American Legion like you are living examples of lessons such as working hard and good choices and being good people. And I pledge to you today, if God allows, I will work harder than ever to take the gifts you have given me this weekend, to live up to your principles. Again, from my heart, a sincere thank you to you all. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: That was very, very impressive. She's only been doing it three years. That is amazing.

Fifty-three young competitors gathered in Indianapolis, one of my favorite cities, for the 73rd National Oratorical Scholarship Program in Indianapolis this past April. The champion is a home-schooled, and believe me that is the wave of the future, home-schooled high school junior from Iva, South Carolina. The title of her oration of the United States was "A Rising Sun." Please welcome Tori Beth Black. *(Applause)*

**2010 National Oratorical Contest First Place Winner
Victoria Black, Iva, South Carolina**

Good morning everyone. I am so honored to be here today, and I'm even more honored to be able to represent an organization such as The American Legion. Through this past year, the experience that I have had with The American Legion Oratorical Contest, I have met some of the finest people in our nation. I've been blown away by your generosity, care, and true love for the youth and the present generation. Not only have you served our nation by protecting it from other nations, but you continue to serve by protecting and providing for the next generation, for my generation. *(Applause)*

First of all, I must draw attention to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who has given me and provided me so many opportunities in this past year. Also to Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Terry, the leaders of my Post 44 in South Carolina, for getting me involved in the oratorical competition, and believing that I could make it to the national contest. To Mr. Gene McDaniel and Mr. and Mrs. Palmer of South Carolina. All three of you have truly blessed my life.

Mr. Mike Buss and Colin Short, those two have really been amazing throughout this entire experience, and I'm very thankful to have you both. And to my mom and dad for encouraging me to practice my speeches, and research a little bit more about the Constitution even when I didn't want to.

I would like to share with you all a short story that I learned while I was studying the Constitution. While studying the Constitution, I learned stories, facts, court cases, and battles that have raged within our nation, all for the sake of protecting our Constitution. But one struck out to me above the rest. While the final signers of the Constitution gathered together, Benjamin Franklin sat gazing at a half sun painted on the back of George Washington's chair. After several minutes, he finally turned to his peers and sighed, "I have often and often during the course of the session looked at that behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to know that it is indeed a rising and not a setting sun." *(Applause)*

Franklin understood that even though the battle is tough and at times seemingly impossible, a positive beginning for our nation lay in the future. Ladies and gentlemen, as part of The American Legion, you are our rising sun, and us, the five of us here that stand before you are the rising sun for the next generation. But we would not be here without you. So I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything that you have done for us. Thank you. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: It's not that hard to see how she won. Ladies and gentlemen, now representing the brightest and most talented young people in America has to offer, your 2009, 2010 American Legion Youth Champions. Here they all are. *(Applause)*

Presentation of the Spirit of Service Awards

MR. STEIN: Very good. Very impressive, especially the shooting one. Our next awards exemplify all that you, as Legionnaires, do throughout the year. The Spirit of Service Awards are given to men and women on active duty for their contributions to their communities and fellow citizens above and beyond the call. Now bear in mind, these people who are going to be getting these awards not only do all the work, sacrifice,

trouble and many, many, many ways to the point of exhaustion that is required of them by being members of the armed services, but they also contribute to their fellow citizens in the community and in the neighborhood and in the nation. Assisting National Commander Hill in presenting the awards is one of the great men of our era. A man whose entire life is built around sacrifice and service to this country. This is a man who could be the head of any giant corporation, any giant bank. Instead, he has chosen to give his life to the service of this glorious country. A genuinely, genuinely, genuinely great man. We are blessed, blessed beyond words, to have him in the service of this country, the Honorable Secretary Robert Gates. (*Applause*).

I can tell you, I've worked in and out of Washington since I was a teenager. I've never heard a person more unanimously praised in my life. I don't think I've ever heard a bad word about Secretary Gates from liberals, from conservatives, from Democrats or Republicans. This man is amazing.

Our first award is to Army Sergeant Chelsey Dawn Billing. She is a Combat Medic with two tours in Iraq. She is currently stationed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, where she volunteers much of her time to assist with the Honor Flight program, bringing World War Two veterans from all over America to their memorial in Washington, D.C. She helps coordinate the logistics and planning to make sure the veterans have a safe and efficient visit. It is with her help that hundreds of your comrades have been honored for their service. Today we honor Sergeant Chelsey Dawn Billing, United States Army, for her service. Sergeant Billing. (*Applause*).

SERGEANT BILLING: Good morning everyone. So all of these young kids were worried about following him. I'm actually worried about following them. They were very good. Very impressive.

First off, I'd really like to thank The American Legion for having me out and giving me this award. I had actually not heard anything about this award until it was offered to me, and I'm very impressed with it. This whole convention has been very nice. Second, I would like to thank my family. Without them I would not be where I am today. With their love and support they've guided me through everything. I would also like to thank my Command, my NCOIC, Sergeant First Class Lewis, for his guidance and support through everything, through work, and he's also supported me a lot in doing the Honor Flight Organization help. And finally, I would like to thank all of you. It is truly my honor to help with the Honor Flights. I get to give a little bit back to everyone that has given so much to our country, and it's truly my honor. I get to sit with all of you and hear your stories and help make that a more enjoyable experience to see the World War II Memorial. It's truly my honor and I thank you. (*Applause*)

MR. STEIN: Petty Officer Thomas Lothridge spends months at a time deployed as a Missile Technician aboard the submarine USS *Maryland*. When he's ashore, however, he makes the most of his time volunteering at his local schools and with Special Olympics. He also has assisted with construction of a Ronald MacDonald House and has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. In all he has amassed nearly 400 volunteer hours since his arrival at his current duty station. Representing the United States Navy as your Spirit of Service Award recipient is Missile Technician Third Class, Thomas M. Lothridge. Congratulations, sir. (*Applause*)

PETTY OFFICER LOTHTRIDGE: Good morning. To begin with, I'd like to thank my family. Long before I joined the Navy, they stressed to me the importance of community service and giving back. The values they impressed upon me when I was growing up led me here. Without their love and support, I would not be standing before you today. I'd also like to thank my Command. The crew of the USS *Maryland* Blue Crew, who are currently sewing the blanket of freedom on which we currently lay. They're like a second family to me and I'm incredibly proud of serving with them. It is their pride and professionalism that motivated me to bring the Navy to communities in positive ways. Finally, I'd like to thank The American Legion for their support of veterans and their families. The amazing achievements which they've accomplished since being established has and always will be worthy of the utmost praise of all Americans. Thank you. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: This man is going places. He knows to speak for a short time. Sergeant Avery Washington volunteers countless hours to various organizations and events at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina and in his local community. He's a supporter of the Special Olympics and numerous athletic events for children and seniors alike. He's active in local schools and charitable and communities events, and throughout the year he shares his skills and talents in the true Spirit of Service. Representing the Marine Corps, please welcome Sergeant Avery Washington II. *(Applause)*

SERGEANT WASHINGTON: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm thankful to God for being here this morning. I'd like to thank my family and friends for keeping me motivated. I'd like to thank my unit of the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Marine Unit Cherry Point for nominating me, and The American Legion for giving me the opportunity to represent the Marine Corps at your National Convention.

A little more than three years ago I received a call from Gunnery Sergeant Rubin Rivera. I didn't realize it then, but this conversation was the beginning of a drastic change to come in my life. In the Marines I have learned the importance of unselfishness. We are taught to look out for the Marines on our left and our right. Our motto is: "Always Faithful." As I learned these things, I developed an appreciation for their importance in any organization. We can all remember a time when we wished for a helping hand. But we also never forget how it felt when that help appeared, when that task that you couldn't fathom starting was coming to a finish. As we grow with each valuable lesson that we have learned while serving our country, we must realize that it is our duty not only to defend this nation, but to enrich the lives of the individuals it is comprised of. Most important of all the lessons we are taught as we serve is to set the example. We must show the leaders of tomorrow the value of service to their nation. In the words of Marine General James N. Mattis, I will continue to demonstrate to the world there is no better friend, no worse enemy than United States Marines. *Semper fidelis (Applause)*

MR. STEIN: Petty Officer David Downham and his wife formed the "Best Day Foundation, New Jersey Chapter" in 2008. This foundation provides a safe means to involve children with physical and developmental challenges in outdoor activities to build confidence and self-esteem. He has organized and conducted numerous events to date serving hundreds of children with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, blindness, cancer, spinal cord injuries, and other challenges. With his success in the Atlantic City area, he has helped launch two additional chapters in New Jersey and

California. Representing the United States Coast Guard is Aviation Survival Technician Second Class David L. Downham. *(Applause)*

PETTY OFFICER DOWNHAM: Good morning everybody. You know, in the media we hear a lot today that our education isn't going so well. I don't think they met these people, because that was extremely impressive. *(Applause)*

I've got to thank all the other recipients in the military and the students over there. Without their accomplishment, we all need to lead the way and they are doing that, as well. First I've got to thank my wife. You know how they always say behind all great men is a great woman. Well, I can barely get my shoes on and get out the door, so she needs to up her game a lot and she does. So thank you, honey. *(Applause)*

I've got to thank my unit and my Command Master Chief. Master Chief Daniels came out to support me on this. And my Command, my unit supports by volunteering and coming out. And it always surprises me because I spend all day taking these kids surfing and I ask them, what's the best part of the day? It's when the helicopter flew by. I didn't do anything. The helicopter is always the favorite part of it. And then finally, I'd like to thank The American Legion. We've been walking around since we got here Saturday and it's impossible to thank you guys because you're constantly thanking us. Well I've got a microphone this time, so I win. I want to thank you for your support, your service. You guys led the way and now we're taking over and we've got our future. Your enthusiasm, but most importantly your patriotism, we don't see that as much today and it's been great to be surrounded by it this week. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

MR. STEIN: Staff Sergeant Edward Perez has made a tremendous impact on the community surrounding Keesler Air Force Base Mississippi. His long list of volunteer accomplishments includes support for Toys For Tots, numerous mentoring and support activities for local youth and citizens in need, and work with the Salvation Army. He was honored by the Mayor of Gulfport, Mississippi with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. For his countless hours of selfless support to his community, we honor Staff Sergeant Edward L. Perez, Jr., United States Air Force. *(Applause)*

STAFF SERGEANT PEREZ: Good morning everyone. I'm not as prepared as any of my fellow brothers and sisters back here because I didn't write a speech and honestly, I was planning on writing a speech out, and then some of these Army and Marine guys took me out yesterday and things didn't work out as planned. *(Laughter)*

And the Coast Guard guy. But what I do want to do is, first of all, I'd like to thank the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Coast Guard for allowing the Air Force to be the smartest branch out there. Hurrah Air Force. That was for all you Army guys that keep picking on me. *(Laughter)*

No, but seriously, I would like to thank The American Legion. You guys have been awesome. You know, I've learned so much since I've been here the last two days, it's unbelievable, and I hope to become a great impact on The American Legion down in Biloxi, Mississippi. I know Mississippi is in the house somewhere. *(Cheers)*

There we go. So I also want to thank my wife. She deals with me going on the road a lot with my job. When the 85th Engineering Squadron, which is a small breed in the United States Air Force, but we hold it down. We travel the whole world, you know, and we don't hold back. So if you guys ever need any installs from electrical engineering, call

our squadron. It's the 85th, Biloxi, Mississippi, Keesler Air Force Base. My Colonel Lonnie Hammack is a great man. He's been supportive on our family. When we get home he gives us plenty of time to get back recuperated to our families and I guess back to the civilian lifestyle. At the same time I'd like to thank my branch chief, his name is Jose Fuertes. He's probably the only reason why I'm still in the military. He has definitely took me under his wing. I had some hard time in the military. He took me under his wing and that's what brothers do and that's what good mentors do, and he took me under his wing. As well as my supervisor, Staff Sergeant Ian Harbaugh, or Tech Sergeant Ian Harbaugh. Sorry, sir, if you hear this. He's definitely been a great inspiration in my life. So to everybody here and all my brothers and sisters, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I know you all have been waiting to hear this, but they are all members of The American Legion. *(Cheers and applause)*

MR. STEIN: Ladies and gentlemen, I just want to make a couple of closing remarks. I live part of the time in L.A. and part of the time in Washington, D.C. When I go to Washington, D.C., the first thing I do after unpacking is generally to go to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. A really, really great hospital, no matter what you hear from the press. And I visit men and women who have had their arms shot off and their legs blown off. Who are in terrible pain. Who have had 60 surgeries in three months. Who have suffered and suffered and suffered for this country. They join a long, long line of men and women who have suffered for this country and have made this country the great bastion of freedom, decency, prosperity, and opportunity that we are. When I see these men and women, when I think of what they've done, when I go over to Arlington National Cemetery, which I also do very frequently, and look at what these men have done, the men and women who lie there in peace for having served this country in war and having served in the tumult and the terror of war, I think of a great, great man, John F. Kennedy, who said words that I think talk more about The American Legion than about perhaps any other organization in the world except the Armed Forces themselves. He said, "We ask God to bless this great country. We ask God to go to work for this great country. We ask God to go to work for the Constitution and for the principles of the people we love in this great country. But here on earth God's work must truly be our own." You men and women have done it. God bless you and God bless the United States of America. *(Applause)*

... 4Troops return to the stage.

4TROOPS: We're back. Good morning again, family. Hey, let's give one more round of applause for all the award winners today? *(Applause)*

We would like to say, before you leave today if you would please visit the exhibit hall. We will have information on special ticketing for our concerts that we're having. We're doing a 60 city tour and we would love to visit your town where you are, if we're local, if we're near where you are. Please, get information about that so that we can come and do more shaking hands, hugging and just representing and celebrating what you do. So we thank you for what do you. You are very important to us, and without you all we would not be here today. Thank you.

...4Troops perform "Here We've Been." (Applause)

4TROOPS: So hopefully everybody is awake now; right? You guys are awake? You don't sound awake. All right. Well, we feel like doing something patriotic. You guys feel like doing something patriotic to celebrate the greatest nation in the world. *(Applause)*

I don't believe them, and I'm going to ask one more time. And if you don't get a little louder, I'll send Ron after you. He's a little big. *(Laughter)*

All right. So are you ready to do some patriotic songs that celebrate the greatest nation in the world? *(Chorus of cheers)*

There we go. All right. That's a little better. Please feel free to sing along, stand up, dance around. We do it a little differently than you might remember, but the words are the same.

... 4Troops perform patriotic medley. (Standing applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you 4Troops for your service and for sharing your talents today. Will you all come to the podium now for just a moment?

I know that those assembled here will want to know whether you are all signed up as members of The American Legion. The answer is definitely "Yes." *(Cheers)*

I'm now going to present you with your official Legion caps and ask you to represent the organization with pride as you travel the country. Meredith Melcher, Post 141, Department of Virginia. Daniel Jens, Post 345, Department of Texas. Ron Henry, Post 141, Department of Virginia. And David Clemo, Post 92, Department of Washington. Ladies and gentlemen, please show your appreciation to 4Troops. *(Applause)* And thank you also to Ben Stein for sharing his time and talent with us today. Thank you for being here and thank you for all of your support for our troops and America's veterans. Also, congratulations once again to our Youth Champions and to our Spirit of Service Award winners. Thank you all for what you do and for being with us here today. *(Applause)*

Now, it is my pleasure to introduce the man who leads the magnificent men and women who serve in our armed forces. A former CIA director and president of Texas A&M University, our guest became the first Secretary of Defense to be asked to remain in that position by a newly elected president. A native of Kansas, he received his bachelor's degree from the College of William & Mary, his master's degree in history from Indiana University, and his doctorate in Russian and Soviet history at Georgetown. Commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force in 1967, our speaker served as an intelligence officer at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. I had the pleasure of listening to this Eagle Scout present and offer advice to 45,000 Boy Scouts this year at the Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. Ladies and gentlemen, please extend a warm welcome to the Honorable Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense.

**Address: The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary Department of Defense**

Thank you very much, Commander Hill, for that kind introduction. I'd like to add my own congratulations to the award winners this morning, and also my thanks to the 4Troops for their music. It's a pleasure to be with The American Legion today. Of course, I would have to tell you, it's always a pleasure to be anywhere but Washington, D.C. A town all too clearly built on a swamp and in so many ways still a swamp. *(Laughter)*

I'm especially honored to be here speaking to you. The Legion has done so much for our nation and for our military. As a proud Eagle Scout and a former long-term president of the National Eagle Scout Association, I'm particularly grateful for your long-standing support of the Boy Scouts of America. Thanks in part to the support of the Legion, the

Boy Scouts just recently celebrated their 100th anniversary. I spoke at the Jamboree a few weeks ago, and was pleased to see that the enthusiasm for Scouting is still strong, as strong as when I was earning my badges over a half century ago. Most awesome to me was when I asked the huge audience at the Jamboree to stand up if they had a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, an uncle or an aunt serving in the military. I believe about half of the 45,000 scouts in attendance rose to their feet. (*Applause*)

The Legion's most notable contributions, of course, have always been to our men and women returning from the battlefield. Most recently from the post-9/11 conflicts. This commitment has been expressed through the Heroes to Hometowns program, the only nationwide all-volunteer reintegration assistance service, which eases severely wounded soldiers back into civilian life.

One case that stands out is Sergeant John A. Borders, severely wounded in Iraq. When he came home, Sergeant Borders, his wife, and their two daughters moved to a new home in Spring Hill, Florida. The house had been refitted to accommodate John's needs, but it still needed a lot of work, and that's when the Legion rallied. Post 99, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 99 and Unit 152, Tampa, all gathered to do the work, and hundreds of hours of sweat equity later, the property is ready for John and his family.

The contributions of the Legion are particularly necessary and welcome now when we are asking so much of our troops. Each of whom has volunteered to serve in wartime. Each of whom is a fitting successor to the legacy you uphold every day. Captain Dan Luckett, of the 101st Airborne Division, lost his left leg and part of his right foot in Iraq in 2008. He was so set on rejoining his unit in combat that he passed the Army pre-deployment physical fitness test again within a year, including a 12-mile march carrying a 35-pound pack. Now Dan can be found on patrol outside of Kandahar. He is known as the "One-Legged Warlord of Ashoqeh," and sends a powerful message to our friends and enemies alike about American guts and determination. (*Applause*)

This generation of heroes has been tested in a daunting array of ways: Multiple deployments and separations from family, Spartan living conditions, a loss of friends and comrades, wounds seen and unseen. Our military institutions as a whole face complex and unprecedented challenges, as well, and I'd like to discuss some of them today.

They include: The major transitions underway in Iraq and Afghanistan, preparing our military for threats looming on the horizon, and in doing so the importance of making every defense dollar count. Tomorrow Operation Iraqi Freedom will officially become Operation New Dawn, a change that recognizes that Iraqis have assumed full responsibility for their own security. This is the moment both of our nations have long worked and hoped for, a moment made possible by the dramatic security gains of the last three and a half years. Consider that despite recent headline grabbing attacks against soft targets in Iraq, that would mean innocent civilians, overall levels of violence this year remain at their lowest point since the beginning of the war in 2003. General Odierno reports that his forces haven't needed to conduct an air strike in more than six months. And in an important victory against transnational terror, al-Qaeda in Iraq has been largely cut off from its masters abroad. (*Applause*)

I'm not saying that all is or necessarily will be well in Iraq. The most recent elections have yet to result in a coalition government. Sectarian tensions remain a fact of life. Al-Qaeda in Iraq is beaten, but not gone. This is not a time for premature victory parades or self-congratulations. Even as we reflect with pride on what our troops and their Iraqi partners have accomplished, we still have a job to do and responsibilities there. And even

with the end of the formal combat mission, U.S. military will continue to support the Iraqi army and police, help to develop Iraq's navy and air force and assist with counterterrorism operations.

The president will talk about America's future role in Iraq during his address to the nation tonight. As that mission moves forward, we must never forget that the opportunities in front of all Iraqis, and especially the opportunity for political freedom, has been purchased at a terrible cost in the losses and trauma endured by the Iraqi people, and in the blood, sweat, and tears of American men and women in uniform. Today, at the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 4,427 American service members have died in Iraq. 3,502 of them killed in action. 34,268 have been wounded or injured. The courage of these men and women, their determination, their sacrifice and the sacrifice of their families, along with the service and sacrifice of so many others in uniform, have made this day, this transition possible. And we must never forget. (*Applause*)

As the U.S. military campaign in Iraq winds down, an invigorated and reinforced Afghanistan effort is moving ahead on all fronts. Much has been said and reported about Afghanistan, and I'd like to emphasize a few main points.

First, while the United States has been in this fight for a long time, we should think of the Afghan campaign to this point as two different wars. The first, from 2001 to early 2002, was won outright when the Taliban were ousted from power, elections were held, schools and clinics were opened and women were liberated from medieval bondage. However, with the invasion of Iraq, our attention and our resources were diverted. Afghanistan became a second-tier priority for troops, equipment, security and development assistance. Starting in 2003, the Taliban regrouped, refilled their ranks, reconstituted themselves in safe-havens and reentered Afghanistan. Violence began to increase significantly in 2005, and has grown worse ever since.

But today, for the first time in nine years, we now have the resources, the troops, the equipment, military and civilian, needed for this fight. The total international military commitment when fully deployed will reach approximately 150,000, more than three times the number when I became defense secretary going on four years ago — including some 45,000 troops from our NATO allies and other partners. This dramatic increase in military capability is amplified by a tripling of deployed civilians and a substantial influx of trainers.

Going forward, Afghans must accept responsibility for the future of their country. We are making slow but steady headway on that front, with about 85 percent of the Afghan National Army now partnered with ISAF forces in the field, training together, planning together and fighting today. General Petraeus has worked with President Karzai to develop a plan for locally recruited forces that will be accountable to the central government that will also give local communities the means to defend themselves. We are committed to enforcing a hard line against the corruption that exploits the Afghan people and saps their support for their elected government, and that includes making sure that American tax dollars and other assistance are not being misused. All these efforts will help build the trust and self reliance that the Afghans will need to govern and protect themselves for the long term.

Encouraging that self-reliance is why beginning a responsible transition to Afghan control next summer is so important. That being said, as the president has frequently noted, we are not turning off the lights next July. As in Iraq, our drawdown will be gradual and conditions based, accompanied by a buildup of our military assistance and

civilian development efforts. If the Taliban really believe that America is headed for the exits next summer in large numbers, they will be very deeply disappointed and surprised to find us very much in the fight. (*Applause*) And the realization that we will still be there after July, 2011 and aggressively going after them will, I believe, impact their morale and willingness to continue resisting their government and the international coalition.

Finally, I know there's a good deal of concern and impatience about pace of progress since the new strategy was announced last December. It is important to remember, however, that we are only just now reaching the full complement of surge forces ordered by the president. The Taliban are a cruel and ruthless adversary and are not going quietly. Their leadership has ordered a brutal campaign of intimidation against Afghan civilians, singling out Afghan women for barbaric attacks. But the enemy is paying a price for these crimes, as more than 350 Taliban commanders have been killed or captured in just the past three months. These efforts will only accelerate as our military offensive rolls back the enemy from their strongholds and secures key populations centers.

It will be a tough, hard campaign with setbacks and heartbreak. The fact that we knew our losses would increase as the fight was brought to the enemy makes them no easier to bear. The intensifying combat and rising casualties is in many ways reminiscent of the early months of the Iraq surge when our troops were taking the highest losses of the war. Much of the coverage and commentary is similar, as well.

Three and a half years ago, very few believed the surge could take us to where we are today in Iraq. And there were plenty of reasons for doubts. Back then this country's civilian and military leadership chose the path we believed had the best chance of achieving our national security objectives, as doing in Afghanistan today. Success there is not inevitable, but with the right strategy and the willingness to see it through, it is possible. And it is certainly worth the fight. (*Applause*)

I would remind everyone that this country's leaders, myself included, made the mistake 20 years ago of abandoning Afghanistan to chaos after the Soviets were driven out. Of believing its power-vacuum did not and should not concern us, and that we could eliminate threats from a distance at little cost to ourselves. As events have shown in New York, Washington, Pennsylvania, London, Madrid, Amman, Lahore, Bali, Jakarta and elsewhere around the world, we were dead wrong.

General Petraeus believes, I believe and the president believes that we now have the right strategy in Afghanistan, a strategy that represents our best chance of achieving goals essential to the safety of the United States — delivering a strategic defeat to al-Qaeda and its extremist affiliates by rolling back the Taliban from their strongholds, building Afghan capacity to secure their own territory, and in so doing denying safe haven to terrorists that would attack our country once again. That is our objective, that is our strategy and it is the only possible justification for the risks and sacrifices we are asking of our troops.

As I'm sure everyone in this audience is keenly aware, even if everything should go ideally in Iraq and in Afghanistan, a year from now, five years from now, the United States will still find itself in a dangerous world. Our military must remain strong and agile enough to face a diverse range of threats. These range from non-state actors attempting to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction and sophisticated missiles, to the more traditional threats of other states both building their conventional forces and developing new capabilities that target our traditional strengths. Building a flexible portfolio of capabilities and systems that can be used across the widest possible range of

conflict will be the key challenge for the entire Department of Defense as we move into a new era.

As a country, historically, we have a troubling, predictable pattern of coming to the end of a conflict, concluding that the nature of man and the world has changed for the better and turning inward, unilaterally disarming and dismantling institutions important to our national security. And when we are invariably, and inevitably, proved wrong, when war comes again, we have had to rearm and rebuild, at huge costs in blood and treasure, most recently after September 11th. It is critically important moving forward that we not repeat that mistake again. *(Applause)*

Yet in the coming years, the pressure will undoubtedly be great to ignore the lessons of our history and to reduce spending on defense. The post-9/11 spigot of defense spending may be turned off, but going forward we must have modest and sustainable growth in the defense budget in order to maintain and reset our fighting forces and invest adequately for future challenges. To make the case for this growth at a time of economic and fiscal duress requires the Defense Department to make every dollar count. To fundamentally change the way we do business. It means shifting resources from bureaucracies, and headquarters, and overhead to the combat capabilities needed today and in the future. *(Applause)*

As part of this effort, I've asked the entire Pentagon earlier this year to take a hard unsparing look at how the department is staffed, organized, and operated. While many of these decisions were difficult, they are necessary to ensure that our fighting forces on air, land and sea have the resources to achieve a wider range of missions and prepare for future challenges and needs.

As those who have paid the price in previous conflicts from misplaced priorities when it comes to national defense, I ask your support for a leaner more efficient Pentagon and continued, sustainable, robust investments in our troop and future capabilities. Our troops have done more than their part. Now it is time for us in Washington to do ours. I will do everything in my power to ensure that we live up to our solemn obligations, for the safety of our country, for the well being of our troops.

These talented and resilient men and women in uniform are the ones who give me confidence in the future, as there is no group of people at any time or any place more capable of confronting the challenges our country faces. I feel a deep sense of personal responsibility to each and every one of them to ensure that they have all they need to accomplish their mission and to come home safely. The debt owed by all Americans to those now serving, and those who have served, can never be fully repaid. You have my gratitude and my respect for all you do for our troops and for all you do for the country they have stepped forward to defend. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before I introduce our next honored guest, I would like to read a letter of greetings from the President of the United States. It reads:

I send my warmest greetings to those attending The American Legion's 92nd National Convention. The skill and sacrifice of our armed forces have earned us our freedom and security, and we owe them a profound debt of gratitude. They left the comfort of home to defend our nation, knowing the risks inherent in their choice, and their families stood by their sides. All are patriots, and have earned a place among the greatest of generations.

Today, those who have worn the uniform of the United States, continue their service to communities across America. Countless Legionnaires participate in programs to promote the safety and well-being of our service members and veterans, and to enrich and educate our youth. These efforts renew the spirit of America, and lay the foundation for a brighter future for our children and grandchildren.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your dedicated service to the United States. I wish you all the best for an enjoyable convention. Barack Obama. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Our next guest is responsible for the federal and state missions of the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard and the state's Division of Emergency Management. He's also the governor's Homeland Security Advisor and chairs the state's Homeland Security Council. He joined the Air Force in 1983 and the Air National Guard in 1991. A command pilot with over 3,000 flying hours, principally in B-52 and KC-135 aircraft, he was named Adjutant General by Governor Jim Doyle. Ladies and gentlemen, Brigadier General Donald P. Dunbar of the Wisconsin National Guard. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Brigadier General Donald P. Dunbar
The Adjutant General, Wisconsin National Guard**

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I'm honored to be in your presence and address The American Legion on the occasion of your 92nd National Convention. Now, as I understand it, it's been several years since you've held this conference in Wisconsin. Some of you may not be familiar with Wisconsin. Maybe you're new to Wisconsin. And maybe secretly you're thinking, 'I wonder if I have some connection to Wisconsin?' And you're asking yourself, 'how could I tell?' Let me help you.

If you consider it a sport to drill through 38 inches of ice, and sit on a frozen lake hoping a fish will swim by, you might be from Wisconsin. If you're proud when your state makes the national news about 85 or 90 times a year as the coldest spot in the country, you might be from Wisconsin. If you've worn shorts and a parka at the same time, you might be from Wisconsin. If you have either a child or a pet named Brett, you're probably from Wisconsin. If your town has an equal number of churches and bars, you might be from Wisconsin. If you think that catsup is just a little bit too spicy, you're probably from Wisconsin. And lastly, if you have ever had a lengthy telephone conversation with someone who simply dialed the wrong number, you're definitely from Wisconsin. *(Laughter)*

Wisconsin is a great place and we're glad you're here. It is indeed our privilege to welcome such a wonderful group of Americans to our fair state. The Legion was founded in 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization, and today the legacy endures with some 2.6 million of you serving in over 14,000 posts worldwide. Thank you for all you've done to preserve freedom, and for all you continue to do for today's service members and their families.

As a point of personal privilege, I especially want to thank the Vietnam veterans in the audience today. *(Applause)* I tell you the more I learn, the more I appreciate your service under very difficult conditions. Thank you.

I am privileged to command the Wisconsin National Guard, comprised of over 10,000 soldiers and airmen. Wisconsin's finest sons and daughters. Since September 11,

2001, every unit in the Wisconsin National Guard, except our band, has deployed for the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. And just so you don't think I'm taking a dig at our band, our band is ready; they've just never been called. And many of our individual musicians have deployed with other bands to harm's way.

Now, the vast majority of us are combat veterans. We serve America in a time of persistent conflict and war. In 2009 alone, we sent over 40 percent of our National Guard into the combat zones. As veterans, we share a sacred bond with Legionnaires like you.

The Legion is a bedrock foundation in America. You've made America better and stronger, first by serving in uniform, and today by continuing to serve in The American Legion. You have built upon our institutions; started and succeeded in businesses; served in public offices, and in our communities. You have raised families and you continue to serve today by supporting our veterans.

I know of your commitment. I know of your commitment to family because I serve with your sons, your daughters, and your grandchildren. I know of your commitment to today's veterans because I saw the Legion there when we mobilized our guardsmen and sent them into harm's way. And I saw you again when we welcomed them home. It didn't matter if it was ten o'clock at night or three o'clock in the morning, Legionnaires were there with a smile, with gratitude, with a "Hoo-Rah," determined to make sure that today's veterans knew they were appreciated for what they did.

Your selfless service and commitment is significant to us in the National Guard, because our tempo remains very high and our nation will likely need our tempo to remain high in the years to come. And we simply cannot succeed in the National Guard without the support of our families, our employers, and of course organizations like The American Legion. Our tempo as citizen-soldiers has never been higher.

Now, clearly the mobilizations for World War I and World War II were longer in duration, but today's combat scenarios are distinct. We have never seen returning mobilizations of our National Guard on a scale like this. Many of our soldiers and airmen have deployed multiple times, and we now have a very experienced combat-hardened National Guard. In fact, the National Guard is in uncharted territory. We have moved far from the strategic reserve envisioned after World War II. And we have transformed into an operational reserve.

There is a serious debate ongoing about how operational the National Guard should be in the future, as we responsibly withdraw from Iraq, and eventually from Afghanistan. Some wonder openly if the National Guard will break under the sustained operational tempo or if we will lose the support of the American public.

Well, don't you believe it, because as we speak, the National Guard nationally is over 100 percent end-strength. It includes record retention. And most of today's Guardsmen joined after 9/11 when they knew that a combat tour was likely. The National Guard provides enduring value to America at an unrivaled level of efficiency. We have great support from our families, our employers in our communities. We connect Main Street to the Pentagon, and we connect the state house to the White House.

In context, this superb operational performance by the National Guard is critical, because it is no longer theoretical, it is proven capability. As you know, our nation faces many challenges today, an ongoing terrorist threat; real estate bubbles and financial crises; increased unemployment; accidents like the BP oil spill, and record deficits adding to our national debt. All of these are significant. All of these will require sacrifice and bold decisions by our national leaders. It's an American problem. They're American

challenges; they're our challenges, and it will require difficult choices, and I believe America will look to the institutions that are serving her well, like The American Legion and the National Guard in part to help solve them.

Because of the National Guard's proven capability to respond in this era of persistent conflict, and because we enjoy the support of our families, our employers, the public, and organizations like The American Legion, our nation will likely choose to continue to rely on the National Guard for a higher operational tempo, and take advantage of our increased efficiencies. And that makes sense. For today, over 59,000 National Guardsmen, including over 800 from right here in Wisconsin, are mobilized with the vast majority serving overseas. They join the active duty and Federal Reserve in a joint force that is serving this nation magnificently. These warriors will return to lead our nation forward and to meet these challenges head on, and they will solve them. And someday in the not too distant future, they too will be known as a great generation.

I am an optimist, and I believe our best days lie ahead. I have faith in our countrymen. For our history is freedom's history, and it must be preserved. Each generation must keep the torch of freedom lit, and pass it on to the next generation, and this is not merely cliché, it is very hard work. And you, The American Legion have kept that torch burning brightly since 1919, and continue to support those who carry it forward today. Our nation will continue to need The American Legion as it confronts the challenges facing her, and I believe our nation will continue to need the National Guard, always ready and always there.

I am privileged to wear this uniform and serve this great nation. Like you, I love this country. It is an honor to join my countrymen in expressing congratulations to The American Legion on your 92nd Convention. Thank you for your service and for all that you do. I ask that God continue to bless The American Legion and continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The American Legion's new Web site and electronic media have undergone changes in the last year. Those changes were on display the last few days in the Convention Exhibit Hall. Visitors have been able to take a close look at the website and pick up brochures.

Traffic to the Web site has grown dramatically in the last eight months. The number of American Legion Web pages clicked on per month grew from about 816,000 to more than 1.7 million between January and July, 2010. July's traffic of 364,095 visits was a record.

The Legion's Twitter and Facebook followings have also grown during the year. Our Facebook fan base is nearing 15,000 and growing every day. And just two weeks ago, The American Legion World Series was streamed live from Spokane, Washington. There were more than 104,000 unique visitors averaging 28 minutes per visit for over 3.5 million minutes viewed. A unique visitor is an individual, if you visit five times, it counts as one.

Those who took a few minutes to visit the Magazine Division's booth in the Exhibit Hall were treated to a firsthand look at the new Web site. Visitors to the booth also had an opportunity to enter a drawing for an Apple iPad or an HP laptop computer.

Right now I've asked General Dunbar to remain on the stage and to rejoin me here at the podium, along with Wisconsin Department Adjutant Dave Kurtz, and Father Ken Liedel, Wisconsin's 5th District Chaplain to draw the names.

This is for the iPad. Ready? Abigail Hood. The winner of the laptop is Judy Sessums. We'll be contacting those two winners.

Our next guest is a retired federal public servant who has devoted her life to service. She is a regular volunteer at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque and has served in a variety of American Legion Auxiliary leadership roles at all levels. She is a lifetime member of Otero-Garcia-Navarreté Unit 72 in New Mexico. She is eligible for Auxiliary membership through the military service of her husband, Tony, a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War era, and the Department Adjutant for New Mexico. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the leader of the nation's largest patriotic women's organization, National President Rita Navarreté. (*Applause*)

**Greetings: Mrs. Rita Navarreté
National President, American Legion Auxiliary**

Thank you for that music, Pete, "Oh Fair New Mexico." Thank you The American Legion family, thank you for your service. Had it not been for the forefathers of this great organization, The American Legion, we would have not been established in 1919, because it was then the decision that The American Legion needed troops, women troops to help them advocate for the many programs and the activities for the great organization. Thank you. (*Applause*)

I stood before you August 27, 2009, expressing it was a time to celebrate the 90 years of service of The American Legion Auxiliary. I told you then that my theme of "Reconnecting and Energizing" was going to be the theme; because it was time that we believed that anything was possible with God. ...*Spanish translation.*

As I began my year, I realized that there were many, many individuals, our own members perhaps too, our own communities that did not know who we were; what we did and how we served. So I started the journey of traveling across the nation, and I want to thank all of the departments, all the levels of the organizations, all the programs that assisted me in the journey to let people know who we are, what we do and how we serve.

You elected not only your national commander, but you elected a fantastic individual who has become a very dear friend and definitely a family member. I have said that family comes first as volunteers, but the second family that I've known for many, many years is The American Legion family. Clarence, Liz, have truly been a part of the family. We have carried your message.

I mentioned to Clarence one day in our passing, and we met at many conferences, many activities, "Gee, I already know your speech, the Four Pillars. I already know the information of your Twitter and only pressing one button." He says, "Well gee, then maybe you could carry on my message, too." And I have had that support all year as we traveled across the country and also overseas to see the troops; to listen to their stories; to know that we are truly making a difference. In Landstuhl, we saw the results of the generous donations that were made. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, our troops need us. I say to you, a veteran is a veteran every day, and I say a volunteer is a volunteer every day. And The American Legion family needs to remain strong as we continue to work in our communities.

I would like at this time to make a personal gift. On behalf of me and Tony Richard and my family, we would like to present you with this gift. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It's a painted pony that has the American flag obviously, and down the sides are the seals for each of the branches of the services. Thank you, Rita. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT NAVARETTÉ: The commander has allowed me a personal privilege, and the Department of New Mexico, where are you? (*Cheers*) Thank you for your love and your support. I love you. (*Standing applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It gives me great pleasure to introduce our next guest. A 1965 graduate of West Point, Secretary Shinseki completed 38 years of uniformed service in the U.S. Army, including two combat tours in the Republic of Vietnam and service as the Army's Chief of Staff from 1999 to 2003. Secretary Shinseki became the seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs on January 21, 2009. As secretary, he has promised to end homelessness among veterans. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to the honorable Eric Shinseki. (*Applause*)

**Address: The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs**

Well, good morning. Thank you all very much. Thank you. Well, Commander Clarence Hill, thank you for that kind introduction and for inviting me to join you here in Milwaukee. And Clarence, just let me express my personal appreciation for the great work we have done together this past year. Thanks for your leadership. The Legion has been well served. I know Secretary Gates just spoke and departed. He may not be on the premises anymore, but I would like to acknowledge him. The last time he and I were even close to being on the same stage together, it was at a mental health conference, which I thought was fitting. (*Laughter*)

Senator Feingold may have already arrived. Congressman Moore. Thanks to both of them for their unwavering support for veterans. Major Tom Barrett, of Milwaukee, thanks for your hospitality. And then the members of the Legion's national leadership: Adjutant Dan Wheeler; Auxiliary President Rita Navarreté who you just honored. Superb Executive Director, Peter Gaytan, who I spend a lot of time with working. Other leaders of the Legion family, it's good to see all of you again.

Legionnaires, fellow veterans, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it's good to be back at the Annual Convention, your 92nd. I'm honored to be here in Milwaukee with an organization that traces its roots back to 1919, and that has been a powerful voice on behalf of veterans' rights, whether in the halls of Congress or in the Oval Office, and all across the country, wherever and whenever veterans needed your help.

Now, over the years VA and The American Legion have collaborated on many projects to serve our veterans. My opinion is that the relationship has never been stronger, more trusting, or more productive. And I would offer to you these are not accidental, this is not a matter of personal chemistry between individuals, it's a matter of hard work, concerted work on behalf of veterans by both the VA and The American Legion.

And I'm going to go into a little bit of detail with you today, to sort of tell you what we think we've accomplished, and sort of where we're headed. I would also tell you there will always be unfinished work. I've been in this position now for about 20 months and I've figured out that there will always be unfinished work. That's the nature of the

mission. But for all of us it is to continue to establish priorities, fight for resources, and go and take care of veterans, and that's what we intend to do. We have established clear priorities, and with the increased funding provided by President Obama and the Congress, we are addressing those priorities.

Let me go into some specifics about where we've come the last 19 months, and sort of where we're headed the next 24. In 2009 we had a congressionally enhanced budget of about \$99.8 billion. Congressionally enhanced, it's the budget I inherited when I arrived. But the budget was significant with that congressional enhancement, because it allowed us to begin addressing a range of issues that had accumulated over time. And thanks to the Congress, we were able to establish a framework for much needed change. Like building a house or a building, you got to put the foundation first, and that's what we worked on in '09. Framework for much needed change that will enhance veterans access to VA's benefits and services, improve the quality and the safety of our health care programs, and then equally importantly, re-engineer our business processes to provide accountability. Accountability. So we can assure the best returns on those investments. That was '09.

This year's budget, 2010, \$114 billion. A \$14.2 billion, 16 percent increase to the 2009 budget. Provided by President Obama, it is the largest single-year increase in over 30 years for this department. *(Applause)* The President has enabled us to put in place programs and procedures that will serve veterans well into the next two decades.

2011, next year's budget that's currently before the Congress, the president's request is \$125 billion dollars. Eleven billion dollars greater than this year's 30 year large budget, a 10 percent increase over this 2010 budget will give us much needed firepower to increase veterans' access to our benefits and health care services; end the disability claims backlog, and eliminate veterans homelessness by 2015.

Now, to deliver all of this, VA must be, without hesitation, an advocate for veterans. And this is part of a culture change that's underway. We need to make permanent the gains of the past 19 months. Given the economic challenges facing the government and the nation all across the nation today, the \$25 billion increase in the VA's budget over these two years, underscores the president's commitment to transforming VA, and fixing persistent problems that have plagued this department for decades. Problems that you all have wrestled with along with the department. We in the department need a sense of urgency that matches the president's commitment, and we are developing it, and that's part of the culture change. These fixes require setting clear priorities, challenging the VA workforce to get more and better results out of the funding we've been provided, and generating new business processes to track the money and ensure it produces the greatest gains for veterans.

Now last year we implemented the new Post 9/11 GI Bill, the largest student aid package of its kind since the original GI Bill of 1944. To date we have over 328,000 veterans and family members enrolled in colleges working towards their degrees. Three hundred and twenty-eight thousand. Now, when you include the Montgomery GI Bill and Chapters 30 and 35 programs that number goes up to nearly 600,000 veterans and family members in classrooms preparing for the next phases of their lives. *(Applause)*

We need their ingenuity. We need their leadership. We need their operational experience. We need their toughness. We need their discipline. And yes, we need their dreams in American business and government today, just like we needed yours in your time. But as I tell them, these students, as I travel the campuses, unless they graduate,

there is no payoff. We're all excited about them going in the front door. I'm watching graduation rates. I'm dad. If they don't graduate, the program doesn't pay off, and I'm determined to see them graduate.

Now, we have worked two other hard issues that have been on the back burner for decades: One for 40 years, Agent Orange, the other 20 years, Gulf War illness. Last October I accepted the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Agent Orange Update. And based on the requirements of the law and the Institute of Medicine's findings, I decided that the evidence was sufficient to award presumption of service connection to three new diseases: Parkinson's disease, hairy cell and other chronic B-Cell leukemias, and ischemic heart disease. *(Applause)*

These bring the total number of Agent Orange presumptions to fifteen. The president fully supported these presumptions. The Congress has appropriated \$13.4 billion to begin making benefits payments to the 250,000 or so veterans who are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months to 24 months. Now, as many of you know, I've been invited to testify before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on 23 September to explain these decisions, and I am happy to do that. It was the right decision, and the president and I are proud to finally provide this group of veterans, our Vietnam veterans, the care and benefits they have long deserved. *(Applause)*

Now, in the same vein, in March of this year we provided presumption of service connection for nine new diseases associated with service in the Gulf during Operation Desert Storm. We must continue to research what might have caused these illnesses, but that cannot be our primary focus. Our primary mission is to address veterans' suffering by diagnosing and treating the symptoms of the ailments they suffer. We'll continue to do the research to try to figure out what caused Gulf War illness. In the meantime we're getting on with taking care of veterans. Nine new diseases have been added. *(Applause)*

Likewise, in July we simplified claims processing for veterans suffering from PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. This decision ends decades of focusing on documenting the stressor event. Things like providing a six or eight digit coordinates of where that stressor event might have occurred. Most of us couldn't do that. Not everybody had maps, remember? Instead, we are streamlining the delivery of medical care and benefits to veterans suffering from verifiable PTSD resulting from combat. They no longer have to document that stressor event if they have been in combat, and they have verifiable PTSD. This is a generational issue. It is not Iraq or Afghanistan. It is all who have served in combat, so whether it's World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I, our current operations, these are the new rules on PTSD. *(Applause)*

We provided \$4.5 billion for mental health programs and hired another 1,000 mental health professionals in 2009. This year we are spending an additional \$379 million on mental health. And our mental health staff today numbers over twenty thousand. Our priority here is to diagnose, treat, and cure. And if cure is not possible, then diagnose, treat and care will be the standard. *(Applause)* We are not going to allow our veterans who have carried the responsibilities of our national security squarely on those shoulders, on those missions that Secretary Gates described for you in detail. We're not going to allow our veterans who carried those missions, to languish for the rest of their lives without hope for ailments they can't explain.

For traumatic brain injury, TBI, we fielded a new disability rating system to greatly improve how claims are evaluated. And we've made enormous advances in treating those veterans with the most serious head injuries, those who arrive at our polytrauma centers

comatose with injuries that only a few years ago were thought to be irreversible and hopeless.

USA Today recently reported on some of our successes, some of you may have seen them, chronicling the breakthroughs of VA's four emerging consciousness centers in Tampa, near here in Minneapolis, Richmond and Palo Alto. Through innovative care, a tripling of their professional staffs over the past six years, increased resourcing and engaging families as co-providers in treating their loved ones VA facilities have brought nearly 70 percent of these comatose patients back to consciousness. This is a rate that far exceeds the national norm, according to the highly respected Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in New Jersey. This is your VA, and we don't accept hopelessness in our lexicon, not among the injured, not among the ill, not among the homeless.

There is much to be done in 2011. We will focus on three critical concerns of significant importance to veterans; at least veterans talk to me about them when I travel. Increasing access to benefits and services now. Eliminating the disability claims backlog and ending veterans' homelessness. And let me touch on each of these and how they are impacted by this budget.

Access; VA must do better at reaching out to veterans to ensure that they are aware of our programs and entitlements based on service connection and need. And I'm always constantly surprised when I encounter veterans who don't know they have benefits and entitlements coming to them. With as much outreach as we do, we're not doing it the way I think is the standard, and there's more work to be done here, and that's why the work of The American Legion in helping us with outreach is so critical.

Access touches a broad range of issues. Everything from our hospitals to building new community based outpatient clinics, to vet centers, to mobile vans that go out to the most rural areas to reach veterans who have no other way to transport themselves to our facilities.

Access also includes applying telehealth technologies to extend VA's reach into the nation's most remote areas, and even into veterans' homes where lifesaving monitoring ongoing today for 40,000 veterans who are being monitored in their own homes. In 2010 we have invested \$121 million in telehealth technologies. Next year in 2011, those investments will go to \$163 million.

Veterans' health care. In 2011, VA has projected to treat 6.1 million patients, equivalent to the populations of Los Angeles and Chicago combined. Those 6.1 million veterans, including 439,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, will make an estimated 83 million visits, outpatient visits to our facilities. And be treated as inpatients admitted to our hospitals, 937,000 times. Those are our working estimates.

To address these large numbers, VA has programmed the following resources to care for them: \$6.8 billion for long-term care, an increase of 14 percent over this year, 2010. \$2.6 billion for care for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. A 30 percent increase. \$5.2 billion for mental health care. Up \$410 million over 2010, enabling us to expand both inpatient and outpatient mental health services. \$590 million for medical and prosthetic research. \$538 million for spinal cord injury programs. An 8 percent increase over 2010, and an 18 percent increase over 2009. \$250 million to improve health care access for the more than three million enrolled veterans who live in the most rural areas of the country, and nearly \$218 million to meet the growing needs of women veterans. An increase of more than \$18 million over the 2010 budget. And finally, funding for continued development of the virtual lifetime electronic record, which we see as the way

to link DoD and VA in a seamless transition as youngsters take off the uniform and show up on our rolls.

In benefits, in 2009 we received for the first time ever over one million claims, and that's not going to go down. Disability claims have increased 75 percent between 2000 and 2009. And on average what that means, is over 97,000 new claims being submitted every month. So we've launched an aggressive campaign to attack the claims backlog, a problem that has existed for decades. We intend to break the back of the backlog this year. It's a multi-pronged attack. We have set an ambitious objective of no claim over 125 days, and a 98 percent accuracy rate. I think most of you know that our average right now is about 160 days moving toward that 125 day mark. But our goal is not an average of 125 days, our goal is no claim over 125 days, 98 percent accuracy. So not just faster, also better and more accurate. And there's nothing magical about 125 days. Trust me, when we get there, we'll be looking at another target.

In the last 18 months VBA expanded its workforce by over 3,500 people; began accepting online applications for initial disability benefits; initiated an innovation competition within its own workforce to get the best ideas, the best of breed forward; launched over 30 pilot programs and initiatives to identify those best practices; and invested over \$138 million in a paperless veterans benefits management system which we will deploy in fiscal year 2012. This is 2010. I know 2012 sounds like it is two years away. 2012 is 14 months away.

And additionally, VBA awarded a nine million dollar contract to fast track Agent Orange claims, associated with our presumption decisions of last October, so we don't have 250,000 or so Agent Orange claims being piled onto our disability claims processing. We're going to fast track the Agent Orange claims.

To enable VBA to meet its aggressive targets, the president's 2011 budget provides \$2.1 billion in discretionary funding, an increase of \$460 million, or 27 percent over the 2010 budget — an unprecedented amount of resourcing for VBA in the history of VA.

The budget will include \$145 million in information technology funds to support the ongoing program to develop a smart paperless claims processing system, and this is how we get after breaking that backlog. We do intend to break the backlog this year.

Homelessness, in this rich and powerful nation, roughly 643,000 Americans remain homeless on any given night. We accept that our veterans, who come from every town and village in this great land, are a vital part of the national landscape. We say that in honoring their service, we keep faith with Abraham Lincoln's promise to care for those who have borne the battle, and their families. Yet nearly one in six of America's homeless is a veteran. 107,000 veterans are homeless today. This cannot define your VA, and this cannot define our nation. If you wonder what this secretary will be working on for the next several years, this is it. Over the past six years we have reduced veteran homelessness by nearly 90,000. We will end veteran homelessness in the next five years.

Last year the National Cemetery Administration performed over 106,000 interments of veterans and eligible family members, and provided over 352,000 headstones and markers worldwide. This June we began offering a bronze medallion signifying a veterans status that can be attached to privately purchased headstones and markers for use in those civilian cemeteries where our veterans are in final rest.

VA expanded NCA's burial policy, resulting in a plan to develop new state and national cemeteries. Ten grants totaling \$40 million were awarded to states to fund five new state veteran cemeteries, and VA opened five new national cemeteries at a total

construction cost of over \$89 million. The president's proposed 2011 budget seeks \$251 million for cemetery maintenance and operations to support an estimated 114,000 interments next year. A 3.8 percent increase over 2010. We are providing a final resting place for the heroes of our nation, and we want those cemeteries to represent the national shrines those heroes deserve. (*Applause*)

So what's the point of my relaying to you this list of funding levels and programs and the progress we've made? I'm sharing this with you because of every dollar in additional resources, every step forward toward improving care; increasing access; eliminating the backlog; ending homelessness, has a profound effect on veterans, and it's part of my watch.

On 1 October 2009, less than a year ago, a roadside bomb on the outskirts of Kandahar, Afghanistan targeted a patrol of nine Army Rangers out of the 1st Battalion. Ranger Cory Remsburg was blown into a nearby canal face down. The right side of his head shattered and caved in, and in the ensuing gunfight his buddies went in there and got him out. Other members of this patrol were either killed or severely wounded.

Following medevac, six surgeries at military hospitals in Afghanistan, Germany, and Bethesda, Ranger Remsburg was sent to the Tampa VA Medical Center last November. He was fully comatose in a state doctors described as vegetative. By their own estimates, the odds for recovery, any recovery, were slim. But Cory, his family, his VA therapists, doctors, and nurses never gave up. They rallied to his side; they worked his limbs; massaged his body, keeping his muscles limber using a wide variety of stimulants, everything from medications to aromas to even television, anything which might stimulate his senses. Everything they could think of to bring him to consciousness.

For long days, weeks, and months, nothing, but after three months, doctors recognized that Cory Remsburg had awakened. He had regained consciousness. Through sheer determination on his part, mirrored by the unwavering efforts of those who loved and cared for him, his progress has been agonizingly slow, but miraculously steady.

He communicated first with a computer keyboard, but has now slowly regained his ability to speak. He is one of VA's 70 percenters, one of those who was comatose with severe traumatic brain injury, and for whom no one held out much hope, that VA doctors and therapists, along with the love of his family, and Cory's own fighting spirit, brought back from the darkness.

In June he returned for a visit to Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah, Georgia, home of the 1st Ranger Battalion to shake hands with his buddies. As President Obama recounted in a recent speech, Cory is just what we expect of a Ranger Staff Sergeant. When someone at the VA Hospital told him, "Cory, some day you're going to walk out of here," Cory's response was, "No, I'm running out of here." (*Applause*)

You see, Staff Sergeant Cory Remsburg embodies the fighting spirit that has made our military forces great and made our country what it is. "Rangers lead the way" is the slogan of the Rangers, and whatever service you come from, I think all of us can relate to the importance of the words that are found in the Soldiers Creed, four simple lines, four declaratory statements: "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade. Four simple declaratory statements.

And I emphasize the "I," because these are promises one makes to the rest of the team. That on the toughest days you can count on my doing my part. Well, Staff Sergeant Cory Remsburg's life from his 10 deployments since 9/11 — hear that — 10 deployments

to his rescue by fellow Rangers, to his fight for his own life, epitomize that creed. He will not give up, period. And VA will not give up on him or any other veteran who needs us.

And the care and benefits promised by President Lincoln in 1865, that promise defines my mission, it is the purpose of the funding update that I just gave to you, and it is the mission of VA's 300,000 employees, and we will continue to look to the members of The American Legion for your assistance, your advice, and your advocacy as we fulfill that mission.

Thank you very much, and may God bless the men and women who serve, and have served this great nation, and may God continue to bless this wonderful nation of ours. Thank you all. (*Standing applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Our next guest was a 1977 Rhodes Scholar and a graduate of Harvard University Law School. In 1992, he won a three-way primary to represent Wisconsin in the U.S. Senate, and then went on to defeat a two-term incumbent. He was re-elected in the Senate in 1998 and 2004. In May 2010, President Obama signed legislation championed by this senator to cancel a pay increase for members of Congress. He has worked for years to end the automatic pay raise system for Congress, and is a leader in reforming political campaigns. Please welcome Senator Russ Feingold.

**Greetings: The Honorable Russell Feingold
United States Senator**

Thank you all. Let me congratulate The American Legion on its convention here, and congratulate you on your good sense of having it right here in Milwaukee, which is a great place. You're going to have a very good time here.

Through the sacrifice of the veterans and their families have made on behalf of our country, we absolutely have to do everything possible to ensure that they receive the care and the benefits that they have more than earned. And I want to particularly thank Leo Endres here in Wisconsin, and Clarence Hill at the national level, for their leadership in The American Legion.

Now, one of the greatest honors I have as a U.S. Senator is to work on issues that have to do with the brave men and women who serve this great country in uniform. And now with this news that the combat forces will be coming home from Iraq, that responsibility is even greater. This is about a society and country's shared responsibility to make sure that their needs are taken care of so they can re-transition into civilian life. So I want to just very briefly comment on a couple of things that have been done in Congress to try to move this forward.

We have made progress toward ensuring the high quality of care for our veterans on a timely basis by passing the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act. This new law's goal is to help end the delays that too often have caused hospitals and health care centers to put off buying equipment or hiring staff, and that often compromises the health of our veterans. But it isn't good enough just to authorize benefits and care for veterans, we've got to make sure that veterans know what's available to them, and many times they don't. That's why I authored The Veterans Outreach Improvement Act. The bill will provide state and local governments more money to conduct better outreach to veterans so they're aware of the benefits to which they're entitled. And I was

pleased that that bill was signed into law last December. It will help particularly in rural areas where the VA may not have this strong a presence.

Finally, I'm so pleased that our state and other states are finally getting some help in terms of vet centers. Places where people can come, veterans can come, to talk about things that have to do with their re-transition: Mental health issues; PTSD, but also other issue that have to do not with direct health care issues, acute health care issues, but have to do with the other problems that veterans often face.

Just a few years ago Wisconsin only had two vet centers, even though we have 470,000 veterans in the state. I was happy to be able to get a new one of these in Green Bay this year. There will be a new one in La Crosse shortly. And there was just an announcement thanks to the department, that there will be one in Wausau, Wisconsin as well. The veterans returning from abroad with record rates of mental health issues such as PTSD, the counseling provided by veterans to veterans at these facilities is more important than ever.

Let me also just say a word about the task and the honor of recognizing the service of those who have fallen and those who have served. Three quick examples that I have witnessed just in the past year: One has to do with a Civil War hero. In March 2010, the U.S. Army announced its recommendation that Delafield — this is Wisconsin — Delafield native and Civil War hero, Alonzo Cushing, be awarded the prestigious Congressional Medal of Honor. Now, this is rare, because it's usually not done posthumously. But his heroism at Gettysburg was so profound and amazing, that this award has been recommended, and it was somebody that is actually from here in Wisconsin.

Now on Memorial Day I was out doing what politicians do, I was at the parades; I ate a lot of bratwurst and corn. I paid tribute. But I wanted to do something just by myself. So my staff and I went over to Delafield. I just wanted to see the monument. We didn't alert the press. We brought a beautiful wreath. And I showed up at three o'clock, and lo and behold there was a huge group of people doing a Civil War reenactment in honor of this Cushing family. Four sons who had served this nation in the Civil War, they asked me to come over and fire one of the cannons. The first time I fired it, it didn't work. But they let me do it again, and it worked the second time in honor of Alonzo Cushing, and I was deeply moved.

Earlier this year I had a chance to go up to a place in Wisconsin called Merrill, where a lady named Eleanor Owen Pyle lives, she was one of those members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, a WASP, a civilian branch of the Army Air Forces during World War II. With our nation at war, she selfishly served her country and paved the way for future generations of women service members and pilots. I had the honor of presenting her with a Congressional Gold Medal at age 87. She looked great. She shed a little tear, but what really came forward was her smile. And all the women in the room who were in uniform, stood with her for a picture, because she knew that her sacrifice and her effort made it possible for women to play this role in our military. And I was deeply moved by that moment with Eleanor. (*Applause*)

The last example sadly was just from this very weekend. On Saturday I was asked to come and participate in a beautiful ceremony to dedicate a new veterans' memorial in a place in Wisconsin called Sauk Prairie, a gorgeous area not far from my house. And it was a very nice ceremony, and it was in honor of so many who had fallen who had served in that part of our state. But unbeknownst to me, and unbeknownst to many in the

audience, just the day before, Adam Novak, a 20 year old soldier from Prairie Du Sauk was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. So just as we were dedicating that memorial, another American had fallen in service to this country.

So I dedicate my thoughts to him and to his family and to you. We must bear witness to this part of our great history, and we do it best by providing the care and the resources to those who come back to this great country. Thank you for having me here today. *(Applause) ...National Vice Commander Avis assumed the chair.*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Our next speaker was elected to a second term to his current office in 2008 with 79 percent of the vote, the largest percentage of a Milwaukee mayoral candidate in 40 years. He forged relationships with faith-based groups and neighborhood organizations to strengthen the community's role in crime reduction. A former five-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives, he was previously a member of both the Wisconsin State Assembly and the State Senate. It is my pleasure to introduce to you Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: The Honorable Tom Barrett
Mayor of the City of Milwaukee**

Well good morning. Good morning. Welcome to Milwaukee. We are delighted to have you here, and it is a real honor to welcome you to our beautiful city. I want to begin by paying tribute to you and to all the members of the armed services who have served this great country. The sacrifices that you have made to preserve our freedoms, is something that every single American should remember for the rest of their lives. We are proud you are here. We thank you very, very much for your service.

I want to take a minute and share with you some of the important work we are doing right here in the City of Milwaukee to recognize veterans and their families. Just last week the City of Milwaukee signed a community covenant to formally commit the support of the city to soldiers and their families. Retired Army Colonel and American Legion member Mike Tobin, who is a member of my staff, was there to participate in this important ceremony. The City of Milwaukee takes great pride in employing distinguished veterans like Mike.

We also dedicated a special project in this community. We dedicated The American Legion Star Emblem at Kilbourn Park. For those of you who are not from the area, the effort was actually to recreate the emblem in as close to the same scale and color as what was a previous presentation made of annual flowers. From at least 1931, the 49 foot 7 inch diameter emblem was formed from segments of an iron template embedded in the hillside. The template was filled with some 6,000 live flowering annual plants, but this was discontinued in the 1990's due to the high cost of maintenance. We're proud to say that the emblem is back. The new emblem presentation in the original location in the park and also in the original iron frame consists of colored recycled glass pieces covered with a hard glaze. This new emblem will serve to welcome American Legion members and veterans for years to come. If you haven't seen it already, I hope you get a chance to visit this beautiful monument while you're here.

In July, we broke ground on Veterans Manor, a 52-unit apartment building which will provide one bedroom apartments for low income veterans. Many important services will be provided on site, including job counseling, computer training, VA benefit

assistance, on-site case management, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, GED attainment, vocational training and more. Valuable partnerships made this unique housing unit possible, and the city was pleased to commit more than \$550,000 to this effort.

Milwaukee is also pleased to be the home of Dryhooch of America, which opened just last week. I'm proud to be the mayor of this city that recognizes the sacrifices you've made and will continue to do all we can to help provide access to education, housing, and transitional services for our veterans and their families.

Again, we are proud you are here and we are thankful. Now, as mayor I have one final duty. Each year you go to a different community and I'm sure in each community there's a unique custom and the mayors are often there to tell you what the custom is. Just like other communities, we have a unique custom here in the City of Milwaukee. As you may have noticed, we have a lot of wonderful restaurants, we have a few taverns and we have very, very friendly people. This is a time of the year where we also have a lot of music in our parks. But we ask you to do one thing before you leave the city. Before you leave the city, if you could just take a moment, just one moment and make sure that you've spent all your money. *(Laughter)* Just a little local custom we have here. And if you could do that we would appreciate it. Again, thank you much for being here and have a great stay in Milwaukee. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Born in Racine, Wisconsin, our next guest was raised right here in Milwaukee. As a member of Congress, she is a strong advocate for ensuring our nation's veterans received the care they need to treat Post Traumatic Stress. She strongly supports increasing funding in this area and introduced legislation to promote confidential mental health care services for members of the military. She was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2004. Ladies and Gentlemen, Congresswoman Gwen Moore. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: The Honorable Gwen Moore
United States House of Representatives**

All right. Privates, seamen, airmen, sergeants, petty officers, lieutenants, admirals, generals, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, thank you for coming to Milwaukee and welcome to the 4th Congressional District of Wisconsin, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a great place on a great lake. I am so pleased that you have chosen Wisconsin once again for your 92nd Annual American Legion National Convention. And I am so proud to showcase my hometown for this auspicious occasion.

Let me tell you something: My association with American Legion goes way back to when I was about four years old at the Dorie Miller Post. My uncles and my father were members of the Dorie Miller Post in Racine, Wisconsin. And, so, there was an indelible impression that I had of military service being from a military family in the beginning. And when I first ran for office in 1988, the very first bill that had my name on it as chief sponsor was a bill that supports the educational opportunities for veterans, and that passion has persisted throughout my career as an elected official.

Let me say that I appreciate The American Legion because your call to service did not end when you left the Army or the Navy or the Marines or the Coast Guard or wherever you men and women served. It didn't end there. Because of your membership in The American Legion that call to service has been a second call to service to support the

men and women who have served. And, indeed, since 1919, you have done an amazing job.

Let me tell you how that has presented itself right here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Mayor of Milwaukee mentioned Dryhootch. Dryhootch is a project that originated right here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and it's a coffee house. I invite you to go visit it. It's at 1030 East Brady Street. You'll have a good cup of coffee, good comradeship, and it's a place where veterans can gather to heal. This organization is designed to make sure that those veterans who have survived the war can survive the peace by having their brothers and sisters around to help them through Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, through alcohol and drug addiction, through family reintegration problems. It is something that we have had inquiries from veterans' organizations from as far as Florida. But the original Dryhootch, ladies and gentlemen, is right here in the Milky Way, right here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Let me tell you something else. Milwaukee is home to one of three original soldiers' homes commissioned by President Abraham Lincoln. We have the soldiers' home that is in most intact with gorgeous, beautiful buildings and a beautiful campus right here in Zablocki Medical Center in West Milwaukee, part of the 4th Congressional District of Wisconsin. It is certainly a worthwhile thing. So our commitment to soldiers has a legacy that goes back that far.

Let me say in closing that The American Legion means a lot to this nation, but it means a lot in particular to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That Dryhootch project that I talked about would not have been possible were it not from the generous donation provided by The American Legion organization, and I want to personally thank you for that right now. And while you've heard many comments today about all the things that Congress is doing to help our soldiers and to help those veterans who have returned home in the areas of health care and homelessness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injury and educational opportunity and housing. You all know this already, none of this would have been possible were it not for the advocacy of The American Legion for these past 92 years. Thank you for being who you are, and thank you for allowing me to address your convention. Have a great time in Milwaukee and visit Dryhootch and our beautiful Zablocki Center, our original soldiers' home. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Elected as Milwaukee County Executive in 2002, after nine years in the state legislature, our next guest attended The American Legion's Badger Boys State Program while in high school. He was also selected as one of Wisconsin's two representatives to Boys Nation that year. He was active in the Boy Scouts of America and achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. As a member of the State Assembly, he authored Truth-in-Sentencing and voter-identification legislation. Please extend a warm welcome to County Executive Scott Walker. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Scott Walker
Milwaukee County Executive**

Good morning. To Commander Hill, to the officers of The American Legion, to the delegates of this convention for The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, to the sons and daughters of The American Legion, to family and friends, my fellow Americans, we are proud to have you here in Milwaukee County. We are proud to

welcome you back again for a convention. Just a decade ago having you here, it's a real honor to have you back in Milwaukee County.

I got to tell you, we're proud to have you here for a number of reasons. We're proud to have you here because we love this community and we're home to things like a world class zoo. A gold medal winning park system. One of the best ball fields in all of major league baseball, Miller Park. We're home to the Milwaukee Public Museum just down the way from this convention center. On the other end down by the lake we're home to Milwaukee Art Museum. And we're home, of course, to the Harley Davidson Museum. We hope you partake of all those attractions while you're here and have a very wonderful time.

But even more so, we're proud to have you here because we support our veterans. Each year, near Independence Day, we host a gathering called Operation Freedom where we invite our veterans, our military personnel and their families to come in for a free day to say thank you for the work that they've done and continue to do and to support the families that support them. Last year we had several local American Legion posts help us welcome 17,000 people into our zoo to say thank you and offer them a free day of family fun. We appreciate the support from those local chapters. *(Applause)*

Just a few years ago, in this site and several others throughout Milwaukee County, we welcomed one of the most successful National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and we were able to pull that off with the support again of so many veterans and supporters in this community who support our veterans and support our military personnel. And probably one of the best examples of this on an ongoing basis, if you just go down just out the door here down Wisconsin Avenue and head near the lake, you'll see that one of our most prized locations in all of Milwaukee County, a spot that's at the edge of downtown on the shores of Lake Michigan, is precisely where we put the Milwaukee County War Memorial where our motto is "To Honor the dead by serving the living." We support our veterans and we are proud to have you here now. *(Applause)*

And finally, I just want to say on a personal level how proud I am. As was mentioned in the introduction, 25 years ago my interest in public service, not just in politics or campaigning, but in serving the public was forged up in Ripon College as part of being a member and a delegate to Badger Boys State. Then I had the honor and distinction as being one of the two sent to Washington.

It was a great joy on Sunday when I participated in your parade, and then I saw him again just behind stage, to see my adult counselor, Bob Turner from Georgia, who was your Commander in 1990-'91. He didn't really want me to tell you it was 25 years ago, but it was. But Bob Turner has continued, he took the place of one of our favorites from Florida, Casey Cason, on the staff helping lead Boys Nation just as Casey did in the past and energizing our delegates and making it one of the most life-changing experiences any young man would go through. The same being true for Girls State and Girls Nation, as well.

I just got to tell you, between that and then the honor for me of coming back and serving for several years on the Badger Boys State staff and to see Marty Justis here and serving for him, working for Marty for three years on the Boys Nation staff, I got to tell you personally what a pride it is. How proud I am to stand before you as someone who learned the value of public service from the men and women who are part of one of the nation's finest, The American Legion.

On behalf of all of us here in Milwaukee County, I want to say we're proud to have you here. We're proud to welcome you to our community. We're proud that you participate and lead the way, whether it's in Boys State or Girls State, whether it's in Boys Nation or Girls Nation, the Oratory Contest, The American Legion Baseball, all of the programs you do to make sure the young people of our country continue to be great leaders in the future. But most of all, on behalf of all of us who honor what you have done in a commitment to this country in serving our country in the military and the fact that you continue to serve not only our country but our states and our community here today and everyday as a part of The American Legion, thank you, thank you, thank you. Godspeed, good to see you and God bless America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Our next speaker is a Vietnam-era veteran of the United States Navy. He has served the Wisconsin American Legion well, at the post, district and department level. An adjutant for 30 years at Post 360 in Waunakee, he was elected Department Commander for the 2009/2010 year. Please join me in welcoming Past Department Commander Leo Endres. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Leo Endres
2009-2010 Wisconsin Department Commander**

Commander Hill, Legionnaires and distinguished guests. Department of Wisconsin's American Legion family welcomes you to the 92nd Annual National Convention. The Wisconsin Convention delegation led by Wayne and Diane have worked hard to make this enjoyable and exceptional week for you. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help make your stay more enjoyable.

We hope you have taken some time to see the many attractions around Milwaukee. There are a great variety of eating establishments to enjoy and beautiful sites to see. The lakefront is the home of the war memorial and the beautiful Lake Michigan. And stop by Miller Park or tour Miller Brewery, but Schlitz made Milwaukee famous.

All of us have one thing in common. We are veterans and we have proudly served our country to keep America free. Thank you for your service in joining us in Milwaukee this year.

Commander Hill, thank you for your leadership this past year. God bless you, God bless our troops and God bless America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Wayne Jensen is a veteran of three military branches, serving the U.S. Navy in the Republic of Vietnam, the Coast Guard in Milwaukee, and the 440th Tactical Airlift Wing of the Air Force Reserve, also in Milwaukee. A retired police lieutenant, Wayne serves on The American Legion National Foreign Relations Commission. Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the 2010 American Legion Convention Corporation of Wisconsin, Wayne Jensen. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Wayne Jensen, President
2010 American Legion Convention Committee**

Greetings fellow Legionnaires. It is humbling and a very surreal moment for me, as I bring you greetings from the Wisconsin American Legion family. Except for them there

Minnesota Vikings and the Bears, we pretty much love everybody here in Wisconsin. The cheerfulness and smiles on the faces of the clerks, the waitresses, and the bus drivers is genuine. We Badgers pride ourselves in friendliness. Our goal this week is to have you enjoy yourself so much that you can't wait to come back in 2020.

Thank you very much. Have a wonderful convention. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: A century of great traditions and values. That is what the Boy Scouts of America have given this country. It is fitting today that we honor the Boy Scouts, now in its 100th year. The American Legion has officially supported the Boy Scouts since our first national convention back in 1919, making it the first youth organization recognized by our organization.

Today, more than 2,700 Scouting units serving more than 71,000 young people are chartered by American Legion posts, American Legion Auxiliary units, and Sons of The American Legion squadrons.

In 2009, service projects were conducted by more than 2.8 million youth members and more than 1.1 million volunteers. Nearly 37 million service hours were given by members of this great organization last year in projects ranging from community clean-ups to military appreciation. Simply put, the Scouts stand for God, Country and Service. Sound familiar? Representing the Boy Scouts of America and accepting, on behalf of his organization, The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal is Assistant Chief Scout Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Boy Scouts of America, Jim Terry. *(Applause)*

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal
James J. Terry
Assistant Chief Scout Executive and Chief Financial Officer
Boy Scouts of America

I'm honored today to be here to accept this singular recognition from The American Legion on behalf of Chief Scout Executive Bob Mazuka and the entire organization. It becomes even more humbling when you are aware of those who have received this Distinguished Service Medal recognition in years past.

The Boy Scouts of America accepts this award with humility, but want you to know that the Boy Scouts of America in this our centennial year is planning to be around for another second century and beyond.

Please permit me to share with you a personal story. In my hometown of Peterstown, West Virginia, there are no traffic signals. In fact, in the entire county there's not even one red flashing light. My hometown sits on the West Virginia-Virginia border about a mile from New River, and is home to maybe 600 people. During World War II it sent its share of sons into battle. Many were called and went. Most came home, but some did not. There's a proud American Legion post there, the Rowe-Jones Post 145. It is named for the first and the last soldier killed in combat in World War II.

Lieutenant Claude Rowe, an Army Air Corps pilot who was acting as a tail gunner in a lead plane flying on brand new B-17 on Christmas Eve in 1944. They were shot down and he was killed during his descent, his parachute descent, by strafing. The Jones part of the name of Rowe-Jones Post comes from Punch Jones, who was an infantryman

with the 387th Infantry killed in action April the 1st, 1945, and he left a three-month old son behind.

Both of these men had brothers who also served who came back home and made lasting contributions to my hometown. My dad was one of those. My dad was an Army Air Corps cadet, trained in Texas, was assigned to the 5th Air Force, 312 Bomb Group and served his flying time combat missions in the Pacific. Punch Jones had four brothers, all who served in the military. One of those brothers was also in the Army Air Corps and he was a radio specialist. He spent most of the time training new radio operators, but also ferrying airplanes across the ocean. Every now and then he would hitch a ride on a combat mission because they always needed a radio specialist along. And with a smile to this day he tells stories that hitching rides on those planes got him in hot water because he had no authorization to fly in combat.

About 10 years after the war this brother of Punch Jones, this brother's name is Tom Jones, a group of men approached Tom Jones and asked him to be Scoutmaster for Troop 151 in my hometown. Tom Jones said yes. He had his own family to worry about, but he recognized early on that Scouting was a good thing for the community and thought it was the right thing for him to do. I thought he was a great guy at the time, but as I grow older I realize more and more the true impact Tom Jones, this member of American Legion Post 145, just like my dad was a member, the impact that he had on my hometown. I always thought he was extraordinary, but after I've come to know more Legionnaires across the country, I realize it's something that all of you do because it's part of your creed to make your community a better place in which to live. Not so much for yourself, but for other people. And that continues to this day.

You know, the concept of doing one's best, to have a sense and respect for duty to God, along with one's duty to country, has always been part of Scouting and it always will be. And the magic in Scouting happens when men and women of good character come together to deliver the Scouting program to young people in their community. In a world where the only constant is change and where all values are shifting and ethics are often situational, they need a firm foundation on which to build the lives of character, service, leadership, and achievements. Lives like you have help build. Kids today need the words, those 40 simple words, found in the Scout Oath.

As I close today I want to ask each of you, if you feel so led, to stand and join me in reciting the Scout Oath. Because I contend once you learn it, you never forget it. I want also, as you stand, to remember where you were when you first learned these words. I want you to remember the troop leaders that you had, and many of them were probably Legionnaires. I want you to remember the scouts who stood beside you and remember the leaders who were there taking away time from their family to share it with you so you could become the man that you are today. Scout Sign: "On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to obey the Scout law and to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." Two.

Thank you very much Legionnaires. *(Applause)* ... *National Commander Hill resumed the chair.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ladies and Gentlemen, please turn your attention to the video screen as part of our next presentation.

... *A video was played for the delegates.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: What you have just seen is the side of war not often shown to the public. America's military members are humanitarians. Death and destruction will always remain a part of war, but our soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen have always gone to great lengths to protect and assist the civilian population. Our first Patriot Award winner today, Major David Howell of the Michigan National Guard epitomizes the compassion that our soldiers have for innocent civilians. He played a key role in ensuring that the young boy, Mohammed, received the medical care in the United States that he needed. It is a perfect example of what separates us from our enemies. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a 2010 Patriot Award winner, Major David A. Howell. *(Standing applause)*

Special Presentation: The American Legion Patriot Award
Major David Howell
Michigan National Guard

Thank you. I want to thank The American Legion for this prestigious award. I'm very humbled and honored to receive it today. Prior to today my only distinction was, as a former Coast Guard officer, I was the only person in the Army that knew how to tie 13 knots. *(Laughter)*

But little did I know that a combat mission in Ramadi to protect several hundred women and children from a suicide bomber would culminate in my standing before you today. I've been very fortunate over the past year and a half to be associated with so many wonderful and caring individuals and groups, and I want to just mention a couple of them today. Dr. Edward Lanigan and his surgical team, including Lieutenant Colonel retired Charles Thomas and the other doctors and nurses from Sparrow Hospital in the Michigan State University Department of Surgery who performed five life-saving reconstructive surgeries on Mohammed. I'd also like to thank the Muslim host family in East Lansing that was a surrogate family for him during his one-year stay in the United States. Also like to thank the Greater Lansing Islamic School for providing his education, as well. I'd also like to thank the men of the finest light infantry battalion in the National Guard, the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry of the 37th Brigade Combat Team, of which I am a proud member, preparing for deployment to Afghanistan in the near future.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family that supported me during Mohammed's stay here and also during my four prior deployments. Little did I know that the Army medical recruiter that recruited me into the National Guard, she told me that I could have two jobs. One of them was to go to the Army Medical Command in Lansing, where I would do histories and physicals on one weekend a month, and the other job could be with an infantry battalion in Flint, Michigan. And she said that, you know, we've tried a lot of different PAs with this infantry battalion. No one seems to stick. They all are there for a few months or a year and I'm sure you don't want to go there. And I told her, give me that assignment. And it's been one of the best things that has ever happened to me. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "For your unwavering devotion to children in need. While serving as a physician's assistant with the Michigan National Guard in Ramadi, your compassion and determination to help a severely burned Iraqi boy led to dramatic life-altering surgeries for the youth as you arranged for his medical treatment

and transportation to the United States. Your establishment of the Martyr Medical Fund for Children will not only provide for the needs of this boy and his family, but will also assist other children of Iraqi interpreters that are killed in the line of duty. On behalf of the 2.5 million wartime veterans of The American Legion, thank you for your service to this nation and for following your motto: 'Believe in a cause greater than yourself.' Presented this 31st day of August 2010 at the 92nd National Convention." (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ladies and gentlemen, you have just seen a presentation concerning one aspect of this war. It is only fitting that we watch this next video presentation about our other Patriot Award winners, which is a grim reminder of why we must fight and win the Global War on Terrorism. ...*A video was played for the delegates.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: In case you did not notice in the video, it was an American Legion cap that Duane Jackson was wearing. In fact, all three of today's Patriot Award winners are Legionnaires.

There is no telling how many innocent men, women, and children would have died had it not been for the brave actions of our other Patriot Award winners. They chose to "get involved," and a major terrorist attack was thwarted as a result. They served our nation honorably during the Vietnam War, and they have made a significant contribution to protecting the homeland during the current war. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our 2010 American Legion Patriot Award winners, Duane M. Jackson and Lance L. Orton, Sr. (*Standing applause*)

ANNOUNCER: The awards read: "For your life-saving assistance and public vigilance. While selling merchandise as a vendor in the heart of New York City on May 1, 2010, your perceptive observation skills and sense of civic duty led you to discover a suspicious vehicle that was packed with explosives intended to inflict massive casualties upon innocent bystanders. By alerting authorities, a barbaric terrorist attack upon Times Square was thwarted and a major blow to America's confidence was averted in the Global War on Terrorism. Your actions saved potentially hundreds, if not thousands, of lives. This was not the first time you answered your nation's call as proven by your honorable service to this country during the Vietnam War. On behalf of the 2.5 million wartime veterans of The American Legion, thank you for your service to this nation and the contributions that you have made in keeping your community and country safe. Presented this 31st day of August 2010 at the 92nd National Convention." (Applause)

MR. JACKSON: Good afternoon everyone. First of all, I'd like to make two presentations of my own. My mother, Ruth M. Taylor, American Legionnaire, Post 28, Roswell, New Mexico, Fort Bragg, 1941. I brought with me today her Legionnaire hat, and I'd like to make this hat a presentation to the New Mexico contingency, the Roswell Post that she belonged to for over 12 years. She was an Army nurse. After retirement she became a Navy nurse in Long Beach, California Naval Hospital, and certainly I know if she were here today looking at all of you and me and saying that's my son, he and his comrade did the right thing. And exactly, that's what we did May 1st. Lance came from the left flank, I came from the right and we got the results we needed. Thank you so much. (*Applause*)

I'd also like to present National Commander Hill, we are street vendors in New York City, Lance and I — so we do keep our day jobs — with one of our T-shirts that says, as Lance always says, "You see something, you say something." You speak up. You get involved. And this is one of the things we tell children all over our great nation to get involved. *(Applause)*

My fellow Legionnaires, I am honored and humbled to have been invited to address the 92nd Convention. We are here, we The American Legion, honorable men and women who have proudly served our country. The time, however, is now for hundreds and thousands of us across the U.S. to stand together and say no more to political wars. Whether it's 47 dead in the month of June or 58,000 dead in Vietnam, no more to political wars. No one is more dedicated to a strong national defense than we are. However, regarding this war, it is up to us, my fellow Legionnaires, to converge on the halls of Congress, to those who represent us and replace their agenda for the people's agenda. Stop sending our men and women, our soldiers and sailors into harm's way with one arm behind their back. *(Applause)*

We need people in Congress to do the people's will, Democrats and Republicans alike and stop this Potomac two-step. Our enemies call us the Great Satan, they who strap bombs to children and women all in the name of Allah, and they call us the devil. I ask my fellow Legionnaires, if not now then when; if not us, then who? Across the country we volunteer at VA hospitals, at burn centers, and we give comfort to those who have fought for our way of life, and we owe a great debt to those who did not come home. And when we must go to a war, we must change the way we construct our war strategy, a way that will not waste tens of thousands of valuable lives.

Right now, my fellow Legionnaires, I urge you to join me, with God on our side, our mission is clear, there is no right way to do a wrong thing. So here in Milwaukee it is our duty to go to the halls of Congress and urge those in charge to replace these failed strategies and give our men and women in harm's way all that they need. There was a General once who said, "Go in with overwhelming force and get the job done." God bless you all. God bless America. Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

MR. ORTON: Good afternoon everyone. Fellow Legionnaires. I didn't prepare a speech, but I will say this incident has severely changed my life. On May 1st, Saturday, 2010, which you might have read in the newspapers, as you all know, there are thousands of people that are always in the Times Square section of New York City. But this particular day, there was hundreds and hundreds of people dancing on the street where Duane and I work, 45th street and Broadway. And the louder the music was played, the more people converged on this corner.

And I saw on the news so many times: How did this guy slip in there? Well, anyone could have slipped in there when you have hundreds and hundreds of people oblivious to what's going on around them. And I sat down for a second that day and I said to myself, something wrong is going to happen today. There are too many people converging in one area. And I sat down and I looked to my left and there's an SUV not two feet away from me.

As Duane said, we don't let cars stay on the corner because tourist buses and different vehicles have to turn that corner, so it has to be clear. So, it seems strange when there's a vehicle staying right there. I tried to peek if anyone was inside, but the windows were dark. But what I did notice was smoke in an unusual place that was seemingly

moving along, such as when a fuse is lit. And the first thing that came to my mind, I said, my goodness, I bet this is bomb. I saw three officers. I alerted one on horseback and two more on foot. They immediately began to get people out of the area. I guess most of you know the story because it's been told worldwide.

It's a very humbling experience. I can't explain how it is to be so close to something and realize, like I realized, if that thing had of blown, there wouldn't have been enough of me left to bury. So, my moral to today is, as my shirt says, if you ever come to 45th Street and Broadway, "If you see something, say something," because it might be your life.

I have a lot of people say to me that come from all over the world, well, we don't have to worry; we have guys like you and Duane to look out. No. When they say enemy foreign and domestic, we got a problem here folks. A lot of these guys are here. That's domestic. And we can't sleep on it. No one knows that better than I do after that day. But we, as veterans, Legionnaires, we have to let civilians know that it's not our job to look, it's all of our jobs to be vigilant and alert, especially during these times.

In the past, these things would have never happened. I come from a long line of soldiers. My grandmother used to have a mantle with all of our pictures: My dad, her husband; my grandfather; my uncles. So I come from a long legacy of soldiers who were making hospital corners when I was a little kid. I never thought after all of these years of being away from war that anything like this would happen.

Please, folks, stay alert. Spread the word to stay alert because these guys are here, among us, and some of them look just like us. Thank you for this wonderful award and presentation, and God bless America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before I introduce our next speaker, I ask that the Legion Riders that are presenting checks for the Legacy Fund please gather behind the stage in order to expedite the presentation.

Our next guest was elected National Commander at the 38th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion last August in Louisville. He's a member of Squadron 127 in Buford, Georgia, and resides in Tucker, a suburb of Atlanta. He has served in the Sons at every level, and is eligible for membership through the service of his father, a 55 year Legionnaire and an Army veteran of the Korean War. A graduate of the Citadel, Mark and his wife are strong supports of the Auxiliary. Their three daughters are all Junior Auxiliary members. Please give a warm welcome to the immediate Past National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Mark E. Arneson. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Mark E. Arneson, Georgia
Past National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

Afternoon y'all. How y'all all doing? Y'all doing all right? It's good to hear. Good to hear.

In Louisville we launched Operation Proud Son. And Operation Proud Son was based on three simple concepts: Pride in our loved ones service in the U.S. armed forces; Pride in America, and pride in The American Legion.

Today I'm a proud son to have served as National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion to honor my father. It is my belief that the quintessential thank you that you can give as a son to your father or mother, grandfather, grandmother, great

grandfather if that's the case, is a membership in the Sons of The American Legion. My role as a son is to make sure that his efforts, his sacrifices, and his experiences in Korea are not forgotten by my family and those affiliated with us.

As Defense Secretary Gates told us, our military sacrifices in Iraq should not be forgotten. I had the privilege this past summer to take part in ceremony to see that the Korean War veterans are not forgotten. You see, South Korea put together this beautiful tribute, if you will, to the Korean veterans that served, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the start of the conflict known as the Korean War. It was a beautiful ceremony. The governor came and spoke. They had a beautiful dinner. And then if y'all haven't seen it, they travel around the country. The little angels gave a beautiful performance. They're called the Little Ambassadors of South Korea. And their sole purpose, just as the Sons, was to say thank you, and remind us that because of the sacrifices that the U.S. military and the U.S. made in Korea back in the 1950s, today 54 million people live in freedom. Live in freedom, what a beautiful thing. And all they were there to do was to say thank you and recognize those veterans. And I was very privileged to be there that evening and to see my father's pride and be a part of that pride. And I will take that memory and pass that down to my kids so they will not forget what their grandfather and great grandfather did for our great country. And for what all Korean veterans do and for what all y'all do. It was a tremendous thing.

It is my belief that when you make membership personal and one of pride, you do not need a gimmick to promote it. There is nothing more powerful than pride, and that is what the Sons are about. With Operation Proud Son, we brought professionalism and business concepts to focus our growth this past year. We were able to increase our market penetration by one percent. I know in the Legion's side you all focus on Legionnaires to eligible veterans in your community. On the Sons' side we wanted to focus on squadrons to posts. We were able to increase that by one percent this past year.

We were able to put in place an incentive program known as the Triple Nickel to reward those detachments for their wonderful efforts in what they do to promote membership and increase our membership.

We also wanted to bring the concept of employee of the month to the Sons. While I couldn't give anybody a good parking spot or an increase in their paycheck, we gave them something called a Son That Shines, to recognize those individuals. We often say it's the blue cappers out there that do all the work. But what do we do for the blue cappers? And that is why we put in place the program called a Son That Shines. A simple thank you, to recognize their efforts for what they've done for the Sons and for The American Legion, and for this great country.

As a result of all these efforts, I'm proud to say once again the Sons hit another all time high in membership, a tradition that we have continued since 1983, and one that we're tremendously proud of. And the best way I know to say thank you is to increase our membership every year.

I was able to start off this next year, 2010-11 off on a positive note. As y'all noticed, James Terry came before us, and mentioned that he was proud of his father's service in World War II. We're going to take care of business tonight at the banquet and get him signed up in the Sons in Texas to continue on this tradition of all time highs.

Operation Proud Son had two missions: We wanted to double our VAVS representation, and hit \$500,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation. I'm proud to say that we accomplished both missions. *(Applause)*

We were able to increase our VAVS representation from forty to eighty-two, and it's our goal by that by September 30th we're going to get as close to a hundred as we can. That is the VA fiscal year. And that is our goal this year to hit a hundred. And we've got the guys understanding now what we're about. Because when we stand up at the beginning our meetings, we say we're a proud possessor of a priceless heritage. And I know no better way to do that, than to take care of our veterans and know what is going on in this these VA facilities. And that's why it is of so vitally importance that we increase our representation there. And I extend the invitation to y'all to help us out in this effort. Because y'all know the Sons are out there. They're working in these facilities and taking care of the veterans. Let's get them involved in the process. Y'all know this ever since y'all started in 1919. We are a little slow on this one, but I think with some help we're going to get there, the full representation, as the new elected commander told us on Sunday. Not only did we hit 500,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation, we did \$540,000. Almost a \$200,000 increase over last year, which given this economy makes a tremendous statement of what the Sons are about. We doubled VAVS. We hit our goal. We took care of two pillars of what The American Legion was founded upon. *(Applause)*

I want to say thank you to all the departments that graciously extended the invitation to allow me to come into your Legion family for a weekend, and be a part of y'all. I've been asked several time what I'm going to miss about being national commander, and my response is simple: I'm going to miss making friends on a weekly basis as I travel around and meet so many great Americans that do so many great things for us, and that is what I'm going to miss. When we get to these afternoons in the fall, that is going to be tough for me to come to grips on, but I will do it.

I want to say thank you to my American Legion family in Georgia. It is my belief that you don't elect a person to be national commander of the Sons. You elect somebody that will represent the department, and to the Department of Georgia I hope I have done you proud this year, and what I've done as national commander, and for that honor I say thank you. *(Applause)*

On the national level, I hope y'all are sure proud of us and what we have done this year, because we're sure proud of what ya'll did and what ya'll do. And I hope what we did makes y'all proud because we're certainly very proud of y'all. The Legion is coming up on a hundred years, a hundred years of service to this great country. We have the right ideas, yes. But I think there's something more that helps us to achieve all these great things that that we have achieved over all these 92 years. And I think when you stop and think about how y'all started y'all's meeting today, when y'all stood up and said, "For God and country." For God and country. And there you know the key to our success right there in those simple words.

One the neat things you get to do as national commander is to go the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois and give tribute to our 16th President of the United States. Lincoln is known for having said many great things, so I thought, well, I might as well plagiarize him and share some of his thoughts. And as I was going through trying to come up with that quote, I found the one that our Legion forefathers must have read as well, and read it the same way that I did. Because during the Civil War Abraham Lincoln was asked, "Is God on our side? Is God going to help us win this war?" Lincoln's response was, "My concern is not that God is on our side, but my greatest concern is that we are on God's side, for God is always right." For God is always right.

As Ben Stein said up here, "We come to God and say we need your help." But it is our actions here that make God's possibilities a reality. And we understand that here in The American Legion family when we stand up and say, "For God and country."

While we close out Operation Proud Son and say mission accomplished, we still have an ultimate objective out there that we will continue to strive for, and that is to keep God number one, keep veterans number one, and keep America number one in the hearts and minds of our fellow countrymen. Thank you and God bless. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada Association, or ANAVETS, is Canada's oldest veterans' and community service organization with more than 18,000 members and 70 units throughout Canada. There is one unit in the USA referred to as ANAVICUS. Today, we are most fortunate to have with us a gentleman who has dedicated his life to Canada's veterans and their families. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1957 to 1972. Legionnaires, please join me in welcoming Gordon Marsh, the dominion president of The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Gordon Marsh , Dominion President
Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada**

Thank you, Commander. National Commander Hill, ANAVICUS President Comer, National Adjutant Wheeler, honored guests and comrades, it is an honor for me to have been invited to address you today at your 92nd National Convention.

I would like to mention something that I have not written down. In our association, we have an award; it's called the Award of Merit. It's the highest award our association gives, and I'm proud to say that three ANAVICUS members have it. They are Comrade Jake Comer, Dan Ludwig, and Bob Spanogle. So, we always say at our conventions, stand and be recognized for your service. Please stand, gentlemen. *(Applause)* And we thank you.

On behalf of the executives and all members the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to bring you greetings, and to be able to express our appreciation for the friendship that exists between our two associations. The men and women of the armed forces of our country established this friendship and brotherhood, as comrades in arms in past wars. This bond, forged in combat, makes our relationship unique and enduring. Today our mutual concern for our troops and our veterans continues to join us together.

Comrades, even while our young men and women are again fighting shoulder to shoulder in Afghanistan, as a veterans' organization we continue to fight for the dignity of our men and women who return from duty injured. As well, we should never forget the importance of the role that the spouse plays in all of this. If you think about it, the spouse is really the unsung hero to the men and women that we send off to war. A spouse will most likely have to give up a career to enable the military member to be away on courses or on assignments, frequently for six months, or a year, or longer. Should there be children, then the spouse will have to do double time in satisfying those requirements as well. All without the support of his or her loved one.

And should the soldier, sailor, or airman and women come back injured, their lot in life has just taken another nosedive. He or she now has to be the care giver and motivator,

all of this without pay or compensation in any way. In fact, in Canada the family is only guaranteed a taxable 75 percent of what they earned should they become released for their injury. And for a young private or corporal, this isn't very much at all. Even this is cut off at age sixty-five.

So, in Canada the fight is just beginning. We still have a long way to go to provide the dignity and respect that our military men and women deserve. And when you think about those men and women in uniform, you almost must think of the spouse, and the freedom that he or she has given up to support our country. So when we speak about veterans, we also include the spouse.

Comrades, the ANAVETS motto is "Shoulder to shoulder." Thank you for allowing me to stand shoulder to shoulder with you today, and let me reaffirm the ANAVETS solemn pledge to stand by our troops and our veterans. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Royal British Legion is committed to safeguarding the welfare, interests, and memory of those who are serving or have served in the British Armed Forces. The organization has been campaigning for the rights of service personnel and ex-service personnel since its formation in 1921. We are fortunate today to have with us the national chairman of one of the United Kingdom's largest membership organizations, John Farmer.

**Greetings: John Farmer, National Chairman
The Royal British Legion**

Good afternoon American Legionnaires. I can't tell you how privileged I am to be here today, so thank you Commander Hill for your invitation.

If I just tell you my first connection with the American services was in 1946 when I was six years old, and I was in the hospital, a children's hospital. Two events occurred in that year for me. One, Darby County won the soccer football association cup that year, the first after the war. The second was to meet American G.I.s who came around with chocolates and sweets and books and things. And of course, that was only a kind of a way to get into the hospital to chase the nurses around. That's what we found out later.

Often I am asked what makes a charity a successful charity? Well, I think the answer would be the same that you would give, it's the people. People like yourselves who give time, effort, expertise, and money into making sure that what you deliver is delivered professionally and with an arm around the shoulder and love and concern for your fellow servicemen, women and ex-servicemen and women.

Remembrance is very, very important to us. Often people think that the Royal British Legion is just there in November on November 11th, a remembrance time. But I can assure you we remember every second, every minute, every hour, every day, every week, every month, every year. And I'm sure you do too. Because once we start to forget to remember, then we will find ourselves in great difficulties, and so will the people that we intend to look after.

Our troops, yours and ours, are now serving in Iraq and Afghanistan side-by-side for many, many years. And it's a good thing too, because we all love the same object, to ensure that the peace reigns in the world. That we can look forward to a safer world. That we can look forward to developing things so that our children and our children's children can have a safe and peaceful life.

One of the things that we are concerned with is to ensure that we remember those who made the final sacrifice and to also ensure that we look after those who are wounded, not only physically, but mentally too. We have found that through stress, traumatic stress, that it's 15, maybe 20 years before that condition shows itself. So we always have to be aware that this could raise its ugly head later on in life. And I'm sure many of you have experienced the same people who suffer from those conditions.

Our mission, as your commander said, is probably not much different from yours. It's to safeguard the interests, the welfare and the memory of those who serve or who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

Next year, we're a little bit younger than you; next year is our 90th anniversary, 90 years of providing service, not self. Absolutely wonderful. Just the same as you. So next year is going to be a watershed in the life of the Royal British Legion in England, and we'll be planning for the next 90 years. And I think that's very important that we should look forward to what we've got to do in the future. Make no mistake about it; the challenge will always be there. The challenge to look after those less fortunate than ourselves. So next year for me, as my first conference in 2011 is going to be very, very challenging, and challenging for the Royal British Legion as a whole.

I don't want to continue much on; because I'm sure there are more people with something more important than I to say. I can only say this to you that it's important that we continue with our relationship, and recognize each of its values, and hopefully one day we can call upon each other to serve each other.

I just want to end it with a humorous note. Our guy this morning, the staff sergeant I believe he was in the American Air Force, said behind every good man is a good woman. Well, that's true. But remember this, guys, behind every successful husband is a very surprised mother-in-law. Thank you. *(Laughter and applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Sixty years ago, war broke out on the Korean Peninsula. Called by some "The Forgotten War," the legacy of the Korean War veterans is one of freedom, as evidenced by the vibrant and robust nation that South Korea is today. The Korean Veterans Association is a patriotic honor organization that strives for veterans' friendship, welfare, promotion, and rights. With us today is a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran and a graduate of the Korean Naval Academy. Please extend a warm American Legion welcome to Secretary General Shin, Won-Bae of the Korean Veterans Association. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Major General Shin, Won-Bae (Ret.)
Secretary General, Korean Veterans Association**

Mr. National Commander Clarence Hill, American Legionnaires, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen. On the occasion of the 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion, I would like to extend on behalf of the 8.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association, my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you.

First of all, I am very grateful to you for your invitation and warm welcome. It is my great pleasure to meet and join with you today in this beautiful city of Milwaukee. You American Legionnaires, you are the veterans who bravely fought in many kinds of war, such as the Second World War, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and the several

recent wars. You were willing to sacrifice even your precious lives for world peace and the promise of mankind.

There must be many Korean War veterans here today as this year marks the 60th annual anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. The Korean government and the Korean Veterans Association have been holding various commemorative events. On behalf of the members of the Korean Veterans Association I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Korean War veterans who put their lives on the line, sacrificing for the cost of liberty. Since 1975 in order to express the Korean people's appreciation to Korean War veterans, the Korean government and the Korean Veterans Association have invited you and Korean War veterans and their families to Korea. In particular, in this 60th anniversary year, we have been inviting 2,400 Korean War veterans and families from 21 U.N. allied nations, including 1,200 from the United States of America. We have also had many events in the 21 Korean War participating countries in honor of the Korean War veterans, and the first Peace Camp for Youth, inviting children of the Korean War veterans to Korea.

Over the last 10 years I have served in the Korean Veterans Association myself, it has been my special honor and privilege to welcome you veterans visiting Korea at different times on the visits to the Korean program. Today, I am very happy to meet many again here in the United States of America. Today, the Republic of Korea stands as a strong democratic and peaceful nation, and as a peacekeeper of the United Nations, it is making every effort, in many parts of the world, to return your contributions.

It was your unselfish service in Korea more than half a century ago, which allowed the beautiful country to bloom. With courage and determination you brought a halt to the communist aggression and ensured the freedom of Korea today. However, in recent years we have seen rising tension and unstable environments on the Korean peninsula due to North Korean aggression. It was clearly demonstrated by the recent tragic incident that North Korea attacked and sank our navy ship patrolling the North Korean limit line, killing 46 young sailors. As proven bonded allies, the United States of America and the Republic of Korea are doing their utmost to make North Korea give up the nuclear program and become a peaceful member of the world community.

I think that we all have a great responsibility today to make the seed of peace and freedom planted by the Korean War veterans 60 years ago bear rich fruit on the Korean peninsula. Dear American Legionnaires, as a veteran of war myself, who fought with U.S. soldiers in the jungle, I have a strong confidence that you will continue to support, as you have always done, for a strong U.S. alliance and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean peninsula.

I also believe that the strong relationship between The American Legion and the Korean Veterans Association will become even stronger as time goes by. May God bless your great organization of The American Legion. May God bless you, veterans and your families. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Years ago the Republic of China established a Veterans Affairs Commission to render care and services to nearly 580,000 veterans and their families living in the Taiwan area by solving their living problems, as well as to provide medical care, home care, employment opportunities, and education assistance. Under VAC's integrated plans, all veterans are assured that the able-bodied will be employed; the well-educated, fully utilized; the ill, hospitalized; and the children,

orphaned, widowed, elderly and disabled, cared for. We are fortunate to have with us today a man who has dedicated his life to veterans and their families. Please welcome the director of the Overseas Liaison Department for the Republic of China's Veterans Affairs Commission, Hans Song. (*Applause*)

**Greetings: Hans Song, Director
Overseas Liaison Department Veterans Affairs Commission
Republic of China**

Well good afternoon. National Commander and your great staff, ladies and gentlemen, I'm from Taiwan, the Republic of China, and please remember people from the island are all very considerate. It's passing 1:00 already, many of you are hungry, and I'll make my remarks very short.

First of all, I want to bring gratitude and appreciation on behalf of my country, especially from President Ma Ying-jeou, and my boss, the minister, who cannot be here this time.

The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission in Taiwan have associated with each other for over 50 years. And in the past 50 years we appreciated very much that The American Legion has never failed to pass resolutions in support of my country, the Republic of China in Taiwan. (*Applause*) Thank you. And because of your support we are able to defend ourselves. We are able to progress in carrying out democracy. And because of your support, we have very strong friends from the United States.

Two years ago, our new administration, led by President Ma Ying-jeou, came into office, and he stressed in developing the relationship between Taiwan and so-called China. It is China already. There is no more hostility between each other. Instead, we are focusing on improving the economic relationship between the two. And just this past June 30th, the two sides signed the agreement so-called ECA, the Economical Cooperation Agreement. And with that, everybody in the states I think would especially like it, because after the signing of this agreement, the economic situation in Taiwan is booming up. Right after the signing of this, President Ma Ying-jeou encouraged all his people in Taiwan, we will make no wars, because nobody is entitled to waging wars. We will make friends, and we will make money, and we are doing that. (*Applause*)

Thank you. And another thing he mentioned when he was interviewed by a reporter from CNN, he stressed that we will not ask Americans to fight for us. You see, nobody likes wars, especially veterans. Veterans know wars, but veterans do not like wars. And we in Taiwan will not and do not like wars, and waging wars. But, every country, even though we do not like wars, we have to be well-equipped to defend ourselves. This is why I'm coming here to once again pledge to you that we will be your faithful friends, but we want your continuous support. As you have in past years, you passed resolutions and we need that support, too.

This is all almost my fourth point, and the last one. Next year will be the 100th year of the founding of the Republic of China in Taiwan. We are going to have a big celebration. We welcome all friends from the United States, and especially from The American Legion to join us. Please let me know. I'm the director for overseas ceremonies.

As National Commander Hill mentioned, we are very friendly and we will continue to do that. Just let me know. I will show you the veterans' services in Taiwan are so grateful. The national commander mentioned it so clearly how we serve our veterans. Well, I don't know if I should say this, many of our American friends visiting my organization recommend that they will bring back what they see to share with the American veterans and also they will recommend the VA send officers to visit with us so that we can both learn from each other. Thank you, national commander, for your kind compliments.

Finally, I would like to represent our government to present National Commander Clarence Hill, a medal of my country in appreciation of all his efforts in the past year in promoting the relationship between our two countries, as well as in the hard work for bringing up the welfare and benefits for all the veterans. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Royal Canadian Legion is committed to securing adequate pensions and benefits for veterans and their families by dealing directly with the federal government. Its poppy campaign ensures the remembrance of Canadians who have sacrificed their lives in wars and military missions around the world.

Our next guest joined the Royal Canadian Legion in Saskatchewan following service in the Royal Canadian Navy. They all seem to pick the right service. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Royal Canadian Legion Dominion President Patricia Varga.

**Greetings: Patricia Varga, Dominion President
The Royal Canadian Legion**

Good afternoon. National Commander Hill, distinguished guests, members of The American Legion, comrades, as dominion president of the Royal Canadian Legion, I bring you greetings from your friends to the North and our 350,000 members; our 1,500 branches in Canada, Europe and the USA. I really wish you success in your convention.

This is actually the second American Legion Convention I've been fortunate enough to attend. I went to Reno a number of years ago. But of course my knowledge of The American Legion goes back farther than that, and I've learned from some of the best, and that's the Montana crew who quite often come up to our Saskatchewan and Alberta conventions, and we exchanged the favor.

I'm here to bring you greetings, and I want to talk about something that's near and dear to our hearts. Comrades, we in Canada believe that we have the best veterans programs in the world although we continue to press the Department of Veterans Affairs and our government for improvements. And we urge you to keep up the fight for the best veterans' benefits that your government can deliver. (*Applause*)

We believe, as you do, that there is no greater calling than to serve in the military of your country. I came across a rather interesting definition not long ago of a veteran. A veteran is someone, who at one point in his life wrote a blank check made out to his country for any amount up to and including his life. We know that those who serve wrote that blank check to the government, to their country. Sometimes that check is cashed. And we know that our service personnel are ready to give up their life. Those who return have also made many sacrifices, be they physical or emotional. The families that make the sacrifice, they deserve our support. Our governments needs to address those issues in

a meaningful way, and if that means writing a blank check to the veterans, then so be it. *(Applause)*

There are no greater patriots than our sons and daughters who serve in the pursuit of freedom. We may differ in some ways, but one thing is for certain, your organization and ours were born because of the need to care for veterans, and that care extends to all who have served. We continue to serve today, side-by-side as allies as we have for decades. We feel your losses as I know you feel ours. The cause of freedom for all cannot be denied. Our men and women serve with honor, and we understand that better than most. We must continue to fight for the rights of the veterans. We, the Royal Canadian Legion and The American Legion must continue that fight so that all veterans, past and present, receive what they deserve, indeed, what they are owed.

I have to note that many of us today that have come forward have a navy background. Interesting that the leaders are from the navy and some of you may know that I'm navy as well. And as always, the navy stands ready, I ready, to take on the challenge.

We noted your programs this morning. Our programs are the same: To care for veterans and their families; to support our currently serving military and their families; to support our youth; to support our communities, and to support remembrance so that the sacrifices are never forgotten. I would like to take this opportunity to thank The American Legion for their invitation, to both myself and our dominion secretary, comrade Brad White, and our respective spouses. It has been a pleasure to be amongst you once again. God has indeed blessed America. He has given them you. God bless Canada, and God bless America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: With us today is a man who serves as the chief executive officer for a patriotic organization with direct lineage to America's original patriots. The Sons of the American Revolution conducts historical research, raises funds for scholarships and educational awards, and preserves sites and documents related to the Revolution. Our next speaker has been a member with the Kentucky Society since 1991. He was elected president general of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in June. Please welcome President General J. David Sympson. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: J. David Sympson, President General
National Society of the Sons of The American Revolution**

Thank you. Thank you very much. And I want to thank Commander Hill for that most kind introduction, and his strong leadership and service to The American Legion and our nation. I also want to salute all Legionnaires for your service on and off of the battlefield. Legionnaires and members of the ladies auxiliary, volunteer in veterans hospitals; sponsor scout troops; youth baseball; collect scholarship money for deserving students, including a special fund that the Legion established for the children of the troops that have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thank you for your dedication to God and country. As a veteran of the United States Army in the Vietnam War, I'm honored to address the 92nd Convention of The American Legion.

As president general of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, I also am honored to bring greetings from one of the oldest patriotic organizations in America. SAR was organized in 1889 as a national society of direct

descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution. Over the past 120 years we have worked tirelessly to ensure that the courage and sacrifice of our nation's first war veterans were not forgotten. SAR has much in common with The American Legion that was chartered in 1919 for God and country. The American Legion was conceived primarily by SAR Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., and our 1906 charter was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, also an SAR.

Both organizations share a dedication to perpetuating the memory of veterans, protecting and defending the United States Constitution, and for perpetuating Americanism and true love of country. Fittingly, The American Legion named its first post in honor of George Washington. It was The American Legion and SAR that helped draft our nation's first flag code back in 1923, and we've been working together ever since to ensure that our flag is cherished and protected.

SAR is proud to join The American Legion in the Blue Star salute to support veterans' homes through the visitation; participate in grave decoration programs. Our chapters across the nation participate in the Wreaths Across America program to decorate all veterans' graves every December at Arlington and in communities across the nation, and also ensure that those who have given their last full measure of devotion are never forgotten.

The American Revolution began on April the 19th, 1775 in Lexington Concord, with the shot that was heard around the world. Minutemen mustered into battle, and our nation's citizen soldier emerged in defense of liberty. George Washington's example of civic duty, our founding father's principles of liberty and of equality, and the courage and sacrifice of the heroes of the American Revolution who won our nation's independence and gave us a nation of free men must endure if we are to keep the blessing of liberty for ourselves and for prosperity.

Washington referred to his soldiers, which are our patriotic forefathers, as a patriotic band of brothers. We invite you to also join our patriotic band of brothers, the Sons of the American Revolution, if you descend from one of those gentlemen. And I invite all Legionnaires to continue the patriotic partnership of the SAR and The American Legion for God and country.

It is my honor now to make a special presentation on behalf of the Sons of the American Revolution. As a captain in the United States Army in the Vietnam War, I offered my thanks and gratitude on more than one occasion to a Navy captain. This afternoon I'm privileged to thank a retired Navy captain on behalf of the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution and a grateful nation.

Commander Clarence Hill, would you please join me. Commander Hill, in recognition of your dedication, leadership, and service to our nation, your dedicated leadership and service to our nation's veterans organization, and in recognition to your distinguished leadership and service in promoting patriotism and true love of country, I'm honored to present you the highest award I can. The Patriotic Leadership Award. And God bless the Legion. I really appreciate everything you do. As a fellow veteran, I salute you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: There'll be a brief interlude while we set up for our next speaker.

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

...The delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole at the organ.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We can come back to order, please. Our next guest was elected to represent Ohio's Eighth Congressional District for the 10th term in November 2008. He is a national leader in the fight for smaller, more accountable government. As the House Republican Leader, he is a staunch opponent of pork-barrel politics and is fighting to eliminate wasteful spending, create jobs, and balance the federal budget without raising taxes. In 2006, he authored the Pension Protection Act and was instrumental in crafting the Republicans Contract with America. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Honorable Congressman John Boehner. (*Applause*)

Greetings: Honorable John Boehner
Office of the House Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives

Thank you all very much, and I want to thank Commander Hill for his introduction. The American Legion made a great choice by electing an Ohioan as its commander.

Thank you for having me. It's always an honor to be among those who wear and have worn our nation's uniform. Before I go any further I want to thank The American Legion and all of our veterans' service organizations for supporting our troops wherever they are stationed and caring for them when they come home. It's truly heroes work, and I know I speak on behalf of all the members of the United States Congress when I say to all of you, thank you.

I also want to congratulate Commander Hill and the hundreds of bikers who participated in yet another successful Legacy Run. All told you raised more than \$360,000 for families of service members who have fallen in the line in the years following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Your efforts serve as a reminder of our shared resolve of our country to never forget 9/11 and to keep faith with the heroes who lost their lives that day, often in the hope that others might live. Those memories don't fade and these colors don't run. So we honor the sacrifices of our 9/11 heroes today, tomorrow, always. (*Applause*)

Thank you for the work that you're doing to help improve veterans' access to the quality health care that they deserve. I was proud to work with the Legion last year to stop a severely misguided plan to bill veterans' health insurance companies for combat injuries. Insurance companies don't send men and women into combat, our nation does and our nation should take responsibility for that momentous decision. (*Applause*) And I was proud to stand with the Legion this year to expose flaws in the new health care law that could have harmed veterans. And with the Legion's help, we successfully protected veterans' health care benefits from new mandates and costly regulations.

As important as our government's commitment to provide quality health care for our veterans may be, just as important is a commitment to the dignity and respect that comes from holding a job. Today, as thousands of our warriors come home seeking to provide for their families and realize the American dream that they volunteered to defend, awaiting them is an economy that affords neither opportunities nor jobs. Veterans' unemployment today is at 11 percent. That's why I've called on my colleagues in the Congress and the president to join me in supporting a series of immediate actions to end the ongoing economic uncertainty and help more Americans find an honest day's work. Stimulus spending sprees, permanent bailouts, federal mandates and government takeovers have failed our nation and they have failed our veterans. It's time for a fresh

start. (*Applause*) We need a fresh start so that every man and woman who has donned the uniform of our nation knows that when they leave the service the opportunity for a good job in the private sector will await them.

You know, it's an honor to share the stage today with Secretary Robert Gates. And I join him in thanking our brave men and women who have served and are currently serving in Iraq. This day belongs to our troops whose courage and sacrifices have made the transition to a new mission in Iraq possible. It is with profound gratitude that we reflect on all that our service members and their families have done and continue to do during a time of peril. We also salute the work of their commanders, General David Petraeus and General Ray Odierno. At this moment I can't help but think back to the time when the situation in Iraq was grim and the future was bleak. When General Petraeus embarked on the surge strategy it was widely viewed as our last chance to save Iraq from spiraling into an irreversible descent toward chaos.

The consequences of failure then, as now, were severe. Some leaders who opposed, criticized, and fought tooth and nail to stop the surge strategy now proudly claim credit for the results. One leader in the U.S. House of Representatives declared that the surge was a failure, even before it was implemented. One leader in the United States Senate said, and I'll quote, "This war is lost," even as additional forces were being mobilized. One lawmaker rejected the idea that the surge would reduce violence in Iraq saying, and again I'm quoting, "In fact, I think we will do the reverse." These are lawmakers who supported and accepted support from an anti-war organization that ran a full-page ad in the New York Times smearing a four star general, a commander of men and women in uniform that were working in harm's way, when they referred to him as "General Betray Us." These, ladies and gentlemen, are sad facts. Today we mark not the defeat those voices anticipated, but we mark progress. And I want to thank President Obama for setting aside his past political rhetoric and recognizing the importance of the surge and the diplomatic agreement signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki.

At this hour some 50,000 U.S. troops are still in Iraq. And for those troops and for their families this war will not be over until they come home. And though the mission has changed, their work is no less critical. There's no stronger bulwark against the menace posed by the Iranian regime or other extremist forces in the region than a democratic Iraq. There's no greater inspiration to moderate governments and reformers in the region than a successful Iraq. And there's no better argument against those who preach intolerance and hatred than a free, stable, and thriving Iraq.

Of course, true success in Iraq will be determined not by the words politicians speak today, but by their actions in the months and years ahead. The hard truth is that Iraq will continue to remain a target for those who hope to destroy freedom and democracies, and the people of that nation, and this nation, deserve to know what America is prepared to do if the cause for which our troops sacrificed their lives in Iraq is threatened. I hope the president will address that question as early as tonight when he speaks to the nation and to the world. Over the past several months we've often heard about ending the war in Iraq, but we haven't heard much about winning the war in Iraq. And if we honor what our men and women fought for, we cannot turn our backs now on what they have achieved. When we support our troops, we support them all the way. And there's no such thing as supporting our troops, but not the mission they are there to fight for. (*Applause*)

Victory in Iraq was the only option in 2007, and it is the only option now. The American Legion understands that and the American people understand that. That's why

we are here today talking about our troops returning home in success instead of gradual surrender. Of course, too many of our own have returned to home from Iraq to be laid to rest. Their sacrifices have not been in vain, and I know Legionnaires give their all to ensure that the families of our fallen are held up in our hearts and in our deeds.

Staff Sergeant Daniel Clay is one of the fallen heroes. His wife, Lisa Bell Clay, once worked in my congressional office as my personal assistant. Sergeant Clay was one of the United States Marines killed in Fallujah in 2006. And before he died, he left a letter for his family to be read in case he didn't make it home. In the letter Sergeant Clay wrote, and I'll quote, "What we have done in Iraq is worth any sacrifice. Why? Because it was our duty. I know that sounds simple, but all of us have a duty. Duty is defined as a God given task, and without duty life is worthless." This Marine understood his duty to God and country, and we as elected leaders must understand our duty, as well. (*Applause*)

Our troops in harm's way should never have to doubt Congress' commitment to supporting their mission. And when asked to provide our troops in harm's way with the resources they need, we should do it without delay. That means no more troop funding bills held up by unrelated domestic spending and pork-barrel projects. We need a Congress that understands that when we send our sons and daughters to risk all in defense of our security, that victory is the only option and that we'll do whatever it takes to provide them with the necessary support so that they can return home swiftly and successfully. No voice, no matter how strong or committed, can substitute the voice of the Commander-in-Chief. That's why the president must take the time to articulate, in a coherent, consistent manner, to the families and fellow citizens the cause, the purpose and the goal of this mission. These imperatives should not be communicated in a manner of just checking a box. These missions should not be bunched together amongst a whole laundry list of political challenges.

Afghanistan is just not one of two wars. It is central to the global struggle against extremism and intolerance. The border of Afghanistan that they share with Pakistan is a virtual command and control center where al-Qaeda leaders plan and plot their attacks against Americans and our allies. Afghanistan must be resistant to the forces of extremism hell-bent on returning power, and it must be resistant to becoming a potential safe haven for terrorist organizations.

I support our counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. But the president must do more to emphasize his commitment to ensuring its success rather than focusing on arbitrary deadlines for withdrawal. And he must also place a greater emphasis on ensuring successful implementation of both the military and civilian components of his strategy. Using campaign promises as yardsticks to measure success in Iraq and Afghanistan runs the risk of triggering artificial victory laps and premature withdrawal dates unconnected to conditions on the ground. And after years of hard fighting, which has come at a high price, we cannot afford to underestimate the impact of domestic debates and political hedging and what that will have on decisions made by friend and foe alike. If we're successful in accomplishing our goals in Afghanistan, it will be because of the endurance, the discipline, and the patience of our troops. And I know that The American Legion joins me in expressing our gratitude to our men and women serving in Afghanistan today. (*Applause*)

The United States certainly can't afford to think short-term when our enemies have proven time and again that they're in it for the long haul. This is a war that began well before the tragic events of 9/11. It's a war that the American people did not seek and did

not start. This is an enemy that first tried to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993. This is an enemy that took its desire to kill Americans abroad; to Riyadh in 1995, to the Khobar Towers in 1996, to East Africa in 1998, and to the USS *Cole* off the Yemen coast in 2000. This is an enemy that seeks to impose a pernicious legal code and wills the death and destruction of anyone who opposes them. And before 9/11, the United States treated terrorism like a law enforcement issue. We handled each incident as separate and unique content with investigating after the fact, rather than preventing the attack. We characterized the perpetrators as criminals to be tried and contained rather than terrorists to be deterred and defeated.

We see signs of a return to this pre-9/11 mentality in proposals to house terrorists on American soil just to fulfill a campaign promise. The American people were told last year that keeping open the Guantanamo Bay prison, which houses the worst of the worst, served as a rallying cry for our enemies. We were told that closing the detention facilities and importing the remaining terrorists into the United States would diminish the threat. And then, starting with a plot to blow up the Manhattan subway system last September, we witnessed four terrorist incidents on U.S. soil in an eight-month period, including the Fort Hood shooting, the attempted Christmas Day bombing and the failed Times Square bombing. Each of these attacks represented new strands of terrorism. And each of these terrorists received varying degrees of support, but all had ties to international terrorist organizations and their radical extremist platform.

Now, more than ever, the American people deserve a reassurance that their government has the right legal authorities and the right mindset to prevent future attacks on American soil. Just days ago the Justice Department announced that it would not be pursuing charges against the terrorist who allegedly coordinated the bombing of the USS *Cole*. Now this is no garden variety terrorist. This is a terrorist who has the blood of 17 American soldiers on his hands. This is a terrorist who worked hand in hand with one of the 9/11 hijackers. And the commander of the USS *Cole*, who has fought for justice alongside the families of the fallen soldiers, has said the Obama Administration is blatantly playing politics with this issue. Now, when it comes to holding those who kill innocent Americans responsible for their heinous acts, politics should be the last thing on our mind. (*Applause*)

Over the course of the last 20 months, it's clear that our country's overarching detention policy has been lost. We do not know the parameters for when, how, and under what circumstances we will capture, solicit information from, and detain illegal enemy combatants. Ladies and gentlemen, we are a nation at war. A patchwork of political promises does not represent a coherent strategy to confront and defeat the terrorist threat. We need a Congress that will hold our government accountable for an overreaching capture, detention, and interrogation policy. And we need a Congress that will use every tool at its disposal to keep terrorists off of U.S. soil. (*Applause*) Stopping at nothing to confront and defeat the terrorist threat, that is how we can best protect the American people and set an example for the rest of the world.

Our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are also critical to maintaining America's centuries-old role as a selfless beacon of hope and opportunity. For America did not become the last, best hope of man by accident or by force. It was a choice. A choice first made by revolutionaries who faced down what was then the most powerful empire on earth.

During the second inaugural address, President Lincoln talked about how the Union did not seek to make war, but chose to accept war in freedom's defense rather than letting the nation perish. At the height of our test of wills against Soviet communism, President Reagan reaffirmed America's commitment to genuine peace, but made certain that the evil empire knew that we will never compromise our principles and our standards and we will never give away our freedom. Ideas matter. When reports of President Reagan's words reached the Siberian gulags the Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky tapped them out to his fellow prisoners in Morse Code. And years later when finally he was free and his oppressors had been tossed into the ash heap of history, Sharansky visited the Oval Office. And he urged President Reagan to keep giving his speeches so that others who aspired to liberty could hear his call to arms.

President Reagan's rhetoric rang out to another dissident. An electrician by the name of Lech Walesa, who shaped the Solidarity movement that caused one of the first dents in the Iron Curtain. When President Reagan died, fifteen years after the Berlin Wall came down, Walesa wrote in newspapers all across the country and he said this: "We in Poland took him so personally. Why? Because we owe him our liberty."

Margaret Thatcher said of President Reagan, that he took words and he sent them out to fight for us. What words are being sent out now from our government to fight for the cause of freedom and democracy. What words does a prisoner in Cuba's gulag or a freedom fighter in Iran hear today? Or those who are struggling to hold on to newly formed democracies in such places as Georgia or in the democracies in our own hemisphere threatened by Venezuela. And if the prisoners of Belarus or North Korea hear nothing, if it is silence that echoes in their cells rather than firm words of American support, if they hear nothing, will they one day be able to sit in the Oval Office or write in the pages of a free media to thank an American president?

Never forget that America remains the only nation on the face of the earth founded on an idea, not an identity. An idea that free people can govern themselves, and that government's powers are endowed only through the consent of the governed. An idea that the rights of all will be respected and protected, and that no one's opportunity to pursue happiness will be limited. If America will not stand with freedom-loving peoples and those who seek to be free from evil, whether in the guise of petty tyranny, radical Islam, or any Marxist regime, then who on this earth will? Ideas matter.

Our government must reawaken itself to the task of providing a more robust defense of freedom and liberty. Because when America does not articulate these enduring values in a forceful, consistent manner, when we do not send these words out to fight for us, we cause turmoil and confusion. Our enemies take this as a sign of weakness or a dimming of our belief in ourselves. Our allies see cause to be uncertain and unsettled about what role the United States will play in the future. And when we do not speak out, our deeds are left to speak for themselves. Every time we make a concession to countries acting against our national interest, every time we ignore or snub the commitments or shared values and sacrifices of our allies, we pay a price.

As we gather here, Iran is working to develop nuclear weapons. Contrary to the wishful thinking of some, the Iranian regime is capable of doing a cost-benefit analysis of pursuing these weapons in the face of international isolation. Iran is more than prepared to sacrifice the well-being of its people for the chance to fundamentally change the balance of power in the region. It is the true source of instability in the region, and we must not naively assume that a nuclear-armed Iran would be containable.

The destinies of Iran and Israel are often inter-linked, and with good reason. Israel is an island of freedom surrounded by a sea of oppression and hate. Surrounded by enemies who seek its destruction. Israel is on the front lines of the ideological and violent clash that we are confronting. And the attacks against it, whether through acts of violence, international criticism, or manipulation of the laws of war, are often the vanguard of what our country will face.

America stood by Israel since Harry Truman sat in the Oval Office. Our commitment to this longstanding friendship should be no less strong today. Where I come from you stick by your friends and you stick by the people who share your values. You do not send a message of strength to your enemies by shunning your friends and allies. The foreign policy of the United States should not be built on a platform of apologies, corrections and reset buttons. *(Applause)*

We will not confront and defeat the terrorist threat by blurring America's exceptionalism and backing out on America's commitments. Our nation has paid a tremendously high cost these last nine years of war, and our military personnel and their families have paid the highest price.

We have had heart-wrenching debates regarding how best to address these challenges. And these debates have left a lot of scar tissue between the two parties and ideologies, but the challenges that we face know neither. We have serious decisions to make regarding our path forward, and these decisions will be made in an environment in which we borrow 41 cents of every dollar the federal government spends this year. This means we must focus on working together to identify our national security priorities and ensure continued military and economic superiority.

And just as America's founding was a choice, maintaining its greatness is a choice, as well. Today we choose to do what needs to be done, to do what we know to be right and to never accept the next best thing for our families, our country, or for freedom. These are articles of faith, worth fighting to the last for. You've done it, your comrades have died for it and our troops have risked it all for it. All you've asked for, and all they ask for today, is the full support of their elected leaders. And so long as I have anything to say about it, I'll give you my word, they have it. *(Applause)*

High atop the dome of the United States Capital stands the Statue of Freedom completed in 1863 during some of the darkest and most divisive days in the history of our country. What I love most about the Statue of Freedom is that she faces to the east, because the sun never sets on freedom's face. The sun never sets on an American pioneered, an American idea that we've championed, an idea that generations have fought and died for, incurring a debt that this nation can never fully repay.

I want to thank you. I want to thank your families. God bless you, God bless your families and God bless this great United States of America. *(Standing applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before we accept Legacy donations, we have a very special donation to Operation Comfort Warriors from China Post 1. With us are Post Commander Fred Platt and Vice Commanders Hans Stockenberger and H. Ownby. They will not be here Thursday when we will accept other Operation Comfort Warriors donations.

VICE COMMANDER STOCKENBERGER: Commander, China Post operates in over 90 countries, and these funds were raised by our division in Saudi Arabia. And we're

happy to present this to the Legion to begin new funding for Operation Comfort Warriors. It's \$10,000 from one little post. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Now I'd like to read a letter that a rider from the United Kingdom sent to me concerning the Legacy Run.

"Sir, I wish to thank you and all the members of The American Legion for the warm and welcoming hospitality that has been extended to me over this past week whilst participating in the 5th Annual Legacy Run. It was both moving and humbling to be welcomed by all with such genuine warmth and affection from the very first moment we arrived at Wayne Post in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Throughout the week I experienced nothing but love and friendship from not only my fellow riders, but from the wonderful members of each post and members of the general public who took time out to support us on our route. It was a moment almost worthy of a comedy show when in Albert Lea a small child with his parents approached me and asked: "Are you one of the British guys?" I replied, "Yes, have you ever seen so many motorcycles before?" He said, "Oh yeah, but never so many British who want to ride them." (*Laughter*)

The thing is, we did want to ride the bikes, but we also wanted to come and support our fellow ex-comrades and bikers who are doing something for such a worthwhile cause. And I think we all have had a wonderful and most memorable time doing it. I have no complaints, issues, constructive criticism, or suggestions regarding the administration and logistics of the Legacy Run 2010. I have nothing but praise and admiration for everyone involved. For everyone who every time we stopped at a gas station — see, I remembered it's not called a garage over here — spread the word to the public what we were about. I hope and pray that the donations continue to flow in and that the target is soon reached.

Life has enough challenges for us when we are young without losing one of our parents. So if we could help those less fortunate to get a better start in life with a scholarship, it can only be a good thing.

As I write to you I am in West Palm Beach, Florida with some dear friends, and I have not stopped talking about what I can honestly describe as one of the greatest adventures of my life. I think I can speak for all of us when I say, thank you for allowing us to share this totally awesome experience with you. May you all ride safe, God bless you all and I mean this final statement. God bless America. Thank you again. Yours sincerely, Andrew J. Trickett." (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Now I'd like to call Terry Woodburn, adjutant of the Department of Illinois to help lead the presentation of Legacy Fund donations.

**Presentation: Terry Woodburn, Illinois, Department Adjutant
Representing The American Legion Riders**

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT WOODBURN (IL): Thank you, commander. In just a couple of minutes you're going to see about six states and 450 miles in about a two-and-a-half minute video, but I think it will be a really big treat for you. But before we do that, I'd like to thank a couple of folks; our National Adjutant Dan Wheeler, Executive Director Marty Justis, Membership Director Billy Johnson and Membership Staff Member Bill Sloan. You can't imagine 350 bikes going down a road having to stop at hotels, having to gas, it's a logistics nightmare. And without the assistance of these four

gentlemen and their staffs as a foundation, it would crumble. There's no way the ride could take place without that.

We also have a chaplain. Is our chaplain here today? He's from the Department of France. His name is Ron Moore. Chaplain Moore is our inspirational leader along the run, and has been for all of the runs. And we were talking one night — when you see this many bikes lined up, all kinds of paint jobs, all kinds of sizes and colors, paint jobs, it's a cardinal sin basically in this country to go ahead and just walk up to a bike and touch it. And for heaven's sake, don't just walk up and sit on it without the permission of the owner. Not a good thing will happen in that regard. And I made that comment to Chaplain Moore one night when we were out discussing things under the stars, I was getting my inspiration. And he said, well not only in America, he said a lot of people don't know this, but in between Legacy Runs I do a little missionary work. And I was down in South America in the Amazon working with a local tribe. He said, me and the chief were out walking one day and I was just trying to get a dialogue going, so I pointed up and said, "Sky." The chief said, "Sky." I looked down at the path and I pointed to the path and said, "Path." Chief said, "Path." Went over and touched a tree. Chief said, "Tree." So the chaplain went over and was going to go do the bush next, and all of a sudden the bushes started moving and he looked in the bushes and there's a couple in there of tribespeople kind of entwined in a bit of an embrace. He got a little embarrassed, didn't know what to say to that, so the first thing he said came to his mind was, "They're riding bikes." Chief looked in the bush. Didn't say a word, he just jumped in and started pummeling the guy, messing him up really bad. The guy finally got away, he's running down the path. Chief came back, looked at the chaplain, chaplain kind of just went one of these type things like embarrassed, what's all that about. In good English the chief just pointed to the bush and said, "My bike." (*Laughter*)

As I indicated, we went through six states. We started in Indiana, hit Illinois, from Illinois into Missouri, into Iowa and Minnesota and then back into Wisconsin to finish the run. Tremendous, tremendous run. Handled very well. All the hospitality was marvelous. I don't want to slight any department. It was wonderful, every place we went. But there are two, I think, that kind of went a step above, and I think most of us would agree with that. Give yourselves a hand Iowa, you did a hell of a job. (*Applause*)

Virtually every overpass in Iowa had people on it from one place or another. And the parade we got at the fuel stop before we went into Camp Dodge, there were people on both sides of the street, young ones waving flags. One lady had a flag and her little grandson had a flag and her dog was sitting down between the two of them and he had a flag in his collar. And then there was Albert Lea, Minnesota. (*Applause*)

I don't know what the population of Albert Lea is, but it's got to be a bunch and I would be willing to bet only five of them stayed home. All the way through Albert Lea and then Albert Lea American Legion Post 56, such gracious hosts. Everybody was wonderful, but those two were just really steps above.

You're going to hear some pretty good numbers I think in a couple of minutes. Our goal this year was \$450,000. I know we're close to that and I think we'll probably eclipse that by the time people get off the stage.

I would like to recognize one post, though. You're going to hear some big numbers from departments, a lot of organizations. A post now in Converse, Texas, Converse Texas Post 593 along the way presented checks in the amount of \$25,655. (*Applause*)

One last comment. This was a very unique ride. In the five years we've been doing this, this is the fifth anniversary ride, this was the first run all the way from start to finish, no rain. At this time I'd like to introduce the video, if they would put that on. It's about two-and-a-half minutes. ...*At this time the Convention Delegation viewed a video.*
(Applause)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT WOODBURN: The Legacy Run is indeed a truly unique experience, as you see from that short video. I'd also like to thank our United Kingdom riders from across the sea. They were just absolute marvelous bunch to be with and as sincere as you'd want to have. Commander, as we start the contributions, if I might, I'd like to call past department commander of Illinois and our Delegation Chairman Bill Flanagan for the first presentation.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FLANAGAN (IL): Commander, on behalf of the Department of Illinois, I'd like to present you a check for \$2,500, which will bring the Illinois total for everything that's been given on the ride already and tabulated a total of \$9,200.

NEC MEMBER GOUGH (WI): Commander, from your host Department of Wisconsin we have numerous checks here totaling \$17,500 raised through the efforts of The American Legion Riders of Wisconsin. Along with the \$1,000 that was turned in at the Romp on Friday night, brings Wisconsin's total to \$18,500.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DIEFENBACH (NV): Commander, on behalf of The American Legion Riders of the State of Nevada, to add to our previous total, we have \$1,537.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, on behalf of the great State of Georgia and The American Legion Riders and the Department of Georgia, I think they've committed or contributed somewhere around \$2,500 en route here. We'd like at this time to present you with an assortment of checks that will total an additional \$1,755.76.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, as the 4th District commander of the great State of Florida, our riders brought up in the 4th district a little bit less than \$5,000. On my way coming up I stopped at the airport and got another check for another donation for \$50.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, from a little post in St. Albans, West Virginia, our American Legion Riders, \$2,127.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAMBURGER (AZ): From the State of Arizona we have two additional checks to give you today from our Legion Riders and other participants from Arizona. A \$300 check from Post 35, Post 39, Post 44 and the remainder from District 12.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And from Chapter 58 in our American Legion Family in Fountain Hills, Arizona I have an additional \$2,000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAMBURGER: And look for our total later.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SAMUELSON (ND): Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of North Dakota American Legion Riders, I'd like to present you with a check for \$5,000.

NEC MEMBER MARSHALL (FR): Commander Hill, from the Department of France I have a first check here for \$500 with the chaplain from the Legacy Run, and also our Pony Express Chairman from the Department of France will be presenting several more checks. Thank you.

PONY EXPRESS CHAIRMAN BRADLEY: Commander Hill, every little bit counts. From the Department of France, we're also bringing in from The American Legion Riders GR07 - if we want to ride in Germany we have to have a permit because we're flying the American Flag. Only bring in \$602 from them, but we picked up from other posts, GR42 \$400, GR09 \$100, GR03 \$250, GR05 \$150, GR14 \$120, GR1982 \$149. We got personal donations of \$100, \$100, \$100, \$300 — sounds like a lot of money, doesn't it, but it only comes up to \$2,291. Like to turn this over to you, sir.

And there were a few gentlemen out here that were wearing the caps while we were — you say every little bit counts. Like to put in an additional \$90 that they paid. And since I told myself I was going to get \$100 from those people out there that didn't make it, so I'm going add \$10 more to it. You got \$100.

NEC MEMBER WARNKEN (KS): We brought so much money from Kansas it took three of us to get it all here. To start with from my post, Post 68 in Hutchinson, Kansas, we've got a check for \$500.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have two additional checks total \$3,900.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From the great State of Kansas, proudly present \$70,676.81.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, representing The American Legion Rider Chapter 48 out of Oxnard, California, they just had a poker run so they know this check is good. I don't know about the others. But it's only for \$700, but they just done it this last weekend.

MR. COX: Commander Hill, from Wayne Post 64, where four out of the last five Legacy Runs have started, you know we gave you some more money earlier, have another \$1,000 here with the help from a guy named Froggie from Post 108 in California to make that half and half draw of \$1,000, brings our total to \$4,555.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, from Madisonville, Kentucky, Post 6 American Legion Family, \$2,500.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, from American Legion Riders 113 in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, I present to you \$4,000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GOODIN (MO): Commander Hill, from the Department of Missouri, the Riders in the department, to go along with what we gave in Missouri, another \$11,620.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN DIMMERMAN (OH): Mr. Commander, from the great State of Ohio, your home state, I happen to have two checks for you today. First check is from The American Legion Riders Post 221, Massillon, Ohio, a check for \$3,721. And also the second check is from the Department of Ohio for \$15,000.

NEC MEMBER BUSHAW (VT): Commander, NECwoman for the Department of Vermont, and I am bringing in check from the Cole Chester Post 91 that burned a year ago. They have made their quota for the year even though they did not have a post to work out of. They worked out of a tent. And they raised the money to put a new home up. June 14th they had a new home in nine months. And after that they committed themselves to a project. We have started a Legion Rider Program and we had our first rider out here brought \$1,400 from Nissan, and during that time the he was traveling we raised another \$360 with delegation and within the post.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TRUJILLO (NM): Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of New Mexico, Post 69, Post 68, Post 7, Post 99, we'd like to present to you \$11,025.

MR. PERCY (NE): Mr. Commander and fellow delegates, my name is John Henry Percy, I'm from the Post 32, Papillion, Nebraska. We lost a Legion Rider last year and a very good Legionnaire. We would like to present a check for \$3,500 to The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund in memory of David Hill, Sr., who passed away last year. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Commander, on behalf of American Legion Riders Chapter 16, Norfolk, Nebraska, present a donation of \$5,000.

MARY ANN OTTE (NE): Mr. Commander on behalf of American Legion Riders, Columbus, Nebraska, Hartman Post 84, we'd like to present a check for \$769.94.

ROLLIE OTTE (NE): Commander, my name is Rollie Otte, and keeping in due form with The American Legion Riders, I am the tail gunner of this Nebraska delegation here today. And with that, our Department Commander Ron Corbett has been handed a couple of checks here. From Omaha Post 1, \$6,088.32. From American Legion Riders at Post 3 in Lincoln, \$4,000. From Northeast Nebraska Central Sand Hills Chapter 126, \$500. From Post 119 at St. Paul, Nebraska, \$220. And from my own post at Morse Bluff, Nebraska, \$100 and cash received \$40. Now there's a story behind that, but I'm not going to go into that. And so our total donation as of today is \$20,218.26 from the State of Nebraska.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN COOK (NC): Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of North Carolina, we'd like to present you with a check for \$15,578.72.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, on behalf of the State of Connecticut, I'd like to give you our first check from our newest Chapter, Chapter 38, for the total of \$200. Which gives us the grand total of Connecticut \$4,791.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of South Carolina and the Legion Riders of South Carolina, I would like to present you a check in the amount of \$1,721.60 in addition to what's already been donated.

TODD HARRIS (AZ): Hello. Todd Harris from a little post in northern Arizona, Post 86. Legion Riders, in coordination with several other little posts up there, came up with \$2,916.84. On the ride we picked up, just from people at gas stations handing you money. Everybody was a big help. What a fun ride. Thank you. And thank you guys as a Son and a Legion Rider, it's really an honor to be able to go out and represent and support a program like this. Without you supporting us, we can't support you. Thank you. Anyway, we have a total of \$3,311.84.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: American Legion Riders, Washington Post 29 at Washington, Iowa, happy to present a check for \$600.

NEC MEMBER NEYLON (NH): Commander Hill, several weeks ago New Hampshire lost one of its more dedicated and most respected members. He was a past department commander, past National Executive Committeeman, and at the time of his death was serving as the department chaplain for the Riders. That's Benjamin Talford. At this time Department Commander Frank Anderson has two checks totaling \$12,250.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From The American Legion Riders of Post 575 in Lubbock, Texas, we have checks and some cash totaling \$4,378.35.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN KALMBACH (OR): Commander Hill, from the Department of Oregon, The American Legion Family of Post 45 in La Pine, Oregon, we have a check for \$4,326. From The American Legion Riders of Oregon we have a check for \$1,150. This brings the Department of Oregon's American Legion Family donations for this year's Legacy Run to about \$8,000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN OLSON (ME): Commander Hill, Department of Maine, from the Legion Family of Maine, \$17,060.90 previously recorded.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, from Chapter 83 in the Buckeye state, \$1,000.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, in addition to the stop that the Riders made in Albert Lee, The American Legion Riders and the Department of Minnesota had their own run. And they, first of all, would like to present you with an American Legion Riders T-shirt and a patch from Minnesota and a cap catcher to go with it. And on the run that we made or they made in the Department of Minnesota, they collected \$22,000.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander, this is from one post, Chapter 4 in Michigan. They had a spaghetti dinner and they raised \$1,114.45.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander Hill, Brakeman-King Post 336, 9th District, Department of Ohio, formed a Legion Riders Chapter in January of this year. We just had our first fund-raiser. We didn't do real good, but we wanted to play. Here's \$100. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Maestro, could we have a drum roll? Okay. Total to date, \$591,932. Congratulations to everybody. *(Standing applause)*

National Commander's Report to Convention Clarence E. Hill, Florida

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I will now make my Commander's Report to the Convention. I tried to skip opening remarks at the Pre-Convention NEC and they wouldn't let me, so I guess they won't let me skip this one either.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have honored this Navy captain by allowing me to serve as your national commander these last 12 months. And while my time at the helm is winding down, my voyage as a Legionnaire is far from complete, as The American Legion will continue to explore uncharted waters and earn the respect of our nation's leaders, and more importantly those who so bravely serve in our defense.

This year has been a great ride. I would like to first of all thank my wife, who, as you know, was the reason that I joined The American Legion. She wanted to join the Auxiliary, and gave me those two options. I could fill out my membership card or I would have to be deceased. *(Laughter)* So here I am. And I met her in 1974, about three, four months before my first promotion, so I would never have been promoted in the Navy had I not met her. So six promotions later and a retirement and now with The American Legion. My wife Liz. *(Applause)* With her is one of my daughters, Nicole, and two of my granddaughters, Kadence and McKenzie. *(Applause)* Some of you may remember McKenzie from last year. She voted no. *(Laughter)* And I would also like to thank all of those posts and departments for all your hospitality and camaraderie this entire year. Like I said, it's been a great ride and it was all because of you all.

Just a couple of months after we met last year in Louisville, The American Legion enjoyed a great and historic victory. On October 22, 2009, President Obama signed the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act. After years of hard work and grassroots lobbying by The American Legion family, the VA health care system was finally given the advance funding that it deserves. *(Applause)*

Now to some this may sound like Washington Beltway jargon, but I challenge you to try to plan your own family budget without knowing how much income will be coming your way. Simply put, VA now knows a year in advance how much resources will be available so the department can deliver the high quality health care our veterans expect and deserve.

The American Legion was also a major player when Congress passed the National Health Care Reform earlier this year. We were not advocates for either side in this contentious debate, but we were advocates for veterans, the military, and their families. My predecessor, Dave Rehbein, and I received personal assurances from the president, the secretary of defense, the VA secretary, the speaker of the House, the majority leaders of both Congressional chambers, and other numerous members of Congress, that nothing in the legislation will change current DoD and VA health care eligibility or practices. The autonomy of these health care systems will be maintained and current services are protected. The frequent consultations and the calls that we received from Congressional leaders at pivotal moments just demonstrated the high esteem that our nation's lawmakers have for the opinions of The American Legion.

And one more thing to remember when it comes to veterans health care. It is not a mere benefit. It is not an entitlement. It is the payment of a debt that our nation owes. *(Applause)* It has been earned. The premiums and the co-pays of these patients were paid during their oaths of enlistment. The strongest way to show our patriotism is to care for those who have served.

And to protect those who are currently protecting us, our support for the missions of our military in Afghanistan and Iraq remains unwavering. We did not declare war on the terrorists until long after they declared war on us. Iraq and Afghanistan are complex and challenging missions, but it was just a couple of years ago that we were told the war in Iraq was hopeless. In fact, one prominent senator stated that we had lost. But we saw positive results from a troop surge led by General Petraeus, a strategy supported by The American Legion from the very beginning, when the outcome was far from clear.

We continue to have faith that General Petraeus, with the help of the finest military in the world, will make significant progress in Afghanistan. The American Legion has voiced some serious concerns against pre-announced deadlines for withdrawal, which simply tell our enemies to lay low until we leave. We must listen to our military commanders, and allow conditions on the ground to determine our strategy. America must never again allow foreign lands to be safe breeding grounds for terrorists who wish to do us harm. We must support our military members who are stretched thin due to frequent deployments by advocating for the economic needs of their families. We must ensure that the weapons, training, and quality of life received by our men and women in uniform are worthy of the outstanding service that they are providing to this nation.

The American Legion has added staff at major military medical commands to assist our heroes with any needs they may have as they transition back into the society, or, in some cases, remain on duty. We do this because, in the words of country singer Michael Peterson, "It's who we are."

We are advocates for veterans and also watchdogs when agencies fail veterans, including our departed comrades. The reports pertaining to Arlington National Cemetery are nothing short of a national disgrace. America's fallen heroes deserve nothing but the highest respect and dignity in their final resting place. The management of Arlington National Cemetery has fallen short at all levels, and The American Legion will insist that

the situation be made right, while at the same time the outstanding services provided by the Army's Old Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns, the funeral honor guards, wreath-laying, and other ceremonial services continue at their current high levels.

The American Legion is also disturbed by a report released by the Department of Defense last week that the military is failing to get a handle on the problem of suicides. Last year, 309 men and women in our armed services took their own lives. This was more than we lost to enemy fire during the entire Gulf War. The stigma associated with mental illness or stress, must be removed from troops seeking help, and placed on commanders that ignore the problem. The military must listen to its own task force on suicides, and implement its recommendations immediately.

The American Legion is not afraid to confront the tough issues of the day. Our position on illegal immigration can be summed up in two short sentences: Amnesty won't work. Secure our borders. *(Applause)* It's a matter of fairness. We have no quarrel with those who enter the country legally. Those who do not, have no business cutting in front of the line. *(Applause)*

Abolishing the Disabled Veterans Tax is also a matter of fairness. Although during the past few years, Congress and the White House have lifted the tax for some military retirees, The American Legion believes that any veteran who has to pay this tax is one too many. Retired and disabled veterans deserve full concurrent receipt. Some were wounded in the battlefields. They understood the stakes. That advanced to the sound of the guns. We must not shortchange them. *(Applause)*

The American Legion continues to press for Medicare reimbursement at the VA. Most veterans pay Medicare taxes throughout their entire working careers. They have a right to use those benefits in the health care system that was created for them.

We are already recognizing the needs of our younger veterans. For instance, earlier this year, thanks to your help, The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors received the most Internet votes in Pepsi's Refresh Everything Project. The \$250,000 that we won as a result, continues to be put to good use, supplying wounded warrior with DVDs, therapeutic athletic gear, sweat suits and other comfort items at military hospitals and warrior transition units around the globe.

I'm asking for your support again as we try to win another \$250,000 to fund our job fairs for veterans. These veterans served America and they deserve the opportunity to earn a living. It's already the end of the month and I know many of you don't have your computers with you here in Milwaukee. If you aren't able to visit the legion.org web site to vote, you can text message your vote from most cell phones. The instructions on how to do this were included in a flyer that was placed in your Convention registration packets. Pepsi rolls over the top 100 vote getters, so we'll be in September we're pretty sure. So check the legion.org web site on the first of September and starts voting daily. Voting for this cycle ends today so be sure and get this done. Just as importantly, tell your friends to do the same. Remember, the number one priority for most people leaving the military is finding a job. Not long ago, President Obama signed an Executive Order committing jobs for veterans, and it is our job to ensure that it is enforced. Veterans' preference is not a goal. It's the law.

We also offer our complete support to helping VA Secretary Eric Shinseki keep his promise to end homelessness among veterans. It's a huge endeavor but so was writing and passing the GI Bill. The American Legion will do all that we can to help Secretary Shinseki make his promise a reality.

The American Legion will never back away from its values. One such value is respect for the flag of our nation. It is wrong when people desecrate our flag, it was wrong when the Supreme Court said it was okay, and it is wrong when members of Congress vote against the Flag Protection Amendment. (*Applause*) The American Legion has been fighting this battle since 1989, and we will never, never retreat.

We will also continue to fight for just causes like the Mojave Desert cross. Our Preamble begins "For God and County," and what cause better illustrates both than the acknowledgement of faith at a veterans' memorial?

This year we did have an increase in membership, but it is not nearly as high as I would like it to be. It was incredible when I heard the Korean War veteran say that he has 8.5 million members. During this year we achieved a 92.6 percent renewal rate, which is up from 90 percent. Congratulations to all of you. And while I may have earned another Gold Brigade Award as national commander, I know that it is because of the hard work by many in this room that The American Legion is an organization worth joining. You don't need to have a red cap to earn a Gold Brigade. I earned a Gold Brigade as a department commander, and I have several others as a blue cap Legionnaire.

If we want to get new veterans into our organization, we must find new ways to talk about The American Legion. The national web site received a major overhaul this past year, and The American Legion has pages on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social networking sites. If you've been following my tweets, Facebook entries and blogs, you would learn some interesting things about what your national commander does. But these activities are not about me, they are about you.

You are the reason that I have met with the President of the United States three times. Once in an executive order signing, again at a Veterans Day breakfast, and a private one-on-one session. It was on your behalf that I met the vice president twice; the VA Secretary; the Deputy Secretary of Defense. It was because of the power of The American Legion that I was able to meet with eleven governors and lieutenant governors; 57 mayors; nine adjutants-general; 27 state representatives; 15 state senators, and made calls on 38 U.S. Representatives and nine U.S. Senators. There were eight Clarence Hill days declared around the country, and I was given the keys to twelve cities. I visited 223 American Legion Posts, and 33 VA centers. During my travels I was given 25 books, twelve of which I have read. I was honored to join with the Philippine Ambassador and Minister of Defense in laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. I'll always remember the Thanksgivings that I spent last year with the troops on the DMZ; spending Pearl Harbor Day at Pearl Harbor; honoring fallen American troops at the American Cemetery in Florence, Italy on Memorial Day; and spending D-Day in Normandy.

It was because of the respect people have for The American Legion that I was invited to Veterans Day at Arlington, and numerous gatherings, reunions, and conventions, including the Berlin Airlift Association; USS *Indianapolis* Association; the Royal Canadian and Royal British Legions, and the Sons of the American Revolution. Thanks to our new media, we were able to report most of these events as they were happening. I was interviewed by 37 TV stations; 31 radio stations; and 66 newspapers.

New media and blogs are making an impact in this country and they are making history for The American Legion as well. Not only did they contribute to our Pepsi victory, but The American Legion's Burn Pit blog raised more than \$150,000 for our troops at Combat Outpost Keating, Afghanistan, when their personal gear was destroyed.

The Pepsi Challenge's \$250,000 victory in February, and the Al Snyder Legal Fund are other examples.

I believe that we can continue to be successful in recruiting younger members by using social networks. Last year we recruited 37,000 new members in the eligibility periods after the Vietnam eligibility period. This year it was nearly sixty-eight thousand.

While nothing should replace face-to-face contact, just think about the role the new technology can play in reaching out to people who are always on the go and in remote locations. The membership potential is enormous.

Another membership tool and a great gift idea is the new *History of The American Legion* DVD that is available at Emblem Sales. This 48 minute documentary covers our great history from our founding in 1919 to the quality programs and effective advocacy that we do today. Proceeds of the DVD help benefit the National Emergency Fund, Child Welfare Foundation and the Legacy Scholarship Fund. So be sure to pick up a copy today at Emblem Sales, or order your own from the website.

Another way to honor our history is to observe American Legion Day next month. September 16th is the anniversary of our Congressional charter and an opportune time for posts to kick off Legiontown campaigns. All the details that you need to run a Legiontown campaign are available on the national web site. The American Legion will always be a national force, but it is what is done at the local level in our communities every day that makes people notice who we are, and establishes our reputation. If your town is not a true Legiontown, make it one.

Not all veterans are interested in the intricacies of the VA or Department of Defense policy, but they do care about what you are doing for their neighbors, their children, and their grandchildren. There are many words that aptly describe The American Legion, but if I could only choose one, it would be "service." That is what I believe the group of World War I veterans who met in Paris had in mind. None of our great organization's founders are with us today, but what they envisioned is still alive and vibrant because what they envisioned is what you believe. And you are the guardians to ensure their legacy continues for future generations. Thank you and God Bless. (*Standing applause*)

Certificate of Appreciation

John L. Beaver, Alabama, National Chaplain

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The man who has served as our National Chaplain this year is truly dedicated to the principle of God and country. He is a member of Post 250 in Mobile, Alabama. During his 20 years in the Legion, John has held several key positions, including serving as chaplain for the State of Alabama. It is an honor for me to present a Certificate of Appreciation marking his year of service as National Chaplain to John L. Beaver. (*Applause*)

The certificate reads, "Certificate of Appreciation, presented to, John L. Beaver appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion, 2009-2010. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion." Signed by myself and Adjutant Dan Wheeler.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: At this time I call on Past National Commander Dave Rehbein of Iowa to present the Plaque of Appreciation to Silas Noel,

president of the 2009 National American Legion Convention Committee, Incorporated, for hosting the 2009 National Convention in Louisville.

**Presentation: Plaque of Appreciation the City of Louisville, Kentucky
for the 2009 National Convention
Past National Commander, David K. Rehbein, Iowa**

Thank you, commander. You know, this is one of the privileges that a past national commander has each year, to come back the following year and present this Plaque of Appreciation for that National Convention.

As I think back on that Convention, Friday when the Legacy Run arrived; Sunday the parade; that opening, like today with the Youth Champions; the Spirit of Service Awards. I had the opportunity and privilege to listen to Darryl Worley at the Commander's Banquet. And finally that final morning, being able to sit there and watch my successor be elected.

The Department of Kentucky did an outstanding job with that Convention. I can only envision, only imagine the amount of work that goes into hosting a National Convention. For that work we have a plaque to present to them to display at their Department Headquarters. I hope they will display it proudly. They were led by their Convention President, Silas Noel. I will present that plaque to Silas on behalf of the Department of Kentucky, but it really belongs to the entire department. Thank you, Kentucky. *(Applause)*

MR. SILAS NOEL: Mr. Commander, national officers, Legionnaires and guests. When I joined The American Legion 47 years ago, I never dreamed I would be standing on this platform, but here I am, and the Department of Kentucky and the City of Louisville are privileged that you allowed us to sponsor the 91st American Legion Convention. And the only thing I can say about that is y'all come back soon. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I now call on National Adjutant Dan Wheeler from the Department of Virginia, to issue the Call for the Convention.

**Call for Convention
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, National Adjutant**

Call for the 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31 through September 2, 2010.

The Convention business sessions will be held in the Frontier Airline Center, Halls A and B upper level.

Purpose

The Annual National Convention is the legislative body of The American Legion. The Convention is called for the purpose of setting the programs of The American Legion for the ensuing year, amending the National Constitution and Bylaws, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

On Thursday, September 2nd at 12:00 o'clock noon of the final session, or at the conclusion of all other business of the National Convention, whichever first occurs, officers for the ensuing year will be elected, these being the National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders in that sequence.

Representation

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

"... 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 2, 2010, 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."

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 their respective departments, except that the vote of the National Commander should 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 the departments to make and accredit substitutes for absentee delegates or alternate delegates shall be recognized by the National Adjutant, provided that such substitutions shall be officially certified by the delegation chairman and delegation secretary 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 the regular delegates. The selection of alternates to represent absent delegates is a matter for decision within the respective delegations. The vote of any registered delegates absent and 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 Bylaws.

Department Officials

Department officials, unless elected as delegates or alternates to the National Convention, have no privileges in the Convention except as the guest of their respective delegates.

Convention Committees

Committee, number of delegates, number of members for the department: Americanism, one delegate. Children and Youth, one delegate. Constitutional

Amendments, one delegate. Credentials and Internal Affairs, Credential and Other Matters, one delegate. Membership, one delegate. Economic, Employment and Veterans Preference, one delegate. Other Economic Matters, one delegate. Finance, one delegate. Foreign Relations, one delegate. Legislative and Rules, one delegate. Security, Aerospace, one delegate. Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness, one delegate. Law and Order, one delegate. Merchant Marine, one delegate. Military, one delegate. Naval, one delegate. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Claims and Rating, one delegate. Hospital and Medical Services, one delegate.

Mr. Commander, that completes the Call.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Adjutant. I now declare the 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion regularly convened. The Chair recognizes Larry J. Besson of Illinois, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs
(Section I of Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs)
Larry J. Besson, Illinois, Chairman

To the 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010. The section on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs met at 9:00 a.m., August 29, 2010, in the Hilton Milwaukee City Center, Walker Room, Fourth Floor. Larry J. Besson of Illinois was elected Chairman, and George West of New Hampshire 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 2, 2010); and one alternate for each delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) National Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention. All living past National Commanders are members of the National Executive Committee without vote and life delegates to the National Convention with vote, which is exercised in their respective Departments. (Voting strength figures attached.) Motion was adopted by majority vote that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s). In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on August 2, 2010 and in accordance with Article V of

the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 2,757 allocated as follows:

Alabama	30	Montana.....	19
Alaska	13	Nebraska.....	49
Arizona.....	54	Nevada.....	16
Arkansas.....	25	New Hampshire.....	28
California.....	127	New Jersey.....	68
Colorado.....	32	New Mexico.....	19
Connecticut.....	31	New York.....	153
Delaware.....	18	North Carolina.....	55
District of Columbia.....	8	North Dakota.....	25
Florida.....	138	Ohio.....	132
France.....	9	Oklahoma.....	31
Georgia.....	58	Oregon.....	29
Hawaii.....	9	Pennsylvania.....	210
Idaho.....	19	Philippines.....	7
Illinois.....	119	Puerto Rico.....	12
Indiana.....	109	Rhode Island.....	13
Iowa.....	67	South Carolina.....	34
Kansas.....	46	South Dakota.....	30
Kentucky.....	35	Tennessee.....	37
Louisiana.....	36	Texas.....	93
Maine.....	31	Utah.....	16
Maryland.....	74	Vermont.....	22
Massachusetts.....	59	Virginia.....	63
Mexico.....	7	Washington.....	41
Michigan.....	92	West Virginia.....	30
Minnesota.....	103	Wisconsin.....	76
Mississippi.....	26	Wyoming.....	14
Missouri.....	60		

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN BESSON: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Illinois, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Do I hear a second. ...*Second* Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? Motion carries. The report of the Credentials and Other Internal Affairs, Section I, is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Chair recognizes James Koutz of Indiana, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules
James E. Koutz, Indiana, Chairman**

The National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met on Sunday, August 29, 2010 in the Hilton Milwaukee City Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There were 45 delegates to the Committee present and 14 guests in attendance. Following the

preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, James E. Koutz, a delegate from the Department of Indiana, was elected Permanent Chairman. Russell H. Hanseter, a delegate from the Department of Wisconsin, was elected Permanent Secretary.

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

A unanimously approved motion allowed the Permanent Chairman and Permanent Secretary to make technical and grammatical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate.

Unanimously approved motion authorized the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules.

The Legislation and Rules Committee received Resolution #40 from Ohio entitled "Political Participation" for consideration. After debate a motion to reject Resolution #40 was unanimously passed by the Committee.

On September 22, 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. Members of The American Legion family attending this presentation should also take the opportunity for face-to-face meetings with their elected members of Congress.

National Commander Hill, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Indiana, 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 COMMANDER HILL: Do I hear a second. ...*Second*. Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed. Report of Legislation and Rules is adopted. The Chair recognizes Ken 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

This is a report of the Convention Committee on Finance.

Forty-three members met at the Frontier Airlines Center Room 102A at 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 29, 2010 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Shawn Long, CPA (Indiana), National Finance Director, opened the meeting as staff liaison and 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 economy. A summary of his report stated: Many Americans are asking what is ahead for the U.S. economy. To date our recovery has been modest, with tentative employment growth. While we do not believe that there will be a total relapse into a recession, regaining a healthy economic environment could still take several months. Our Gross Domestic Product growth of 3.5% this year is far from the 6.3% growth average recoveries in post-recession periods since World War II. Inflation

in the U.S. being in-check for the time being, and rock bottom interest rates available from banks will assist in the pace of recovery. So if the GDP is recovering, why does the economy still lag behind hoped for performance? In a nutshell, there is still an abundance of idled resources and assembly lines that are operating at less than full speed. Millions of Americans remain out of work. The 980,000 net-increase in jobs so far this year only chips away at the 8.4 million jobs lost in 2008 and 2009. Until more employers are confident the economic recovery is on solid ground they will resist committing to permanent hiring of employees. Another hindrance is the housing market. Credit availability remains far from normal crimping the ability of small construction firms and Americans to borrow for new home construction. One bright spot is that exports, in general, are on course for a swift return to pre-recession levels expanding by more than 14% in 2010, the fastest pace since 1988. Longer term, we remain optimistic that the larger U.S. companies will make a commitment to invest in growing their companies after cutting their inventories to a level that requires replacement to respond to customer orders for goods. We believe that investors should maintain broad diversification in their stock and bond portfolios recognizing that signs of a positive recovery are still several months in the future.

Treasurer Buskirk then recommended that the national dues be set at \$13.50. A motion from Leonard Normandeau (VT) was made that the 2010 per capita dues remain at \$13.50. Ken Powell (FL) seconded the motion, and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chairman then recognized Dennis Henkemeyer (MN), chairman of The American Legion Magazine Commission for a report on the Magazine. Mr. Henkemeyer reported the following: The American Legion Magazine Division is poised to return a budget surplus of approximately \$850,000 by the end of the year. Careful editorial page management and static circulation have combined to create lower-than-expected costs for paper, printing and mailing *The American Legion Magazine*. Electronic media continues to grow. The American Legion Online Update, the newly reconditioned Web site, social media and other electronic media channels under the division's management are rapidly growing audience. The number of unique visitors to the site has more than doubled since January, to more than 360,000 visitors in July. The total audience of unique visitors of The American Legion Baseball World Series webcast grew from a respectable 18,900 in 2009 to over 104,000 this summer.

National Finance Director Shawn Long, CPA presented to each delegate and discussed a nine page seven-year financial review and forecast. He informed the committee that we had a \$6,100,000 surplus for the year ended December 31, 2009 and that from our first run projection reports; we are anticipating a 2010 surplus around \$3,640,000.

Chairman Danilson reported that the 2009 Crowe Horwath (formally Crowe Chizek) certified annual audit is included in the convention program and instructed the delegates to address any questions to the Director of Finance, Shawn Long or National Treasurer, George Buskirk.

Silas Noel (KY) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Finance. Richard Heigert (MO) seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote. As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DANILSON: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected delegate from the tall corn state of Iowa, I move to adopt my written report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Do I hear a second. ...*Second*. Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed. The report of Finance is adopted.

National Emergency Fund donations will be collected after the membership awards tomorrow. We will collect for the Child Welfare Foundation after the Children and Youth report tomorrow. Operation Comfort Warriors donations will be collected after the National Security report on Thursday. I now call on the national adjutant for announcements.

Announcements

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: At the recess of today's session, the Western Caucus will meet in Room 103 of the convention center. Tomorrow, September 1, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the American Red Cross will be conducting The American Legion Family blood drive to support the troops and the public. It will take place in this convention center, Room 103 D and E, Street Level. Appointments are appreciated. Walk-ins are welcome. For an appointment, call 1-800-Give-Life.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you. Legionnaires, please join me in a salute to the flag of the United States. Hand salute. Two.

...At this time the delegation stood and rendered a salute to the Colors.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The time is now 3:20. The Convention will stand in recess until 8:30 tomorrow.

...At 3:20 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, September 1, 2010, at 8:30 a.m.

**PROCEEDINGS
SECOND DAY**

Wednesday, September 1, 2010

... At 8:00 a.m., the delegates listened to the prelude by Mr. Peter Ole at the organ.

... At 8:30 a.m., the delegates assembled for the second day of the 92nd Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were conducted.

Call to Order

Clarence E. Hill, Florida, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Please take your seats. Ladies and Gentlemen, as we begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for Peter Ole. *(Applause)*

The Convention will come to order. Colors in place, hand salute. Two ... *At this time, the Delegates stood and saluted the Colors.*

For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain John L. Beaver of Mobile, Alabama. Ladies and Gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation

John L. Beaver, Alabama, National Chaplain

Gracious Lord, You have given to Your people a promise that You are with them at all moments of life, in joy, in sadness, in danger and adversity. Grant O Lord the fullness of Your spirit may always encourage us to be open to Your truth and ready to serve each other. This day we pray for those who have suffered and whose need is great. Particularly for the men and women of our Armed Forces who have given their lives. May they receive Your eternal reward. We pray also for the injured and all the families, that You will give comfort in their time of need. Bless our nation and make us mindful of Your love for all people. May Your grace be upon us this day and every day. We ask this in Your precious name. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you Chaplain Beaver. Ladies and gentlemen, please remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States. ... *At this time the Delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Cover. The Convention is now in session.

The National American Legion Press Association is an association of editors, writers, and professional communicators who are members of The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and other subsidiary organizations. Today more than 1,000 members of NALPA are involved in spreading the message of the American Legion family, keeping members up-to-date on local organizational happenings. Bringing us greetings this morning is the newly elected president of NALPA, Carl Griffith.

Greetings: Carl Griffith, President NALPA

Commander Hill and those present at the dais, good morning. Good morning delegates and all of the 92nd National Convention of The American Legion. I'm happy to bring you an update on the National American Legion Press Association. Some of you present probably do have post newsletters, district newsletters, and department newsletters. You are either editors or perhaps ones that gather items for these editorials. You are considered sort of professionals in your own right. I'd like to see a more dedicated group into our association such as you. We are looking for more members, and I'm sure you will assist me in accomplishing this.

Communications is a necessary item in this time and day. The word that you put out is informational for everyone in The American Legion world. We have many tools at our hands such as e-mail facilities to utilize and complete our communication gap. Take advantage of this. I would like to see the posts, districts, and the departments take advantage of what tools we have available to us. I'm sure the professionals we have out there will surely see that we would be advantageous to the press associations in this country. So please, join me to seek that goal and in turn increase our membership. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Appointed by President Obama to serve as the 12th director of the Selective Service System on December 4, 2009, our next guest was previously the Soldier and Family Assistance Program Manager of the U.S. Army 5th Recruiting Brigade. He is a retired U.S. Air Force Reserve lieutenant colonel, and a former chairman of the Bexar County, Texas, Veterans Committee. He is also a Legionnaire from Post 2 in San Antonio. Ladies and gentlemen, the director of the U.S. Selective Service System, Lawrence G. Romo. *(Applause)*

**Address: Lawrence G. Romo
Director U.S. Selective Service System**

Good morning fellow Legionnaires. I'm very happy to be here today. Also, I want to commend your commander and also the adjutant for the fine, dynamic leadership ring. Commander Clarence Hill and Dan Wheeler are top notch.

I do have to go on a tangent for a second. I'd like to tell Commander Clarence Hill, a lot of people don't realize he's a Naval Academy graduate and I'm an Air Force Academy graduate. Unfortunately, the Navy has owned the Air Force in football, the last seven years they've beaten Air Force. But this is the year that the Air Force Academy, Air Force will beat Navy in football.

But it's great to be here today because you all are heroes in your community. You all are the ones that enhance the wellness of our military, our veterans and their family members. I have to commend you for doing that. And I am one of you. I have been an American Legion member for 13 years. I serve as a second vice commander in Post 2, the Alamo Post in San Antonio, Texas, District 20, in the great State of Texas. It was a labor of love. I enjoyed working the Americanism program, helping prepare for the oratorical contest, helping our young men for the Boys State and also all the awards we gave for the Air Force, Army Junior ROTC Units in San Antonio, Texas. It's truly a great program that we have with the Americanism program.

Also, I had the extensive opportunity to travel all around the country in my position as the 5th Recruiting Brigade Soldier and Family Assistance Program Manager and in my position now, but I always make it a point to go visit an American Legion post, at least one, in the city I'm at. I like to trade out the license plates for Post 2, the Alamo Post, and I encourage you to visit there when you are in San Antonio. And also I enjoy the camaraderie when I go to the posts. There's some great omelets in Overland Park, Kansas. The Harry Truman Post in Independence, Missouri. I had the opportunity to visit Santa Fe, Colorado Springs, Willimantic, Massachusetts, and I plan on hopefully going to at least one post in all 50 states. *(Applause)*

We need to work together, not only at the federal level but the state level, to enhance our benefits. One thing we did while we were in Texas, we got together as Legionnaires and also with the other veterans groups and we were able to, over two legislative sessions, to come up with a great educational benefit for Texas veterans. It's called the Hazelwood Legacy Act. The Hazelwood Act is where a Texas veteran that entered the service in Texas that served at least 180 days of active duty service, they go back to Texas and they can get 150 semester hours in any state supported school. And that's in addition concurrently with their federal GI Bill benefit. Well we realized a lot of the Texas veterans were not using that benefit, so we were able to get our legislators, both the Republicans and Democrats, to say, hey, if that Texas veteran did not use their benefits, they can pass them on to their children. That took effect 1 September. So I was very proud of that achievement that we did working together as a veterans group.

What I need now is your help. I believe in partnerships. Partnerships are essential to make sure that we work together to achieve a greater goal. Selective Service does exist today. I need you to please tell your people in the community that 18 to 25 year old young men still need to register in case we have a draft. If we have a national emergency, it's essential that we're prepared. And I'm an old strategic air command fellow that understands the importance in deterrence and readiness. It is essential that we're prepared. And while I'm the Selective Service Agency director, we will be prepared. That is what the taxpayers expect, that's what you all expect, that's what Congress expects, and that's what the president expects.

Also, we have tied up a lot of things since the Vietnam War. We want to make sure that if we do have the draft that it's the fairest draft around. How's it going to be the fairest draft? There's many things we have changed, but one of the things is we want to have a truly representative local board member committee. There are five people per board. We have to have at least three out of five members. You get a presidential appointment. You all can serve on the board. Most of you all can serve on the board. We are looking all around the country in our territories for board members. You can have a 20-year appointment if you'd like to serve. It's important that we have a reflective representation of your communities, because you all are the ones that's will decide if a young man can be a conscientious objector if they're a pacifist. Let's say they've been a member of the Mennonite church or a Quaker their whole life, then we will probably give them two years of public service. But it will not be my decision; it will be the local board members' decisions. It is essential that we have the fairest draft possible, and it will be up to you to help us out. Let's work together and have the greatest Selective Service Agency and the fairest local draft board around.

I appreciate what do you for our country. God bless The American Legion. God bless our country. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: You know it's not often that our speakers bring their wishful thinking with them, but I would suggest if Director Romo wants to beat Navy he put it on his bucket list. (*Laughter and applause*)

Our next speaker this morning is truly committed to a well-funded VA and to meeting the needs of our nation's veterans. A former history professor at San Diego State University, he was a "freedom rider" during the 1960s, championing civil rights for minorities. He is one of only 22 members in the House of Representatives holding a Ph.D. He represents a large military community in California's 51st Congressional District and is the chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Please give a warm welcome to Congressman Bob Filner. (*Applause*)

**Address: The Honorable Bob Filner, Chairman
Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives**

Good morning. It's a great honor to be here with you. Thank you for inviting me and thank you for your service. Not only when you were in the service, but for helping everybody else now that you're Legionnaires. So thank you so much for the honor of allowing me to speak here today.

I think you all know that we have a great VA, but I think you all know that we have a long way to go. We have too many people who still think that VA means veterans adversary. A lot of those with Agent Orange claims, for example. And our job is to make sure that we are veterans advocates, that that's the VA that everybody knows and respects.

I think we've come a long way. We've done some good things in the last few years I've been chairman. The honor of being chairman is an awesome responsibility, to meet great people back to World War II. It's a great more than to travel to see our new recruits or our new volunteers in Afghanistan and Iraq. By the way, Mr. Commander, we have Operation New Dawn now instead of Operation Iraq Freedom. I want to make sure everybody knows, and especially this man right over here who's right on it, that all the benefits that we've done for OEF/IOF will go for OND, Operation New Dawn. We'll make sure that happens right away.

But in the four years that I've been chairman we have raised the VA health care budget by \$23 billion. That's over 60 percent. Unprecedented in the history of the VA. Unprecedented for any other budget at this time of deficits in the nation.

Now we think the VA now has resources to be responsive to everybody. My job as chairman of the VA Committee in the House, and I know all of my congressional colleagues take the responsibility very seriously, is to be the watch dog, to make sure they spend that money wisely, fairly, efficiently, but with responsiveness. That they spend it on veterans needs. So you are our eyes and ears. All of your posts make sure that we know what's going on in the VA. And you exercise that very well, your guys in Washington keep us fully informed and always on the ball to make sure we do the right thing by you.

We've done some other good things. The Legion took a strong stance on this to help make it happen. In the last 20 years, only three years has the VA ever gotten its budget on time during the start of the fiscal year. Well how can you plan a health care system without a budget? You can't hire, you can't build, you can't look ahead. And maybe five

months without a budget. So now we have put the VA budget a year ahead. So right now with all the politics going on, whether it's democrats, republicans, whether it's House, Senate, whether it's president, Congress, the VA knows what its budget is going to be no matter what those politics are and they can plan and make sure that we have the highest quality health care system in the world. So we have that done that.

For our new veterans, I thought about my dad who came back from World War II. Because of the GI Bill of 1944, he was able to go to college. Maybe more important, he was able to buy a house for the first time in our family's history. I've lived in apartments with my relatives. We had our own house. I'm middle class. That's why I'm a Congressman today. And 8 million families took advantage of that GI Bill to make America the most productive nation in the world in those decades following World War II.

Over the years the benefits have gone down. They haven't been as targeted and widely used, so we decided to do a GI Bill for the 21st century. And not only does it cover the full cost of colleges or vocational school, but it gives stipends for books and housing and transportation, child care, the new needs of our new veterans. And for the first time, the National Guard and Reserve units, who were doing half the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, will have access to the full range of benefits that the GI Bill provides. So the Reserves and the National Guard are taken care of. And if the veteran doesn't want to use the benefits or doesn't need them, he can pass those on to the spouse or the children. That's a great benefit and 300,000 students are in college the first year taking advantage of that, and we'll see an even bigger amount in the coming term in college.

So we've been able to look at the budget, we've been able to look at how we finance; we've been able to look at education. We have a long way to go, though, in terms of access for rural veterans, for women veterans, for homeless veterans. We've got a long way to go.

But I want to talk to you about one main thing today. When we have a war, as we did in Iraq and now in Afghanistan, that is divisive. And this is a democracy; you can debate war in our country. But what is not open for debate is the care of our young people or older people when they come back from that war. They need to get all the care, the love, the attention, the honor that a nation can give. *(Applause)*

And if we didn't know that in our heads, we should have seen what happened in Vietnam. How many of you are Vietnam vets here? I should have asked how many aren't. You know, you never got your homecoming. You never got the thanks. You never got the care. That war was divisive. I opposed that war. But we should have differentiated between the war and the warrior. We should have welcomed all the Vietnam vets home as heroes. As heroes. *(Applause)*

Most of you were drafted. You didn't have a say in the policy, you did what you were told and what your nation demanded of you. But when you got home, we did not treat you right. We're paying a horrible price as a nation. Individuals and families paid a horrible price. You know, half of the homeless on the streets tonight around the nation are Vietnam vets. It's almost 200,000. That's a national disgrace that we allowed that to happen. Our secretary, who you heard from, in Congress, has declared a war or zero tolerance for homeless vets. We have a five-year plan to get every homeless vet off the street and get some security. It's a hard job, but we're going to do it.

But even worse, I'll give you a statistic that if you haven't heard will floor you. There have been more suicides by Vietnam vets than died in the original war. That's over

58,000. That is a terrible stain on America in that we allowed that to happen. Now you can't prevent every person from doing things to themselves that we would not want them. But you can certainly take care of the vast range of mental health concerns, of physical health concerns which may have led to that suicide, and we didn't do it. But you know, it's not too late for many of you to say welcome home. It's not too late.

You know, it took us a couple decades as a nation to say that Agent Orange was a problem. We just denied it. Then we put up and we said it may have done some harm, we put up all kinds of bureaucratic hoops that you've got to fight, many of you for decades. They're probably making sicker fighting the VA than whatever the original injury was.

I have two pieces of legislation that I hope all of you support and we can get through the Congress quickly to really say thank you, to really say we're sorry, to really say finally welcome home Vietnam vets. As you know, eligibility to get Agent Orange claims is limited to those who have boots on the ground at a certain spot, which you have to prove where there was Agent Orange in the dioxin. You shouldn't have to do that.

First I want to expand the eligibility to everyone who had any chance of contact with Agent Orange. My motto is, "If you were there, we should care." I don't care if your boots were on the ground or if you were in the blue waters off the shore, if you were in the blue skies above, if you were in Laos or Thailand, if you were in Guam, if you were in Camp Lejeune and other American bases which handled these shipments, you should be eligible because that's where the dioxin was. That's what gave you the cancer or whatever you might have now. So we should open that eligibility to everyone who was in any of those places, and I hope you support that.

But I think we should go further. You all know we have backlog claims of up to a million, which is an insult to each and every person who served our nation. The most technologically advanced nation in the world and we have a million backlogged claims. That's ridiculous. We have to cut through that, and I don't have time, but I've got some ideas on that. But for the Agent Orange claims, which probably are several hundred thousand of that million, why don't we honor them today. Why don't we honor them tomorrow? That is, you have been fighting for 20 or 30 years. We change presumptiveness and, you know, a few at a time. But if you were there, I'm willing to say we presumed that you had Agent Orange and that you should get compensated and we should bring some peace finally and say welcome home Vietnam vets. That's what we should do today. That's what we should do as a VA. *(Applause)*

So whether you're a new Operation New Dawn veteran, we're going to make sure that you get education benefits worthy of you. And if you were in Vietnam, we should make sure that you get the compensation that you are entitled to. Korean vets, World War II vets, we haven't forgotten you. We're looking at all of the injustices that may have been caused. You know we have atomic vets still. We sent folks to do atomic testing and we didn't tell them there was any danger from that and they still don't have compensation many of them. So, I think Secretary Shinseki has put us on a good path. We have changed the financing structure to continue that path, but we have a long way to go. Not only for all the veterans, but for the access of rural veterans, women veterans, to end veterans homelessness. With your help we're going to do all of that, because this nation can do nothing less. Thank you so much for your service. Thank you for being Legionnaires. I appreciate your support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Just a little clarification. What the Congressman started out with refers to a letter that I wrote this week to ensure that with the name change from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn that the benefits that existed for OIF would carry over to New Dawn, and that letter has gone to all 435 Representatives and all the Senators and the president, it's going through the mailing list. So that's what he was referring to there. We want to make sure that the OIF benefits carry over, and just because the name changed the troops aren't going to suffer for it.

Our next guest is listed in his official biography as "the federal government's chief people person." It's understandable since he heads an agency that is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and benefits for 1.9 million federal civilian employees. Calling this a new day for the civil service, he is reinvigorating the federal work force to meet the challenges of the 21st century. He previously served with the Department of Treasury and as legislative director for U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer. Please welcome the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, John Berry. *(Applause)*

**Address: John Berry, Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

Thank you very much, Commander Hill. I appreciate the invitation and the kind introduction, and it is a deep honor for me to be here with you today at the 92nd Annual Convention.

I come from a family with a proud tradition of service. My father enlisted in the Marines Corps before Pearl Harbor and served in the 1st Division at Guadalcanal. My uncle, for whom I am named, was a Marine fighter pilot who was killed in battle in the Philippines. So it is no surprise that one of my highest priorities has been honoring your service and the service of all who have risked their lives on behalf of our country.

The president spoke of some of them last night, thanking all the men and women in uniform who served so proudly and valiantly in our combat mission in Iraq, as well as those who are continuing the fight in Afghanistan and beyond, making crystal clear the message America is committed to al-Qaeda's defeat. *(Applause)*

For the sacrifices that you and your comrades-in-arms have made, and for those yet to come, a grateful nation thanks you. But words of thanks are not enough, and that's why I am very proud to be here with you today to tell you about a few of the actions that are underway.

The president and I were appalled that our men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan were facing an unprecedented unemployment rate, especially those who were between the ages of 18 and 24. And so we set out to do something about it. Relying on the skill and leadership of people like Lieutenant Colonel Ken Robbins, United States Army, our White House fellow; Hakeem Basheerud-Deen, a 24-year veteran of the United States Air Force; Lieutenant Colonel Ray Decker, United States Marine Corps Reserve; and a very creative senior executive named Joe Kennedy. We set out to build a new approach that built upon existing law and all of existing programs with the goal of hiring more veterans in all government agencies. They built this program by working with our men and women in uniform, veterans and their families, asking them what they needed and repeatedly ground testing it with them.

They worked to develop the Veterans Employment Hiring Initiative, which has been made official by the president in his Executive Order 13518. The initiative is led by a

government-wide council on veterans' employment. It's chaired by Secretary Shinseki and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. It has representatives from every major agency in government, and I serve as the COO. We have established a veteran's employment program office in all 24 major agencies with full-time veterans hiring professionals, not collateral duty. You all know what the word "collateral" means. It don't get done. We want it done. Full-time attention. And that is now in place. The mission is very simple. Hire more vets. (*Applause*)

Hire retired enlisted personnel. Hire officers. Hire those with disabilities. It's not enough to have vets in DOD and VA and in our national security agencies. We need you everywhere. And that's why we've been working so closely with the Legion and Commander Hill in these past few months helping people transition from the service into jobs throughout the government. And we have good news for you today. We are just six months into the program, and these results are only preliminary, but in the first six months of this year, compared with last, we have had a 3 percent increase, which translates into 2,600 more vets hired in the federal government this year than the year before. That is success. (*Applause*)

Now some erroneously mention that somehow this is in place of our veterans' preference program or that there is some secret agenda to attack our veterans' preference program. Let me unequivocally state, there is no truth to that statement. It is a lie. We have not altered or changed one comma of our existing veterans' preference laws or regulations, nor will we. This program is in addition to all of our laws and regulations, not in place of. Once we've succeeded in getting this right in the government agencies, my hope and plan is to work with you to take this out to the private sector so that we can plug the index of all of our veterans' talent into the private sector supply of jobs, as well. And your help is going to be critical in helping us to succeed in that effort.

I've recently been out talking to a number of CEOs across private sector. And the good news is that many of them are very willing to help and support us in this regard. I was stunned when some of them asked if they could have tax breaks if they hired veterans. I didn't just say no —well I won't say what I said. These are valued, experienced and trained professionals, and I told them you should be paying us a finder's fee, not the other way around. (*Applause*) Our veterans are the world's best. Their integrity is unmatched, as is their intellect and their creativity. They keep us all safe and free. The best we can do is to match their skills, talent, and know-how to a job when they decide to take off the uniform. My promise to you and to each of you in this room is this will remain my highest priority and I will not rest until we succeed on these efforts while I am in this job.

Other important initiatives are going to help us hire more veterans, as well. We are reforming hiring. We have killed the knowledge, skills, and ability essay questions which were a roadblock to so many, and now the federal government has finally joined the rest of the world and you can apply for a job with a simple resume. That is going to help our vets as well.

Coming soon we are going to be launching a student initiative to draw students into the government and building on the initiative that Chairman Filner was speaking about, we're going to be able to draw all of those folks who are reusing the GI Bill to come in and reenergize our government, as well. For every person who volunteers to risk his or her life on a frozen mountain top or in a burning desert, our support should know no

bounds. But for every family member who supports that servicemember on that mountain, our compassion cannot equal their sacrifice. But we certainly must try.

And so this year, for the first time, we have made it easier to hire military spouses who uproot their lives and cross the globe in support of active duty service members. Helping spouses find civilian federal employment is the right thing to do, and we can do it a whole lot better and will. In the last year we've also pushed through new regulations that will make it easier for federal civilians to use sick leave when they need to care for a wounded warrior in their family. *(Applause)*

And lastly, we finally fixed Reservist pay for federal civilians. Some were losing pay because their military pay was less than their civilian pay. No family should lose income because mom or dad has been called up. So, thankfully, the Congress and the president took action. And as soon as they gave us the authority to fix it, we worked with the agencies and resolved all the issues and have now equalized and make sure there's no diminution in their pay. *(Applause)*

OPM is proud of these accomplishments on behalf of our veterans and active duty service members. And we're just a small agency. I don't have to tell you how much the rest of the government is doing. You heard yesterday from Secretary Shinseki. He and my good friend Deputy Secretary Scott Gould are transformational leaders and they have been phenomenal partners in the work we're doing at OPM and throughout the government.

This administration and this Congress have secured the biggest increase in VA funding in 30 years, and we are not slowing down. For those of you who missed it, Secretary Shinseki published a historic regulation yesterday that will especially help Vietnam veterans by expanding the number of war-related illnesses covered by VA health care. That's part of a small commitment to you.

For over 234 years our nation has overcome every obstacle and faced down every threat because people like you have served. In those years, the United States has accomplished more as a nation than the founders could have ever dared to dream. We forged our own nation and liberated others. We have created and defended a *pax Americana* that begat the greatest era of prosperity and discovery in human history. We have shaped a body of knowledge that I would argue will endure as a lighthouse through the ages. The first humans to walk on the moon still walk amongst us today, as do those who cracked the human genome. In the last half century, we have mastered the atom, broken the sound barrier, created the Internet and peered through billions of light years in space towards our very origins. These are literally achievements for the ages, rivaling those of Pericles and Augustus. And they will be revered centuries hence as amongst the greatest accomplishments in human history.

They are also, I would note, largely the accomplishments of America's public servants, both military and civilian. Who could have imagined these achievements a century ago? More importantly, who could imagine what we, military, veterans, civil servants and all who swore an oath to our flag and constitution will accomplish in the years ahead. Together we can build that lighthouse of knowledge, civilization, and accomplishment so sturdy that it will last another thousand years, and so bright it will illuminate the ages. In his poem "Go Forth," Walt Whitman wrote, "I am the new American pioneer, looking forward. Never back. No longer content to wait for better times, I will work for better times. There is a better tomorrow. Look across the plains and the mountains and see America's eternal promise. A promise of progress."

Near the end of his remarkable life, General Ulysses Grant spoke of your promise. As the first president to travel the world after leaving office, he was the most famous living person everywhere that he went. Stepping up to speak in Germany one day, he was introduced as the man who saved the Union. He got up, rejected that notion and summed up the America character thusly: "If I had never held command; if I had fallen; if every Union general had fallen, there were 10,000 in line behind us ready to pick up the Flag and carry the cause to victory. So long as our young are animated by that spirit, there will be no fear for our Union."

You are that 10,000 times 10,000 that Grant spoke of. You and the men and women who emerge from our military services today are that 10,000 living force for good in our world and in our country. Thank you. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for your sacrifice. God bless you, God bless our president, and God bless the United States of America. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: A senior in the Geography Department at George Washington University, our next guest co-founded the George Washington University Student Veterans Organization. He served seven years in the U.S. Army Reserves as a combat medic, which included two tours in Iraq. He currently represents more than 200 student veteran organizations from around the country, serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the Student Veterans of America. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Brian Hawthorne. (*Applause*)

**Address: Brian Hawthorne, Legislative Director
Student Veterans of America**

Good morning. Thank you very much for that kind introduction. Greetings to all of our distinguished guests and especially my fellow Legionnaires. I'm humbled to be here today addressing you at this fabulous event. My name is Brian Hawthorne, and I sit on the Board of Directors for Student Veterans of America. I'm an Iraq veteran of the United States Army and a member of Legion Post 1 in Washington, D.C. (*Applause*)

Thank you. I'm privileged to be here today to represent the hundreds of thousands of student veterans across the country going to school. And I'd like to start by saying thank you to you, the Legion, on behalf of our very young but very powerful organization for all that you have done for veterans across the decades. Since long before I was born, you have been fighting for our veterans and their families, both in the halls of government and on the streets of our nation's towns and cities. You have fought to ensure that "We will never forget" is more than a bumper sticker. You have welcomed us back into our communities, secured a system of benefits to take care of us, and most importantly, you've been our friends, our mentors, our guides, and our families when we return home from war.

Thank you to Commander Hill and National Adjutant Wheeler for inviting me to speak today. And thanks to Executive Director Peter Gaytan for your continued support and friendship in D.C. And special thanks to Past National Adjutant Bob Spanogle for truly spearheading getting vets into college for more than 30 years.

When I was on my first tour in Iraq in 2005, the founders of Student Veterans of America had just started their own struggles at different universities across the country. They found that schools were unsupportive, apathetic, and under-resourced to provide the

support that this new generation of veterans needed. After years of watching their comrades drop out and transfer away, they decided to band together and do something about it. We were founded a few years later in January of 2008, and since that time we've ballooned from less than a few dozen chapters to almost 300 in almost every state across the country.

Being here in Wisconsin, I should mention that the University of Wisconsin-Madison was one of those founding chapters. While I was on my second tour, this time to Baghdad as part of the surge, I had the daunting task of not only serving in combat, but also planning on going to school when I returned home. I wasn't sure which would be more challenging. I didn't know where to turn for answers or guidance, and a friend of mine put me in touch with SVA. They proved to be an invaluable resource to me then, and gave me the renewed sense of mission that I needed after leaving the combat zone.

We help thousands of veterans, just like you, prepare for college, get started in their schools once they're accepted, and connect them to resources that they need along the way. I should also note that we support thousands of family members with anything they need while they're in school, whether or not they're veterans are going to college. Most importantly, we provide leadership opportunities on college campuses where veterans do not naturally see themselves fitting in.

Since our founding, The American Legion has helped us in countless ways. You've supported our conferences where our members can meet and network around the country, just like this one. You have worked with us on passing important legislation, shown us the ropes in how to care for veterans, and the advice, guidance and legal direction of Post 46 in Ann Arbor, Michigan ensured that SVA was set up on the right path when we were incorporated. Thank you very much Post 46.

We've recently hosted two education symposiums with you, and we're currently working together to improve the post 9/11 GI Bill. Both in D.C. and around the country, we are fighting together to bring tens of thousands more veterans into the fold of this benefit, as well as providing support for vocational schools, on-line training and more benefits for active duty servicemembers and their families. For all this and more, thank you for what you do and will continue to do.

When I was growing up I often watched with admiration as the Legionnaires marched in the Memorial Day parade. My own Legion story, however, started years later, almost the day I returned from Iraq in my first tour in 2006. The little town I grew up in just north of New York City wasn't exactly teeming with military servicemembers or veterans, and I was not expecting to find anyone who understood what I had just been through. Of course, I was wrong. One of my fellow firefighters that I had served with and the husband of my Cub Scout leader from elementary school were the leaders of Legion Post 77. Both had children that had graduated from high school with me, and they had been keeping track of me on my journey to and from Mosul, Iraq. Not long after I came home, I received a phone call from them inviting me down to the next meeting. A handshake from a small room full of veterans meant so much to making me feel welcome back in the states. Thanks for that, too, by the way. (*Applause*)

Student Veterans of America strives to provide that same comfort to our veterans on college campuses across the country. Our members seek out and welcome new veterans to the school at each of the almost 300 chapters. For returning veterans, starting at a new college can be just as stressful as coming home from a deployment. SVA is there to ensure that our veterans are not only welcomed on their campus, but we're there to

represent and advocate for you, ensuring that any barriers to your success are torn down. We host tours of campuses, vet specific orientations and usually just a friend to listen to who gets where you're coming from, and sometimes that's all it takes to make education seem a little more possible.

The sheer volume of student veterans using just the new GI Bill speaks to the importance of this work. But we need your help to keep doing it. Many veterans start out at their schools not knowing about us, not knowing about the huge veteran network that is out there or that there are veterans on their campuses with experiences just like them. Eventually, many of them wander into their nearby Legion posts, remembering you from their childhood like I did. Make sure you tell them that there are organizations out there to support them. And if there's not a chapter on their campus, use your leadership to help start one. It's very easy and it's free.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention how life saving this transformation can be. SVA recently started a veterans' education transition program helping wounded and injured veterans leave military hospitals and enter academia, and the drive that we see in these young men and women is awe-inspiring. Severely injured, it would be easy for them to sit down and give up hope and hang out on mom's couch and collect disability. Not these scholars, however. Recognizing the power of education, they see their studies as a mental equivalent to their physical therapy and recuperation. Many have taken on leadership roles, both in their communities and at their schools, seeing themselves not only as mentors but shining examples of how to overcome obstacles. They may never recover from their physical wounds, but try to stand in their way and you will see how strong they can be with graduation as their next target, that next hill they need to take.

We've also established an employment program, actually with the help of OPM and Director Berry, and we're very appreciative of that. We've partnered with major corporations and government agencies to place our graduating student veterans in rewarding careers as they finish their studies. Our mental health programs train veterans in peer-to-peer mentorship techniques to assist their fellow veterans in getting through tough situations on and off campus.

Now, you may feel it's odd to have another veterans' organization addressing your national conference about our goals and successes. And, of course, with other organizations your concerns may be justified. But we turn to organizations like yours for many of the services that our veterans need, like disability advocacy. We are all about forming communities on campus, but off campus we partner with your Legion posts in towns and cities. Even if our members do not become Legion members today, they are extremely loyal and will remember your help when they are in need. And I promise we'll make fantastic Legionnaires for the rest of our lives. And after all, if you're a life member of Student Veterans of America, you've done something very wrong.

Please do not hesitate to contact our chapters in your area or our national leadership for collaboration or support. Many of the posts in this room have done so and have not only been of valuable assistance to us, but have come away with new members and great stories. We look forward to seeing that continue.

There are other ways that you can help us transition from combat to college. Many schools do not know what it takes to support their growing student veteran populations and may turn to you for advice as to how they can be more veteran friendly. Being such an established and respected entity in your communities gives you a very powerful voice to point these schools in the right directions. I hope you take this opportunity very

seriously and you can help those veterans coming back go not only into college, but more importantly graduate from college. We could put anybody in a college classroom, but having them walk across a stage like this takes a community, the support and love of people like you.

Now some schools have hesitated to embrace the new GI Bill and have ignored the tremendous honor it is to educate our men and women returning from our nation's battles. They've read the news and they hear about post-traumatic stress disorder, rising suicide rates, substance abuse and traumatic brain injuries, and they see us as a hazard instead of a benefit to the community coming to cause trouble on their campuses, and their apathy is deafening. This is not just insulting to our honorable service, but it's foolish not to look beyond the headlines. Our veterans enter the classrooms head and shoulders above their peers in maturity, leadership, and knowledge of the world. Our mission-first attitude often takes us to the top of our classes, and we are far less likely to be overwhelmed by a little bit of homework. We may not look or talk like traditional college students, but I promise that we can walk into any ivory tower in the world and teach someone something. The difference is that we have already been tested. School is not the challenge, it's just more training for the battlefield of life.

We've been leading troops through hell on the streets of Fallujah, carrying our battle buddies down the mountains of Afghanistan, protecting the world economy on shipping lanes with missile cruisers, and dropping bombs through window from 30,000 feet. If the hardest thing we have to do in a day is sit in a lecture about whether or not we should have been there, then I rest easy knowing that the future of our country is in my comrades' capable hands. *(Applause)*

Some schools have taken this opportunity and run with it. And they should be praised for their recognition of a smart investment, both economically and for their people. The George Washington University, my alma mater, looked into its history and not only saw a General Colin Powell, Admiral Thad Allen, and VA Secretary Tammy Duckworth, but also the first recipient of the original GI Bill of 1944, Mr. Don Balfour, a Navy veteran and realized that its namesake, General and President George Washington, demanded action. Making veterans a priority could have been done without a large financial investment, and many schools have provided the resources that we need without a lot of money. However, GW decided to fully fund the Post 9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program for undergraduate student veterans, enabling them to honor one of the most prestigious degrees in the country at no financial cost, earned through blood, sweat and sacrifice.

Looking at the current crop of veterans going to school in our country, we may not look all that impressive just yet, but I promise that one day these schools will be proud to call us their alumni. The next generation of leaders for our great nation is sitting in classrooms right now. Maybe sleeping through some lectures, but finishing their education in record time, thanks to the generous new GI Bill. Hundreds of thousands of veterans, young and old, are going to schools they had never dreamed of thinking about how they are going to change the world, and they better be. The issues facing our country are as daunting as they have ever been, and we need every bit of the battle-tested leadership that our student veterans have to solve them.

But the road leading to graduation is a long one, and we need your help to make it all the way out. That military experience that makes school so easy also makes it so hard. After planning convoys and serving as a medic in Baghdad as part of the surge, walking

across my urban campus in downtown D.C. was a huge let down. I wanted to be back in the fight. I wanted to be part of something where people depended on me, where I felt like I was contributing. And you, of all people, know what I'm talking about. After being part of history, having to learn about it can be excruciating.

Many of my friends have left school to deploy again or just dropped out, out of boredom. We need to stand together as a veteran community and as a nation to ensure that these men and women finish their new mission, which is to graduate and keep going. School is not the battle. Yes it can be boring, but it's an important achievement for veterans of all generations and we must come together with the schools in our communities to get student veterans through their degrees as fast as they can so they can get back into the fight where they belong; running for office, leading corporate boards, supervising shifts, curing diseases, and taking international delegations around the world.

We know about the challenges that this generation of heroes faces. As I've said, it's all over the news; rising suicide rates, unemployment at twice the national average, failed families shattered by multiple deployments and a multitude of legal issues. But ours is not a generation of trouble makers. This is a group of men and women that have proven themselves on the battlefield and continue to need strong leadership; and more importantly, a new mission. The greatest gift we can give them, that you can give them, is to challenge them to better themselves through education and vocational training so they can continue contributing to our fantastic nation. The people who raised their right hands don't do so to get out of jail. Much to the shock of some of our academics, they do so because they want to feel part of something bigger than themselves. Keep that fight alive in them by giving them opportunities to lead in your posts and daring them to finish their degrees on time and keep going.

Practically, this can be part of the solution to our slowed economy. Putting veterans back to work at higher levels with more education can dramatically increase an organization's productivity. Many of you own small businesses or are leaders in your large businesses and you know exactly what I'm talking about. And we've been working with the Department of Labor and OPM to get that message to our corporate leaders around the country. Veterans make fantastic employees. Just as importantly, statistics show that every dollar spent on the 1944 GI Bill was returned seven fold in increased tax revenue and doubled the size of the middle class. We can continue that trend today, and I hope that you join us as we do so.

Veterans are seen as leaders everywhere they go, and I look forward to watching this next generation lead our economy out of these troubled times. There are so many things that we can do together as a family of veterans and their supporters. We have the opportunity to take these young men and women and show them the way, long before suicide, long before homelessness. Education can be the cure to so many of the ailments that face our veteran population, and we just have to motivate them to send in that application. Many colleges have made this very easy waiving application fees and having specific people to read their applications, and we need to encourage our student veterans to keep going; to reach into their communities, wherever they're from, and start and finish their college education.

I would like to ask for a short second of reflection. Think about those who didn't make it home like we did; those powerful men and women whose amazing lives were cut short by the horrors of war. They are the reason we must keep fighting, must continue to keep our veterans in school and graduating. Education is just one step in our journey to

honor their lives and sacrifices, to make the most of the time that we have left. I hope that you will stand with us as we help those who are coming home take that step in honor and memory of those who cannot.

In a few weeks, on September 11th, Student Veterans of America has partnered not only with the Legion, but also with the Mission Continues to do community service in benefit of veterans in their communities in honor of our fallen comrades, taking this day of tragedy and turning it into a day of service. Who better to lead our nation out of the cloud of 9/11 than you. Our veterans who have said I will not back down; I will go where you will send me to defend our nation, and now I'm home but I'm not done serving. That is how fantastic our partnership can be.

As a proud American Legion member and board member of Student Veterans of America, it is a privilege to be in your company today. And I look forward to standing alongside you in these important efforts for years to come. Thank you again for your service, and welcome home. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The co-founder and president of the SVA was here so I asked him to come up on stage so that you can acknowledge him. Derek Blumke. (*Applause*) And if you have a university anywhere near you, I would ask you to hook up with these veterans and provide whatever service you can to them.

Before I introduce our next speaker, I would like those who are going to receive membership awards, those who have donations to the National Emergency Fund, those that are receiving National Emergency Fund awards, and those that are receiving Consolidated Post reporting awards, to report back stage now to Billy Johnson or Jack Querfeld.

Our next speaker was formerly the principal staff assistant to Secretary Robert Gates for the Department of Defense Organizational and Management Planning. He has over 26 years of experience in the national security community, including service in the Senate, White House and the Pentagon. A veteran of the U.S. Army, he served with the 18th Airborne Corps and 5th Special Forces Group. He was sworn in as Secretary of the Air Force on October 17, 2008. Please welcome the Honorable Michael B. Donley, Secretary of the Air Force. (*Applause*)

**Address: The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force**

Good morning. Thank you for that nice welcome. It's great to be here with the Legion in Milwaukee. I am using notes, not the electronic pad. I'm not quite there yet, but I would note that this is wind proof, water proof, and seems to work all right.

It is a great honor to be with you this morning, former warriors still selflessly serving our nation through The American Legion. Your work here is truly admirable, and I want to thank you upfront for all you have done and continue to do on behalf of the armed forces and for our nation. It's a pleasure to join you at this 92nd Annual Convention; 92 years of critical advocacy and attention to the needs and well-being of all who serve, past, present and future. Our nation's defense has always been in the hands of Americans who have put duty and service to country above all else. And it passed from generation to generation, a nation both secure at home and respected abroad. Each and every day I am reminded, and I am thankful, for the work that you and others like you

have done to help build the military that we have today, and to pass it on to the current generation. The future of our nation's defense depends on our continued public service in that distinguished heritage, and it serves us well to remember the magnitude of the sacrifice of those answering the nation's call.

Thinking about the Air Force's heritage, takes me back to one of the most audacious air operations in our history, one some of you are experienced enough in life to recall. It was in April, 1942 that Jimmy Doolittle and his Tokyo Raiders gave hope to the nation when they were able to attack the home islands of Japan. The Air Force Chief of Staff, General Swartz, and I were recently with some of the eight surviving raiders as they marked the 68th anniversary of that courageous mission. What an honor it was to be among those American heroes. On that day in April of 1942, then Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle led 79 volunteers to the skies in what was to become one of the first truly joint operations of World War II. Working hand-in-hand with the Navy, he built a plan calling for Army Air Force bombers to fly off the decks of Navy aircraft carriers, which had never been attempted. They faced extraordinary challenges and would require leadership, courage, and ingenuity to complete that risky mission to Tokyo. The success of that mission bolstered American confidence, and despite its limited tactical objectives, it had strategic effect, leading the Japanese to husband assets to protect its homeland, and over-extend its forward forces. This is one of many stories whose outcome at the end of the day has rested on the shoulders of America's real treasure, its people. And our military history is rich with examples from all branches of service.

All of us know today a soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine serving in our armed forces. They are our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, neighbors, friends, and you can visibly see the pride that they have in what they are doing and in what they stand for. I am privileged to observe firsthand the airmen who serve today, and I too take pride in all they do and the manner in which they are doing it, with integrity, with excellence, all the while placing service before self, time and time again. Today I would like to share some of the incredible accomplishments of our airmen today as they serve the American people, preventing conflict through deterrence, prevailing when deterrence fails, and preparing for what the future might hold.

Your Air Force's distinctive capability to exercise global vigilance, global reach, and global power, gives a critical edge to today's joint war fighting and coalition team. We're providing game-changing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities with both manned and remotely piloted aircraft from the high ground, and providing persistent awareness from the ultimate high ground, space, controlling over a hundred satellites 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In 2009 and 2010, airmen flew over 35,000 ISR sorties. In fact, at this very moment, remotely piloted sorties are being flown by an airman somewhere here in the United States. Data is streaming across the globe in milliseconds via satellite to steer aircraft over targets of interest, and then feed that critical battlefield information for processing, exploitation, and dissemination, often available immediately for use by troops on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Equally impressive I believe is our ability to build combat power anywhere in the world within hours or days. America's global reach is a national asset. It is unmatched on the planet. Every 90 seconds an Air Force aircraft departs, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Airmen offload 600,000 gallons of fuel everyday to U.S. joint and coalition aircraft all over the world. Airmen have carried 1.8 million passengers and 600,000 tons of cargo

to Afghanistan and Iraq since 9/11. And at the same time, your airmen provided humanitarian relief for floods in Pakistan, earth quakes in Haiti and Chile, and they've conducted air medical evacuations the world over.

Once your Air Force gets to its destination anywhere in the world, the power we bring is unmatched. Across the full spectrum of conflict, from nuclear deterrence to irregular warfare like that in Iraq and Afghanistan, to all manner of military engagement in between, like strengthening regional stability by building the capacity of our coalition partners around the globe. No one brings global power with the speed, precision, and flexibility of your United States Air Force in the air, space, and cyberspace.

Today, 58,000 airmen, and their families in some cases, are forward stationed overseas, strengthening regional stability and long-standing alliances in support of combatant commanders. Less understood, however, is that another 130,000 airmen are engaged in support to the combatant commanders from their home stations here in the United States, performing the continuing mission of nuclear deterrence, controlling the satellites that supply missile warning, weather, imagery, and communications to the joint team or providing air sovereignty alert for homeland defense.

Finally, nearly 40,000 airmen are deployed to 135 countries across the world, mainly in support of contingency operations, now especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. Clearly, your Air Force provides global vigilance, reach, and power like no other in the world. We all have much to be proud of, but the job of remaining prepared for what the future holds will never end. From the Doolittle raid, through Korea and Vietnam, the Cold War, the Gulf War, to today's fights, the United States Air Force has continued to evolve, incorporating new technologies and operational concepts to meet emerging challenges.

The Air Force we are building today and for the future is shaped by the broad scope of potential threats and uncertainties in the global environment; from terrorists' movements to newly developing nuclear powers, from failed states and ungoverned areas of the world, to rising regional powers whose ambitions are unclear.

It's also being shaped by the globalization of information and other technologies in the rapid pace of technological change. For example, global commerce and security are increasingly dependent on assured access to interconnected cyber networks. We are far from alone in space. Fully, 59 countries can be counted as space-faring nations. And we have watched carefully over the past decades the proliferation of ballistic missiles technology, and we've responded accordingly, making missile defense a high priority and transitioning many years of research and development into operational capabilities today. In response to this changing, yet uncertain, environment, we must build in the balance, the flexibility, the versatility that allows our Air Force to operate effectively across the potential spectrum of conflict. This includes appropriate focus on the enabling capabilities upon which the entire joint force depends, at any level of conflict. Capabilities like command and control; communications; mobility and air refueling, ISR, and cyber, just to name a few.

It also reflects the need for a broad range of capabilities. While we're currently reinforcing our counter-insurgency capabilities, we're also building the joint strike fighter, America's next Stealth fighter. While working on command and control for missile defense, we're building light attack and light support aircraft to more effectively train nascent air forces like that in Afghanistan. While planning for the recapitalization of our tanker fleet, we're strengthening space situational awareness and cyber defense. And

while we're building up language and cultural competencies, we continue research on directed energy weapons.

In space, we're modernizing each mission area operating within this critical domain. We're investing in the next generation missile warning system to give us global situational awareness against ground and airborne missile threats. In satellite communications we've improved our capability many times over through new systems with faster processing and more bandwidth. GPS continues to be the premier positioning navigation and timing service for the world, and the next generation of GPS satellites is on the way. And to protect the investments we've made in space, our first space-based surveillance system will be launched later this year.

The only man-made domain, cyberspace, is certainly the fastest growing. Just think about the pace of change. Thirty years ago, computer applications were simple tools for e-mail and routine administrative functions in our Air Force; indeed in our society. This grew into business systems to improve support functions like health care, logistics, personnel, and from there, network information systems have grown to be important elements in command and control operations, linking our weapon systems and our war fighters with unprecedented amounts of information sharing, and vastly improved operational capabilities. Cyberspace operations are now critical to our military in every respect. We live by these networks; we fight through these networks, and we must, and we will, actively defend these networks.

In addition to an uncertain international environment and rapidly changing technologies, constrained resources are another factor we'll likely face in shaping and building the future Air Force. Much of the buildup in defense spending since 9/11 has been focused on supporting the current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. From our wartime experiences and investments we have become a stronger and more capable Air Force and joint force in many, many respects. But the immediate years hold many challenges for our Air Force checkbook. In generating the combat power to support Central Command, our home station units have struggled to maintain adequate readiness. We have constrained military construction. Our personnel costs, and especially our medical costs, mirroring the national challenge, have continued to rise. New missions like missile defense and cyberspace defense are on our plate. And most significantly we continue to face the challenge of modernizing our aging aircraft inventories of trainers, fighters, bombers, and especially tankers, whose average age is now 49 years. This is why the Air Force so strongly supports Secretary Gates' efforts to move more of our defense resources from our supporting tail, to our war-fighting teeth.

Over the past several years we've used information technologies, especially, to reduce the size of supporting functions such as personnel and financial management, and we have shifted personnel savings to meet increasing demands in intelligence and building crews from remotely piloted aircraft. Financial operations are actually a good case in point. Those of us that served during the Vietnam Era or perhaps earlier will remember standing in line every other week to be paid by our commander, fall out for pay, in cash. It was a huge paper and manpower intensive system. All that is history, as military pay evolved to check writing, and in the early '90s moved to electronic funds transfer.

We also continue to focus on energy. As the largest single consumer of jet fuel, the Air Force is focused on reducing our internal demand. We have certified our jet engines to be ready for more synthetic fuels in the future marketplace. And we continue to invest

in renewable energy like solar, especially in the southwest. There is more to do and we will continue to develop new initiatives that help us get the most from every Air Force and taxpayer dollar. Every dollar we gain from internal efficiencies is a dollar that we can invest in future Air Force capabilities.

And in all this work, we know that while technology and a balanced posture for the future, serve as hedges against uncertainty and fiscal constraints, our truest hedge against uncertainty remains as it always has been, our airmen. The Air Force is proud, remains proud of its reputation for caring for airmen. But nearly a decade of sustained combat operations has imposed extraordinary demands on these airmen and their families, and that's why General Swartz and our Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Jim Roy, joined together in designating this past year as the year of the Air Force family. Following a comprehensive review and dialogue across our Air Force, we've strengthened programs and initiatives across every pillar of airmen support: Health and wellness, including health care access and quality; deployment support; fitness facilities, and airmen and family resiliency following deployments; airmen and family support, including extended duty and home community-based childcare programs, and our exceptional family member programs; single airmen programs.

In education and development, the DoD military spouse career advancement accounts will resume this October to assist spouses with education and employment opportunities. And we will triple the number of liaison officers in the next two years to advocate for our Air Force children with local school districts. I would urge the Legion's support for the interstate compacts, which 35 states have currently joined, to ease the social transitions for military kids as they move from base to base.

The final pillar of emphasis for the year of the family was housing in communities, and it included a close look at family housing, as well as dorms and dining facilities for our single airmen. We will have built or renovated over 23,000 privatized homes by the end of this fiscal year. This has been a quiet but successful public-private partnership, that has allowed us to leverage tax payer dollars, providing thousands of new homes to airmen that would otherwise have come years later than they were needed, and at higher costs. The bottom line is that we will continue to provide for the physical and emotional, cognitive, and spiritual well-being of our airmen and their families, because we recognize that airmen are the means of mission accomplishments. So addressing these needs is not only the right thing to do for our airmen, it is the smart thing to do for our Air Force.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of over 600,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian airmen, I would like to finish this morning the way I started, by saying thank you. First, thank you to The American Legion for helping to elevate the VA to cabinet status in 1989. That effort led to better access to care for vets, better funding, a GI Bill for the new century, and rehabilitation and healing from both the physical and psychological wounds of war. That is caring for airmen.

Thank you for your successful work shaping the public's impression of military, and for offering kinship and support for our returning airmen, like Air Force Captain Kyle Dean. Captain Dean was wounded in action on the 19th of June this year when his helicopter was struck with small arms fire. He suffered fragmentation and gunshot wounds to both legs. But when he came home to New Kensington, Pennsylvania in July, he was greeted by American Legion Post 868. That is caring for airmen. *(Applause)*

Thanks for the work that you do in support of children and youth. Through your legendary programs like Boys State, American Legion Baseball and so many others, you

continue to lay the foundations for America's future instilling in our youth the values of patriotism, good citizenship, and public service. That work will bring us future airmen.

And in all these commitments you are walking the walk and setting the example for this next greatest generation. And finally, especially in the middle of our difficult work in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past several years, thank you for helping to build the supportive American public that understands the importance of our military institutions, what they mean to our society, the depth of our commitment to the nation and the sacrifices made by our military members and their families. I ask that you continue to frame these issues accordingly in the public debate, in the local communities that you serve, and in the minds of all Americans.

We owe a debt of gratitude to The American Legion for 92 years of unwavering support of veterans by veterans. Take pride in the fact that your steadfast support of a strong national defense, your unwavering advocacy for a well-prepared force has made a difference to the United States Air Force. Thank you for having me. It is an honor to serve along side of you in support of the world's finest air force. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: He does have an application for membership. The chair recognizes Harold Dale Barnett of Georgia, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs for Membership for the purpose of making a report. *(Applause)*

**Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs)
Harold D. Barnett, Georgia, Chairman**

Forty-one members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee Section III (Membership), considered two resolutions, both of which originated with Departments of The American Legion. Both were referred to the standing Membership & Post Activities Committee.

Ron Daum of Illinois nominated Harold D. Barnett of Georgia as Chairman. It was seconded by Elmer Palmer of Montana. Motion carried. Jack Climer of Utah nominated Gerald Goetzinger of South Dakota as Secretary. It was seconded by Ken Dittenber of Michigan. Motion carried.

Elmer Palmer of Montana made a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the report of the Committee. The motion was seconded by Ron Daum of Illinois.

Jack Cook of Indiana made a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the Resolutions reported out of the Committee to insure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Jack Climer of Utah.

Referred to the Standing Committee for Membership & Post Activities

Resolution No. 201 (MX): Eligibility for Membership Awards

Resolution No. 267 (ID): Eligibility for Membership Awards

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BARNETT: Commander, as a duly elected delegate to this Convention, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? Motion carries. The report of Credentials and Internal Affairs, Membership, is adopted.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It is now time for the membership awards. The departments and individuals who will be joining me on stage took membership to another level in 2010. With the help of those being recognized today, and those of you in the audience, we were able to exceed our goal set back in July of 2009 of 2,364,667 by 34,225. Congratulations. (*Applause*)

We are continually building relationships with The United States Recruiting Command, Active and Reserve military components, and the National Guard, by utilizing community covenants, plus our own programs to reach out to all veterans and their families. Programs and activities such as The American Legion Riders, Team Johnson Racing, Heroes to Hometowns, Operation Comfort Warriors, and many others, have expanded the opportunity for The American Legion to fulfill the promises of our Four Pillars.

Couple all this with our continued commitment of service to veterans, their families, and our communities, and you can clearly see why The American Legion's growth potential is unlimited. Membership gives The American Legion strength because, as we all know, there is strength in numbers. The American Legion is stronger today thanks to the efforts of the departments and individuals who are about to be recognized.

This year I challenged the departments to increase their market penetration by establishing two awards. These awards would be based on the highest percentage and the most improvement in market penetration as of August 6, 2010. The departments had to attain at least 95 percent of their membership goal, using traditional methods, by the May target date to qualify for these awards. I now ask that National Vice Commander Morris M. Bentley assume duties at the podium and the cognizant national vice commander join me as we congratulate the departments from their areas.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BENTLEY: Two departments met this challenge. The Department of Delaware earned the most improved award by achieving 16.85 percent which was an increase of .52 percent. A plaque is being presented to Department Commander Larry Marcouillier. Good job.

The next category was for the highest percentage achieved, and this award goes to the Department of Vermont. They achieved 33.37 percent. A plaque is now being presented to Department Commander Royal Sheeley.

We all know of places where we can develop and start a new post. Places where The American Legion does not have a presence in the community. This past year one department recognized this need and took their post development and revitalization efforts to a new level. The Department of Texas started seven new posts this year. Congratulations, Texas. A plaque is being presented to Department Commander Donald Daft, Department Adjutant Bill West and Department Membership Chairman Bill Hueske for these efforts. Please give them a round of applause for these efforts. (*Applause*)

Will National Vice Commander Dr. Gordon Browning assume the duties at the podium for the reading of the Bodenhamer and Race-to-the-Top Winners.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BROWNING: The O.L. Bodenhamer Trophy is presented to the department that led The American Legion in traditional membership for the Flag Day report of June 14th. This department attained 96.95 percent of their goal by the Flag Day report. Please give a warm welcome to the Department of Vermont. This presentation is to the Department Commander Royal Sheeley, Membership Chairman Ed Brown, and Department Adjutant, Bob Perham.

The next presentation is the District Commander's Race to the Top award. As always, this contest is very competitive and the separation between qualifying for the award and the first, second, and third place winners come down to just one-hundredth of a percentage point in some cases. There are five categories, and for the first time in several years, we have a winner in each category. Please welcome these District Commanders: Category I, Jack Climer, Department of Utah; Category II, Wayne Duffell, Department of Georgia; Category III, Carl Nelson, Department of Georgia; Category IV, Gary Nelson, Department of Arizona, Past Department Commander Carol Hamburger will accept the award; Category V, Patrick Holter, Department of Maryland.

These district commanders are being presented a new Legion cap, a polo shirt, and a shadow box. We sincerely appreciate all your hard work and dedication, and we thank you. (*Applause*)

Consolidated Post Reporting 2009-2010

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Consolidated Post Report is a summary of what The American Legion posts have accomplished in their communities. It's an opportunity to tell a story of your post on an easy-to-fill out form. For the past 18 years the average response rate has been around 50 percent. When I testified before Congress in September, I used that data from this report as part of my testimony. For the 2009-2010 membership year our response rate improved by two percent over last year's response rate. We achieved the 61 percent response rate with 8,509 posts reporting out of 13,951. As you can see, there is still room for improvement. Those department commanders that met the challenge of 75 percent response rate were North Dakota and Missouri. I think they deserve a large round of applause. (*Applause*)

Now, those departments that exceeded the challenge and had a response rate of 95 percent or higher I have asked to join me on stage today for special recognition. At this time we will present their plaques to the department commander. Will National Vice Commander James Morris assume duties at the podium for the reading of the winners?

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MORRIS: The first one is Katrina Bentley, Department of Idaho; Jack Mitchell, Department of Montana; Royal Sheeley, Department of Vermont; Michael Wood, Department of Mexico; Carol Hamburger, Department of Arizona; John Kalmbach, Department of Oregon; Jim Weinreich, Department the Rhode Island; Nels Lofgren, Department of Wyoming; and Phillip Hearlson, Department of Florida. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: National Recruiter of the Year
Nathaniel King, Department of Georgia**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The next membership award goes to a man who raised the bar for recruiting during this membership year. The National Recruiter of the Year recruited 760 new members to the roster of The American Legion. This is his second time as our National Recruiter of the Year. He last won the award in 2004. Please give a warm welcome to a dedicated Legionnaire, Nathaniel King, from Post 267 in the Department the Georgia. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SCHUMACHER: Nathaniel, this is but a small token of our appreciation for the job you have done. Without a doubt, you are one outstanding recruiter, who shares a passion for supporting veterans.

Commander Hill is presenting you with a new Legion cap, a shadow box plaque, a National Top Recruiter ring, and a polo shirt signifying you earning the title of National Recruiter of the Year for the 2009-2010 membership year.

Congratulations, Nathaniel, and please continue to recruit more members into our great organization. We hope to see you again next year, unless there is someone in the audience or in our organization who is up to the challenge of dethroning Nathaniel. Nathaniel, are you up to the challenge?

MR. KING (GA): Oh, absolutely.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SCHUMACHER: He's up to the challenge. Somebody has got some work to do. The podium is yours. *(Applause)*

MR. KING: Good morning everyone. First of all, I would like to give honor to God. Also I would like to thank my wife who has really supported me over the last four or five years on my recruiting effort in The American Legion. I bring you greetings from my post commander, Miss Vickie Dykes. It is indeed an honor and a pleasure to be this year's Recruiter of the Year. As you heard, I've been Recruiter of the Year twice. Four times runner-up. I was runner-up last year, and three times third runner-up.

Today it was asked about me several times during this Convention, "How do you recruit 760 members?" So I thought long and hard what could I share to the national delegation today on the impact that you could use and take back to your department. So I decided to say my method of successful recruiting requires three things: Department. Our department is probably the greatest department in this national organization. *(Cheers)* It gives you the resources. It teaches you. It mentors you, and allows you to implement it from the department level all the way to the post level. As you see, annually you will see from the Department of Georgia Race-to-the-Top winners. Our National Membership and Post Activities chairman, Dale Barnett, is from the great Department of Georgia. Our leadership is great. They teach you.

Also you must have the second portion, the post. You must understand your post. In our post we have 26 Gold Brigade members where National has Race-to-the-Top, we have Race-to-Fifty. The first person in our post that gets 50 members, we have an event in October called The Gold Brigade Extravaganza, and they are awarded. People say membership is the easiest hardest job. Membership is not hard. Just ask someone.

The third thing is our product. We sell the best product in America, The American Legion. *(Applause)* And when you sell a product, we can't use the old ways: Television, radio, billboards. With the new Legionnaires and the new breed of Legionnaires as the national commander has reiterated, we must to go to our social networks, Facebook,

Twitter, Skyping. This is what we need to do to continue to grow. I challenge each and everyone from each department, next year, a lot of you are leaders in this great organization, but I challenge you to ask not what the Legion can do for you anymore. Ask what you can do for your Legion to continue this growth. Thank you. *(Applause)* ...*At this time the delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole at the organ*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Our next speaker is THE speaker. She is truly an historic figure. Elected the first woman speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, she has served California's Eighth Congressional District since 1987. In 2004, she received an American Legion "Unsung Hero" award at our Washington Conference. She has shown commendable leadership in fighting against the Disabled Veterans Tax and for increases in the VA Budget. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the speaker of the House, the Honorable Representative Nancy Pelosi. *(Applause)*

**Address: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives**

Thank you very much. Good morning Legionnaires. As speaker of the House, I have the great pride to bring greetings of the entire House of Representatives to The American Legion. I come and bring thanks and recognition for your leadership. Thank you Commander Hill for your leadership in establishing priorities and ensuring accomplishments for our nation's veterans and military families. And after your term comes to an end tomorrow, we all look forward to working with your incoming national commander, Jimmie Foster.

I've been watching the proceedings and I see the recognition that you have given to each other. I congratulate all of the awardees, and I recognize the leadership of all for whom some of these awards are named. And as a Californian, I'd like to acknowledge American Legion's Department of California and its commander, Mark Foxworthy, and other Californians who are here. Any Californians in the house? *(Cheers)* As a proud daughter of Baltimore, Maryland, I'd also like to salute the Department of Maryland and its commander, Michael Mooney. *(Applause)*

The work of The American Legion is summed up in your commitment to mutual helpfulness. That means: advocating for those who wear our nation's uniform when they serve, and when they come home; protecting the American people; promoting patriotism that has made our nation great; and developing the next generation of leaders. Thank you Legionnaires. *(Applause)*

I know that you heard this morning from Chairman Bob Filner, chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. He has led one of the most active and accessible Veterans Affairs Committees in history. He partnered with others in Congress, the Chairman Chet Edwards of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, to provide the VA with advance appropriations, the number one priority of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Chairman Chet Edwards asked that I tell you how proud he is of the National Commander's Distinguished Public Service Award with which you honored him at the last Washington Conference. All of us take great pride in his accomplishments on behalf of our nation's veterans. I'd also like to acknowledge Congresswoman Gwen Moore, who represents Milwaukee in the Congress and whom you heard from yesterday. One of her

first accomplishments in Congress was to secure funding for a spinal cord injury unit for disabled veterans right here in Milwaukee. (*Applause*)

I display with great pride what Commander Hill referenced, my "Unsung Hero" award. I display it with great pride in the Speaker's office. It's an award that I'm proud of because I received it from you, our nation's heroes, the 2.2 million American Legionnaires. For 92 years you have helped ensure that we live by our moral obligation to honor the service of our troops and the sacrifice of their families with deeds, not just words. From your founders, the veterans of World War I, to your newest members, those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, you understand the commitment of veterans, the commitment that veterans have from one generation to the next. We have a responsibility to ensure that all Americans, though, understand the sacrifice of our troops and their families.

Earlier this year the Blue Star Families presented me with a report that made this heartbreaking conclusion: Nearly 95 percent of military families believe that the general public does not understand or appreciate the sacrifices made by servicemembers and their families. That must change. We must work together. You certainly have done your part. We all must work together to make sure that that number changes because military service has always been a source of American pride and, of course, American strength.

When I was growing up in Baltimore, everyone knew or had someone in their family but all were grateful to members of the armed services. In my family four of my brothers are veterans, and now my nephew is. I remember — this is my first serious recollection as a young child — VJ Day. You weren't born then, but I was a little girl and I remember the excitement of people in the Italian-American neighborhood that I lived in streaming into the streets. Someone dressed as Uncle Sam was riding a white horse and he came through the neighborhood and people were cheering and cheering and cheering and singing patriotic songs, because as with many ethnic neighborhoods we're so proud of our heritage and so fiercely patriotic. But that made an impression on me that day because it was first time I really saw people laughing and crying at the same time and learned what the excitement was about.

Some years later my father became Mayor of Baltimore, and one of his accomplishments was to bring the Orioles to the city and in order to do that he had to build a stadium. I remember with pride the dedication of a new stadium, Baltimore Memorial Stadium, to honor our nation's veterans. Including his brother, my Uncle Johnny D'Alessandro, who died at the Battle of the Bulge. On the wall of Memorial Stadium it said, "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds." And because of the leadership of The American Legion, we will always remember and honor those who protect and defend our country and our Constitution.

I'd like to especially acknowledge the Gold Star and the Blue Star families who join us here today and thank them for their participation and their leadership. Blue Star, Gold Star mom's and Gold Star families. (*Applause*)

Today in the Capitol we have a glorious monument, a constant reminder, not that anyone needs any, that our men and women in uniform have served our country so well. It is the statue of President Dwight Eisenhower. I bring this up because it was his request, this man who had served two terms as president of the United States, that he be depicted not in civilian clothes as president, but in his general's uniform as he looked when he addressed the troops before D-Day. Come see that statue in the Capitol.

In 2005, when I was elected House leader, I planted a flag for our veterans. In our offices, members of Congress hear the concerns on case work basis the challenges that our veterans face. The American Legion and other veterans service organizations have come and spoken to us about the priorities for our veterans. And you know the list is a long one, so we have to establish priorities to get the job done. We planted that flag and said, "Give us the problem. We have to find a solution. No more just talking about it." And I worked closely with The American Legion, as did other members of Congress, and other veteran service organizations to create an agenda, a veterans' agenda which was our promise to you. And that agenda included the GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century. *(Applause)* It is a wonderful thing, the GI Bill. And I'll talk more on it in a moment. When I became speaker, this was my to do list. And you continued to push for action in our regular meetings in the speaker's office. We'd have a meeting, we'd put forth a challenge, the next meeting the veterans wanted a report on it. As a result, together we made more progress over the last four years for our veterans and military families than has been made since the passage of the original GI Bill in 1944. *(Applause)*

Consider these accomplishments and take pride in them, because they most certainly would not have happened without The American Legion. You said that the VA needed timely and reliable funding, what we call advance appropriations, so they would know their budget in advance. Advance appropriations is now the law of the land. *(Applause)*

You said that veterans' health care was being left behind. We passed the largest increase in veterans funding in history, which means that tens of thousands of new doctors and nurses, new vet centers and community-based outpatient clinics and 300,000 modest-income veterans receiving VA health care for the very first time. *(Applause)* And that is something that The American Legion called "A cause for celebration."

You said we needed to put an end to the Disabled Veterans Tax, otherwise known as concurrent receipt. The House unanimously passed the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act last year, and we're going to keep the pressure on the Senate until it becomes the law of the land. We need your help to do that. *(Applause)*

You, The American Legion, said that veterans were facing enormous costs to travel to receive care. We would hear this from individual veterans. As I traveled the country they would come and tell us about this, but you made it a priority. We've addressed this hardship, making investments to help deliver care where veterans live and more than quadrupling the travel reimbursement for our veterans. *(Applause)*

You said that veterans were being left behind in this economy. It's a tough economy. We passed the Recovery Act which made billions of dollars of investments to provide jobs, tax cuts, and quality of life improvements directly for our troops and veterans, to alleviate the burden of this recession and reduce the claims burden.

You demanded action on behalf of our veterans coping with aftereffects of Agent Orange. And we passed more than \$13 billion in disability compensation for these brave veterans who have suffered far too long. And just this week the Obama Administration took historic action confirming that there is a connection between Agent Orange and certain diseases and allowing the VA to provide compensation, health care and long overdue recognition to many.

I just want to say this about Agent Orange. When I was the chair of the California Democratic Party I went down to southern California to join a group of veterans who were on a hunger strike. I mostly wanted to tell them as a mom, a mother of five children, don't do that. It's not good for your health. But they were determined to call attention to

the Agent Orange challenge that our veterans were facing. They were courageous. Some of them were feeling the effects of their hunger. In fact, I told them at the time that my brother, who served in the military in Texas, he became friends of Dick Gregory at the time. They were at the same camp. And Dick Gregory was there that day talking to the Agent Orange hunger strikers telling them how to take care. He had been on hunger strikes before. Anyway, the impression from them of the desperation that they had, the sacrifices they had made for our country, I was particularly proud when we passed the Agent Orange legislation just recently in Congress.

And you said that the GI Bill, the former GI Bill, a centerpiece of American prosperity, no longer kept pace with the times. With The American Legion by our side, just as you were at the creation of the original GI Bill, we passed the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Together, we have restored the promise of a full four-year scholarship for our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, and we have made it transferrable to their spouses and children. *(Applause)* This is very important to us. And I know you know this, but I want to acknowledge it. It was the World War I vets, as I mentioned, who knew that they were not treated in a way that was worthy of their sacrifice, their courage, their patriotism. And they fought for the World War II veterans. That was passed even before the war was over because of the insistence of the World War I vets; largely, The American Legion. And now here again, veterans of former wars are looking out for those who serve our country in combat and otherwise, because this applies to others. Educating our nation's veterans is a cost of war, and it is a promise we make to our troops for their courageous service to our country. We had big rallies in Washington, thank our troops; send them to college. And already over 300,000 veterans and their families have pursued a degree through this initiative. Well over 300,000. Take pride in that Legionnaires. It would not have happened without you. *(Applause)*

I'm especially proud that the vast majority of our accomplishments were done with overwhelming bipartisan support, because there should be no division between Democrats and Republicans when it comes to supporting those who have worn our nation's uniform. *(Applause)* When they serve, and when they come home. We have made remarkable progress working together. Our work will not be complete until every American who has fought for our country abroad can find a job when they come home. We will put our veterans to work with our "Make it in America" economic strategy. Think of it. It's a patriotic action to say that we want to ensure our national security. Our national security depends on our having a strong industrial, technological, manufacturing base so that we can provide our troops what they need when they go to battle and when they train. But our manufacturing base has been eroding in our country, and we're saying one way to correct that is to make it in America. *(Applause)*

Not only to manufacture it in America, but to enable the American people, and our veterans in particular, to make it in America. It's a national security issue. In fact, I've referenced President Eisenhower earlier, and I'm inspired by him and his presence in the Capitol, but also by his actions, as is relevant on this point. When he was president, there were very difficult economic times. Very difficult economic times. And he said, in spite of that bad economy, he made the decision that we would build the interstate highway system. Where would the money come from? You hear this all the time. Where would the money come from? We were in dire economic straits. The president said we are going forward because it is a national security issue for us to have the American people connected by an interstate highway system. And not only that, it created an enormous

amount of jobs. And just think of where we would be if the country had not invested in that infrastructure at that time. It was a very courageous move by a very courageous president.

We have a challenge now to rebuild our infrastructure, which will create jobs in America. All of our servicemembers who serve our country in uniform know that some of the reasons that we go to war can be addressed by having a stronger America here. But if they know when they fight we promise them a future worthy of their sacrifice, and that future must provide economic opportunity for them and their families as they make it in America, build our infrastructure, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, clean up our air, make us technologically number one. We are number one. We are determined to be number one, and the connection between our returning vets, job opportunities, preserving our industrial base, strengthening that base, building of the infrastructure of America is the path I believe we must work together so that everyone can make it in America. Especially our veterans. *(Applause)*

In our office we have Major Bill Collins, who's the head of our Wounded Warriors Initiative. And what we do there is to hire wounded warriors on congressional staff. And we're very proud of this initiative, but also because it serves as a model to others to hire our wounded warriors when they come home. And it is such a joy. Democrats and Republicans have wounded warriors on their staffs. It's a source of great pride. And when our veterans visit our offices, they know there is someone who understands their needs.

We also have Lieutenant Colonel Stacey Bacco on our staff who is our liaison with the military. And I can just see in the two of them the discipline, the patriotism, the values, the respect to our men and women in uniform when they are in battle and when they come home. They are a resource, too, in our office. Our work will not be complete until there is not one homeless veteran on any street in this the land of the free and the home of the brave. *(Applause)*

Our work will not be complete until we have ended the widows tax. This has been a priority for our veteran service organizations. We have already made some progress, and we will keep working until survivors of those who died as a result of their service-connected injuries are no longer penalized and receive the full benefits they so rightly deserve. *(Applause)*

Our work will not be complete until we ensure that no veteran in need of care is ever turned away from a VA medical facility and no veteran is left to wade through mountains of bureaucratic red tape to settle their claims. And we must make renewed commitment to treating the signature wounds of today's wars, TBI and PTSD. *(Applause)*

We will move forward knowing that we will work with The American Legion every step of the way. Just last night President Obama made a strong statement from the Oval Office about the new chapter our nation has begun in Iraq. Our nation thanks those in uniform who have served in Iraq, and those who continue to bear the burden in the service of our country, including the approximately 100,000 troops in Afghanistan. When the troops come home now from Iraq, we will show them our thanks in the grandest possible way. We will show them our thanks by ensuring a smooth transition when they come home. We know The American Legion will be a leading voice on behalf of these men and women in uniform. Again, together we will build a future worthy of their sacrifice. Regardless of what you may have thought about going into the war, we separate the war and the warrior and we will welcome them home as the heroes that they are.

(Applause) God bless them for all they do. God has certainly blessed them with their service to our country.

Our nation can never fully repay the debt of gratitude we owe to the courageous men and women who have worn our nation's uniform. For those who have answered America's call to duty, there is no make-up day for missed birthdays, anniversaries, or graduations. We honor our troops by never forgetting their families. Nearly two million children in America have at least one parent serving in the military. Nearly one million children have seen a parent endure multiple deployments.

Let me say this before I tell you this story. When we talk about the families, one of the honors of being speaker, or even a member of Congress, every member of Congress has veterans as a top priority, and now we want to channel all of that enthusiasm into legislation to change public policy to make a difference in the lives of our vets.

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to visit North Korea as part of an Intelligence Committee trip there. Very unusual. Not many people go to Pyongyang, to North Korea. Two main issues that we brought to the table there were, one, we wanted them to stop developing missile technology and perhaps selling it to other countries. But in relationship to these families, and sometimes I think it comes as a surprise to some of these countries, very important to us was the issue of our MIAs and POWs. Commander Hill talked about the Korean War in his comments. Every country has to know that if we're talking historically about former wars or if we're talking about what we're engaged in now or any thought into the future, we will never forget. We will always try to get the truth about our MIAs and our POWs. It was quite an honor to be able to speak on their behalf to the leadership of North Korea. But it's an issue that is much bigger than any Congressional visit. That's why we have those flags flying in the Capitol, as well, for our POWs and our MIAs. We will never forget.

In terms of not forgetting, I'd like to tell you a story about just one Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry. Gunnery Sergeant Fry was a father of three serving in Anbar Province. After suffering a serious hand injury, he was told he could go home with a Bronze Star, but he volunteered to stay and serve. He said he wanted to stay and protect his fellow Marines. John Fry defused nearly 100 bombs during his time in Iraq. The last bomb took his life. The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship legislation, passed by Congress, named for him, promises the children of those killed in the line of duty since September 10, 2001, will receive the GI Bill benefits their parents earned. I say this because that was not part of the original bill. And if you can imagine, we used the model from before, but we had to pass special legislation. Chet Edwards' leadership was very instrumental on this special legislation to say if the service person dies the opportunity still exists. John David Fry has three children who will now be able to go to college because of their father's service and sacrifice. And so will the children of so many who lost a parent in the war. We passed this legislation with The American Legion by our side.

As I say, take pride in all of it because it could not have happened without you. You are our nation's strongest voice on behalf of patriotism and honor. You understand the need of continued devotion to all who are so devoted to our nation that they showed it in the military. I can never repay their sacrifice. We as a country cannot repay their sacrifice. But we can and we must honor the patriotism, courage, and service of all of our men and women in uniform. Because of you, because of you, we are the land of the free

and the home of the brave. Just as our troops pledge to leave no one behind on the battlefield, we say we will leave no veteran behind when they come home. (*Applause*)

God bless The American Legion. God bless our nation's veterans. God bless our troops and their families. God bless America. Thank you for the honor of presenting my views to you today. Thank you all very much. Thank you Legionnaires. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Madam Speaker, I'd like you to know that I am very aware of what you have done for our veterans and I appreciate it. And on behalf of The American Legion, I thank you. (*Applause*)

In 2005, our next guest was appointed chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and now serves as its ranking Republican member. A graduate of the Citadel and a veteran of the Gulf War, he championed the TRICARE-for-Life and the Senior Pharmacy entitlement program for Medicare-eligible military retirees; one of the most comprehensive prescription drug plans in history. After nine terms in Congress, he will be retiring at the conclusion of this session. Please give a warm welcome to Representative Steve Buyer. (*Applause*)

Address: The Honorable Steve Buyer
U.S. House of Representatives

Thank you very much. I am pleased that Speaker Pelosi could make it to be with us today, so thank you very much for your remarks. I'd like to thank National Commander Clarence Hill for this opportunity to be here with you this morning and for the kind introduction and more importantly, for his strong leadership. Commander Hill, you've done a fine job this past year in not only leading The American Legion, but I'd also like to thank you for a career that has spanned the globe on the high seas. You have a career that has been well-lived. I'd also like to express my appreciation for Rita Navarreté, the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary, and like to thank all past presidents of the American Legion Auxiliary who are with us here today. I want to compliment you on your 90th anniversary of service, not self — for veterans, God, and country.

I'd also like to acknowledge the Hoosiers who are in the room today, and in particular, a special guest of mine. He's a former childhood friend that I grew up with, he and his brother, Jim and Shane Mayhew, on the Tippecanoe River. Jim went on — both of them went on to follow in their father's footsteps, who was a veteran of World War II and of Normandy. And they served careers in the United States Navy. Jim is the past department commander of North Carolina, and he's with me on the podium here today, so I'm very pleased about that.

It gives me great pleasure to be here to address you today. And what I had planned to do is I'm going to behave and to follow one-third of my prepared remarks. The other is, given that I am a retiring member, I plan to be very candid, not only about Congress, but about some legislation and then about my counsel to the nation and then I'll step aside.

I truly am pleased to call all of you not only my comrades, but also fellow Legionnaires. I am aware of your pride. I live your pride. Not only in your service to country, but also of the legacy of service for which you acknowledge. I'm a proud life member of The American Legion Post 81 in Monticello, Indiana. (*Applause*) My lifelong involvement with The American Legion starts as early as I can remember, cleaning tables and washing dishes, drying pots and pans after the ladies washed them. You see, I know

about the tough duties of the Legion Auxiliary. They make you all look good. I was that snot-nosed little brat that would wander into the alleyway where all the smoke was from you guys were frying burgers and tenderloins and you were drinking things out of cans that I had no permission to touch. And you would always shoo me back inside with the ladies so I could continue to dry and clean tables. So I remember all that. And you know what, some of you here also remember that.

My great grandfather's, a veteran of World War I, name is inscribed on the wall at the World War I Memorial on the mall in Indianapolis next to the Legion Headquarters. He then went on to be a commander of his Legion Post. Inspired, then, his son to go to Culver and into the Culver Military School in Indiana for four years, and then he went to the Citadel for four years. My father chose not to go on active duty after eight years in the military. He wanted to be a dentist, to follow his father's footsteps. And then what happened in the summer of 1950? He was drafted as a recruit into Korea. You see, my father then went and served the nation, even though he had eight years of military experience in the enlisted ranks.

My brother and I are the proud sons of an Army sergeant. Never ever did I hear my father say, "I could have been an officer." He did what many do in this nation of ours. You answer your call to service. You serve, you do your duty and you go home and raise your family and you live your life. And that is, in fact, what he did as a dentist in Francesville, Indiana. He served as a dentist actually until the age of 80. And then he closed his door. His goal was to work until he was 80, and from the johnboat, the two of us floating down the Tippecanoe River, I said, "Dad, congratulations, you accomplished your goal." And he said, "What the hell did I do that for?" (*Laughter*)

My brother John and I have a rare privilege coming up. We followed our father through the Citadel. And John is a graduate of the Citadel in 1979, myself in 1980. He went on to the Army Dental Corps as a dentist. I went in the Medical Service Corps, and then after law school branch transferred to the JAG Corps. I'd been on and off active duty several times in war and in peace.

But my status as a veteran I think has been extremely helpful to me in my committee assignments, to serve you and the nation in Congress. What is really unfortunate is that there just are not as many veterans that serve in Congress today. You know, actually there's probably less than 20 of us that have actually served in a theater of war, and it's really pretty stunning. Not long ago I was able to say to my friend, John Dingell, the longest serving member of the House, that I do envy him in that if God had given me the ability to choose my years of service to the nation in Congress, I would have chosen 1948 to 1964. Because the individuals who served in the Congress at that time, were individuals of whom had served the nation in World War II and Korea. And they understood the American character. They understood a character that was formed and forged out of the crucibles of very difficult times. Not only coming from the American Revolution, but those that which has been passed through time, and then to actually go to a foreign land, to go to places where they had never been, to fight for people that they had never met. And to leave freedom in their footsteps and to also leave loved ones behind. They understood something very powerful. Something more powerful than party labels, Madam Speaker. Something more powerful than being a Republican or something more powerful than being a Democrat. How about those in Congress being an American for once! (*Cheers and applause*)

For 30 years, I have had the honor to wear the Army uniform. And for the past 18 years, I have also served the people of Indiana in the United States Congress and this nation. On September 16th, my brother and I will stand in uniform in the Veterans Affairs Committee room in a ceremony hosted by the Secretary of the Army, and I will retire. This will complete my federal service to the nation in Army uniform and the United States Congress. I am grateful and humbled for the opportunity and I thank all of you who have supported my career because it has truly been remarkable to serve the men and women who wear the uniform.

I also want to extend my great appreciation to the national commanders throughout the last 18 years, but also my mentors, Sonny Montgomery and Bob Stump and Lane Evans. You've passed unto me in my tenure of leadership some really great qualities and attributes. When I think about our concerted efforts, they have truly been remarkable. When I think about what the VA looked like when I first came in 1992, it was depicted in a movie called "Born on the Fourth of July." It was not a very good story to tell.

But the VA has transformed itself in the last 18 years, and it has taken a lot of hard work and a lot of maintenance and mentorship not only by The American Legion, but other veterans service organizations and military organizations. The VA has transformed itself from a healthcare provider of last resort, to a world class healthcare system that we're all proud of. We provide this constant maintenance as we transform from a hospital-based care model to the current community-based outpatient clinics that serve our veterans so much more conveniently and efficiently.

For 92 years, Legionnaires have stood proudly for God and country. Your mission is among the highest callings of any organization I believe in our country outside of religious affiliations. This includes the mentoring and sponsorship of youth programs in our communities. The impact that you have upon young men and women today is very powerful. They watch what you do. When they told you as a young soldier, sailor, airman, Marine or Coast Guardsman, that to lead by example when you took off your uniform and you then returned to your civilian status, you continued to set the example and you're pacesetters in your communities.

These programs are extremely important, especially at a time when there are pillars in our society that are weakening at its base. So when the military, our religious organizations, some private schools, when you think about it, what outfit is there out there that provides pillar and stability of America's soul? You play a very important role. Your advocacy for patriotism and helping tell your story so that people understand honor in service and selfless sacrifice, promoting a strong sense and well-being of our nation's security.

As I listen to the speaker's remarks, she's absolutely correct when she said, "You must first have economic security before you can have national security." That's part of the problem and why communism failed. But Madam Speaker, you must have also, though, a complete understanding of what it means for the men and women who wear the uniform. Please don't just say, "Oh, I'll take care of you when you come home." You cannot have a voting record whereby you do not support the men and women in the military. You see, let me give you an analogy. You can't say unto your children, oh, I don't like your behavior; I don't like what you're doing, so I tell you what. That car, I'm not going to buy that car. I'm not going to teach you how to drive it. I'm not going to provide maintenance for that car. I'm not even going to change the tires on that car. But if you get hurt, I will do everything in my treasury to care for you in the hospital and make

sure that you're taken care of for the rest of your life. No. When somebody enters the military, you make sure that they're properly trained; they're properly equipped so you don't have to take care of them for the rest of their life. (*Applause*)

Another little piece of candor for the moment. A lot of individuals of whom were war protestors during the Vietnam era have a disdain for the military. I got to serve with them in Congress. Now they are in leadership positions in Congress. Let me tell you how they cope with themselves. This is a coping skill. Maybe you've heard it before. Oh, it's ok, you know, how we may feel about the war, but we all love the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the Marines when they come home. We all want to care for the veterans. Don't let them get away with it. Don't let them get away with it.

One thing I do want to touch on is when I talked about your pride of your leadership and what you do for us, is what you did for me to help the country. The Legion and what you instill in your ideals and how you touch those who actually still serve in the uniform, when they come home on their breaks you get to see them, you welcome them home, you check in with the families. All of that is about the American family. We know that. But I just want you to know that when you did that to me, I in turn, when I came into positions of power, could then help the country.

Prime example. I come right out of the first Gulf War. A lot of my comrades come home very sick, including myself. So what do I do? I champion the causes of Gulf War illnesses then with Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts. I then, as the chairman of the Military Personnel Committee recognized something and that was that our government said if you take an oath to defend this country in uniform and serve a career, we will take care of you with healthcare for life. Then when we go through the first rounds of the base closings in the early 1990s, it was the shock of many in the military that we were closing and that we said, well, you're just going to have to go get your healthcare somewhere else or you can get it from Medicare. And people became outraged.

Well that may have been what it said, quote, in the law, but what did you say when you signed the dotted line? Now at the time Congress was saying, all right, well we'll respond to the pressure from The American Legion and everybody else. I tell you what, we'll take it to the military retiree, we'll trigger you into FEHBP, which is the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan. You know what? I said no. Over 380 members of Congress said we will trigger the military retiree into FEHBP at age 65. I called a meeting in my office. In that meeting sitting at this little round table was John Chapla of VMI, Vietnam veteran, Army Colonel, retired; you've got Mike Higgins, Air Force colonel, retired; Ed Wyatt, Navy corpsman, Vietnam; Jim Lariviere, a Citadel graduate, at the time a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, he's now a brigadier general in the Marine Reserve; and myself. I looked at them at the table and I said, "You know, there are moments in time where you recognize that there is a problem and someone has to fix it. Gentleman, it's us. We're going to do it; we're going to do it right now." My colleagues, those in Congress are advocating that we trigger the military retiree into another program on a magical date. Now think about all the different healthcare circumstances that people may go through. Just because of some magical date I'm going to disturb all of that? No. I believe that if they're serving their country and they and their families are receiving TRICARE, I believe that we should create a program and leave them in TRICARE for life. (*Applause*) John Chapala picked up a pen and he wrote at the top of the pad, "TRICARE for Life" and he underlined it. That was the creation of a program to fulfill America's promise. I then coupled it with the revitalizing of the pharmacy program that

is extraordinary. It is the richest pharmacy benefit of any program in America. And I know that a lot of people want access to it. But let me tell you how you get access to it. Serve the nation in uniform for 20 years or more and you can have access to it. Keep your hands off of it, anyone else. (*Applause*)

I then set off to do a lot of things and champion with The American Legion. Let me hit a quick laundry list, and then I'll move on. Because these are things I really have enjoyed. Not only taking on the homeless veterans issue, but in particular, in the 1990s, what happened? The Clinton Administration went into the inner cities and recruited a lot of women with children and brought them into the military. I then had to respond because then we had people in the military that were on food stamps. And so then these individuals, as we go into the next decade, many of them get out of the military and then what's the new problem we have? We have women veterans who are homeless with children. So I then created a program to respond to that. We established also a VA office for rural healthcare to improve access and quality of care to our veterans living in rural areas. I also then said I'm going to improve contracting, and I established a 3 percent annual government-wide goal of federal contracting and subcontracting for service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. They need to be able to participate in the federal contracting process.

And after helping reorganize the United States Olympic Committee, I then took those relationships and said, "I want to use sports as a platform for healing." I then brought the Olympic Committee and the VA together, and we created sports programs and actually also created an avenue for our warrior-athletes to be able to compete in the Olympic Games. And that has become a reality. (*Applause*)

But you know, there's something else that we always have to do, and I'm going to ask of you this when I leave Congress. Please be vigilant when it comes to our cemeteries. I know many of you performed your duties in the burial of our comrades. Over the years I've watched the largest expansion of our cemetery system since the Civil War. I've been an advocate of the VA's national shrine program. I believe that a nation defines itself how we care for individuals who came before us. I took on recently the Department of Interior for not taking care of our battlefield cemeteries and veterans cemeteries. We should have one standard, and that standard is set by the Battle Monuments Commission when it comes to our cemeteries. One standard. So please help me when I leave Congress to do that.

And, you know, sometimes you just have to say enough is enough. That happened twice. In the military we call it on-the-spot corrections, right? Well, I recall this one day I picked up the phone, and I do this, I talked to a mother whose son had just been killed in Iraq. On the other end of that phone, she was crying. And she said, "I almost didn't answer the phone." And I said, "Okay, what's wrong? What can I do to help you?" And she said, "I didn't answer the phone because I was afraid he was calling back." And I said, "What is it, ma'am?" She said, "Someone on the other end of the line just called me and said, 'I'm glad your son is dead.'" I was shocked. The person was calling to tell them they're glad their son had died in Iraq. She also told me that her house had been egged, and that someone put trash all over their yard. And that someone also was trying to take the American Flag down, but the dog ran them off. At that time America was recognizing that people were protesting at military funerals. I said enough was enough, and got together with Mike Rodgers of Michigan and we passed a law criminalizing the

protesting of military funerals. (*Applause*) Let me thank the Legion Riders. Let me also thank the Patriot Riders and Rolling Thunder for what you do at these funerals.

My second on-the-spot correction, I turned to the federal courts. Have you lost your mind? You just made unconstitutional the Stolen Valor Act? You think it is okay for someone to go ahead and put on medals of valor; the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, wear them around as though they are a warrior hero and you think that's free speech? These are the same federal courts that think it's free speech to burn the flag and act like a hero. What do they do, serve in Congress? (*Laughter and applause*)

Let me tell you another on-spot correction. You guys do this all the time. You go to the VA, you see something, boom, you want to make a correction. I get to do that, too. So I am in Minneapolis. We create the polytrauma centers. We've got five of them. They are extraordinary. Please be the advocate to keep them. And what do I see? Our great, talented physicians have one of our warriors and his skull has been removed. The pieces of the skull are stored in the body cavity. The trauma to the brain was that severe. And I had to stop and think about what were we doing? You see, America made such demands to do everything they could to protect our warriors, so what is it? We put them in up-armored humvees, we put them in so much armor, body armor. What were we doing? We got problems with the helmet. The sling system in the helmet that you grew up with and having to wear and complained about. I said you know what; something's wrong here with our helmets. I'm from Indiana, man. We watch the Indianapolis 500. We watch a car hit the wall with all of over 100 gs and the car explodes and the driver walks away. Now, what do they have in their helmets that we don't have in ours? So I got the Marine Corps to do a research. And we changed from the sling system of the helmet to a padded system in the helmet to reduce the g force impact upon a soldier when an IED goes off so we can save lives. Those are the things that we can do. (*Applause*)

When Sonny Montgomery left Congress, I turned to Paul McHale, a colleague of mine from the first Gulf War, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, and we created the Guard and Reserve Caucus. Oh, Sonny Montgomery, I do love this man. He used to carry the water for the National Guard, and whatever splashed out of the pail went to the Reserves. That was Sonny Montgomery. I got to let you know, Sonny, before he died I made a pledge to Sonny Montgomery. I told Sonny, "Sonny, I will do everything I can in my lifetime that a statue is never erected in your honor and placed outside; because the pigeons just won't do you justice, Sonny." (*Laughter*) Sonny was a great man. He really was. Great in humor, great in his love for veterans, great for his love for his country, great in love for his military and he taught me so much.

And we did everything imaginable to prepare the Guard and Reserve. Never did we ever anticipate in the restructuring of the Guard and Reserve and getting them through the desert training in California did we anticipated that they would be activated and utilized as much as they are. We never ever anticipated that. And I am so proud of the men and women who are the butcher and the baker and the teacher and they are on the shop floors and they give up their lives and they might be on their third and fourth and fifth rotations and they keep going back to serve this great nation of ours. They're extraordinary, ladies and gentlemen. (*Applause*)

But please keep your eye on the ball. Keep your eye on the ball. Because right now the president is saying, well, a change in mission. Change in mission. They're no longer combatants. Really? How do you think that spec four just felt standing out there all geared up ready to go out on his patrol and the president just said it's no longer a combat

mission. Let me just tell you what's happened. Just because we have taken combat brigades out of theater and we have left 50,000 behind, those in the combat support and combat service support, they are combatants. Those guys that thought, well, I am not infantry; they are infantry.

So I know that some of my colleagues that I work with, and I know in their heart this is hard for them. It's really hard for them. They would much prefer those in the military to be peace keepers than to be warriors. Well, when you're in harm's way we have to be vigilant and we have to be careful. And I'm going to ask you to also be vigilant and be a watch guard here. Because even though you remove the combat brigades, what had lagged behind in its training were the combat support, combat service support functions of logistics, and it takes a long time to train that up. And so long as those men and women are in place, they are, Mr. President, in harm's way. (*Applause*)

I do want to conclude my remarks. And I want to thank you for your patience in letting me share a few things with you. I sat in my room last night and I made some notes and I just wanted to speak candidly and to the heart. This will probably be the last time I make public remarks, so let me share this with you.

I truly have been a fighter over the years. And at times I have even fought with you. One thing I've recognized is we've always believed in the same thing, and that is pride of our country, pride of our ideals, pride of the men and women who wear the uniform and taking care of them and their families when they return. And if they do not return alive, to ensure that they receive an honorable burial and that we take care of their widows and orphans. That we have never wavered. I have prided myself on the fact that I fight for the people of Indiana and this country. I also believe that in order to be an effective leader you have to fight for what you believe in. So I am not only a fighter, but I'm also a believer.

So let me share with you what I believe. And I share this with you and I also share it with a listening country. I believe that in each of us is indomitable spirit; born free and armed with an insatiable desire and undaunted courage to push the boundaries to discover new frontiers. We do so with the hope that there is a better future just over the horizon. It is the American character. I believe America is the land of opportunity. A place where it is okay to dream big. I also believe that there is a nostalgic vision for our nation and decent and determined Americans that are guarded by their faith, their virtues, and values and have opinions and belief that can improve life.

The bottom line: Americans have a choice of individuals who lead in their government. Plato once said that those who do not take an interest in the affairs of their government are doomed to live under the rule of fools. I believe in the liberty of free thinking and innovation that can change and enliven us. I also believe that America can adapt and prosper to change more than any other country. I also believe among us that there is a vibrant sense of nationhood that mocks the prophets of evil, doom, and ruin.

We are an inspirational nation that will preserve with integrity, fight for what we believe in and resist the easy path. Every day as a Citadel cadet I would pass through the PT barracks, and on the side of the wall was a quote by Robert E. Lee that said, "Duty is the sublimest word of the English language." I truly believe that.

So I conclude with this: I also believe that when you answered your nation's call to duty in uniform, that it is, in fact, the highest form of patriotism. And as the defenders of freedom, we must remain vigilant, but we must also be grateful. Grateful for our liberty and for our physical and spiritual and cultural inheritance, because we do not own it

outright. We are merely trustees for life. It is our moral duty and obligation to preserve and protect this inheritance and to pass it along improved, if possible. To do otherwise would be selfish. Therefore, it is our endless sacrifice to consecrate our lives to the greater good, beset by recurrent hopes for a more peaceful and prosperous union.

How do you want the United States of America to be viewed in world history? As a world superpower that was a little over 200 years young but like a meteor that shined brightly for a moment but moved quickly as it faded across the span of time? Or, do you want, as I believe, and permit the eyes of your mind to see a greater vision. To see America as a nation that has the moral courage to reach deep and to revitalize itself, inspire other nations to freedom. A nation who sought the greater understanding, preserved liberty, released the power of the human spirit, and embraced God's blessings for wise tolerance, good will, and an enduring peace. For I believe that those of whom are the vigilant, you, are the vital link between the vision and reality.

I am eternally grateful for having served you and this nation. I ask God's blessings upon you as you travel home from this convention, and I seek His guidance as His blessings upon these our United States. Godspeed. (*Applause*)

National Emergency Fund Awards

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The National Emergency Fund is perhaps one of the most visible ways we demonstrate our "devotion to mutual helpfulness" to our fellow Legionnaires. During the challenge year, The American Legion gave out \$34,300 in grant monies to Legion family members for the disasters experienced in 2009-2010. We raised \$240,050 this year and currently have \$2.6 million available for those in need. It is great to know that when a Legion member needs help, the Legion family will step up and give without reservation. And it is because of your continued giving that we are able to sustain this fund. I think we all deserve a round of applause. (*Applause*)

Those department commanders who were the top fundraisers in their respective categories determined by membership size will receive a plaque. We have five department commanders being recognized today. At this time we will present their plaques. Will National Vice Commander Eugene Schumacher assume duties at the podium for the reading of the winners?

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SCHUMACHER: Those department commanders who are being recognized as the top fundraisers for the National Emergency Fund based on size are: William Kearsing, Jr., Department of New York; Henry "Butch" Adams, Department of Georgia; Kenneth LaFleur, Department of Louisiana; Donald Cabrol, Department of Mississippi; and Nels Lofgren, Department of Wyoming.

Congratulations and thank you for your hard work. Please don't stop the fundraising efforts because we never know where the next disaster will strike again and interrupt someone's daily life. Remember that each and every dollar donated to the National Emergency Fund stays in the National Emergency Fund and we take care of our own when they need help. (*Applause*)

The National Emergency Fund Post Excellence Award was created to showcase American Legion posts that exemplify the spirit of mutual helpfulness by providing assistance and support in their community after a natural disaster takes place. This year's winner is American Legion Post 306 in Fletcher, Oklahoma. This post was chosen during

the 2010 Spring NEC meeting in Indianapolis. Current Department Commander Art Besa, is accepting this award on behalf of Post 306. *(Applause)*

Thank you to all of you for your hard work in making sure that the Legion family members and their respective communities knew where to turn during a natural disaster. At this time I would like those departments that would like to present checks to the National Emergency Fund to come forward and make the presentations now.

CHAIRMAN BESSON (IL): Commander, I would like to be the first to present the award and it's from my post in Illinois, Stonington Illinois, for \$500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, it's an honor to present you with a \$500 check from Callaway, Kemp, Roughley and Tee Post No. 7, Harrington, Delaware.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: National Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of Connecticut, I would like to present a check to the fund for \$200. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of New Hampshire, I present this check for \$1,300.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf the Department of South Carolina, I would like to present you this check for \$1,871.60.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: National Commander Hill, on behalf of the Ohio delegation, 120,000 members, family, officers and our National Vice Commander Jim Morris sitting over there in the sky boxes, a check for \$15,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf of the Department of Florida, I would like to present you this check for \$5,000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GOODIN (MO): Commander Hill, on behalf the Department of Missouri, I would like to present this check for an additional \$3,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, the Department of Pennsylvania, Immediate Past Commander, Joe Socha, could not be here with us today. I have a check for you for \$2,137.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, Post 42, Grand Canyon, Arizona, Department of Arizona, a check for \$1,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, up in Idaho and Montana and Nevada, we have a Fun Days every year. Over the last 24 years, next year will be our 25th annual. We have donated over \$40,000 to the NEF, and we have a check for \$1,600 this year.

NEC MEMBER HEDRICK (NC): Commander Hill, this morning at the Southern Caucus, which you were present, we had fines for folks that didn't listen to the speaker, with a commitment from Virginia for 1,325, we have a check for \$5,783 for the National Emergency Fund. And also Virginia donated \$425 to the Legacy Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf the Department of Minnesota, we would like to donate this check for \$5,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Mr. Commander, members of the Department of New York, when it comes to the National Emergency Fund, believe it's far better to donate to it than to be in a position where you have to withdraw from it. Therefore, on behalf of the Department of New York I would like to present you with this check for \$65,000.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thanks to your generosity, that was \$107,892 to the National Emergency Fund, and \$425 to the Legacy Fund. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The chair recognizes Randall Fisher of Kentucky, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters

Randall A. Fisher, Kentucky, Chairman

Eighty (80) members of your Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters met at 9:00 a.m. on August 29, 2010, in the Frontier Airlines Center, Room 102C, Street Level, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committees were called to order by Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr. (DC), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Mark Walker (DC), Deputy Director for Economic Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for chairman. Randall Fisher (KY), Chairman of the Standing National Economic Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committees.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman elected David A. Korth, as Committee Secretary; Albert M. Robotti (NJ), Chairman of the Employment and Veterans Preference Committee and William Christofferson (UT), Secretary; James Fratolillo (MA), Chairman of the Other Economic Matters Committee and Lloyd Wagener (WI), Secretary.

A Screening Subcommittee on Economic Resolutions, in a preconvention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their action, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committees for consideration.

The Screening Subcommittee conserved the time of the Convention Committees substantially. It was chaired by Randall Fisher, (KY), Chairman of the Economic Commission and was composed of the following persons:

James Fratolillo (MA)
Lloyd Wagener (WI)
Albert M. Robotti (NJ)
William Christoffersen (UT)

The 57 Economic 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 Committees:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	43
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	9
Referred to the Standing Commission	5
Received and Recorded	0
Rejected	0

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign and deliver the report on the Convention Committees' behalf.

A report of action taken on the 57 resolutions referred to the Standing Economic Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Employment and Veterans Preference Committee**Approved or Approved as Amended****Resolution No. 45: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program****Origin: Utah****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)****(As amended)**

WHEREAS, The United States Government has recognized that employment of veterans is a national responsibility and that alleviating unemployment or underemployment of honorably discharged veterans is a national priority; and

WHEREAS, Unemployment rates of individuals recently separated from military service is unacceptable because America's employers have been lax in hiring those ex-service members; and

WHEREAS, The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program created by Congress encourages employees to hire targeted applicants but present program language is too restrictive and fails to include many veterans who are receiving food stamps, welfare or seeking job vocational rehabilitation when requesting employment; and

WHEREAS, Expansion of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to include those and other categories of separated members of the uniformed services will in the long run promote recruitment and retention of members in all branches of the military services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion request Congress for changes in legislation relating to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to include:

- 1. All members of the military who have served active duty and/or still on active duty for training who have served more than 180 days since September of 2001**
- 2. That this benefit will be extended beyond September 1, 2011.**

Resolution No. 48: Allow Military Retirees to Apply for Position in Federal Law Enforcement After Age 37**Origin: Utah****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, Under Public Law 101-509, makes it mandatory for all Federal law enforcement position personnel to retire by age 57 requiring an applicant to be no older than 37 when applying, thus allowing them to complete 20 years of service before age 57; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense spends in excess of \$15 billion annually to train men and women of the Armed Services with thousands of career personnel who complete their initial 20 years for retirement of which a large number have reached the age of 38 – 40 at time of separation; and

WHEREAS, Under existing law it is impossible for a 20-year military retiree to obtain a career in federal law enforcement because of age restriction even though they are

more than qualified for federal employment with their job expertise, security clearance credentials, allegiance to their country, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Providing opportunities for transitional career military personnel is a reinvestment in defense training that would help preserve scarce recruiting and training funds while providing a stable source of manpower to help fulfill the federal government's 188,000 law enforcement personnel requirements; and

WHEREAS, Removing the age restriction or at least providing a waiver based on military service would complement the American taxpayer who has fully funded the training and experience of our career military by utilizing their expertise for federal law enforcement position; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion petition the Congress to amend Public Law 101-509 that makes it impossible for our retiring military men and women to pursue post-military careers in Federal law enforcement based solely on age; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That age waivers for other means be adopted to accommodate those who have served honorably allowing them to continue to serve in a profession that would be enhanced by their previous experiences.

Resolution No. 50: Oppose Efforts to Change the Residency Requirements for State Directors of the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS)

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 84 (MD))

WHEREAS, The United States Government has recognized that the employment of veterans is a national priority and responsibility; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor, Veterans Employment & Training Service has done an outstanding job of promoting the employment of veterans and protecting the right of veterans to employment across the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that each State Director have a comprehensive knowledge of the state economy, veterans' service organizations, including The American Legion, local service providers, and each state's workforce agency; and

WHEREAS, Each State Director must have a strong cohesive relationship with state Workforce agency. Therefore: in most cases the State Directors are hired from the state Workforce agency; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, U.S. Code 4103 (s) (2) requires each Director for Veterans Employment and Training for a State shall, at the time of appointment, have been a bona fide resident of the State for at least two years; and

WHEREAS, The residency requirement as stated in Title 38 USC has served this nation well and has enhanced the success of all programs administered by the Veterans Employment and Training Services; and

WHEREAS, For many years The American Legion has been a strong supporter of keeping the residency requirement part of Federal law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That, The American

Legion vigorously oppose any effort to change the current law that requires the residency requirement for State Directors, United States Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservist Returning From Deployment

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Over seven years of war has caused record high deployment rates of citizen soldiers, who have the responsibility of maintaining civilian employment while waiting for the call to serve their country; and

WHEREAS, Many of these soldiers, who struggle daily to balance their dual military and civilian lives, have returned home from deployment to find that same contract of balance was not upheld by their employers; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Defense's Status of Forces study released in November 2007, among post-9/11 returning Reservists and National Guard, nearly 11,000 were denied prompt reemployment and more than 20,000 lost seniority, pay, and other benefits awarded to them through their dedicated service; and

WHEREAS, It was the intent of Congress in enacting the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 that no veteran be denied employment, reemployment, advancement or discrimination in employment for serving their country in the interest of protecting our nation; and

WHEREAS, As currently drafted, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 fails to adequately support military personnel upon their return to civilian employment as countless employers have violated the rules laid out in Title 38 of the United States Code; and

WHEREAS, Legislation is under consideration that will help ensure that service members and veterans are promptly reinstated in their civilian jobs when they return from tours abroad; and

WHEREAS, This Legislation would strengthen the protections in current law to ensure that service members' and veterans' employment and reemployment rights are effectively enforced under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports and urges Congress to adopt and enforce the provisions as outlined in USERRA; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the amending and strengthening of USERRA to ensure that National Guard and Reservists receive the employment and reemployment rights afforded to them through their dedicated service to the country and as required under law.

Resolution No. 194: Support Full Funding and Staffing for the Veterans Employment Training Services (VETS) Programs**Origin: Texas****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)****(Consolidated with Resolution No. 11 (SD), Resolution No. 49 (UT), Resolution No. 82 (MD) and Resolution No. 219 (MA))**

WHEREAS, Within the Department of Labor (DOL) annual discretionary appropriations, the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) receives funding for the administration of various employment programs; and

WHEREAS, VETS provides such programs as the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), the Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, and the National Veterans' Training Institute; and

WHEREAS, VETS programs provide quality employment services to enrolled veterans and potential employers; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), provides a Federally mandated staffing formula for both DVOPs and LVERs; and

WHEREAS, Historically, Congress has failed to fully staff all DVOP and LVER positions in each state; and

WHEREAS, Meaningful employment is a proven effective approach to homelessness among many homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, The goal of VETS is assisting all eligible veterans in obtaining meaningful employment through proactive assistance and aggressive training; and

WHEREAS, NVTI provides VETS with standardized training for veterans' employment professionals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion continues to advocate full funding (3000 positions nationwide) and staffing for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and its effective programs.

Resolution No. 195: Oppose Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) of Hiring Non-Veterans**Origin: Texas****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)**

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) administers employment assistance and employment protection programs serving veterans, members of Armed Forces Reserve Components and eligible persons as defined in and pursuant to Chapters 41, 42 and 43 of Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 107-288 amended 38 USC, Chapter 41 to allow for the appointment of non-veterans to positions of Regional Administrators, Directors in the States Assistant Directors in the States and "other professional staff assigned to the States", and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff located in Regional offices and those serving in the state routinely and extensively interact with State Workforce Agencies' staffs, members

of Active and Reserve military components and Veterans' Service Organizations, all of whom are veteran or military affiliated; and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff would be unable to fully participate in, nor have the full confidence and credibility with the Veterans Service Organizations; and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff would not have the credibility of the shared active military service or transition experience from active duty, for which VETS has the responsibility for program delivery leadership; and

WHEREAS, For more than 25 years, the VETS staff have, by Title 38, USC, Chapter 41, been required to be veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds it inconceivable that Congress would not find "Veterans Serving Veterans" to be the most appropriate manner of delivering these critical services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek and support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, to require Veterans Employment and Training Service Regional Administrators, State Directors and Assistant State Directors and "other professional staff" under VETS to be veterans of the Armed Forces.

Resolution No. 196: Support Revision of Veteran Employment and Training Service (VETS) Performance Standards

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is an agency within the Department of Labor (DOL) dedicated to providing America's veterans with quality employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) is responsible for ensuring that the agency continues to meet its mission; and

WHEREAS, The ASVET is committed to taking aggressive actions to improve the quality, timeliness, and accessibility to veterans' employment and training services within every State; and

WHEREAS, VETS' programs must meet the needs of veterans facing employment barriers; and

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion continue to work closely with LVERs and DVOPs in local communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, Although Title 38, USC, identifies duties and responsibilities of LVERs and DVOPs, the ASVET cannot accurately capture necessary local, state wide and national data to adequately assess performance outcomes or hold the various states accountable for providing priority services to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion strongly support improvements in the reporting programs available to and administered by Veterans' Employment and Training Service; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion petition the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training to establish clear, up-to-date real

time performance standards and a means of collecting data to properly measure performance at the local, state, and national level.

Resolution No. 197: Elimination of the Regional Offices of the Veterans Employment and Training Service

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The United States Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor is one of the smallest divisions of the Department of Labor which severely limits the number of staff available to investigate Uniformed Service Employment and Re-employment Rights and veterans preference complaints; and

WHEREAS, The President's Management Agenda calls for elimination of the middle level of management of the Federal government; and

WHEREAS, The current system of management within the Veterans' Employment and Training Service includes Regional Offices who continue to increase the number of staff that do not provide direct services to veterans, conduct investigations or provide any identifiable services or products that directly benefit veterans; and

WHEREAS, This continued growth of staff in the Regional Offices of VETS has had a negative and adverse impact on the delivery of services to veterans seeking and needing assistance with their complaints by reducing the number of Assistant Directors located in the various states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that will eliminate the Regional Offices of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and return the organization to its original purpose of advocating and providing direct oversight services to veterans' programs.

Resolution No. 198: Restore Oversight of Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Programs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-one year history of the United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the armed forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served the United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In Section 4301, Title 38, United States Code (USC), Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), "to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service"; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans of the armed forces are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, A recent Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General report has recommended that VETS increase its' oversight of this program, which confirms that services for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by Congress to ensure that all veterans/disabled veterans are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 107-288 has eliminated the requirement that DOL/VETS review all workforce centers annually and this has minimized Federal oversight of the programs since the ASVET has drastically cut funds allocated for this activity and established a policy that only 10 percent of the centers operated under Title 38 will be reviewed; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 has removed the job descriptions of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) from Title 38, USC, and given the States the ability to establish the duties and responsibilities, thus weakening the VETS programs across the country by eliminating the language that required these staff positions provide services only to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The enactment of PL 107-288 also removed the Federally mandated manning formulas for assigning DVOPs and LVERs thus allowing each State to determine the number of veterans' employment personnel in each State, and the assignment of more than one half-time DVOP and/or LVER to one office, while eliminating positions in offices that need veterans' staff by virtue of veteran intake; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation that will restore language to Chapter 41, Title 38 that will require that veteran staff serve only veterans, require that half-time DVOP/LVER positions be assigned only after approval of the DVET, and that the Secretary of Labor be required to monitor all Career Centers that have veteran staff assigned; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also support legislation that restores the duties and responsibilities of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training being required to review all Department of Labor employment and training programs in order to ensure that all programs provide priority services to veterans.

Resolution No. 215: Support Staffing Local Veterans' Representatives (LVERS), as Required by Law

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 199 (TX))

WHEREAS, Under Title 38, U.S. Code, Chapter 41, 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 have 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 216: Support Veterans' Preference in Public Employment

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended)

WHEREAS, Our Federal government specially selected as mentally, morally, and physically fit, certain members from its society, specially trained this group, subjected them to stringent rules and regulations, removed them from home, family and employment, asked of them a special sacrifice, required some of them to suffer wounds they will live with forever; and

WHEREAS, A grateful nation through its representative in the Congress of the United States and State Legislatures has in recognition of that special service and loss of employment opportunity while defending the country in time of need, extended a long history of employing the returning veterans by enacting the Veterans Preference Act; and

WHEREAS, The term "veteran" includes every category of socioeconomic, gender, age, religion, ethnic group, race, and creed; and

WHEREAS, Absence from the highly competitive job market due to military service creates an unfair and unequal burden on veterans in competing for employment with non-veteran peers upon completion of military service; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Preference Law accomplished the legislative purpose of honoring veterans and provides a small advantage in competing for Federal and State government jobs; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Preference requires a veteran must be fully qualified for the position sought; and

WHEREAS, There are reported incidents of hiring officials in both the Federal and state government agencies who have ignored Veterans' Preference in selecting new employees; and

WHEREAS, There have been Federal and state legislative efforts to repeal or avoid application of Veterans' Preference in hiring practices; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion deploras each and every attempt to degrade, dilute, or modify the historical precedence of giving job eligibility preference to those who are taken from their communities to serve their country in time of war; and, be it further

RESOLVED, Urge all law makers at every level of government to oppose any and all efforts to repeal or circumvent Veterans' Preference in government hiring practices; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, Urge all executives at every level of government to enforce Veterans' Preference in their respective government agencies.

Resolution No. 217: Support Reasonable Set-Aside of Federal Procurements and Contracts for Business Owned and Operated by Veterans

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended)

WHEREAS, Government small business assistance for all honorably discharged Veterans dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Veterans have provided selfless military service to America, and previous generations of veterans have achieved significant self employed small business success in America; and

WHEREAS, Present policies and legislation ensure that not all veterans receive the same opportunity to prosper as small business owners, undermining their opportunity to succeed as part of the DOD or governments supplier base that is central to ensuring America's success in the War on Terror, and America's success in the international economic systems; now, therefore, be it;

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion will support development and passage of Federal, State and local veteran business development legislation to provide assistance to all veterans, including disabled veterans and members of Reserve components of the U.S. military to ensure equal opportunity for veterans to start or grow a small business, including establishing numerical goals for all veterans to compete in government procurement; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to ensure equal parity for all veterans in all Small Business government contracting programs, thus ensuring no veteran procurement program is at a disadvantage in competing with any other government procurement program established by law.

Resolution No. 218: Support for the Military Transition Program

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended) (Consolidated with Resolution No. 235 (WI))

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

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

WHEREAS, The SMOCTA program provides financial incentives to employers who hire and provide training to eligible Veterans; 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 rating of 30 percent or more; or

Be unemployed and have been unemployed for at least eight (8) 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 Department 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 provided funding for SMOCTA while the VA and DOL were 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 Military Transition Program can help to 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek continuation of the Military Transition program until the employment picture improves and the downsizing of the military is completed; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek adequate funding for the Military Transition Program so that it can achieve what it is designed to do.

Resolution No. 332: Authorize U.S. Small Business Administration to Re-establish a Direct Loan Program for Veterans Entrepreneurs

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Small Business Development Assistance to veterans who have honorably served this country is a veterans' benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Small Business Benefits specifically for veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, A core mission of the U.S. Small Business Administration is to assist eligible small business entrepreneurs who are the backbone and engine of the American economy, to gain access to the financial resources needed to either start or expand their small business through either a guaranty or direct loan, or both; and

WHEREAS, During military service, many veterans may not accrue necessary or adequate capital or collateral requirements necessary to privately finance their small business, especially if it is home based; and

WHEREAS, These prospective veteran entrepreneurs, may need from \$25,000 to \$250,000 (or more or less) to finance their small business; and

WHEREAS, Regardless of the particular amount, access to capital and credit is critical and extremely difficult in the current and future economic recessions; and

WHEREAS, Commercial credit sources are “risk adverse” and look for applicants with near perfect credit, which can be more difficult for veterans, Reservists and National Guard members/families who risk all during their service to this country, their credit is often impaired and accumulation of collateral diminished; and

WHEREAS, The current and historical high unemployment rate of returning veterans also presents a career challenge for military personnel whose skills can be difficult to transition to civilian life, resulting in unemployment; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supports the efforts of the U. S. Small Business Administration to improve access to capital for veterans, active-duty service members eligible for the military’s Transition Assistance Program, Reserve and Guard members; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion sees great value in a significant expansion of the existing Microloan and 7a Loan Programs as another financial resource for veterans in need of small and reasonable amounts of capital for their small business creation or purchase, and who may otherwise be adversely impacted by lack of credit and capital as they return to diminished civilian employment opportunities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages Congress to require the U.S. Small Business Administration, whose core responsibility as an alternative lender to American small businesses, to provide capital and credit under reasonable terms to veterans who are entrepreneurs, that is not otherwise available from the commercial credit markets; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation which would direct and authorize funds to the U.S. Small Business Administration to reestablish a direct loan program for eligible veterans, National Guard and Reservists to either establish, purchase or expand a small business.

Resolution No. 333: Support For Vocational Rehabilitation And Employment (VR&E) Program Hiring More Counselors And Employment Coordinators

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The intent of the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program is to retrain and educate service-disabled veterans so they may find productive jobs compatible with their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the caseload for the VR&E Program is 1 employment coordinator per 145 cases; and

WHEREAS, The average veteran is enrolled in VR&E for approximately 900 days, in part due to large case loads of vocational rehabilitation counselors and lack of individualized care; and

WHEREAS, Veterans, especially those of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, continue to have higher unemployment rates than non-veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports an increase in funding that would allow the VR&E Program to hire more vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment coordinators, to minimize the caseload so veterans have more individualized counseling as well as ensure them of ample employment opportunities once they complete the program.

Resolution No. 334: Veterans Hiring Preference from Employers with Federal Contracts or Grants

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The employment of veterans should be one of the highest priorities of the Federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive hiring preference from employers that receive grants and contracts from the Federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive preference from employers that receive contracts on Federally assisted projects while other target groups do receive special hiring consideration; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are not well served by current law that requires Federal contractors to provide affirmative action to employ and promote qualified veterans in contracts of \$100,000 or more but contains no real enforcement mechanism and provides no rights or benefits enforceable by law to any veteran; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seeks to ensure that veterans receive employment preference from employers who receive grants and contracts from the Federal government and employment preference from employers that receive funding on all Federally assisted projects.

Resolution No. 335: Veterans' Employment Initiative

Origin: Committee on Economic

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Significant hurdles to veterans employment in the Federal government exist despite veterans preference laws, including deficiencies in Federal agency human

resource departments and a lack of adequate information on the part of veterans about how to obtain Federal employment; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13518 created a Veterans Employment Initiative in response to these hurdles but provides only general guidance to covered agencies as to how the initiative is to be implemented; and

WHEREAS, *The Government wide Veterans' Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan for FY-2010-FY2012*, published as part of the Veterans Employment Initiative, also sets out general goals; and

WHEREAS, Many of the goals described in the three-year Strategic Plan have been met less than a year after the Plan was published, leading to the impression that in the Strategic Plan has set the bar too low; and

WHEREAS, Because each agency or department named in Executive Order 13518 is required to develop its own operational plan and standards, there is no efficient way for the government, the individual veteran, or the public at large to track these plans and their outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Some agencies are absent from the list of agencies participating in the Veterans Employment Initiative; and

WHEREAS, Neither Executive Order 13518, nor the Strategic Plan establish metrics to assess whether the Veterans Employment Initiative is successful; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That Executive Order 13518 and the Strategic Plan be supplemented to include measurable, specific goals and specific metrics to better assess the effects and successes of the Veterans Employment Initiative; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Executive Order 13518 and the Veterans Employment Initiative include all Federal agencies and departments; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That there be further development of the Veterans Employment Initiative to provide enforcement and oversight mechanisms and rights or benefits enforceable by law to any veteran; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion commends the current administration for taking action on veterans employment in the Federal government.

Resolution No. 336: Support Recognition of Military Service and Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Office of Personnel Management's interpretation of Section 531.203 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations 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; and

WHEREAS, The interpretation of this law places an undue financial hardship on former members of the Armed Forces and penalizes the individual for serving in the military defending our country and provides an advantage to non-veterans seeking higher starting salary when entering into Federal employment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that requires Federal agencies to take an employee's military experience and military pay history into consideration when computing that employee's starting civilian salary.

Resolution No. 337: Oppose DVOP/LVER Personnel to Work on Public Assistance Related Programs

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service administers programs to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, Many state employment agencies are utilizing DVOP/LVER personnel to work on public assistance related programs including food stamps; and

WHEREAS, This diverts the DVOP/LVER personnel from their prime mission which is to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, That time would be better utilized assisting veterans with their employment and training needs or providing them with veterans benefit information; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans are not aware of their veterans benefits and could benefit from information on veterans benefits in addition to assistance with employment and training; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in, National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion will go on record opposing the utilization of DVOP/LVER to work with, or process public assistance programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress reinforce the mandate of the program to assist veterans with their employment and training needs and whenever possible provide veterans benefit information as a part of their service to the veteran customers.

Resolution No. 338: Oppose Any Weakening of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty one-year history of The United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the armed forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served The United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of, the President of The United States; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans of the armed forces of The United States

are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers, and that veterans helping veterans has proven to be extremely effective; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, the Congress of The United States to ensure that all veterans who served The United States in uniform in time of war and peace are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, PL 107- 288 has revised Title 38 to eliminate the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be veterans and serve only veterans and to reduce the direction and control of such employment assistance programs while relinquishing the direction of veterans services to the discretion of the governors of the several States and/or contracting of such services to for-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 also eliminates the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be assigned based on veteran intake and veteran population, and creates half-time DVOP positions, thereby eliminating positions available to serve veterans or allowing positions to be assigned at the discretion of the individual state workforce agency, which may or may not adequately assign positions; and

WHEREAS, Such devolution of program responsibility will then be based on each state's elected officials' which and may result in either limited services or such variations in employment assistance provided disabled veterans as to make a mockery of the expressions of the Congress found in Title 38 USC; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek national legislation that will require LVER and DVOP staff be veterans and serve only veterans, and that the assignment of these positions to local one stop centers be based on veteran populations; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all DVOP and LVER staff members be Federal employees.

Resolution No. 339: Support Tax Credit for Certain Employers

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

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 known as Southern Watch, Joint Forge and Uphold Democracy; and

WHEREAS, Currently another 80,000 Reserve components are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of those men and women left jobs and careers in the civilian community to answer the call of their country; and

WHEREAS, Many of those veterans and their families suffered economic hardship as the result of that service because the military salaries they received while on active duty were often much lower than the salaries paid by their civilian employers; and

WHEREAS, While some employers were able to make up the difference between their employee's military pay and their regular civilian salary, most employers could not, or would not, make up the difference between the two; and

WHEREAS, There is no incentive for employers to make up the difference between an employee's military pay and their regular salary; and

WHEREAS, The financial disadvantages suffered by many members of the Armed Forces Reserves and National Guard who are called to active duty could very possibly serve as a major impediment to the recruitment and retention of a competent reserve component of the military total force; and

WHEREAS, The recent downsizing of Armed Forces resulted in increased reliance on Reserves and National Guard units for military operation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 340: Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops for National Guard and Reserve Members

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Public Law 101-510, codified in sections 1141-1150 of Title 10, United State Code, authorized comprehensive transition assistance benefits and services for separating service members and their spouses and required that Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshops be established and maintained; and

WHEREAS, TAP Employment Workshops are available for the service members prior to separating from active duty; and

WHEREAS, Many of the forces engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are members of the National Guard and Reserves; and

WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard and Reserves are not afforded the opportunity to attend a TAP Employment Workshop prior to separation from active duty; and

WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard and Reserves must take time away from their civilian jobs and travel to an active duty site at their own expense to attend a TAP Employment Workshop on a space-available basis; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for National Guard and Reserves members be provided at no expense to them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek legislation that will provide every National Guard and Reserve member who is activated for 12 months or longer, a period of five days to attend a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Workshop within ninety days of separation.

Resolution No. 341: Support Legislation to Amend Title 38 United States Code, to Prohibit Discrimination and Acts of Reprisals by Employers Against Veterans that Seek Treatment for their Service-Connected Disabilities

Origin: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economic (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, This great organization was based upon comradeship born of wartime service and dedicated to fair and equitable treatment of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, Many of this Nation's men and women have answered the call to serve in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Congress, through the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), provides protection from employment discrimination for men and women who perform military duty; and

WHEREAS, USERRA requires that employers release any employees to perform military duty; and

WHEREAS, Many of the men and women serving in the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard as well as activated National Guard and Reserves) sustained service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Under USERRA, employers are required to "make reasonable efforts to accommodate a person's disability so that the person can perform the position that would have held if the person had remained continuously employed"; and

WHEREAS, The employers, however, are not specifically required by law to allow veterans with service-connected disabilities to be absent from the workplace to receive the necessary medical treatment for these disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The necessary medical care can be provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at the VA medical centers as well as a private provider for service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced that would amend Title 38, United States Code, (USC) to prohibit discrimination and acts of reprisal against persons who receive treatment for illnesses, injuries, and disabilities incurred in or aggravated by service in the uniformed services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation to amend Title 38, USC, to prohibit discrimination and acts of reprisals by employers against veterans that seek treatment for their service-connected disabilities.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Economic

Resolution No. 10 (SD): Support the Rollover of IRA Accounts without Penalty or Tax Liability of a Permanent and Total 100 Percent Service-Disabled Veteran with Individual Unemployment

Committee on Other Economic Matters
Approved or Approved as Amended

Resolution No. 44: Veterans Entrepreneur Training Program

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

(As amended)

WHEREAS, In 1989 The American Legion Department of Utah received a grant for \$91,447.00 from The American Legion Small Business Administration to be used to fund entrepreneurial training for veterans desiring to implement and own a small business venture; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion program was designed to encourage and motivate veterans to explore their management and organizing abilities required in formulating sound business plans and help in obtaining needed financing for successful implementation of a business; and

WHEREAS, Cooperation with The American Legion and Small Business Administration with local entities that entail schools with Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, business owners, State Industrial Development Departments, private consulting support systems, lending institutions, and instruction and information from existing and retired business owners can contribute to The American Legion programs following three fold objectives:

1. To reach out to as many veterans as possible to explore their business interests.
2. To select a reasonable number of veterans to participate based on entrepreneurial potential and application of business successful criteria.
3. To provide selected veterans with education programs, support workshops and counseling to assist in forming sound business plans; and

WHEREAS, Classes should be held at educational establishments during evening or weekend hours and should include the veteran entrepreneur's spouse or partner whenever possible having proved to be an unequivocal asset to the veteran's success; and

WHEREAS, Due to older age individuals separating from active military, plus activation of Guard and Reserve units who have immediate family obligations that interrupt a Service Member's business or employment while deployed can completely change their future professions when returning could necessitate a training program to fit their changed needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion request the Small Business Administration and the Congress make funding available to reinstate the Veterans Entrepreneur Training program grants to help those who are in need to return to productive civilian professions.

Resolution No. 46: Support Reinstatement of Funding for Veterans Upward Bound

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The present Congressional budget allocations for education impairs and is devastating to some veterans and their educational interests because funding for Veterans Upward Bound has been eliminated; and

WHEREAS, For the past twenty years the Veterans Upward Bound program has served thousands of veterans in counseling, assisting, and tutoring them free of charge to help them to succeed in postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, The program has proven to be very successful in accomplishing its mandate from the Department of Education to assist veterans to become honorable graduates at the postsecondary level; and

WHEREAS, The graduation rate for veterans utilizing Veterans Upward Bound far exceeds the graduation rate of colleges and universities, and if funding is not set apart during the appropriations process, the accomplishments that Veterans Upward Bound has done in promoting educational goals for our military veterans will end with the 2010–2011 budget year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the American Legion insist that the President and Congress reinstate funding for the Veterans Upward Bound education programs for now and future years.

Resolution No. 83: Eliminate Delimiting Dates for the Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 – the original G.I. Bill; and

WHEREAS, This GI Bill helped our veterans to pursue a higher education; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill is now in place; and

WHEREAS, The Post 9/11 GI Bill is now in place; and

WHEREAS, The benefit of a higher education is still viewed as a vehicle to economic security; and

WHEREAS, The present ten year delimiting date for the Montgomery GI Bill and fifteen years delimiting date for the Post 9/11 GI Bill to utilize this benefit should not exist; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That there be No time constraint with regards to the Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill.

Resolution No. 221: Support Efforts of the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

(As amended)

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a veteran’s benefit that dates back to the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, The military is currently in the process of downsizing, which will mean that thousands of former military personnel who have honorably served their country will be unemployed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports increased funding for the efforts of the Small Business Administration's (SBA), Office of Veteran Business Development, in its initiatives to provide enhanced outreach and specific community based assistance to veterans and self-employed members of the Reserve and National Guard; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation that would permit the SBA's Office of Veteran Business Development to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals and develop a nationwide community based service delivery system specifically for veterans and members of Reserve components of the U.S. Military.

Resolution No. 251: Raise Ceiling on VA Home Loans for Two Legally Married Eligible Veterans

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, It is the sincere desire of The American Legion to see all veterans realize the American dream of owning their own home; and

WHEREAS, Real estate prices for homes in certain parts of the country far exceed the maximum VA loan amount of \$417,000 in most states; and

WHEREAS, Two veterans of the opposite sex, married to each other and each having entitlement in their own right to \$417,000, are limited to the ceiling of \$417,000 if they purchase a home together; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to change the ceiling on a VA loan to \$834,000 in those situations where two eligible veterans of the opposite sex are married to each other and purchase a home together.

Resolution No. 258: Surviving Spouse Mortgage Eligibility

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

(Consolidate with Resolution No. 86 (MD))

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who meet certain criteria are eligible for the VA home loan program for as long as they live and in certain circumstances may use this benefit several times; and

WHEREAS, Once the veteran expires this benefit does not pass onto the surviving spouse except in those situations where the veteran died of a service-related condition or died in service; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are usually the primary income provider for the household and contribute the majority of payments to mortgages for the family; and

WHEREAS, Once the veteran dies the mortgage payments must continue to be paid and the burden falls on the surviving spouse; and

WHEREAS, The surviving spouse may have to downsize and/or move to a different area to obtain a more affordable dwelling; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to allow the surviving spouse of a veteran who was determined to be eligible for the VA loan program to use this same entitlement for a one time guarantee of a new mortgage and that this eligibility be good for up to fifteen years after the veteran dies or the surviving spouse remarries.

Resolution No. 318: Support the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Living Stipend to Match the Post 9/11 GI Bill Living Stipend

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Program, is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31; and

WHEREAS, VR&E allows payment for tuition, fees, books, supplies and a stipend of at least \$574.54 (for veterans with no dependents) regardless of where the student resides; and

WHEREAS, The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, more commonly called the Post-9/11 GI Bill, also allows payment of tuition, fees and books; however, it established a variant living stipend based on the basic housing allowance of an E-5 with dependents, veteran's percentage of eligibility and the zip code of the educational institution he/she attends; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom may elect the Post-9/11 GI Bill due to its more favorable living stipend; and

WHEREAS, Veterans' educational benefits, whether VR&E or Post 9/11 GI Bill must be designed so veterans do not elect one over the other due to monetary gain, but rather for the program that will best serve the veteran throughout his/her transition from military to civilian life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation that raises the VR&E living stipend to match the Post 9/11 GI Bill living stipend.

Resolution No. 319: Support Major Enhancements for the Post 9/11 GI Bill Educational Benefits

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 265 (IL))

WHEREAS, The Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act was signed into law on June 30, 2008, and was implemented on August 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Four very different education programs now exist: the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve, and the Reserve Educational Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, This new Post 9/11 GI Bill goes well beyond helping to pay for tuition and fees; many veterans who served after September 11, 2001, will get tuition and fees, a new monthly housing stipend, and a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies; and

WHEREAS, The new Post 9/11 GI Bill also gives Reserves and Guard members who have been activated since 9/11 access to same GI Bill benefits; and

WHEREAS, However, this new Post 9/11 GI Bill only covers institutions of higher learning and excludes worthy service men and women that deserve this new education benefit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation that would include all Active Guard Reserve members of the United States Armed Forces Federalized under Title 32, United States Code (USC), to be eligible for educational benefits under Chapter 33, Title 38, USC, based on their honorable military service consistent with the terms of that Chapter; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports changing Chapter 33, Title 38, USC, to include apprenticeship programs, flight training, correspondence schools, vocational schools, and on-the-job training programs being completed at any educational or training institution; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends that the allowances at distance learning be similar to those in effect as residential learning; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends that VA sustain full tuition and fees reimbursement for veterans attending public undergraduate colleges, while setting a national standard for private and graduate schools.

Resolution No. 320: Funding for Homeless Veterans

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has passed legislation to fund the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, the Homeless Domiciliary Care Program and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) rehabilitation program; and

WHEREAS, Some of these programs have been in partnership with veterans service organizations and other non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, VA estimates that 107,000 veterans are currently homeless; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been an active partner with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs with the Health Care for Homeless Veterans and CWT programs; and

WHEREAS, These programs have proved to be successful in rehabilitation of the veteran in helping him/her to become a productive citizen again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion renew its commitment to assisting homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to support the efforts of public and private sector agencies and organizations with the resources necessary to aid homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek and support any legislative or administrative proposal that will provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall call on the Congress of the United States to keep the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem 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. 321: Home Loan Guaranty Program

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

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 benefited 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 over 18 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 some of the veterans who have participated in this program could have obtained private sector financing that required a down payment, many others could not have qualified for such financing; and

WHEREAS, Congress has made numerous changes over the years in attempts to improve this VA program, including authorizing certain pilot programs; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided with authority to guarantee both traditional Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMS) and Hybrid Adjustable Rate Mortgages (HARMS). This authority expires after September 30, 2010; and

WHEREAS, DVA's ARMS and HARMS have become very popular, comprising approximately 22 percent of VA's guaranteed loans in some years; and

WHEREAS, One of the attractive features of an ARM is that it allows the borrower to obtain a home loan with a beginning 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 loans in DVA's ARM and HARM programs were underwritten much more conservatively than those available in the conventional market, 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 extend the Department of Veterans Affairs' Adjustable Rate Mortgage and Hybrid Adjustable Rate Mortgage programs beyond their September 30, 2012 expiration date; 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. 322: Homeless Veterans Assistance

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Assistance for homeless veterans is not adequately funded; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That it urge Congress to establish a fund in the Treasury of the United States to be known as the "Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund," to provide assistance to homeless veterans as a supplement to, but not a replacement for, existing funds for such assistance; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow taxpayers with income tax liability of \$3.00 or more to designate \$3.00 of said liability for transfer to the Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund.

Resolution No. 323: Support Expanding the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Voucher Program

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the nation has a responsibility to ease the difficulties experienced by military veterans returning to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, In the most severe cases, veterans transitioning home and their families have found themselves homeless; and

WHEREAS, In 2010 VA estimates there are nearly 107,000 homeless veterans on any given night and nearly twice as many veterans experience homelessness at some point during the year; and

WHEREAS, President Obama and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Shinseki are committed to eliminating homelessness for the nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has developed a comprehensive Five Year-Plan to achieve this goal; and

WHEREAS, The HUD-VASH program is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (VASH) program to help homeless veterans and their immediate families by providing permanent housing with case management and supportive and clinical services provided by VA at its medical centers (VAMCs) and in the community that promote and maintain recovery and housing stability; and

WHEREAS, The HUD-VASH is a prominent element of the Five-Year Plan; and

WHEREAS, VA identified 217 VAMCs and Community Based Outpatient Clinics that will participate with the program; and

WHEREAS, In doing so, the VA took into account the population of homeless veterans needing services in the area, the number of homeless veterans served by the homeless programs at each VAMC, geographic distribution and VA case management resources; and

WHEREAS, There will be at least one site in each of the 50 states and in the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, To be eligible for this program, veterans must be VA Health Care eligible, homeless and willing to participate in case management services in order to obtain and sustain permanent independent community housing in VA Healthcare; and

WHEREAS, This program was designed to address the needs of the most vulnerable homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, The program is designed to improve each veteran's health and mental health, and to enhance each veteran's ability to remain stable, housed, and integrated in their local community; and

WHEREAS, This is done using HUD Section 8 "Housing Choice" rental assistance vouchers and VA's case management services; and

WHEREAS, A voucher may be either "project-based" (where its use is limited to a specific apartment complex) or "tenant-based" (where the tenant is free to choose a unit in the private sector with a Section 8 program); and

WHEREAS, Of the approximately 9400 housing vouchers allocated in Fiscal Year 2010, only 400 are project-based; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED; By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports expanding the HUD-VASH voucher program, to include the funding of 20,000 additional housing vouchers; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages a higher allocation of project-based HUD- VASH voucher units.

**Resolution No. 324: Support Increase in Reporting Fees for Educational Institutions
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, A Certifying Official is responsible for certifying the enrollment and changes in enrollment of eligible students to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, The Certifying Official's primary function is to let VA know if a student is registered for classes, showing the beginning and ending dates, number of credit hours or clock hours per week in attendance, and indicating the status of the student as an undergraduate or graduate student; and

WHEREAS, VA pays an annual reporting fee to schools; and

WHEREAS, The reporting fee is intended to help defray the cost of processing VA certifications; and

WHEREAS, The annual reporting fee is based on the number of VA students, including chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation), certified by the school during the calendar year; and

WHEREAS, Colleges and Universities are always relying on reporting fees from VA to pay for veteran-related activities; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the reporting fees to colleges and universities is \$7.00 per student-veteran enrolled; and

WHEREAS, Colleges and universities use certifying officials as the first liaison for a veteran using veterans' educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, Certifying officials need continuing training in order to properly inform veterans about their education benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veterans enrolled in institutions are in need of a place/location to meet other enrolled veterans to confer and find information for veteran-related assistance; and

WHEREAS, The increase in reporting fees would allow certifying officials to receive initial and recurring training, buy and/or upgrade equipment (i.e., computers) and provide office space for student-veterans to meet; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is dedicated to assuring proper education and information for those who are assisting veterans and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports increasing the amount of the reporting fees payable to educational institutions for Certifying Officials who assist/enroll veterans receiving educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Resolution No. 325: Support Licensure and Certification of Active-Duty and Selected Reserve Personnel

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The unemployment rate in March 2010 for Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans is at 14.7 percent; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are in need of employment after exiting the military; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, DoD establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupational career fields in the Armed Forces that can easily translate to a civilian counterpart; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, In the Armed Forces, these unique occupations are performed to approved military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria; and

WHEREAS, Upon separation, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the

comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement; and

WHEREAS, This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service; and

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

WHEREAS, That DoD is obligated to keep such licenses and certifications current and cover the costs of renewal; and

WHEREAS, The Post 9/11 GI Bill is not authorized to pay for civilian licenses or to pay for necessary preparatory course work for the credentialing examinations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the timely and successful transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that service members be trained, tested, evaluated and obtain any licensure or certification that may be required in the local civilian workforce; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports a pilot program dedicated to working with the top 10 transferable military occupations to find the best practices for providing veterans with a way to become gainfully employed using their military skills; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support making the Post 9/11 GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses; 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 support changes for the Post 9/11 GI Bill to enable the use of benefit for the establishment and operation of Small Business concerns.

Resolution No. 326: Support Major Enhancements for the Montgomery GI Bill

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The American Legion first drafted the GI Bill of Rights, which was enacted by Congress in 1944, and

WHEREAS, The nation now has a Total Force military policy that requires the operational integration and deployment of active-duty, National Guard and Reserve forces; and

WHEREAS, All members of the Total Force endure the same hardships and sacrifices, including National Guard and Reserve personnel who contribute to every operational mission and deployment; and

WHEREAS, The original purposes of the GI bill are sound and supportable; and

WHEREAS, Many Selective Reserve members have significant readjustment challenges upon discharge from active-duty service; and

WHEREAS, The current structure and management of the MGIB by the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs causes administrative confusion and inequitable allocation of benefits; and

WHEREAS, A grateful nation should honor the service of all members of the Total Force GI Bill that is compatible with the nation's Total Force military policy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That Congress should move the Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve from Title 10, the United States Code (USC) to Title 38 USC; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the annual appropriations for the MGIB and the MGIB-SR become one annual appropriation within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA has administrative authority for both the MGIB and the MGIB-SR Bill.

Resolution No. 327: Transitional Housing Allotments for Returning Combat Veterans

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Unlike the active-duty component that are stationed stateside in the final months of their service, Guardsmen and Reservists are fully employed in a combat zone up until the final day that they redeploy back to the Continental United States; and

WHEREAS, At the demobilization site, returning veterans undergo approximately 3 weeks of physicals, transition programs, reunion with family members and inventory accountability. There is little time for these service members to start the process of finding a home, apartment, room or other dwelling; and

WHEREAS, Families are sometimes unaccommodating to returning veterans and cannot or refuse to house them. Young veterans are living with their families, friends, in hotels, in cars, and are homeless; and

WHEREAS, Many single soldiers stay at hotels and are burning up their savings earned over the prior year. Veterans are having to enter unfair leases/agreements just to find a place to stay because they are in dire need; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are ineligible to live on campus housing due to the likelihood of returning in the middle of a semester and are unable to start college for 4 more months. For 9 months out of the year, universities are in their lengthy fall and spring semester terms and these young men and women can't restart their academic careers until the next term starts; therefore, they are not eligible to live on campus; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 90,000 Guard and Reserve have been re-entering the private sector each year since 2001; and

WHEREAS, A 180-day 'buffer' period will allow veterans to transition back in to the civilian sector with much greater ease and will prevent homelessness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion

support the creation of a program by Congress for returning veterans similar to Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), for housing upon return from mobilization for 180 days.

Resolution No. 328: Oppose the National Veterans' Business Development Corporation

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Small business ownership and entrepreneurship are the backbone of the American economy and foundation for democracy; and

WHEREAS, Veterans, through their service, have cultivated experiences, skills, and self-discipline that make them well suited for self-employment; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-50) to assist veterans and service-disabled veterans owned businesses by creating the National Veterans Business Development Corporation; and

WHEREAS, The National Veterans Business Development Corporation is no longer fully engaged in providing entrepreneurial education, services and advocacy to promote and foster successful veteran entrepreneurship within the veteran business community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion no longer support the continuing initiatives or existence of the National Business Development Corporation due to its failure to carry out the mandates as set forth in P.L. 106-50; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion asks Congress to revoke the National Veterans Business Development Corporation's Federal charter referenced in 15 U.S.C. 657c (a).

Resolution No. 330: Veterans Home Loans

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Legislation to amend the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Tax Code to delete the requirement that State Veterans Home Loans may only be made to those veterans who are within twenty-five years of date of discharge is pending in Congress; and

WHEREAS, This change in the IRS Tax Code would allow thousands of veterans to become eligible for a State Veterans Home Loan; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports amending the IRS Tax Code to delete the requirement that State Veterans Home Loans may only be made to those veterans who are within twenty-five years of date of discharge.

Resolution No. 331: Amending the Eligibility Criteria for the Transfer of the Post 9/11 GI Bill Educational Benefits**Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters**

WHEREAS, Eligible service members can share the Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits with their immediate families only if they were on active-duty on August 1, 2009; had completed six years of active-duty military service; and committed to serve four more years; and

WHEREAS, When Congress passed the new GI Bill, a provision was included to allow the transfer of education benefits to immediate family members; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense wanted to entice troops to reenlist, so the transferability benefit only applies to service members with 10 years of active-duty service or a commitment to serve 10 years; and

WHEREAS, A spouse can begin using transferred benefits before the additional four years are served, but children may not use benefits until a service member has completed at least 10 years of service; and

WHEREAS, Service members with 10 years of active-duty service or more; who are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill educational benefits; who were not on active-duty on August 1, 2009; and who were prevented from committing to another four years by the Department of Defense; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation that would authorize all service members with 10 years or more of active-duty service, who are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill educational benefits, but left the Armed Forces before August 1, 2009, be able to use the transferability entitlement to give to their immediate family members.

Resolution No. 342: Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee**Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Home Loan Guaranty program has been in effect since 1944; and

WHEREAS, The VA Home Loan Guaranty program has afforded approximately 18 million veterans the opportunity to purchase and refinance homes; and

WHEREAS, The VA Home Loan Guaranty program offers veterans an affordable and easy to use method of purchasing homes in return for their service to this nation; and

WHEREAS, Currently the loan guaranty limit is \$417,000; and

WHEREAS, The VA funding fee charged to veterans was enacted into law to defray the costs of the VA guaranteed home loan program; and

WHEREAS, Funding fees collected each year virtually always exceed the costs of operating the program; and

WHEREAS, The current fee of 2.15% for first-time users amounts to a principal payment of nearly \$4,500 by the veteran on the current average loan of \$209,000. This is the equivalent of requiring the veteran to "purchase" a benefit that historically could be used cost free; and

WHEREAS, The VA funding fee that is collected goes to a Department of the Treasury account that sustains that VA Home Loan program, with excess monies used to pay for other Federal Government programs and expenses; and

WHEREAS, Congress is required to fund the operation of the home loan program because the program has “permanent and indefinite budget authority”; and

WHEREAS, The funding fee paid to VA has had a negative effect on many veterans by adding significantly to the cost of a VA loan, or by deterring other veterans from using an earned benefit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the elimination of the VA Home Loan funding fee; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion petition Congress to appropriate funding to sustain the VA Home Loan program.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Economic

Resolution No. 37 (OH): Support Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Being Included in the Post 9/11 GI Bill

Resolution No. 222 (MA): Reauthorize and Fund Veterans Affairs Small Business Loan Program

Resolution No. 247 (NE): Support Transfer of Education Benefits to Servicemembers with Less than 6 Years of Service

Resolution No. 329 (Economic Committee): Support and Strengthen the Service Members Civil Relief Act

CHAIRMAN FISHER: Mr. Commander, I Randall A. Fisher, Kentucky, as a duly elected and registered delegate to this Convention, move for the adoption of this report. Respectfully submitted. ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? The report of Economic is adopted.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Now it is time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making jobs available to veterans. That special recognition comes in the form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organizations as 2009 Employers of the Year. One award is for companies employing 50 or less people, another for companies employing 51 to 200 people, and the third are companies with more than 200 workers. Each is nominated by a post and advances through department and national competition levels. The award in the 50 employees or less category goes to Millennium Security Services, LLC of Roswell, Georgia. Accepting on behalf of the company is Mr. Michael Mizell.

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans for 2009. Presented to Millennium Security Services, LLC, for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 92nd annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin." (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The award in the 51 to 200 category goes to Regent Security Services, Incorporated, of Columbus, Georgia. Accepting the award is Mr. Ernie Sizemore. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans 2009. Presented to Regent Security Services, Inc., for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 92nd annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: In the large employer category of 200 plus employees, the award goes to BNSF Railway Company of Forth Worth, Texas. Accepting on behalf of the company is Mr. John Wesley. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans 2009. Presented to BNSF Railway Company for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 92nd annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

Presentation: Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Another employment award that I'm honored to present goes to the top Local Veterans Employment Representative in the nation. The award honors individuals who have done such a remarkable job of placing veterans in jobs that even their peers take notice. The Employment Service Award to the Local Veterans Employment Representative for 2009 goes to Kathy Y. Ford of Denver, Colorado. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year 2009. Presented to Kathy Y. Ford for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Colorado."

Presentation: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The American Legion is also proud of the men and women who work on behalf of disabled veterans seeking employment. This year I'm happy to present the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award to Kenneth E. Kempf, of Raleigh, North Carolina. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the year 2009. Presented to Kenneth E. Kempf for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of North Carolina."

Presentation: Outstanding Employer of Disabled Veterans Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: When the Employer Awards Program was established in 1947, its purpose was to recognize employers across the country who had established outstanding records in the employment and retention of the disabled. In doing so we are able to educate employers and the general public about the many positive aspects of hiring disabled persons and thereby increase their employment opportunities. Here to accept the award is Kenneth Grant, director of Veterans Services, and Ronald Denowski, administrator of Employment and Training Division. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Disabled Veterans 2009. Presented to Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Madison, Wisconsin, for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 92nd Annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: On behalf of every veteran in America, I extend to you our congratulations and say those words all workers love to hear: "Thank you for a job well done." We're certain you will keep hiring or assisting veterans. Please tell other businesses about the reliability and work ethic of our veterans. Thank you and congratulations.

Presentation: Employment Service Office of the Year

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Continuing with our recognition of those who assist our fellow veterans in finding meaningful work, it is time to honor the top Employment Service Office of the Year. The award goes to Cumberland County Job Link Center, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Accepting the award is Department of North Carolina Adjutant Frank Stancil. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year 2009 is presented to Cumberland County Job Link for outstanding service to the veterans of the state of North Carolina."

Presentation: Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The charge of The American Legion is to serve veterans and their families. This includes helping our homeless vets as they try re-entering society as productive, self-supporting citizens. I'm honored to present the Homeless Veterans Outreach Award to one department of The American Legion that goes above and beyond the call of duty in helping our homeless. That department is Colorado. *(Cheers)* Accepting the award is 2009-2010 Department Commander, Francis McCurdy. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National 2009 Homeless Veterans Outreach Award is presented to The American Legion Family Department of Colorado, for exceptional efforts toward the elimination of homelessness among veterans in the state of Colorado. Presented at the 92nd annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

Presentation: Outstanding Employer of Older Workers Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The American Legion strongly believes that older workers are a valuable economic resource of proven skills, stability, and experience. We also encourage employers to hire and retain older workers in the workforce. The purpose of the Older Workers Award is to recognize employers for their outstanding record in hiring and retaining older workers. Accepting the award for the Allen Corporation of America is Mr. Kevin Vaughey. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Older Workers 2009 is presented to Allen Corporation of

America, Inc. of Fairfax, Virginia, for an exceptional record in the employment of older persons. Presented at the 92nd annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you all again for your dedication to employing our veterans.

The chair recognizes Joseph Caouette of New Hampshire, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism, for the purpose of making a report.

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

Forty-three members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, August 29, 2010, in the Hilton Milwaukee City Center, Regency Ballroom, Fifth Floor, Milwaukee, Wisconsin to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the committee.

The committee organized by electing Joseph Caouette (NH), Chairman; Darell Bishop (OH), Vice Chairman; and James Gates (CO), as the Secretary.

The committee discussed twenty-nine resolutions that were assigned to the group. The resolutions that were considered continue to reflect the desire by the 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 by William Moore, Jr. (KY) and seconded by Byron Callies (SD) 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 and that the staff be authorized to make any necessary changes to the resolutions, such as spelling or changes in wording, as long as it does not change the intent of the resolution. The motion was approved.

Twenty-nine resolutions were considered with 13 being approved, 6 approved as consolidated, and 10 referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism.

The Following Resolutions Were Approved

Resolution No. 302: Strategy to Address Social, Economic and Population Problems Related to Illegal Immigration

Origin: Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion, since its inception in 1919, has expressed concern that legal and illegal immigrants arriving in this country in large numbers would be unable to effectively assimilate into our society unless numerical quotas were established and enforced; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's concern is exacerbated by the estimates by immigration reform groups and reports by news sources and others that as many as 10 to 20 million individuals are in this country illegally; and

WHEREAS, Numerous authoritative studies have shown that mass immigration has harmed the interests of millions of Americans, including veterans, by undercutting wages and working conditions, increasing welfare costs, overburdening local schools, public health care facilities and other vital social institutions; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has urged the Congress of the United States to adopt an immigration policy that will eliminate social, economic and population problems resulting from our country's failure to secure our nation's borders and to enforce its immigration and employment laws; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is opposed to any amnesty or legalization program, policy or directive that would grant illegal immigrants legal permission to remain in the United States, thereby rewarding them for criminal behavior while penalizing those immigrants following lawful immigration channels and increasing the financial burden on law-abiding taxpayers who would ultimately pay for these services; and

WHEREAS, It is universally thought by both proponents and opponents of illegal immigration that immediate deportation by force of all illegal aliens in the United States is not a workable solution to the issue, with estimates for such action totaling perhaps as much as \$215 billion over the next five years according to the Center for Immigration Studies, an independent non-partisan 501(c)(3) research think tank devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the impacts of immigration on the United States; and

WHEREAS, A 2006 study by the Center for Immigration Studies, found that as a result of illegal aliens accessing government programs upon being granted amnesty, the government's net fiscal burden would increase an additional \$20.2 billion; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Immigration Studies, has proposed an alternative to mass deportation or mass legalization of illegals, seeking instead the attrition of the illegal population and efforts to encourage illegal aliens to leave the U.S. of their own accord; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Immigration Studies plan, which uses the government's own cost estimates, could cut the illegal population by nearly half in five years with an additional investment of less than \$2 billion, or \$400 million per year; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of the Center for Immigration Studies plan have been reviewed by the National Americanism Commission and are determined to be compatible with the provisions of American Legion resolutions on the subject of illegal immigration; and

WHEREAS, Few candidates for public office or their political parties address the issue of illegal immigration or express a willingness to take a position – either pro or con – as to their stand on illegal immigration in the United States because of the likelihood of alienating a significant number of voters in their jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Americans are becoming increasingly frustrated by what they see as the federal government's reluctance and/or failure to stop this large influx of illegals and the actions by some states to provide taxpayer funded services and other benefits to illegal aliens thus providing additional incentives for more people to enter this country illegally; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has passed numerous resolutions calling for the enforcement and/or reform of the government's immigration laws, policies and procedures and now seeks to combine many of the positions regarding social, economic and population problems into a single resolution concisely stating The American Legion's positions and strategy to resolve this complex matter; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion be unalterably opposed to illegal immigration and oppose legislation that would

result in the granting of amnesty and legal residency, in any form or by any name, to illegal immigrants currently in the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, on behalf of all Americans and future generations of Americans, urge the Congress and the federal government to authorize and fund the following strategy in addressing the issue of illegal aliens in the United States:

1. Eliminate the jobs magnet and social services benefits:
 - (a) Mandate verification of employment eligibility,
 - (b) Enforce employer sanctions as called for in current employment laws and assess heavy penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens,
 - (c) Make illegal residents ineligible for Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, and other government-sponsored public services and public assistance,
 - (d) Eliminate governmental financial aid for illegal alien students;
2. Enforce existing laws and pass new laws to reduce U.S. illegal population:
 - (a) Reject amnesty or “legalization” programs for illegal aliens,
 - (b) Prohibit eligibility to services offered by financial institutions in the United States,
 - (c) Issue no drivers licenses to illegal aliens,
 - (d) Designate English as the official language of the U.S. government and print all documents, including election ballots, in the English language only,
 - (e) Work with state and local governments to discourage illegal settlement;
3. Revise legal immigration procedures; screen and track foreign visitors legally entering the U.S.:
 - (a) Eliminate the Visa Lottery Program,
 - (b) Restrict the number of countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program,
 - (c) Establish numerical limits for all immigration categories of temporary workers to help prevent labor market distortions and create new visa categories or expand the H-2A and H-2B Visa Categories for temporary agricultural and temporary and seasonal workers as necessary to replace illegal workers eliminated from employment opportunities in the U.S.,
 - (d) Create and enforce a reporting system to track the whereabouts of foreign visitors to include students at academic institutions, members of a country’s diplomatic corps, aircraft and vessel crews, foreign press representatives, exchange visitors, H-1B Workers, L-1 Intracompany Transferees and those individuals categorized as humanitarian entrants; and
4. Hold accountable those employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens, especially those aliens showing suspected fraudulent documents, thus suggesting the possibility that identity theft may have occurred; and

5. Promptly deport to their country of origin those illegal aliens convicted of felonies relating to the use of fraudulent identity documents, especially those of children, in order to obtain employment in the United States; and
6. Assist victims of identity theft perpetuated by illegal aliens by providing the victims with assistance in reclaiming their identity while erasing derogatory information, such as criminal convictions resulting from the misuse of the victim's identity records; and,
7. Make institutions of higher education who fail to cooperate with the federal government in monitoring and tracking foreign students ineligible to receive federal student loan monies benefiting foreign students; and, be it further,

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adamantly oppose provisions of any comprehensive immigration reform legislation that grants amnesty or forgiveness to the employers of illegal aliens; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes any legislation or executive order that would allow illegal aliens and others who are in this country illegally to receive in-state tuition rates, federal or other government education grants and or financial assistance to attend a college or university in the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion endorses the report by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) titled "Attrition Through Enforcement – A Cost-Effective Strategy to Shrink the Illegal Population" and adopts the action as proposed in the report as a portion of its strategy for reform of the U.S. immigration policy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion work with CIS to obtain Congressional approval and national acceptance of the plan which includes the following:

- Mandatory workplace verification of immigration status
- Measures to curb misuse of Social Security numbers and IRS identification numbers
- Cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement officials
- Increased screening of foreign visitors
- Increase non-criminal removals through increased interior enforcement
- Discourage illegal settlement by adopting additional state and local legislation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the United States government to hold respective agency heads accountable in guaranteeing the desired communications and exchanges of technical information concerning the various aspects of the illegal alien issue; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seize every opportunity to request an accountability of our elected officials in implementing and enforcing federal and international laws and treaties to eliminate the large numbers of individuals from foreign countries entering the United States illegally and that all candidates for public office and the Democratic and Republican National Committees express publicly to the American people their positions and solutions to this grave danger to our country's stability; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue an information campaign to alert its members, federal and state elected officials, and the general public of the massive influx into the country of illegal immigrants, the consequences of mass immigration and how it will affect the standards of living in these United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion use all possible means to bring forth a solution to the challenges faced by the United States because of illegal immigration.

Resolution No. 304: Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The dates of certain patriotic holidays have been changed from their original dates to create "three-day weekends"; and

WHEREAS, The time-honored traditional observances of these holidays has been eroded; and

WHEREAS, The majority of Americans view Memorial Day as a time for relaxation and leisure recreation rather than as a solemn occasion and a time to reflect and pay tribute to the American servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives in defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, By urging the ringing of bells in our communities for one minute on traditional Memorial Day, May 30, 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 urges the passage of federal legislation that would result in an annual Presidential proclamation calling on all American institutions, public and private, to toll their bells for one minute, beginning at 11:00 a.m. on the traditional Memorial Day, May 30, in remembrance of the servicemen and women who died defending our Nation and our freedom.

Resolution No. 305: English Language Be Used in Naturalization Ceremonies

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 567, titled, "Naturalization Ceremony," was passed by delegates to the 56th annual National Convention of The American Legion in 1974 and opposed any change in the Judicial Naturalization Ceremony for new United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, naturalization ceremonies have been conducted in foreign languages; and

WHEREAS, Several resolutions have been passed by The American Legion which urged Congress and the various state legislatures to declare the English language as the official language of government in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Amendments to the Immigration and Naturalization Act make the traditional naturalization ceremony conducted by a United States District Judge optional, thereby removing an integral and indelible step in the naturalization process; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires and American Legion posts have traditionally participated in naturalization ceremonies as part of the Legion's Americanism program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages the United States Attorney General to issue a directive making naturalization ceremonies by a U. S. District Judge a mandatory step in the process of acquiring U.S. citizenship; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress, the U.S. Justice Department and the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security to require that all Citizenship Naturalization Ceremonies be conducted in the English language.

Resolution No. 306: Injured or Disabled Non-Citizen Veterans Applying for Naturalization

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, During our Nation's call to arms in the preservation of our liberty, our Nation has been blessed with the services of individuals from many nations who cherish liberty; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has recognized that through service in our Armed Forces these servicemen have forged a bond with our Country; and

WHEREAS, Under the present Immigration and Nationality Act the non-citizen soldier is allowed to apply for naturalization only upon completion of three (3) years of active duty; and

WHEREAS, Some non-citizen servicemen were injured or became disabled while on active duty and were medically discharged from the Armed Forces for said injuries or medical conditions prior to the completion of 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 and who were legally in the United States at the time of enlistment, to seek naturalization if they are injured or their injuries aggravated while on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, resulting in a discharge under honorable conditions.

Resolution No. 307: School Prayer**Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism**

WHEREAS, Americans have historically believed in seeking God's protection and guidance through prayer; and

WHEREAS, The value of expressing spiritual convictions through public prayer has been recognized as a firm basis on which to conduct public proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court decisions during the early 1960's 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 ensure that our Nation's public school children have a daily opportunity to pray.

Resolution No. 308: Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States**Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism**

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 civic, veteran, business and fraternal organizations which have come together to persuade Congress to propose a flag amendment; and

WHEREAS, The legislatures of all 50 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 flag amendment; and

WHEREAS, Flag protection amendments have passed the House of Representatives six times previously, only to fall short of the necessary two-thirds supermajority required in the Senate; 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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, Inc. to bring to a successful conclusion the grassroots campaign to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in order to return to the people their right to protect the Flag from acts of physical desecration.

Resolution No. 310: Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 the Congress that would allow conscientious objectors to elect to have their income, estate, or gift tax be used 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to oppose legislation that would give conscientious objectors a voice in diverting monies from military spending.

Resolution No. 311: Amend the “Temporary Protected Status” Portion of the Immigration Act of 1990

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a classification granted to eligible nationals of designated countries who are temporarily present in the United States when natural disaster or political turmoil in their country interferes with their plans to return; and

WHEREAS, A person from a designated country who is in the United States is eligible to be granted TPS only by establishing that the designated country was the applicant’s last place of habitual residence; and

WHEREAS, TPS beneficiaries are granted work authorization during the TPS period and for any extensions of the designation; and

WHEREAS, TPS was created by the Immigration Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, Anyone in the United States from the designated country is eligible for TPS, whether they entered the country in violation of our immigration law in order to find work or for other reasons, or violated the law by staying in the country and taking a job illegally, or were a bona fide visitor; and

WHEREAS, Currently six countries are designated as TPS; and

WHEREAS, Conferring TPS status on persons illegally in the United States rewards them with a work permit that legitimizes their illegal activity; and

WHEREAS, Any person who can establish that they fear persecution if forced to return to their country of origin is eligible for asylum in the United States; and

WHEREAS, TPS allows aliens to live in the United States without our being able to learn their true identities or background information; and

WHEREAS, The events of September 11, 2001 have proven that we can no longer afford to accept people into our country without thorough background checks; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to amend the Temporary Protected Status section of the Immigration Act of 1990 to limit its coverage to foreign visitors legally in the United States.

Resolution No. 312: Support Fairness for Immigrant Spouses

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion was founded by veterans who were concerned about the welfare of dependents of servicemen and women killed as a result of their service in World War I; and

WHEREAS, Current immigration law requires an immigrant spouse to be married to a citizen of the United States for two years before proceeding with a petition for legal permanent resident status; and

WHEREAS, The immigrant spouse's petition for permanent legal residence is canceled when the citizen spouse dies before the two-year threshold is reached; and

WHEREAS, Current law allows immigrant spouses of U.S. military personnel who die in combat or as a result of combat to continue their original petition for permanent resident status; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to caring for the families of the service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in the furtherance of the interests of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow immigrant spouses of U.S. military personnel who die in training on military installations to continue their petition for permanent resident status without the current two-year eligibility restriction; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Immigration and Nationality Act be amended to waive the fees for posthumous citizenship assessed to surviving family members who lose a relative in hostile combat while a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and who has a pending application for United States citizenship.

Resolution No. 313: Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Since the earliest days of our republic, Congress has exercised its constitutional power to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Rules of Naturalization, as established by Congress, requires an oath of allegiance and renunciation of all prior allegiances as a condition of naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance serves as a contract between the applicant for citizenship and the United States government in which the applicant, in return for the benefits and privileges received, agrees to

1. Renounce all allegiance to any foreign state or sovereign;
2. Support and defend the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, both foreign and domestic;
3. Bear "true faith and allegiance" to the United States of America; and
4. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and
5. Take this oath without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that naturalization is a privilege, not a right, to be granted only in accordance with the conditions established by the Congress; and

WHEREAS, In taking the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, the immigrant pledges to transfer their full political allegiance from his or her birth nation to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, According to immigration experts, the great majority of immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship come from countries that "allow or encourage multiple citizenship;" and

WHEREAS, Many immigrant-sending countries, including Mexico, are actively promoting dual allegiance; and

WHEREAS, To retain allegiance to another constitution besides the U.S. Constitution, is inconsistent with the moral and philosophical foundations of American constitutional democracy, thus violating our core principles as outlined in the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance; and

WHEREAS, The integrity of the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance and the integrity of the entire citizenship naturalization process are challenged or compromised by the continuing increase in the number of U.S. citizens who hold multiple national allegiances; and

WHEREAS, A "Citizenship Roundtable" was created by NEC Resolution 28 (October 1999) titled "Citizenship Naturalization Process" that established a working relationship between The American Legion and the Hudson Institute, an internationally recognized public policy research not-for-profit 501c(3) organization; and

WHEREAS, The Citizenship Roundtable opposes any revisions to the oath of allegiance that would dilute or eliminate the applicant's commitment, under oath, to the United States of America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion opposes any and all changes to the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, as used in naturalization ceremonies, that would dilute or eliminate any of the following important and necessary elements of the oath:

1. **Renunciation of all allegiances to foreign states or sovereignties;**
2. **Support for and defense of the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;**

3. Bear ‘true faith and allegiance’ to the United States of America; and
4. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and
5. Take this oath without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to prescribe the language that is used in the oath of renunciation and allegiance for purposes as outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Congress of the United States to enact measures to prevent dual citizenship by naturalized U.S. citizens.

Resolution No. 314: The Boy Scouts of America and the Department of Defense

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The Eighty-Second National Convention of The American Legion in Milwaukee, Wisconsin passed Resolution 334 titled “Support of Boy Scouts of America” which reiterated The American Legion’s longstanding support of the Boy Scouts of America in its efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to their membership and their leadership standards; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, as chartered by the United States Congress, pledges to “transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy”; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion endorses the concept that the perpetuation of these principles may best be initiated by an enlightened public achieved through the implementation of educational practices offered in the homes, in our schools and through public wide programs organized and developed for this purpose by organizations like the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States has upheld the constitutional right of the Boy Scouts of America to set their own standards and membership policies because an indispensable part of being free is the right of individuals to hold moral positions and to associate with others who share those positions; and

WHEREAS, Despite the Supreme Court having ruled in favor of the Boy Scouts’ freedom to associate with those sharing their moral views and to not associate with those who do not share their moral views, the Boy Scouts have been subjected to a continual barrage of attacks by groups and individuals holding opposing views; and

WHEREAS, These opposition groups have been successful in eliminating the Scouting program from all branches and installations of the U.S. Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that this unrelenting assault against the Boy Scouts is not a unique occurrence but a part of an orchestrated effort to denigrate, damage and systematically destroy traditional American values, as embodied in the Boy Scouts of America, The American Legion, the Flag of the United States, the Pledge of Allegiance, and numerous other embodiments of Americanism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion express its steadfast opposition to Department of Defense policies that prohibit the chartering of Boy Scout units by components of the Armed Forces of the United

States and prohibit the use of Department of Defense installations and facilities worldwide by the Boy Scouts of America; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion use every executive, legislative and judicial avenue available to restore longstanding policies of cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Boy Scouts of America that will allow Boy Scout units the right to use DOD facilities and to authorize components of the active duty military, National Guard and reserve units to charter or sponsor Boy Scout units without fear of legal reprisal.

Resolution No. 316: Oppose Flag Code Change Conduct During Hoisting, Lowering or Passing of the Flag or During the National Anthem

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion is recognized as one of the country's foremost authorities on the proper display of the United States flag; and

WHEREAS, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 9, United States Code previously stated, "During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Aliens should stand at attention. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes."; and

WHEREAS, Title 36, Chapter 3, Section 301, United States Code previously stated, "During a rendition of the National Anthem when the flag is displayed all present except those in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart; men not in uniform should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold the headdress at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note."; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 110-181, 110th Congress, amended Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 9, United States Code to read: "During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, those present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes"; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 110-417, 110th Congress amended Title 36, Chapter 3, Section 301, United States Code to read: "During a rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note; members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform; and all other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, and men not in

uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart"; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion appreciates the sincere intent of the current law to recognize all veterans by authorizing the military salute as an option to the traditional means of honoring the flag by placing the right hand over the heart; and

WHEREAS, Military regulations were affected, which previously specified that members not in uniform face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart, if covered, men shall remove the headdress and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and

WHEREAS, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 4, United States Code states, "The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag" should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute; and

WHEREAS, The sentence "Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute," raises the concern that Legionnaires, while wearing a baseball cap or other casual headdress would render a military salute; and

WHEREAS, The non-veteran public may soon follow the lead of those veterans and render the military salute as the flag is hoisted, lowered, is passing or during a rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That those sections of the U.S. Flag Code prescribing that members of the Armed Forces and veterans out of uniform may render the military salute during hoisting, lowering, or passing of the United States flag and/or during a rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, causes confusion leading to breaches of flag etiquette, to include proper conduct during the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to repeal that portion of Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 9, United States Code permitting members of the Armed Forces and veterans out of uniform to render a military salute during hoisting, lowering, or passing of the United States flag; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to repeal that portion of Title 36, Chapter 3, Section 301, United States Code permitting members of the Armed Forces and veterans out of uniform to render a military salute during a rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed.

Resolution No. 317: Eliminate Damages and Attorney Fees in Establishment Clause Lawsuits

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion, whose motto is "For God and Country" and has been since its founding by veterans of World War I in 1919, is leading a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment Clause lawsuits; and

WHEREAS, Many Americans mistakenly believe that the words “separation of church and state” are included in the Constitution of the United States and provide the legal basis for removal of symbols with a religious aspect or references to God in our National Motto or to our country’s founders’ reliance on God, from veterans memorials, and other public lands, areas, monuments, buildings, seals, or ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, The First Amendment to the Constitution nowhere in fact mentions “separation of church and state,” nor “separation of state from religion,” but states only: *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*; and

WHEREAS, Judges in increasing numbers have issued orders in Establishment Clause cases that ban the Boy Scouts, ban the Ten Commandments, ban religious symbols at veterans memorials, ban the Pledge of Allegiance, ban historical religious symbols in the official seals of counties, and ban cities and the Department of Defense from assisting the Boy Scouts, and judges in such cases have awarded millions of dollars to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others in attorney fees to be paid by taxpayers as authorized by 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S. Code Section 2412, and/or other federal statutes; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that all federal statutes of the United States should be amended to rescind and repeal the authority Congress gave the courts to impose damages or attorney fees in Establishment Clause cases, as the threat of judge-ordered damages or attorney fees is being used as a club to compel local elected bodies, villages, towns, cities, counties, school boards, and state and federal agencies, to surrender to demands to remove or destroy symbols or expressions of a religious aspect from all areas of the public sphere for fear of imposition of damages or attorney fees to be paid by taxpayers, and is being used to chill private citizens from exercising the First Amendment right to seek redress by entering Establishment Clause lawsuits to defend symbols of and references to our American heritage, for fear that damages or attorney fees will be imposed upon them personally; and

WHEREAS, The 86th National Convention of The American Legion, August 31 – September 1, 2, 2004, passed Resolution 326, Preserve WWI Veterans Memorial in Mojave Desert, which called on Congress to amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, to prohibit the courts from awarding attorney fees under that statute in lawsuits brought to remove or destroy religious symbols; and

WHEREAS, The 87th National Convention of The American Legion, August 23, 24, and 25, 2005, passed Resolution 139, Amend the Equal Access to Justice Act, which called on Congress to amend 28 U.S. Code Section 2412, or any other similar federal statute, to limit remedies to declaratory and injunctive relief only and to eliminate court-ordered attorney fee awards in cases brought under the Establishment of Religion Clause of the U.S. Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, the Equal access to Justice Act, 28 U.S. Code 2412, and any and all other federal statutes, to limit remedies to injunctive relief and declaratory relief only, and to rescind the authority of the courts to award

attorney fees to the prevailing party in lawsuits brought under the Establishment of Religion Clause in the U.S. Constitution.

Approved and Consolidated

Resolution No. 303: The English Language be Declared as the Official United States Language

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 266 (IL))

WHEREAS, The United States has over the many years been a haven and in most cases a new home for people of many ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, These people, although keeping their ethnic background alive, were urged to take advantage of the educational system that taught them the English language and American history; and

WHEREAS, Many permanent residents and new citizens, although clinging to their ethnic backgrounds did with pride take advantage of learning the language of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Bilingual programs funded by the Department of Education are designed to teach with the primary instruction in the student's home language, while English is subjected to a secondary status; and

WHEREAS, These programs tend to encourage separatism, rather than a unification of purpose; and

WHEREAS, There exists alternative bilingual education programs which provide a more efficient transition to proficiency in the English language; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages legislation which would establish English as the official national language; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges 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. 309: Oppose Importation of Foreign Manufactured American Flags

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 220 (MA))

WHEREAS, The Flag of the United States is a uniquely American symbol; and

WHEREAS, The Flag Code of the United States as listed in Title 4, United States Code, Chapter 1, subsection 8(j) states that: "The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing"; and

WHEREAS, Foreign manufacturers are making and exporting to the United States U.S. 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion encourages 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. 315: Support the Pledge of Allegiance

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 43 (UT))

WHEREAS, In October 1970, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution 13 titled "Defense and Respect for the United States Flag," that voiced The American Legion's support for continuing the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, several states have passed legislation to encourage and authorize the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance in the schools within their state; and

WHEREAS, In 1954, The Congress of the United States reaffirmed the influence on government by a supreme power when it revised the Pledge of Allegiance by inserting the words "under God" as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, Liberal judicial opinions and media coverage have questioned the propriety of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools in the United States, citing the unconstitutionality in references to God; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the Congress of the United States, and many other groups and organizations open their regular meetings by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion reiterate its continuing support for the Pledge of Allegiance in its current form, voicing opposition to any and all attempts to revise it beyond the version approved by Congress in 1954; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the nation's schools to include the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by teachers and students in regular school activities and events; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, at all levels, continue its unyielding support for the Pledge of Allegiance and its provisions of national loyalty by using all means practical to inform Americans about the belief in and the reliance in God by our nation's founders in forming our democratic Republic.

Referred To The Standing Commission On Americanism

Resolution No. 6 (KS): Support and Distribute Braille United States Flag

Resolution No. 47 (PA): Ashes to Graves Flag Program

Resolution No. 64 (CA): Patriot Day

- Resolution No. 67 (CA): Judicial Jurisdiction Over Claims Against Veterans Memorials or Cemeteries Arising Under the Establishment of Religion Clause**
Resolution No. 177 (VA): United States Flag Dimensions
Resolution No. 190 (NY): Flag Code Compliance by the United States Postal Service
Resolution No. 191 (TX): Flag Code Compliance During Athletic Events
Resolution No. 193 (TX): Transportation Costs for All Players in the American Legion Baseball World Series
Resolution No. 236 (MO): Reverse Automatic Birthright to Children Born of Illegal Immigrants
Resolution 239 (MO): Proper Display and Care of the American Flag

CHAIRMAN CAOUPETTE: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of New Hampshire, I move the adoption of this report.
 ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of Americanism is adopted.

**Presentation: The Frank Belgrano, Jr. Trophy and
The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Having completed the adoption of the Americanism report, it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards.

The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy is given annually to the department rendering the most outstanding service during the 12-month period beginning August 1st to the Boy Scouts of America program. This year's winner is the Department of Iowa. (*Applause*)

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy is given to the Department within the United States documenting the greatest activity in operating The American Legion School Medal Program. The winning department shows what can be accomplished by an active and involved American Legion. The winner is Alaska. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Joining me on stage to present the next award is Portia Young, an Emmy-nominated anchor and reporter for WISN's "12 News in the Morning." Portia came to WISN from WOTV in Battle Creek, Michigan, where she was a weekend news anchor and reporter. A Detroit native, she is a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy, which Portia is about to present, is one of the most impressive awards that The American Legion presents during each National Convention. It is named in honor of one of American journalism's most prominent and influential figures and given to the department achieving the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs. The winning department is selected by the National Americanism Commission on the basis of total resources, manpower as well as financial, which were devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year. Ladies and gentlemen, Ms. Portia Young. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy
Portia Young, WISN-TV Hearst Corporation**

Thank you very much, national commander. Good afternoon everyone. I know you guys have been here a long time, and welcome to Milwaukee. I'd like to play a little show of hands before I begin my remarks. Okay. So far who has had a brat? Okay. Who's had a cheese curd? Okay. Who's had a good Miller beer? All right. And who loves the Green Bay Packers? We're going to Super Bowl baby this year. We're doing it.

Thank you very much for having me. I'm honored to be here to present the Hearst Award. I've been a member of the Hearst Corporation family for about eight years now, and it's a wonderful organization and I do "12 News This Morning." I've done that for eight years now, and it's an honor and a privilege to be in such a wonderful city. And national commander, you said my hometown right. You said Detroit. That is correct. That's where I'm from. You put that emphasis on the "D."

Well as we know, William Randolph Hearst, he was a man who created an American empire. He liked to search for the truth and sometimes made his own truth, but he wanted to disseminate that to the world and to the masses. The award that bears his name honors Americanism. It honors that which The American Legion strives to achieve through its many departments here across the United States.

I've had the good fortune to have some contact with The American Legion in my years of reporting here in Milwaukee. I've had a chance to meet with the women's post here, Post 448 in southeast Wisconsin here in Milwaukee, and the African-American post. And I've done that through some wonderful, dynamic people who I've gotten the chance to meet.

I also want to point out that my brother is an Army veteran. He's an Iraq War veteran. He served a tour of duty from 2007 to 2008. My brother is Captain Brian Thompson, and he is now studying to be a JAG officer at William and Mary College in Virginia. I'm very proud of my big brother. (*Applause*) Thank you. And I'm very proud of all the veterans who have served our country honorably and continue to do so.

I'm also proud of the work of The American Legion. That's why I'm very, very humbled to be with you today. And its love, its efforts to promote love of country, love of self and love of freedom. In my contacts with The American Legion, I met a decorated war veteran from Vietnam, William Carr. William, he took me to his post summer picnic. I'm not sure—I think he might have had a crush on me, too. But he took me to a summer picnic and we broke bread with some other Vietnam veterans and we just had a really good time these past couple of years. William, I can now call him a dear friend. And he holds The American Legion principles in his heart, as well as his love for the military. He told me about stories and I could tell—he told me about the physical wounds that he received on the battlefield, but he also has some emotional wounds that William has shared with me from time to time.

For the past two years William has invited me to be part of the African-American celebration at the VA's medical center, the Zablocki Medical Center here in Milwaukee. It's a wonderful night in Milwaukee, and when it's February it's a balmy 25 degrees and we're just enjoying the camaraderie and the laughter and the warmth that's generated in that VA room. And that night always reminds me of the sacrifice that our veterans have made. They make them against the odds, and they sometimes make them when they come home and not without that much support. But William always reminds me that his love

for the military is unwavering and his love for The American Legion is unwavering, as well. That's the way of a veteran, and that's the way of The American Legion.

I met the ladies of the Women's post, Post 448, three years ago. One of the members was Maggie Christensen, she proudly served during World War II with the Coast Guard. She said that her most heart-wrenching day was the day that the war ended, because she knew that that meant her adventure was over and that she would have to go back, as she said, to the kitchen. That's what Maggie said. She's a character, too. She said when she joined the Women's Post 448 that they fought hard and struggled to create here in Wisconsin, she felt alive again. Felt a rekindling of her Americanism and she felt like she was on her Coast Guard adventure. She was with other women like her who proudly answered the call during World War II and other conflicts in America.

On the home front, the Women's Post, it helps our current veterans. It sends them care packages and has all sorts of youth organizations. I was touched to hear about her experience and how she shared that with other woman. The Post 448 is continuing to be dedicated to our veterans who are serving in Afghanistan and still serving in Iraq. So for them I salute the Post 448. And the ladies at Post 448, we met at the VA center and they all defined Americanism. The ones that I met at Zablocki, the ones I continue to meet during my reporting years here. Americanism is a vital, active, living force. It means peace. It means strength. And it means courage to live free in a free land. And as William Carr showed me, and as Maggie Christensen showed me, it means being friendly to people around the world. Americanism is defined by The American Legion as, "Not just a word, it's a cause. It's a way of life. The best way of life ever known. It's a challenge and a hope in this world."

The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy bears the Hearst name. Mr. Hearst believed in the principles of Americanism and he believed in our form of government, our democracy. It recognizes the truth and the basic rights of human beings that they are given to us by the creator. The inalienable rights that our forefather's promised to protect, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to gather, freedom to pursue our happiness.

I am honored to present the distinguished award to The American Legion department who this past year best exemplified this spirit. The winner of the 2010 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy for this year, selected by the National Americanism Commission and my good friend Joe, who I just met today, the winner is the Department of Wisconsin. *(Applause)*

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ENDRES (WI): First of all, this trophy goes to the Department of Wisconsin, all you fine Legionnaires. Back in 2009 you elected me your department commander here in Milwaukee. And at that time we hired a new adjutant. And one of the first things he told me when I came into department headquarters, he said, my goal in the next three years we're going to go for the William Randolph Hearst Award. Well we won it the first year, so I guess he's got his work cut out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Our next guest assumed the position of associate director of the Center for Women Veterans in 2004. Her passion for veterans began with her Marine Corps service, which extended from 1978 until 1992. In March, 2010, she kicked off the "Her Story" campaign to recognize the military contributions of

women veterans. She has a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Sarasota. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome for Dr. Betty Moseley Brown.

**Address: Dr. Betty Moseley Brown, Associate Director
Center for Women Veterans
Department of Veterans Affairs**

(Hoorah) I now say "Hoorah" for my mother. It is a pleasure to be here, national commander, to represent the Center for Women Veterans. This is truly an honor and I am humbled. But I am also very honored because I am one of the newest members of The American Legion. *(Applause)* So thank you. I feel that I am here amongst brothers, sisters, friends, and family.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you about some updates, some initiatives, that are happening through the Center for Women Veterans. We were congressionally mandated in the early '90s, but the decision about women veterans has truly been happening since the DACOWITS, the Defense Advisory Committee On Women In The Service, back in 1951. But it took a Congressional mandate for the VA to actually have an office that really looked at issues regarding women veterans. Our mission is to monitor and coordinate the administration of programs and benefits and services for women veterans at VA. We are also to serve as the advocate at VA for a cultural transformation, and to raise awareness of the responsibility to treat women veterans with dignity and respect. How many of us have heard stories where women have gone into VA facilities and they're asked the question, "Who's your sponsor; who's the military member?" And we're here to say that women veterans served and we deserve. We deserve the best treatment at all VA facilities. *(Applause)*

Traditionally, we coordinate and collaborate with a lot of our veteran service organizations, federal, state, and local organizations. But in the next couple of years we're going to branch out into organizations that may not even know that women veterans exist or know that one day the little girls that are part of those organizations are going to be young ladies who go down and get on the yellow footprints and become our nation's proudest veterans one day.

So we're looking to turn a new leaf. Still be observant and concerned with what's happening within our walls at VA, but to also try non-traditional organizations to let them know about the contributions of women veterans. We also want to make sure that we educate VA staff on the sensitivities of women veterans because many of them don't know about the proud women of the "6 Triple 8s" of World War II, the all African-American platoon that was responsible for clearing out the mail in Europe. Or they may not know about the "Lionesses," those proud Army women in the early 2000s that were stationed with Marines and that were on the front lines in Iraq that really did see combat. We want to make sure that our VA employees understand the contributions of our proud women veterans. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Women veterans are one of the fastest growing veteran subpopulations, along with minorities and those that aging. The median female veteran's age is 46, and I'm proud to say that God has let me live long enough that I'm not even the median age anymore. I've surpassed that. *(Laughter)* The median male veteran age is 60, so you can see that there is a large difference of the age of a woman veteran coming into a VA facility and our male veterans. But that still means that she deserves that high quality care, as all of our

veterans do. Last year alone VA experienced a 20 percent jump in the number of women using VA facilities. And it's projected that within the next five years that women using VA will actually double and we're excited about that.

But we need to get ready, because there are projections that show that 20 percent of the new recruits are women. So that means that there are going to be more women veterans coming to VA in the next years, the next decades. The Department of Defense estimates that by 2020 women veterans will comprise 10 percent of the veteran population, and right now we're right about 7.7 percent.

So what do women veterans tell us that they really want? They tell us that they want recognition and respect. Once we hang up the uniform and we become a civilian, we want to know that there is a VA that is ready and able to take us as the next customer. We want to know that when we do serve either in the Reserve and Guard and we come home that there is gainful employment for us, that we're not there unemployed because we wore the uniform. Women veterans want to know that there is suitable housing for them. Even if they do fall on hard times and are at risk of being homeless, they want to know that there is suitable housing to help them through that hard transitional time. Women veterans want access to and receipt of the high quality health care. Women veterans that have children; women veterans that have grandchildren want to know that if they come to a VA facility that there are childcare options while they attend their appointments at a VA. Women veterans tell us they want that opportunity for social interaction. We want to proudly be part of The American Legion and all our veteran service organizations, so that we can talk about those opportunities of our military service. And finally, women veterans tell us that they just want to make a difference. They want to know that whenever they did wear the uniform and they come home that their service is respected and honored just like any veteran of any war. (*Applause*)

We also facilitate at the Center for Women Veterans an Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, and within the last week we submitted a report from the committee. I briefly want to go over the ten recommendations that have been submitted so you will hear in the next couple of months how these initiatives, how these recommendations are going to be implemented.

The first one asks VA to establish more of a collaborative partnership with community installations. They want to know that, yes, we have partnered with VA, but we also go outside of VA for medical care when it comes to women veterans.

Two: That VA provides childcare options for eligible veterans. And we've heard this on numerous recent legislation and we'll see how this truly comes to fruition.

Number three: That VA establishes more gender-specific healthcare programs regarding posttraumatic stress disorder and military sexual trauma. We know that VA has done a wonderful job in mental health care, but there are instances when women veterans who have recently served in combat would like a gender-specific type of treatment.

Number four: That VA establishes a women veterans awareness training program for new employees. So when there is a new employee orientation, that VA focuses on the changing roles of women veterans, combat-related exposures, and gives them a military sexual trauma sensitivity course.

Number five: That VA develops a plan of action to reverse the high turnover of our women veteran program managers. In 2009, we got full-time women veteran program managers at all of our VA health facilities, but we quickly found and saw that there was a trend that some clinicians chose to stay in their field by taking on the role as a full women

veteran program manager. So Veterans Health Administration is watching this trend very closely and trying to correct the high turnover rate.

Number six: That the Veterans Benefits Administration establishes full-time women veteran coordinators encatchment areas where there are 40,000 or more women veterans in that area. And I am so glad to see this coming, because we saw that there were full-time women veteran program managers on the health side, and now we may actually see full-time women veteran coordinators at our regional offices.

Seven: We want to know that those duties are standardized for the women veteran coordinators. It shouldn't be that if you go to Florida you get one type of care and California another type of care. Let's standardize how our women veteran coordinators are providing care.

Eight: It was recommended that VBA, Veterans Benefit Administration, provide an area conference every two years and bring all those program managers and women veteran coordinators together, because our customers, veterans, don't see that there's a benefits line and there's a health line. They just come to VA. So we need to make sure that we talk within our own home, and then we can take care of our women veterans.

Number nine: That VA ensures rural healthcare, mobile vans, and clinics have standardized protocols.

And number ten: That VA collaborates with the Center for Women Veterans on media campaigns, such as posters and printed materials. It's not good enough just to show pictures of women on the posters, because those pictures may be our loved ones, our children, our wives, our daughters. We want to see women in uniform. We want to see our wonderful Reserve and Guard in uniform. We want to remember that women served and they deserve. (*Applause*)

So finally, I want to tell you about two wonderful things that are happening. In November, we are going to culminate our Her Story campaign. Every week we've been putting the picture up of a women veteran employee. One, of how she looked when she was in uniform; and then, the wonderful look of how she looks now. Because many of us know we don't retain that youthfulness, but instead we get a maturity as we age. So we want to proudly show that. And we want to give a little narrative of what she did during her military service, so you can see that every week on our VA website.

In November, during Veterans Day, we are going to distribute a DVD that tells the story of ten of our women veterans. Now these are not employees, these are women veterans. We have the story of a POW. We have the story of a pilot. And then we have a story of nurses and generals. So be on the watch to receive your DVD telling the stories of these ten wonderful women veterans.

And then lastly, at our Women Veterans Forum that was held July 28th—and thank you American Legion, you were one of our proud sponsors to the pre-form reception—it was announced that Secretary Shinseki is not going to wait until 2012 for our quadrennial summit which was planned for 2012. We've now moved up the National Summit and it's going to be in September of 2011. So once again, American Legion, we are going to knock on your door and ask for your support. I want to thank you, not only as a women veteran but as a member, and just say thank you for taking care of all of our veterans but especially our women veterans. *Semper Fidelis.* (*Applause*)

**Presentation: 2010 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
Captain Michael J. LaVine, Metro Transit Police Department
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: As an organization anchored in the belief that we must maintain law and order, The American Legion annually selects an individual as its Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Our 2010 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year joined the Minneapolis Police Department in 1975. A member of the Zurah Shrine Horse Patrol, he has raised money for the Minneapolis Children's Shrine Hospital Transportation Fund. A past recipient of the Metro Transit Officer of the Year Award and three Police Commendation Awards, he is a member of The American Legion Post 96 in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm round of applause to Minneapolis Metro Police Captain Michael J. LaVine. (Applause)

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "Award of Commendation presented to Captain Michael LaVine, Metro Transit Police Department, Minneapolis, Minnesota. For outstanding achievement in being selected as The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and Midwest Regional Winner for 2010. You are clearly a winner and personify America's finest. We wish you continued success in your career. Presented this first day of September, 2010."

CAPTAIN LAVINE: Good afternoon. I want to thank The American Legion for bestowing this honor upon me. I've had a great week here. The staff has been great in taking care of my wife and I. And I especially want to recognize the Minnesota contingency for making us feel so welcome. They are so full of energy. (Cheers)

Now I need to thank Roger Olson, Post 96 in Minnesota, who submitted me for this award. I would like to recognize my extended family and friends who have come to be a part of this and to honor me with their presence. And I want to thank my best friend, companion, and love of my wife, Colleen, for being here. (Applause)

And my mother was not up to make the trip, and my father passed away three years ago. My father was a very proud Marine. Once a Marine Always a Marine. He was a World War II veteran in the Pacific, and I know that he's proud of me receiving this award today. Semper Fi, dad. (Applause)

I would like to recognize my chief, Chief David Indrehus who came also to be here with me. If you talk to my chief he would tell you that I spent many years in investigation of robbery homicide, and got a fair share of confessions out of suspects, and he tells people never ever to walk past my door at the station. He says the last time he came to see me for something, he ended up confessing to something he did in the 7th grade. (Laughter) Thank you for being here, chief.

When you see a squad car the first thing you do is the obligatory look at your speedometer and see how fast you're going, and get that little shot of anxiety, but you should also see on the side of that squad car the words "To Protect and Serve." And for the protect part of that, I tell people that we try to hire officers who are willing to run toward the gun shots instead of away. And as I look at this auditorium, it's full to the brim of people who fit that criteria, so thank you for what you do and have done. (Applause) You know, I'm a hunter and I like to say that being a police officer has been a great job for me because I get to hunt bad guys every day, and the best part about it is there is no bag limit. (Laughter)

For the served part, when we serve the public, we try to do for people what they are unable to do for themselves. And one of the biggest things that we need to do now is get to our young people, get to them before the drugs and the gangs get to them. And I would like to recognize The American Legion for all the programs that you have out there for the young and upcoming people who are going to make the future leaders of this country. And I say that because I was one of those young people 45 years ago when I had the benefit of being sent to Legionville in Minnesota, and here I am 45 years later returning to you as your Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

**Presentation: 2010 National Firefighter of the Year Award
Firefighter Marcus Haynes,
Valdosta Fire Department, Valdosta, Georgia**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The images we have of firefighters running into the Twin Towers as others were running out on 9/11, simply reminded us what we already knew. It is a dangerous profession full of heroes. It is why The American Legion has created a new Firefighter of the Year Award. Just as members of the American Legion answered our nation's call during time of war, America's firefighters answer their community's call during time of emergency. Our 2010 American Legion Firefighter of the Year belongs to the Valdosta, Georgia Fire Department. Since joining the department in 2007, he distinguished himself with certifications as a public fire educator, relief driver, and member of the Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force II Team. He has been previously selected Hero of the Year by Papa John's Pizza and Firefighter of the Year by the Valdosta, Georgia Fire Department. Please extend a warm welcome to Valdosta Firefighter Marcus Haynes. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: *The award reads: "Award of Commendation presented to Firefighter Marcus Haynes, Valdosta Fire Department, Valdosta, Georgia. For outstanding achievement in being selected as The American Legion National Firefighter of the Year and Southeast Regional Winner for 2010. You are clearly a winner, and personify America's bravest. We wish you continued success in your career. Presented this first day of September 2010."*

FIREFIGHTER HAYNES: Good evening. First I want to say I thank God for being here, and it's an honor and a privilege to be able to receive such a prestigious award from such a well-known organization as yourself. And I'm honored today to have my wife of seven years by my side, as well as our departmental chief, Fire Chief J. D. Rice.

Again, I want to say to each and every one of you, thank you for what you do, and continue to do what you do because it truly is making a difference in our community. Thank you and God bless you. *(Applause)*

DELEGATE ADAMS (GA): I know many of you are probably wondering why Georgia keeps coming up here. Well, we keep finding things, and commander, I just happen to find another check for the Legacy Scholarship presented to the American Legion Riders for \$100. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before we hear the next report, would those who will present donations to the Child Welfare Foundation please gather backstage.

The chair recognizes Dennis Boland of Florida, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children and Youth, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: National Convention Committee on Children and Youth
Dennis R. Boland, Florida, Chairman**

Mr. Commander and delegates to the 92nd National Convention.

The Convention Committee on Children and Youth met at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 29, 2010 in the Frontier Airlines Center, Room 103C, Street Level. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Dennis Boland of Florida as Chairman and Herbert J. Petit, Jr. of Louisiana as Secretary. There were 43 members of the committee present.

The committee considered twenty-two (22) resolutions. Twenty-two resolutions were approved.

The Following Resolutions Were Approved

Resolution No. 277: Protect Children from Unrestricted Media

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity and other forms of moral depravity 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. 278: Financially Assist Families Faced by Catastrophic Illness of Their Children

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, A catastrophic illness is any illness or condition, acute or chronic, for which expenses are incurred that are not fully covered by a private insurer, federal or state health care assistance, or other financial source; and

WHEREAS, When a child becomes ill or disabled, the cost of medical care alone can be catastrophic for the family; and

WHEREAS, Families of any income level may be faced with high uncovered medical expenses for their children; and

WHEREAS, Families with or without insurance are vulnerable to extraordinary medical bills; and

WHEREAS, Several states have enacted legislation to establish Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Funds to help families bear the excessive financial burdens associated with the care of children with special health care needs and disabilities; and

WHEREAS, These funds have been proven effective and are designed to act as a safety net for families from all walks of life who have excessive expenses related to a child's medical needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the federal government to enact legislation to financially assist families faced by the catastrophic illness of their children, thus preserving the family's financial integrity and their ability to cope with the responsibilities that accompany significant health problems in children; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion through Department and Post leadership, urge state governments to enact legislation including, but not limited to state-specific Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Funds, to assist financially those individual families faced by the catastrophic illness 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 programs be expanded to include catastrophic illness.

Resolution No. 279: Maximize Efforts to Screen Children for Sickle Cell Disease

Origin: Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long advocated the use of preventive medicine to protect children from many childhood ailments; and

WHEREAS, Sickle cell disease is an inherited disease of red blood cells which can cause attacks of pain and damage to vital organs and can lead to early death; and

WHEREAS, Sickle cell disease is a major public health concern, affecting more than 80,000 Americans; and

WHEREAS, Many children of our nation have undiscovered Sickle Cell disease; and

WHEREAS, Infants and young children with Sickle Cell disease are especially vulnerable to several bacterial infections, such as those that cause meningitis and blood infection, and infections are the leading cause of death in children with Sickle Cell disease; and

WHEREAS, There is no specific treatment for children with Sickle Cell disease, but early diagnosis and treatment dramatically reduce the risk of infections and death; and

WHEREAS, Present screening procedures (i.e. blood tests) enable the undiscovered cases to be found and a National Institutes of Health panel has recommended that all babies be screened at birth for Sickle Cell disease; and

WHEREAS, To date, only 40 states are testing newborns for Sickle Cell disease; and

WHEREAS, There is much benefit gained by counseling the parents of the affected child(ren) and the child(ren) who have the disease; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the maximum dissemination of information presently known about Sickle Cell disease; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the fullest use of any suitable procedure developed to screen children who are potential victims of Sickle Cell disease; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That once a child has been found to have Sickle Cell disease or to be a carrier of the disease trait, that adequate counseling be available for the affected children and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That sufficient federal funds be provided so that medically indigent children may have an opportunity to be afforded such services necessary to treat Sickle Cell disease; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That states be encouraged to enact legislation to make screening for Sickle Cell disease among potential victims a requirement for admission into public schools.

Resolution No. 280: Oppose All Efforts to Undermine, Alter or Otherwise Corrupt the Institution of Marriage

Origin: Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, A guiding principle of The American Legion's Children & Youth Program is to strengthen and maintain the integrity of the family unit; and

WHEREAS, The World Congress of Families II defines the "natural family" as the fundamental unit, inscribed in human nature and centered around the voluntary union of a man and woman in a lifelong covenant of marriage; and

WHEREAS, A 1999 Wirthlin Worldwide survey conducted for the World Congress of Families II found that 84 percent of people around the world agree that the definition of marriage is the union of one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, A child's biological connection to a married father and mother increases the likelihood that they will identify with the child, be willing to sacrifice for the child, and thereby reduces the likelihood that either parent would abuse the child; and

WHEREAS, Children are dependent on a mother and father for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs and that the existence of a marital bond between a mother and father is vital for the child's overall well-being; and

WHEREAS, Children raised by their married mother and father experience low rates of social problems, to include premarital childbearing, illicit drug use, arrest, health problems, emotional or behavioral problems, poverty, and school failure or expulsion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion recognizes that the natural family is the fundamental unit, inscribed in human nature and centered on the voluntary union of a man and a woman in a lifelong covenant of marriage for the purposes of:

- satisfying the longings of the human heart to give and receive love;
- welcoming and ensuring the full physical and emotional development of children;
- sharing a home that serves as the center for the social, educational, economic and spiritual life of a child; and
- building strong bonds between succeeding generations to pass on a way of life that assures the perpetuation of the natural family; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recognizes that marriage is a fundamental institution that predates the law and the Constitution of the United States: and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes all efforts to undermine, alter or otherwise corrupt the institution of marriage, which is the cornerstone of a healthy family; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the Congress to ensure that the institution of marriage is preserved and protected, either through appropriate federal legislation or through an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Resolution No. 281: Oppose Any Attempt to Weaken Present Laws Governing Penalties for the Production, Sale and Distribution of Pornographic or Obscene Materials

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, television and the Internet; 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 282: Support Efforts to Reduce Drug Abuse

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The first duty of government is to provide security for citizens and the Constitution of the United States articulates the obligation of the federal government to uphold the public good, providing a bulwark against all threats, foreign and domestic; and

WHEREAS, Drug abuse, particularly by our nation's children and youth, constitutes such a threat and is a hazard to our safety and freedom, producing devastating crime and health problems and diminishing the potential for citizens to grow and develop; and

WHEREAS, Drug abuse, drug trafficking, and their consequences destroy personal liberty and the well-being of communities, draining the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and moral strength of America; and

WHEREAS, Crime, violence, workplace accidents, family misery, drug-exposed children, and addiction are only part of the price imposed on society as drug abuse spawns global criminal syndicates and bankrolls those who sell drugs to young people; and

WHEREAS, Drug use and its consequences threaten Americans of every socioeconomic background, geographic region, educational level, and ethnic or racial identity, demonstrating that no one is immune and every family is vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, Prevention efforts are our first line of defense against illegal drugs, and organizations like The American Legion have programs designed for youth to keep them active and to help them feel a sense of pride in the future of their community, state and nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That all levels of The American Legion be urged to continue their efforts to reduce drug abuse, as it affects our nation's young people; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion does affirm its support for the Office of National Drug Control Policy and that, to the extent possible, the Legion will work with the President of the United States, Congress, state legislators, and federal, state and local agencies when, as an organization, the Legion believes changes or additions to our laws or government policies are necessary; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support those initiatives designed to educate children about the real dangers associated with drugs and seeks the involvement of parents, business and community leaders, school administrators and coaches, and other role models in a broad prevention campaign; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages families and institutions, including employers, law enforcement agencies, faith-based and community-based organizations, and health care providers to help drug abusers recognize their addiction and urge them to seek appropriate treatment; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That drugs and drug abuse must be attacked as a whole, which includes international relations, law enforcement, education, judicial reform, research, treatment and rehabilitation, to ensure that our nation's children grow up as healthy and productive members of society.

Resolution No. 283: Provide Equal Treatment in Admission of Children of United States Citizens

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 284: Strengthen Penalties to Eliminate the Production, Sale and Distribution of Materials that use Children in Sexually Explicit Scenes

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 285: Support Efforts Aimed at Improving Child Care Services for Children

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion is deeply concerned about the quality of life issues surrounding our children and youth; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Education Statistics there are approximately 21 million infants, toddlers, and preschool children under the age of six in the United States with more than 12.9 million of these children in child care; and

WHEREAS, Child care services have traditionally been providing care, supervision and protection for children of pre-school and early school age, when the primary caregiver is necessarily absent from the home; and

WHEREAS, The Carnegie Report finds that quality child care enables a young child to become emotionally secure, socially competent, and intellectually capable; and

WHEREAS, Consistent studies have found that childcare at most centers in the United States are poor to mediocre and child care licensing standards, designed to assure minimal standards for health and safety, vary widely from state to state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at improving child care services for children; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national child care organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate child care programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all Departments and Posts are encouraged to cooperate with the state and community public or private agencies with day care responsibilities to the end that licensed child care facilities will be available to all children in our nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion continue to encourage the adoption and implementation of safe and consistent licensing standards for childcare in facilities throughout this nation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion be encouraged to assist in raising the level of understanding among the general public about the needs of adequate child care, and to contribute to a greater willingness to commit more resources to achieve a level of quality that is necessary for children to grow in a healthy and safe environment.

Resolution No. 286: Support Efforts to Immunize All Children

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 287: Support Funding Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth Programs

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has and will continue to do everything possible to ensure that every child has a home, health, education, character and opportunity; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant has provided a foundation for ensuring the health of our Nation's mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, The Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant has operated as a Federal-State partnership for more than 67 years; and

WHEREAS, When the Social Security Act was passed in 1935, the Federal Government, through Title V, pledged its support of state efforts to extend and improve health and welfare services for mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, Title V funds are used by states and jurisdictions to implement a wide range of maternal and child health care programs (assessment, diagnosis and treatment for low-income children, long-term care for special needs children, rehabilitation services for blind and disabled children, prenatal care for women, and childhood immunization) and to develop comprehensive, family-centered, systems of care for children with special health care needs; and

WHEREAS, These programs are dependent upon the annual 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion affirms its support and endorsement of the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant contained 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, to include all programs related to the Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth.

**Resolution No. 288: Support Funding for all Drug Trafficking Prevention Programs
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 exceed 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 289: Support Legislation Aimed at the Prevention, Investigation and Prosecution of Child Sexual Exploitation

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude, yet largely unrecognized and underreported; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that one in five girls and one in ten boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood, yet less than 35 percent of those child sexual assaults are reported to authorities; and

WHEREAS, The widespread use of the Internet to sexually victimize children presents an even broader threat to our children's safety; and

WHEREAS, According to *Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey* conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice "one in five children (10 to 17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online"; and

WHEREAS, By far the most prevalent exploitive act reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is the production and distribution of pornographic images of children; and

WHEREAS, The lives of the children featured in these illegal images are forever altered, not only by the exploitation itself, but by the permanent record of it; and

WHEREAS, The impact of these terrible acts can devastate families and put children at risk of depression, disassociation, and post traumatic stress – symptoms that can last well into adulthood; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at the prevention, investigation and prosecution of child sexual exploitation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state agencies and organizations involved in the prevention of child sexual exploitation as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth

to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in preventing child sexual exploitation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to raise community awareness about the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children and to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, government entities and public/private organizations that seek to empower the public to take immediate and direct action to enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding child sexual exploitation.

Resolution No. 290: Support Legislation Aimed at Reducing or Preventing Teen Pregnancy

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been concerned with the health and quality of life issues surrounding its young people; and

WHEREAS, Teenage pregnancy is a serious problem in the United States, which currently has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and births in the industrialized world; and

WHEREAS, Each year one million pregnancies occur among American teenagers aged 15-19 and almost 200,000 teens aged 17 and younger have children, with the vast majority (86%) unintentionally; and

WHEREAS, Childbearing has adverse consequences for teenage mothers and particularly for their children, contributing directly to mothers and their children being poorly educated, unmarried and not well connected to the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Teenage pregnancy creates an ever-widening, self perpetuation of programs affecting the mother, infant, parents, grandparents and, therefore, tears at the very fabric of the all important family unit in our society; and

WHEREAS, The offspring of teen mothers have high rates of illness, mortality, educational and emotional problems, and often are the victims of child abuse at the hands of parents too immature to understand their baby's needs; and

WHEREAS, Preventing teen pregnancy is an effective way to address a range of other pressing social issues including poverty, child and family well-being, responsible fatherhood, workforce development, and out-of-wedlock childbearing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at reducing or preventing teen pregnancy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with national and state teen pregnancy prevention organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate teen pregnancy prevention programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to support and cooperate with organizations and agencies that seek to educate teenagers on the advantages of delaying pregnancy.

Resolution No. 291: Support Legislation and Efforts to Locate Missing Children and Prevent Child Victimization**Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth**

WHEREAS, Each day in the United States, an average of 2,185 children, 17 years and younger, are reported missing or disappear by abduction, run away or are lost to some unknown cause; and

WHEREAS, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) was created in 1984 as a central resource and data clearinghouse for law enforcement, victims and their families, to aid in fighting for the safe recovery of missing children and the protection of all children from sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, Today more children come home safely than at any time in our nation's history, law enforcement is better prepared, and families are more alert and aware than ever before because of the tireless work of NCMEC and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, NCMEC's overall recovery rate for missing children is 94.9 percent, demonstrating that the current system is working due to effective response of law enforcement, technological advances, and the general public paying attention to missing children photos; and

WHEREAS, Although NCMEC has made a significant impact in tackling this daunting problem, there is much that remains to be done for too many children still do not make it home, and too many are still victims of sexual predators; and

WHEREAS, Even one child disappearing is the concern of all responsible persons; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at locating missing children and preventing child victimization; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President of the United States and the Congress to provide adequate annual funding for the continued operation and expansion of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, America's best resource to combat the national crisis of child victimization; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state missing and exploited children agencies and organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role, at all levels, in locating missing children and preventing child exploitation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Departments and Posts of the American Legion are encouraged to increase the public's awareness of child victimization and its detrimental effects on the children and youth of our society and to cooperate with credible organizations and agencies that seek to locate missing children in their states and communities.

Resolution No. 292: Support Legislation to Prevent Child Maltreatment**Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth**

WHEREAS, The American Legion has, since its inception, voiced and demonstrated active concern about the health and welfare of children; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau reported that approximately 906,000 children were victims of child maltreatment in 2003; and

WHEREAS, The federal government defines child abuse and neglect in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as "the physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened"; and

WHEREAS, According to CAPTA, child maltreatment encompasses physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse; and

WHEREAS, All responsible citizens have a valuable role to play in building strong communities in which families and children are valued and supported, and in which children are safe from all forms of maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, There are concerned adults who care about this problem and will work to combat its degenerative effect on our society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at preventing child maltreatment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state child maltreatment prevention organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of child maltreatment prevention programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, The Departments and Posts of The American Legion cooperate in all ways possible with organizations and agencies that advocate for child maltreatment prevention and to promote and increase the public's awareness of child maltreatment and its detrimental effects on the children and youth of our society; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all educators, coaches, school administrators and all others responsible for children in any capacity to familiarize themselves with the warning signs of all forms of child maltreatment and, when necessary, report any suspected maltreatment to the proper authorities and ensure that these children are referred to the appropriate child protective service in their community; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue through its Children & Youth program, at all levels, to educate the public of their obligations and duties with respect to reporting suspected cases of child maltreatment.

Resolution No. 293: Support Programs and Organizations that Promote Child Safety**Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth**

WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, unintentional injury remains the leading cause of death and disability among children ages 14 and under in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Every day, more than 39,000 children are injured seriously enough to require medical treatment, totaling more than 14 million children each year; and

WHEREAS, The top causes of unintentional injury-related deaths and disabilities among children and adolescents are automobile accidents, drowning, fire, falls and poisoning; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that as many as 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented; and

WHEREAS, A combination of education, environmental improvements, engineering modifications, enactment and enforcement of legislation and regulations, economic incentives, community empowerment and program evaluation is effective at reducing the incidence and severity of unintentional death and disability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at preventing or reducing unintentional injury among children and adolescents; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national safety organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate child safety programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to provide leadership on organized safety commissions and to actively promote child safety at the state and local levels.

Resolution No. 294: Support the Rights of all People with Intellectual Disabilities**Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth**

WHEREAS, Historically, it has been The American Legion's position that all children should have quality services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, According to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, it is estimated that between 7 and 8 million Americans of all ages, or three percent of the general population experience intellectual disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Intellectual disabilities cuts across the lines of racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic backgrounds and one in ten families in the United States are directly affected by a person with intellectual disability at some point in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Intellectual disabilities in children is a complex problem with educational, medical, social, cultural and vocational aspects, and presents a major challenge to the social, educational, health, and economic systems within the United States; and

WHEREAS, About 87 percent of those children with intellectual disabilities are mildly affected and may not be identified until they enter school, and as adults many will be able to lead independent lives in the community; and

WHEREAS, The remaining 13 percent of people with intellectual disabilities will have serious limitations in functioning, but with early intervention, a functional education and appropriate support as adults, can lead satisfying lives in the community; and

WHEREAS, During the past 30 years, significant advances in research have prevented many cases of intellectual disabilities, and other early intervention and prevention strategies have reduced the chance of intellectual disabilities in children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion recognize and support the rights of all people with intellectual disabilities to enjoy a quality of life that promotes independence, self-determination, and participation as productive members of society; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the goals of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities:

- **The assurance of full citizenship rights of people with intellectual disabilities;**
- **The provision of all necessary supports to individuals and families;**
- **The reduction of the occurrence and severity of intellectual disabilities; and**
- **The promotion of the widest dissemination of information of models, programs, and services within the field of intellectual disabilities;**

become the goals of The American Legion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support and encourage early diagnosis, intervention and treatment, increased professional staffing, expanded educational opportunities, family counseling, improved and new living facilities, and adequate social and vocational services for the intellectually disabled; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports continuing research, to include research on the development and function of the nervous system, fetal treatments, and gene therapy to correct the abnormality produced by defective genes; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That whenever possible, The American Legion is encouraged to help alert the public through awareness and education programs designed to change the negative attitudes and prejudices concerning our nation's intellectually disabled children.

Resolution No. 295: Urge Congress to Appropriate Sufficient Funds for School Nutrition Program

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, There has been an 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 296: Urge the President and Congress to Establish "National Family Week"

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, One of the principles guiding The American Legion's Children & Youth Program is to maintain the integrity of the family unit; and

WHEREAS, The family unit is the center of our affections and the foundation of our American society; and

WHEREAS, No institution can take the family unit'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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 297: Improving Services for Children Living in Foster Care

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion affirms that all children need safe, permanent families that love, nurture, protect and guide them; and

WHEREAS, On any given day in the United States, half a million children and youth are in foster care, removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, While foster care protects children who are not safe in their own homes, too many times what should be a short-term refuge becomes a long-term saga, involving moves from one foster home to another; and

WHEREAS, Social agencies, both public and private, and dedicated foster parents provide these children with a temporary or a permanent environment that will help them become the responsible citizen of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, These agencies and foster parents are finding it increasingly difficult to provide the basic needs of these children, such as medical and dental care, education, food, clothing, skilled social work, and other community resources; and

WHEREAS, These ends can be met only by increased funding and concerted public effort on the part of all citizens, governmental and private agencies, legislators, and others responsible and concerned for the future of these children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation at all levels of government aimed at improving services for children living in foster homes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national foster care organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate foster care programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Posts are urged to volunteer their talents and energies in behalf of foster children and to make their communities aware of the vital role that adequate foster care services play in enabling these children to develop into mature, responsible and productive adults

Resolution No. 298: Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion is vitally concerned about the violent crimes 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 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 and Delinquency Prevention has proved effective in many states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the President and the Congress meet or exceed current funding levels for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BOLAND: As a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Florida, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Do I have a second? ...*Second* Any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? The report of Children and Youth is adopted.

Presentation: Garland Murphy Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I now have the pleasure of presenting the Garland Murphy Award to the department that raised the most money for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to present this award to the Department of Ohio. (*Applause*)

ANNOUNCER: The Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Ohio for the program year 2009-2010. In recognition of their designation as the number one department, in total contributions received from their volunteers, in support of our annual program designed to meet the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of our nation's children through productive and meaningful grants. Dennis R. Boland, president of the Child Welfare Foundation, and Robert K. Caudell, the foundation's executive secretary, signs it.

Presentation: The U.S 'Udie' Grant Legacy Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It is now time for me to present the U.S. 'Udie' Grant Legacy Award. This award recognizes the collective efforts of The American Legion Family in a department. It goes to the department that collectively raises the most money for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. The winner of this prestigious award is the Department of Ohio. (*Applause*)

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "The U.S. Udie Grant Legacy Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Ohio for the program year 2009-2010 in recognition of outstanding support for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. We thank you."

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: On behalf of the great Department of Ohio, we thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We have a Legacy Scholarship Fund donation that got skipped yesterday, so I call on Bill Kearsing of New York.

DELEGATE KEARSING (NY): Sorry for not seeing you yesterday, commander, but on behalf of the great Department of New York, we would like to present you a check for \$25,000 for the Legacy Fund.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Those who have donations to the Child Welfare Foundation I will now accept those on stage, starting with Ohio.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: On behalf the Department of Ohio we would like to present a check for \$30,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander, on behalf of the state of Nebraska, we would like to donate \$677.62 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf the state of New Hampshire, we would like to present you a check for \$1,787.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander, on behalf of the state of Florida, I would like to present a check for \$8,396.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf the great state of Connecticut and the department, I would like to present a check to the Child Welfare Foundation for \$1,622.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Commander Hill, on behalf the Department of South Carolina, I would like to present you one check for \$596.18 for the Children's Miracle Network, and another check for the Child Welfare Foundation for \$1,017.60.

CHAIRMAN BOLAND: Commander Hill, as president of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, it is indeed an honor to present you with a diamond lapel pin from the Child Welfare Foundation for all you do for our nation's veterans and the children of our nation. I appreciate being your friend, and it's an honor for me to be able to do this.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you, Dennis. Donations total \$43,500.28 for Child Welfare; \$596.18 for the Children's Miracle Network, and \$25,000 to the Legacy Fund. Thank you. (*Applause*)

I would like to call our five national vice commanders to join me on stage for our next presentation, which will be given by Bron Mogenis, trustee for the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

**Presentation: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion
Bron Mogenis, Trustee**

Thank you, Commander Hill. This is my third appearance before you, and as you can see, today I'm wearing two hats. One of the commander of the D.C. Department, and the other one of a trustee of the Chapel of Four Chaplains Foundation. Every time I come here I do get this warm feeling because it's from my perspective you cannot do enough for The American Legionnaires or our veterans. And every time you do something, you sort of get that warm feeling.

Let me talk a little bit about the award that the national commander and his five vice commanders will receive: The Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion Award. No tradition of American society is more precious to or characteristic of our culture than that of voluntary reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national nonprofit organization, is founded upon a shining manifestation that of four chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another, and went down with the USAT *Dorchester* when it was torpedoed by a German submarine on February 3, 1943. This was in the icy waters of the North Atlantic at 12:30 a.m., and you can see that this was indeed a heroic act which was recognized much later.

The Legion of Honor Award for the Chapel of Four Chaplains program publicly recognizes members of our society whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to the community, the nation, and humanity without regard to race, religion or creed as so dramatically exemplified by the four chaplains of different denominations on board the sinking of the USAT *Dorchester*. Of the 902 servicemembers on board, 672 perished, leaving only 230 survivors. The four chaplains who gave up their life jackets, their only means of survival, also perished.

Then in February, 1951, the four chaplains were honored, an interfaith memorial chapel was dedicated in Philadelphia by the form of President Harry S. Truman. Today, as it has over the many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men. Thus, to continue to recognize and encourage acts of brotherhood and sacrifice among every American of every age, station in life, the chapel continues to award the Legion of Honor Award to individuals who have demonstrated the selfless and transformative achievement that is above and beyond that of the professional organization or position the individual holds.

Over the years this award, not presented lightly, has been presented to the following presidents of the United States: President Harry S. Truman; Dwight D. Eisenhower; Jimmy Carter; Ronald Reagan; George Herbert Walker Bush, as well as to a number of U.S. legislators. And in addition such luminaries such as Bob Hope; John Glenn; James Michener. Public servants such as FBI Director Robert Mueller. And not to say the least, the past American Legion national commanders, Martin F. Conatser and David K. Rehbein, and the five vice commanders.

The American Legionnaires that are about to receive this award today have paid their dues. They have spent a lifetime of outstanding contributions throughout their military service, subsequently followed through The American Legion in which they held a variety of leadership positions.

Thus, today, it is indeed my singular honor to present the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to National Commander Clarence E. Hill from Florida, and the national vice commanders, Morris M. Bentley, Idaho; Dr. Gordon B. Browning, Maryland; Mark A. Avis, Massachusetts; James C. Morris, Ohio, and Eugene Schumacher, South Dakota.

If the candidates would step forward, I think what we would do, I have three things to give: A pamphlet about the foundation; the honor award which is framed; and a bronze medallion. If the candidates would please remove their hats as I come to put the bronze medallion over their neck that would help out. So right now let's start out with our commander, Clarence Hill. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion from the Chapel of Four Chaplains is granted for extraordinary contributions to the well-being of others at the national or world level, to world peace, or to interfaith or inter-ethnic understanding. The medallions are being presented by Bron Mogenis, trustee, Chapel of Four Chaplains, and awarded to National Commander Clarence E. Hill; National Vice Commander Morris E. Bentley; National Vice Commander Dr. Gordon B. Browning; National Vice Commander Mark A. Avis; National Vice Commander James E. Morris, and National Vice Commander Eugene Schumacher.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The chair recognizes Michael D. Helm of Nebraska, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman**

74 members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on August 29, 2010, in Monarch Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Hilton City Center Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Barry A. Searle (PA), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Jacob Gadd (DC), Deputy Director for Healthcare, VA&R Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. Michael D. Helm (NE), Chairman of the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman appointed Robert M. Suter (NY), as Committee Secretary; Julius Walsh (LA), Chairman of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee and John Kavanagh (NY), Secretary; Terry Schow (UT), Chairman of the Hospital and Medical Services Subcommittee and Arthur Brest (AZ), Secretary.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Ian Deplanque (DC), Deputy Director, Operations and Legislative Action and Verna Jones, (NC), Deputy Director, Claims Services to Claims and Rating and Barry Searle (PA), Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and Jacob Gadd (DC), Deputy Director for Healthcare, to Hospital and Medical Services.

As has been the custom for the 65 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolutions, in a preconvention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their action, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. It was chaired by Michael D. Helm, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

- REGION 1 – John Kavanagh (NY)
- REGION 2 – Julius Walsh (LA)
- REGION 3 – Robert McBride (DE)
- REGION 4 – James Fialowski (WI)
- REGION 5 – Arthur W. Brest, Jr. (AZ)

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Ninety-Second National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 100 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee. The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	73
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	19
Referred to the Standing Commission	1

Received and Recorded	0
Rejected	7

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign and deliver the report on the Convention Committee's behalf.

A report of action taken on the 1 resolution 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.

Approved or Approved as Amended

Resolution No. 13: State Veteran Homes' Extended Care Facilities Grant Program Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for veterans after the American Civil War and have ably served disabled veterans for nearly 150 years; and

WHEREAS, Every State operates at least one State Veterans Home, with one home in Puerto Rico, and more State Veterans Homes and beds and other programs within them are planned or projected annually to meet a growing demand for long term care programs and facilities for American's elderly, sick and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, The State Veterans Home program has proven itself to be the most cost-effective source of high quality long-term health care services for the nation's veterans who need skilled nursing, domiciliary, adult day health care and other specialized programs to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) promotes the care and treatment of veterans in State Veterans Homes as an important means to attain its goal of developing, providing and maintaining the highest quality of care for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, Subchapter III of Chapter 81, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes the State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program, funded by VA through Congressional appropriations, to assist the States through grants for construction of new State Veterans Homes and for significant renovations of existing facilities, at a cost not to exceed 65% of the total cost of any such project proposed by a State and approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, VA has not kept up with the States' pace of grant applications for construction of new State Veterans Homes and significant renovation and modernization projects at existing homes, resulting in a significant backlog of "Priority One" projects already funded by the States, within a total backlog of projects and new homes approaching \$1 billion; and

WHEREAS, Congress appropriated \$150 million in supplemental appropriations for the State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program, as a small increment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, H.R. 1, an Act the President approved on February 17, 2009; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) in supporting full annual funding, at minimum an amount of \$250 million, for the State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program, in order for the Department of Veterans Affairs and

the several States to further reduce the structural backlog of worthy projects pending funding during Fiscal 2011.

Resolution No. 15: The American Legion Policy on State Veterans Homes Inspections

Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, State Veterans Home program, represented by 140 participating facilities within 50 States and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, has proven itself to be the most cost-effective resource available to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), for high quality long-term health care services for those of the nation's veterans who need skilled nursing, domiciliary care, Adult Day Health Care and other specialized long term care programs to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, VA promotes and closely monitors the care and treatment of veterans in State Veterans Homes as an important means to attain its goal of developing, providing, maintaining and guaranteeing options for the highest quality of long term care for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, Each State is accountable for ensuring veterans in its State Veterans Homes received quality long term and other health care services, and for achieving high patient satisfaction and comfort in state environmental conditions; and

WHEREAS, A State Veterans Home generally functions within a State's department or division of veterans' affairs, public health, or other accountable State agency, and operates under the governance and oversight of a board of trustees, a board of visitors or other similar accountable public body; and

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes hold themselves accountable for the quality of care they provide through myriad internal management controls, State and federal long term care regulations, and integration of model policies, practices and standards advocated by the National Association of State Veterans Homes and other standards bodies, for the continuous quality improvement of their programs of care for sick, elderly and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes are subject to both regular and periodic inspections and audits from State agencies, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, among other inspectors, and are accountable to the general public through the press and news media; and

WHEREAS, Surveys by State agencies and the federal Department of Health and Human Services already hold State Veterans Homes to the same and more conditions and standards of care as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), with the exception of eight VA unique and primarily administrative criteria; and

WHEREAS, In the Memorandum on VA Inspections of State Veterans Homes dated June 6, 1996, the VA Under Secretary of Health instructed the Deputy Secretary to modify relevant sections of the Veterans Health Administration Administrative Manual to ensure that State Veterans Homes that are accredited/certified (without waivers) by either the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) or the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) are exempted from annual VA inspections unless there is good reason to believe that the State Veterans Home is not substantially in compliance with the current VA standards. Likewise, non-JCAHO or

non-HCFA certified State Veterans Homes may be exempted if they are licensed by the State inspection standards and the State standards approximate VA standards; and

WHEREAS, In the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, issued on January 21, 2009, the President instructed the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to issue an Open Government Directive to direct executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation and collaboration to improve the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the consolidation of the duplicitous inspection process and that the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), where applicable, combine their surveys into one inspection or defer to the CMS inspection results, except for those unique VA criteria, to assure that State Veterans Homes function within required standards and fulfill their roles as effective, safe and high quality sources of compassionate care for eligible sick and disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors.

Resolution No. 16: The American Legion Policy on Pension Protection

Origin: Florida

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income, and who are age 65 or older, or if under 65, who are permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, Countable income received by the veteran from most sources would include earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business; and

WHEREAS, Any reimbursement that would compensate a veteran for expenses due to an accident, theft or loss would also be considered countable income; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to amend paragraph (5), section 1503(a), title 38, United States Code, to exempt the reimbursement of expenses related to accidents, theft loss or casualty loss from being included in the determination of countable income with respect to pensions for veterans and surviving spouses and children of veterans.

Resolution No. 17: Oppose Increased Co-Payments and an Enrollment Fee for Priority Group 7 & 8 Veterans to Receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law (PL) 104-262, that authorized eligibility reform and open enrollment process, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA),

Veterans Health Administration (VHA), has experienced a dramatic growth from 2.5 million veterans to over 7 million veterans enrolled in VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Fiscal Year (FY) 2002 saw the astronomical growth of Priority Group 7 veterans seeking health care at their local VA medical facility and the creation of a new Priority Group 8; and

WHEREAS, VA, upon creating the new Priority Group 8, placed an immediate suspension on all new Priority Group 8 enrollments; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect, and retain co-payments and the third party insurance payment of Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans; and

WHEREAS, During the past several years, VA has proposed to increase the outpatient co-payment from \$15 to \$20 and the prescription co-payment from \$8 to \$15 per 30 day supply, as well as, levy a \$250 enrollment fee on Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, VA proposed to eliminate the copayment offset (reduction in payment) to Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans who have third party insurance; and

WHEREAS, The co-payment increases and enrollment fees could suppress the demand for VA services at the expense of Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans who may not be able to afford the co-payment increases and out-of-pocket enrollment fee; and

WHEREAS, VA believes these initiatives will ultimately drive 1.2 million veterans away from the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, VA increased co-payments from \$8 to \$9 for each 30-day supply of outpatient medications; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion adamantly oppose any effort to increase co-payments or impose an enrollment fee for Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans to receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care.

Resolution No. 18: The American Legion Policy on Tobacco-Related Disabilities

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Throughout its history, 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 the Department of Veterans Affairs (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 \$15 billion, which VA believes would have a devastating impact on the VA budget, in particular, and the federal budget, as a whole, while ignoring the plight of veterans who

used tobacco on active duty and especially those who were introduced to tobacco during such service; and

WHEREAS, The President's FY 1999 budget request for VA was predicated on legislation barring the grant of service connection of any disability or death due in whole or in part to tobacco use as well as entitlement to VA medical care for such disability; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in the course of debate on the FY 1999 federal budget, used the \$15 billion identified as savings resulting from the bar to veterans claims for tobacco-related illnesses as a funding source for the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA-21); and

WHEREAS, TEA-21, signed by President Clinton as PL 105-178 on June 9, 1998, made veterans use of tobacco products in service synonymous with willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that action should be taken by Congress to overturn this anti-veteran legislation that violates veterans constitutional rights, since no other group of citizens, who are ill from tobacco-related causes, is being singled out and stripped of their eligibility for federal benefits and medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 19: Exempt Certain Income From Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Pension Rate Determination

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Serving on jury duty is a civic obligation, which all citizens, when called, should take very seriously; and

WHEREAS, At many polling places, there is a shortage of needed supervisory personnel and serving as an election judge helps ensure a fair and impartial election process; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and surviving spouses in receipt of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension benefits under Public Law (PL) 95-588 must report all income received from outside sources, since this directly affects the amount of VA pension to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The amount of financial remuneration received from these types of civic activities is relatively small, but it can result in the reduction in monthly benefits, dollar for dollar, or the complete loss of entitlement to pension; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion

shall sponsor and support legislation to exempt income received from jury duty and income from service as an election judge in determining the VA pension rate under Public Law (P.L.) 95-588.

Resolution No. 20: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 (1979), which mandates that the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) conduct a major epidemiological study of Vietnam veterans who were exposed to dioxin, unless it is determined to be unfeasible; and

WHEREAS, VA was congressionally mandated by Public Law 102-4 (1991) to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review existing peer-reviewed research on herbicides - to include their components - exposure and medical evidence on related health effects; and

WHEREAS, A committee convened by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies to study the health effects of herbicide exposure had little information about the exposures the Vietnam veterans encountered and recommended in its 1994 biennial report that VA, upon discovering the feasibility of a valid exposure reconstruction model, facilitate epidemiological studies; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of VA, in response to the recommendation, requested that IOM convene a separate committee to oversee development and evaluation of herbicide exposure models for use in studies of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, The IOM committee determined - in 2003 - that a model created by researchers from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health demonstrated the feasibility of a valid exposure-reconstruction model of Vietnam veterans' herbicide exposure and recommended that VA and other governmental agencies promote more epidemiological studies of veterans by non-governmental groups and independent researchers; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has still not funded the major epidemiology study mandated by public law; and

WHEREAS, In view of the current absence of alternative judicial recourse to remedy the injustice perpetuated on so many disabled Vietnam veterans, their families and survivors, The American Legion will continue to monitor other pending dioxin-related suits; and

WHEREAS, Information has been released by the Department of the Defense on numerous locations other than Vietnam where the herbicide was tested, sprayed, and

stored, including: testing at Fort Drum, New York, in 1959; spraying in the Panama Canal Zone in the 1960s and 1970s and in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in 1968-69; and the storage of unused herbicide on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific from 1972-78; and

WHEREAS, VA has recently identified more units that were exposed to herbicide at the Korean DMZ; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, section 1116 and title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.309, set forth certain presumptions that apply to claims for service connection based on herbicide exposure by veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served in other locations during these periods who may have been exposed to the herbicide and who may have developed one of the recognized Agent Orange-related diseases, set forth in title 38, United States Code, section 1116 and title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.309, are not entitled to presumptive service connection for their disability, rather they must meet the more stringent requirements for direct service connection; and

WHEREAS, This inequity was not contemplated at the time of the enactment of Public Law 102-4, the Agent Orange Act of 1991, as amended, due to limited available information on the full extent of the United States' Agent Orange testing, spraying, and storage activities; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, Chapter 18, benefits are payable to children of veterans that served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962, to May 7, 1975, and who suffer from the birth defect spina bifida; and

WHEREAS, Recent legislation has extended the spina bifida benefits to include the children of veterans who served in or near the Korean Demilitarized Zone during the period of September 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, and determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to have been exposed to herbicides during such service; and

WHEREAS, The children of veterans who served in locations other than Vietnam and Korea who were possibly exposed to Agent Orange would be denied entitlement to compensation for spina bifida under the current statute and regulations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 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 seek legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1116, to provide entitlement to these presumptions for those veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in areas other than the Republic of Vietnam where Agent Orange was tested, sprayed, or stored; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, Chapter 18, to provide entitlement to spina bifida benefits for the child or children of any veteran who was exposed to Agent Orange as the result of service in the Republic of Vietnam or in other locations where Agent Orange was tested, sprayed, or stored.

Resolution No. 21: Exempt Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits and Services From Pay-Go Provisions

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Budget Enforcement Act (BEA) significantly amended the laws pertaining to the budget process by constraining direct spending through a Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) requirement for all legislation affecting the direct spending of all federal agencies and departments; and

WHEREAS, Under this statute, as an example, if Congress wishes to establish a new entitlement or expand an existing program for veterans, it must find the money to fund such change within existing budget limits; and

WHEREAS, Wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a result of the injuries sustained during their period of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, The benefits and services received by wartime-disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities are an extension of the cost of war; and

WHEREAS, This country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen-soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Since BEA PAY-GO requires Congress to fund new benefits or services within existing spending limits, this, in effect, requires one group of disabled veterans to give up benefits or services, so that another group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The budget implications of PAY-GO are often a deterrent to favorable congressional action on major changes in veterans legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to exempt Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) provision of the Budget Enforcement Act.

Resolution No. 22: Oppose Lump Sum Payments of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Disability Compensation**Origin: Michigan****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is paid monthly to an eligible veteran on account of and at a rate commensurate with diminished earning capacity resulting from the effects of service-connected disease or injury; and

WHEREAS, Such compensation, by design, continues to provide relief from the service-connected disability for as long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, By law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring reevaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of the Inspector General, in a May 2005 report on variances in VA disability compensation payments, specifically recommended that VA consider establishing lump sum payments for veterans with disability ratings of 20 percent or less and the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission, created by Congress to study the VA claims processing system, will undoubtedly be making recommendations regarding the lump sum issue in its report to Congress and the President in October 2007; and

WHEREAS, Such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be for Government savings and convenience; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion oppose any recommendation, legislative or otherwise, to establish lump-sum payments of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation.

Resolution No. 23: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Involvement in the Department of Homeland Security**Origin: Michigan****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The Department of Homeland Security provides a single source of authority, at the highest level, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, The role of the Department of Homeland Security is to coordinate national strategy to strengthen protection against terrorist threats or attacks; and

WHEREAS, One of the critical missions of the Department of Homeland Security is emergency preparedness and response "to minimize the damage and recover from future terrorist attacks"; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical system serves as a primary back-up to the Department of Defense (DoD) in the event of military casualties; and

WHEREAS, VA and DoD have a Contingency Hospital System Plan as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, VA is prepared to augment the DoD's network of hospital and health care facilities in the event of a crisis, with 155 medical centers and a significant medical staff, many of whom are veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA also acts as a federal support organization during major disasters, as one of four partners in the National Disaster Medical System; and

WHEREAS, VA provided medical and psychological support to those in need during the months following the September 11, 2001, attack; and

WHEREAS, VA also maintains radiological response teams and decontamination systems should radioactive materials ever be used; and

WHEREAS, VA manages the largest health care program and is the largest medical education and health professional training program in the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA is a federal presence in virtually every local community in the country; and

WHEREAS, VA has the ability to move health care professionals to the site of a disaster and provide medical care quickly and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the contingency plan for disasters developed by VA and DoD should be integrated as a part of the primary health care procedures of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge Congress and the Administration to include Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in all strategic planning of the Department of Homeland Security; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress take into account any additional requirements of VA as a result of involvement in Homeland Security obligations when developing VA's annual budget.

Resolution No. 24: Restore and Increase Burial Plot Allowance

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Resolution No. 214 (MA))

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, Benefits for deceased veterans include a burial and a plot allowance to assist families in providing a proper burial of their loved one; and

WHEREAS, The National Cemeteries Act (Public Law 95-73) enacted in 1973 established a burial allowance of \$250 for eligible wartime veterans, and a \$1500 burial allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1990 limited the payment of the burial plot allowance of \$150, which was previously paid to all honorably discharged wartime veterans, to only those veterans who are indigent or who are in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension; and

WHEREAS, Although there have been subsequent increases in the allowances, the infrequent incremental increases have meant that the current \$300 burial plot allowance and respective \$300 and \$2000 burial allowances have not kept pace with inflation and increases in the cost of living throughout the years; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-73 originally covered 13 percent of a private burial plot, and now only covers 2%; and

WHEREAS, The \$250 burial allowance under Public Law 95-73 represented 22 percent of the cost of an average funeral of a wartime veteran, at the time; and the current burial allowance reflects only four percent of the cost; and

WHEREAS, The corresponding allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition covered 73 percent of the same average burial; now it only covers 39 percent of the current average funeral cost; and

WHEREAS, Increases, based on VA's Price-Waterhouse-Cooper Study, "Assessment of Burial Benefits Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs" (December 2000), would help to restore the amount and percentages of the allowance payments relative to current burial and plot costs; and

WHEREAS, Tying these allowances to the Consumer Price Index, thus requiring VA to adjust the allowance for inflation annually, would eliminate the need for periodic legislative action to bring the allowance in line current with burial and plot costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to return the burial allowances and burial plot allowance to all veterans who served during a time of war or conflict; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans now eligible under 38 United States Code (USC) § 2302 and 2303 be increased from \$300 to \$1350; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans who died as a result of a service-connected condition as set forth in 38 USC § 2307 be increased from \$2000 to \$4000; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial plot allowance be increased from \$300 to \$800; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) be required to annually adjust burial allowances and burial plot allowance for inflation by tying the increased allowances to the Consumer Price Index.

Resolution No. 25: Indiana-Ohio Center for Traumatic Amputation Rehabilitation Research

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Many veterans of the War on Terror have been subjected to high energy, penetrating blasts or high-velocity gunshot wounds and many survive their injuries, due to advancements in protective gear and improvements in medical treatment available in theater; and

WHEREAS, *Those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan have required more than twice the number of amputations needed in previous conflicts; and*

WHEREAS, Those with traumatic amputations require extensive physical rehabilitation and functional prosthetics to enable them to live autonomously and care for their dependents; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for research addressing long-term outcomes of military personnel who experienced war-related traumatic amputations; and

WHEREAS, Conditions related to blast injuries and amputations - like heterotrophic ossification, a rare and understudied condition where bone growth occurs during recovery at the amputation site - have already begun to manifest in some recovering Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center for Traumatic Amputation Rehabilitation Research (The Indiana-Ohio Center) was established to specifically promote research that will address the needs of veterans with war amputations; and

WHEREAS, Data on Vietnam War veterans with amputations related to blast trauma has not been widely collected and their rehabilitation experiences would be valuable in illustrating the long-term health effects of traumatic amputations; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center seeks to develop a databank to capture the long-term health care and rehabilitation experiences of Vietnam War veterans to improve care for future veterans who sustain traumatic amputations and to increase knowledge of war-related amputations for the scientific community; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center's initiative will also address issues affecting war amputees, such as use of prosthetic devices and access to health care, as well as psychological, social, and economic outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Information gathered during the course of this research would be beneficial in determining possible outcomes in current and future war veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion provide public endorsement for the efforts of Indiana-Ohio Center researchers; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion provide input to highlight issues relevant to war amputees; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion disseminate information (i.e. via publications and the website) about the war amputation research project to the membership in an effort to solicit participation from eligible Vietnam War veterans who may be interested in providing information for the databank; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion provide support for efforts of Indiana-Ohio Center researchers to collect information that would improve the knowledge of the long-term effects of traumatic amputations, at no direct cost to The American Legion.

Resolution No. 26: Support Legislation to Institute Mandatory Psychological Screening for all Returning Global War on Terror, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Reserve and Guard Troops

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, With the Global War on Terror, and the two current components, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraq Freedom, there are more non-traditional soldiers to include reserves and national guard; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are currently approximately 150,000 service members deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Approximately, 67,525 Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom veterans have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at Veterans Affairs Medical Centers; to include 16,851 at Vet Centers; and

WHEREAS, Along with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a major by-product of these operations; and

WHEREAS, PTSD is an insidious disease from which no known resolve exists; only treatment; and

WHEREAS, The earlier the treatment, the better chance veterans will have a more productive life; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD) have yet to do an effective job of screening reserve and guard troops for PTSD; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion petition Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to institute mandatory psychological screening for all returning reserve and guard troops, and that this screening be mandated at 30, 90, 180 and 365 day intervals; and also prior to the expiration of their current entitlement to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 27: Support Legislation that the Department of Veterans Affairs Include and Treat Family Members of Veterans with Illnesses and Injuries

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The nature of combat wounds suffered by our troops has changed dramatically during the current period of conflict; and

WHEREAS, Injuries such as Traumatic Brain Injury, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and poly-trauma often impact families as well as veterans; and

WHEREAS, Many family members are the primary care givers for these veterans, and

WHEREAS, The modern all-volunteer force is more likely to be married with dependents than their historic predecessors; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code currently allows only treatment for wounded veterans at VA Medical Center facilities; and

WHEREAS, Under certain circumstances it would be advantageous to provide certain types of care to family members in the course of treating a veteran; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That it urge Congress to amend Title 38, United States Code to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include family members in comprehensive therapy and treat family members of wounded veterans for those conditions determined to be related to the veteran's condition where such treatment is deemed in the best interest of care for the veteran.

Resolution No. 28: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Grant WWII Veterans Same Hospital and Medical Entitlements as Previously Granted to WWI and Spanish American War Veterans

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly supports the extension of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Benefits to include all U.S. Veterans; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapter 17, Sect. 1710 (a) (2) (e) requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish needed hospital care and medical services without regards to the other VA eligibility requirements to Veterans of WWI and Spanish American Wars; and

WHEREAS, Only a small number of WWI veterans and none from the Spanish American War are alive today; and

WHEREAS, The veterans of WWII have served our country honorably both in the war and as exemplary citizens of our great nation and are reaching an age when such medical services are needed similar to those granted WWI and Spanish American War veterans in the aforementioned law; and

WHEREAS, The current medical services provided to the WWII veterans by VA is based on a category and/or an income means test and proves difficult for these aging veterans to complete as well as being cumbersome for VA to apply and thus prevents some WWII veterans from accessing those services; and

WHEREAS, The funds the VA spends to apply this bureaucratic means test procedure could be better spent providing direct care to these WWII veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support amending Title 38, U.S.C. Chapter 17, to grant WWII veterans the same hospital and medical entitlements as granted to WWI and Spanish American War veterans to honor their service and ensure VA continues the same standards of care.

Resolution No. 29: The American Legion Position on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Means Test

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 2008-083 establishes policy on Means Test and Geographic-Based Means Test Thresholds; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 107-135, the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001, directed VA to implement a Geographic Means Test (GMT); and

WHEREAS, VA uses the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) "low-income" geographic-based income limits as the thresholds for VA's GMT; and

WHEREAS, Congress established Priority Groups within the Department of Veterans Affairs to prioritize access to VA health care; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs authorized suspension of new enrollment of Priority Group 8 veterans in January 2003; and

WHEREAS, Using the adjusted gross income may reclassify them as a Priority Group 7, thus allowing enrollment into VA; and

WHEREAS, Using the adjusted gross income may reclassify Priority Group 7 veterans as Priority Group 5 veterans; and\

WHEREAS, The eligibility requirement for enrollment in Priority Group 5 or 7 for veterans to receive health care services provided by VHA is based on income; and

WHEREAS, The income for the Means Test is based on gross income, not adjusted gross income; and

WHEREAS, All other Federal agencies have eligibility on adjusted gross income; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to change Department of Veterans Affairs Means Test policy to allow adjusted gross income to be used for the eligibility criteria in Priority Groups 5, 7 and 8.

Resolution No. 30: Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Establish a Marker for Cremation Urns Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), under the auspices of the United States Code (U.S.C.) Title 38 § 2306, provides veterans' headstones and markers for the unmarked graves anywhere in the world and of eligible dependents of veterans buried in military post, state or national cemeteries, of flat bronze, flat marble, upright granite and upright marble to mark the grave in a style consistent with the cemetery, and niche markers also are available for identifying cremated remains in columbaria; and

WHEREAS, Headstones and markers are inscribed with the name of deceased, branch of service, and the years of birth and death and such optional items that may be inscribed are military grade, rank or rate, war era service, months and days of birth and death, an approved emblem of one's belief and text indicating valor awards; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of the aforementioned statute do not provide for any such marker of recognition for a veteran's urn when it is the decision of the veteran's family to not inter the remains of deceased veteran; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation to amend United States Code (U.S.C.) Title 38 § 2306 to specify that an additional marker be provided for veterans' urns when an election is made to not bury the ashes of deceased veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That such marker be an appropriate sized adhesive backed metal plate to be placed on the urn bearing the ashes, as well as provide like information as the bronze marker now available for burials.

Resolution No. 35: Request Supplemental Information from the Department of Defense in Connection with Agent Orange Claims for the Department of Veterans Affairs**Origin: Louisiana****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The American Legion offers assistance to all veterans rightfully pursuing claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs for service connected injuries; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DOD) has compiled a list of areas where Herbicides, specifically Agent Orange, were utilized and/or sprayed in the United States and throughout the world in connection with the location and deployment of military units; and

WHEREAS, The DoD listing is not complete and does not clearly cover all of the areas where troops were located and/or deployed; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served in Panama and Okinawa report having seen the use of herbicides in these areas; and

WHEREAS, Panama and Okinawa are not listed on the DOD list of locations where Herbicides, specifically Agent Orange, were utilized and/or sprayed in connection with the location and deployment of military units; and

WHEREAS, The failure of the DOD list to include Panama and Okinawa brings the veracity of the list into question; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s claims of some veterans may be denied due to the failure of the DoD to include Panama and Okinawa its official list of locations where Herbicides, especially Agent Orange, were utilized and/or sprayed in the locations referred above; and

WHEREAS, The National Security Committee has reviewed and recommended approval of this resolution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion request that the Department Defense (DoD) prepare and provide an updated list of all areas outside of the United States, including but not limited to Panama and Okinawa, where it is known that Herbicides, specifically Agent Orange, were used in connection with the location and deployment of troops, to include but not limited to the herbicide or herbicides used; the date of each use of each herbicide; and the units located in each area/place that may have been exposed.

Resolution No. 59: The American Legion Petition the Census Bureau to Include Veteran Information on Future Censuses**Origin: Utah****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, For more than 200 years men and women have served this country in the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Census does not ask U.S. Citizens to identify if they are military veterans or disabled as a result of military service; and

WHEREAS, Veterans benefits are allocated to states based on Veterans population which is currently estimated based on sampling; and

WHEREAS, This does not accurately reflect true veterans population and as a result inaccuracies exist; and

WHEREAS, This is a disservice to the men and women who have served our country in time of peace and war; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 31st, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion petition the President and Congress to include information on veterans' status on all further census data gathered henceforth.

Resolution No. 87: Oppose Legislation Authorizing Legion-Accredited Representatives to Develop Claims

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, There are over 25,000,000 honorably discharged veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Currently, there are approximately 650,000 veterans who have some type of action pending on their claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, Approximately 168,000 of those claims are over six months old; and

WHEREAS, In addition, there is a growing backlog of pending appeals, which is now over 169,000 cases, as well as approximately 18,000 remanded cases at the Appeals Management Center; and

WHEREAS, Appeals are, by definition, among the oldest claims in the system and reflect the claimant's belief that they have not received a fair or proper decision; and

WHEREAS, The nation's veteran population is dying at a rate of over 1,300 veterans a day; and

WHEREAS, Proposed legislation to reduce the backlog of veteran's claims at VA was previously introduced in the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Under currently proposed legislation, a pilot program, establishing an official federally funded arrangement between County Veteran Service Officers and VA in five states (California, Florida, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas), with the potential of expanding to other states upon the request of a County Veterans Service Officer in such a state, would be created in order to eliminate the backlog of claims for veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, Many County Veterans Service Officers are, in fact, accredited representatives of The American Legion and employed by local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, The proposed legislation would allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to choose a County Veterans Service Office for development of a claim based upon the office's geographical proximity to the claimant; and

WHEREAS, County Veterans Service Officers are already working long hours to assist veterans and eligible dependents in the application for, administration of, or receipt of benefits under any federal, state, or county veterans benefits program; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, under this program, would refer claims to the County Veterans Service Officer for specific development as specified by the Secretary; and

WHEREAS, Claims submitted to the County Veterans Service Officer under this program would be treated, for receipt of claim purposes, as if submitted to VA; and

WHEREAS, VA referrals to a County Service Officer imply a dual role, that of advocate for the veteran and VA adjudicator of the veteran all at the same time; and

WHEREAS, This dual role would essentially make the County Service Officer a quasi-VA employee, creating an inherent conflict of interest between the County Service Officer's role as a veterans advocate and his/her function as a quasi employee of VA; and

WHEREAS, VA referrals could jeopardize the veteran-service officer confidentiality and even violate the Privacy Act and Power of Attorney relationship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion adamantly oppose any federal legislation requiring an accredited representative of The American Legion to develop claims on behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under a contractual arrangement between VA and County or State government or under any other arrangement where the representative would be acting in an official capacity directly on behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 88: Clarification of "Service in the Republic of Vietnam" for the Purpose of Agent Orange Presumption

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun to implement a General Counsel opinion that impacts negatively on the eligibility of veterans who served their country during a time of war; and

WHEREAS, Until most recently, VA awarded service connection on a presumptive basis for all individuals who served on the Republic of Vietnam soil and also those who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam, thus recognizing such service as service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Congress in its plain language included a definition of "Service in Republic of Vietnam" in the most general of terms; "performed active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975," so as to plainly be deemed an intent of inclusion, rather than exclusion; and

WHEREAS, Succeeding interpretations in 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and General Counsel precedent opinion (VAOPGCPREC) prior to VAOPGCREC 27-97 have considered service in a "naval" capacity as service in the offshore or territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam, as included in the category of "exposed" to Agent Orange, and, therefore, included in those eligible for presumptive consideration; and

WHEREAS, The plain language and sentence structure of the statute is expanded in 38 CFR 3.307(a)6(iii) to include restrictive terminology which was further supported and confirmed in VAOPGCREC 27-97; and

WHEREAS, The sentence structure and plain meaning of even the restrictive language can be interpreted to include "service in the territorial waters offshore" as "service in the Republic of Vietnam;" as "territorial waters" would be considered to be within the boundaries of the Republic of Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek legislation to plainly identify and further clarify "service in the Republic of Vietnam beginning January 9, 1962 and ending on May 7, 1975" to include those

who served in the territorial waters offshore, as this was clearly the original intent of the statute; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That those individuals who served in “other locations,” who can show their condition of service-involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam, shall also be included under the definition of those exposed to Agent Orange and the resultant presumptive conditions.

Resolution No. 89: The American Legion Policy Regarding Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS)

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, A Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is a health care site in a fixed position that is geographically distinct from the parent medical facility; and

WHEREAS, A CBOC can be a site that is operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, A CBOC site can also be contracted since the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act, Public Law 104-262, significantly enhanced VA's sharing authority so that it may now be used to contract for primary care and/or for a CBOC; and

WHEREAS, Since 1995, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs has activated hundreds of new CBOCs to more efficiently and effectively serve eligible veterans and provide care in the most appropriate setting; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of CBOCs is subject to multiple criteria including the development of a CBOC business plan and application of national CBOC criteria, VA Central Office approval and notification of Congress, the availability of funds within the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), and applicable federal statutes and VA regulations; and

WHEREAS, A CBOC must have the necessary professional medical staff, access to diagnostic testing and treatment capability, and referral arrangements needed to ensure continuity of health care for currently and potentially eligible veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, The VISN Network remains the focal point for CBOC planning, allowing decisions regarding needs and priorities to be made in the context of local market circumstances; and

WHEREAS, CBOC proposals must meet minimum uniform criteria and standards to ensure consistency nation-wide; and

WHEREAS, There has been a major shift in the delivery of mental health services away from inpatient care and towards outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, There has not been a commensurate shift in resources to support the necessary continuum of outpatient care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion affirm its support for the development of Community-Based Outpatient Clinics that meet established criteria as a means of improving veterans access to high quality health care services in the most appropriate setting and in a cost-effective manner; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to monitor the incorporation of mental health services as an integral component in the planning,

development, and activation of CBOCs to promote reasonable access to services, and to ensure sufficient resources and capacity at CBOCs to meet the mental health needs of the local veteran population.

Resolution No. 90: The American Legion Policy on the Correction of Military Records

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, United States Code (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 service member, 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, Congress is investigating the fairness and independence of the BCMRs and the effective date for the commencement of the correction of records by active service members; and

WHEREAS, Section 205 of The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides for the waiver of periods of limitation for persons in military service with respect to civil proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in the case of *Detweiler v. Pena*, held that the three year rule does not apply to active duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, The Discharge Review Board, considered to be a lower review agency, has a 15 year statute of limitation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That appropriate action be taken in support of legislation to amend title 10, United States Code, section 1552, so as to eliminate all time limitations restricting when a claimant may petition the Boards for Correction of Military Records for relief of an error or injustice.

**Resolution No. 91: Exempt Purple Heart Recipients from VA
Prescription Co-Payment**

Origin: Maryland

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 256 (IL))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Under the priority category system at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, those who were awarded the Purple Heart have been singled out as a special group of veterans deserving special consideration for their service and sacrifice to their country; and

WHEREAS, This special group of Purple Heart recipients has been placed in Priority Group Three; and

WHEREAS, Priority Group Three veterans do not have to make any co-payments for any of their inpatient or outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, These same veterans, if they are rated under 50% service-connected disabled or receive prescriptions for a non-service connected condition are charged an \$8 co-payment for each 30 day supply of medication; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to exempt all those who were awarded the Purple Heart and are enrolled in the VA health care system, from any co-payment for prescription drugs.

Resolution No. 92: The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Illnesses

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Approximately 1.7 million members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, More than 160,000 women served in theater during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Over 20 percent of new recruits in the Armed Forces today are women and that percentage is likely to grow in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of Gulf War veterans are in good health, thousands of Gulf War veterans nevertheless suffer from unexplained physical symptoms known as "Gulf War veterans illnesses"; and

WHEREAS, Over 200 scientific studies are investigating these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Few of the aforementioned studies are focused exclusively on the illnesses experienced by women Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, Misleading information about Gulf War veterans illnesses has spread on the Internet and through the media, and this information has caused a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the severity and prevalence of Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine has prepared reports that evaluate the nature, the likely causes and the Federal Government's response to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, These reports directly affect Department of Veterans Affairs compensation programs for Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several independent expert scientific committees and organizations have stated that a number of suspected causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses are not likely associated with those illnesses, whereas others are more likely associated with those illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs established a committee comprised of doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans and veteran service organization representatives to provide guidance and advice on future Gulf War-related research efforts; and

WHEREAS, Pyridostigmine bromide was used by the United States and some coalition troops as a nerve agent pre-treatment during the Gulf War although the Food and Drug Administration had not yet approved the drug for that use and some researchers contend that pyridostigmine bromide may be associated with Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several medical studies have found that the unexplained physical symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are similar to other medically unexplained symptom syndromes like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States signed into law legislation amending the Gulf War undiagnosed illness law (title 38, United States Code, section 1117) to include medically unexplained disabilities such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization strive towards its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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, or recommendations offered by the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, regarding its Gulf War veterans programs and research; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses and to refrain from supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to closely monitor the implementation of the changes to Title 38,

United States Code, Section 1117, to ensure proper application of the law at the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office level; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to develop the 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. 93: Support Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C
Origin: Maryland**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is an easily transmittable blood-borne virus, which can result in long-term, potentially fatal health problems; and

WHEREAS, Because of the exposure risk factors directly related to military service, veterans have a much higher incidence of hepatitis C than the general population; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates 10 to 20 percent of veterans currently have hepatitis C, compared to 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 25 or 30 years ago or more in service are now showing signs of severe liver disease and 52 percent of the liver transplants done by VA are for veterans with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, In 85 percent of cases, no acute symptoms would have shown up at the time of infection with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Military training and combat situations offer many opportunities for transmitting the blood-borne hepatitis virus through blood to blood contact; and

WHEREAS, No effective blood test for hepatitis C was available until 1992; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with hepatitis C who were treated for acute hepatitis during military service and who now claim service connection are generally denied by VA, because they cannot prove the current hepatitis C is related to the hepatitis noted in service; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Veterans' Appeals often rejects claims for service connection for hepatitis C, because the veteran's medical records do not show the presence of hepatitis C at time of discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Because of the nature of this disease and the long latency period, veterans who experience certain exposure risk factors in service, such as: blood transfusion prior to 1992; exposure to blood on or through the skin or mucous membrane; hemodialysis; experience of a needle-stick accident or medical event involving a needle, not due to the veteran's willful misconduct; a diagnosis of unexplained liver disease in service; experience of an unexplained liver dysfunction or abnormal liver test; or duty as a health-care position or specialty as prescribed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; should be accorded a statutory presumption for the purpose of establishing entitlement to service connection for hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Service connection for hepatitis C is important to veterans and their families, since it entitles the veteran to compensation for any disability related to the disease as well as necessary medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously promulgate regulations providing for presumptive service connection for hepatitis C; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to provide for a statutory presumption of service connection for hepatitis C under certain conditions in service; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide regular notification to Congress, the veterans service organizations, and veterans on new treatment modalities for hepatitis C.

Resolution No. 94: Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-588, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Improvement Act of 1978, provided major changes in the disability and death pension program for the veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars and their surviving spouses and children; and

WHEREAS, This pension program established different guaranteed annual income levels for necessary economic support; and

WHEREAS, After extensive study, The American Legion concludes that certain inequities exist in the Improved Pension program that need to be addressed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Under the current Death Pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving spouse with no income and no dependents is \$7,094 or about only two thirds of the amount received by a veteran with no income and no dependents; and

WHEREAS, In addition, current regulations provide that surviving spouses are not entitled to pension benefits for the month in which the veteran dies, if they are not found eligible for death pension; and

WHEREAS, The majority of these surviving spouses are elderly and disabled and are living below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, Under the current Death Pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving child with no income where there is no surviving spouse is \$1,806 or seventeen percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income or dependents; and

WHEREAS, This limited amount may impose a severe financial hardship on the surviving child; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, section 1543 where the surviving child is residing with a person who is legally responsible for such child's support, the income and corpus of estate of that person is countable for the purposes of determining entitlement or continued entitlement to pension benefits; and

WHEREAS, Currently, when two veterans are married to one another where both meet the disability, service and income requirements, basic pension benefits are payable only at the rate of a "veteran with one dependent," which is currently \$13,855 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 \$10,579, 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 August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support amendments to title 38, section 1543, 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. 95: Recognize Operations in Lebanon (1958), Grenada (1983), Panama (1989-1990) as Periods of War for Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Purposes

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Subsection 11 of Section 101, Title 38, United States Code (USC), defines "period of war" as the Spanish-American War, Mexican Border Period, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam Era, the Gulf War and the period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by Congress and the ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of Congress; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, Section 1521(a) provides that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall pay pension to each veteran of a "period of war" who meets

the length of service requirements specified in Section 1521(j) and who is permanently and totally disabled and who meets the income criteria in this section; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, Section 101(6) recognizes that, for VA purposes, the dates for the “period of war” for the Spanish-American War (April 21, 1898, to July 4, 1902) also include service during the Philippine Insurrection, Boxer Rebellion, and service in the Moro Province from April 21, 1898, to July 5, 1903; and

WHEREAS, Operation “Blue Bat” in Lebanon, July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, Operation “Urgent Fury” in Grenada, October 23, 1983, and Operation “Just Cause” in Panama, December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990, are not qualifying service for pension or benefit purposes, under Title 38, USC, definition of a “period of war”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the Congress be urged to include in the definition of “period of war” in Title 38, United States Code, Sections 101(11) and 1521, the following periods – the operations in Lebanon in 1958, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989-1990 for the purpose of establishing entitlement to VA pension.

Resolution No. 96: Request Congress Provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Service is very productive in advancing medical knowledge and improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; and

WHEREAS, VA has developed the cardiac pacemaker, nicotine patch, the concepts that led to the Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT) scan, and other medical breakthroughs; and

WHEREAS, Basic biomedical research provides the most rational and cost-effective means of preventive health care and provides treatments and cures for many diseases; and

WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research lead to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and serve as a successful model in lowering long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, VA realigned its research priorities in response to recommendations of the Department’s Research Realignment and Advisory Committee to better serve the needs of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, The Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is a venture undertaken by the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Service to establish a national system to translate research discoveries, innovation, effective and efficient diagnostic and treatment strategies into patient care; and

WHEREAS, QUERI is a comprehensive, data driven, outcome-based quality improvement program that will ensure excellence in all areas of Veterans Health Administration medical care: in-patient, out-patient and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Continued research is urgently needed for many diseases if medical science is to overcome cancer, heart disease, AIDS, new strains of tuberculosis, mental illness, hepatitis and others, to help spare veterans and citizens from prolonged illness and permanent disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The need to reduce the nation's budget deficit must not compromise the efforts to maintain and improve health productivity and develop new preventive and therapeutic procedures through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that Congress and the Administration support strong medical and prosthetic research programs within VA so that veterans and all citizens continue to benefit from the exceptional research capability of the Department; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support adequate funding for VA biomedical research activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress and the Administration encourage acceleration in the development and initiation of needed research on conditions that significantly affect veterans - such as prostate cancer, addictive disorders, trauma and wound healing, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), 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. 97: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has a substantial mental health population; and

WHEREAS, According to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, of the returning Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans who have sought care at VHA facilities, mental health problems are the second most common medical problem of these war veterans; and

WHEREAS, There has been significant restructuring of VA mental health services during the past several years; and

WHEREAS, This restructuring has often resulted in a downsizing of in-patient-base care, and the shift of treatment programs from residential-based to ambulatory-based programs; and

WHEREAS, There has not been a commensurate re-investment of resources in alternative treatment modalities to maintain community-based mental health services to treat veterans who were de-institutionalized by the closure of inpatient programs; and

WHEREAS, During the past several years, the number of veterans provided specialized substance abuse treatment has declined, while the funding for such treatment has been significantly decreased; and

WHEREAS, Since the restructuring, the Veterans Health Administration now has more mental health patients seeking treatment with fewer mental health providers; and

WHEREAS, Veterans continue to need increased access to mental health services, including, but not limited to, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Mental Health Intensive Case Management, Substance Abuse Disorder Programs, and Compensated Work Therapy Programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has published and started implementing a Mental Health Strategic Plan that embraces many of the New Freedom Commission's concepts and recommendations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the Mental Health Strategic Plan; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to annually appropriate sufficient funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure comprehensive mental health services are available to veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide annual oversight of VA's mental health services.

Resolution No. 98: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs National Life Insurance

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program or, later, the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program; and

WHEREAS, Upon discharge or separation from service, individuals had only 120 days within which to convert their government life insurance to a private commercial policy, with Veterans' Group Life Insurance not becoming available until August 1974, with a retroactive open period to 1970 for unconverted active or inactive SGLI policies, but not applying to the major portion of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Many of these veterans experienced extraordinarily severe readjustment problems and were often financially and/or emotionally unable to take advantage of the conversion provision within the 120-day time limit after discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Many Vietnam War veterans who did not convert their government life insurance to a private policy, as well as veterans of the World War II and Korean War period whose National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) policies 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, 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, 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 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) notifies them of the grant of service connection (one year prior to September 1, 1991); 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 99: Extend The Presumptive Period for Service Connection for Gulf War Veterans With Undiagnosed Illnesses

Origin: Maryland

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(As Amended, Consolidated with Res. No. 161(GA), and No. 213 (MA))**

WHEREAS, Many servicemembers who served in the Gulf War suffer from long-term, life-altering ailments and chronic multi-symptom illnesses that have unknown etiology—like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, concentration problems; and

WHEREAS, Many service members who have served in the Southwest Asia theater since the 1991 Gulf War - including those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom - have also been exhibiting chronic, unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, There has recently been some progress in research on the long-term health effects of many of the agents Gulf War veterans were potentially exposed to during the Gulf War, but numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are still not well understood, the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain evasive for some time; and

WHEREAS, Continuation of care for ill Gulf War veterans would provide invaluable data that could be used to examine the nature of Gulf War illnesses, provide better care for ill Gulf War veterans, and provide preparation for treatment of future servicemembers who may become ill after deployments to the Southwest Asia theater; and

WHEREAS, Additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed by the Department of Veterans Affairs Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Certain ailments caused by environmental exposures may produce unforeseen health effects that may manifest in the future; and

WHEREAS, Eligibility for Gulf War veterans in Priority Group 6 of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s health care system—expired January 1, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Congress needs to grant VA the authority to re-establish eligibility for Gulf War veterans in Priority Group 6; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation to reinstate and extend the presumptive period for service connection of Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Gulf War veterans be re-established as eligible for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Priority Group 6; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA continues to conduct research into the long-term effects of Gulf War Illnesses and expand the Gulf War registry.

Resolution No. 100: Oppose Any Reduction of Eligibility Criteria for Department of Veterans Affairs Per Diem Payments to State Veterans Homes

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

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, Today, there are 133 State Veterans Homes facilities in 49 states and Puerto Rico with over 30,255 total beds providing nursing home, hospital and domiciliary care; with more capacity being added annually; 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 the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) own nursing, hospital and domiciliary programs; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA per diem payments for veterans residing in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, There has been consideration of limiting the eligibility for inpatient long term (maintenance) care to veterans in Priority Groups 1 through 3 and Priority Group 4 veterans determined to be catastrophically disabled; and

WHEREAS, Such a change would cause thousands of veterans who are now eligible for per diem to become ineligible; and

WHEREAS, Such a change could cause financial disaster to many State Veterans Homes that now rely on VA per diem for revenue; and

WHEREAS, Such a change could result in a new population of elderly homeless veterans, especially in states that have poor Medicaid nursing home reimbursement rates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion

shall oppose any legislative proposal to reduce the eligibility criteria for VA State Veterans Homes per diem.

Resolution No. 101: Provide Full Funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(Consolidated with Res. No. 212(MA))

WHEREAS, The health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are increasingly aging physical plants in need of replacement; substantial renovation and improvements relating to fire, safety and privacy standards are necessary, as well as modernization and reconfiguration to meet the demands of the advances of medicine; and

WHEREAS, The increasing demands placed upon the outpatient and ambulatory care facilities of VA require substantial alterations to meet changing space requirements; and

WHEREAS, No health care delivery system can be expected to provide quality care if the physical settings that house that care are allowed to deteriorate to a state which places them beyond redemption; and

WHEREAS, VA has undertaken a Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) planning process with the stated intent to realign its medical facilities and services more effectively and more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, 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, For several years VA facility directors have been forced to use non-recurring maintenance funds to provide care; and

WHEREAS, The CARES Decision released in May 2004 contained hundreds of construction requests, upgrades, and alterations of current buildings that will require a substantial increase in funding for Major and Minor Construction within VA; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient funding must be provided to maintain, improve and realign VA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge Congress to annually appropriate sufficient funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs construction program to ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans and the implementation of the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) decisions.

Resolution No. 102: Amend the Eligibility Requirements and Extend the Eligibility Time Period for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (SDVI) program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was founded by Congress in 1951 to provide life insurance coverage for veterans suffering only from disabilities rated by VA as being connected to their military service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, Service-connected disabled veterans are required by statute to not only be in good health except for their service-connected disability, but must apply for SDVI coverage within two years from the date of their last VA rating for a new, original, disability, with increases in prior VA disability ratings not being includible for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans in good health except for their service-connected disabilities, and who are granted rating increases because of worsening severity in such disabilities, continue to be denied SDVI coverage at a time when it has become most needful to them, due to the requirement that SDVI eligibility periods begin only with a VA rating for a new disability and last for only two years; and

WHEREAS, Other service-disabled veterans also continue to be denied insurance, due to the strict two year time limit (from the date of their last original rating) to make application; and

WHEREAS, It continues to be the experience of veterans service organizations such as The American Legion that many service-disabled veterans remain unaware of the SDVI program despite automated VA notifications, a fact supported by VA's own casework experience and program studies, and that the insurance benefit remains inadequate and in need of enhancement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend Sec. 1922(a) of Title 38, United States Code, to permit that increases in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected ratings also provide a service-connected veteran with an eligibility period to apply for VA Service-Disabled Life Insurance in the same manner that ratings for new, original, disabilities presently do, and that the time period of such eligibility be increased from the current two years to a period of at least five years from the date of rating determination and notification, and that such amendment also apply to any new similar issue of VA Service-Disabled insurance that may be enacted into law.

Resolution No. 103: Support Medicare Reimbursement for Department of Veterans Affairs

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides medical care to eligible beneficiaries as authorized by title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, The fundamental branch of VA that administers and operates this medical care delivery system is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); and

WHEREAS, VHA is the nation's largest comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system that provides excellence in health care value, service, education and research; and

WHEREAS, The mission of VHA is to meet the medical needs of America's veterans by providing specialized care, primary care and related medical and social support services for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA consists of hospitals, ambulatory clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries and readjustment counseling centers located nationwide; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be the nation's largest educator of health care professionals through its affiliations with medical schools, academic medical centers and other research institutions; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be a major national research asset conducting basic, clinical, epidemiological and behavioral studies across the entire spectrum of scientific discipline; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to serve as a contingency back-up to Department of Defense (DoD) medical services and, during national emergencies, supports the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS); and

WHEREAS, Enrollment in VHA could be limited by the availability of existing annual federal discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to seek other revenue streams to supplement limited annual federal discretionary appropriations and meet the growing demands for quality treatment of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect and retain payments from enrolled veterans and their health care insurers, except Medicare, for inpatient and outpatient care, outpatient medications and long-term care services, and

WHEREAS, Medicare is a prepaid, federally mandated health insurance program for all eligible Americans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare is an entitlement program for nearly forty million Americans; and

WHEREAS, VA is prohibited from billing and collecting Medicare reimbursements for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled Medicare-eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, Indian Health Service has successfully demonstrated the ability to bill and collect Medicare reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's GI Bill of Health proposes Medicare Reimbursement for VA as a realistic health care coverage for enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans seeking treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VHA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion advocate to Congress amending title XVIII of the Social Security Act, to allow Medicare Reimbursement for VA on a fee-for-service basis for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans be authorized to participate in the Medicare Advantage option by choosing VA as their primary health care provider.

Resolution No. 104: The American Legion Policy on Radiation

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), Section 1112, lists various diseases which will be presumed to be service-connected in radiation-exposed veterans; and

WHEREAS, The term “radiation-exposed veteran” is defined as a veteran who participated in a radiation-risk activity while on active duty or inactive duty for training; and

WHEREAS, The term, “radiation-risk activity” is defined as involving onsite participation in an atmospheric nuclear weapons test, or the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946, or internment as a POW in Japan during WWII which resulted in an opportunity for radiation exposure, or participation in underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, Alaska prior to January 1, 1974, or service at gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Radiogenic diseases recognized as being presumed to be related to veteran’s exposure to radiation in service-listed in Title 38, Code Of Federal Regulation (CFR), section 3.309 - include various cancers that may manifest decades after exposure; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, CFR, section 3.311, requires VA to consider the circumstances of the veteran’s service and make a determination of whether the veteran’s disease resulted from the claimed exposure; and

WHEREAS, Such determinations are based heavily on an estimate of the veteran’s probable dose exposure; and

WHEREAS, It is well documented that, because thousands of veterans who participated in the atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and various other radiation-risk activities did not have dosimetry badges, and record-keeping by the military and other Federal agencies concerning individual and group exposures was poor, current radiation dose estimates have been arbitrary, unreliable, and inaccurate; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) continued use of questionable radiation dose estimates has caused the claims of thousands of radiation-exposed veterans to be denied; and

WHEREAS, Congress expressed concern about this problem in a provision of Public Law (PL) 106-419 requiring VA to conduct a two-year study of the radiation dose estimate program and report back to Congress; and

WHEREAS, Based on the lack of credible historic data as to the amount of radiation atomic veterans were actually exposed to, The American Legion believes this requirement in the regulations should be eliminated; and

WHEREAS, PL 106-398 included provisions amending the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 to include workers in Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons-related programs who were exposed to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, thousands of veterans have been assigned duty at various DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities, such as Hanford, Washington, Oak Ridge, Tennessee and others, and would have been similarly at risk of exposure to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, The claim for a radiogenic disease or a disease related to beryllium, or silica by such veterans would be denied by VA, because their military duty does not meet the current definition of a radiation-risk activity in title 38 USC and proof of such exposure for direct service connection would be difficult if not impossible to obtain, nor do these veterans meet the eligibility criteria for benefits under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek legislation to eliminate the radiation dose estimate requirement in claims of veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to recognize military duty at all DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities as a “radiation-risk activity”; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation it include title 38, United States Code, those diseases recognized for benefit purposes under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended, including those resulting from exposure to beryllium and silica.

Resolution No. 105: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Pharmacy Benefits

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) basic Medical Benefits Package includes prescription drugs and supplies; and

WHEREAS, VA has experienced unprecedented demand for prescription drugs since open enrollment in 1998; and

WHEREAS, By law (Public Law (P. L.) 101-508 and P. L. 106-117) VA must charge veterans a co-payment for each 30-day or less supply of medication provided on an outpatient basis for the treatment of a nonservice-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (P. L. 106-117) authorized VA to increase the co-payment amount and to establish an annual cap on the amount of medication co-payment charged; and

WHEREAS, The amount of the medication co-payment and the annual cap may be changed on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, VA increased the amount of the co-payment from \$2.00 to \$7.00 dollars effective February 4, 2002; and from \$7.00 to \$8.00 in 2005; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion opposed the pharmacy co-payment increases citing alternative options; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Inspector General reported an audit of VA regarding pharmacy co-payment levels and restrictions on filling privately written prescriptions for priority group 7 veterans in December 2000; and

WHEREAS, This report raised the issue that the indirect cost of re-writing private prescriptions that are filled by VA physicians can exceed the direct cost of the prescriptions themselves; and

WHEREAS, VA’s policy to fill only prescriptions written by VA physicians and the processes that have been developed to comply with this policy affects all veterans receiving or eligible to receive VA health care; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been unable to provide all enrolled veterans with services in a timely manner and this has generated interest in filling prescriptions from outside providers; and

WHEREAS, Various legislative proposals have been offered to grant VA the authority to provide veterans with pharmaceuticals prescribed by physicians or other health care professionals who have no affiliation with VA; and

WHEREAS, VA is a managed health care system that requires enrollment; and

WHEREAS, Authorizing VA to fill prescriptions from a private sector physician without the veteran enrolling would fundamentally change the system; and

WHEREAS, VA provides medications and pharmaceutical supplies to veterans, with limited exceptions, only in the course of providing medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion oppose significant pharmacy co-payment increases at the expense of veteran beneficiaries, in lieu of seeking alternative funding sources, such as Mandatory Funding and Medicare Reimbursement, that would generate and provide Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with more adequate system-wide funding; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the provision of VA Pharmacy Benefits to enrolled veterans only when prescribed by an authorized VA physician or provider in the course of providing them medical care.

Resolution No. 106: Extend VA Protection Life Insurance to Service-Connected Veterans who are Permanently and Totally Disabled

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs Mortgage Protection Life Insurance is presently available to veterans entitled to the special adapted housing award under Section 2102 (a) of Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, Service-connected veterans rated as permanently and totally disabled cannot obtain Mortgage Protection Life Insurance through commercial insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, Their widows and dependents must bear an undue hardship upon the death of such veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek the enactment of legislation, which would extend the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Mortgage Protection Life Insurance to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

Resolution No. 107: Support the Automatic Waiver of Veterans Benefits Administration Debts of \$250 or Less

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Res. No. 209 (NJ))

WHEREAS, Overpayment of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits is often the result of a lack of understanding of VA regulations and not due to any fraud or misrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, VA processing of collection or waiver of small overpayment amounts requires significant resources and time; and

WHEREAS, Under current regulations, most overpayment waiver requests are granted; and

WHEREAS, Elimination of processing of small overpayment amounts would allow VA personnel to concentrate on other duties, such as claims processing, thus improving the timeliness of VA in delivering benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the Congress of the United States be requested to amend Title 38, United States Code, to state that any alleged overpayment in the amount of \$250 or less be granted an automatic waiver.

Resolution No. 108: All Veterans Receive “Wartime” Benefits for Active Military Service Between February 28, 1961 and August 5, 1964

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Certain VA benefits require wartime service by veterans; and

WHEREAS, The present dates for wartime service during the Vietnam War are August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, On November 10, 1997, Public Law 105-110 was signed by President Clinton; and

WHEREAS, This legislation amended the public law which established The American Legion (41 Stat. 285; 36 United States Code (USC) 45), approved September 16, 1919, by striking December 22, 1961, and inserting February 28, 1961; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always advocated the principle of equal benefits for equal service and believes that wartime service is not limited to only those who served in combat; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the provision in section 101(29(A)), Title 38, USC, which limits entitlement to wartime benefits to those who served “in-country in the Republic of Vietnam” in the period February 28, 1961, to August 5, 1964, discriminates against those other veterans who served on active duty during this period, but who did not happen to have been stationed in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, During these early years of the war in Vietnam, those serving on active duty in other parts of the world were a part of the build-up of military forces in Vietnam and were subject to transfer to Vietnam at any time; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall seek legislation to establish February 28, 1961, as the beginning date of the Vietnam War for VA benefit purposes.

Resolution No. 109: Revision of Work-Rate Standards for Department of Veterans Affairs Adjudicators

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The current Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) work-rate standards are based upon a series of work credits or End Products (EPs) that can be taken upon completion of work at the various stages in the processing of a claim; and

WHEREAS, This data is used to measure and evaluate each individual adjudicator’s performance as well as the station’s overall performance; and

WHEREAS, Under this type of system, the amount of work performed is measured in terms of the cumulative number of EPs reported without regard to whether the action taken, as indicated by the EP, was correct or proper; and

WHEREAS, Since all action – good and bad – receives the same amount of work credit, there is no incentive to do good quality work or disincentive to do poor quality work, which makes the use of these work credits prone to manipulation and abuse; and

WHEREAS, The use of a piecemeal approach to work measurement does not provide accurate or reliable information on the actual amount of work being performed, its quality, or the amount of time and resources needed to properly process a claim; and

WHEREAS, The number of new appeals filed each year and the overturn rate by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) and the courts can be useful tools in gauging claimant satisfaction with the "quality" of a VA regional office decision and how the BVA views the propriety of these decisions; and

WHEREAS, Since decisions of VA regional office adjudicators do not become final until ruled upon by the BVA, or the claimant does not file a timely appeal within one year; and

WHEREAS, Without a fundamental change in the work measurement system, the BVA will continue to be burdened with an inordinate number of unnecessary appeals, and veterans and their families forced to endure prolonged hardship while waiting for a final decision on their claim; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010 That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, to provide that Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regional office adjudicators shall not receive work credit for a claim until the decision in that claim becomes final, meaning that no future action is permitted by statute, either because the claimant has failed to initiate a timely appeal or the Board of Veterans' Appeals has rendered a final decision on the claim.

Resolution No. 110: Include World War II Veterans in Priority Group 6 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Mexican War and WW I veterans were provided priority medical care on reaching advanced age; and

WHEREAS, The average age of the WW II veteran is 82.6 years; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC) fails to provide reasonable care to WW II veterans who are passing away at the rate of 1000 a day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to amend Title 38, USC, to give the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to enroll WWII veterans in "Priority Group 6" for the purpose of receiving VA health care services.

Resolution No. 111: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Nursing Home Capacity**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Long-Term Care (LTC) has been the subject of discussion and legislation for nearly twenty years; and

WHEREAS, In a landmark July 1984 study, *Caring for the Older Veteran*, it was predicted that a wave of elderly veterans had the potential to overwhelm VA's long-term care capacity; and

WHEREAS, The recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of Long-Term Care in its 1998 report *VA Long-Term Care at the Crossroads*, made recommendations that serve as the foundation for VA's national strategy to revitalize and re-engineer long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act, enacted in November 1999, required VA to continue to ensure 1998 levels of extended care services (defined as VA nursing home care, VA domiciliary, VA home-based primary care, and VA adult day health care) in its facilities; and

WHEREAS, The Millennium Act specifically requires VA to maintain its in-house Nursing Home Care Unit (NHCU) bed capacity at the 1998 level of 13,391; however, VA has never met this mandate; and

WHEREAS, Recent General Accounting Office reports show that VA has failed to fully implement mandates of the Millennium Act that would expand non-institutional long-term care services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should be required to restore its nursing home care unit capacity as intended by Congress to the 1998 level of 13,391; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA must create incentives and receive appropriate funding to maintain its nursing home care unit beds rather than abandon them to alternative sources; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA be prohibited from counting any but their own nursing home care unit beds for the purposes of compliance with the provisions of Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress should appropriate sufficient funds to support the provisions of the non-institutional long-term care mandates of Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act, so that VA is not forced to reduce its nursing home care unit capacity in order to comply with said non-institutional care mandates.

Resolution No. 112: The American Legion Policy on Prostate Cancer Research and Treatment**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer, other than skin cancer, among men in the United States and is second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer-related death among men; and

WHEREAS, One of six males will develop clinically significant prostate cancer in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The American Cancer Society recently estimated that 192,280 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed while 27,360 will die within the next year; 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 (VA) 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, 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, VA is very productive in advancing medical knowledge, improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That federal funding for prostate cancer research, treatment, and therapies at the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) be significantly increased and that Congress and the Administration re-double their 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. 113: Increase the Maximum Coverage Under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Program

Origin: Maryland

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Res. No. 255 (IL))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (also known as S-DVI or RH insurance) was established in 1951 to meet the insurance needs of certain veterans with service-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The maximum coverage was set at \$10,000 back in 1951; and

WHEREAS, What cost \$10,000 back in 1951 would cost over \$74,000 in 2006 due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, This puts a greater burden on the surviving family members to meet the burial and final expenses of a deceased service-connected disabled veteran; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to increase to \$50,000 the maximum coverage a service-connected disabled veteran can purchase under the Service-Disabled Veterans insurance program.

Resolution No. 114: Support Legislation to Place Mariner Medal Recipients in Priority Group 3 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Qualified Merchant Marines are eligible for veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, Congress authorized the Mariner's Medal, which was awarded to any seaman who while serving in a ship during the war period (World War II) was wounded, suffered physical injury, or suffered through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of enemy of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment levels for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care are set according to eight priority groups established by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Purple Heart recipients are accorded Priority Group 3 status for VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Recipients of the Merchant Medal should be accorded similar priority group status for VA health care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation that would place recipients of the Mariner Medal in the priority group 3 enrollment level for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care.

Resolution No. 156: Remove the Specific Date to Award Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Benefits to Surviving Spouses for Former Prisoners of War
Origin: Georgia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Res. No. 254 (IL) and No. 228 (IA))

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Benefits Act, Public Law 106-11, authorized payments of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits to the survivors of former Prisoners of War (POWs) who died after September 30, 1999, and who were continuously rated totally disabled due to a service-connected disability for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding death; and

WHEREAS, There are thousands of widows whose spouse was a former POW who died before September 30, 1999, and who was rated totally disabled for over one year for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, These widows are not able to become eligible for DIC because their husband's death was before September 30, 1999; and

WHEREAS, When other survivor benefit programs were liberalized, they usually covered the widows of veterans who died before the enactment of the law, e.g. deaths from cancers from Agent Orange; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend section 1318 of Title 38, United States Code, to remove the date of September 30, 1999, and substitute "who died any time after discharge from active duty and who were rated totally disabled for over one year."

Resolution No. 157: Allow Beneficiaries to Retain \$90 of Their Benefits While in Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes**Origin: Georgia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Res. No. 259 (IL))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, When a veteran without dependents in receipt of pension benefits is covered by Medicaid for nursing home care, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension is reduced to \$90 for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, However, when a veteran without dependents who is receiving compensation benefits and is similarly covered by Medicaid, only \$30 a month is allowed for incidentals; and

WHEREAS, When a helpless child who is in receipt of pension or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and is similarly covered by Medicaid, there is no provision for VA to reduce the individual's award for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, When a surviving parent who is in receipt of Parents' DIC and is similarly covered by Medicaid, there is no provision for VA to reduce the individual's award for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, Under current VA and Medicaid statutes, the service-disabled veteran, helpless child and surviving parent are financially disadvantaged; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to authorize veterans in receipt of VA compensation, or a helpless child in receipt of VA pension or DIC, or a surviving parent in receipt of VA Parents' DIC, to keep up to \$90 of their monthly VA benefits for incidental expenses while in a Medicaid-covered nursing home.

Resolution No. 158: Extend the Filing Period of an Appeal Notice to the Court of Veteran Appeals for Veterans Claims**Origin: Georgia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Res. No. 260 (IL))**

WHEREAS, Claimants have up to one year from notice of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating decision to file an appeal with any or all adjudicated issues to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA); and

WHEREAS, Notice of Appeal of a final denied claim by the Board of Veterans' Appeals must be filed with the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) within 120 days of the denial by the BVA; and

WHEREAS, The CAVC lacks statutory authority to waive the 120-day period for filing Notice of Appeal; and

WHEREAS, Veterans or their surviving spouses can become discouraged, or are not effectively represented, or may require more time to perfect their appeal to the CAVC; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall support legislation to extend the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Notice

of Appeal filing period to one year following Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) final denial of an appeal.

Resolution No. 159: The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration

Origin: Georgia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) was established by Congress and approved by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 to provide for the proper burial and registration of graves of Civil War dead; and

WHEREAS, NCA is currently comprised of 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as, 33 soldiers' lots and monuments; and

WHEREAS, More than 3 million Americans including veterans of every war and conflict are buried in VA's national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, More than 24 million veterans and Reservists and National Guard members have earned the honor of burial in a national cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Annual interments in national cemeteries have annually increased and are projected to increase for the next several years due to an aging veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate land acquisition is a key component to providing continued accessibility to burial options; and

WHEREAS, Operations, maintenance, renovation, and construction funding must continually be adjusted to reflect the true requirements of the National Cemetery Administration; and

WHEREAS, NCA administers a program of grants to states to assist them in establishing or improving state-operated veterans cemeteries in locations where there are no nearby national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, Congress must provide sufficient major construction appropriations to permit NCA to accomplish its stated goal of ensuring that burial in a national or state cemetery is a realistic option by locating cemeteries within 75 miles of ninety percent of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, In addition to providing a grave site, NCA provides a headstone or marker, a Presidential Memorial certificate, a U.S. Flag, Medallion, and perpetual care for the grave; and

WHEREAS, The 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act eliminated the then-headstone allowance of \$85, which was paid to all eligible veterans in lieu of a government-provided headstone or marker and now directly provides a standard government headstone or grave marker to eligible veterans anywhere in the world; and

WHEREAS, VA pays a burial allowance of \$2,000 for veterans who die of service-related causes. For veterans who were receiving VA compensation or pension, VA pays \$300 for burial and funeral expenses and \$300 for a plot. The plot allowance would still be payable to state veterans cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran passes away in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary, or in an institution at which the individual was receiving hospital or nursing care at the expense of the United States at the time of death, VA will pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial; however, a veteran who

passes away in a State Veterans Home is not allowed transportation cost for the remains to the place of burial by VA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and petition Congress to provide required operations and construction funding to ensure VA burial in a national or state veterans cemetery is a realistic option for veterans and their eligible dependents; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support restoration of a veterans burial allowance and an increase in the burial benefit; along with restoration of the pre-1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act criteria to provide eligibility for a government-furnished headstone or marker allowance and restoration of the burial plot allowance for all honorably discharged veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support action to provide, 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 determined by the family within a 75 mile radius.

Resolution No. 160: The American Legion Policy on State Veterans Home Per Diem Reimbursement

Origin: Georgia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(Consolidated with Res. No. 12 (WY))

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded in the late 1800s for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans and continue to serve generations of veterans today; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay per diems for care in State Veterans Homes to those veterans with a 70 percent or greater service-connection rating; and

WHEREAS, A Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 06-264 in March, 2006, Data Gaps Impede Strategic Planning for and Oversight of State Veterans' Nursing Homes, identified that certain aspects of VA's per diem reimbursement policy had not been applied consistently and VA headquarters officials have not been consistent in explaining to VA Medical Centers whether they could approve reimbursement to state veterans' nursing homes for care provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, Public Law (P.L.) 109-461, Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, authorized the Secretary of VA to publish a Strategic Plan for Long-Term Care for VA to include specific plans for working with Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance companies to expand the availability of such long-term care, which included State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, In response to the P.L. 109-461 in August 2007, VA submitted the long-term care strategic plan to Congress with the effective dates through Fiscal Year (FY) 2013; and

WHEREAS, A Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 09-145 in January, 2009, Long-Term Care Strategic Planning and Budgeting Need Improvement, reported that, "many veterans who need long-term care do not receive it from VA, but instead receive care from other providers that is financed by programs such as Medicaid,

Medicare, private health or long-term care insurance, or self-financing by the patients”; and

WHEREAS, GAO Report 09-145 concluded as a result, in VA’s long-term care strategic planning, determining future workload is a multi-step process requiring estimating the number of veterans who will need long-term care, the number of those veterans seeking care through the VA and the number of veterans VA will serve, which is expected to increase by 167 percent between FY 2007 and 2013 and that VA provided unrealistic cost assumptions and workloads in its FY 2009 budget submission; and

WHEREAS, VA pays State Veterans Homes a per diem that covers approximately one-third of the cost of providing these services to eligible veterans, which is less than the actual daily cost of care provided by Medicare/Medicaid rate; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported enactment of legislation to require VA per diem payments be at a rate of 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in State Veterans Homes, to increase the VA per diem rate closer to the Medicare/Medicaid rate; and

WHEREAS, In September 2009, The National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) and State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), recommended that Congress pass a clarifying amendment to P.L. 109-461 to postpone the mandatory implementation of the VA per diem program due to the lower cost of VA’s per diem amount, compared to the Medicare/Medicaid rate which would shift all the cost burden on the State Veteran Home operating budget; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion remains concerned that Congress has not provided clarification of Public Law (P.L.) 109-461 and VA has not factually reported its planning workload projections to assist State Veterans Homes budgets; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) to provide clarification to the State Veterans Home, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) per diem reimbursements; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to increase VA per diem payments to a rate of 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home to more closely align to the Medicaid/Medicare rate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA accurately report its planning workload projections and budget submissions in future fiscal years to account for the 167 percent increase in long-term care workload identified by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Resolution No. 162: Reinstate Vietnam Veterans with Agent Orange Exposure in the Department of Veterans Affairs Priority Group 6

Origin: Georgia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Resolution No. 208 (NJ))

WHEREAS, Over 2 million Veterans served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War and are presumed to have been exposed to dioxin in Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of Vietnam Veterans have developed many different severe diseases which are or may be related to the aforementioned exposure; and

WHEREAS, Many of the diseases contracted by Vietnam Veterans are not accepted as presumptive conditions for the purpose of compensation benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Until recently, Vietnam Veterans seeking care for a condition claimed to be related to said exposure were eligible for needed medical care, as those Veterans were enrolled and placed in Veterans Health Administration Priority Category six (6); and

WHEREAS, The regulation placing those Vietnam Veterans in Category six (6) has expired and has not been re-instated; and

WHEREAS, Many Vietnam Veterans may no longer be able to apply for medical care from the VA unless they meet other criteria which places them in Priority Categories one (1) to seven (7); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek and support re-instatement of the regulation placing Vietnam Veterans seeking care for a condition claimed to be related to Agent Orange exposure in Veterans Health Administration's Priority Group 6.

Resolution No. 163: Reduce the Number of Years of One-Hundred Percent Service Connection Required for Dependency

Origin: Georgia

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 253 (IL))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is paid to the widows and widowers of service-connected disabled veterans who die as a result of their service-related condition or who at the time of death were rated 100% service-connected disabled for at least ten years; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans don't reach the 100% level until they are much older and their condition has worsened; and

WHEREAS, They often pass away due to other than their service-related condition well before they have been receiving the 100% rate for the required length of time; and

WHEREAS, The spouse has usually been the primary care giver and companion for these disabled veterans throughout the veteran's lifetime and the VA compensation has been a primary means of support; and

WHEREAS, The surviving spouse in many instances can no longer count on VA benefits for assistance due to a 100% rating of less than ten years; and

WHEREAS, This causes a dramatic change in the quality of life of the surviving spouse; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to reduce the number of years a veteran must

be rated 100% from ten years to five years for eligibility to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments.

Resolution No. 164: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Disability Compensation

Origin: Georgia

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 210 (NJ))**

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 (VA) 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 (COLA) 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any legislative effort to automatically index such cost-of-living adjustments to the cost-of-living adjustment authorized for Social Security recipients, nonservice-connected disability recipients and death pension beneficiaries.

Resolution No. 165: Special Monthly Compensation (K) Award**Origin: Georgia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 261 (IL))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), section 1114, provides for the payment of disability compensation for a service-connected disability, which is rated from ten percent to one hundred percent under the Department of Veterans Affairs' Schedule for Rating Disabilities for the particular disability; and

WHEREAS, An additional \$87 in Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) is payable, under Title 38, USC, section 1114 (k), where a veteran, as the result of a service-connected disability, has suffered the anatomical loss or loss of use of one or more creative organs, or one foot, or one hand, both buttocks, or blindness in one eye and having only light perception in the other eye, or rendered unable to speak, or deafness in both ears, or in the case of a female veteran, suffered the anatomical loss of one or both breasts, including by mastectomy; and

WHEREAS, The SMC (k) award, which is paid over and above the amount of compensation authorized under Title 38, USC, section 1114, for these losses or loss-of-use disabilities, is intended to recognize the lifelong physical limitations and psychological trauma associated with such loss or loss of use of the veterans' limbs or other body parts; and

WHEREAS, In contrast to regular increases in the rates of disability compensation through the years, the SMC (k) award, which was initially authorized in 1939, has been increased infrequently; and

WHEREAS, In 1939, the SMC (k) award was originally \$18.75 when the rate of compensation for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled was \$75; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, the SMC (k) award is currently \$91 and the rate of compensation for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled is \$2,393; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are again being placed in harm's way and many of the seriously wounded veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have suffered loss or loss of use injuries; and

WHEREAS, The token payment of \$91 is a disgrace to those men and women who have put their bodies on the line in the service of their country and paid a heavy price as a result; and

WHEREAS, To restore the original twenty-five percent (25%) differential that existed in 1939 between the amount of the (k) award and the compensation rate for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled, the SMC (k) award should be increased to \$598; and

WHEREAS, This substantial increase would provide a more appropriate level of additional compensation to those veterans who have suffered these types of grievous wounds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support an increase in the SMC (k) award, under Title 38, USC, section 1114(k) from \$91 to \$598.

Resolution No. 166: The American Legion Policy on Assured Funding for VA Medical Care**Origin: Georgia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annual budget consists of both mandatory and discretionary funding; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding refers to a process where the level of funding is governed by formulas or criteria set forth in authorizing legislation rather than by appropriations; and

WHEREAS, Under budget law, a mandatory program is one that requires provision of benefits to all who meet the eligibility requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding is provided for programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and VA compensation and pension; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, discretionary funding is “all other” funding subject to the annual appropriations process; and

WHEREAS, Discretionary funding in VA’s current annual budget provides for programs such as medical care, major and minor construction, National Cemetery Administration, State Extended Care Facility Grants, and State Cemetery Grants; and

WHEREAS, There have been annual struggles to obtain sufficient funding to provide access to quality care for eligible veterans seeking care in VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, A method to provide dependable, stable and sustained funding for veterans health care is needed; and

WHEREAS, Assured (mandated) funding is one component of a combination of funding mechanisms to ensure adequate Veterans Health Administration (VHA) funding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That Congress designate assured funding for VA medical care; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress continue to provide discretionary funding required to fully operate other programs within the Veterans Health Administration’s budgetary jurisdiction; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress provide, if necessary, supplemental appropriations for budgetary shortfalls in VHA’s mandated and discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of America’s veterans.

Resolution No. 167: Department of Veterans Affairs Dental Care**Origin: Georgia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, This great organization was based upon comradeship born of wartime service and dedicated to fair and equitable treatment of all veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes that oral health is integral to the general health and well-being of a patient and is part of comprehensive health care; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system is mandated under Section 1712, Title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental services to veterans rated 100% service-connected, to veterans held Prisoner-of-War, or to those who have sustained dental trauma in performance of military service; and

WHEREAS, Section 1710, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to provide hospital care and medical services to any veteran for a service-connected disability or a veteran who has a service-connected disability rated at 50% or greater; and

WHEREAS, A dental condition is a medical condition which can impact on all other medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, VA currently provides dental services throughout the VA health care system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 1712, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled veterans.

**Resolution No. 168: The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners of War
Origin: Georgia**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In its interest for the welfare of all those who have served in the nation's Armed Forces, one of the major concerns of The American Legion has been the welfare of those who have been prisoners of war (POWs); 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, Continued scientific observation of their condition during the years subsequent to their internment indicates additional health problems probably associated with the conditions of their internment; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a fundamental obligation to do everything possible to alleviate any and all health problems of former POWs and see to their physical, social, and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes there is a need to further modify the current provisions of Title 38, United States Code, that provide for former POWs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. Arthritis, including osteoporosis;
3. Chronic pulmonary disease (where there is a history of forced labor in mines during internment);
4. Chronic liver disease;
5. Adult-onset diabetes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to be enacted to rescind the requirement in section 1112(b) of Title 38, United States Code, that a POW must be held in captivity for at least 30 days to receive benefits and

compensation for any presumptive disabilities, specified in that section, that were incurred in captivity; and, be it finally

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.

Resolution No. 169: Department of Veterans Affairs' Role in National Emergency Preparedness

Origin: Georgia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Under Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), 8111A, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been established as the principal medical care back-up for military health care "during and immediately following a period of war, or a period of national emergency declared by the President or the Congress that involves the use of the Armed Forces in armed conflict"; and

WHEREAS, Under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the Federal Response Plan (FRP) VA's specialized duties entail conducting and evaluating disaster and terrorist attack simulation exercises; managing the nation's stockpile of pharmaceuticals for biological and chemical toxins; maintaining a rapid response team for radiological releases; and training public and private NDMS medical center personnel around the country in properly responding to biological, chemical, or radiological disasters; and

WHEREAS, The VA Strategic Plan for 2006-2011 lists as an objective, "Improve nation's response in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster by providing timely and effective contingency medical support and other services"; and

WHEREAS, If VA is to play a key supporting role as part of the FRP and the NDMS, it must have adequate resources to execute its role; and

WHEREAS, The Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process was designed to ensure that VA's capital infrastructure meets the needs of veterans for health care services in 2010 and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) implementation of the CARES decision must take into consideration and sustain VA's ability to perform its fourth mission as a back up to the Department of Defense; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to take an active role in the development and implementation of plans to enhance Federal homeland security initiatives; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly urges Congress to provide VA with the funding necessary to further enhance its capacity to act as a back-up to the Department of Defense in times of war and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in responding to national emergencies.

Resolution No. 172: GI Bill of Health**Origin: Virginia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The American Legion's intent in its initial draft of the GI Bill of Health was to ensure a permanent effective veterans' health care delivery system for the nation's veterans and their eligible dependents into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, For the past 50 years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided high quality health care to America's veterans, trained numerous health care providers, engaged in innovative research, and supported the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, VA has changed the way it delivers health care during the past decade through restructuring and legislative initiatives, which has resulted in the implementation of several of the original provisions of the GI Bill of Health; and

WHEREAS, The elements of the GI Bill of Health that have already been accomplished under measures established by Eligibility Reform in 1996 and the Millennium Bill in 1999, include:

1. Portability
2. An equitable standardized resource distribution method
3. Extension of health care access to all veterans
4. A defined benefits package
5. Long-term care for veterans rated 70 percent or higher or for service-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, There are two main components of the original GI Bill of Health that have yet to be addressed - Medicare Reimbursement and dependents access to VA health care; and

WHEREAS, The authorizing of VA to collect Medicare Reimbursement, would provide an alternative funding stream to supplement VA's limited annual budget to meet the growing demands for quality treatment of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA's mission, "To care for him who has borne the battle, his widow and orphan," which includes the sacrifices made by family members who are not currently being treated by the VA; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the new 2010 GI Bill of Health, The American Legion addresses concerns in the following areas: Eligibility Reform, Budget Reform for VA, Sharing Arrangements, Seamless Transition, VA Employee Recruitment and Retention, Women Veterans, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Bilateral Electronic Medical Record Exchange Between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs and Third Party Billing; and

WHEREAS, In passing the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, PL 104-262, Congress required VA to furnish hospital care and medical services to any veteran with a compensable service-connected disability or who is unable to defray the expenses of necessary medical care and services; and

WHEREAS, Since the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)'s limited budget determined by Congress, causing VA to establish eight priority groups and insuring prioritization of veterans by income not service; and

WHEREAS, This prioritization discriminates against veterans who qualify for enrollment and cost-free health care services based on a compensable service-connected

condition or other qualifying factor, but fail the financial assessment (Means test) and thereby are denied earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the Means Test is based on a threshold from Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) geographical index, which allows the zip code of a veteran to influence whether they are able to enroll; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, then Secretary Anthony Principi suspended enrollment of Priority Group 8 veterans to which the suspension continues on to today; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has strongly advocated for alternative revenue streams to no longer restrict enrollment for veterans who choose to use VA as their health care provider; and

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s Veterans Health Administration (VHA) was given the authority to bill, collect, and retain third-party reimbursements for outpatient medications, nursing home and hospital care; and

WHEREAS, VA also can bill, collect, and retain payments made by veterans for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, VA is able to enroll all veterans through the ability to bill their third-party insurances, which would recoup the necessary funds needed to treat veterans who are not currently enrolled within VA; and

WHEREAS, Veterans by their service have earned the right to choose health care through the very system created to meet their unique needs; and

WHEREAS, The funding for VA health care under the Federal budget is a discretionary program, meaning that it is within the discretion of Congress to determine when and how much money it will allocate each year for veterans' medical care; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, section 1710(a), provides that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs "shall" furnish hospital care and medical services, but only to the extent Congress has provided money to cover the costs of the care; and

WHEREAS, The partnership of nine veterans service organizations supports VA healthcare budget reform to achieve sufficient, timely, and predictable funding for VA health care that is reflective of the rising cost of health care and increasing need for medical services; and

WHEREAS, For several years VA has used different types of arrangements to enhance services provided to veterans – outleases, enhanced use (EU) leases, sharing arrangements, which includes "selling" space or buying space and sharing of VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) health care resources; and

WHEREAS, While The American Legion supports sharing arrangements, The American Legion remains concerned that the process has not always been transparent between VA, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has sought to ensure that VA continues to maintain control of the facility and veterans be given priority when seeking services; and

WHEREAS, The President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors was established to implement much needed reform to ensure a seamless transition for those severely wounded in theater in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Service members and their dependents are understandably overwhelmed in dealing with the multiple bureaucracies during their time of transition from DoD into VA; and

WHEREAS, DoD and VA continue to struggle to establish a compatible computer system that would improve the bilateral exchange of medical records between the two departments, allowing timely access to patient information; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has urged both DoD and VA to aggressively screen, identify and treat veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) for those serving in OEF and OIF; and

WHEREAS, DoD and VA established the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, which has not effectively provided effective definition, clinical guidelines, collection of statistics, treatment, research and treatment methodologies for PTSD and TBI afflicted soldiers and veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA must continue to be able to retain and recruit well-qualified medical providers and has had difficulty recruiting specialty medical practitioners in fields of cardiology, surgery as well as nurses and mental health providers; and

WHEREAS, The inability for VA to offer a competitive compensation packages as well as lack of childcare support options are both seen as barriers to recruitment and retention of VA health care providers; and

WHEREAS, There are 1.8 million living women veterans in 2008, of whom 453,250 were enrolled in the VA Health Care system for care, with the number expected to grow by 33 percent in the next three years; and

WHEREAS, Participation in OEF and OIF has forced women veterans to expand their military roles which leads to them sustaining the same types of injuries as their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Women veterans accessing VA benefits and services are often stigmatized in filing the same claims their male counterparts file and reports have indicated that women veterans are experiencing unprecedented growths in homelessness, childcare support, unresolved mental health illnesses and military sexual trauma; and

WHEREAS, Veterans must travel sometimes at great length and often pass quality health care facilities such as DOD or Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities in order to receive treatment at a VA approved facility; and

WHEREAS, VA is the largest medical care system in the United States that effectively created and manages an advanced electronic medical record, however, the records are not shared between the Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration leading to delays between the two departments; and

WHEREAS, Timely access to quality health care offered by VA, the nation's best integrated health care delivery system is an earned benefit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the enactment of the remaining main components of the original GI Bill of Health involving Medicare Reimbursement and dependent access to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA having Medicare Reimbursement, VA would continue to receive an alternative funding stream to supplement their limited annual budget to meet the growing demands for quality treatment of enrolled veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress allow VA to open enrollment to ALL veterans and beneficiaries with the option to use their Medicare, TRICARE, TRICARE for Life

or private insurance for nonservice connected conditions to cover the cost of care; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues to support legislation to guarantee Congress provide sufficient, timely and predictable resources to cover the expenses of the veterans' health care program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support a publicly transparent Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) process in consultation with Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and stakeholders; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any EUL that does not specifically provide any obvious and permanent benefits, resources or services to the veterans' community; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress sufficiently allocate the funds necessary for VA to effectively recruit and retain medical providers against the private sector; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress mandate VA medical centers establish Child Care Centers to assist in recruitment and retention of medical providers and to allow women veterans to make arrangements for their medical care appointments; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA ensure any future women veterans' research will take into consideration the barriers and solutions of timely access and quality health care being received through VA; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA continue to research the mental effects of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) as they impact veterans today; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress mandate VA's Veteran Health Administration (VHA) and Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) utilize interoperable computerized medical records to share veterans health and claims information between both departments; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That veterans be allowed to utilize any appropriate government health care facility in order to reduce travel time, travel expense, and undue stress on the veteran and/or the veteran's caregiver.

Resolution No. 173: Support of Admission to State Veterans Homes for Any Parent Whose Child Perished While Serving on Active Duty in the Armed Forces of the United States

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for soldiers and sailors following the American Civil War, and have honorably served veterans and some of their immediate dependents and survivors for nearly 150 years; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the 137 State Veterans Homes in all States and in Puerto Rico, on a daily basis, provide such services as: hospital, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, long-term care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, domiciliary care, respite care, end-of-life care and adult day health care, to approximately 28,500 veterans and dependents; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 51.210(d), authorizes "The percentage of facility residents eligible for VA nursing home care must

be at least 75 percent veterans except that the veteran percentage need only be more than 50 percent if the facility was constructed or renovated solely with State funds.”; and

WHEREAS, 38CFR51.210(d) specifies “All non-veteran residents must be spouses of veterans or parents all of whose children died while serving in the armed forces of the United States.”; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the contemporary trend of the all volunteer military force, the wide array of career paths available to American citizens, and modern asymmetrical wars and military conflicts require both periodic and episodic deployments to combat engagements throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, A post-World War II policy interpreted by VA requires all children of a parent perished in war as a precondition of eligibility for residence of a State Veterans Home under 38CFR51.210(d) is unwarranted and exhibits an exclusionary intent toward parents who have suffered irreparable loss of a child, or children; and

WHEREAS, Military service is now all-voluntary and the number of service members on active duty is greatly reduced from the days when military recruitment was supplemented by new recruits provided by the Selective Service Administration’s local draft boards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports amending Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)51.210(d) to authorize admission to State Veterans Homes of the parents of any service member who perished while on active military service to the United States.

Resolution No. 174: The American Legion Policy on Opening the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals to Medicare and Medicaid

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals (FSS-P) is a schedule of pharmaceutical supply contracts awarded to responsible vendors supplying comparable products and services at fair and reasonable prices to the Government; and

WHEREAS, FSS-P is essentially a price catalog of approximately 24,000 pharmaceutical products available to the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the largest purchaser of pharmaceuticals under FSS-P; and

WHEREAS, Pricing of pharmaceuticals to VA is at least 24% below and as much as 60% below drug manufacturers’ most favored non-federal, non-retail customer pricing; and

WHEREAS, Known as Federal Ceiling Prices (FCP), these prices are generally 14-20% lower than regular negotiated FSS-P prices; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid is a joint Federal and State program that pays for medical assistance for individuals and families with low incomes and relatively few assets; and

WHEREAS, Numerous states encounter shortfalls in Medicaid funds and implement aggressive measures to control growth and curb expenditures, including prescription drug expenditures; and

WHEREAS, Beneficiaries of prescription drug benefits under Medicaid who also receive medical care under Medicare Parts A and B are known as “dual-eligible”; and

WHEREAS, “Dual-eligible” are mostly elderly poor who account for 34% of the enrolled Medicaid population, but 80% of the Medicaid drug bill; and

WHEREAS, “Dual-eligible” beneficiaries were automatically enrolled into the new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA90) required drug manufacturers to provide rebates to State Medicaid programs for outpatient drug purchases in exchange for Medicaid reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, Manufacturers are willing to price FSS-P low because it accounts for a very small fraction of the total domestic drug market and because up to 70% of new doctors receive some residency training in medical school affiliated VA medical centers, thereby creating a continuous flow of loyal prescribers of their products; and

WHEREAS, When OBRA90 Medicaid rebates went into effect, manufacturers responded by raising FSS-P pricing to VA some 14%; and

WHEREAS, If Federal legislation mandates that the new Medicare Part D drug benefit be tied to FSS-P, pharmaceutical manufacturers will act predictably to raise FSS-P prices to VA; and

WHEREAS, U.S. veterans receiving outpatient VA pharmacy benefits requiring co-payments of \$8.00 for a 30-day supply of medication would almost certainly end up paying more were VA to lose its protected FSS-P pricing; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has consistently opposed increases in prescription co-payments in the past, arguing that corrections to other programs should not be made “on the backs of veterans”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion oppose any Federal legislation that would open the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals to Medicaid, Medicare Part D, or any other entity or program not now specifically authorized to purchase on the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals.

Resolution No. 175: The American Legion Policy on State Veterans Home Per Diem Reimbursement

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with Resolution No. 14 (WY) and Resolution No. 211 (MA)

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded in the late 1800s for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans and continue to serve generations of veterans today; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay per diems for care in State Veterans Homes to those veterans with a 70 percent or greater service-connection rating; and

WHEREAS, A Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 06-264 in March, 2006, *Data Gaps Impede Strategic Planning for and Oversight of State Veterans' Nursing Homes*, identified that certain aspects of VA's per diem reimbursement policy had not been applied consistently and VA headquarters officials have not been consistent in explaining to VA Medical Centers whether they could approve reimbursement to state veterans' nursing homes for care provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, Public Law (P.L.) 109-461, Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, authorized the Secretary of VA to publish a

Strategic Plan for Long-Term Care for VA to include specific plans for working with Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance companies to expand the availability of such long-term care, which included State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, In response to the P.L. 109-461 in August 2007, VA submitted the long-term care strategic plan to Congress with the effective dates through Fiscal Year (FY) 2013; and

WHEREAS, A Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 09-145 in January, 2009, *Long-Term Care Strategic Planning and Budgeting Need Improvement*, reported that, “many veterans who need long-term care do not receive it from VA, but instead receive care from other providers that is financed by programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, private health or long-term care insurance, or self-financing by the patients”; and

WHEREAS, GAO Report 09-145 concluded as a result, in VA’s long-term care strategic planning, determining future workload is a multi-step process requiring estimating the number of veterans who will need long-term care, the number of those veterans seeking care through the VA and the number of veterans VA will serve, which is expected to increase by 167 percent between FY 2007 and 2013 and that VA provided unrealistic cost assumptions and workloads in its FY 2009 budget submission; and

WHEREAS, VA pays State Veterans Homes a per diem that covers approximately one-third of the cost of providing these services to eligible veterans, which is less than the actual daily cost of care provided by Medicare/Medicaid rate; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported enactment of legislation to require VA per diem payments be at a rate of 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in State Veterans Homes, to increase the VA per diem rate closer to the Medicare/Medicaid rate; and

WHEREAS, In September 2009, The National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) and State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), recommended that Congress pass a clarifying amendment to P.L. 109-461 to postpone the mandatory implementation of the VA per diem program due to the lower cost of VA’s per diem amount, compared to the Medicare/Medicaid rate which would shift all the cost burden on the State Veteran Home operating budget; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion remains concerned that Congress has not provided clarification of Public Law (P.L.) 109-461 and VA has not factually reported its planning workload projections to assist State Veterans Homes budgets; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) to provide clarification to the State Veterans Home, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) per diem reimbursements; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to increase VA per diem payments to a rate of 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home to more closely align to the Medicaid/Medicare rate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA accurately report its planning workload projections and budget submissions in future fiscal years to account for the 167 percent increase in

long-term care workload identified by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Resolution No. 186: Expand Responsibility of The American Legion's Ad Hoc Committee on Claims to Streamline the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) Processes to Address the Backlog of Appeals

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (As amended)

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans' Affairs Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has reported that 20 percent of all claims are wrongly decided by VA Regional Offices (VARO); and

WHEREAS, A veteran whose claim is denied by the VARO has a right to appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA); and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans' Affairs has released a study showing that the average time needed to decide an appeal to the BVA is 600 days; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Resolution 11, adopted at the Spring 2010 National Executive Committee meeting, the National Commander appointed an ad hoc committee to offer recommendations to help streamline and improve accuracy of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims processing system in order to address its growing backlog; and

WHEREAS, VBA has already finalized its plans and will be moving forward with improvements to its claims process but still has not addressed the appeals process; and

WHEREAS, The Ad Hoc Committee on claims in its purview did not address the growing backlog of claims to seek resolution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion's Ad Hoc Committee on Veterans Claims be authorized to expand its responsibility and purview to explore viable options and present recommendations to improve on the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) appeals; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Ad Hoc Committee prepare a report of recommendations for submission to the National Commander at the Fall 2011 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

Resolution No. 187: Support Legislation for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to Receive Private Hospital Bills and Documentation to One-Year

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) to make payment, or reimbursement, to a claimant for non-VA emergency medical treatment provided to a veteran for non-service connected conditions after individual eligibility determinations have been made; and

WHEREAS, In all non-VA emergency health care, the provider must bill the VA for all charges associated with the emergency treatment and provide medical documentation of the services provided; and

WHEREAS, The itemized bill and documentation must be received by the VA within ninety (90) days of the healthcare provided or the claim will be automatically denied; and

WHEREAS, All national private health care insurance companies queried require the same information be provided to pay a claim; however, require the claim and documentation be received within one (1) year of health care provided; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are burdened with a more rigid requirement to have this medical information sent to the VA within ninety (90) days of the date health care was provided; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports amending Title 38 U.S.C. §1725 and 38 C.F.R. 17.1004 (d) to be changed to read “to receive payment, or reimbursement, for emergency services, the VA must receive itemized bill and documentation within one (1) year after the date of services.”

Resolution No. 188: Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Eliminate The Requirement That A Veteran Had To Serve In Vietnam To Be Eligible For Wartime Benefits

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 as the period of the Vietnam War, enabling Veterans serving during that period to be eligible for membership in said organization as Veterans having served during war time as described in our National Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code Section 101 (29) (A) designates only Veterans serving in Vietnam during the period from February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 as being eligible for all Veteran benefits and further stating in Section 101 (29) (B) that Veterans serving in areas other than Vietnam will become eligible for similar benefits starting August 5, 1964 thru May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, Those Veterans who served during the period from February 28, 1961 to August 4, 1964 in areas outside Vietnam are therefore not considered wartime Veterans for the purposes of benefits despite service recognized as during the period of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, This exclusion of Veterans who served during the period from February 28, 1961 to August 4, 1964 deprives Veterans who served honorably, benefits available to all other Veterans designated as wartime Veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge Congress to modify Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 101 (29) (A) to eliminate the requirement that a veteran had to serve in Vietnam to be eligible for wartime benefits during the period from February 28, 1961 to August 4, 1964; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Title 38 (U.S.C.) Section 101 (29) (B) be eliminated and that the time period of the Vietnam War be firmly established as from February 28th,

1961 to May 7th, 1975, enabling all veterans serving during that period to be eligible for benefits.

Resolution No. 241: Support Department of Veterans Affairs' Vet Centers Expansion to Rural Communities

Origin: Minnesota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Veterans residing in rural areas maintain reoccurring disadvantages accessing earned VA medical care and mental health services due to traveling distances; and

WHEREAS, The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 encourages improved mental health services to veterans residing in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has identified the need to establish and maintain a nation-wide system of community based programs separate from VA medical centers in order to remove unnecessary barriers to care and honoring requests for counseling without delay; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to assist veterans and family members overcome the readjustment problems associated with war and personal trauma; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers retain counselors with specific military backgrounds making it more likely to effectively relate to the unique needs of combat veterans; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers provide bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children, and siblings of service members who died of any cause while on active duty, including federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers provide outreach services to combat veterans that's integral to locating and engaging veterans by providing them with information and services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vet Centers be expanded in geographic locations that maximize opportunities to reach rural veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Vet Centers be established using input from interested Veteran Service Organizations representing those veterans for whom Vet Centers have been established to assist; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Vet Centers provide a clear definition of those geographic locations that outreach and counseling services are to be provided; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That criteria be used to justify the establishment of new Vet Centers that take into account factors not measurable, but rather reflective of the unique characteristics of each state, its resources and limitations to reach its rural veterans.

Resolution No. 252: Exempt Income from Jury Duty for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Claims Purposes**Origin: Illinois****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Serving on jury duty is a civic obligation, which all citizens, when called, should take very seriously; and

WHEREAS, At many polling places, there is a shortage of needed supervisory personnel and serving as an election judge helps insure a fair and impartial election process; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and surviving spouses in receipt of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension benefits under Public Law (PL) 95-588 must report all income received from outside sources, since this directly affects the amount of VA pension to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The amount of financial remuneration received from these types of civic activities is relatively small, but it can result in the reduction in monthly benefits, dollar for dollar, or the complete loss of entitlement to pension; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to exempt income received from jury duty and income from service as an election judge in determining the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension rate under Public Law (P.L) 95-588.

Resolution No. 262: Special Monthly Compensation for Female Veterans**Origin: Illinois****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, A veteran may suffer from erectile dysfunction (E. D.) due to an injury they receive while on active duty; and

WHEREAS, He may also suffer from this condition due to a service-connected medical condition such as diabetes or hypertension; and

WHEREAS, He may also suffer from E. D. due to a side effect of medication prescribed for a service-connected illness; and

WHEREAS, Male veterans may resort to prescription drugs such as Viagra and Cialis to address this problem; and

WHEREAS, Under the current Schedule of Rating Decisions that the V A uses, a male veteran who suffers from E. D. due to a service-related injury or due to medication prescribed for a service-related condition becomes eligible for Special Monthly Compensation K, which allows him an additional \$96 a month; and

WHEREAS, Females now make up close to 20% of the military services and they too will suffer injuries or illnesses which will result in painful or difficult sexual intercourse; and

WHEREAS, This sexual dysfunction in females may include insufficient vaginal lubrication due to depression, pregnancy, stress and fatigue, painful intercourse due to endometriosis, pelvic mass, ovarian cysts, and scarring from surgery, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, Female veterans can sometimes treat these problems with medication, counseling and hormone therapy; and

WHEREAS, There is no corresponding SMC K provision for veterans who suffer from female sexual dysfunction and they can only receive this SMC K rate if they actually lose their creative organs or a portion of their breast; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the VA to amend its current regulation for Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) K to include females who suffer sexual dysfunction to be able to obtain this SMC K rate similar to that awarded male veterans.

**Resolution No. 299: Increase Beneficiary Travel Pay for Eligible Veterans
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 268 (ID))**

WHEREAS, Service-connected and other veterans authorized beneficiary travel only receive \$.41 per mile, and are subject to a \$6 per trip deductible, not to exceed \$18 per month; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 110-387 required the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to freeze the Beneficiary Travel deductible amounts as specified in 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 111(c)(5) to \$3.00 per one way trip, \$6.00 for a round trip with a maximum deductible of \$18.00 per calendar month; and

WHEREAS, Eligible veterans are not reimbursed at a reasonable level for costs incurred to visit a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility for service-connected or other authorized care and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Beneficiary travel pay was never intended to pay actual transportation costs, such as authorized by the government for Federal employees, but instead, provided to help defray costs; and

WHEREAS, There are no provisions in law that VA must increase the per mile travel authorization on a regular basis; and

WHEREAS, The beneficiary travel program is discretionary and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is required to review the program annually to determine the VA's ability to maintain the program and its ability to increase the reimbursement rate for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has determined that it is necessary to maintain the current reimbursement rate in order to allow the VA health care system to accommodate the increasing patient workload; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding for VA health care would allow the Secretary to increase the rate without negative consequences to funding for direct care; and

WHEREAS, The price of gasoline has steadily increased since the \$0.41 rate was established, creating a financial hardship for veterans who have to travel long distances for care, or for those who have limited financial resources; and

WHEREAS, The lack of a consistent and reliable mechanism to periodically adjust the per mile authorization for beneficiary travel creates an injustice and an unfair economic burden to many veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek adequate funding to accommodate the

needs of the increasing demand for care, to include the need for an increase in the beneficiary travel rate; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to immediately increase the per mile beneficiary travel pay for eligible veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to periodically adjust the rate to assure that the per mile reimbursement rate is increased at a reasonable and acceptable level.

Resolution No. 300: Reorganization of Arlington National Cemetery

Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) is our Nation's most sacred shrine representing the embodiment of the sacrifices that were made to uphold our country's ideals and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is dismayed and disheartened by the failures and disgraceful conduct documented by the U.S. Army Inspector General (IG) Agency's Report of Investigation identified as SAIG-IN ROI 10-004 which was released on June 10, 2010; and

WHEREAS, The recent shameful events, including the improper handling of remains; loss of accountability of cremated remains; unmarked gravesites; unintended double burial of remains; and the failure to notify next-of-kin of the trans-interment of remains; are disgraceful consequences of a long-term failure in leadership and a fundamental breakdown in the chain of command which have been festering for 18 years; and

WHEREAS, Those interred in Arlington National Cemetery or any other American military cemetery within the United States or abroad, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of our Nation, are to be treated with the utmost dignity, honor, and respect and nothing less is acceptable; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery should set the very standard on which all other such cemeteries are to be compared and not the opposite; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense, through the Department of the Army, has jurisdiction over only 2 national cemeteries: Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs, through the National Cemetery Administration, is responsible for maintaining 131 National Cemeteries, as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites nationwide; and

WHEREAS, The National Cemetery Administration has achieved the highest rating in customer satisfaction ever awarded to a federal agency or private organization with a score of 95 out of a possible 100 according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey which is conducted by the University of Michigan Business School every three years; and

WHEREAS, The Convention Committee on National Security has reviewed and recommended approval of this resolution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to place the responsibility of managing, operating, and maintaining

Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs through the National Cemetery Administration; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the responsibilities of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, traditionally known as "The Old Guard," which include conducting military ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, manning the 24-hour vigil at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and being the provider of military funeral escorts at Arlington, will not change, as a result of any reorganization associated with Arlington National Cemetery.

Resolution No. 301: Veterans Receive Same Level of Benefits

Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a membership organization founded in 1919 on the common bond of wartime service during any active U.S. Period of War; and

WHEREAS, The United States Code (U.S.C.) § 101, unfairly categorizes service members and veterans by dates of service and/or theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, Due to this injustice, veterans from different eras and theaters of operations are receiving different levels of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits based solely on their dates and locations of service, rather than their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, For example, the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 recently passed by both chambers of Congress created two distinct caregiver support programs – providing a stipend to caregivers of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans, but not to caregivers of veterans from previous eras; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always advocated on the principle of equal benefits for equal service; and

WHEREAS, All veterans of the United States are all united by the common bond of service and all took an oath of service to preserve, protect and defend the country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge Congress to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide the same level of benefits for any veteran, regardless of the dates or theater of operations during their military service; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress review current legislation and public laws to ensure that veterans benefits are provided equitably and consistently for all veterans from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those veterans from previous eras and conflicts.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Resolution No. 189 (NY): New Cemetery Be Built in New York State

Rejected

Resolution No. 5 (DC): The American Legion Policy on U.S. Merchant Marines

Resolution No. 9 (SD): The American Legion Policy on Incarcerated Veterans

Resolution No. 62 (WA): In-State Licensure of Department of Veterans Affairs' Healthcare Providers

Resolution No. 155 (MD): The American Legion Policy on Merchant Marines

Resolution No. 242 (CO): Merchant Marine Compensation

Resolution No. 245 (NE): Merchant Marine Policy

Resolution No. 269 (ID): Merchant Marines

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HELM: Mr. Commander, as a delegate to this Convention from the Department of Nebraska, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Is there a second? ...*Second* Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed. The report of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation is adopted.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: With the adoption of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation report it is appropriate to announce the winner of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually to the department that best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families, and their survivors. For the 2010-2011 program year the trophy is awarded to the Department of Wisconsin.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT KURTZ: Thank you, commander. The Department of Wisconsin is very fortunate to have an excellent relationship with our county veteran service officers. Each year at our mid-winter conference we offer training to our post service officers, and we find it a very effective way to train them and have them refer their more difficult cases to our department service office at Zablocki VA Medical Center. Our service office staff, led by James Fialkowski, who is with us here today, does an excellent job.

We also maintain a rehabilitation camp in Lake Tomahawk, Wisconsin. We have done this since 1925. And any Wisconsin veteran, whether you're a Legionnaire or not, as long as you're a resident of the state of Wisconsin and a veteran you can attend Camp American Legion for free for one week.

We also do a great deal of outreach through Heroes to Hometowns, Operation Outreach and our own troop and family support efforts. This year, with the help of the national organization and the American Legion Auxiliary, we've conducted 20 job fairs across Wisconsin.

And our prime volunteer, Mr. Mike Rohan, likes to tell the story about how a young veteran came to one of our job fairs here. And Mike was feeding him hot dogs in the back of the hall, and this young man came up and asked Mike, you know, "Can I have a hot dog?" Mike said, "Sure, have a hot dog." "Well, can I have another one? Are these hot dogs just for veterans?" And Mike said, "No, take a hot dog." So he called his wife over, and this young man's wife was pregnant. And they came to our job fair looking for a job, and when they left that day they left with two hot dogs and a job. (*Applause*)

And I want you to know the Department of Wisconsin is proud of the work we do. We're humbled by this award, but most of all we're grateful for the opportunity to serve veterans and still serve America. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The chair recognizes Larry J. Besson of Illinois, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section II of the Convention Committee on Credentials and other Internal Affairs)
Larry J. Besson, Illinois, Chairman**

Forty-three members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, elected Larry J. Besson of Illinois as Permanent Chairman, and George West of New Hampshire as Permanent Secretary, and considered twenty-three resolutions, twenty-one of which originated with Departments of The American Legion and two which was created by the committee. Of these, three were approved; two were approved as amended; thirteen were referred; three were received and recorded and two were rejected.

Approved

The following resolutions are recommended for *approval*:

Resolution No. 250: Increase Income Tax Deduction for Volunteer Mileage

Origin: Illinois

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section II)**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime era veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a firm supporter of the VA Voluntary Service Program which is the largest volunteer program in the federal government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion statistics have shown for the last several years that over 7,000 volunteers have contributed over 850,000 hours annually, and the rising cost of gasoline is one of the barriers to their recruitment and retention; and

WHEREAS, As the federal budget is tightened due to the current economic crisis, the reliance upon volunteers will expand; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, being one of the nation's largest and most active community service organizations, recognizes the need to create an environment which would attract and retain volunteers; and

WHEREAS, One of the best ways to, promote volunteerism is to defray out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers; and

WHEREAS, For tax year 2009 the standard mileage rate for business use of a vehicle was 55 cents per mile, medical rate was 24 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, The optional standard mileage rate for volunteers providing service to a government or charitable organization is still 14 cents per mile and has not changed since 1997; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge Congress to approve legislation to increase the volunteer mileage income tax deduction and to adjust this rate yearly based on regular CPI-based adjustments.

Resolution No. 275: Appreciation to Host City

Origin: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters

(Section II)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters

(Section II)

WHEREAS, The 92nd National Convention has been held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010; and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of Wisconsin, the officers of the Convention Corporation and the Department, and by the officials and the people of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That we express our deep appreciation to the Department of Wisconsin; Governor of Wisconsin Jim Doyle; Mayor Tom Barrett; the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, including the Fire Department, Police Department, and other Public Safety Officials; and to the 2010 National American Legion Convention Committee, Inc., Wayne Jensen, President. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable convention.

Resolution No. 276: Change Internal Revenue Rules in Counting Sons of The American Legion Membership at the Post Level as Outlined in Section 501(c) (19) of the US Code

Origin: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters

(Section II)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters

(Section II)

WHEREAS, The American Legion continues to be focused on the basic principles outlined in the Preamble to the National Constitution and By-Laws developed ninety years ago, words that are held aloft on four main pillars of service and advocacy for veterans and their families: a strong national security, taking care of all veterans, promoting patriotism/Americanism and mentoring youth; and

WHEREAS, For the benefit of the community, state, nation, The American Legion has developed programs and activities to support these pillars such as, honor guards, burial details, Heroes to Hometown, The American Legion Baseball, The American Legion Oratorical Contest, The American Legion Boys State and Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Children's Miracle Network support, transport of veterans to VA hospitals, blood donation, Child Welfare Foundation, the Legacy Scholarship Fund, and assistance in obtaining veterans benefits, among many others; and

WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion is a national program of The American Legion whose membership consists of non-political, civic-minded male descendants of members of The American Legion or military personnel who died while serving during a The American Legion qualifying war period to assist The American

Legion membership in fulfilling their obligations to veterans, nation, state, community and families in these four pillars; and

WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion members augment the members of The American Legion in active participation and outstanding support with the above programs and activities in communities throughout this country since 1932; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Sons of The American Legion eventually become eligible for membership in The American Legion after honorable military service during a wartime period; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of Section 501(c)(19) of Title 26 of the US Code lists the type of organizations which includes The American Legion that are exempt from federal taxation unless denied under section 502 or 503 and is quoted as follows:

“ (c) List of exempt organizations

(19) A post or organization of past or present members of the Armed Forces of the United States, or an auxiliary unit or society of, or a trust or foundation for, any such post or organization—

(A) organized in the United States or any of its possessions,

(B) at least 75 percent of the members of which are past or present members of the Armed Forces of the United States and substantially all of the other members of which are individuals who are cadets or are spouses, widows, widowers, ancestors, or lineal descendants of past or present members of the Armed Forces of the United States or of

(C) no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual”; and

WHEREAS, Recently there he been cases that the Internal Revenue Service has been auditing individual posts and threatening to revoke tax exempt status of The American Legion posts due to significant annual increases in enrollment of the Sons of The American Legion program or otherwise greater than the 75% stipulation; and

WHEREAS, This calculation is based on individual posts and since the population of eligible descendants of The American Legion eligible members are not evenly distributed across the United States and may be unevenly clustered in certain regions of the country; and

WHEREAS, The fairest and most equable calculation should not be based on each post but rather on the percentage of the national organization or in other words the Sons of The American Legion program membership cannot exceed 75% of the total The American Legion membership at the national level; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion seek an amendment to Section 501(c)(19) of Title 26 U.S. Code by the 112th Congress to either remove the minimum percent of veterans in the post or to provide clarifying language that the minimum percentage be based upon the aggregate enrollments based on the entire national organization of the veterans service organization rather than on a local community-based post.

Approved as Amended

The following resolutions were recommended for *approval as amended*:

Resolution No. 176: Remove Bust of Joseph Stalin from the National D-Day Memorial**Origin: Virginia****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section II)****(As amended)**

WHEREAS, The National D-Day Memorial is a most fitting and superbly conceived and designed memorial whose purpose is to honor the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of the Allied Forces on D-Day, 6 June 1944; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Stalin is one of the most reviled totalitarian dictators in modern history, who was responsible for the deaths of millions of people, contributed to the start of World War II in Europe, established Communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe, and bears chief responsibility for the Cold War, which resulted in the deaths of American and Allied servicemen; and

WHEREAS, The placing of a bust of Stalin on a pedestal at the Memorial is seen as granting Stalin a place of honor, as having little if anything to do with the purpose of the Memorial, as honoring Stalin in the absence of statues honoring U.S. and Allied airmen and sailors (other than three busts of British commanders), as honoring Stalin in the absence of statues honoring any leaders of the other ten Allied nations whose flags fly at the Memorial between the American and British flags, as showing insensitivity toward Polish, Czech, and Slovak Allies whose countries were enslaved by Stalin after the war, as flying in the face of history which has seen countries tearing down—not erecting—statues of Stalin, as bringing to the Memorial and the area the notorious distinction of probably having the only bust or statue of Stalin in America, and as having potential adverse consequences for visitation to the Memorial, for financial and volunteer support for the Memorial, and for the U.S. Government's consideration of taking over the Memorial; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion feels it is inappropriate to display the bust of Joseph Stalin in any location at the National D-Day Memorial and that the National Headquarters so inform the Board of Directors of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.

Resolution No. 272: Support Vietnam Veterans Memorial Education Center**Origin: Tennessee****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section II)****(As amended)**

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, also known as The Wall, it is the most visited Memorial in our Nation's Capital; and

WHEREAS, Engraved upon the wall are the names of 58,261 heroes – 1,294 from Tennessee – who valiantly gave their lives in service to our Country during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, The dedication of the Wall nearly 30 years ago began the process of remembrance, healing and honoring those who served and died in the longest war in the U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, Both Houses of the U.S. congress have unanimously authorized the building of a new underground education center across from the Wall; and

WHEREAS, The education center at the Wall will tell the stories behind the names on the Wall and draw attention to the sacrifices made by those who defend our freedom; and

WHEREAS, The education center will feature the wall of faces – digital images of the 58,261 casualties memorialized on the wall – and the hall of heroes – representative images of those who have served in other wars – as well as an artifacts collection of more than 100,000 items left at the wall and related educational material on site and on line; and

WHEREAS, The Education Center will share and celebrate core values of duty, loyalty, respect, service, honor, courage and integrity; and

WHEREAS, The stories and values that will be showcased at the education center must be preserved and shared with future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1,2, 2010, That The American Legion endorses the concept of the Vietnam Memorial Education Center on the National Mall in Washington, DC which Congress authorized to be constructed without the use of federal funds for either the planning, design, construction or sustainment of the Education Center and we further support the basic ideals of this worthy project without any financial obligation to The American Legion in order to commemorate the sacrifices of those who served, those who fell and those who wait at home.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Internal Affairs

Resolution No. 4 (DC): Rededicate The District Of Columbia World War I Memorial As A National And District Of Columbia World War I Memorial

Resolution No. 38 (OH): Creation Of An American Legion Men’s League

Resolution No. 154 (MD): Rededicate The District Of Columbia World War I

Memorial As A National And District Of Columbia World War I Memorial

Resolution No. 192 (TX): Male Spouse Eligibility In The Sons Of The American Legion

Resolution No. 238 (MO): Designate Liberty Memorial In Kansas City Missouri As The National World War I Memorial

Resolution No. 240 (MN): Study Impact On Female Membership Caused By Lack Of Programs For Spouses

Resolution No. 249 (IL): Establish World War I Monument Committee

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Convention

Resolution No. 230 (OH): City Of Cincinnati Offers To Host The 2016 National Convention

Resolution No. 244 (MI): City Of Detroit Offers To Host The 2017 National Convention

Referred to the Standing Committee on Emblem Sales**Resolution No. 203 (NJ): Recognition Of The Official Designer Of The POW/MIA Flag****Referred to the Standing Commission on Magazine****Resolution No. 200 (MX): Magazine Delivery In Foreign Departments****Referred to the Standing Committee on Membership & Post Activities****Resolution No. 264 (IL): Department Service Officers Information On Dues Notices****Referred to the Standing Committee on Trophies, Awards & Ceremonials****Resolution No. 229 (IA): Retirement Of The POW/MIA Flag As Part Of The POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony****Received and Recorded****Resolution No. 34 (MT): Endorsement Of Mervin G. Gunderson For National Vice Commander****Resolution No. 243 (CO): Endorsement Of Eleanor Allen For National Historian****Resolution No. 248 (NE): Endorsement Of Robert B. Craig For National Historian Rejected****Resolution No. 66 (CA): Honor And Remember Flag****Resolution No. 274 (CA): National Parks Discount**

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

CHAIRMAN BESSON: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Illinois, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: A motion and a second. Any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? The report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs is adopted.

The chair recognizes the Honorable Vincent Gaughn, of Illinois, chairman of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Vincent Gaughan (IL), Chairman**

Commander Clarence Hill, National Officers of The American Legion, brother and sister Legionnaires, friends and guests. First I want to report some good news. This is the last report of the day.

To the 92nd National Convention of The American Legion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 29, 30, 31, 2010.

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 29, 2010 in the Gilpatrick Room, 1st Floor of the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee. Committee Liaison Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD) called the roll and announced that 42 members of the Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was authorized by the members and is hereby 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.

Vincent M. Gaughan (IL) was elected Chairman and Cathy J. Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary. Thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of all the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, the National Constitution and By-Laws and the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion, which include the Standing Rules of Convention, 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 assigned to the Committee, which was done.

A motion was made by Charles Mills (NY) and seconded by Alan C. Lennox (CA) that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting, but not actual delegates to the Convention Committee 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 with regards to the requirements for consideration of resolutions to amend the Constitution of The American Legion, and the details as stated in the Standing Committee's report, he would rule out of order those resolutions which did not meet those requirements.

The Chair further announced that he was in agreement with the Report of the Standing Committee on the Constitution and By-laws.

Resolution No. 1 (NEC) was considered. The Chair announced that this resolution was in order.

Les Howe (VT) made a motion, seconded by Art Besa (OK) that the committee adopt Resolution No. 1 (NEC). There was a comprehensive discussion concerning department responsibilities, credit card service fees, and transmission of dues to departments and posts. It was clarified that the resolution assigns responsibility for credit card service fees to the national organization. Motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 1 provides:

Resolution No. 1: Direct Payment Of Renewal Dues**Origin: National Executive Committee****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments**

WHEREAS, The American Legion has considered allowing members to renew membership through use of a credit card over the internet or other media with the National Organization transmitting the appropriate amount of dues for the Post and Department to Department, so that the Department may transfer the appropriate amount of dues to the Post; and

WHEREAS, The National Organization has tested this idea in the Departments of Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland and Wisconsin and confirmed the validity of the concept; and

WHEREAS, The National Constitution of The American Legion contains no such authorizing provision; and

WHEREAS, Article X, Section 3 of the National Constitution of The American Legion provides:

“The annual dues shall be collected by each Post and transmitted promptly through the Department to the National Treasurer. Departments are designated agents for collection for The American Legion with respect to such annual dues and upon the receipt thereof shall remit them promptly to The American Legion. In no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by a Department and the remittance thereof to The American Legion exceed thirty (30) days;” and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is not responsible for the actions of independent, autonomous Posts and Departments, but plaintiff’s lawyers are known to argue, incorrectly with regards to The American Legion, that “control follows the money” which argument could cause the organization to be held in various cases through trial as opposed to getting out on summary judgment, as currently happens; and

WHEREAS, The solution to this problem appears to be an amendment to the Corporate Charter to confirm the independence of Departments and Posts; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been approved by the National Executive Committee which recommends it to the National Convention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The National Constitution be amended so that Section 3 of Article X of the National Constitution become Section:

3.1 “The annual dues shall be collected by each Post and transmitted promptly through the Department to the National Treasurer. Departments are designated agents for collection for The American Legion with respect to such annual dues and upon the receipt thereof shall remit them promptly to The American Legion. In no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by a Department and the remittance thereof to The American Legion exceed thirty (30) days;” and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a new section 3.2 be added to Article X of the National Constitution as follows:

3.2 “The annual dues shall be collected in such alternate method(s) as determined by the National Executive Committee from time to time and thereafter communicated to the Departments for communications to the

Posts provided that (a) in no instance shall the National Organization or the Departments be empowered to retain, or withhold, more than each ones published amount of per capita dues; (b) in no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by the National Organization and the remittance thereof to the Departments exceed thirty (30) days; and (c) any such alternative method shall be in addition to and not in substitution for method 3.1 above;” and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion petition Congress and President of the United States to amend the corporate charter of The American Legion (36 USC Section 21701 et seq) to change subsection 8 of section 21704 to subsection 9 and that a new subsection 8 to Section 21704 be added as follows:

(8) “The National Organization may provide guidance and leadership to the individual Departments and Posts, but in no instance does the National Organization control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of the independent, autonomous Departments and Posts;” and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the changes to the National Constitution shall not take effect until the U.S. Government has amended the Corporate Charter of The American Legion as referenced herein.

Resolution No. 63 (WA) was next considered.

The Chair ruled Resolution No. 63 (WA) in order. This resolution would open up eligibility to all since April 6, 1917. This would destroy the deductibility of gifts or donations to The American Legion, under 26 USC 170 (c) (3) (part of the US Tax Code), which limits such deductions to those who donate to war time veterans organizations. A better approach would be to amend Section 170 (c) (3) to delete the war time requirement. This resolution would abolish the true nature of our organization.

Ron Roberts (MS) made a motion to reject Resolution 63 (WA), seconded by Charles Armbruster, Jr. (DE). Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 65 (CA) was next considered.

The Chair ruled Resolution No. 65 (CA) out of order because it does not provide for amending Article IV, Section 1 and Article XIII, Section 2 of the National Constitution. Hence, if the change was made as proposed by this resolution, the organized corporate documents would be in conflict unless the provisions of Article XVII of the National Constitution were used. The use of this saving provision would disenfranchise the National Convention and the delegates’ right to vote on the exact language. Also, it still does not change the National Constitution of The American Legion Auxiliary.

Joe Sims (GA) made a motion to affirm the ruling of the chair, seconded by Harold Burson (LA). Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 202 (NJ) was next considered. The Chair ruled Resolution No. 202 (NJ) out of order because it does not include the American Legion Auxiliary, does not include the language for the charter and the charter provision actually conflicts with the constitutional provision. In fact, it urges Congress to act without specifying the language for the convention to approve.

Art Besa (OK) made a motion to affirm the ruling of the chair, seconded by Kenneth Fletcher (NH). Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 237 (MO) was next considered. The Chair ruled said resolution in order because the language for the convention to vote on was present. This resolution

would change the Preamble to the National Constitution by changing the reference from “The Great Wars” to “All Great Wars.” The change is not only unnecessary but it also raises the question of what is a great war, and results in substantial and unintended financial consequences at all levels of the organization because of the need to reprint documents and change plaques. Hence, it is counterproductive.

Bill Gooden (VA) made a motion to reject Resolution No 237 (MO). Rex McBee (TN) seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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 Convention Committee. Doug Goodwin (MO) made the motion and it was seconded by Les Howe (VT). The motion carried.

Charemon Dunham (SD) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chairman. The motion was seconded by Ed Barry (CT).

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.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GAUGHAN: Mr. Commander, as a delegate to this 92nd Convention of The American Legion, I move the adoption of this report and Resolution No. 1 from the National Executive Committee be adopted. ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign, and we need two-thirds to approve it. All opposed? Report of the Constitutional Amendments is adopted.

National Adjutant, have you any announcements?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: I have no announcements.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: There are no announcements. Sergeant-At-Arms.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS MARTEL: With our flag of our nation is place, hand-salute. Two.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The time is 15:45. The Convention will stand in recess until 08:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

**PROCEEDINGS
THIRD DAY**

Thursday, September 2, 2010

...At 8:30 a.m. the delegates assembled for the third day of the 92nd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

**Call to Order
Clarence E. Hill, Florida, National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ladies and gentlemen, as we begin our program, please give a round of applause for Peter Ole. (*Applause*) The Convention will come to order. Sergeant-at-Arms.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS MARTEL: The Colors of our country in place. Hand-salute, Two.

...At this time the delegation stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.
For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain John Beaver of Mobile, Alabama.

**Invocation
John L. Beaver, Alabama, National Chaplain**

Before I start this prayer, I ask all of you to keep in your prayers the folks on the east coast as Hurricane Earl passes through, that no one will be injured or harmed.

We implore Your blessings O God, on this assembly and upon all who call upon You by name. Whatever our circumstances or whatever our task, we ask that Your spirit would fill our hearts with those divine gifts You have prepared for us. May Your grace to us find expression in our compassion to others, and may Your mercy to us encourage our good will in all we do. As we face the demands of our nation, grant us Your peace and strength to solve the problems we face today. Bless our leaders and all those in authority to keep us in Your good graces that together in harmony and understanding we will do Your will. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Please remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Cover. The Convention is now in session.

**Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award
Clarence E. Hill, Florida, National Commander**

We begin this morning by recognizing outstanding achievement in journalism that had a positive impact on a community. The American Legion Fourth Estate Award is difficult to earn. It is a testament to the demanding nature of the competition, and the quality of the entries.

This year's award goes to the *American Bar Association Journal* for publishing "The Cemetery Sea," an article that chronicled the sinking of the *Alaska Ranger*, a mackerel boat that perished 120 miles off the Alaska coast during a severe storm. The report highlighted the role that the legal and regulatory system played in allowing the disaster to

happen. It garnered the attention of decision makers in Washington, and issued a stark warning that the safety of our fishing fleets needs to be improved. Accepting the award on behalf of the *ABA Journal* is its editor and publisher, Edward A. Adams. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "2010 Fourth Estate Award for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism, is presented to ABA Journal for the investigative report that uncovered safety systems deficiencies that contributed to sinking of the Alaska Ranger, "The Cemetery Sea." Presented at the 92nd National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

MR. ADAMS: On behalf of my colleagues, it's an honor to accept this award, particularly because the *American Bar Association Journal* is the first association publication to ever win it. Also, we owe a debt of gratitude to the people that we wrote about, the crew of the *Alaska Ranger*. They had a sense of mission; a sense of honor, and a bond of friendship that survived even through death. It's really they that you honor today. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before I introduce our next guest, please watch the video screens.

... At this time the delegation viewed videos. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Our next guest is a veteran of the U.S. Army and a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He currently serves as the division vice president of public relations for Sears. His responsibilities include leading Sears' Heroes at Home program, which provides support to servicemembers, veterans, and their families through joint efforts with various nonprofit organizations, including Rebuilding Together and the USO. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Tom Aiello. *(Applause)*

**Address: Tom Aiello District, Vice President
Sears Holdings Management Corporation**

Thank you very much. You know, when I walked up here, I bet you didn't think you'd hear me say that I'm older than you. You know, Sears will celebrate its 125th anniversary next year as The American Legion turns ninety-three. Two great American organizations that have touched the lives of so many millions of people, Sears and The American Legion share a rich heritage important in the place of our country.

We also share a common lineage and honor with respect to the military. General Robert Wood was one of the most important and influential people in the history of Sears. He served as chairman from 1939 to 1954. Under his leadership, Sears shifted from catalog sales into department stores. This focus on the military lives on today as Sears employs over 30,000 military veterans, some 1,500 still in the Guard and Reserve. So you might argue that The American Legion and Sears have some of the richest heritage in America. But despite all this history, it means very little to the veteran or military family in need. You see, we also have in common the desire to serve, the desire to help, and to act.

Four days ago I was in New Orleans helping rebuild 50 homes on the 5th anniversary of Katrina. One quarter of the homes that Sears was rebuilding, belong to military veterans. One home in particular belonged to the Hansel family. Now, the Hansel family had four military veterans in one family; one Army and three Navy. Two months ago this

family lost George, Sr., a Vietnam veteran to diabetes at the local VA hospital there. Now, before George died, he learned that Sears was going to help rebuild his home, which gave him great comfort knowing his family was going to be taken care of. This family touched me in a deep way, because his story hit so close to home for me. You see, 13 days ago I lost my own father. The character and strength of that Hansel family really represents why Sears is out there honoring the sacrifice of so many military families that have given so much for us all.

Sears has raised over \$20 million now in the last three years, and helped over 51,000 military families. And as you here in The American Legion know those numbers sound impressive, but behind those numbers are real people in need. You see, I had my spinal cord fused as result of injuries in a Humvee accident while I was serving in the Army. My right arm was completely paralyzed before I went in for an emergency surgery. While the injury was service-related, the VA has declined my claim, and that's where you step in, The American Legion. The American Legion has helped me file an appeal earlier this year. I'm told this process can take over three years, and it's enough for any veteran to get frustrated with the process. But The American Legion is there to provide me the guidance and encouragement I need to continue moving along, and my family and I thank you for that support. *(Applause)*

So both Sears and The American Legion share this great heritage, this great history of helping others, but at this point in our history we also share something else in common. Right now we have a unique opportunity to innovate who we are to be more relevant and to help younger generations. We must reinvent who we are, but also stay true to our culture. You know, I've seen some of that change with The American Legion and how quickly The American Legion could respond and partner with Sears. You had volunteers spring into action in our stores. In the end, you have over 1,000 new members in your ranks because of our partnership, and Sears raised over \$70,000 to help The American Legion veteran employment programs. Yes, I've seen The American Legion change for the better, and I must confess that I'm not just rooting for you — *(Mr. Aiello puts on Legion cap)* I am counting on you. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I would also mention for those of you that attended the Dryhooch Cafe ceremony here, Sears was a partner with Rebuilding Together and The American Legion in making that happen.

The United States had many loyal allies during the Vietnam War and it's important that we, as a nation, never turn our backs on those who fought alongside us. With this in mind, our next guest is a president of "Save the Montagnard People." He is a Vietnam veteran and has dedicated himself to compelling the U.S. government to keep its promises to these great friends. Please welcome Mr. George Clark. *(Applause)*

**Address: George Clark, President
Save the Montagnard People**

Good morning. I'll say one thing; the Legion puts on one hell of a show. Being an old boy from Platte County, Missouri, I didn't even see this many people growing up. I'm here today like our commander said, to plead for our allies. In 1967 I went to Vietnam. I was a young Green Beret. I just knew we were going to win the war all by ourselves. And the first mission I was on, I was so doggoned confused I don't think I even fired a shot.

But there was some Montagnards with me. Now, I looked at my team daddy, who was training me, we were an alert unit. I said, "What are these people about?" He said, "They're about keeping you alive."

Well, I stayed on. In 1968 I went to the concept of Mike Force. It was mobile gorilla units of all the Montagnard infantry, with two Americans with each Montagnard company, or a recon from one or two Americans. I now stayed with those folks all the way to 1970, and they kept me alive. They saved countless Americans in the fighting. *(Applause)*

What brought the message home the most to me was on April Fool's Day 1970 I was actually down in the Mekong Delta working with some Navy PBRs. I had some Montagnards with me. We got in a gun little fight down there. I got hit twice. Actually I was about to get finished off when the Montagnards jumped on my body and took the bullets to keep me from being killed. You can't pay that back. So I dedicated my life ever since then to fight for these people.

Now, what are they doing for us today? Let's talk about the Montagnards. One, they're the only allies that never borrowed money from us. *(Laughter and applause)* They sacrificed 25 percent of their population in service to U.S. special forces and armed forces throughout the Vietnam War. Then to add insult to injury, when we pull off and left them, we told them keep fighting, we'll support you.

In 1975 there was almost eight million Montagnards left in Indochina. Today, there's less than seven hundred thousand. Talk about ethnic cleansing. It's an understatement. Two crimes they're guilty of: One, having been loyal to the United States. Two, being Christians. On December 7, 2002, we got 1,259 refugees out from a big riot that happened over there. So the Vietnamese wanted to teach them a lesson, so they went around and burned 57 Christian churches to the ground throughout the Central Highlands. Physically crucified seven of the pastors. Most of the other pastors were hauled off to prison or shot.

Now, you would think if I was in their shoes I might be a little ticked off at Americans. Instead, they come here, all 8,000 Montagnards which is all we have in America, and the first thing they tell their kids when they graduate from high school, "Do you have a job? Are you going to college? We owe this country. You will go serve." There's 128 Montagnards in Iraq and Afghanistan as we speak today. *(Applause)*

So what do we need? Everybody needs money. That's all I'm here about. We need help. We have 139 Montagnards that have been stuck in a UNHCR camp in Cambodia for over three years. There used to be 560 of them there. The rest have been spirited away, disappeared, floating down some other river.

We want them here. They have relatives here. I've got a young kid Li Bonya, he calls me Uncle. He's a young Montagnard. He's on his second tour — well, he's in Afghanistan. He was in Iraq, and it's his relatives in that camp. You're good enough to go fight for us, but not good enough for us to bring your relatives here. That's just plain wrong, and that's not America is about, folks. *(Applause)*

In March I spoke to a bunch of you commanders in D.C. In seven days after speaking to you guys, you got three congressmen so shook up that they started hollering, "Let's help the Montagnards." We hadn't got a congressman to even let us buy him a cup of coffee in two years. You guys get it done in seven days. Think what you can do if every one of your chapters sent a letter to the congressmen in your respective state and say, "Hey, let's save these people."

We passed a law called the Lautenberg Amendment in 1986 that guaranteed the Montagnard tribesmen the right to come to America for their service with the United States. And then we turn around and didn't live up to it. That's why there's only 8,000 Montagnards here today. The smallest minority in America.

So, please, what we need: Contact your congressman. We're fighting for HR-1969 in the House, which is the human rights bill that covers the Montagnards and the Vietnamese, and S-1159 in the Senate.

Don't let the Senate Foreign Relations Committee kill this one. Ask Mr. Kerry, "Please pass this one this time. Do not kill it again." But that's why I need your help. If we could get the attention raised to save these people, we're not asking to bring them all over here. They don't really want to come over here. But if you're a Christian and you're in Vietnam and you're a Montagnard, you haven't got too many options.

They don't ask for welfare. The first ones that came, we tried to give them food stamps. They said, "What's this?" They wouldn't take it. They said, "We have to earn what we do." Consequently, Greensboro, North Carolina was losing all its squirrels because they had to have food, so they were snaring squirrels and stuff like that. Finally, the only way we got them to take any food stamps, we said, "It's back pay. We shorted you on your pay back in '69. This is your back pay."

They don't believe in welfare. They don't believe in a handout. They like a hand up to give them a chance to get started, and they give us back. They make the finest American citizens in the world.

In closing, this is Mr. Y Siu Hlong. He's one of the Montagnard leaders. Actually, he's the Gandhi of the Montagnard people. (*Standing applause*) Everybody in our organization is a volunteer. Nobody draws a dime. Everybody is a bunch of retired people, men, and young people. But one of our members in Pennsylvania has racked up 23 cars. He gives them to him because his car has been hit on every single corner. If a Montagnard comes to this country and has to learn how to drive, they use Y Siu's car. If a Montagnard has to go to the hospital, they use Y Siu's car for the ambulance. So this car has hundreds of thousands of miles and every corner is beat to pieces. They give him a nice new car. He comes down to the Montagnard land; he's in the old beat up car. We say, "Y Siu, you can drive the other car." "No, there's a family. They got a job. They needed the car." He's done this to us 23 times. (*Laughter and applause*)

Y Siu was the first Montagnard to get U.S. citizenship. He's also the first Montagnard to graduate from the University of North Carolina. And he pushes these kids at no end to college. He tells them, "You're not going to sit around and be lazy in America. America needs you to be good." And he tutors children. He teaches four ESL classes a day, not just to the Montagnards, but anybody that's new to this country that needs to learn English. He teaches them. That is what Montagnards do.

So, please, help me. Get the letters out. Tell the Congress, "Get those people out of those camps." Make some arrangements. The Montagnards will no longer be harassed because of their religion, and they have a right to live like all the rest of us do. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

If I could, we have an award we developed, I'll make it quick. A few years ago we had a photographer, a guy out of Southeast Asia, a Frenchman, and he was over there when the Montagnards were fighting their way out. The Montagnards didn't quit fighting in 1975. Most people don't know that. They continued fighting, and the last battalion, this battalion, came out in 1998. When the Khmer Rouge fell and the UN troops were moving

onto Vietnam, they still had their M-16s that we issued them. They wouldn't give them up to the UN. So, they had to fly a military attaché officer to Northern Cambodia to accept the return of the weapons.

We made this award now. It's called the Freedom Fighters Award. The chiefs wanted to call it that. With what you all did for us in March with your YouTube and your letters, the tribal council voted The American Legion to be the recipient of the 2010 Freedom Fighters Award. So, Commander Hill, would you receive that on behalf of us. And by the way, the Legion is the first service oriented group to help us, out of all the others. Thank you all. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: For a number of years now, The American Legion has been engaged in a battle to save our war memorials from groups such as the ACLU that are determined to use the courts to remove any and all religious symbols from society. A short time after veterans enjoyed a great victory in the Supreme Court a few months vandals stole "that old rugged cross" from the Mojave Desert Memorial. This just shows how desperate our opponents are on this issue. The legal battles continue, but we are fortunate to have organizations like the Liberty Institute on our side, an organization that knows the law and understands our Constitution. With us today is an Army Reserve veteran and the director of litigation for the Liberty Institute. Please welcome Hiram Sasser. (*Applause*)

**Address: Hiram Sasser, Director of Litigation
Liberty Institute**

Thanks for having us. You guys probably don't know this, the hardest job at this convention are the folks that are back there trying to type and keep up with everything. And I gave them a prepared speech, but I'll probably deviate quite a bit from it, so, if you see somebody walking around and their fingers are shaking, and they're kind of haggard, that's those folks that are doing that job to make sure that the words are up on that screen, and they're doing a great job.

One more thing before I get started on my prepared remarks. I just want to tell you guys that there's something special about the Legion that I just want to share with you. I'm a new member, but this is something, I don't know if people tell you guys a lot, but you know, most people think that the Legion is a veterans service organization, and that's what you are, but you guys are very outwardly focused. You're very others-focused. You put a lot of other people ahead of yourselves, and it's amazing how that works.

You guys already served this country; you've done your part, but yet here you are, you're still here, and I've met some of you guys and you've been coming to these conventions and been part of the Legion and active members for decades. And your service continues on. And I tell you that the America that you fight for, you continue to fight for daily in many, many ways through your continued service. And really, you are the leading veterans service organization in that way, not because of your service to just your fellow veterans, but your service to this country and all of the issues and the things that you guys stand for. So I really appreciate that. It's very humbling to be a part of that.

Now, I will tell you that it has been our privilege to represent the Legion in important cases involving our enduring symbols of courage, sacrifice, and remembrance, our nation's veterans memorials. You know, not all of our nation's veterans memorials

have religious imagery, but that hasn't actually stopped those who desecrate even those memorials too. I don't know if you remember, when in September of 2007, someone even vandalized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Some folks put together care packages and greet troops at the airport when they return home. You know, some they just don't care one way or the other, and I guess some folks vandalized or tear down veterans memorials. It's sad but true.

I'm going to tell you that I recall back six years ago when I had a conversation with Phil Onderdonk, your national judge advocate over here, about veterans memorials coming under attack. I want you to know that your Legion was the first veterans organization that stood up and said we are not going to sit on the sidelines while they tear down our veterans memorials.

I want to tell you that the attorneys at the Liberty Institute, we thank you for allowing us to serve you, and represent you in these pivotal Supreme Court cases involving veterans memorials. We represent the Legion for free in the sense that we don't charge the Legion for services, but you all as members of the Legion have already paid greatly for the Constitution that we defend at the courthouse, and your service to our country is indeed payment in full.

I'm here to update you today on some important issues involving the veterans' memorial cases, the most important of which is the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial. I would like to play a video you may have seen before, but I want to refresh your recollection of the events that have taken place up to this point, before I begin with my situation report that will follow. So with that, I think we could start the video. ... *At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

In 2004, The American Legion was the first organization to stand up for veterans memorials. That's a VFW memorial that they put up in 1934, but if hadn't been for you guys, if it hadn't been for Phil Onderdonk, hadn't been for your leadership, they never would have had a voice either at the U.S. Supreme Court. You guys started the ball rolling because you guys had foresight, you had leadership and you had commitment to an understanding that our veterans memorials mean something, and you had it long before everybody else, and I thank you for that, and the VFW thanks you for that as well.

Now, our brief we filed at the U.S. Supreme Court, the one in which the Legion and the other veterans groups stood for preserving the memorial was the only brief to tell that story. It was the only one to tell the story of the veterans. It was cited no less than twelve times by the United States Supreme Court. I want you to imagine that. We're not even a party to the case. We are acting as a friend of the court, to advise the court on the veterans' perspective of this case, and they cited your brief twelve times. I think it's absolutely fantastic. They totally relied on everything you had to say. (*Applause*) We won that case; you won that case five to four. You won five four. Can you imagine it was that close? I just want you to soak that in for a second. There were four justices on the Supreme Court who voted in favor of tearing down this 75 year old veterans' memorial.

I want to tell you that towards the end of World War I, Europe, Canada, and Australia and the United States experienced fantastic losses of life, just tremendous losses of life. You know, one of the things we did in America that was different, is that we had been honoring for quite some time prior to World War I the selfless service and sacrifice to our veterans in the form of memorials. Europe wasn't actually used to that. They had memorials that mainly honored great battles, commemorated great battles. They didn't honor their individual veterans, but when they lost almost an entire generation of males,

they began to want to have memorials to honor those veterans. Those memorials all throughout Europe and in the United States are traditionally in the shape of a cross. In England and in Canada they are called the Cross of Sacrifice. They have a sword emblazoned on them. Here in the United States you will find at Arlington Cemetery there are two World War I memorials, both are free standing crosses. In fact, one of them, the Canadian Cross of Sacrifice donated to us by the Canadian government to honor the Americans who served in the Canadian Army prior to America's entry in the Great War, is two and a half stories tall. It dominates the surrounding landscape and it casts a shadow across the street of the amphitheater wherein lies the tomb with an unknown soldier bearing the slogan, the etching on the side of the tomb, "Herein lies a soldier known but to God." I won't be surprised some day if we see a case that wants to sandblast the God portion off of that sacred tomb.

Now, I'm going to tell you this memorial that we're fighting for has had two caretakers since 1934. Riley Bembry, World War I veteran, and Henry Sandoz from 1984 to the present. I'm going to tell you something personal about Henry. Henry had a heart attack before and he's not sure how long he's going to last, and he called me, he was in great despair because of what I'm about to tell you. You see, we won the case, but Henry had to call me to let me know — I'm going to advance some slides here to let you know. This is out in the Mojave Desert. Here's your veterans gathered in 1934. There's Riley. Here's Henry. There's the cross wrapped in a bag as if it is some sort of inappropriate magazine. There it is out there.

Henry had to tell me something that was very disturbing. I'm going to get to it. The cross was stolen. We won the case five to four. We get to have our memorial, and it was stolen in the middle of the night by somebody who didn't like the decision. It's not there anymore. Henry was very distraught and he wanted to know what was going to happen. And I made him a promise, a promise I have to now keep, and then I'm going to ask you to keep with me is that I promised him that the memorial will be returned and it will stand, and I will personally guarantee that, and take care of that for the rest of my life, and pass it on to somebody else. *(Applause)*

And so I'm going to ask that you join me in doing that, because it's going to be a tall task. I will tell you one other thing that's — I'm going to deviate a little bit here because this is important. The only person that seems to have the power to restore that veterans memorial to that location is the President of the United States. So, we sent a letter, I mean we, is that your commander and the commander of other veterans service organizations signed a letter to the President asking him to restore the veterans memorial.

It was stolen on May 11th of this year. It was on June 10th when we sent the letter to the President, and we haven't heard a response yet. Which is good, because we haven't heard a no; that's good. But it's important that we get a response, especially before Veterans Day, as all of you know, Veterans Day has a very special tie to World War I veterans.

I'm going to go back on the slide just one more piece here, just to tell you the relevance of this veterans memorial today. There were some soldiers in Iraq who came out to the veterans memorial. There they are. There's a photo of them. And I'm sorry, Afghanistan. These are guys are from Afghanistan who heard about the memorial and they wanted to come out, and they held a ceremony out there to honor their fallen comrades, out in the middle of the desert. When they got back to Fort Polk, Louisiana, the first thing they did was get in their truck. They didn't even unload their gear. They

had been in Afghanistan for a year. They get in their truck and they drive from Fort Polk, Louisiana to the Mojave Desert to read the names of their fallen comrades from their unit. And there we are out there in the middle of the desert.

I'm going to tell you one final story. There have been a lot of heroes here in this case. I don't know if you guys realized this, but we commissioned a poll to see where America stood on your veterans memorial. Ninety percent of Americans want that memorial put back up. Ninety percent. (*Applause*)

Five percent opposed, and I think the other five percent didn't know what a veterans memorial was, so we've got some work to do. Not only that, but the *Washington Post* did a story on this veterans memorial that honored veterans, honored your service, honored this memorial, and I don't care what you think about the *Washington Post*, they actually sent a reporter out there. I drove with him. Actually it's a funny story, I had to tell him that, "Look down, you don't have any cell coverage, do you?" He said, "No." I said, "It's taken us like three hours to get out here in the middle of the desert." "Yeah." I said, "There's no hospitals out there." He said, "Right. Right." I said, "There's rattlesnakes crawling all over that memorial site, so if you get bit by one of those rattlesnakes, you're going to die in my rental car, and I don't know if they'll take it back after that. So be careful." And what's funny is that Justice Alito actually in his opinion supporting your veterans memorial said that he figures that more rattlesnakes are probably offended by that memorial than people, and I agree with him on that.

So where we stand now is that we are preparing to intervene into the case to make sure that that veterans memorial gets restored back to its original form, a simple white cross, that's in the spirit of all the veterans memorials from World War I, from all over the world, from New Zealand to the Czech Republic, even the Axis powers honor their war dead from World War I with a lone solitary cross.

I want to thank you. I thank you. It's our privilege to serve you as your attorneys. It's our privilege to be able work with your leadership. If you guys hadn't of stood up, no one — I'm going to tell you this now, this case would not have been won. I believe that because of the foresight that you guys had to stand up for veterans memorials in leading the charge back in 2004 when no one dared think that a veterans memorial would be torn down, you guys stood in the gap, and I really appreciate that. And it makes me proud to be a member of The American Legion.

And my parting word is encouragement. Those young guys from Afghanistan, they appreciate what you stood for, and in standing for that memorial for them, and you got a new generation of folks who have served, and who will continue to serve this country, following your fantastic lead. Please continue to lead. Continue to be out front. We appreciate you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The chair recognizes Doc Simon of Vermont, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
Melvin 'Doc' Simon, Vermont, Chairman**

At 8:30 a.m. Sunday, August 29, 2010, 48 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in the Phoenix Convention Center,

Milwaukee. Mr. Melvin “Doc” Simon (VT) was elected Chairman and Todd White (WY) was appointed Secretary.

At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the committee chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolutions and to sign the report on behalf of the delegates. A total of 35 resolutions were assigned to the convention committee on foreign relations. Following this initial meeting, an Ad Hoc Administration Convention Committee met in the Empire Ballroom of the Hilton Milwaukee City Center to consider the resolutions that had been assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

The Ad Hoc Committee report contains resolutions that will, in conjunction with resolutions previously adopted, provide and an effective viable foreign relations program for the American Legion. This program will fully support a strong dynamic US 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.

General Foreign Policy

Approved

Resolution No. 61: Support for New JPAC Headquarters Facility and a Second Laboratory

Origin: Vermont

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel still held captive, missing and unaccounted for from all of our nation’s wars; and

WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of the U.S. government to account as fully as possible for America’s missing veterans, including – if confirmed deceased – the recovery and identification of their remains when possible; and

WHEREAS, The headquarters and laboratory facilities currently utilized by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, are inadequate to handle existing requirements, now including the mission to recover and identify all possible US personnel unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, Korean War, Cold War and World War II; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes it imperative to retain the current structure of JPAC as a Command under US Pacific Command in which the Central Identification Laboratory is an integral part, but recognizes the need to expand identification capability and, therefore, supports development of a second JPAC laboratory in the continental United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That we support and commend Admiral Robert Willard, USN, Commander, US Pacific Command, for his commitment to construction of a new JPAC headquarters in Hawaii, including a state-of-the-art laboratory, to begin in FY 11 and be completed in FY 12; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the US Congress to fully fund this US Navy military construction project and development of a second laboratory to ensure that those who serve our nation – past, present and future – are returned and accounted for as fully as possible; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion renews its longstanding commitment to the goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for all U.S. military and designated civilian personnel missing from our nation’s wars.

Resolution No. 73: POW/MIA Policies

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Many Americans are reported as missing in action or otherwise unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War and the war in Southeast Asia; 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 US 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 that there is still a probability of American POWs still being held in Indochina today; and

WHEREAS, Specific locations of alleged remains of US servicemen have now been identified by the US Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes US 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States of America and every member of the US Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those US servicemen who remain 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 US 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 Democratic People's Republic of 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 the Socialist Republic of 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 when neither is possible.

Resolution No. 76: Support for Foreign Exchange Education Programs

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The United States and Mexico, Central and South America are historic, regional 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 help reduce social, cultural and international barriers and promote good will and understanding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to increase financial and political support for existing international education exchange and scholarship programs, such as: the Fulbright, Gilman Programs and others offered through the Departments of State and Education, which will increase cooperative endeavors on all fronts to enhance the prosperity and security of those nations participating; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government to expand the number of scholarships for Mexico, Central America and South America, particularly for those highly qualified students, who lack funds to attend undergraduate and appropriate vocational-technical programs, provided said students promise to abide by the current or future immigration student visa policies, after completing their education or program requirements.

Resolution No. 77: The American Legion Global Trade Policies**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations****(As amended)**

WHEREAS, Continued escalation of import energy prices tied to America's unrelenting consumptions of foreign import goods has resulted with balance of trade deficits unheard of in our past history of world trading; and

WHEREAS, Last year's imbalance of over \$495 billion is another disturbing example of the economic trend that has contributed to the loss of over 5 million US-based manufacturing jobs including some related to our military and national security supplies since the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, It's a known fact China and other trade countries have purchased billions of dollars worth of US Government bonds, stock market shares, and individual companies with their windfall money from our trade deficit as a result of Congress approving the "World Free Trade" policy a number of years ago; and

WHEREAS, China and other trade countries have not adhered to the global trade rules initially agreed to in the treaty relating to import fees and tariffs resulting with below reasonable costs of the products in the US and higher prices of US products sold in their territories; and

WHEREAS, Revenues realized by other countries from these trade imbalances have resulted in greater purchasing power and the potential for foreign ownership of essential industries and corporations vital to our basic national security interests and infrastructure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress to reign in run-a-way trade deficits by pursuing the enforcement of the conditions of the trade negotiations made in good faith with these nations, and support the efforts of our trade negotiators and diplomatic officials to use every avenue available through the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to pursue our Nation's claims for fair trade practices.

Resolution No. 79: The American Legion Foreign Policy Objectives**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 US 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion believes that the following objectives should be incorporated into US foreign policy

in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy:

1. **Recognition that the US has great and multiple responsibilities as a leader of the Free World**
2. **Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture**
3. **Support for a global fight on multiple fronts to end the scourge of terrorism**
4. **Support for democracy and human rights in other countries when such is consistent with US national interests and national power**
5. **Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share**
6. **Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve US national security**
7. **Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles which may be used by terrorists, terrorist organizations, communists or aggressor nations**
8. **Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking**
9. **Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with US sovereignty and serve US national interests**
10. **Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices**
11. **Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of US foreign policy as envisioned in the US Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding**
12. **Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect US vital national interests world-wide.**

Resolution No. 81: Central America's Democracy Promotion

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the U. S. government to continue economic aid to friendly, democratic Central American nations which are seeking to develop democratic societies with market economies; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends the U. S. Government provide minimal amounts of military aid while urging nations in the Central

American region to adopt the model of Costa Rica and Panama, disbanding military forces and relying solely on police forces for internal security, thus freeing funds for development and contributing to peaceful relations in the region.

Resolution No. 207: Support for Increased Personnel and Funding

Origin: New Jersey

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting for US personnel still held captive, missing and unaccounted for from all of our nation's wars; and

WHEREAS, personnel and funding for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) have not been increased at a level commensurate with the expanded requirement to obtain answers on Americans unaccounted for from the Vietnam War and earlier wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the US government to account as fully as possible for America's missing veterans, including – if confirmed deceased – the recovery of their remains when possible; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion deeply appreciates Vietnam's 2009 proposal to expand the pace and scope of POW/MIA accounting cooperation, including use of US Navy vessels for underwater operations; and

WHEREAS, The US Congress recently passed the Defense Authorization Bill mandating that the Department of Defense develop the capability to identify a minimum of 200 remains per year beginning in 2015; thus requiring additional funding and personnel to carry out strategies, programs and operations to resolve this issue and obtain answers for the POW/MIA families and our Nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, This accounting effort should not be considered complete until all reasonable actions have been taken to achieve the fullest possible accounting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That we remain steadfast in our commitment to the goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for all US military and designated civilian personnel missing from our nation's wars; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the US Government to respond positively to Vietnam's proposal to expand the POW/MIA accounting effort to enable reaching the fullest possible accounting as soon as possible, while their immediate family members are still living; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls upon Congress to immediately appropriate the funds necessary to increase personnel and resources of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory, and the Armed Forces DNA Laboratory, including specific authorization to augment assigned personnel when additional assets and resources are necessary.

Resolution No. 225: The American Legion's Policy on the United Nations**Origin: Iowa****Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, Countries with vast national budget surpluses are exploiting their working citizens for unfair economic leverage in the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, The current scale of assessments, which weighs and considers the "low per capita income" of each member nation, determines the funding structure of the United Nations is inequitable to the United States; 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to use American leverage to encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress encourage the United Nations to recalculate the assessment of nations' funding obligations to be based on the Gross National Product (GNP) of each country with no 'low per capita income' factor to distort the proportion of such obligations; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in the absence of such reform of the funding formula, then and only then the United Nations should adopt a weighted voting strength based on the funds contributed by each member nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That truly independent authority be provided to the Inspector General and ensure that United Nations agencies become subject to periodic, unannounced auditing, the finding of such audits to be reported to member nations; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That an equitable fiduciary relationship be established between the United States and the United Nations.

Resolution No. 226: The American Legion's Policy on Veterans Mail at Overseas Embassies**Origin: Iowa****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, As of January 1, 2010 the Department of State has said it cannot be responsible for the costs of mail going to military retirees, veterans, and their dependents at embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions; and

WHEREAS, This decision has adversely affected the quality-of-life of U.S. military retirees and veterans living abroad; and

WHEREAS, Specifically, this newly implemented policy will negatively impact veterans' personal lives in regards to potential prohibitive costs in addition to potential unreliable delivery of medications, compensation, absentee ballots, legal correspondence, along with dealings involving Federal, state and local government agencies among other important personal documents; and

WHEREAS, The change in policy is inconsistent with the Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual No. 14 FAM 761.3 (CT: LOG-59; 05-06-2009) which states that U.S. citizen employees, military retirees, and certain authorized contractors may use the diplomatic post office; and

WHEREAS, The Defense Department cannot pay the State Department for the delivery of retiree mail on the basis of the Anti-deficiency Act also known as 31 U.S.C. § 1341; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to change any applicable law that precludes the Department of Defense from being able to fund ICASS (International Cooperative Administrative Support Services) for the purpose of restoring mail benefits and privileges to military retirees, veterans, along with their dependents, and government employees at all U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions abroad.

Resolution No. 345: Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) Funding and Support**Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, WHINSEC is established in Public Law 106-398, Section 911 which amended Chapter 108 of Title 10, United States Code by adding a new section numbered as § 2166, to enhance security, and promote democratic values, and foster cooperation among the Organization of American States; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the primary missions cited above, the mission of WHINSEC also includes promoting respect for human rights; knowledge and understanding of U.S. customs and traditions; and training programs covering ethics, the rule of law, international treaties and conventions, international humanitarian law, the military role in democratic societies and civilian control of the military; and

WHEREAS, WHINSEC inherited an unfair and unfortunate reputation from its predecessor, the School of Americas (SOA) and such reputation is being generated by public response to media coverage of claims by a number of human-rights activist groups who accused SOA, without any specific cause and effect evidence, of conducting training that had influenced a total of eight military leaders from Central and South America to

commit serious human rights violations and crimes against their fellow citizens, long after leaving SOA and serving in much higher positions of responsibility in corrupted governments; and

WHEREAS, WHINSEC and DoD have long maintained that no school should be held accountable for the actions of only a minute number of its large number of its graduates; and

WHEREAS, American Legion representatives personally visited WHINSEC in June 2008 and observed ethics and human rights courses being conducted and met with students from South and Central America who expressed appreciation for the training in American alliances, cooperation, democracy, living in free societies and traditional American values; and

WHEREAS, During their WHINSEC visit, The American Legion representatives observed the personal relationships and bonding developed between and among the WHINSEC faculty, the international military students and US military students training along with the international military students and how effectively, therefore, WHINSEC is building the kind of partnering with other nations and their military, police and first responders that is deemed as an essential element of national power to use in the long fight against extremist terrorism; as well as a very cost effective way to build improved relationships and the international partnering needed for success in the prolonged war against extremist terrorism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) is adequately funded on the basis that hemispheric training, alliance building, and the sharing of knowledge among the Organization of American States is a vital interest to the U.S. in terms of the establishment of alliances, hemispheric cooperation and national security; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the Congress to ensure that such funds be approved and restricted for use for no purpose other than those included in the mission statement of Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC); and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress and the Secretary of Defense to establish similar institutes for other regions of the world where international mutual cooperation and alliance building can be beneficial to the vital interests of the U.S.

**Resolution No. 346: The American Legion's Support for World Press Freedom
Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS; In a democratic society the essential role of the press (News Media, print and electronic) to report on government activities, social movements, scientific developments and other significant events or breakthroughs are one of the basic pillars of our Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS; Such reporting and expression of speech help to ensure the transparency of the political and social systems that are in place and that an informed and educated public can more effectively participate politically; and

WHEREAS; The American Legion recognizes that oppressive and restrictive regimes around the world work to deter, manipulate or out-rightly deny their citizens to get unfettered information, or to allow free press to investigate and report in those countries; and

WHEREAS; Department of State and US Government News Media Organizations under the Broadcast Board of Governors such as: The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio Marti TV, and Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN), are essential news resources to countries; whose domestic news sources are oppressed or restricted; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the US Congress to designate and provide adequate and appropriate funding for the Department of State and US Government News Media Organizations under the Broadcast Board of Governors such as: The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio Marti TV, and the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN); and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports international press freedom and the protection of international journalists who report and investigate news throughout the world; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recognizes the great value and contributions these unique individuals have made to society and the global community to draw attention to oppression, injustice and tyrannies that threaten open and free societies around the world.

Resolution No. 347: Enhanced Funding for USAID

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The United States Department of State is the first line of defense of the nation in combating the myriad security threats that face America from abroad, and is charged with a number of missions that are vital to the nation; and

WHEREAS, These missions include: diplomatic relations with foreign nations, promoting peace and stability in regions of vital interest, bringing countries together to address global challenges, creating jobs at home by opening markets abroad, and helping developing nations establish stable economic environments that provide investment and export opportunities; and

WHEREAS, The State Department has been allocated little more than 1% of the total federal budget to accomplish many of these development tasks through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in contrast to the approximately 16% spent on defense; and

WHEREAS, In recent years the State Department's responsibilities have expanded enormously to include combating threats from terrorism, international crime, and narcotics trafficking, and that development programs through USAID are in the frontline to offer solutions and alternatives for emerging states to prevent their economic and democratic failure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion

supports policies and legislation that will enhance funding for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) within the Department of State and seeks use of that funding towards targeted states whose failure to provide for its people could result in the expansion of international terrorism; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That USAID because of its technical knowledge and expertise be given a greater role in the decision making process for the disbursement and usage of funds targeted for reconstruction in nations where our military presence has resulted in the need for infrastructure redevelopment.

Resolution No. 348: Expand Foreign Service Officer Corps

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Foreign Service Officers have the mission to assist developing countries in the national interest of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion maintains fervent support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests world-wide; and

WHEREAS, Foreign Service Officers remain as the primary force in bringing foreign policy objectives to fruition by acting as the essential link between strategic interests and U.S. Aid and International Development programs that achieve those interests; and

WHEREAS, in the current climate of international relations and the importance of reconstruction following U.S. combat operations, the Foreign Service Officer Corps needs to be increased to meet the ever growing challenges against American vital interests; and

WHEREAS, Due to the fact that the work of the Foreign Service Officer Corps often takes place in hostile and desolate environments, qualified military veterans should be given veterans' preference in the staffing of such positions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President, Congress, and the Department of State to significantly increase the number of Foreign Service Officers in its ranks; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the President, Congress, and the Department of State to implement a veterans' preference policy with the aim of recruiting more veterans into the Foreign Service Officer Corps whose experience may be an essential enhancement of the nation's diplomatic mission.

Resolution No. 349: Interagency Policy Coordination & Cooperation

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Since the formation of the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) in 1992, there has been a marked decrease in interagency coordination and cooperation on POW/MIA accounting matters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress of the United States, to call upon the National Security Council, Department of Defense and Department of State to re-energize

interagency coordination in support of criteria for unilateral actions by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam regarding POW/MIA issues.

Resolution No. 350: Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Funding

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) was forced to reduce field operations to account for missing US personnel in early 2006 due to a failure of the Defense Department to provide adequate funding; and

WHEREAS, The mission of JPAC has been expanded by Congress to include investigation and recovery operations dating back to and including unaccounted for WWII personnel and funding levels were not increased to meet this requirement; and

WHEREAS, The headquarters currently utilized by JPAC, previously the headquarters of the Central Identification Laboratory, prior to its merger with the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting to become JPAC, and is no longer capable of housing the expanded command nor the expanded laboratory requirements for forensic identifications; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion calls on the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) has at least \$62 million in operation funds; and, be it further

RESOLVED, An additional \$62 million in military construction funds be included in the Department of Defense (DoD) budget for FY2010 and a minimum of \$64 million per year for FY2011 through FY2012 for JPAC; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the Congress to ensure that such funds be approved and restricted for use for no purpose other than those included in the mission statement of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Hickam AFB, Hawaii.

Resolution No. 352: Support Secure Borders and War Against Drugs

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The borders that separate the United States, Canada and Mexico are relatively open; and

WHEREAS, There are rising concerns among US Officials about the deteriorating security situation which allows significant smuggling of drugs, illegal immigrants and other contraband across our borders; and

WHEREAS, The violence on the Mexican border has caused a change in smuggling from that area to other parts of our borders such as Canada and our sea coast; and

WHEREAS, The Mexican government while attempting to control the problem is not able to counter the cartels due to being out-manned and out-gunned; and

WHEREAS, The United States has the capability to provide assistance to the Mexican government that would allow them to reestablish control and eliminate the drug cartels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the President's and Congress's efforts to provide assistance and aid to the Canadian and Mexican governments to secure the borders separating the United States, Canada, and Mexico from trafficking illegal drugs across those borders.

Resolution No. 353: The American Legion's Cuban Policy

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The communist government of Cuba has ruined the Cuban economy, repressed the Cuban people, provided a base area for forces inimical to the United States, and committed aggression in many lands; and

WHEREAS, Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Cuba has lost the sources of foreign subsidies that alone sustained its inefficient communist economy; and

WHEREAS, If the Free World remains firm in its rejection of communism in Cuba, many economic, social, and political indicators point to the likely collapse of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government to continue 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.

Resolution No. 354: Defense POW/MIA Accounting Office (DPMO) Funding

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS; Many American Service-members are reported as Missing in Action or otherwise unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War and the War in Southeast Asia, the Persian Gulf Region and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS; The families of the Prisoners of War, Missing Captured, 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 US search teams; and

WHEREAS; The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Office (DPMO) is the direct agency responsible for the administration and policy for military personnel accountability; and

WHEREAS; The American Legion believes US Government POW/MIA and personnel accountability operations are still inadequate, and that the President's budget and appropriations provided for by the Congress has not been sufficient to fund research and development for new or improved personnel accountability programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the US Congress to designate and provide adequate and appropriate funding for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting

Office (DPMO) for their current and future mission to ensure the accountability for our Nation's servicemen and servicewomen; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues to exert the maximum effort for reasonable accountability for MIA's from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Cold War and those missing and captured in our current conflicts around the world.

Resolution No. 355: Social Security Survivor Benefits for Non-Resident Alien Spouses and Dependents

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, From its inception The American Legion has been dedicated to guarding the well-being of the surviving spouses of members and veterans of the armed services; and

WHEREAS, All Legionnaires pledge themselves to "devotion to mutual helpfulness"; and

WHEREAS, The survivors of veterans living in countries where appreciable numbers of US military forces are based presently benefit from treaties and administrative agreements which are not applicable to other foreign domiciled "nonresident alien beneficiaries"; and

WHEREAS, Existing Public Law and administrative regulations of the Social Security Administration require Mexican and Central American nationals who claim survivor benefits to provide proof of physical presence inside the territory of the United States either:

a) 30 days every six months or

b) one day per month every month of the year,

but such physical presence may not be required of Social Security beneficiaries of other nationalities when residing outside the United States depending upon whether or not the Social Security Administration has entered into international agreements with the governments of those beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, Establishing a physical presence in the United States requires considerable expense and disruption of family life when a Mexican or Central American beneficiary lives anywhere except along the US-Mexico border; and

WHEREAS, The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a bureau of DHS (formerly the "Immigration and Naturalization Service or "INS") exercises the ability to legally deny entry to non-U.S. citizens even when such persons hold valid visas issued by the US Department of State; and

WHEREAS, Since the events of September 11, 2001 the INS and USCIS have increased the level of its control of persons attempting to enter the United States; and

WHEREAS, The USCIS and INS have denied entrance into the United States by visa-holding surviving beneficiaries of veterans based solely upon their apparent lack of means of support even though they would have enjoyed a decorous level of income once they had met the physical presence requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, The regulations implementing Public Law relating to Social Security Survivor Benefits are inherently unfair because they impose different conditions upon surviving spouses which may vary according to the location of that person's domicile; and

WHEREAS, Existing law allows an individual USCIS officer to be the arbitrator as to whether or not a potential recipient may enter the US for the purpose of meeting the physical presence requirements of the Social Security legislation; and

WHEREAS, Proposed new Department of Homeland Security regulations would limit visitor visas to a period insufficient to establish physical presence under the requirements of the Social Security legislation; and

WHEREAS, Mexican and Guatemalan surviving spouses of American veterans have requested that The American Legion assist them in gaining relief from these unfair and country-specific regulations; and

WHEREAS, Section 233 of 42 US Code 433 allows for the establishment of agreements between the social security system established by the act and the social security system of any foreign country; and

WHEREAS, Section 404.463 of the Social Security Act contains a listing of the countries which meet the social insurance or pension system requirements which may result in relief from Section 404.460 "nonpayment of monthly benefits;" and

WHEREAS, The countries of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama are included in this listing; and

WHEREAS, The present situation can be remedied by administrative action by the Office of International Programs of the Social Security Administration without the necessity of any new legislation; and

WHEREAS, The Social Security Administration's own Internet web site indicates that in some cases bilateral negotiations are being conducted or are being planned, but that such negotiations are not currently planned for all countries of Central America and negotiations with Mexico have been postponed on more than one occasion; and

WHEREAS, The Social Security Administration has responded in writing to requests for information by Legion staff indicating that no discussions are even contemplated with the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, or Panama; and

WHEREAS, Rules of The American Legion relating to resolutions requiring Social Security legislation are different from resolutions which do not require legislative action by the Congress, the following is submitted as a separate resolution from any other resolution relating to Non-Resident Alien Survivor Beneficiaries; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion petition The Social Security Administration's "Office of International Programs" to expedite the negotiation of international agreements with the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama necessary to permit the recession of the nonpayment provisions of Section 404.460 of the Social Security Act, thereby allowing the payment of survivors' benefits and any other legally accrued benefits to the non-resident alien spouses and children of US veterans residing in the above named countries; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such expedited negotiation apply only to the matter of survivor benefits payments and that other matters related to interests of the Social Security Administration not be included if such negotiation would delay the realization of bilateral agreements relating to survivor benefits payments; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Congress with the Social Security Administration to establish uniform eligibility requirements applicable to all foreign nationals receiving Social Security survivor benefits so that all such persons shall be subject to the same eligibility requirements regardless of the location of the recipient's domicile.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 60 (VT): US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs

Resolution No. 74 (MD): The American Legion's United Nations Policy

Resolution No. 205 (NJ): Support For New JPAC Headquarters Facility

Resolution No. 206 (NJ): US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA

Far Eastern Affairs

Approved

Resolution No. 2: Republic of China

Origin: Alaska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations (As amended)

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long-time ally, friend, and a major trading partner of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China, has closely cooperated with the United States against Japanese Imperialism during World War II and in the fight against Communism during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the stability, prosperity, and peace of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of all parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to promote peaceful resolutions of political differences; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the United States Government encourages the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to engage in peaceful dialogue and avoid any negative actions by either side to change the status quo, which would lead to military conflict.

Resolution No. 69: Policy Regarding Support of Republic of Korea

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The security of the Korean Peninsula is vital to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as well as to 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 wars on the Korean Peninsula and to 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 (by North Korea), and (3) promotion of reconciliation and cooperation from the six party talks. In so doing, the

ROK Government is pursuing the peaceful coexistence of South and North Korea as well as the dismantlement of the Cold War Structure on the Korean peninsula; and

WHEREAS, Despite serious food shortages and economic failures, it is indicative that North Korea continues to build up its military capabilities, particularly long-range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons which weapons of mass destruction pose a grave threat to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia as well as to the security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The six party talks; the United States, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Russia and The People's Republic of China, are negotiating to resolve the nuclear issue, such as access to the suspect underground facility in North Korea and to resolve the issue of North Korea's development, production, deployment and export of missiles; and in addition the talks are being pursued in an attempt to reduce tensions and to build confidence on the Korean Peninsula and to eventually replace the current Armistice Agreement with a lasting peace arrangement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the government of the United States render prompt and effective assistance to the Republic of Korea to repel any external armed attack against the Republic of Korea in accordance with the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty, and to maintain solid ROK-US combined defense readiness, and make efforts toward the long-term development of the ROK-US security alliance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States implement and maintain a determined and effective policy to bear on North Korea to keep its pledge in the US-DPRK Agreed Framework to freeze and eventually dismantle its existing nuclear facilities, by means of faithful implementation of the "1992 Joint Declaration of the De-nuclearization of the Korean peninsula," smooth implementation of the light-water reactor (LWR) project in North Korea and clarification of the suspect underground construction in North Korea; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States increase its efforts to reduce the North Korean threat of weapons of mass destruction and reach an agreement with North Korea on the control of its development, production, deployment, and export of ballistic missiles and to encourage North Korea to participate in international non-proliferation programs including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and that the US Government take determined steps toward North Korea's missile threats with close consultations with the ROK Government; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Government of the United States continue its efforts for the further progress of the Six Party Talks with the thought that positive progress in the Six Party Talks is important to the reduction of tensions and establishment of a peace regime until the Armistice Agreement is superseded by a durable peace arrangement.

Resolution No. 71: Unilateral Action for Vietnam POW/MIA**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) government has consistently pledged to provide the US with POW/MIA-related documents and records that could help accounting America's unreturned veterans still missing from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Government has defined the criteria for the SRV leadership to unilaterally provide such cooperation, but the SRV continues to withhold documents assessed by US experts to be readily available; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion calls on the US Government to encourage the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's leadership to deliver archival records and documents in relation to POW/MIA issues to the US government prior to the President's visit to Hanoi; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That significant unilateral actions regarding POW/MIA issues by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continue to be priority objectives in efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting for US personnel still missing from the Vietnam War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense to ensure that the need for unilateral responsiveness on archival records and repatriation of remains is consistently and accurately conveyed to counterpart Vietnamese officials at every level and opportunity.

Resolution No. 75: Vietnam Human Rights**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the comradeship and loyalty of the ethnic minorities of Vietnam to include, Montagnards and Hmong hill people, whose assistance was invaluable during the Vietnam War; and

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 the protection of Human Rights are 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress to support legislation and policies that will compel the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to meet the international standards of Human Rights; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the ethnic and religious minorities within the country of Vietnam be extended those protections and rights to live and worship in peace without threat of imprisonment or retribution from their government.

Resolution No. 80: Taiwan Defense Arms Sales**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, The Republic of China, also known as Taiwan, is a long-time friend having fought with the United States against Japanese Imperialism during World War II and against Communism during the post-war period; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a major trading partner and democratic ally of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Asia-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), the United States is committed to provide defense equipment and defense services, in such quantities that the Government of the Republic of China may maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the sales of the latest American weapon systems, including naval vessels, submarines, military aircraft, high-tech electronics, communications equipment and air-defense missile systems to Republic of China of such quality and in such quantities so as to enable the Government of the Republic of China to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the continued sales of sophisticated US weapon systems, including, but not limited to, F-16 fighter aircraft, anti-submarine equipment and torpedoes, anti-aircraft/anti-missile systems, and electronics and communications equipment to Republic of China; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Government of the Republic of China be given preferential pricing for these items but not equal to that given to the US government, to enable the Republic of China to purchase sufficient quantities of these items for their defense needs.

Resolution No. 227: Save the Montagnards**Origin: Iowa****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

WHEREAS, The tribal people of the central Highlands of Vietnam, commonly known as the Montagnards are among the most loyal allies the United States has ever known; and

WHEREAS, The Montagnards were instrumental in the success of many campaigns led by the U.S. Special Forces between 1962 and 1975 which dealt devastating blows to the Vietnamese communists during the war; and

WHEREAS, The Montagnards continued to fight the communists in Vietnam long after 1975; and

WHEREAS, Since diplomatic and trade relations have been established over the last 20 years and normalized as recently as 2007 between the U.S. and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the condition of the Montagnard people has greatly worsened in terms of persecution; and

WHEREAS, In the current climate of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the world is watching how the United States is treating allies from earlier conflicts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to take such measures as are necessary to overcome the jamming of Radio Free Asia by the government of Vietnam; and (2) that educational and cultural exchange programs with Vietnam should promote progress toward freedom and democracy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress to create a U.S. policy that will offer refugee resettlement to Vietnam nationals (including members of the Montagnard ethnic minority groups) who were eligible for the Humanitarian Resettlement program, the Orderly Departure program, the Resettlement Opportunities for Vietnamese Returnees program, the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1988, or any other U.S. refugee program, but who were deemed ineligible for reasons of administrative error, to include inaccurate language translation or certain circumstances beyond their control.

Resolution No. 351: Renew Korean War POW/MIA Discussions

Origin: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been and is now deeply committed to accounting for US personnel previously listed as prisoner, missing and unaccounted for from the Korean War and all of our nation's past wars; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the progress in bilateral discussions with North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on strategic issues; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the lead time required between renewing bilateral discussions and restoring actual operations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports renewing direct bilateral humanitarian talks with the DPRK regime for the sole purpose of restoring the processes required to account for all unreturned Korean War missing in action and /or otherwise unaccounted for personnel.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 68 (MD): Republic Of China

Resolution No. 70 (MD): Vietnam Underwater Recovery Policy

Resolution No. 204 (MD) Unilateral Action For Vietnam

**Middle East and African Affairs
Approved**

Resolution No. 72: Middle East/Gulf States Foreign Policies

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The end of World War One brought about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the arbitrary delineation of middle eastern states of the former Turkish held territories of, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine (Israel), Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Aden, Oman (United Arab Emirates) and the Gulf of Aden states of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan and to include the sovereign states of Egypt and Libya; and

WHEREAS, Many of these nations continue to struggle with reforming from authoritarian regimes to more democratic and representative forms of governance, and that the call by their own populations to seek greater freedoms and the protection of individual human rights and universal suffrage, and that states which fail to provide the basic needs of their people creates an opportunity for extremists and terrorists to flourish and grow; and

WHEREAS, That as each of these nations strive to reform their governments will need the technical and economic support of more developed and advanced Representative Democracies, and these needs will include: creating diplomatic coalitions with other countries and international institutions, creating jobs, open market reforms, developing and establish stable economic environments, internal and international security cooperation; and

WHEREAS, The President and the United States Congress have both identified in statements and in proposed legislation and have called for policy that will help promote and assist nations seeking to establish greater democratic reforms in the Middle East; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation and foreign policy that specifically targets diplomatic, economic and educational programs to promote greater and peaceful democratic reforms in Countries within the Arabian Gulf and Middle Eastern Region.

Resolution No. 78: Policy on Africa

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Decades of colonization, authoritarian rule, severe economic disparity, internal conflicts, rampant corruption and in many cases great resistance to change has overwhelmed the African continent; and

WHEREAS, Today some African nations are beginning to develop strong economic markets, and are making determined efforts to put the continent towards a solid democratic course with multi-party systems and other significant political changes; and

WHEREAS, Promoting policies that support democracy, conflict resolution, economic development, free and open trade and disease prevention in African countries are in the national interests of the United States, understanding that a major contributing factor to terrorism are failed states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports bipartisan policies and legislation that identify areas and authorize and fund programs where the United States can provide economic, political and social development in Africa; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that such US policies toward African nations must be intertwined with our nation's overall strategy to promote democracy throughout the world; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That any African nation that clearly demonstrates open democratic reforms, human rights protection and cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, will have the support of the US government.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SIMON: Mr. Commander, as a delegate to the Convention from the Department of Vermont, I move the adoption of this entire report.

...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? The report of Foreign Relations is adopted.

Before we listen to the next report, I am asking that the departments who will be presenting checks for Operation Comfort Warriors begin assembling behind the stage. The chair recognizes Daniel M. Dellinger of Virginia, chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on National Security
Daniel M. Dellinger (VA), Chairman**

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 29, 2010, 239 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in the Hilton City Center and Frontier Airlines Center. Mr. Dan Dellinger (VA) was elected Chairman and James Chapman (VA) appointed Secretary.

General Security Ad Hoc

Douglas C. Haggan, France, Chairman
Leroy Thornton, Maryland, Secretary

Conservation of Natural Resources

E. C. Toppin, North Carolina, Chairman
Don Lechner, Wisconsin, Secretary

Aerospace

Robert Weyenberg, Wisconsin, Chairman
Gerald Rhoads, Virginia, Secretary

Homeland Security and

Civil Preparedness

Charles Kruger, Minnesota, Chairman
Larry Eary, Texas, Secretary

Law and Order

George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman
Harvey Daggett, Connecticut, Secretary

Merchant Marine

Charles Moreland, Florida, Chairman
Charles Powell, Virginia, Secretary

Military Affairs

Leo Malloy, Massachusetts Chairman
Marie Rhyne, Virginia, Secretary

Naval Affairs

William B. Goede, Minnesota, Chairman
James Casey, New York, Secretary

On Sunday afternoon, August 29, 2010, the delegates again assembled in Hilton City Center, for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on National Security.

Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 81 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on National 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. The Convention Committee authorized the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report of the Convention Committee on National Security on behalf of its delegates and make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the Committee.

**General Security Ad Hoc Committee
Douglas C. Haggan, France, Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 36: Repeal DOD Policy Prohibiting Women From Combat

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion are concerned about the status of women serving in the Armed Forces totaling 225,349 in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom with 29,538 currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Women are usually attached to support units, but are often not excluded from front-line duties and are increasingly attached to combat units, resulting in almost 200 deaths and over 2,000 wounded; and

WHEREAS, There appears to be diversity between interpretation and application within the Department of Defense as to the assignment of female military personnel in combat situations; and

WHEREAS, Women have historically been an integral part of the U.S. armed forces; and

WHEREAS, It has been stated by members of the military that these current conflicts could not be fought without the inclusion of women; and

WHEREAS, Women find it difficult to advance in rank without combat experience, resulting in women being underrepresented in the senior ranks of the military; and

WHEREAS, Women who are not designated as "combat veterans" have difficulty proving they are suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in order to apply for benefits, and are often excluded from treatment programs that serve only "combat veterans"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall initiate efforts to encourage the repeal of the Department of Defense's policy governing the assignment of women in combat situations.

Resolution No. 115: Support For The Global War On Terrorism

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's membership is composed of veterans of all wars, the majority of which are Vietnam veterans who have endured the consequences of a nation divided in time of war; and

WHEREAS, Warriors, above all other people, pray for peace, for they must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war; and

WHEREAS, Because of the very nature of war, the warrior cannot be separated from the war itself; and

WHEREAS, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001, resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and members of the military of the United States; and

WHEREAS, This tragic event does not stand alone, but is a continuation of a long series of unprovoked terrorist attacks aimed at destroying American lives, and the very basic core values of freedom, democracy and respect for human life; and

WHEREAS, In response to this despicable act of cowardice, a united Congress in a bipartisan manner authorized the use of armed force against the global armies of terrorism no matter where they reside; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing that the global war on terrorism is as deadly as any war in which the United States has been previously engaged, the President and Congress did authorize military actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The global war on terrorism is a just war, aimed at protecting the very foundations of freedom and freedom-loving people everywhere; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion fully supports the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the global war on terrorism; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the global war on terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be, and is hereby authorized, to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about this war on terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the united support of the American people.

Resolution No. 116: Conduct Hearings On Nuclear Warhead Modernization

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The need for viable nuclear deterrent capability gained new recognition during the events of 2008 with the concentration of nuclear capable bombers and ICBMs in the new Global Strike Command which will allow dedicated attention to the nuclear mission; and

WHEREAS, The changes to top USAF leadership dictated by the Department of Defense clearly reemphasized the importance of nuclear deterrence to our nation's strategic planning and recognized that nuclear capabilities have been allowed to erode resulting in an increased level of risk; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Defense has confirmed that the USAF and USN will provide the main strategic deterrent in the years ahead; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Defense has stated in his article "A BALANCED STRATEGY," printed in Foreign Affairs of January and February 2009 that "Congress needs to do its part by funding the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program for safety, for security and for a more reliable deterrent;" and

WHEREAS, Recognition of the nuclear deterrent requirement is in fact recognition of the significance to our national defense of a resurgent Russia, growing Chinese military capability, immanent Iranian nuclear arsenal, North Korean nuclear program, potential for nuclear proliferation and possible terrorist access to such weapons; and

WHEREAS, Inherent is this recent acceptance of the need for nuclear deterrence is the recognition of a need for provision of reliable and modern means of implementation; and

WHEREAS, Due to the moratorium signed in 1992 it has been nearly 20 years since the United States designed or manufactured a nuclear warhead or conducted an underground test which suspension has resulted in decay of our production capability and loss in the scientific community of nuclear warhead experience; and

WHEREAS, There is concern which will increase with the passing years over the reliability of our nuclear warheads while the warheads age and are subjected to accumulated untested changes; as stated by Gen Kevin Chilton, Commander of United States Strategic Command, "we need a modernized nuclear warhead that has high reliability, safety, and security features that are improved over what we currently have and maintainability of design — which we absolutely do not have today;" and

WHEREAS, Reliability issues due to design and testing failure and budget restraints are not unheard of in history as our World War II experience with submarine torpedo failure in the early war years which rendered the USN submarine ineffective, or the more recent grounding of our F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft due to structure failure across the fleet; and

WHEREAS, Design and production of the proposed Reliable Replacement Warhead would result in a reduction in the number of warheads in the stockpile, a means of meeting the Moscow Treaty goals of 1700 to 2200 while maintaining confidence in warhead reliability; and

WHEREAS, Proposals for design and production of a Reliable Replacement Warhead have been defeated by the influence of groups which hope to see the nuclear capability vanish from the world's arsenals placing our strategic planners in the illogical and dangerous situation where the risks to the reliability of our nuclear arsenal continues to grow even while recognition of the need for nuclear deterrence is reaffirmed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion advocate to the Senate and House of Representatives that hearings commence to resolve the apparent disconnect between the political desire to limit the possession of nuclear weapons and the strategic necessity of fielding a reliable, sustainable and secure arsenal of nuclear warheads; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That subsequent arguments be conducted with a goal of avoiding the possibility of a failure of our deterrent weapons.

Resolution No. 119: Buy American**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of veterans which pledges to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense contracts with large corporations for the construction and repair of military hardware to include ground systems, armament, aircraft and other systems for all of our military branches; and

WHEREAS, These large corporations must rely on subcontractors for the production of, and overhaul, of individual components and subsystems to be used in the construction of these pieces of equipment; and

WHEREAS, The corporation constructing a system or systems may choose to enlist the services of subcontractors located in foreign countries over those which have comparable equipment and comparable costs; and

WHEREAS, The choices made by the corporation not only can affect the security of our Nation as well as the employment of many Americans and veterans who may work at these subcontractors at both the originating and overhaul facilities located in the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to require government contractors to utilize American-made components and subsystems in construction of their equipment over those made by foreign subcontractors for use by the United States military services to ensure the defense of the country as well as the continued employment of Americans and veterans at subcontractor facilities.

Resolution No. 120: Support Fight Against Cyberspace Threats**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The security of the United States is 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 cyberspace threats to critical government and private infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, The President also has appointed a National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to appropriate the necessary funding and resources to combat the continuing cyberspace and other threats to the United States in the 21st Century; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the American public to be vigilant of cyberspace attacks, and that all efforts be made to detect, deter and defend against the threats of cyber warfare, and to prosecute violators to the fullest extent of the law.

Resolution No. 121: Prohibit Foreign Investments In U.S. Defense Industry

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 and the downsizing of our industrial base in the 1990's and the continuing decline in the 2000'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, three 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 Peoples' 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, Some Allies of the United States, which lease or purchase U.S. advanced technology, may transfer or resell to actual or potential enemies of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Such proposed actual sales threaten the security of sensitive U.S. military technologies and U.S. technological superiority; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to ensure that foreign entities are not permitted to own critical industries, especially those involved in producing defense items; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes the transfer and sales of sensitive 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 PRC, or any actual or potential adversary of the United States, which could seriously jeopardize national security interests of the U. S. and her allies.

Resolution No. 122: Support For National Missile Defense System**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union had placed a cap on deploying missile defense systems and limited more advanced research on such defensive systems; and

WHEREAS, The Bush administration in January 2002 had given Russia and our allies the required six-months notice of U.S. intent to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty and did so that past June; and

WHEREAS, Work on the underground silos for the first missile interceptors in Alaska began in June 2002 which reflected the urgency to begin moving on a missile defense system; and

WHEREAS, As unreliable, hostile nations such as North Korea and Iran seem determined to acquire the capability to deliver a nuclear strike over long distances, including striking the continental United States, the need for a national missile defense as an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security for the continental United States has become as urgent as ever; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to develop and continue to deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people and an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security.

Resolution No. 124: Rebuild America's Defense Industrial Base**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, Past defense budget share included limited funding for technological research and development which resulted in a production shortfall in a time of national emergency; and

WHEREAS, Developing new technologies for the Armed Forces can be hindered by budget shortfalls despite the fact that the U.S. is currently the world leader in development of new technology, thereby disrupting materiel development vital to national security; and

WHEREAS, Much of our defense industrial base, including weapons production and revitalization of the ship-building industry, has been eroded by plant closures and layoffs; and

WHEREAS, The United States fighting forces must be equipped with state-of-the-art technological advances such as armored Humvees to assure their capability to win on the modern battlefield, whether on land, sea, or in the air; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to rebuild America's industrial base by continuing to adequately fund research, development and acquisition budgets to assure that our military production can meet national requirements especially when U. S. military power is committed; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Administration and the Congress encourage the rebuilding of America's defense industrial base by having a proper balance of policies that:

- 1. Increase and then sustain domestic production at levels that maintain a robust and internationally competitive defense industry**
- 2. Keep the arms industry internationally competitive**
- 3. Ensure that the U.S. is not putting itself at risk by having our armaments produced offshore.**

Resolution No. 125: Support For The American Battle Monuments Commission

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As Amended)

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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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. 126: Support For Armed Forces Retirement Homes**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has authorized the Department of Defense to raise service members' assessments from 50 cents to \$1.00 per month which has yet to be exercised; and such an increase could raise revenues by about \$7.5 million annually; and

WHEREAS, Even if these potential sources of income reach fruition, they will not likely provide the permanent, long-term funding which is vital to assure the solvency and viability of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the U.S. Naval Home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 reconstruction of the United States Naval Home; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, The American Legion strongly supports the rebuilding of the Armed Forces Retirement Home at Gulfport, Mississippi.

Resolution No. 127: Transform America's Armed Forces**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The current national security strategy, contained within the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), continues to transform American's defense strategy that embraces uncertainty and the need for flexibility and easier adaptability is to be effective abroad; and

WHEREAS, A central objective of the strategy is to shift the basis of defense planning from a "threat-based" model to a "capabilities-based" model while simultaneously better defining the Department of Defense's (DOD) responsibilities for homeland defense within a national framework; and

WHEREAS, The strategy requires adapting existing military capabilities to new threats and circumstances, while experimenting with the development of new capabilities

or the transformation of U.S. forces, capabilities and institutions to extend America's asymmetric advantages well into the future; and

WHEREAS, Transforming America's defense for the 21st Century will require a long-standing commitment from our Country and its leaders, but the challenges are here and now: They include protecting our critical bases of operation, including the U.S. homeland, and projecting and sustaining U.S. forces in distant environments as well as preemptive actions to confront threats before they emerge; and

WHEREAS, Transformation includes assuring our information systems and providing persistent surveillance, tracking and rapid engagement of adversarial forces by U.S. and allied joint operations; and

WHEREAS, The QDR particularly emphasizes the following five areas:

1. Department institutional reform and governance
2. Irregular warfare
3. Building partnership capacity
4. Strategic communications
5. Intelligence; and

WHEREAS, Over time, the promise of transformation will be realized as resources translate into new concepts, capabilities and organizations that maximize our warfighting effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, confirmed the Government's strategic direction as well as the soundness of such planning principles to include its emphasis on homeland defense, on offensive action against global terrorism, on surprise, on preparing for asymmetric threats like terrorism, on developing new concepts of deterrence, and the need to balance the different dimensions of risk; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the United States Government and our Armed Forces, as we contend with the difficult challenges of the war on terrorism, to continue to proceed on the path of transforming America's armed forces into a modern force capable of providing for the security of all Americans, strengthening and expanding military capabilities, and in honoring America's commitments worldwide as well as on the home front.

Resolution No. 128: Support For Uniformed Services University Of The Health Sciences

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), since its establishment in 1972 as the Nation's Federal Academic Health Center dedicated to providing uniquely educated and trained uniformed officers for the United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service. USU alumni are currently serving over 20-year careers and thus providing continuity and leadership for the Military Health System (MHS) as physicians, advanced practice nurses and scientists; and

WHEREAS, The USU F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine has a year-round, four-year curriculum that is nearly 700 hours longer than found at other U.S. medical

schools. These extra hours focus on epidemiology, health promotion, disease prevention, tropical medicine, leadership and field exercises. Doctoral and Masters degrees in the biomedical sciences and public health are awarded by interdisciplinary and department-based graduate programs within the School of Medicine. Programs include infectious disease, neuroscience, and preventive medicine research; and

WHEREAS, The USU Graduate School of Nursing offers a Master of Science in Nursing degree in Nurse Anesthesia, Family Nurse Practitioner, Perioperative Clinical Nursing, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, and a full and part-time program for a Ph.D. degree in Nursing Science. The university's continuing education program is unique and extensive, serving and sustaining the professional and readiness requirements of the Defense Department's worldwide military healthcare community; and

WHEREAS, The university's nationally ranked military and civilian faculty conduct cutting edge research in the biomedical sciences and in areas specific to the DoD health care mission such as combat casualty care, infectious diseases and radiation biology. The university specializes in military and public health medicine, focusing on keeping people healthy, disease prevention, and diagnosis and treatment. USU faculty offer significant expertise in tropical medicine and hygiene, parasitology, epidemiologic methods and preventive medicine; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DOD) and the United States Congress have recognized that the extensive military-unique and preventive health care education provided in the multi-Service environment of USU ensures Medical Readiness and Force Health Protection for the MHS; USU is recognized as the place where students receive thorough preparation to deal with the medical aspects of Weapons of Mass Destruction, including chemical, radiological and biological, nuclear and high yield explosive (CBRNE) terrorism or other catastrophe. USU has developed similar training for civilian first responders, medical professionals and emergency planners. USU is also uniquely qualified and experienced in simulation technology, education and training; and

WHEREAS, USU, recognized by DOD as the Academic Health Center for the MHS, has graduated 4227 uniformed physician officers who represent approximately one-quarter of the total physicians on active duty in the Armed Forces; the current Secretary of Defense refers to the USU alumni as the backbone of the MHS; in addition, the USU Graduate School of Nursing has conferred 369 Masters of Science in Nursing Degrees to uniformed, critically required advanced practice nurses during the current Nation-wide nursing shortage; and, the University has conferred 1080 Master and Doctoral Degrees through its Graduate Education Programs in essential areas requested by the MHS; and

WHEREAS, With the establishment by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) of a Joint Medical Command in Fiscal Year 2008 with plans to establish the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) by 2011 and the close collaboration between the Armed Services Flag Officers and the President of USU to create a world-class military academic health center, expanding the role of USU; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to: continue its demonstrated commitment to USU, as a national asset, for the continued provision of uniquely educated and trained 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; support timely construction at the USU campus during Fiscal Years 2010-2011; continue funding the University's collaborative effort for sharing its CBRNE expertise and training; support development of the USU Immersive, Wide Area Virtual Environment (WAVE) Simulation for CBRNE/WMD Medical Readiness Training; support funding for the Graduate School of Nursing Teaching/Educational Programs and, encourage continued close collaboration and progress towards the OSD-proposed Joint Medical Command and WRNMMC with USU as the core academic health center.

Resolution No. 138: Support For DOD Force Health Protection Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, After the 1991 Gulf War, returning military personnel began to report suffering from unexplained multi-symptom illnesses, commonly referred to as Gulf War veterans' illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Although thirteen years have passed and over 200 hundred government-funded research projects are in various stages of completion, costing more than \$200 million; many questions regarding the possible causes of Gulf War veterans' illnesses remain unanswered; and

WHEREAS, Numerous examples of lost or destroyed medical records have been identified, vaccination records were often unclear or incomplete, pre and post deployment examinations were not comprehensive and information regarding troop movements/locations and possible environmental hazard exposures was severely lacking; and

WHEREAS, The lack of such baseline data and other information is commonly recognized as a major limitation in the evaluation and understanding of potential causes of Gulf War veterans' illnesses; and

WHEREAS, To avoid the procedural problems encountered both during and after the 1991 Gulf War, "lessons learned" precipitated the enactment of legislation and policies designed to create a concept of Force Health Protection; and

WHEREAS, Although these policies appeared to correct previously identified problems in theory, reports by the Institute of Medicine and the United States General Accounting Office identified several deficiencies in the implementation of Force Health Protection laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, Controversial vaccines and pre-treatment drugs, such as smallpox, anthrax, and the anti-malaria tablet Lariam, are part of the Department of Defense's overall Force Health Protection plan; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that pyridostigmine bromide, an investigational new drug used as a pre-treatment for the nerve agent soman during the 1991 Gulf War, has not been definitively ruled out as a possible cause of Gulf War veterans' illnesses, the Food and Drug Administration granted full approval just prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, clearing the way for the Department of Defense to use the drug without restriction under the umbrella of its Force Health Protection program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion continue to actively monitor the Department of Defense's implementation of Force

Health Protection policies and urge continual congressional oversight to ensure that all Force Health Protection laws and policies, including thorough pre and post deployment physical and mental examinations, are being properly implemented in a consistent manner by all military branches; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Defense to actively track and follow-up, with proper medical care, adverse reactions to vaccinations as well as any and all health-related complaints associated with the ingestion of controversial drugs such as pyridostigmine bromide and Lariam; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the military continually improve its treatment of service personnel who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and/or traumatic brain injury.

Resolution No. 142: Support For The Reformation Of The Military Voting System

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The 1986 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (Public Law 99-410) streamlined the procedures for overseas absentee voting; authorized a back-up write-in overseas ballot if the voter did not receive one requested from the state; Postal Service was to ensure that balloting materials were “carried expeditiously and free of postage;” and the overall intent was to ensure “maximum access to the polls” by both uniformed and civilian overseas voters; and

WHEREAS, The 2000 General Elections demonstrated numerous problems exist not only in Florida, but nationally as well, concerning uniformed and overseas citizens absentee balloting procedures; and

WHEREAS, Although a Presidential Election is held on the same date across the United States, it is composed of 50 separate state elections; and the Constitution of the United States grants the responsibility for the conduct of elections to the states; and

WHEREAS, Many states have difficulty printing and mailing ballots to overseas military voters in a timely manner, thus, posing a real challenge for military members and their family members to vote and return ballots within deadlines; and other states will not accept ballots received 30 days before general elections making it difficult, particularly, for military personnel deployed overseas; and

WHEREAS, Absentee ballots from forward deployed military members entitled to free postage in locales like the Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia often are not postmarked at mailing but, many times, are postmarked en route resulting in late postmarking in CONUS; and

WHEREAS, Military voters should be protected from disenfranchisement based on technicalities that are beyond their control such as postmark discrepancies, missing notarized signatures and confusion on residency requirements; and

WHEREAS, States are not solely to blame due to complacency on the part of military units which also compounds military absentee voting; voting assistance in the military is often an additional duty relegated to the most junior officers; and special vigilance is often not given to handling election mail; and

WHEREAS, A worldwide Internet voting pilot was recently tested by a Department of Defense contractor using digital signatures and ballot encryption, however, it was rejected for security reasons; and

WHEREAS, Forty-six states now allow the fax transmission of absentee voting materials; and

WHEREAS, Despite progress made after more than a decade by the Department of Defense cooperatively working with the states, on the average, some 30 percent of all military absentee ballots are still not counted in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, National defense is uniquely a constitutional mandate that gives the Federal government the authority and responsibility to ensure that military personnel and their families are not disenfranchised by the circumstances of their service and, thereby, necessitating Federal legislation as the states have not resolved the problem for nearly half a century, and a more adequate uniform and consistent system, not 50 unique systems, is needed; and

WHEREAS, The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws promotes drafts of uniform and model acts, and it could offer uniform formats for the states to follow on military absentee voting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion ensure that satisfactorily drafted uniform acts and/or regulations pertaining to the Military Voting Absentee System, are made available to all appropriate state and local election entities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges that appropriate laws and guidelines be developed at Federal, state and local levels with the intent that all military absentee voters and their families will have their votes counted in every election; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the sending and receiving of blank and completed military absentee ballots be accomplished electronically as much as possible; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion takes an advocate role on this vital issue at National, state and local levels.

Resolution No. 144: Oppose Tricare Fee Increases

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the debt owed to the entire military retirement community for their sacrifices and hardships endured in honorable military service to this nation; and

WHEREAS, The Administration and Defense leaders are seeking to impose very large health care fee increases on military retirees and their families; and

WHEREAS, The proposed fee increases are inappropriate and out of line with career service members' unique sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, Military medical and retirement benefits must be markedly better than civilian benefits because they are the primary offsets for enduring decades of extraordinarily arduous service conditions; and

WHEREAS, Military retirees careers have entailed unique and arduous service conditions few other Americans are willing to endure for 20 or 30 years including hazardous duty, service in foreign countries often in hostile environments, extended family separations, just to mention a few; and

WHEREAS, These proposed increases in premiums are targeted to a select group of military medical care beneficiaries – those military retirees and their families under age 65; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion opposes these increases and sees this proposal as an erosion of quality of life benefits from a grateful nation for honorable military service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion shall prevail upon this Administration and the Department of Defense to reconsider any proposals to implement any increases in the military retirees' TRICARE enrollment fees, deductibles, or premiums.

**Resolution No. 146: Reference Veterans' Service Organizations At Discharge
Origin: Maryland**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion are all veterans of the United States Military; and

WHEREAS, Our Legionnaires would like to share with recent veterans of the United States, the veterans services available to these newly discharged service members; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion members would recommend to the United States military branches, and benefits that a separation package be supplied to each of these veterans being discharged; The American Legion would recommend that discharge packets contain the names and addresses of all major veterans organization in the United States by state; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes that the transition from military life to civilian life is sometime difficult and recognizes that association with fellow veterans and access to services is available to veterans which is highly beneficial in their efforts to become productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion respectfully requests each military service include such a package of information in the separation process from the military; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support legislation to insert a clause into the briefing of discharging service men and women that make specific reference to veterans organizations such as The American Legion in their civilian communities.

**Resolution No. 147: Support For Concurrent Receipt Of Military Retirement And
VA Disability Compensation**

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, Sections 5304 and 5305, has prohibited 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 have been entitled to receive disability compensation only by "waiving 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, which continues to this day, defies both logic and the facts: There are approximately 640,000 disabled active duty and reservist military retirees (rated 0% - 100%), who were retired for longevity and who qualified for military retirement yet, during their military careers, sustained non-career-ending injuries, combat wounds and other ailments; and

WHEREAS, There are also over 100,000 non-careerist military disability retirees who were retired for severely disabling injuries, wounds or ailments who are awarded military retirement disability pay as a percentage of their base pay (30% and above) and who are not authorized to concurrently draw VA disability compensation: In order to draw VA disability compensation, they must waive their military retirement disability pay, which is inequitable for those disabled warriors who were unable to complete military careers; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act authorized a Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) for those disabled military retirees for longevity whose VA-rated disabilities totaled 60 percent and higher due to combat, combat-related training, hazardous duty or the instrumentalities of war; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the concurrent receipt of taxable military retirement pay and VA disability compensation for disabled retirees rated at 50 percent or higher, to include disabled retired Reservists with at least 20 years of service who were drawing retirement pay, as well as veterans who retired under Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA); and

WHEREAS, The FY 2004 NDAA also expanded CRSC for disabled retirees with 20 years of qualifying service who have a combined, combat-related disability of 10 percent or more; and

WHEREAS, Eligible retirees may not receive both concurrent receipt and CRSC but may choose between the two options during an annual “open season;” now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion expresses its gratitude to the Congress for the authorization of both Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and partial concurrent receipt for over 200,000 disabled military retirees but urges the Congress to authorize and fund full concurrent receipt for all disabled military retirees to include those rated at 40 percent and below; to authorize the CRSC payment of military disability retiree pay

and VA disability compensation for those disabled military retirees; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to eliminate the phase-in of provisions in PL 108-136 so as to accelerate restored retired pay in fewer than 10 years; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the Congress to authorize the concurrent receipt of military severance pay for less than 30 percent disabled service members and VA disability compensation.

Resolution No. 150: Support For Pain Management Research, Treatment And Therapies At DOD, VA, And NIH

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The characteristics of modern warfare, including the global war on terrorists, exposes members of the uniformed services to many adverse and dangerous environmental diseases and living conditions; and

WHEREAS, Today's war zone conditions replete with noxious gases released from explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan produce traumatic, life altering, battlefield scars and casualties unheard of in previous wars including infections, instant crushing of protective skull and body bones, loss of sight and limbs, dehydration, blood and other body infections and, in some cases, severely impaired or total loss of mental and physical body motor functions; and

WHEREAS, Military medical rapid response teams provide superb, state of the art, medical and psychological life-saving treatment and care at battlefield sites with an extraordinarily high success rate; and

WHEREAS, Military, Department of Veterans Affairs and some specialty civilian health care treatment facilities are overburdened with caring for the most serious and most painful battlefield casualties ever witnessed from war; and

WHEREAS, The nation's medical and mental health care professionals have not been provided with sufficient resources to adequately research, diagnose, treat and manage acute and chronic pain associated with present day battlefield casualties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That federal funding for pain management research, treatment and therapies at the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs and at the National Institutes of Health be significantly increased and that the Congress and the Administration re-double their efforts to ensure that an effective pain management program be uniformly established and implemented; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs increase its investment in pain management clinical research by improving and accelerating clinical trials at military and VA treatment facilities and affiliated university medical centers and research programs.

Resolution No. 151: Support For Full Funding Of The United States Military**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, A major American Legion goal has been to sustain future years' defense budgets at levels required to meet missions and readiness needs; and

WHEREAS, In the past 60 years, defense budgets have averaged 5.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product in peacetime years alone; The American Legion strongly agrees with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had indicated that continuing planned military manpower increases, replacing and upgrading weapons and equipment worn out by years of war, and treating the military and veterans fairly will require budgets of at least 4 percent of GDP whether troop levels in Iraq significantly decline or not; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion continue to urge Congress to fully fund our Armed Forces and to resist any peace dividend proposals to divert essential funds from defense programs to meet other needs or any initiative aimed at reducing essential manpower growth, or essential weapons program or upgrades.

Resolution No. 152: Develop Defense Against Electromagnetic Pulse Attack**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, In defiance of the United States and international community, both North Korea and Iran conducted tests for missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads in April and May of this year respectively; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's proposed 2010 defense budget cuts missile defense by \$1.2 billion in missile defense and does not provide for any funds for the European missile defense shield that could provide an added layer of protection to the U.S. from potential enemy missiles; and

WHEREAS, Islamic violent extremists and rogue nations continue to plot against the West and seek to destroy the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, The Congressionally sanctioned Commission to Assess the Threat to the U.S. from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) has clearly defined the vulnerabilities in America's homeland defense posture to include potential catastrophic damage to U.S. infrastructure, telecommunications, banking, energy, transportation, food, water, emergency services, space systems and government agencies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to fully fund, develop, and deploy a national ballistic missile defense system designed to intercept EMP attacks; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to swiftly commission the further development and installation of electronic equipment and components resistant to EMP to quickly provide significant protection and limit damage to high-value generation and transmission assets as well as emergency generation and re-start capability; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to expeditiously develop an EMP response plan to include necessary back-up

systems and corresponding supply of electronic parts and equipment vital to a successful American defense and response of in the event of such an attack in accordance with the 2008 report published by the Commission to Assess the Threat to the U.S. from Electromagnetic Pulse.

Referred to the Standing Committee on National Security

Resolution No. 123 (IN): Support For National Security Principles

Resolution No. 185 (IN): Grant Full Access To Military Facilities For Service Connected Disabled Veterans And Dependents

Resolution No. 246 (NE): Lower The Retirement Age Of Servicemembers In The National Guard And Reserve Components
Rejected

Resolution No. 271 (TN): Urge The White House To Send Letters Of Condolence To Military Suicide Victims

Conservation of Natural Resources
E.C. Toppin, South Carolina, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 51: Support Domestic Energy Production

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, The war on terrorism and the continuing conflict in the volatile Middle East has brought into sharp focus the heavy reliance of the United States on imported foreign oil which necessitates a re-evaluation of our current and long-range energy policies; and

WHEREAS, Like our domestic oil and gas resources, nuclear energy is a safe resource where price and supply are not subject to manipulation by foreign countries; and nuclear energy is our second-largest source of electricity in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has denied petroleum exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Region even though such exploration could have reduced our reliance on foreign sources of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 31st, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion National Office urge the Congress and the administration to pursue further development of domestic sources of energy to include:

1. **Increasing U.S. petroleum production in an environmentally sensible manner so as to reduce America's reliance on foreign petroleum**
2. **Building new nuclear energy plants and renovating America's electrical grid**
3. **Implementing domestic crude oil, Gas Exploration and Utah, Colorado and Wyoming Oil shale development**
4. **Development and implementation of sources to separate and recycle domestic recyclable materials thus reserving our natural resources for future generations**
5. **That the provisions of the Energy act of 1992 be fully implemented and carried out as mandated by the Act; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That conservation of energy and natural resources be more actively pursued in the American private and public sectors.

Resolution No. 52: Support Research And Funding For Alternative Energy Resources

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(Consolidated with Resolution 58 (UT))

WHEREAS, The need for development of alternate sources of energy is critical and vital to America's maintaining competitive advantage in the world economy; and

WHEREAS, Our growing dependence on foreign oil adversely affects the United States and world economics as was discovered during the oil embargo in 1973 and interruption in the supply of foreign oil during the years of conflict between Iran and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The United States has the opportunity to take the initiation and lead in developing new and alternate sources of energy; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing need for creating new employment for the American people and developing new skills especially for our veteran population, as well as for removing the dangers now attendant to continued use of nuclear power by development of further safeguards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Congress and our industrial complexes that it favors legislation or plans for funding of research and development of all alternative sources of energy including the utilization of our coal reserves, crude oil, Utah, Colorado and Wyoming Oil shale Resources and our vast supply of natural gas and/or methanol and ethanol as well as nuclear energy so as to ensure that our Nation will never be an economic hostage; and we can always meet the ever growing completion of Japan and other Far Eastern industrial complexes and the European Common Market; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That our Federal Government be strongly encouraged to substantially expand its incentive to industry, either through tax incentives or through research and development grants, in a greatly expanded effort to develop and use alternative energy resources, including substitute power and heating supplies.

Resolution No. 224: Support For Domestic Control Of Energy Resources**Origin: Iowa****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The United States, like every nation, has two methods for defense of its critical interests, the first being diplomacy and the second military; and

WHEREAS, The exercise of diplomacy by the United States has traditionally been based on the American principles of freedom and democracy with the intent of protecting those principles at home and promoting them overseas; and

WHEREAS, In those instances where diplomacy has proved insufficient to protect the vital interests of the United States, military action has been undertaken to protect those principles of freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, Increase in world trade and governmental actions have resulted in high percentages of strategic, critical resources being imported rather than produced domestically, to the point where now approximately 60 percent of the oil used is imported; and

WHEREAS, Continual dependence on foreign sources of critical resources creates a situation where assuring future supply of those resources assumes an importance approaching that of the founding principles of this country; and

WHEREAS, This dependence on imported energy causes our friends and enemies alike to question whether those noble principles of freedom and democracy still govern the diplomatic and military actions of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Cessation of supply of those critical resources can severely impact the ability of the military of the United States to protect our people in the event that diplomacy fails; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Administration and Congress to develop an energy policy and plan that recognizes the critical importance of ensuring domestic control of our energy resources from production through use; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Administration and Congress aggressively pursue further development of domestic sources of energy to include;

- 1. Increasing domestic petroleum and natural gas exploration and production;**
- 2. Increasing the domestic electricity supply by building additional nuclear energy plants, increasing domestic capacity of solar, hydroelectric, geothermal and wind energy electrical generation and renovating America's electrical grid;**
- 3. Greater utilization of alternative fuels through increased development of biomass and ethanol production; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That intensive diplomatic efforts be made to develop further energy trading alliances with countries of unquestioned long-standing friendship and where security of the energy resources can be assured in order to assist in development of their energy resources.

Received And Recorded**Resolution No. 53 (UT): Recycle Spent Nuclear Fuel Rods****Resolution No. 54 (UT): Support Comprehensive Plan For Energy Welfare****Resolution No. 55 (UT): Recycle Spent Nuclear Fuel Rods****Resolution No. 56 (UT): Support Strategy For Energy Conservation****Resolution No. 57 (UT): Strategy For Compliance With Nuclear Waste Policy Act****Aerospace Committee****Robert Weyenberg, Wisconsin, Chairman****Approved****Resolution No. 32: Maintaining Military Air Supremacy****Origin: Montana****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, Procurement of the F-22 air supremacy fighter has been terminated; and

WHEREAS, Air supremacy is presently dependent upon the limited number of F-22s and the aged fleet of F-18, F-16, and F-15 aircraft; and

WHEREAS, China, Russia and India are currently capable of combat with our existing fighter fleet other than the F-22; and

WHEREAS, Russian and Chinese aircraft such as the PAD FA and XXJ (or F-12) will begin to match or compete with the limited F-22 fleet by mid decade; and

WHEREAS, Risk will increase in the time frame 2015-2020 in the ability of the U.S. to successfully engage with nations having the ability to compete with our 4th generation fighters such as the F-18, F-16, and F-15; and

WHEREAS, The F-35 was never intended to be an air supremacy vehicle against 5th generation Russian and Chinese aircraft; and

WHEREAS, Air supremacy is an absolute requirement before other military forces can maneuver in the presence of an enemy possessing a modern air capability; and

WHEREAS, The acquisition cycle for the F-22 extended for nearly 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Present budget limitations may preclude procurement of many desired weapon systems, it is also true that the initial conceptual phase of acquisition are relatively inexpensive but provide the basis for rapidly proceeding with design test and production should our capability to maintain air supremacy be deemed at risk; and

WHEREAS, The development of new aircraft require not only time but the assembly of scientific and engineering skills in effective teams which may well not exist in the absence of national commitments which use these skills; and

WHEREAS, There will always be new technology arising which excuses the definition of requirements for a weapon system and results in ever increasing risk as decisions are delayed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion lobby the Department of Defense to undertake an adequately funded and prioritized program to define the nature of a generation 6 air supremacy fighter to the point in the acquisition cycle where a concept including performance is established, systems

engineering plans are ready, a request for proposal is on-hand to commence the development, test and production of a new 6th generation fighter should the need be recognized; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion requests that Congress budget the limited funds needed to proceed with the relatively inexpensive initial steps leading to capability of rapidly beginning acquisition should risk assessment determine it necessary circa 2015.

Resolution No. 33: Protect Against Long Range Strike Threats

Origin: Montana

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, USAF Chief of Staff General Schwartz has recently stated that “Deterrence is not a fading construct in national security – re-emerging and growing in importance as an aspect of U.S. defense policy, risks and uncertainty cloud our ability to forecast the weapons needed to offer deterrence in a world of changing economies, alliances, competing political systems all of which require defense planning for the potential threats of ten and twenty years in the future; and

WHEREAS, Continued Russian efforts to update their strategic missiles and air force, an example being the recent flight of the PAK FA stealth fighter and the expected flight of a Chinese equivalent the F-12 circa 2015, resulting in the proliferation of 5th generation aircraft; and

WHEREAS, Development of Russian Surface to Air Missiles has progressed to the point where there is concern about the ability of present non-stealth vehicles in the bomber mix to penetrate modern air defenses; and

WHEREAS, Russia and China have a history of supplying their weapon systems to nations which are often unfriendly with the U.S. as stated by Lt. Gen. David Deptula Deputy C/S for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance “we need to be prepared to deal with advanced fighter technology in quantities and locations beyond Russia and China; and

WHEREAS, Both nations have failed to support efforts to impose effective sanctions on Iran’s nuclear program and in the case of Russia have offered the potential sale of advance SAM capabilities to protect Iran’s nuclear installations; and

WHEREAS, Technical opportunities are changing constantly making the selection of what new capabilities should be developed to counter anticipated threats a major challenge as an error in selection of a course of development can have repercussions for decades; questions concerning manned or unmanned, hypersonic conventional or nuclear, missile or aircraft will constantly face the strategic planner while restricted defense budgets and the need to support other facets of the spectrum of conflict will persist; and

WHEREAS, In July of 2009 the aerospace Industries Association stated that one of the most significant factors in assuring that this remains viable over the long term will be its ability to retain minimum sustaining technical capabilities in advanced military aircraft design and development and that given the last B-2 was delivered in the 1990s and no follow-on bomber designs have been in production since then, the industrial base is not optimized to provide new capability in long range strike in a manner it can for other aerospace products; and

WHEREAS, The intention of the USAF to acquire a follow-bomber by 2018 has been subject to budget inconsistencies even though the air launched cruise missiles which give the B-25s a chance to penetrate have already required several upgrades; and

WHEREAS, Uncertainty exists about the nature of the strike solution uncertainties that may arise in the next decade warrant the relatively inexpensive efforts to define the requirements of a long range strike weapon; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion lobby the Department of Defense to undertake an adequately funded and prioritized program to define the nature of a long range strike capability to the point in the acquisition cycle where a concept including performance is established, systems engineering plans are ready, a request of proposal is on-hand ready to commence the development test and production of a new long range strike capability should the need be recognized; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion request that Congress budget the limited funds needed to proceed with relatively inexpensive initial steps leading to capability of rapidly beginning acquisition should risk assessment determine it necessary circa 2015.

Resolution No. 178: Support Funding For NASA Budgets

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(Consolidated with Resolution 231 (WI) and Resolution 234 (WI))

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 U.S. aircraft used NASA technology; and

WHEREAS, The aeronautic advances we currently enjoy have provided this nation with leading edge technology, world leadership and air superiority in the civil and military arena, some of which has taken 10 to 20 years of extensive research; Now the Nation's aeronautics research programs are in serious decline and NASA aeronautics research appropriations have declined about 50% since FY 1994; The proposed FY09 budget request further reduces to approximately a mere \$446.5 million out of the agency's \$17.6 plus billion; and

WHEREAS, The September 11 terrorist attacks resulted in a complete shutdown of the U.S. air transportation system for several days; The impact emphasizes just how dependent we all are on air transportation; Air travel has now returned to pre-9/11 levels, and the capacity of our air transportation system is again approaching its maximum capability; Continued U.S. economic growth is dependent on further expansion of air transportation system which requires further investments and aeronautical research; In addition, the stunning success of air power in Afghanistan and Iraq is the result of research performed a decade or more ago and reminds us that continued emphasis on military aviation R&T is essential to future U.S. air superiority; and

WHEREAS, NASA's top priority, the space exploration initiative (SEI), threatens to consume even larger portions of the agency's budget with potentially disastrous

consequences for the aeronautics research program; Two recently published National Research Council (NRC) reports, “Decadal Survey of Civil Aeronautics: Foundation for the Future” and “NASA Aeronautics Research: An Assessment,” both re-emphasize the importance of aeronautics research to the nation and recommend 51 high-priority R&T challenges; Unfortunately, at current budget levels, NASA will not be able to develop these technologies to a sufficient level of technical maturity to hand them off to U.S. industry ready for commercial application; 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 about 50% and is focused on 60-70% with a goal of total domination of global aeronautics; This Nation needs to awaken to the fact that competitive nations have recognized the importance of aeronautics for economic and technology reasons and have built new wind tunnels and have greatly expanded their research; 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; In addition, much of the research is directed toward issues of protecting the environment, maintaining safety and security, and expanding the national airspace system, which are all government responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, In April 2005, the National Institute of Aerospace issued its report “Responding to the Call: Aviation Plan for American Leadership;” The report was developed by over 250 of the nation’s top engineers from industry and academia at the request of Congress; It defines the most important technical need and provides specific program goals, milestones, and budget recommendations required to meet these needs; It is important for Congress to act now to ensure that the essential first steps are taken to implement these recommendations; NASA must be directed to develop a national program plan to realize the technologies needed to achieve these goals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, 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 national aeronautics-related outcome goals and 51 challenges announced in the recent NIA and NRC reports, and that Congress mandate that all military aircraft research, engineering and development be performed within the boundaries of this Nation while upgrading research facilities of this Nation and encouraging civil-aero testing within these facilities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That with the decline of the United States global commercial aircraft market of 90% to about 50%, the aging of our military aircraft, and the increased investment by other countries in aeronautics, that NASA aeronautics budget be fully restored to 1994-1995 funding levels to meet the challenges of the 21st Century in military and civil aeronautics and NASA commit 10% of budget directly to 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. 179: Support For Research And Development Of Air Breathing Scramjet Powered Vehicle

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The X-43A Scramjet test flights are part of NASA Hyper-X program, an advance research effort in propulsion technologies for high speed flight with the atmosphere and into Earth orbit; and

WHEREAS, After many years of research and development testing the craft met major milestones propelling itself slightly over Mach 7, seven times the speed of sound, or some 5,000 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, Unlike any other space vehicle that must haul along weighty amounts of oxygen for propulsion scramjets use the atmosphere as an oxygen source so that scramjet powered craft could haul greater payload into orbit and suborbital flights; and

WHEREAS, Scramjet broke its own world record on its third and final flight with a new world speed record for jet-powered aircraft of Mach 9.6 which equates to nearly 7,000 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, Researchers predict scramjet speed could reach 15 times the speed of sound so that an 18 hour trip to Tokyo from New York City becomes a 2 hour flight; and

WHEREAS, There are few or no moving parts in the scramjet, allowing engine ignition and combustion in a matter of milliseconds which is considered a major aerospace engineering achievement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges Congress to direct NASA to continue and expand research and development of the air breathing scramjet powered vehicle program and to fully fund and continue this revolutionary program which will once again bring the United States to the forefront of aerospace engineering achievement.

Resolution No. 180: Support For The United States Air Force

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As amended)

WHEREAS, People are the United States Air Force's top priority: the Air Force is the world's premier aerospace force because its great people—active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian—continue to serve selflessly as a total force under increasingly difficult circumstances, and in order to grow the force, recruiting and retention are among its highest priorities; to continue attracting and retaining dedicated men and women the Air Force recognizes that it must continue its efforts to improve pay, benefits, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, In the past four years, America's Air Force has accelerated its post-Cold War high operations tempo despite a 40 percent force size reduction since 1986; and

to maintain this pace while minimizing the adverse impact on its people, equipment, and infrastructure, the Air Force; and

WHEREAS, To meet the challenges of adversaries at home and abroad, Air Force strategy calls for a capabilities-based approach to defense planning: This enables the Service to answer a broad range of challenges posed by potential adversaries, while also developing the capabilities it needs for the future; and

WHEREAS, In assessing existing and potential adversaries' capabilities against our own, the Air Force is developing Task Forces for a variety of mission requirements, from strategic response to homeland security: For example, Global Strike Task Force, which describes how we will operate in an anti-access scenario is the next step in the journey to fully achieve Air Force missions, while also opening doors to adaptive and innovative operational plans and relevant organization structure; and

WHEREAS, Continued investment in the core competencies of aerospace power— aerospace superiority, global attack, precision engagement, information superiority, rapid global mobility, and agile combat support—will continue to be the key to preserving the Air Force's ability to respond to threats to America's national security whenever and wherever they occur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Congress to appropriately support the United States Air Force's commitment to attract, retain, and train quality people and to mold them into an expeditionary aerospace force capable of flexibly responding to threats to America's national security; to enhance readiness through its continued focus on total force integration and the integration of air and space systems; and to build and implement a transformation and modernization program that will maintain America's dominance in air, space, and cyberspace well into the 21st Century.

Resolution No. 181: Support For The National Space Program

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The national security, technology and economic welfare of the United States are of paramount importance to the people of America; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aerospace research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic, social, environmental and political institution and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The dissemination and use of space systems technology, the research programs on which it is based, and the spin-off products, techniques and services derived from the U.S. space program are vital components of the nation's economy and the well-being of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. space program has kept the nation on the leading edge of the technology frontier, has created jobs, improved communications, electronics, material, diagnosis and treatment of medical care for veterans and all Americans, fostered new scholastic interest in space science, provided insight into the evolution of the universe and current state of the earth, its environment and its solar system, and has provided visions and objectives for the future for business, industry and academia and the nation's youth; and

WHEREAS, In view of changes in domestic and international priorities in the areas of geopolitics, foreign policy, national security, economics and science, affirmation of new long range and lasting objectives are required for the manned and unmanned U.S. national security, civil and commercial space programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to adopt the following objectives with regard to the National Space Program:

1. **Full funding support for the President's Space Exploration Initiative (SEI) including NASA's other important roles in aeronautics research and science; and**
2. **A balanced NASA program that maintains U.S. preeminence in science and aeronautical technologies as a high priority while returning to the Moon and exploring Mars; Aeronautics research and science should not be sacrificed in order to meet an arbitrary date for return to the Moon; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that as we move into the 21st century, we must continue to support science, aeronautics research and venture beyond and into the promises of space.

Resolution No. 182: Support For One Manager To Preside Over The U.S. Military Air And Space Programs

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Military assets in space are essential to all levels of conflict and all military services; and

WHEREAS, The development of an overall national policy for the deployment of space assets and for the defense of such assets will require vigorous, dedicated, advocacy by the military users of space assets; and

WHEREAS, Successful advocacy of space issues will require the long term development of knowledge and doctrine as experience is gained and requirements evolve in the face of present and future risks as that presented by the recent Chinese anti-satellite missile test; and

WHEREAS, There is a long and success history of the Department of Defense assigning single manager responsibility for essential, long lasting, evolving military assets that reach across service boundaries as exemplified by the establishment of single management responsibility for transportation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion advocate to Congress that the United States Air Force be given single manager responsibility for the nation's military space programs.

Resolution No. 184: Support For Aeronautical And Space Exploration

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(Consolidated with Resolution 233 (WI))

WHEREAS, The United States has been the world leader in aeronautics for almost 90 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 Commission an Aerospace Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010 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 to maintain U.S. technological leadership**
- 2. Adequate funding to build, upgrade and enhance the nation's civilian and military aerospace research facilities and wind tunnels**
- 3. A renewed national commitment to education involving academia in aeronautical and aerospace engineering research and technologies insuring a state of the art educated work force**
- 4. Overwatch and investigating functions and related activities with respect to the transfer of American aerospace technology abroad**
- 5. Provide that all of our military aircrafts are design, manufactured and assembled within the borders of the United States; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That the Nation must sustain its commitment to aerospace engineering research and development if it is to maintain its role as the world leader as we move into the next century.

Resolution No. 232: Employ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Origin: Wisconsin

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Historically unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's) commonly known as drones, were primarily used for reconnaissance; and

WHEREAS, Currently, military UAV's perform both reconnaissance as well as attack missions; and

WHEREAS, No other weapon platform has more significantly transformed the way the U.S. military wages war in recent years; and

WHEREAS, Since 2006, operations have grown from about 165,000 hours to more than 550,000 hours annually; and

WHEREAS, It is difficult to find any other technology in the Defense Department that in a single decade has made such a tremendous impact on our war-fighting capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the U.S. Government be encouraged to continue to proceed on a path of transforming America's armed forces into a modern force capable of providing for the security of all Americans, strengthening and expanding our military capabilities using unmanned aerial vehicles.

Rejected

Resolution No. 183 (VA): Procurement Of Sufficient F-22 Aircraft

**Homeland Security And Civil Preparedness Committee
Charles E. Kruger, Minnesota, Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 41: Fully Enforce Immigration Laws

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Each sovereign nation is responsible for enforcement of laws regarding its borders; and

WHEREAS, Citizens of each sovereign nation should be protected from those who violate their borders; and

WHEREAS, The United States has laws specifying means to obtain legal means to enter our nation; and

WHEREAS, These immigration laws are being violated each day by persons entering our nation and endangering our national security; and

WHEREAS, There are existing means to arrest, detain, or deport those who violate these immigration laws; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the strict enforcement of immigration laws already in existence; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That benefits of any kind should not be granted to those immigrants who have gained access to our nation in an illegal manner.

Resolution No. 42: Support For Armed Forces Blood Donor Program And Blood Drives

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(Consolidated with Resolution 117 (MD))

WHEREAS, The Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) is the Department of Defense's exclusive blood collection agency; and

WHEREAS, The ASBP is the only organization that collects and supplies blood produces for the men and women of our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Since its founding in 1919 The American Legion has had a history of supporting our troops through one of our four pillars, National Security; and

WHEREAS, In 2007 the Department of Defense changed its 55-year old policy of allowing only active duty military, dependents, and federal workers on a military installation or federal property to donate to the blood program; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is comprised of military veterans from past current conflicts; and

WHEREAS, These veterans are capable and willing to donate blood but do not have access to military installations due to security concerns; and

WHEREAS, There are many Legion posts near military installations that have the facilities to host the ASBP; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion solicit support from the Department of Defense (DOD) to allow local Posts to host blood drives; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage all Posts and Departments to organize and sponsor on site ASBP blood drives when and where possible with the approval of local military commanders.

Resolution No. 129: Support For Financial Anti-Terrorism Law Enforcement

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, U.S. Customs, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service are the first line of defense of the nation in combating the financial security threats that face America from both home and abroad, and is charged with a number of missions that are vital to the security of the nation; and

WHEREAS, These missions include: policing, investigation and enforcement of the financial laws to ensure the integrity and stability of our nation's banking and financial institutions from both foreign and domestic abuse or manipulation, and to ensure a stable economic environment that provides for legal investment and export opportunities; and

WHEREAS, These Agencies are charged with the role of securing both the physical and cyber borders of our nation, and while mindful of the constitutional rights of individuals; and

WHEREAS, Financial investigations and prosecutions by the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations and Internal Revenue Services have uncovered illicit financing schemes and revenue accounts of listed terrorist organizations through knowing or unknowing individuals, investment development groups, associations, charitable and other legitimate organizations; and

WHEREAS, These Agencies must have the ability to use every legal tool and policy at their disposal to ensure that terrorist organizations do not have the ability to be financed through our domestic and the international financial systems; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee adopted this resolution at its Spring 2005 meeting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports legislation that strengthens the abilities of the United States Departments of Justice and Homeland Security and the Internal Revenue Service to police, investigate and prosecute financial institutions or individuals within the parameters

of the U.S. Constitution that use legitimate and illegitimate financial means to help support both domestic and international terrorism.

Resolution No. 130: Support For Homeland Security And The War On Terror

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil have made Americans painfully aware of their vulnerability to violence from international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, These terrorists were able to carry out their attacks because previous emphasis by the U.S. Government on homeland security and intelligence collection, while improving over recent years, had been inadequate and incapable of preventing such attacks; and

WHEREAS, The National Defense Authorization Act of 2003 established the new Department of Homeland Security as well as a new cabinet position designed to be the single source of authority, at the highest levels, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, Although the Congress has appropriated funding for the Department of Homeland Security and its numerous agencies and functions, appropriations continue to be required to fund homeland security tasks and functions at regional, state and local levels across the Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security so as to harmonize the many agencies and offices with Homeland Security responsibilities into a viable and credible deterrent to those who seek to inflict violence on the United States and the American people; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress also fully fund those homeland security tasks and functions being performed at regional, state and local levels.

Resolution No. 131: Support For Anti Terrorism Law Enforcement

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil have made Americans painfully aware of their vulnerability to violence from international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, These terrorists were able to carry out their attacks because emphasis by the U.S. Government on homeland security and intelligence collection, while improving over recent years, have been inadequate and incapable of preventing such attacks; and

WHEREAS, The multiple federal and local government agencies responsible for safeguarding the United States homeland are disjointed, have had multiple chains-of-command, inadequate communications links and were incapable of effective coordination; and

WHEREAS, On September 20, 2001, President Bush announced the establishment of the Office of Homeland Security, a new cabinet position designed to be the single

source of authority, at the highest levels, for all homeland defense programs and policies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the War on Terrorism and the Department of Homeland Security and urges the United States Government to make the security of the United States the top national priority; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to arm the Department of Homeland Security with the legal powers and fiduciary tools to harmonize the many agencies and offices with Homeland Security responsibilities into a viable and credible deterrent to those who seek to inflict violence on the United States and the American people.

Resolution No. 133: Support For The U.S. Coast Guard In Homeland Security

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, By public law the United States Coast Guard is at all times one of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard was able to respond to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, within hours and its homeland security missions have doubled; and

WHEREAS, Included in the numerous peacetime and wartime missions of the Coast Guard are law enforcement in its many facets to include drug interdiction and interception of illegal aliens; environment protection, maritime safety including search and rescue responsibilities and inspecting and licensing Merchant Marine ships; and National Security to include port security and serving as an essential wartime and peacetime partner of the U.S. Navy; and

WHEREAS, Each year the Coast Guard saves about \$2.5 billion in property, saves 4,000 lives, repaying to the American taxpayer about seven times their annual operating budget for search and rescue. During 2002, 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; and

WHEREAS, Since Fiscal Year 1997 to present, the Coast Guard has seized 806,469 pounds of cocaine and 333,285 pounds of marijuana; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard was transferred from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security, these homeland security missions will continue during the War on Terrorism; 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 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 Program 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully fund the United States Coast Guard to achieve its numerous vital missions including homeland security, law enforcement, environmental protection, maritime safety and other missions as assigned as well as the funding of its “Deepwater” initiatives; 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 Homeland Security 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. 134: The American Legion Role In Homeland Security

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Since before September 11, 2001, our Nation has been at risk to the new and changing invisible threat of terrorism launched from abroad; the United States, even during the War on Terrorism, has no more important mission than protecting the homeland and her citizens from future terrorism; and

WHEREAS, The National Strategy for Homeland Security aligns and focuses homeland security functions into six critical mission areas, namely, intelligence and warning; border and transportation security; domestic counterterrorism; protecting critical infrastructure; defending against catastrophic terrorism; and emergency preparedness and response; and

WHEREAS, The responsibility for providing homeland security is shared between federal, state and local governments, and the private sector; many homeland security activities, such as intelligence gathering and border security, are properly accomplished at the federal level: In other circumstances, like first responder capabilities, it is more appropriate for state and local governments to handle these responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, After the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, Presidential and Congressional budgets identified four priority areas for additional resources and they included: Support first responders, defend against bioterrorism, secure America’s borders and to use 21st century technology to secure the homeland; and

WHEREAS, Although there are Homeland Security appropriations committees in the United States Congress, there are no Homeland Security authorizing committees; and

WHEREAS, According to the Council for Excellence in Government, the greatest resource the United States has for enhancing homeland security-which has been largely untapped thus far-is the American people; and

WHEREAS, Polls have indicated that over 62 percent of Americans say they would be willing to spend time volunteering with homeland security planning, training and practicing drills in their communities, yet some 84 percent of Americans and first responders polled admitted to low awareness of federal, state and local emergency preparedness plans; and

WHEREAS, As former members of the Armed Forces trained in vigilance and security, who would be more qualified citizens than veterans to assist in many homeland security activities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges its Legionnaires, Posts and Departments to assist in Homeland Security efforts in communities for example, by developing emergency kits and plans; by remaining informed and assisting families, schools, workplaces and communities in developing emergency plans and checklists; by reporting suspicious activity, or working with community-based organizations.

Resolution No. 135: Support For Citizen Corps

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is composed of grassroots Posts across the Country which have had experience in community civil preparedness; and

WHEREAS, In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps, which is an effort to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility through volunteerism; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps, a component of USA Freedom Corps, is a locally-driven initiative to have every American become an active participant in preventing, preparing for, and responding to crime, natural disasters and other emergencies; and

WHEREAS, The Citizen Corps Affiliate Program expands the resources and materials available to states and local communities by partnering with Programs and Organizations that offer resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their community safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps Program Affiliates support Citizen Corps Council activities by helping to establish training and information delivery systems for neighborhoods, schools, and businesses, and by helping with family preparedness and crime prevention initiatives in a community or across a region; and

WHEREAS, The programs of Citizen Corps are jointly managed by the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice and Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps Councils help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources; and

WHEREAS, The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training; and

WHEREAS, The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program strengthens communities by helping medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need; and

WHEREAS, An expanded Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) Program incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission,

while also serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training; and

WHEREAS, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers; and

WHEREAS, The Fire Corps Program has the goal of providing support and supplementing resource-constrained fire departments through the use of civilian volunteers for non-fire suppression related activities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That all Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to become involved in their local Citizen Corps activities, and establish their own programs under an affiliation with the Citizen Corps and encourage one another to take the CERT Program Training; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reaffirm its Citizen Corps affiliation, and that the Congress be urged to support and fully fund all components of Citizen Corps; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Citizen Corps remain as a permanent part of the nation's approach to homeland security and disaster preparedness; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion annually participates in National Preparedness Month.

Resolution No. 223: Support For U.S. Blood Banks

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States' budget is being cut, including the budget for the National Guard and other defense forces; and

WHEREAS, The public needs to be kept informed to prevent too large cuts in these forces; and

WHEREAS, The public needs to be constantly reminded that the Blood Banks of the United States need to be supported by The American Legion and the public; and

WHEREAS, Emergencies continue to come up where blood is needed without warning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion continues its support of Blood Banks to cover such emergencies; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues promoting the donation of blood for all emergencies where lives are at stake.

Referred to the Standing Committee on National Security

Resolution No. 31 (MI): Abolish The Immigration And Nationality Act Of 1965

Resolution No. 171 (IN): Establish Separate Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Award

Resolution No. 263 (IL): Oppose Amnesty And Legal Residency For Illegal Immigrants

**Law and Order Committee
George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman**

Received And Recorded

Resolution No. 148 (MD): Support For The Right To Bear Arms

**Merchant Marine Committee
Charles Moreland, Florida, Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 343: Commercial Shipbuilding For Defense

Origin: Convention Committee on National Security

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States emerged as the world's foremost economic power and trading nation after the Cold war, and America's policymakers have neglected to use these advantages to sustain the nation's naval and maritime power; and

WHEREAS, Less than 5 percent of America's import and export tonnage is carried in U.S. Flag ships; and

WHEREAS, The 600-ship navy envisioned by President Reagan would have kept the ship yards busy; today, with a Navy only one-third as large and declining further, America's shipyards are in trouble; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, only 6 U.S. shipyards had contracts to build large ocean-going ships, down from 11 in 1993, and the industry, as a whole, has seen its work force decline by 30 percent since 1991; this undermines the ability of the United States to rebuild and expand its naval and maritime forces; and

WHEREAS, China has been expanding its shipbuilding and now accounts for 7 percent of the world total, but short of their 10 percent target for 2000; Beijing is restructuring the industry into two regional corporations answerable to the government; and

WHEREAS, There are only about 197 U.S. Flagged merchant ships, and by comparison, the Chinese-Flagged merchant fleet numbers over 1,500 ships; more than 400 of these ships, carrying 30 percent of China's trade, are operated by the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), a state-owned conglomerate with close ties to Beijing's military and routinely provides shipping support to Chinese military and naval exercises; and

WHEREAS, U.S. commercial build rates are also not large enough to provide the strategic sealift needed in an emergency, or to support a shipbuilding industry large enough to meet future U.S. naval needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Congress to vigorously act to stop the further erosion of our vital maritime capability; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress to boost naval budgets, promote commercial shipbuilding, expand the use of U.S.

flagships in world commerce, and resist foreign actions that would further damage America's defense industrial base.

Resolution No. 344: Support For The Jones Maritime Act And Related Cabotage Laws

Origin: Convention Committee on National Security

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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;" 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, As of 2005, the privately owned ocean-going U.S.-flag fleet consisted of only 197 active ships, which includes 106 ships in domestic trade and 36 other engaged exclusively in U.S. government work, and only 91 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support the Jones Act and related maritime cabotage laws critical to America's maritime infrastructure, and therefore, to the United States national defense.

**Military Affairs Committee
Leo Malloy, Massachusetts, Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 8: Include Holistic Medical Practices In Tricare Coverage

Origin: South Dakota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has recognized that Chiropractic Care for our veterans is an extremely important part of their overall health; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides chiropractic care and services to no fewer than 75 VA medical centers by December 31, 2010 and all VA medical centers by December 31, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Not all retired veterans have reasonable access to the VA medical centers near them due to the travel distance, age, and service-connected disabilities that makes it very difficult to travel the long distances to the nearest VA medical center; and

WHEREAS, Many retired veterans have TRICARE as their health care program; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE, is not an insurance plan, but rather a health care entitlement earned by our nation's military members for their service to this country; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE currently does not cover chiropractic care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion support an effort to encourage the TRICARE Management Authority, a department within The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), to include Chiropractic care for veterans in the TRICARE health care package.

Resolution No. 39: Prosecute Alleged Terrorists As Enemy Combatants

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States of America is engaged in a global war on terror; and

WHEREAS, While our adversaries (al Qaeda and the Taliban) are not members of any sovereign nation's military, they are by virtue of their actions alien unprivileged enemy belligerents; and

WHEREAS, Congress has established legislation for the prosecution of detained alien unprivileged enemy belligerents with the passage of the Military Commissions Act of 2009; and

WHEREAS, The adoption of resolution number 169 at the eighty-ninth National Convention affirms The American Legion's support for the war on terror; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the United States Government prosecute all alleged alien unprivileged enemy belligerents in accordance with the Military Commissions Act of 2009; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That alien unprivileged enemy belligerents prosecuted by The United States government not be afforded the constitutional rights guaranteed to the citizens of The United States of America.

Resolution No. 118: Extend Stop Loss Bonus Payments

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been the premiere veterans advocacy organization since its inception in 1919; and

WHEREAS, Such advocacy includes support of a well-trained and capable military through coordination of funding measures that impact those members serving under authorizations in the United States Code Title 10; and

WHEREAS, Current protections and funding under the National Defense Authorization Act provides bonus payments in the amount of five hundred dollars per month to those military personal who have been stop-lossed and retained on active duty

by the United States government past their documented and contractual date of separation to meet the force requirements of the military; and

WHEREAS, Such bonus is authorized to those personnel serving under Title 10 authority, to include the Reserve component of the armed forces, while excluding National Guard personnel similarly stop-lossed and retained on Title 32 USC authorization during periods of pre and post- deployment activity, resulting in a severe financial disparity for a number of months between those personnel on Title 32 orders and those Personnel on Title 10 orders; and

WHEREAS, An opportunity exists to correct said disparity through legislative action by the Congress of the United States amending the authorizing language in the National Defense Authorization Act; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That Congress be urged to amend and insert appropriate language in the National Defense Appropriations Act (NDAA) to extend stop loss bonus payments to those personnel retained under Title 32 orders.

Resolution No. 132: Support For The Non-Federal Roles Of The National Guard

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 approximately 50 percent of the total United States' forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units also perform such invaluable non-federal roles as quelling domestic civil disturbances to include, providing relief assistance in man-made or natural disasters, 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, Past 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 extended deployment 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to retain National Guard units at reasonable readiness 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 or federal roles as required to include border security.

Resolution No. 136: Codify Burial Eligibility For Arlington National Cemetery
Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery and that such burial be restricted to service members who die on active-duty; to our most decorated veterans to include recipients of the Purple Heart; former members of the armed forces separated from the military with a physical disability of 30 percent or more before October 1, 1949; and to veterans who spent full careers in uniform, and to their spouses and eligible children; to former prisoners of war; and for the President or former Presidents as Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes there should be no waivers for unqualified persons except under unique and compelling circumstances that comport with codified non-partisan waiver procedures as established by Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That eligibility for interment of cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans in the Columbarium at Arlington should also be codified.

Resolution No. 137: Authorize And Fund Tricare For Reserve Components And Dependents

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DOD) created TRICARE to augment its Military Medical System; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE largely consists of regional Federally-contracted, for-profit health care providers; and

WHEREAS, DOD's utilization of Reserve Components in the performance of traditionally active duty missions continues globally; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components, when activated to perform full-time duties, can no longer afford their civilian health care coverage for themselves and their dependents. Also, numerous activated Reservists have been non-deployable due to health or dental problems; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components are among the 40 million Americans with no health care coverage for themselves and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The Reserve Components continue to experience recruiting and retention challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress to authorize and fund the Department of Defense (DOD) in providing permanent TRICARE healthcare for members of the Reserve Components and their dependents.

**Resolution No. 139: Support Full Funding For The Department Of Army Budget
Origin: Maryland**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Army is serving a nation at war and, as America's strategic and decisive land and expeditionary combat force, is a proud member of the Joint Force providing combatant commanders with relevant and ready campaign power; and

WHEREAS, The Army's compelling needs include providing landscape power, training and equipping soldiers and adaptive leaders for the vigors of war, sustaining the All-Volunteer Force, and providing the infrastructure and support systems to ensure the Army is able to execute its missions; and

WHEREAS, The momentum of Army transformation and modernization needs to be maintained so as to deal with irregular, catastrophic, disruptive and traditional challenges; and

WHEREAS, The Army vision is to remain the preeminent land power, the ultimate instrument of national resolve, that is both ready and relevant to the challenges of the dangerous and complex 21st century security environment; and

WHEREAS, Support and funding is required to achieve critical recruiting and retention goals for all Army components; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the Army's budget and wartime demands be fully funded and that supplemental funding is required for combat and contingency operations and to reset and replace battle losses of equipment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, The Congress will ensure that the Army is fully staffed, trained, and equipped to achieve victory in the War on Terrorism; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress enables the Army to maintain the momentum of key programs while accelerating transformation.

**Resolution No. 140: Support For The Selective Service Registration Program
Origin: Maryland**

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, Despite the end of the Cold War, American servicemen and women are deployed world-wide to include their participation in peace enforcement missions in

Bosnia and Kosovo and engaging in the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, and homeland security; the unpredictability and volatility of worldwide tensions urge us to think in terms of continued preparedness; 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 than 90 percent of our 18-25 year olds have registered and there is virtually no resistance to the Program; 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, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion supports the retention of the Selective Service Registration Program as being in the best interests of all Americans, and its maintenance is a proven cost-effective, essential, and rapid means of reconstituting the required forces to protect our national security interests.

Resolution No. 141: Grant Access To All U.S. Military Facilities For Military Retirees And Dependents

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, A portion of the compensated benefits of military retirees is considered to be the use of military facilities, such as PX, BX, Post Exchange, Commissary, healthcare, recreational facilities, mail, and other U.S. military facilities worldwide; and

WHEREAS, As a direct result of the Status of Forces Agreements between the U.S. Government and host countries many of these benefits are usually denied to retired military members and their families/dependents residing or visiting U.S. military facilities located outside the U.S.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That all future Status of Forces Agreements negotiated, renegotiated, or revised with host countries should allow for the unimpeded use of all U.S. military facilities by retired U.S. military members and their dependents, and that U.S. military personnel be more fairly treated in the court system in the Republic of Korea and Okinawa.

Resolution No. 143: Support For Awarding The Purple Heart For Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**Origin: Maryland****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The Purple Heart was established by General George Washington and was reestablished by the President of the United States in War Department General Orders 3 in 1932 and was to be awarded to members of the Armed Forces were wounded or killed in action or died of wounds as a result of combat action with hostile enemy forces; and

WHEREAS, General Washington, in establishing the Purple Heart, "intended awarding or authorizing officers would not make personal judgments based on how more or less serious a wound or injury appeared, and that being wounded in combat-by any degree-was a true distinction of 'military merit;' "

WHEREAS, While clearly an individual recognition, the Purple Heart differs from all other decorations in that an individual is not "recommended" for the decoration, but, rather, individuals are entitled to it upon meeting certain specific criteria; and

WHEREAS, The signature wound in the Global War on Terrorism has been the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), most often caused by roadside explosions (IEDs), which are medically classified as mild, moderate and severe; and

WHEREAS, Over 14,000 Purple Hearts have been awarded, thus far, of the more than 1.4 million service members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the DoD reports that 11-28 percent of combat troops may have been exposed to bomb or shell blasts and suffered at least mild TBIs; and 30 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan casualties at Walter Reed Army Medical Center have been diagnosed with mild, moderate or severe TBIs; and

WHEREAS, Military Uniform Regulations currently call for awarding Purple Heart medals for "concussion injuries caused as a result of enemy-generated explosions;" and

WHEREAS, According to the recently published "Rebuilding the Trust" report of the Independent Review Group investigating Walter Reed AMC, it was noted that "no standard administrative codes exist for documenting even mild traumatic brain injuries in medical records;" and

WHEREAS, According to military medical authorities, combat casualty moderate or severe neurotrauma TBIs, unlike the psychological Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, may be accompanied by internal wounding to include portions of the brain being damaged and malfunctioning, internal bleeding, and even death, which would dictate the presence of internal TBI physical wounds and justification for the issuance of the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, The essence of this resolution was adopted by the National Executive Committee at its Spring Meetings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense and Military Services, as appropriate, to review the regulatory eligibility criteria for awarding of the Purple Heart and recognizing the internal and external wounding aspects of Traumatic Brain Injuries for purposes of awarding Purple Hearts for these wounds resulting from combat actions with hostile forces in the Global War On Terrorism; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges that military medical personnel develop the necessary administrative codes for reporting TBIs for the purposes of detecting, reporting, treatment, and research of traumatic brain injuries to include the awarding of timely Purple Hearts.

Resolution No. 145: Support For Military Quality Of Life Standards

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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, 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, Over 30,000 Reservists had been activated for homeland security and the war on terrorism and with Reservists performing active duty missions for longer periods of time, their benefits need to be significantly expanded and improved; and

WHEREAS, Our military retirees and their dependents and military survivors are deserving and rightfully entitled to adequate health care treatment, concurrent receipt and regular cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans; and

WHEREAS, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund such quality of life features including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Military pay comparability for the Armed Forces and regular increases in the Basic Allowances for Quarters; renovation and construction of military quarters and increased funding for child day care centers are direly needed. Pay raises must be competitive with the private sector;
2. Adequate medical, mental and dental health services; morale, welfare and recreational facilities; and non-privatized exchanges and commissary facilities. The Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) and its functions should be retained and not relegated to the military services;
3. Preserving an attractive retirement system for the active and reserve components and annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) paid at the same rate and 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;
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 as well as Special Compensation pays for disabled military retirees;
6. That the SBP/DIC offset be eliminated;
7. TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy program for Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors, should be adequately funded; and regular cost-of-living adjustments to military retirement deployment pay, capital gains tax exclusions, tax-free and increased death gratuity payments, and combat zone tax exclusions for service in South Korea;
8. Congressional re-enactment of Impact Aid to fund the local public school education of military dependents;
9. Adequately protecting the American public and the Armed Forces from the actual or potentially harmful effects of friendly and hostile chemical, biological and nuclear agents or munitions;
10. Urging the Congress to extend and improve additional quality of life benefits, allowances and privileges to the National Guard and Reserves involved in Homeland Security and other missions so as to more closely approximate those of the active force. Military retirement pay and TRICARE healthcare for members of the Reserve Components should be authorized before age 60. Hazardous duty and incentive pays for Reservists should be the same as active duty; tax credits to private businesses that pay the difference between military and civilian salaries to mobilized Reservists and restore travel exemptions for Reserve and Guard members for expenses associated with attending drills;
11. 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;
12. Whenever a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is conducted, The American Legion will urge that certain base facilities such as base medical facilities, commissaries, exchanges and other facilities be preserved for use by active duty and Reservist personnel and military retired veterans and their families;
13. That Walter Reed Army Medical Center not be closed until after the Global War on Terrorism has ended;
14. That the numerous, recurring and serious pay problems experienced by the Active and Reserve Components be immediately resolved;
15. That Traumatic Brain Injury and Combat Stress Disorders be diagnosed and effectively treated in the military; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urge the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund quality of life features for Active Duty, National Guard and Reservists as well as military retirees, veterans and their dependents, and military survivors.

Resolution No. 270: Support For Bugles Across America To Provide Live Taps For Military Honors**Origin: Tennessee****Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution 273 (OK))**

WHEREAS, The American Legion, in its support of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, feels that every honorably discharged veteran deserves a dignified funeral ceremony with proper military honors; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion works closely with the National Cemetery Administration, Arlington National Cemetery, and other federal and state governments and entities to ensure a proper burial for all veterans, as well as honorable burial services for the veteran, the family of the veteran, and other loved ones; and

WHEREAS, By 2007 DoD Directive 1300.15 section 5.3.7 an active search is to be made for a live bugler, whether they be military, civilian, volunteer, or contracted; if a live bugler is not found it is then authorized to use the electronic bugle or other electronic recording; and

WHEREAS, Bugles Across America is a volunteer organization and a not-for-profit 503 (C) 3 organization that provides live buglers; and

WHEREAS, Bugles Across American currently has over 5,000 buglers in the United States, Europe, and Australia; and

WHEREAS, A live bugler can provide the proper honor with feeling, emotion, and dignity that cannot be reached with any electronic device; and

WHEREAS, The services of Bugles Across America are free of charge, to any veteran family, retiree, Veterans Service Organizations, Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Military Units; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That the largest Veterans Service Organization in the United States support Bugles Across American to provide live taps for military honors in-lieu of electronic recordings when and available; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion encourage its members posts, districts, and departments to fully support and utilize the resources of Bugles Across America; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion desires to give our veterans and their families the opportunity for the final piece of dignity so deserved, with live Taps.

Referred to the Standing Committee on National Security

Resolution No. 3 (DC): Establish A Cold War Victory Medal**Consolidated with Resolution 153 (MD)****Resolution No. 257 (IL): Extend Selective Service Program To Include Registration Of Women 18-25****Rejected****Resolution No. 7 (SD): Award The Army Combat Action Badge**

Naval Affairs Committee
William B. Goede, Minnesota, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 149: Support Full Funding And Resourcing For The U.S. Navy And Marine Corps

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Our national security depends to a large extent on the ability of the United States to maintain sea superiority as well as strategic combat capabilities of the United States Navy and Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The Navy and Marine Corps have continually shown the ability of the United States to maintain a forward posture, projecting US power overseas, when and where needed around the world to uphold our national security; and

WHEREAS, To maintain force readiness, the Navy and Marine Corps must balance priorities of manpower, current and future readiness, quality of service and alignment; and

WHEREAS, Balancing critical combat readiness with future navy requirements is essential to US Naval superiority; and

WHEREAS, A 21st century Navy requires rapid technological advancements in the areas of command and control, which will require judicious upgrades of its systems; and

WHEREAS, The programs that will be the core of Navy and Marine Corps forces in the 21st century require substantial investments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully resource and fund the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to provide credible combat power from the sea.

Resolution No. 170: Commission The USS *American Legion*

Origin: South Carolina

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is composed of members from all branches of the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The United States Navy has provided invaluable services throughout history for all branches of the military since the founding of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, there was a Navy ship by the name of the USS *American Legion* where as members of all branches of the armed services have served in and transported on U.S. Navy ships; and

WHEREAS, The USS *American Legion* and The American Legion both have and continues to serve The United States of America with dedication and pride; and

WHEREAS, This great dedication and distinction of service should continue; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Department of South Carolina assembled in Greenville, South Carolina June 4-6, 2010, annual Department Convention unanimously support and approved this resolution for a new USS *American Legion*; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, September 1, 2, 2010, That The American Legion strongly supports and recommends that a new ship entitled the USS *American Legion* be commissioned by the Department of Navy after the worlds largest veterans organization that is “Still Serving America.”

Delegates also reviewed Resolution 300 (Reorganization of Arlington National Cemetery), submitted by the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Mr. Commander, as a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Virginia, I move the adoption of this report.

CHAIRMAN DELLINGER: Commander Hill, this concludes the report of the Convention Committee on National Security. Mr. Commander, as a duly elected delegate to this 92nd National Convention, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Hearing a random second, is there any discussion? All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? Report of National Security is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: As national commander one of my greatest privileges has been to visit and witness the inspirational fighting spirit exhibited by our wounded heroes in military medical hospitals around the world. The money that you helped us win by voting for Operation Comfort Warriors in the Pepsi contest is still supporting our wounded warriors. But it is also half gone. After purchasing therapeutic athletic equipment for wounded warriors at Fort Gordon, Georgia, I received a letter from the unit thanking the Legion family for "supplying a smile." Considering that these men and women have been supplying our freedom, it's the least we can do. The Pepsi money will not last forever, and we must continue to financially support this great program. At this time, I will accept donations for Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BENTLEY (ID): Mr. Commander, we have a check for \$500 from the Department of Idaho, due to the generosity of Post 147 in Priest River, Idaho.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Commander, the Department of Missouri would like to donate an additional \$540.25.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Commander Clarence, the Sons of the American Legion squadron in my post for the last three years, the first year they raised over \$15,000 for the Fisher House and last year \$15,000 for homes for our troops, and this year they raised this check for your charity. And they do this all in one day with the help of the Legion Auxiliary.

The Sons of American Legion Squadron of Post 78 in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, and I'm proud to present this check for \$11,300. And joining me here is our Commander Frank MacDonald, our National Executive Committeeman Milton Lashus and our national vice commander Mark Avis.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: That donation totals \$12,340.25, and the total for the Convention is \$13,390.25.

I'd like to now call my family to the lectern. And while their coming up here, I'd like the remnants of everybody that's left from Florida to please rise. (*Cheers and applause*) I'd like to thank Florida for all that you've done in the past however many years it took to get here. Bob Procter for honchoing (sic) the whole thing and being the chairman of the committee; Dennis Boland as the co-chairman, Mike McDaniel as the secretary/treasurer

and the rest of the state that served on the committees and did all of the things that you had to do to become the national commander. Thank you Florida. (*Applause*)

Here on the stage with me is my wife, Liz, who has supported my military career and now my Legion career just about from the beginning in both cases. So thank you, Liz. (*Applause*) I have a stepson at home who's a member of the Legion and the Sons, has a wife who's also a member of the Legion and the Auxiliary. My son was in the Army, served in Desert Storm, and his wife served in the Marine Corps. And they have two daughters that are both in the Auxiliary. And I have another daughter at home who has a son and a daughter that are in the Sons and Auxiliary. And my daughter did Navy time and is a dual member of the Legion and the Auxiliary. And here on the stage with me is my youngest daughter, Nicole, and her two daughters, Kadence and McKenzie, who are all Auxiliary members; and her husband, David, who's a Son of the American Legion.

Will my national vice commanders please come forward. You've represented me well during the past 12 months with your devotion to this great organization and with much sacrifice on your part. As a token of my appreciation I would like to present each of you with a gift.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Commander, on behalf of all your national vice commanders, I'd like to present you with this gift. We know you like to read, we know you like to tweet, so we thought we'd get you something to make it just a little bit lighter to read and tweet. Here you go, commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It's an iPad. (*Applause*) Thank you all. I'll now call on the national historian, sergeant-at-arms, chaplain and my aide to come forward. You each played important roles in the success of our organization during the past year. I salute you for your service. Please accept these gifts as a token of my appreciation.

LARRY WHITE (FL): Commander, it's been my privilege to serve as your aide this year. And thank you for taking not only me but 3,000 of your close friends along with you on your journey. I know they enjoyed knowing where you were, what you were doing and what you were eating. And I think you have established the next great tool in membership, the social networks. On behalf of Sandy and I we'd like to present you with a few tokens.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Oh, man. Troy Polamalu. For those of you who don't know him, Pittsburgh Steelers. Okay. This is the United States Navy window art hand-painted glass sun catcher. This is a polo shirt with my Academy crest on it, '72. There you go. You all eat your hearts out on that blanket. Now we'll have a few words from National Adjutant Dan Wheeler.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Thank you, Mr. Commander. May I invite the three executive directors, the national treasurer, and the national judge advocate to join me up here? Mr. Commander, we, your senior staff, and the other 277 employees at headquarters, have thoroughly enjoyed working with you this year while you ushered the Legion into the age of social media. Under your leadership the website continued to be enhanced, the media marketing division was created to more effectively reach out to the media and to social networks.

Your leadership style is business first, and you set the example with many e-mails, tweets, and other communications occurring late into the night and early into the morning. So much so we had to assign two additional people in order to keep up with your correspondence, which was multitudinous. You emphasized attention to detail over and over again. You made us ever more mindful of its importance, and you improved our

effectiveness through that emphasis. Our slogan has now become "Attention to detail, four words to live by."

You kept everything on an even keel, regardless of the challenges. Even in the midst of a storm you were the eye, calm and reasonable, an excellent example of effective leadership. You are somewhat reserved and perhaps a bit difficult to get to know. But once that has been accomplished, you have proven yourself to be a warm, easy-going, self-deprecating, and genuinely humorous individual. You've inspired in all of us loyalty, trust, and a desire to excel sometimes just to get you to say "well done," which you did frequently.

And speaking of humorous, your wife, Liz, is a stitch. We all love her. She's warm, caring, very lovely person with a terrific left hook, as you found out. She's the first lady of The American Legion, a perfect first lady and we will miss you both very much.

Oh, and speaking of missing, I know we both share a love of collecting challenge coins, and I've got one that I think you would be very jealous of, now that I think about it. I happen to have a challenge coin from the governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Now do you have one of these?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I used to.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Liz snuck it out of your room for me. Today is your 53 years of stewardship — 53 weeks of stewardship. It just seemed like 53 years. *(Laughter)* We, your staff, wanted to present you with something that may cause you to remember our relationship with you: You can open it now.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It's got a lot of air in it.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: It does.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: It's an empty box.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: You've lost it?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Something I'm used to. An empty jewelry box.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Well, as you go from commander to captain again we hope you will proudly wear this 1972 Naval Academy graduate ring around your neck, because you don't seem to be able to keep any of them that are awarded to you. That is from your class. *(Applause)* This is a gift from your 282 employees who admire you. We wish you fair winds and following seas on all of your future deployments. It has been a great pleasure to work with you. We admire you greatly and we wish you the very best of everything.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I hope this one lasts longer than the last one. There's a tale that goes with me and Academy rings. I spent most of my time at sea, so I didn't wear rings and things like that when I was onboard a ship. And when I got stationed in Italy, either coming or going, when I got back to the states, every single jewelry box that I owned was empty. Somewhere, either on arrival or departure, the Italians got my Academy ring, my high school rings, my dad's high school rings. I had a gold Command Ashore pin. They got everything. It was all empty boxes.

So after my department commander year, the department officers of Florida bought me a replacement ring and it lasted about four years. I took it off one day when I was changing oil in my car, stuck it in my pocket and forgot about it. And the next day when I emptied my pockets, it wasn't there. So I have no clue where that one ended up. So this is the third one. That's why it's around my neck. *(Laughter and applause)*

**Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
 Ronald F. Conley, (PA), Past National Commander (Colors)
 John P. 'Jake' Comer, (MA), Past National Commander (Plaque)**

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: National Vice Commander Mark Avis, will you please take the gavel and preside over the next order of business.

...National Vice Commander Avis assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: Thank you, commander. After serving this past year as your national vice commander, I am honored to represent all members of The American Legion in presiding over the next order of business. This is the time when we present to National Commander Clarence E. Hill of Florida, the Colors of his year in office and a plaque. At this time I call on Past National Commander Ronald F. Conley of Pennsylvania to present your Colors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER CONLEY: Thank you very much, Vice Commander Avis. Before we go into the official presentation of the Colors to the commander, on a personal note I want to thank Commander Hill for this great honor he has bestowed upon me today to present him the Colors of not only our country, but of our organization. Colors that he has defended as a naval officer, committed his life to making sure that we were a strong nation, continued that commitment in The American Legion and serving each and every one of us as the national commander of this great organization, he has inspired us all. We are committed to carry on the banners, to protect it and at this time will the delegates to the National Convention please rise.

...At this time the Delegation stood for the presentation of the Colors of the National Commander.

I ask for the National Champion Color Guard from Post 472, Department of Texas, to bring the Colors of the national commander to the center stage. Right-hand salute. Two.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER AVIS: I now call on Past National Commander Jake Comer of Massachusetts to present the plaque to our outgoing national commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Comrade Commander, I'm privileged and honored to be here this morning in making this presentation. I also make this presentation on behalf of John Geiger, past national commander of Illinois, and I am standing in for him as he is home ill, and I'm privileged to do that.

Due to your dedication to social media and other electronic communications, The American Legion has advanced several years technologically during your 12 months tenure. You've been a stalwart advocate of the veterans and the Legion. You have traveled throughout this nation, you have visited all 50 states, all departments, and you've done it so well. You've guided us; you taught me what Facebook is all about and many, many others. We will remember your service for many years to come.

And so with that I am proud to present to you a plaque, which attests to your election to the high office of national commander of The American Legion for the year 2009-2010. It is given in appreciation of your dedicated leadership and in recognition of your devoted service to God and Country. It is presented the second day of September, 2010, before the Delegates assembled at the 92nd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Congratulations Commander Hill. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Please be seated. I would like to thank Past National Commander Conley and Past National Commander Comer for those two

presentations. I chose them, as you know, as Past National Commander Conley was my national commander when I was a department commander. Plus, he's a Steelers fan. And of course I consider Jake one of my mentors right from the beginning when he took a pretty raw campaign speech and put me on the track to being able to talk in The American Legion. Thank you both for doing that. *(Applause)*

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We now have come to a special order of business, the election of national officers. National Judge Advocate Philip Onderdonk will read the rules of the Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE ONDERDONK: Mr. Commander and delegates to the National Convention. The rules for voting for National Officers:

Rule 15. Final sentence. Election of National Officers shall be by roll call.

Rule 17. Prior to the election of National Officers, the National Commander shall appoint, subject to the approval of the convention, a judge of election and such number of tellers as he deems necessary, provided that the total number of 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 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.

Mr. Commander that completes the reading of rules pertaining to the election of national officers.

Election of the National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: As chairman of this Convention, I now appoint as judge of the election, Michael R. McDaniel, adjutant of the Department of Florida. And as tellers of the election, W. E. Gene Franks, adjutant, Department of Alaska; Terry L. Woodburn, adjutant, Department of Illinois; and Steven W. Short, adjutant, Department of Indiana. Will the judge and tellers of the election please come forward?

National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler 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.

(The National Adjutant calls each department in turn.)

MR. TURNER (AL): Mr. Chairman, Mr. Commander, I am F. Wayne Turner, chairman of the Delegation of Alabama. Mr. Commander, Alabama yields to Alaska.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JACOBI (AK): Mr. Commander, Bill Jacobi, chairman of the Delegation from Alaska. Mr. Commander, I request that the chair recognize Past National Commander John 'Jake' Comer for the purpose of nomination for the high office of national commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Delegates and Alternates to the 92nd National Convention. It goes without saying that I am singularly honored when our candidate called me and asked me if I would nominate him for the high office of national commander. To lead this great organization in the footsteps of so many in the past that have done the job, we now have an opportunity to have a young man from Alaska come before us and lead us in this coming year.

He and his wife, Rehta, have two sons, Christopher and Michael and five grandchildren. They've all been active members of The American Legion, the Auxiliary and the Sons in the Department of Alaska. In fact, Rehta, in her own right has been unit president, district president, and department president, so we have another American Legion family that's ready and willing to serve us all.

The Fosters are an active and strong American Legion family. Jimmie is eligible for the Sons of The American Legion under his father's service in the United States Army as well. His son, Christopher, is eligible for both The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion due to his own service of being on active duty in the United States Army. And their son, Michael, is a member of the Sons of The American Legion.

I first met Jimmie when I and members of my department took a tour in Alaska. And at the end of the tour we had about six or seven hours left with nowhere to go, and I called Jimmie Foster who is in Post 28 in Anchorage, and I expressed to him my problem. He said bring them along. The bus arrived. He had a roast beef supper for us prepared; wouldn't take anything for the expenses, and then the bus took us out to the airport that night at nine o'clock.

That's the kind of an individual that we have. You know he's visited 48 departments and he walks in with a smile. He knows everyone by their first name. He's exciting. And when the business is over, he goes back out into the posts and he goes to the karaoke with us all and he starts singing. He's genuine. He's real. He's down to earth. And he's going to make a fine commander, and I'm so privileged to look forward to his leadership for another exciting year as we have in the past under Clarence Hill.

He will do the job. Every commander, we never know what his program is or what he's going to do, and he excels from one to the other. So ladies and gentlemen, delegates

and alternates, I am proud to nominate Jimmie Foster of Alaska as our national commander of The American Legion for the year 2010-2011, and I so move. (*Applause*)

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAMBURGER (AZ): Mr. Commander, Carol Hamburger, chairman of the Delegation from the proud state of Arizona. Mr. Commander, Arizona now yields to the state of South Dakota.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARTENS (SD): Mr. Commander, Rod Martens, delegation chairman from South Dakota. Mr. Commander, I request that the chair recognizes Mr. Paul Evenson from South Dakota for the purpose of seconding the nomination of the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The Chair recognizes Paul Evenson of South Dakota.

MR. EVENSON (SD): Thank you, commander. Commander Hill, Adjutant Wheeler, delegates and guests. I am Paul Evenson, delegate from the Department of South Dakota, and it gives me great honor and pleasure to second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster for the high office of national commander of The American Legion.

A Vietnam veteran, Jimmie is a warm and friendly person who was born and raised on a farm in Oklahoma. After high school, Jimmie attended and graduated from Northeastern A&M College in Oklahoma. While in college he met and married his wife, Rehta. Jimmie worked for a short time in the textile and grocery business before pursuing a career in the military.

In 1974, Jimmie entered the Marine Corps and attended boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. In January of 1974 after attending training at Camp Pendleton, he returned to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot for his entire assignment in the Corps.

Upon his discharge, Jimmie went back to school for a short time. Then wanting to get back into action, and once again accepting the call of service to his country, Jimmie enlisted in the Army in July of 1976. After advanced individual training at Fort Gordon Georgia, other duty stations included: Fort Bliss, Texas; Fulda, West Germany; Fort Sam Houston, Texas; recruiting duty in Detroit; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Richardson, Alaska; and ultimately retiring from the Army at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. At the time of his retirement in August of 1994, Jimmie was the Chief Legal NCO of the United States Army Intelligence Center at Fort Huachuca.

After Jimmie's military retirement, he immediately returned to Alaska and served his fellow veterans as he worked as an office manager at a law firm. Jimmie has also distinguished himself by serving his fellow veterans as an accredited Service Officer at the Anchorage Regional Office of the Veterans Administration.

Once again, I can think of no one more qualified for the office of national commander of The American Legion, and I enthusiastically second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster from the Department of Alaska. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Call on the national adjutant to continue the roll call.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WISE (AR): Sir, Cleve Wise, delegation chairman from Arkansas. Arkansas proudly yields to the great state of Pennsylvania.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WASCO (PA): Mr. Commander, Pete Wasco, chairman of the Delegation from the great state of Pennsylvania. Mr. Commander, I request that the chair recognizes James Hale, Jr., for the purpose of seconding the nomination to the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The chair recognizes James Hale, Jr., from Pennsylvania.

MR. HALE (PA): Commander Hill, distinguished officials of The American Legion and my fellow delegates. Jimmie's 29 years of American Legion experience includes offices and appointments at all levels. Jimmie served on many department committees, including Americanism; Citizen Flag Alliance; Economics; Employment; Internal Affairs; Legislative; Membership and Post Activities; Military Affairs; National Security and Naval Affairs to name a few.

Jimmie's time as Membership Chairman of the Department of Alaska, finished number one in the nation on the target date membership. He has served in many line offices within the Department of Alaska, and ultimately served as the department commander, 1999 to 2000. He served as the alternate National Executive Committeeman from 2000 to 2002, and as the National Executive Committeeman from 2002 to 2006, from the Department of Alaska of course.

He served The American Legion National Homeland and Security Council; the Economic; the Internal Affairs; and the Legislative Commissions. He served as vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Resolutions. He most recently served as the chairman of the National Legislative Commission from 2006 to 2008.

All of his service and experience has given Jimmie a well-rounded resume at the national level, and an extremely in-depth understanding of our great organization. It is therefore, a genuine honor and a great pleasure to have the privilege as a duly elected delegate from the Department of Pennsylvania, I also enthusiastically second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster as the next national commander of The American Legion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I call on National Adjutant Dan Wheeler to continue the roll call.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARCOUILLIER (DE): Mr. Commander, Mr. Chairman. The great small state of Delaware, the first state to ratify the Constitution of the United States is proud and humble to second the nomination for Jimmie Foster.

ALTERNATE DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HASZ (DC): Mr. Chairman, Paul Hasz, National Executive Committeeman from the District of Columbia and alternate delegation chairman. Mr. Chairman, the District of Columbia with eight delegates is proud to second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster for the next commander of The American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HEARLSON (FL): Phil Hearlson, chairman of the delegates. Florida, land of beautiful beaches, plenty of sun shine, orange juices for your breakfast, and the first Florida as national commander, Clarence Hill, proudly casts 138 votes for Jimmie Foster as our next national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAGGAN (FR): Mr. Commander, Doug Haggan, duly elected delegate to this National Convention from the proud Department of France, is honored to cast all its ballots to Jimmie Foster, the first member of FODPAL to run and win national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TUCKER (GA): Commander, from the great state of Georgia, home of Past National Commander Bob Turner, Past National Sons of the American Legion Commander Mark Arneson, those Georgia peaches, all delegates would cast their votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CORDES (HI): Mr. Commander, Department of Hawaii, casts all nine votes for the new incoming commander, Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BENTLEY (ID): Katrina Bentley, duly elected delegate and chairman of the Idaho delegation, we proudly cast all 19 votes in support of Jimmie Foster from the west, the west is the best.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FLANAGAN (IL): Bill Flanagan, delegation chairman, Department of Illinois and home of Past National Commanders John Geiger and Marty Conatser, proudly cast all 119 delegate votes to our friend Jimmie Foster of Alaska.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BAXTER (IN): Mr. Chairman, Indiana proudly casts all its votes for Jimmie Foster for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TILLMAN (IA): Mr. Chairman, Marlin Tillman, delegation chairman from the great state, the Hawkeye state, the home of the state that just deployed 3,000 young men and women, we cast all our votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATE ALLEN (IA): I'm Dale Allen, deputy vice commander of the Department of Kansas, and Kansas is proud to second the nomination of Jimmie Foster for national commander.

NEC MEMBER COFFMAN (KY): Randall Coffman, Department of Kentucky, National Executive Committeeman. On behalf of the Kentucky delegation, we proudly second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster as the next national commander of The American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN OLSON (ME): Commander, Andy Olson from the great state of Maine, the Department of Maine casts 31 votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MOONEY (MD): Mr. Commander, the great state of Maryland proudly casts their votes for Jimmie Foster for the high office of the national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MACDONALD (MA): Mr. Commander, Frank MacDonald, department commander and delegate chairman from the great state of Massachusetts, home of such greats as John Hancock and John Adams casts all 59 delegate votes for the nomination of Jimmie Foster for our next national commander.

NEC MEMBER HERBRUGER (MX): Arthur Herbruger, National Executive Committeeman from the Department of Mexico, cast all our votes in the name of the department for Mr. Jimmie Foster. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JACKSON (MI): The great state of Michigan cast all its votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DAVIS (MN): Al Davis, delegation chairman from the Department of Minnesota seconds the nomination of Jimmie Foster for national commander.

ALTERNATE NEC MEMBER GOSA (MS): Robert Gosa, alternate NEC from the great state of Mississippi, we proudly second the nomination of Jimmie Foster from the great state of Alaska, our next national commander. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GOODIN (MO): Mr. Chairman, the "Show Me State" of Missouri, the home of Harry S. Truman and Past National Commander Joe Frank, seconds the nomination for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MITCHELL (MT): The proud state of Montana proudly seconds the nomination of Jimmie Foster for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DEUNK (NE): Mr. Commander, Leon Deunk, delegate chairman from the Department of Nebraska, home of Past National Commander Bill Galbraith, and the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Mr. Commander, Nebraska casts all 49 votes for Jimmie Foster from the Department of Alaska for national commander.

ALTERNATE NEC MEMBER FORD (NV): Mr. Commander, Jack Ford, alternate NEC from the "Silver State" of Nevada, home of the UNLV Running Rebels and the UNR Wolf Pack, we cast all 16 votes for Jimmie L. Foster for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROY (NH): Bill Roy, delegation chairman for the Department of New Hampshire, "The Granite State," gives its rock solid support for Jimmie Foster, and we unanimously cast all our votes for Jimmie Foster for the ensuing year as national commander 2010-2011.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PHILLIPS (NJ): Mr. Chairman, Bob Phillips from the great state of New Jersey, "The Garden State," we cast 68 votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION ALTERNATE CHAIRMAN DAMON (NM): Mr. Chairman, "The Great Land of Enchantment" from New Mexico, cast all votes for Jimmie L. Foster. Jim Damon, alternate chairman.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN KEARSING (NY): Mr. Commander, William Kearsing, delegation chairman from the great Department of New York. The Department of New York proudly seconds the nomination of Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN COOK (NC): Mr. Chairman, Lou Cook, delegation chairman from the great state of North Carolina, the home of American Legion World Series and Past National Commander Ray Smith, we proudly cast all our votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SAMUELSON (ND): Mr. Chairman, North Dakota casts its 25 delegate votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DIMMERMAN (OH): Mr. Adjutant, Lou Dimmerman, delegation chairman from the great Department of Ohio, we proudly cast all our votes for Jimmie Foster for the next national commander. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CLINGENPEEL (OK): Mr. Chairman, Roy Clingenpeel, delegation chairman for the great state of Oklahoma, we cast our votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN KALMBACH (OR): John Kalmbach, duly elected chairman proudly from the state of Oregon, "Pacific Wonderland," declare all our votes for our neighbor from the north, Jimmie Foster, and the great state of Alaska.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHOLTEN (PI): The Department of the Philippines proudly and unanimously, the entire delegation, seconds the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster for commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FIGUEROA (PR): Luis Figueroa, Department of Puerto Rico proudly votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WINRICH (RI): Mr. Chairman, Jim Winrich, department commander, delegate chairman. After caucusing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, our delegation casts all votes for Jimmie Foster for the high office of national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PHILLIPS (SC): Mr. Adjutant, Cecil Phillips, commander and duly elected delegate, casts all 34 votes from South Carolina for the owner of 20 pounds of oil peanuts and our next national commander, Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN TUTTLE (TN): Dean Tuttle, department delegate for "The Volunteer State" of Tennessee, casts all votes for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DAFT (TX): Mr. Adjutant, Don Daft, I'm the delegate chairman for the great "Lone Star State" of Texas, the home of our beloved past national commander, past late Joe L. Matthews, we second the nomination of Jimmie L. Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MASON (UT): Mr. Adjutant. Fred Mason, duly elected delegate and delegate chairman, unitedly we cast all of our delegate strength for the gentleman and our next commander, Jimmie Foster from Alaska.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SHEELEY (VT): Mr. Adjutant, Royal Sheeley, duly elected delegate and delegation chairman, Department of Vermont. Vermont casts all its votes to second the nomination of Jimmie Foster for our next national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MILUSZEWSKI (VA): Mr. Adjutant, delegate chairman of the great Commonwealth of Virginia, we cast all 63 votes for national commander for Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHWARTZ (WA): Mr. Chairman, Bob Schwartz, delegation chairman. From Vista Stadium, the home of the 2010 The American Legion Baseball World Series; the plains covered waves amber green, to the highest mountain top in the contiguous United States from the Canadian border to the Columbia River, across the tree-covered west to the Pacific Ocean, the Department of Washington proudly seconds the nomination of Jimmie Foster as commander of The American Legion.

NEC MEMBER KILE (WV): Mr. Adjutant, Bill Kile, West Virginia, home of Past National Commander Miles Epling, proudly casts 30 votes for our friend, Jimmie Foster.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BATTY (WI): Mr. Chairman, Robert Batty, delegation chairman and commander of the Department of Wisconsin. Wisconsin seconds the nomination of Jimmie Foster, and pledges our full delegate strength and support of his election.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WOOD (WY): Mr. Adjutant, I, Ron Wood, duly elected delegate from the great state of Wyoming, a state with high altitude, low multitude, and great attitude, do proudly second the nomination of Jimmie Foster for national commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Mr. Commander that completes the roll call.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FOXWORTHY (CA): Mr. Chairman, Mark Foxworthy from "The Golden State" of California casts 127 votes for Jimmie Foster for national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MCCURDY (CO): Mr. Chairman, Frank McCurdy, delegate chair from Colorado seconds the nomination for Jimmie Foster.

NEC MEMBER ANDERSON (CT): Mr. Commander, Rich Anderson, NECman from the Department of Connecticut and delegate to this convention, proudly casts 31 votes for Jimmie Foster.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Okay. Anybody else that didn't answer the roll the first time around want to answer now? (*Laughter and applause*) Hope you all are going to be here the next time we do roll call. We have a nomination and two seconds. Is there anything else?

DELEGATE LANOT (MA): Mr. Commander, John Lanot, delegate from the Department of Massachusetts. Mr. Commander, in view of the fact that there is but one

candidate for national commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this convention, close nominations, and that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Jimmie L. Foster 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 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.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: There's a motion before us to suspend the rules of this convention pertaining to the election of the national commander and the nomination and election of the national vice commanders, which rules shall be automatically reinstated at the conclusion of the election for national vice commanders. The motion is non-debatable and requires a two thirds vote. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. The motion carries.

DELEGATE MILTON (MN): Mr. Commander, Denise Milton, delegate from Minnesota. I move that nominations for the office of national commander be closed at this time.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: This motion to close the nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires a two thirds vote. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. Motion carries.

DELEGATE FOLK (NY): Mr. Commander, Maggie Folk, delegate from New York. Mr. Commander, I move that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention and that Jimmie L. Foster be elected national commander by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Is there a second. ...*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 Jimmie L. Foster be elected national commander by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. I call on the adjutant to cast the vote.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: As national adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention for the election of Jimmie L. Foster as the national commander of The American Legion. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I declare Jimmie L. Foster elected national commander of The American Legion. (*Applause*)

Will the sergeant-at-arms assist the new national commander of The American Legion to the platform. Alaska NECman Jim Van Horn will escort him to the stage.

... *At this time a demonstration of support ensued.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Mrs. Foster, Rehta Foster, will now place the red cap on the new national commander. Jimmie's son, Michael Foster, will put the badge on the new commander. Past national vice commander Joe Craig will put his pin on.

**Acceptance Speech: Newly Elected National Commander
Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska**

First, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to every member of this great organization, it's the greatest organization on the face of the earth, for electing me as your new national commander.

Second, I will do my utmost to fulfill those duties that comes with this position during the next year on behalf of the greatest organization, The American Legion. Before I get overwhelmed with emotions and lose my train of thought, I have a bunch of introductions to complete, because without a bunch of people's help, there's no way I'd be up here now.

I would like to introduce you to lady that stood by me by thick and thin for over 40 years, and on a few occasions probably kept me out of jail. (*Laughter*) She has also been a past unit, a past district, and past department president of the state of Alaska. Actually, truth be known, she was a national officer before I ever was. That's my wife, Rehta. Thank you. (*Applause*) I would like to thank my youngest son traveling here from California. His wife, Anna, couldn't be here, but my youngest son, Michael who's a member of the Sons of The American Legion. Thanks Mike. (*Applause*) Our oldest son, as you heard by the seconds and Past National Commander Comer, our oldest son, Christopher, is on active duty in the United States Army and he's currently stationed in the country of Djibouti. He's not able to be with us here today. His wife, Tracy, is here with their new son that was born on July the 30th, Alexander William Foster. After a conversation with Chris, his mother and I, he chose to attend the birth of his son in lieu of my installation because his general wouldn't let him off for both. And do you agree he made the right decision? (*Applause*) I also have three of my sisters here with me today, Winnie and her husband, Wesley Anderson from Arlington, Texas. Wave so they'll know which two you are. My sister Linda from Delaware, Oklahoma. (*Applause*) My sister Ledean and her husband Larry Johnson from Nowata, Oklahoma. (*Applause*) And my sister-in-law Donna and her husband John Clover from Miami, Oklahoma. (*Applause*) My parents or my mother-in-law are not able to be here with us today because of their health, but I know they're here in spirit.

I would like to introduce you to my special friend. To a man that's done it all. He needs no introduction. He's a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and he told me that if I didn't invite him or let him be the lead dog on my sled, that I would have to deal with him. Ladies and gentlemen, if I may here...

...Gaveled three times and the delegation stood.

...Mr. Drew Dix, who's been a member of The American Legion in Alaska, lived up in Fairbanks, since moved to New Mexico, but if you would please assist me in rendering a hand-salute to a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. One, two. (*Applause*) Thank you, Drew, for your friendship and support over the years.

I would like to say thank you to my home post, Spenard Post 28, Anchorage. We have had good times and bad times, ups and downs, but overall they've been behind me 110 percent, and I appreciate them for their support. I want to say thank you to my Department of Alaska. They went out of bounds, out of the box, to do everything to make sure that this arrived on this day. I want to thank them. The big thank you goes out to "Team Alaska." Without them I would not be standing here today. My wild and wooly and crazy Campaign Chairman, Jim Pisa. (*Applause*) And last but certainly not least, my Chief Spoons, Pat and Judy Barney. (*Applause*) They, in my opinion, put on some of the best hospitality rooms of all time. Do you agree? (*Applause*)

I have had a few mentors over my short period in The American Legion compared to some of the other members of The American Legion by longevity. A couple of them have passed on to the Supreme Commander, Past Department Commander Jerry Newman, and Leon "Big Daddy" Miller. Without them I wouldn't be standing here today.

I still remember them saying, "Let the kid do it." And after about 15 jobs, one meeting I said, "Whoa, wait a minute. The kid is already doing 15 jobs." Jerry Newman put his hand on my knee and he goes, "I wonder when you was going to smarten up there."

But I must have learned by it or I wouldn't be standing here before you today. The man that came up and put on my lapel pin, I've known him for a long time. This man wore a red hat in the Department of Alaska for over 24 years. He's my mentor, friend, and I love him like a father. And I appreciate him being here. Mr. Joe Craig. *(Applause)*

Team Alaska, as you might know, has went out of the box on many occasions over the last two years of the campaign trail, but I think that we've shown that a small detached, very detached, department, can put a viable candidate up for the high office of national commander, and that's all that every department would work together as a team. That means the Legion, the Auxiliary, the Sons, and do not forget the Juniors.

I would like to say a personal thank you to Past National Commander Jake Comer from Massachusetts for making my nomination speech. You've been a friend, a mentor, and a supporter for many years, and I thank you, sir. I would like to say, which is going to happen here in a little bit, thank you to Past National Commander Dan "Flat Lander" Ludwig from Minnesota for administrating my oath here in due time. He's been a great friend, a mentor, and his wife Mary is one of the nicest ladies next to my wife that I have ever met. And in due time it will be a thank you to Past National Commander Tom Bock from Colorado, the west is the best as you heard earlier for presenting me my Colors. Thank you, Commander. *(Applause)*

I would like to personally thank each and every department that I have visited during the two years on the campaign trail for your hospitalities and courtesies. You are the epitome of great human beings. You do more out of kindness than most people do all day in another line of work. I want to thank you again, and I love all of you will and you have my undying support. As I've stated in my travels, and in other meetings and stuff doing the caucuses, I'm a personal touch type guy. I like meeting you. I like shaking your hand. I like to have a conversation. And after a while, pretty quick I'll probably remember your name. I might remember your spouse, and if you have a pet with you, I know that I'll remember the pet. I'll talk to you and have a conversation. I'm not always going to agree with you, but at least I'll give you the chance to state what's on your mind. And if after a 10-minute dialog on a losing situation, I might have to go to the restroom.

I, like the other 91 commanders that came before me, believe in the Four Pillars. I think it's the backbone of our organization, and I'm going to be no different. Without a strong national defense we don't have a United States of America. That means that we have the equipment, the technology, the servicemembers, and I call them that so I don't forget one of the five branches of service and offend somebody. But they also need to know that our legislators need to fund them and make sure they have the money and the supplies to accomplish the mission. *(Applause)*

Second, after all of us have served our one, two, three, four, five, twenty years or however many you stayed, and you become a veterans, that this country take care of our veterans. In my personal opinion, if you go to a war or a conflict, let me interject, I've never understood what a conflict is. If somebody is shooting at me, that's a war. *(Applause)* And after you've served in this for your duration and you come back home, if you've attained a service-connected disability, this country has an obligation to take care of you until you die or this country goes broke. *(Applause)*

Third, that we continue to promote Americanism within the United States of America. We do that on a daily basis and sometimes we don't realize we're doing it because some of the stuff we do just comes second nature. There are all kinds of programs out there to do Americanism: Flag Day ceremonies; Labor Day; Memorial Day; Fourth of July, and our day, Veterans Day. If we're not celebrating Veterans Day, something is wrong with us as vets.

What I ask for you, don't get subdued in your own everyday lives that you go to meeting or to a function, you drive there, you attend the ceremony, then you get back in your vehicle or whatever, and you come back home. Go out and toot your own horn. We don't do that enough. Contact somebody in the media, public relations, newspaper, television, radio, and make sure you show them what we are doing on an everyday basis to promote Americanism.

Fourth, that we continue to enhance the quality of those people that will follow behind us, the children of our country. We do that, it's second nature. Boy and Girl Scouts; Boys and Girls State; National Shooting Sports; oratorical; the Sons of The American Legion which is our own program, and the Junior Auxiliary, and the list goes on and on. Make sure that you afford a child the opportunity to have a better life than you did. I say whatever you give in support, whatever you invest you'll reap tenfold in the future.

I, like Commander Hill, believe technology is the way of the future. You know, he got us on Facebook, Twitter, the blog, everything else. I believe in technology too. I don't have a little pocket protector with ink pens or screw drivers in my pocket, but I do believe in technology. It's the way of the future. Our oldest son went to a meeting one time and he goes, "Dad, if you hadn't of signed me up in this, I would have never joined." He said, "It's the same hum-drum stuff. You need to be innovative, creative." So that's from the outlook of somebody that's a little younger than we are. Make sure that you come up with the total package. If your post is not wired for Wi-Fi, I suggest you spend the best \$19.95 that you'll spend a month. Get the people, the young people in that want technology. It may not interest you, but it will bring in the younger members. And if you are afraid of the computer, which I know there's many out here in the audience that won't raise their hand, if you're afraid of it, go next door, find somebody's six-year-old son or granddaughter, they'll give you a quick class. (*Laughter and applause*)

For those states that have military installations, whether they be a base or a post, I ask that you take one day out of your life and sign up for a reconnect trip. You know, instead of sitting in the post having a brewski or wherever you're at, at a picnic, talking about the way you did it in 1945 or 1965 or 1985, take one day out of your life, go out and go on reconnect and find out what these guys and gals are doing at the military installations in 2010. I think that you will be amazed by the technology and the innovative ideas that exist in our military today.

Don't forget the Reserves and National Guard. You heard some dialogue up on the video teleconference and people up here on the platform that have been activated in tours six and seven. One guy eleven times. One guy was six times, and the shortest of the six tours was a year and a day. So make sure that you want to do to them like you wanted. Especially the Vietnam vets that have such a bad taste on the way they received when they come back. Make sure that you go out and send them off to where they're going, at whatever time it may be in the morning, 2:00 in the morning. When they come back,

have a Heroes to Hometown program. Make sure that you interface with the people in your community so they know that they're not left behind, especially their dependents.

Over 15 percent of the total force today is female. And in this audience there should be one-fifth of this audience with some type of American Legion hat on that meets the female. They serve with us on the total force. We need to make sure that we look at that and include them in our organization. (*Applause*)

Approximately one-third of the total force meets some kind of minority status, females rolled up in it. We need to become more diversified. Nobody on active duty since the '70s got drafted that I can remember, so everybody that's a member here, is a member because they want to belong and want to join. So make sure that you look at the complete package, the complete servicemember, and include all ethnic groups within our organization.

My personal opinion, one of the greatest things to come along in a long time, is The American Legion Riders. If everything holds up, they're going to give over \$600,000 at this Convention. And over the last five, if you do the math using the figures that's out there, that will be \$2.4 million to The American Legion Legacy Fund. You know, I've heard them referred to some real terrible things over my travels. And I'll use the best of the worst: Another renegade biker group. I profess to you it's a bunch of veterans that like to ride their motorcycles, go on a poker run or go in a donation run. But if that's a renegade biker group that will bring me \$2.4 million, I'll be a member of it. (*Applause*)

You know, I stand here before you today. I'm not a rocket scientist or a Rhodes Scholar, probably don't want to be, but I don't know what the next great idea is, Clarence maybe didn't know, Dave Rehbein didn't know, the last three here, but you know, any idea, any opinion or anything out there, please don't discount somebody that has an idea or suggestion. That may be the next great idea. And I'm not going to lie to you; I hope it happens during my year.

You may have heard from the Secretary of the VA, General Shinseki, where he stated that the Veterans Administration adjudicated over 900,000 claims this past year. But there was a caveat to that. They took in 1.1 million claims. I don't know about you, but they got some new math out there, but when I went to school they're in the hole as they ended the end over 200,000 claims. We have to do a better job on the adjudication of claims, and as a former department service officer as of 30 July, you can bet that I will advocate on your behalf as veterans on a daily basis to make sure that they simplify and get the system under control. (*Applause*)

The Flag Amendment has been reintroduced into the 111th Congress by Jo Ann Emerson from Missouri, and Jim Marshall from Georgia on the House side. And on the Senate side, by David Vitter from Louisiana. I feel it's high time that the elected officials in Washington, D.C. listen to 94 percent of the American people and get Old Glory protected by a physical desecration amendment. (*Applause*)

You knew I was going to talk about membership. It's the life blood of an organization and ours is no different. We have 25 million members that are eligible to join The American Legion by statistics. We have 2.5, we have one in ten. I talked to a senator the other day, and he goes, "How many do you have?" I told him the same figures. And he said, "Boy, Jimmie if you could get them other 90 percent, my God you would just about control the world." That's what it's all about. We need to go out and resell The American Legion. We can get them all day. It's like *Field of Dreams*. If you believe, they'll come. But then we don't interface with them. They come to a meeting.

Nobody shook their hand. Nobody said hi. Nobody asked them what they wanted to do. And after about a couple years they feel that nobody cared about them, so they went out the back door. A lot of the departments say, "They're dying faster than we can find them, commander." Not true. We did the numbers on every department. The renewals were far more than the deaths. So I ask you to sign up every new member you can. My award is the Lucky Seven. It's a Liberty Bell looking pin, pretty nice. We have a limited amount of stock. You have to sign up two new members and renew five. Have it certified by your post commander and post adjutant. We have a limited stock. I want us to buy more. The reason is, if you're sending in the stuff, you're signing up at least seven members in The American Legion, and we'll purchase more pins. So make sure you get one.

My motto or slogan, whatever the right word is, is the word **SAVED**. That's **S.A.V.E.D** with a period after each letter. That means: **S**erving **A**merica's **V**eterans **E**very **D**ay. And I don't care how you do it. I want you to do it. (*Applause*)

My national president, Colleen Ashworth from Texas, her motto is "The Power of One." We kind of merged that together. By the power of one, being all of you people in this hall and in the Auxiliary. I want you to serve America's veterans every day. And you know, sometimes a thank you is all it takes.

Last but not least, a lot of stuff is going to happen. The year is new. Stay positive. Stay focused. Negativity will get you nowhere except more negative results. You know, everything hasn't been peaches and cream for me over 30 years. I've been on the losing side. So you have to suck it up. In my opinion, a good loser is better than a better winner. Work together. Stay positive. Stay focused.

This year starts here today. But the success of my term of office will be determined as we get to Minneapolis, Minnesota and end the year. I ask for your support now. I ask that you reach across the lane, shake hands with your veterans that are with you, and everybody work together on behalf of The American Legion.

And finally, most of the time, most of the time, there's a few people here getting paid, but most of the time we're volunteers, and you know in life we get beat up enough every day as it is. I ask you to say a simple thank you, and most of the time that will work by most of the people.

Lead by example, not by position. Never do something that you wouldn't have your people do or you haven't done yourself. Don't put yourself in something to demean or demoralize people. Rise to the top. The cream will rise, and it will be better for the organization.

I just want to say it's a great honor. You have no idea what this means to me, to have a dumb Okie go to the pedestal of The American Legion, but I assure you I will do the utmost in my ability to make sure that I represent you in the most ethical, honorable way for this period of service as the commander of The American Legion.

May God bless this organization. May God bless The American Legion, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (*Standing applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The chair recognizes Past National Commander Dan Ludwig for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the new national commander of The American Legion.

**Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota, Past National Commander**

Please be seated. Jimmie Foster, my friend, congratulations to you on your nomination and election to the high office of national commander of The American Legion. It's an exciting time. It's an exciting time for all of us and certainly an exciting time for you and your wife, Rehta, your family and all the good, loyal, faithful members of the Alaska American Legion family. Your challenge now is to guide us, to inspire us, to motivate us and to lead us. And our pledge to you is that we will support you in the mandates that we've passed in this convention, which will be our marching orders for the coming year. And now I invite you to raise your right hand and repeat after me.

...Oath of office administered to the newly elected national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ladies and gentlemen, once again, the 2010-2011 national commander of The American Legion, Jimmie L. Foster. *(Applause)*

Ladies and gentlemen, as a point of personal privilege, I would like to call on Mary Ludwig, wife of Past National Commander Daniel Ludwig, for a presentation to Mrs. Foster on behalf of the first ladies of The American Legion.

MARY LUDWIG: Rehta, on behalf of former first ladies, I would like to present you with this badge signifying that you are our newest first lady. Congratulations.

Election of the National Vice Commanders

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: We'll continue now with the nominations and elections of the national vice commanders. Microphone number 2.

DELEGATE HICKS (TX): Mr. Commander, Harry Hicks, delegate from the State of Texas. Mr. Commander, since the rules of this convention have been suspended, I move that the nominations for the office of national vice commander be made from the floor of this convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Is there a second? *...Second* There's a motion before us to take nominations for the office of national vice commander from the floor of this convention. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it, the motion carries. We'll now entertain motions for the office of national vice commander from the floor.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LAFLEUR: Mr. Commander, Kenneth Lafleur, chairman of the delegation from Louisiana. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Charles Aucoin for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Charles Aucoin is recognized.

NEC MEMBER AUCOIN: Fellow delegates of The American Legion 92nd National Convention, it gives me great pleasure to be able to place the name of a great young man to be a candidate for national vice commander. Department of Louisiana is very proud of Russell. Russell joined The American Legion through his service in the Air Force during the Korean time. Russell is a life member of Sulphur Post 179 in Sulphur, Louisiana and is a 33-year continuous member. He has demonstrated his leadership ability by serving the chairs in his post, the district, the department. He's also served us as NEC and ANEC, and recently the last five years he's served on the Foreign Relations Commission. Russell continues to serve the veterans of Louisiana by virtue of an appointment to Louisiana

Department of Veterans Affairs, where they oversee five homes and three cemeteries. Russell retired from the phone company, Bell South, with over 40 years of service. He and his family believe in the family concept, the Legion family concept. His wife is a past department auxiliary president. His daughter Jolie and her husband are Navy veterans, and both belong to The American Legion. And his grandchildren are either members of the SAL or the Junior Auxiliary. Russell has the endorsement of his post, the district and our department, and it is an honor to place the name of Russell J. Henry to the high office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Are there any other nominations for national vice commander?

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WEINREICH (RI): Mr. Commander, Jim Weinreich, chairman of the delegation of Rhode Island. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Walter Pytko for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Walter Pytko is recognized.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT PYTKA (RI): Thank you Commander. Delegates to the 92nd National Convention, it's a privilege for me to be here to nominate a national officer. A Vietnam era Navy veteran, Eugene Pytko has served The American Legion with dedication and loyalty for 40 years. A member of Philip Caussin Post Number 79 of Central Falls, Rhode Island, Gene has achieved the position of commander at all levels, post, district, and department. Gene has also served as alternate Executive Committeeman and National Executive Committeeman for terms of four years each. He has also served as a department adjutant, department historian and in Children and Youth for two terms. Gene has been the recipient of the Department of Rhode Island Legionnaire of the Year Award in 2002, 2005, and again in 2009. Gene is also my little brother. It is with great pride that I humbly ask for your support for the Department of Rhode Island's candidate to the high office of national vice commander, Eugene Ronald Pytko. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Are there any other nominations for national vice commander?

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAFEMAN (MI): Mr. Commander, Bill Hafeman, chairman of the Delegation of Michigan. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Al Ford for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Al Ford is recognized.

DELEGATE FORD (MI): Commander Hill, national officers, delegates and guests of the 92nd National Convention of The American Legion, it is a privilege and pleasure to be here today to nominate a candidate for the high office of national vice commander from the great State of Michigan. His name is John M. Mella. John earned his eligibility to belong to The American Legion by serving in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. John is an honorary life member of the Aaron Cooper Johnson American Legion Post Number 50 in Iron Mountain, Michigan. He has served most all offices of his post, district and zone, and in 1997 he was elected and served as department commander of Michigan. He has attended all National Conventions since 1992, except Hawaii, and has served on the National Foreign Relations Council since 1999. John has retired from the Department of Veteran Affairs at the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, Michigan, where he served as equipment operator in the engineering department for 35 years. John has been active in his community, serving on the county office of Veteran Affairs as chairman and as finance officer. He served on the UP

Veterans Memorial Committee. He is a member of ANAVICUS, the Past Commanders Club, the NRA, the Elks Lodge and the Knights of Columbus. John has the support of his department and I'm proud to nominate John M. Mella for the high office of national vice commander. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Are there any other nominations for national vice commander?

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHWARTZ (WA): Mr. Commander, Bob Schwartz, chairman of the delegation from Washington. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Mike Montaney for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Mike Montaney is recognized.

NEC MEMBER MONTANEY (WA): Commander Hill, distinguished guests and fellow Legionnaires. I come before you today for the purpose of nominating an eminently qualified Legionnaire from the Department of Washington for the high office of national vice commander. Bill Schrier served honorably in the United States Army for nearly 25 years, retiring in 1988 at the rank of master sergeant. He first joined The American Legion in 1965, and during his military career Bill found time to be an active Legionnaire and served as commander at Jack Warren Post 22 in Delta Junction, Alaska in 1979 and '80. He also found time to earn a bachelors degree in business management. Upon retiring from the Army, Bill transferred to George Baldrige Post 43 in Sedro-Woolley, Washington. Bill moved through the leadership positions of the post and district, and went on to serve as department sergeant-at-arms, department vice commander and department commander for the term 2001-2002. Bill has also served two years as an alternate NECman and four years as our National Executive Committeeman. Bill Schrier has served on numerous committees, commissions, boards, and councils at both the department and national level. His work with the National Legislative Council earned Bill the Certificate of Meritorious Service, a coveted award and one that shows the work done by members of this council in their work with members of the Congress from Washington State. Bill just completed his eighth year on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee. During this time he served one year as vice chairman and two years as chairman. As a member of the Veterans Affairs Ad Hoc Committee, he was instrumental in creating the current working relationship between the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Guard, Reserves, and all branches of the military in the State of Washington. He also helped to establish the Adopt An Army Program to assist the members of the Guard and Reserves and their families. He was asked by National Commander Clarence Hill to write articles for The American Legion blog, The Burn Pit. Bill established the Veterans Network, or VetNet as it has become called. This is one of the information pages linked to the department website with information on the military, VA, and legislation impacting our military, veterans, and their families. This is one of the first such information sites used by The American Legion, and was first established in 2000 as an e-mail site that grew into what it is today. Bill also maintains a Facebook page, where after only five months he had nearly 5,000 unique contacts. Bill places articles and information on this site as well as The Burn Pit, and has again earned Bill and his department national attention. He has been asked to write articles on veterans affairs for several newspapers in Washington State and in Washington, D.C. by a member of the United States Senate. He has also done many interviews with newspapers, both in person and telephonically. At our department

convention in July, Bill received the endorsement of both the director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs and Governor Christine Gregoire. As a bonus, he is an excellent speaker who is well-versed in American Legion programs and policies. I can think of no one more qualified to serve as our next national vice commander than Bill Schrier. Therefore, comrades, it is my honor and privilege to nominate William F. 'Bill' Schrier to be national vice commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Are there any other nominations for national vice commander? Microphone 1.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FIGUEROA (PR): Mr. Commander, Luis Figueroa, chairman of the Delegation of Puerto Rico. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Ramon Rivera for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Ramon Rivera is recognized.

DELEGATE RIVERA (PR): Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, it is a pleasure and honor to be here today presenting the nomination of Carlos Orrio for national vice commander of The American Legion. Carlos from the Department of Puerto Rico. I give you a brief about Carlos. Carlos is a member of active service in the U.S. Army from July '59 to '67, at which time he served a tour in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division. He joined the Marine Corps from June 1968 to '76 for a second tour of Vietnam. He served assignments in several camps and installations: Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Dix in New Jersey; Fort Carson, Colorado; Camp Pendleton, California; Camp Lejeune in North Carolina; Camp Garcia Vieques, Puerto Rico; Okinawa, and Marine Barracks Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He's a graduate of the non-commissioned officers' school at Camp Pendleton, California. He completed military volunteer services as a retired captain from the Puerto Rico State Guard Air Force. His decoration National Defense Service Medal, Air Service Medal, Vietnam Service and Campaign Medal, Combat Action Medal, and Combat Infantry Badge. He speaks so proudly about his military duty on these services. He served for three years at the Veterans Administration, and he is retired from the U.S. Postal Service. He's an honorary life member of The American Legion and also a paid-up-for-life. His wife, Maria, is also in the ladies Auxiliary. He has served the Legion from post level, all positions up to post commander, department commander, and finance officer at the department. At the national level he has sat on commissions and committees of The American Legion: finance, economic, foreign relations and he has served with distinction. Our department has held Carlos in highest esteem because he has lots of ability for his commitments and we are sure that he will do a good job as national vice commander. I truly believe that you will have a great vice commander in Carlos. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Are there any other nominations?

DELEGATE MITRIONE (VA): Mr. Commander, Mike Mitrione, delegate from the commonwealth of Virginia. Mr. Commander, I move that nominations for the office of national vice commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Before I consider that motion I would like a second for all five of these nominations at one time.*Second* Thank you. This motion to close nomination is a non-debatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor say aye. Opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Motion carries. Microphone number 1.

DELEGATE SEAHAFER (WI): Mr. Commander, Dan Sechafer, delegation from Wisconsin. Mr. Commander, I move that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one

vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Russell J. Henry, Eugene Pytka, John M. Mella, William F. Schrier and Carlos Orria-Medina be elected national vice commanders by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Is there a second? ...*Second* There's a motion and a second before us that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Russell J. Henry, Eugene Pytka, John M. Mella, William F. Schrier and Carlos Orria-Medina be elected national vice commanders by acclamation. All those in favor say aye. Opposed say nay. Motion carries. I call on the national adjutant.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Mr. Commander, as national adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention for Russell J. Henry, Eugene Pytka, John M. Mella, William F. Schrier, Carlos Orria-Medina for the offices of national vice commander for The American Legion. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: I declare Russell J. Henry, Eugene Pytka, John M. Mella, William F. Schrier, and Carlos Orria-Medina elected national vice commanders of The American Legion. I now call on Past National Commander Tom Bock of Colorado to present the Colors to our incoming national commander.

Presentation: Colors to Incoming National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BOCK: Thank you, Mr. Commander. Legionnaires and distinguished guests, please rise for the presentation of our National Colors by the Color Guard of Post 472 of Houston, Texas, to national commander-elect Jimmie Foster. Color Guard, present the Colors of the new national commander of The American Legion. Hand salute. Ready, two.

National Commander Foster, will you join me at the podium, please. Jimmie, you've been elected by the delegates of this convention unanimously to represent The American Legion as our national commander. You've got the experience by serving as department commander, National Executive Committee and chairman of the various committees and commissions of The American Legion. It is my great honor to be able to present to you the Colors to travel with you throughout this country and around the world to represent The American Legion. Not only our membership, but all the veterans of this country. Congratulations. (*Applause*)

Color Guard, return the Colors of the national commander to post. Hand salute. Ready, two.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Commander Foster, would you please administer the oath of office to the new vice commanders. Would the new vice commanders come forward.

NATIONAL COMMANDER FOSTER: I would like the newly elected vice commanders to please rise and stand before me. At this time I'm honored to swear you in to your newly elected office as a national vice commander.

I know you will uphold the trust that has been placed in you by the comrades who nominated and supported you and the Convention delegates that elected you. I trust you will fulfill every obligation required of you. I challenge you to familiarize yourself with the duties of your office and carry them out with the same spirit from which The

American Legion was founded. The welfare, success, and integrity of this great organization depends upon you, as you travel in the departments and throughout this country promoting the mandates of The American Legion as approved by the National Convention and the National Executive Committee.

It is your duty to protect the name of The American Legion with the people of our great Nation that you meet as you travel. Help them to know the Legion's purposes and policies. Remember the Four Pillars that motivate us as members to serve this nation. As you serve, always remember there is no rank among us for we all serve as equals. We are all aiming for the same goals, the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. This means you should always employ the cardinal principles of The American Legion to all those that we serve. And they are: the rehabilitation of all disabled veterans and the care of those who are now suffering from wounds, disease and want to include the care of their family members; the education of our children; educating citizens on the ideals of true Americanism; and maintaining a strong national defense. In your travels representing The American Legion, always practice these pillars in your promotion of service to the community and nation. If you five will please raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your name where I give mine.

...At this time the oath of office was administered to the five incoming national vice commanders.

You may lower your hands. Congratulations and I look forward as we together continue to serve this great nation. Ladies and gentlemen, I now present to you your new national vice commanders. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: And your new national commander, Jimmie L. Foster.

This is an exciting time for any National Convention. We have elected a new national commander and look forward to a time of growth and community involvement. This is also the time when the American Legion Auxiliary elects a new president, as this important part of our Legion family is also poised for a bright future. The woman chosen to lead the American Legion Auxiliary has worked many years for veterans and their families. In fact, so many veterans are her family. A 45-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, she is eligible for membership through her late husband, Ray E. Hall; another late husband, Richard Ashworth; her son, Kerry L. Hall; and her granddaughter, Petty Officer Third Class Kathryn L. Hall. "The collective power of one Auxiliary can change the world," she told her Convention delegates. She belongs to American Legion Auxiliary Unit 521 in Pasadena, Texas. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and welcome Mrs. Carlene Ashworth, national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. *(Standing applause)*

**Greetings: Carlene Ashworth, Texas, National President
American Legion Auxiliary**

Good afternoon. Congratulations, Commander Foster, for your election to this great office as the national commander of The American Legion and to all those others who have been elected today. It is a great day and a great future for the American Legion family, and I look forward to sharing this next year with our American Legion family.

And as you just heard Commander Hill say, "The Power Of One" is my theme. You heard also from Commander Foster that we will work together with the power of one

servicing America's veterans every day. And I hope that you will join with us in doing that, because we all have a lot of strength individually, we all have a lot of strength collectively as a huge, huge family of American Legion members; Auxiliary members, Sons of the American Legion, and as Commander Foster said, our junior members, too, because they also have a lot of collective strength within their own group.

So I ask for your support to all of us. I ask you to go out into your communities. Let's revive those posts and units that are dying because we don't have anybody out there supporting them and giving the support to our elderly veterans, our newer young veterans and their families, our new military families. We just want you all to go back into those communities and reach out to them and show them how much power you can have as an individual, as a post, as a unit, as an American Legion family. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: The man chosen to lead the Sons of The American Legion is a son of a U.S. Air Force veteran of the Korean War. A member of the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 321 in Plano, Texas, he spent 25 years working as a contractor in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. His wife of 17 years, Charlie, served as auxiliary president for the Department of Texas. He has served the Sons at every level, including national vice commander. His motto is "By their side, with honor and pride." Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and welcome the national commander of the Sons of The American Legion, David L. Dew. *(Standing applause)*

**Greetings: David L. Dew, Texas, National Commander
Sons of The American Legion**

Good afternoon. Mr. Commander, distinguished guests of The American Legion. It is my great pleasure to represent the Sons of The American Legion on this wonderful occasion. As you all know, Jimmie is a little hard to get to know, to make friends with, but I'm proud to consider myself one of the few that has accomplished that task. No matter where you are or what you're doing, when you see this man coming down the hall he is going to have a smile on his face and his hand stuck out to shake your hand and make you feel welcome and fulfill your day. And this is exactly what we all need to do.

I look forward to traveling this great country together and just hope I can keep up with the man, because he's pretty quick. But he has told me all year long, I will do more than do less. So I assure you that I will.

But all kidding aside, I congratulate you on your selection of a gentleman, national commander of The American Legion, my friend, Jimmie Foster. And I assure you, by your side with honor and pride the Sons of The American Legion stand. There's a song, if you know a little bit about country music, a pretty lady, not near as pretty a lady as our first lady of the American Legion Auxiliary, Faith Hill once sang, "I'm the lucky one." Commander and Madam President, I'm the lucky one. Thank you very much and God bless all of you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: President Ashworth and Commander Dew, please remain with us and be joined by Commander Foster. Ladies and gentlemen, National Commander Jimmie L. Foster, National President Carlene Ashworth and Sons

of The American Legion Commander David L. Dew, our dynamic leadership team for the upcoming year. (*Applause*)

Just a reminder that the post-Convention National Executive Committee meeting will occur in Room 103 immediately following adjournment. All the new national officers are to attend. Is there any further business to come before this convention? Hearing none, please uncover as the outgoing National Chaplain John Beaver, offers the benediction.

Benediction

John L. Beaver, Alabama, National Chaplain

Dismiss us with Your blessing, oh God, as we leave this place with the faith that Your spirit goes with us. Keep us sensitive to Your proctoring to the end that all we do is according to Your will. Finally, God bless our military, the American Legion family and United States of America. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Cover. Color Guard will retire the Flag of the United States. The delegates will stand and hand salute on my command.

Hand salute. Two.

At the end of my 372nd day, at 13:16, I now declare this 92nd Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, *sine die*. (*Applause*)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL RECIPIENT(S)

National American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually for outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion.

RECIPIENT: The Boys Scouts of America

American Legion Baseball Graduate of The Year Award: Presented to the major league baseball player who played American Legion Baseball as a teenager and best exemplifies the principles and purposes of the program in sportsmanship, citizenship, general good conduct, integrity, and playing ability.

RECIPIENT: Brandon Inge – Detroit Tigers

Bob Feller Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player recording the greatest number of strikeouts during the regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: Kevin Hill – Midwest City, OK

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: American Legion Post 170 – Midwest City, OK

Dr. Irvin L. “Click” Cowger Memorial R.B.I. Award: Awarded annually to The American Legion Baseball player who is credited with the most runs batted in by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: Vince Ampf – Roseburg, OR

Ford C. Frick Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having within its jurisdiction the runner-up team in the National Finals of The American Legion Baseball program.

RECIPIENT: Department of Minnesota (Outside Sponsor – Eden Prairie, MN)

The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.

RECIPIENT: Department of Iowa

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: A Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.

RECIPIENT: Brandon Drozd – Geona, NE

The Howard P. Savage Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having the baseball team which becomes the Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: Department of Oklahoma (Post 170 – Midwest City, OK)

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award: Awarded annually to the manager and coach of the national championship team, as representative of the adult leadership Jack Williams stressed during his lifetime.

RECIPIENT(s): **Manager: Doug Weese, Coaches: Shane Hawk, Jerry Long and Derek Snell**

James F. Daniel, Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award: Awarded to The American Legion Baseball player participating in the World Series that represents the principle of good sportsmanship emphasized by the program.

RECIPIENT: **Blake Schmit – Eden Prairie, MN**

Junior Shooting Sports Trophy: Awarded annually in four categories to the top performing Individual and Team in the Sporter and Precision categories competing in the annual USA Shooting National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championship who are members of clubs and teams affiliated with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program.

RECIPIENT(s):

Precision Team: **Arlington Optimist Acorns (VA) American Legion Post 177
Ryan Anderson, Evelyn Holman, Camille Lathbury,
Morgan Lluy**

Precision Individual: **Matthew Martin, Borealis Bullseyes (AK)
American Legion Post 28**

Sporter Team: **Lafayette Gun Club of Virginia “White” (VA)
American Legion Post 273
Hannah Black, Joshua Black, Matthew Brewer,
Thomas Wheelless.**

Sporter Individual: **Hannah Weatherford, North Little Rock H.S. JROTC (AR)
American Legion Post 40**

Louisville Slugger Trophy: Plaque is presented to recipient, or designated representative, by appropriate official upon the conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series.

RECIPIENT: **Jake Hager – Las Vegas, NV**

The Ralph T. O’Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.

RECIPIENT: **Department of Alaska**

Rawlings “Big Stick” Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player having the highest total number of bases as determined by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: **Matt Halloran – Eden Prairie, MN**

Spafford National Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department of The American Legion having within its jurisdiction the winner of the National High School Oratorical Contest.

RECIPIENT: Department of South Carolina (Victoria “Tori” Black – National Oratorical Winner

Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship Award: Awarded annually to the athlete competing in The American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and fair play.

RECIPIENT: Shane Russell (American Legion Post 170) Three Rivers, MI
Member of the St. Joseph County 4-H Straight Shooters

William Randolph Hearst Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department attaining the greatest number of percentage points compiled from information contained in the Consolidated Post Reports, and supporting Department narrative.

RECIPIENT: Department of Wisconsin

American Legion & Scouting Square Knot Award: This award is designed to recognize American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program. This award is not meant to be a selective or limited award, but one that is available to any American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who completes the requirements for the award. The Award is meant to recognize dedication and work required by an American Legion, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member to assist in furthering the Scouting program in The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s):

2009 – Daniel Napolliello, Gerald Newland, Sr.; 2010 – Benjamin Elkins, Clayton Niles, Charles Lewis, Jr., Dennis Smith, Richard Uhrich, Joseph Isacks, Donald Brown, George Hall, Frank Hanchak, James Sundergrill, William Servizi, Oren Peters, Harold Yocum, Quimby Enterline, Bentley Mabee, David Whitney, Alex Wiatt, Tracy Wilson, Richard Cummings, Danny Wilcoxon, Gary Petersen, Michael Staton, Jim Clements, John Beebe, Sr., Dale Emmerton, William Pollack, David Loughlin, Michael Lhotka, Carl Pabst, Royce Niles, Charles J. Kopcho, John Susek, George Alexander, Donald Wiater, William Smith. (as of: 9/30/10)

Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of authentic veterans' organization in Canada. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans' affairs and in the development and perpetuation of the spirit of international good will and comradeship between the United States and Canada and between their veterans' organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s):

ANAVICUS – George Izzard, Peter Young, Ron Newberry, Gilles Martin, Charlie Smith, Howard Copeman, Dave Low, Michael Donovan, Rick Quigley, Elsie Fraser, Bob Matheson, Gerry Bennett, Dwayne Smith, James Gauvreau, John Yates, Bruce Wight, Alex Zubko, George Ing, Don Bell, Andrew Letemplier, Real Hamelin, Gerald S. Wharton.

Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting: Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post reports.

RECIPIENT: Departments of Idaho, Montana, and Vermont

Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans: Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.

RECIPIENT(s) : 2009 Winners

Category I BNSF Railway Company

Category II Regent Security Services, Inc.

Category III Millennium Security Services, LLC

Note: The 2010 Employer of the Year Awards will not be determined until December 31, 2010.

Employment Service Awards: Awarded in three categories: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) of the Year; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) of the Year; Employment Service (ES) Office of the Year.

RECIPIENT(s): 2009 Winners

LVER of the Year: Kathy Y. Ford

DVOP of the Year: Kenneth E. Kempf

ES Office of the Year: Cumberland County Job Link

Note: The 2010 Employment Service Awards will not be determined until December 31, 2010.

Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the AETNA Company, to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.

RECIPIENT: 2009 Winner

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Note: The 2010 Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons will not be determined until December 31, 2010.

National DEPARTMENT History Contest Awards: Awarded annually at the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee to those contestants entered in the National Department History Contest having submitted the One-Year History *Narrative* or *Yearbook* of the Department which best meets the standards established for that particular competition.

RECIPIENT(s):

Department of North Carolina (One-Year Narrative History)

Department of Ohio (One-Year Yearbook History)

National Post History Contest Awards: Awarded annually to those contestants entered in the National Post History Contest deemed by a duly authorized panel of judges to have submitted the One-Year History of the Post which best meets the standards established for the competitions.

RECIPIENT(s):

Frank B. Bartlett Post 7, Buckhannon, WV (One-Year Narrative History)

Matthews-Crawford Post 131, Warrensburg, MO (One-Year Yearbook History)

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s): None awarded for 2010

The Distinguished Public Service Award: Awarded annually by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the Commander's Advisory Committee at the time of the annual Washington Conference. It may be awarded to one or more person(s) of the United States Congress.

RECIPIENT(s): Representative C.W. "Bill" Young (FL)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I – 200-1,000 members; II - 1,001-3,000 members; III - 3,001-6000 members; IV – 6001-12,000 members; V – 12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s): 2009 Winners

Category I Detachment of Mississippi

Category II Detachment of Louisiana

Category III Detachment of Wisconsin

Category IV Detachment of Minnesota

Category V Detachment of Pennsylvania

Note: The 2010 Houghton awards will not be determined until December 31, 2010.

General Henri Gouraud Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said Department having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

RECIPIENT(s):

Category I None Qualified 2010

Category II None Qualified 2010

Category III None Qualified 2010

Category IV None Qualified 2010

Category V **None Qualified 2010**

Category VI **None Qualified 2010**

General John J. Pershing Honor Award: Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more, of the post's previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.

RECIPIENT: **Department of North Dakota**

The Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.

RECIPIENT: **None awarded for 2010**

The North Carolina Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department, not included among the several state Departments or the Department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year's membership.

RECIPIENT: **None awarded for 2010**

The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.

RECIPIENT: **Department of Vermont**

The American Legion Air Force Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class at the Air Force Academy who demonstrates the highest proficiency in all academic subjects.

RECIPIENT: **Cadet Austin B. McKinney**

The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.

RECIPIENT: **Ensign Justin Phillip Brooks**

The American Legion Merchant Marine Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the Merchant Marine Academy, enrolled in the Pre-Commissioning Seminar Course, and selected by the Academy Faculty, as achieving the highest grade pertaining to a 1,000-word composition dealing with the subject of National Security.

RECIPIENT: **Midshipman Andrea M. Morrison**

The American Legion Military Academy Award: Awarded annually to cadet of the graduating class at the United States Military Academy with the highest standing in Chemistry.

RECIPIENT: **Cadet Alexander T. Madden**

The American Legion Naval Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the United States Naval Academy who stands highest in those English, History and Government courses taken to complete a Foreign Affairs major.

RECIPIENT: Ensign William Nugent Murray

National Commander's Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program.

RECIPIENT(s):

Category I — Departments with 100,000 or more members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Category II — Departments with 70,000 to 99,999 members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Category III — Departments with 40,000 to 69,999 members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Category IV — Departments with 25,000 to 39,999 members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Category V — Departments with 10,000 to 24,999 members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Category VI — Departments with less than 10,000 members:

Post Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Individual Participation: Not yet reported by the National Security Division

National Law Enforcement Officer Of The Year Award: To recognize an outstanding law enforcement officer as selected from Department law enforcement officer winners for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.

RECIPIENT: Captain Michael LaVine, Metro Transit Police Department – Minneapolis, MN

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.

RECIPIENT(s): Not yet reported by the National Security Division

Fourth Estate Award: Awarded to press, radio, TV, or other communications media; to associations of same, to owners, executive heads or staff members; such award to be in recognition of outstanding service to community, state, or nation, which service shall have been in accordance with or the furtherance of established American Legion policies and programs.

RECIPIENT: ABA Journal

National Commander's Public Relations Award: Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.

RECIPIENT: **GI Film Festival**

The Arch M. Cantrall Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Band winning first prize in competition with all other American Legion bands during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

RECIPIENT: **The Band of the Tonawandas - Williamsville, NY**

Emblem Sales Trophy: To be awarded annually to that Junior sponsored Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Junior sponsored Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

RECIPIENT: **Last awarded 1984**

The Four Chaplains Trophy: Awarded annually to the winner of The American Legion Firing Squad competition at the National Convention.

RECIPIENT: **Last awarded 1985**

The Glen R. Hillis Trophy: Awarded annually to that Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

RECIPIENT: **American Legion Post 472 – Houston, TX**

The Lemuel Bolles Trophy: Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.

RECIPIENT: **None for 2010**

National Adjutant's Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Firing Squad winning first prize in competition with all other Firing Squads during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

RECIPIENT: **Last awarded 1985**

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy: Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.

RECIPIENT: **Department of Wisconsin**

The American Legion Patriot Award: Awarded to outstanding citizens who have demonstrated a profound and exceptional commitment to military personnel and their families. In addition to the award, the national winners will receive expense-paid round trip travel to Convention to include airfare and lodging.

RECIPIENT(s): **Major David Howell, Lance Orton and Duane Jackson**

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Clarence E. Hill, Jacksonville, Florida. Membership was strong with 2.4 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.

Daniel S. Wheeler
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

William E. Galbraith, Nebraska
 John H. Geiger, Illinois
 Michael J. Kogutak, New York
 Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
 Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
 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
 Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
 Ray G. Smith, North Carolina

Richard J. Santos, Maryland
 Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
 John A. Brieden, III, Texas
 Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan
 Thomas L. Bock, Colorado

Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts
 Martin F. 'Marty' Conatser, Illinois
 Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
 David K. Rehbein, Iowa

National Executive Committeemen

F. Wayne Turner, Alabama
 James L. Van Horn, Alaska
 Deodoro M. Aguilar, Arizona
 Cleave B. Weiss, Arkansas
 Fred J. Walton, California
 Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado
 Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut
 Charles T. Armbruster, Delaware
 Paul H. Hasz, D.C.
 Robert J. Proctor, Florida
 William E. Marshall, France
 Charles F. Wessinger, Georgia
 Andrew W. Johnson, Hawaii
 Wayne D. Mitchell, Idaho
 Eugene Thompson, Illinois
 W. Darrell Hansel, Indiana
 John J. Ross, Iowa
 David O. Warnken, Kansas
 Randall Coffman, Kentucky
 Charles D. Aucoin, Louisiana
 Robert A. Owen, Maine
 John F. Milburn, Maryland
 Milton K. Lashus, Massachusetts
 Arthur Herbruger, Mexico
 Darwin Krieger, Michigan
 Raymond DeZurik, Minnesota
 Charles E. Langley, Mississippi
 Richard A. Heigert, Missouri

Sylvia A. Beals, Montana
 Douglas Boldt, Nebraska
 Salvatore Ruvolo, Nevada
 John E. Neylon, New Hampshire
 William Billy Mack, New Jersey
 Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico
 Richard R. Keiser, New York
 Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
 Curtis O. Twete, North Dakota
 Richard Zulch, Ohio
 Warren D. Wilson, Oklahoma
 Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon
 Richard A. Coccimiglio, Pennsylvania
 William J. Kelly, Philippines
 Alberto Rodriguez, Puerto Rico
 Ronald P. LeVasseur, Rhode Island
 Billy W. Bell, South Carolina
 Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota
 Perry D. Roberts, Tennessee
 Conrad L. Roberson, Texas
 William E. Christoffersen, Utah
 Barbara Bushaw, Vermont
 George C. Lussier, Jr., Virginia
 Michael L. Montaney, Washington
 William W. Kile, West Virginia
 David L. Gough, Wisconsin
 Gerald L. Jacobs, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

Willis Frazier, Alabama
 Peggy Dettori, Alaska
 S. Paul Griffin, Arizona
 James V. Bynum, Arkansas
 Roy L. Nichols, California
 Neal L. Thomas, Colorado
 D. Joseph Jackson, Connecticut
 Lyman R. Brenner, Delaware
 Theodore A. Webb, D.C.

Dennis R. Boland, Florida
 John H. Miller, France
 Charles E. French, Georgia
 LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii
 John B. Dunlap, Idaho
 Luis V. Gonzalez, Illinois
 Paul I. Steward, Indiana
 Bruce C. Feuerbach, Iowa
 Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas

Randall Fisher, Kentucky	Henry S. Long, Ohio
Harold D. Burson, Louisiana	William E. Lonkerd, Oklahoma
Paul A. L'Heureux, Maine	Richard Clark, Oregon
Leroy E. Thornton, Maryland	John J. Gasper, Pennsylvania
Michael E. Cassidy, Massachusetts	Charles H. Cathey, Philippines
Mark A. Walker, Mexico	Monserrate Oquendo, Puerto Rico
Thomas G. Holzgen, Michigan	Normand G. Vadnais, Rhode Island
Marland A. Ronning, Minnesota	John E. Palmer, Jr., South Carolina
Robert E. Gosa, Mississippi	Philip C. Anderson, South Dakota
Clark E. Pointer, Missouri	Rollen D. Bradshaw, Tennessee
Mervin G. Gunderson, Montana	James E. Prendergast, Texas
Jerry Landkamer, Nebraska	Terry D. Schow, Utah
Jack L. Ford, Nevada	Richard H. Farmer, Vermont
Roland E. Patnode, Jr., New Hampshire	Thomas E. Saunders, Virginia
Daniel E. McCole, New Jersey	William R. Bob Wallace, Washington
Prospero J. Sanchez New Mexico	William E. Burkett, West Virginia
Charles I. Herschlag, New York	Alan M. Richards, Wisconsin
Coley A. Hunsucker, North Carolina	William R. Wright, III, Wyoming
Wayne D. Satrom, North Dakota	

**EXCERPTS FROM BY-LAWS OF THE
AMERICAN LEGION**

ARTICLE I

**National Executive Committee
Commission, Committee, and Employees**

Section 6. The National Executive Committee, upon nomination by the National Commander, appoints the following standing commissions: National Americanism Commission, National Commission on Children and Youth, National Convention Commission, National Economic Commission, National Finance Commission, National Foreign Relations Commission, National Internal Affairs Commission, National Legislative Commission, The American Legion Magazine Commission, National Public Relations Commission, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and National Security Commission.

The National Executive Committee shall provide for the appointment and employment of such subordinate officers and employees as may be needed for the administration of The American Legion, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Morris M. Bentley, Idaho**

Thank you to all the great Legionnaires from the West. This year our motto has been: "The West is the Best". I have appreciated your hospitality along with the many gifts and kindnesses extended to me during my travels this year. I have visited all Departments throughout the Western Region. Additionally I have been active in my home Department of Idaho.

Following is a month by month chronology of my travels and activities:

September 2009

- 1-7 National Vice Commander Orientation in Indianapolis
- 8-11 National Vice Commander Orientation in Washington DC; attended National Commander Hill's Congressional Testimony; visited Idaho Senators and Representatives
- 19 9th District Convention in Horseshoe Bend, Idaho
- 26 Area C District Convention in Idaho Falls, Idaho

October 2009

- 1 Memorial Service for CW2 Jesse Phelps, remains returned from service in Vietnam
- 2-4 Department of Oregon, DEC Meeting, Official Visit
- 9-15 Fall Conference in Indianapolis; hosted breakfast for Department Commanders from the Western Region
- 16 North Idaho Food Convoy in Lewiston, Idaho
- 17 2nd District Convention in Craigmont, Idaho
- 18 1st District Convention in Sandpoint, Idaho
- 23-25 Department of Montana, Fall Conference, Official Visit

November 2009

- 5-7 Department of Nevada, DEC Meeting, Official visit
- 11 Veterans Day Service at Grangeville, Idaho, High School
- 14 5th District Convention in Burley, Idaho
- 20-21 Department of Idaho; Reception for Fang Wong, Boise Food Convoy
DEC Meeting

December 2009

- 6 Coordinated Area A American Legion Baseball Meeting, Worley, Idaho
- 12 Keynote speaker at Wreaths Across America in Boise, Idaho at the State Veteran's Cemetery

January 2010

- 4 Department of Hawaii, informal meeting with Commander Dan Cordes, visit to Veteran's Memorial Building and Museum in Lihue, Kauai; Post 54 meeting, Lihue, Kauai
- 14-16 Department of Idaho Mid-Winter Conference; Legislative Reception; Assisted with initiation of 30 Legionnaires
- 17-20 Department of Mexico, Membership Visit, unofficial visit; visited Legionnaires in Costa Rica and Panama
- 22-24 Department of Wyoming, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit
- 29-31 Department of Colorado, Mid-Winter Conference, unofficial visit

February 2010

- 4-6 Department of Washington, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit
- 12-14 Department of New Mexico, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit
- 19-21 Department of Nevada, Membership visit, unofficial visit
- 23-26 Service Officer Training in Washington, DC
- 28-3 March, Washington Conference; visited Idaho Senators and Representatives

March 2010

- 6, 6 District Convention in Pocatello, Idaho
- 13-16 Department of Washington, Membership Tour, unofficial visit
- 27 Home Post, Grangeville #37 Birthday and Awards Dinner

April 2010

- 3, 4 District Convention, Mountain Home, Idaho
 17, 9 District Convention, Payette, Idaho
 22-25 Department of Alaska, Department Convention, Official visit

May 2010

- 1-6 Spring Meetings in Indianapolis
 21- June 3 Department of Philippines including visit with Ambassador Harry Thomas, toured VA clinic in Manila; attended Memorial Day Ceremonies at National Cemetery in Manila, spoke at DEC meeting and many informal meetings with veterans and Legionnaires; helped recruit members and discussed ways to start American Legion Baseball Program in the Philippines starting in Olongapo

June 2010

- 6 and 11 Gem Boys State, Nampa, Idaho
 7-10 Department of Mexico, Mexico City, Department Convention, Official visit
 17-18 US Merchant Marine Academy Awards Ceremony, presented American Legion Award
 18-20 Department of Arizona, Department Convention, Official visit
 25-27 Department of California, Department Convention, Official visit

July 2010

- 6-9, Department of Washington, Department Convention, Keynote speaker
 10-11 Department of Idaho, Department Convention, Keynote speaker at Commander's Banquet
 22-25 Area A (Idaho) Baseball District Tournament, Director

August 2010

- 5-9 American Legion Baseball Northwest Regional Tournament, Patterson Baseball Complex, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA
 12 American Legion World Series Baseball Banquet, Spokane, WA
 13-17 American Legion World Series, Spokane, WA
 26-September 2 American Legion National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER**Dr. Gordon B. Browning, Maryland**

Serving as a National Vice Commander has been a genuine pleasure and distinct honor. Sincere thanks are offered to the Department of Maryland for its endorsement and support during the entire process. The Southern Bloc and its representatives have provided leadership and guidance as the year has progressed, and the thirteen Departments that comprised the region I served have been most hospitable and gracious whenever I visited or contacted them. All of us who served as members of Commander Clarence Hill's team quickly forged bonds that will surely last for the rest of our lives.

Wherever I travelled, the Department National Executive Committeeman, the Department Commander, and the Department Adjutant smoothed the way, insuring that I could be at the proper place on time. The amount and quality of their assistance was matched only by that of their fantastic staff members who were always there to help. The National Staff probably got more calls from me than any other, but never failed to

provide prompt and accurate information or to meet my every need. They are truly beyond compare!

What more can I say but thank you to all the American Legion Family for this opportunity to continue to serve our great organization? It has been a year I will never forget. Thank you.

The summary of my activities for the administrative year 2009-2010 is listed below:

September 2009

- 1-7 Tour, Orientation, and Training at Indianapolis Headquarters
- 7-11 Tour, Orientation, and Training at Washington Headquarters
- 7-11 National Commanders testimony before Congress

October 2009

- 10-15 Fall Meetings and National Executive Meeting at Indianapolis
- 30-Nov 1 Department of Virginia, Fall Conference, Official Visit

November 2009

- 11-14 Department of North Carolina, Membership Round Up, Unofficial visit
- 19-22 Department of Georgia, Membership Caravan, Unofficial visit

December 2009

No Visits

January 2010

- 8-9 Department of Florida, Think Tank, Extra visit
- 22-24 Department of Tennessee, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit

February 2010

- 28-Mar 3 Washington Conference and Legislative visits

March 2010

- 12 National Commander's Banquet, Department of Delaware
- 13 National Commander's visit to Maryland (Home Department)

April 2010

No Visits

May 2010

- 5-6 Spring National Executive Committee Meeting at Indianapolis
- 17-18 Coast Guard Academy, Awards Ceremony

June 2010

- 3-5 Department of Kentucky, Department Convention, Official visit
- 10-12 Department of Louisiana, Department Convention, Official Visit
- 19-21 Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, New York
- 23-27, Department of Florida, Department Convention, Official visit

JULY 2010

- 13-16. Department of Maryland, Department Convention, Official visit

AUGUST 2010

- 27-September 2, National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER

Mark A. Avis, Massachusetts

After being elected at the 91st National Convention in Louisville, Ky, National Vice Commanders, Jim Morris (Ohio), Doc Gordon Browning (Maryland), Gene Shoemaker

(South Dakota), Morris Bentley (Idaho) and I hit it off right away and the friendship was formed and we knew it was going to be a great year.

Then was home for a brief time then off to Indianapolis and Washington Dc for our orientation in TV/radio and the workings of the National Staff. This proved to be of great help as the year went on and interviews were given in various departments throughout our regions.

Then it was home and off to my first visit to the department of Maine September 18 – 20, for their fall conference, which again showed the excitement for growth in this membership year. I spoke on the importance of membership and the programs of this great organization.

October was a time for calling Commanders and the fall meetings in Indy. We also got to have breakfast with our Commanders which were exciting as the energy that morning seemed to carry on throughout our year. Commander Hill in his remarks to us were simple and sound maintain membership and recruit, as he put it recruiting is the hardest easiest job to do. With that in mind and my Commanders with a full belly I asked for a commitment from them to give 100% effort as looking at the goals they set for themselves during their membership meetings were very attainable and I got it from them all. The traditional membership this year proved it in the Northeast this year as we were 1st before DMS was added.

November 16 – 22, I was in Massachusetts for revitalization of 2 posts along with Michele Steinmitz from the National Headquarters. This work proved to be fruitful as we transferred in and found new members for each post. The best part is we found individuals who were ready to step up and take active rolls in the posts.

December saw 2 visits one to New Hampshire 4 -6, for membership round up which was great as I was able to meet with many of the New Hampshire legionnaires and answer any questions they may have had. Then it was off to Rhode Island 18 – 19, for more post visitations and Q and A sessions, again the enthusiasm was great.

January saw 3 visits Pennsylvania 8 – 10, Maine 15 – 17 and Vermont for their Mid Winter Conferences, which was met with great excitement, as can be seen by their final Membership Numbers coming into Convention.

February was spent communicating with my Departments on membership.

March had 2 visits Rhode Island 13 – 14 and New York 15 – 16, the reception was great and the work being done was fantastic in New York Their Membership Chairman was well on his way to a gold brigade jacket.

April 22-26 was to Delaware Where they seem to work so well as a team due to the hard work of the Adjutant and officers of the Department which again keeps it exciting.

May was awesome with a chance to go to DC for the US Coast Guard Change of Command Ceremony on 17 – 18, and then it was off to West Point for the presentation of an award to the Cadet with the highest Chemistry grade, again awesome and breathe taking for an Army Veteran.

June 2 visits Massachusetts 2 – 5 and New Jersey 10 – 12 to attend their conventions.

July had the New York Convention 14 – 17, which again showed the excitement for the programs as well as Membership.

August 27 – September 2 National Convention Milwaukee, WI and the end of a great year. Now back to being a Blue Cap Legionnaire and the back bone of this great organization.

I wish to thank Commander Hill for a Great year of leadership and to my fellow Vice Commanders Thank you for the friendship we have formed and wish everyone great success in the future.

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James C. Morris, Ohio**

My year as National Vice Commander all started on August 27, 2009. That was the day I was elected as one of the five National Vice Commanders — What a great honor.

September 2009

- 1 Arrived in Indianapolis for training at National Headquarters to meet with each Division head and they told us about their programs.
- 3-4 We spent the day on the phone calling all the District Commanders and State Commanders that we would be working with throughout the year.
- 7 Arrived at our office in Washington, DC for training. Attended the Veterans Affairs Committee of the House and Senate as the National Commander spoke about things that should be done for the veterans of this great country.

October 2009

- 10 Arrived at our National Headquarters in Indianapolis for the Fall meetings. We were given an opportunity to meet with all the state commanders that we would be working with this year. We set our plans for a great year in membership.
- 22 Arrived in Michigan for a three-day membership tour. We traveled 1300 miles, going from one end of the state to the other; talking membership with members of The American Legion.

November 2009,

- 6 Arrived in Missouri allotting four days to travel around the state and pick up membership.
- 19 Arrived in Illinois to attend the three-day, 5th Division Past Commander Retreat.

January 2010

- 19 Departed for Illinois for a nine-day membership roundup. We traveled 3000 miles, stopping once in each of the 29 districts; working our membership plan and providing assistance for membership programs.

February 2010

- 15 We began a four-day membership roundup in Ohio. It was really nice to travel my state and work with the department officers and to see so many friends.
- 19 Traveled to Michigan for their mid-winter conference — productive three days.

May 2010

- 3 Arrived in Indianapolis to attend four days of Spring meetings.
- 7 Arrived in Missouri to take part in a three –day program at the Truman Library.
- 26 Arrived in Maryland to attend the Naval Academy for three days — thoroughly enjoyed this experience.
- 30 Arrived in Washington, DC to attend the Memorial Day program. Monday began with breakfast at the White House, after which we went to Arlington National Cemetery for a program; then on to the Vietnam wall for a special event — What a great honor this was.

June 2010

- 11 Traveled to Wisconsin to attend the largest Flag Day parade in the country. Then off to their Boys State for a day.
- 15 Arrived at the Boys state program in Ohio where I spent the rest of the week.
- 24 Attended the Ohio State Convention for 3 days.

July 2010

- 8 Arrived in West Virginia for their three-day state convention

- 16 Arrived in Indiana for their two-day state convention

August 2010

30, September 1, 2

Arrived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the 92nd National Convention where my term in office ended. What a great year — filled with memories that will last a life time.

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Gene Schumacher, South Dakota**

September 2009

No visits

October 2009

No visits

November 2009

16-21 Department of Iowa, Membership Tour, Unofficial visit

December 2009

No visits

January 2010

8-10 Department of Nebraska, Mid-Year Conference, Official visit

21-24 Department of Texas, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit

February 2010

5-7 Department of North Dakota, Mid-Winter Conference, Official visit

12-14 Department of Iowa, Mid Winter Conference, Official visit

March 2010

7-12 Department of Kansas, Membership Tour, Unofficial visit

19-21 Department of Minnesota, DEC Meeting, Official visit

April 2010

16-18 Department of Oklahoma, Children's Home Weekend, Official visit

May 2010

14-16 Department of Kansas, Department Convention, Official visit

23-24 US Air Force Academy Awards Ceremony

June 2010

17-21 Department of South Dakota, Department Convention, Official visit

25-26 Department of Nebraska, Department Convention, Official visit

July 2010

17-18 Department of Nebraska Special Olympic Games

August 2010

27 thru

September 2 National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN**Rev. John L. Beaver, Alabama**

At the conclusion of the 91st American Legion National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, I was sworn in as the national chaplain for 2009-2010. For the past 12 years the department of Alabama has been highly supportive of their department chaplain and was very excited to have one of their own represent the nation with the privilege of wearing the name of "national chaplain."

I'm very humbled to be given this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve in this capacity for one year. Throughout the entire year, our National Commander, Clarence Hill, has been undergirded with prayer from our chaplains across the country.

On September 26, 2009 the National Chaplains' Conference was held at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel. Our department chaplains and department auxiliary chaplains came together to participate in the conference. Our theme, "For God and Country, Having a Compassionate Heart", was put together with national auxiliary chaplain Bev Wolf and national American Legion chaplain, John Beaver. Special recognition was given to past national chaplains Rev. James Alars, Rev. Norris Keirn, and Rev. Lawrence Vollink for their continued service. Excellent workshops were presented on serving the homeless veterans from housing and urban development through veterans' affairs, and Warrior's Hope, a retreat program for returning troops and their families. Other topics presented were Mothers of Military Service, establishing a chaplain's website, being an effective department chaplain, and conducting funerals.

On Sunday, September 28, 2009, I conducted the Protestant service at the end of the conference. A memorial service was performed by me and Bev Wolf, auxiliary national chaplain. After the chaplains' conference I established an email prayer chain to keep everyone informed about those in need as well as any important updates for chaplains.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) met on October 12-13, 2009 in Indianapolis, Indiana and the national chaplain delivered numerous prayers at receptions and meetings. On October 12, 2009, a very special invitation was extended to me to give the invocation, memorial, and benediction at the Steivos Play Day Dinner.

On Veterans Day I brought the message at Kingswood United Methodist Church, Mobile, Alabama with the topic "For God and Country, Having a Compassionate Heart." In December I wrote an article titled "Stacy's Holiday Gift" for the American Legion Dispatch.

From September through November 2009 I visited several district meetings throughout the state of Alabama, bringing the message of "Having a Compassionate Heart", serving our military units, helping veterans and families who are facing illness and/or the loss of loved ones. I conducted two training sessions on the responsibilities of a chaplain at all levels. In January 2010 I delivered numerous prayers at receptions and meetings of our mid-winter meeting and conducted a memorial service. I also conducted many Four Chaplain Services were conducted throughout the country with our department chaplains participating. I had the special privilege of conducting the Four Chaplain Service at the Walter Greene Veteran's Home in Bay Minette, Alabama with the assistance of the 33rd District chaplain.

At the Washington Conference I had the opportunity to pray at the luncheons and receptions. While at this conference I attended the homeless conference to gain as much information as possible on what we can do in our communities to aid homeless veterans. The Washington staff made arrangements with Congressional staff for me to open both

the Senate and House of Representative sessions on March 2, 2010. I visited with the US Senate and House of Representatives chaplains. The greatest highlight was my visit to Walter Reed Medical Center and spending time with our wounded warriors. I also visited Legion members at the VA Center in Washington, DC and offered prayers upon request.

In March and April 2010 I visited all the state veterans' homes in Alabama and toured the new facilities for the homeless in Birmingham, Alabama. In May our NEC meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana and again my contribution was to attend the meetings and give invocations and benedictions. In June I participated in the Alabama Department Convention, where I was re-elected as department chaplain and conducted a memorial service. In July I attended Boy's Nation and performed a memorial service with the topic "Keys to Successful Leadership God's Way". On Monday we laid the American Legion wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arlington National Cemetery with our National Commander.

At the 92nd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Sunday August 29, 2010, I hosted our National Chaplains' Breakfast in which we honored our national youth chaplains, baseball, oratorical, junior shooting, Boy Scouts, and Boys and Girls Nation. Our religious patriotic service was awe-inspiring with the St. Stephens Choir and the message on our year-long national theme, "For God and Country, Having a Compassionate Heart". A DVD of this service is available to any person upon request. Prayers and words of encouragement were offered to the people I met along the way. I opened the convention with the invocation and closed it with a benediction. It was a very humbling experience. I also gave my blessing to the new national chaplain for 2010-2011.

Throughout the year, I have kept in contact with many chaplains, staff, and officers through emails and phone calls. Numerous sympathy cards and prayers of encouragement for the ill were sent out through the prayer chain.

It has been truly an honor and a very humbling experience to serve as the national chaplain of the American Legion. I want to thank God and the American Legion for this great honor. I prayed daily that I would well represent our motto "For God and Country". I hope my prayers were answered in the affirmative. The people I have met and served are the greatest, which makes the American Legion the greatest organization in the world. May God continue to bless us in all of our endeavors, wherever we are serving.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN

James T. Higuera, California

Since our very first caucus 92 years ago in Paris, France, and the subsequent organizational meetings in Saint Louis, Mo. The American Legion, the world's largest veterans' organization, 2.5 million strong with over 14,000 posts across the nation is "Still Serving America." We are extremely proud of our accomplishments past and present, standing on the Four Pillars, which are for the Veteran, our Youth, a strong National Defense, and Americanism. We promote and defend these principals every day.

In 1920 our membership ranks rose to over 840,000 members nationwide, history was in the making, as our American Legion leaders early on foresaw the need to care for the widowed, orphaned and our disabled veterans. As chapter after chapter to our history was added, there is no question that the most significant piece of social legislation for veterans in the 20th century was the GI Bill of Rights. This was largely due to the efforts of The American Legion. Once again we celebrate with the singing of the 2009 landmark

VA financing law, a historic day for the Veterans Administration, and an equally important day for our nation's veterans.

The Four Pillars of The American Legion are as strong as ever. Our members are devoted to God and country, and we have pledged ourselves to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy. We are rich in history, tested by time and tradition; we are The American Legion and proud American citizen-soldiers.

The National Historian is charged with supervising, judging, and certifying the winning entries of the 2009 National Department and Post Yearbook and the National Department/Post Narrative History Book Contest. This contest takes place at the fall meeting of the National Executive Committee held in Indianapolis, Indiana.

A very special thank goes out to the people who made all this possible, Mr. Howard Trace our Librarian and Curator, staff members Lynda L. Lydick, Jo Ellen Gazvoda, Kevin Flanagan and Bernice Radakovits, the members of The National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion, their Past President Charmon Dunham of South Dakota and current President James Copher of Minnesota, the many newly appointed Department Historian, and our associations pillars our Past National Historians

These documented efforts were reported at the Fall 2009 meeting of the National Executive Committee as winners of the National History Book contest.

The results of the One-Year Department Narrative History Contest are:

First Award, Plaque, Department of South Dakota

Second Award, Plaque, Department of North Carolina

Third Award, Plaque, Department of Wisconsin

The results of the One-Year Department Yearbook History Contest are:

First Award, Plaque, Department of Florida

Second Award, Plaque, Department of Ohio

Third Award, Plaque, Department of Vermont

The Results of the One-year Post Narrative History Contest are:

First Award Plaque, No-Vel Post 159, Venice, Florida

Second Award, Plaque, Missing Man Post 667, Universal City, Texas

Third Award Plaque, Ira H. Hayes Post 84, Sacaton, Arizona

The results of the One-Year Post Yearbook History Contest are:

First Award, Plaque, Ontario Post 67, Ontario, Oregon

Second Award, Plaque, Matthews-Crawford Post 131, Warrensburg, Missouri

Third Award, Plaque, Julius L. Shryer Post 430, Durant, Iowa

On behalf of the many state and local post historians, who take pride in the documenting of the many deeds they have accomplished, we commend them for their sterling efforts in preserving and recording their mark in our history.

This National Historian participated in well over one hundred events, ranging from keynote speaker for the City of Carson, California on Veteran's Day, to participating in the 50th annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. All were memorable, as well as historical in nature.

To National Commander Clarence Hill, we wish to thank him for this treasured appointment to serve on his team, and service to the National organization. We also take note of his official visits to the Far East, Europe and the departments nationwide, thus adding many more chapters to our legion history. Commander Hill will also be singled out as adding a new dimension in communicating with our members, by use of the

Internet; and its endless forms of electronic media. His tour as National Commander deserves a "Well Done" as his ship is now preparing to dock at its homeport.

In addition, one would be remiss not to mention the man behind the man, Mr. Larry White, Aide to The National Commander, and their dedicated wives, who were always in support and by their side, Mrs. Liz Hill and Mrs. Sandra White. With grateful appreciation we thank them.

Our annual gathering of historians will take place at our 92nd Annual National Convention in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A luncheon has been planned with retired United States Army Chief Warrant Officer Mr. Ralph DeLaTorre as our featured speaker. A meeting of the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion will follow the luncheon.

In closing this report, we wish to thank Past National Commanders John H. Geiger (IL), John P. Comer (MA), Ronald F. Conley (PA), and Mr. Dick Pedro, Adjutant of the Department of New York in their support of this honored appointment. A special thanks to my number one supporter, my mentor and friend of over 40 years, a person who had the faith and confidence in me, Mr. Bruce Thiesen.

I am thankful to have served with such an outstanding group of individuals and support staff, who unselfishly give of their time and energies is doing the right thing for our nation's veterans, past and present. It truly has been a memorable and historical year, one that we shall remember as an honor and privilege.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE

P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

Contracts

The following one hundred forty-eight (148) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

1. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and Texas National Convention Corporation of The American Legion, Inc., covering the convocation of the 2013 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Houston, State of Texas, have been executed.
2. A Memorandum of Agreement by and between The American Legion and National Veterans Legal Services Program, whereby National Veterans Legal Services will provide consultations, informal training of Department Service Officers, BVA staff and claims/representatives, case work review, briefings on proposed changes in law and regulations and assistance in methods for prompt adjudication of veterans' appeal cases.
3. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and AdoptaPlatoon (AAP), whereby a link has been established to Operation Crayon referring to AAP which provides morale-lifting mail and care package support to service members deployed overseas.
4. A Service agreement by and between The American Legion and Powerware Global Services, whereby Powerware Global Services replaces and services the battery in the computer room.
5. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Data Processing Services, Inc., whereby Data Processing Services will add 15 disc drives to the

computer system and create and add drives to the computer system storage capacity.

6. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Neighborhood E-mail, whereby Neighborhood E-mail will assist in cleaning of in-house data base and E-mail files.
7. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fuller Engineering Service Corporation, whereby Fuller Engineering will provide maintenance on the Liebert Equipment in the computer room.
8. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Dell Marketing L.P., whereby The American Legion will market the Dell Federal Member Computer Discount Purchase Program to its various associations, employees, members and affiliates.
9. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and KBM (KnowledgeBase Marketing-Mutual of Omaha) for marketing of insurance products for Legion members.
10. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Norlight Telecommunications, Inc., whereby Norlight Telecommunications, Inc. will provide a dedicated internet port and service of same for The American Legion's computer system.
11. Housing contract between The American Legion and Marymount University to provide for lodging and food service for American Legion Boys Nation held in July 2010.
12. A Memorandum of Understanding by and between The American Legion and The United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), whereby The American Legion will assist the United States Army Recruiting Command to improve the recruiting environment for Army recruiters and USAREC will provide information regarding American Legion activities and special community events to local units, bulletins and newsletters.
13. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and the James G. Elliott Co., Inc. for integration into the JGECO M-PANEL Services software.
14. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Bridgestone Golf to provide free golf equipment to military personnel returning from duty in the Middle East and Afghanistan.
15. A contract by and between The American Legion and Office Max to provide office supplies, office furniture, technology and similar products.
16. Two (2) 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:
 Resource One
 Association Group Insurance Administrators (AGIA)
17. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Sigma Micro Corporation for The American Legion's Technical Services Rate Retainer (TSRR) subscription for hardware, operating system and environment support.
18. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Budget Truck Rental, LLC for truck rental discount program.

19. Maintenance Agreement by and between The American Legion and Comtech Group for the IBM Software subscription for the AS400 and RS6000 computer software.
20. Maintenance Agreement by and between The American Legion and Quality Concepts for structural and environmental services (cleaning) at the Fort Ben location.
21. A Contract by and between The American Legion and Communications Products, Inc. for software upgrade for the existing server running Windows 2000 Server.
22. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Stratalys Research & Consulting, LLC for a research project to understand the causes of membership non-renewal.
23. Maintenance and Sales Agreement by and between The American Legion and Ikon Office Solutions, Inc. for equipment maintenance.
24. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and 1-800-Flowers.com provides floral and gift products for members.
25. A License Agreement by and between The American Legion and RLX Video, Inc. This is the vendor TN Marketing uses to provide their DVD's.
26. Annual Maintenance agreement by and between The American Legion and Eaton Power Quality Corporation to provide maintenance and perform preventative maintenance checks on the Uninterruptible Power System (UPS) which regulates the power spikes to the AS400 and is the battery backup in case of a power outage.
27. A License Agreement, by and between The American Legion and Lansa Inc. for software.
28. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Caremark Pharmacy Discount Prescription for discount prescription program.
29. A Purchase Agreement by and between The American Legion and Managing Editor, Inc. (MEI) for K4 Publishing System software to be used by the Magazine Division.
30. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and The Seven Company, LLC, a consulting service to obtain and present sponsorships, marketing agreements and marketing loyalty program agreement for The American Legion.
31. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Koorsen Fire & Security for fire alarm and detection systems.
32. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Sears Commercial to promote products provided by Sears Commercial as a discount benefit to Legion members and employees.
33. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Pitney Bowes Software, Inc. for software products.
34. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Vanguard Car Rental USA Inc. (Alamo and National), which offers car rental discount programs to Legion members.
35. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and ASC Data Service which supplies data for four-year colleges for the *Need a Lift* brochure.

36. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fundamentals Company, Inc. to provide a fundraising opportunity through the sale of magazine subscriptions for Legion members and their families.
37. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Bulkley Dunton Publishing Group for the purchase of paper to The American Legion.
38. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Adecco Staffing Services Agreement for temporary help during the 2010 national convention.
39. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Time Warner telephone and data lines services which includes firewall management, internet "pipe," main voice lines, data line to DC office and data line to Fort Ben office.
40. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Swift Trip, LLC, Legion Family Travel. Discount travel services for Legion members and their families.
41. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Mid America Marketing Cancer Care Plus Insurance Program, underwritten by Family Heritage Life available to Legion members.
42. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and WebStream Productions to provide live video webcast streaming of the American Legion World Series Baseball games for 2010.
43. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Reader's Digest Association to help utilize the DMS Program.
44. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and AT&T to upgrade the internet services to the Fort Ben facility.
45. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Brinks for pick-up and delivery services.
46. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and OfficeMax for discounted office supplies and print and document services for Legion and SAL members.
47. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and RoadCare Plus for a discount, full-service roadside assistance program for Legion members.
48. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Honeywell Building Solutions for integrator and/or digital video manager software products.
49. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and USAA to provide financial products and services to members of the U.S. military and their families.
50. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Bowe Bell and Howell, the service provider for the cutters in the Fort Ben lettershop.
51. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Michael Peterson for his CD/DVD developed for The American Legion Family.
52. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Ski Landscape Ground Maintenance Renewal which provides grounds maintenance and snow removal for the Fort Ben building.
53. Ninety-five (95) 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:
 4 Warranty
 Aberdeen American News-South Dakota

Acxiom
AEGON Direct Marketing
Analytics IQ, Inc.
ASC (The College Board)
Audit Bureau of Circulations
Avis and Budget Car Rental
Bankers Life & Casualty Company
Brickmill Marketing Services
Business Mailing Center
Careington International
Caremark, LLC Confidentiality
CD-COM Systems Midwest, Inc.
CES Mail Communications, Inc.
Colonial Penn Life Insurance Company
Commander Printed Products
Commercial Letter, Inc.
Corporate Express Document & Print Mgmt.
Crell Mail Advertising
Daily Freeman Journal
Datagraphic
Data-Mail, Inc.
Dayton Technologies
E H Direct
Edge Direct
Epsilon
Equifax Direct Marketing Solutions, LLC
E-Target Media
Fahlgren Mortine
First National Bank of Omaha
Freedom Graphic Systems
G E Financial Assurance
Gallagher Benefit Services
GMAC
HNE Printers/Daily Reporter
Hutchinson Company
info USA, Inc.
International Data Management
JH Marketing Services
KDM
Knowledge Base Marketing, GP
Konik and Company
Kramers Mailing Service
Life Line Screening
Lighthouse List Company
Long Term Care Associates, Inc.
LTCR Analytics IQ, Inc.
Magnet Direct

Mail Computer Services Direct
Mail Manager
Mailing Services of Pittsburgh
Mainstreet Media-Kansas
MCS Direct
Merkle, Inc.
Military Advantage
MMP Direct and Printing
Moore Wallace Response Marketing
Morgan Printing, Inc.
Name-Finders List
National General Insurance
Nfocus Consulting, Inc.
North Mail, Inc.
On line Insurance Services, LLC
PacifiCare
PEP Direct, Inc.
Perma-Graphics, Inc.
PipMail
Print Communications, Inc.
Production Services Associates, LLC
Propco Marketing
PSA
Quadriga Art, Inc.
R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company
Ripon Printers
River's Edge Printing
SB MailWorks
SCI Management, LLP
Signature Offset
SIRVA Affinity Group Services
Strategic Marketing and Mailing
The Mailing House
The Heritage Company
The Hertz Corporation
TN Marketing
Torrington Telegram-Wyoming
TransAmerica Affinity Services, Inc.
TransContinental Direct
True North Companies
US Monitor
Valley Printworks
Ventura Printing
VERTIS
Veterans Online, LLC
Weider History Group

LitigationIN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE NINTH CIRCUITLORI & LYNN BARNES-
WALLACE; MITCHELL BARNES-
WALLACE; MICHAEL & VALERIE
BREEN; MAXWELL BREEN,Plaintiffs-Appellants/
Cross-Appellees,

Record Nos. 04-55732, 04-56167 XAP

v.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Defendant,

and

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
AND BOY SCOUTS OF
AMERICA-DESERT PACIFIC
COUNCIL,Defendants-Appellees /
Cross-Appellants

This case arose when an agnostic couple and a gay couple sued the city of San Diego because of the Boy Scout's lease of Balboa Park for a campground and the swimming pool. The Plaintiffs claim the Boy Scouts are a religious organization because they require a belief in god and claim they were discriminatory because they did not allow gays to participate as leaders.

The Federal Court in San Diego essentially ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.

For an agnostic to claim religious discrimination against an organization that requires a belief in God does not make too much sense. An agnostic is an individual who doesn't "know" whether or not there is a God. This is different from an atheist who denies the existence of God. Hence, The American Legion believes that these plaintiffs should have been dismissed for lack of standing.

In addition, the gay couple never attempted to use the facilities or send their adopted child to use the facilities. They stated to the court that they "felt" that they would not be welcome. Feelings are not sufficient for Federal Jurisdiction.

After the courts ruling, the Boy Scouts appealed, as did the plaintiffs. Indeed, the plaintiffs got their appeal filed first.

Because the court totally misconstrues the case as a case about establishment of religion, when it is really a case about freedom of association and because it is a case

about the basic values of this country, The American Legion has filed an amicus curiae in support of the Boy Scouts.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

THE REV. DR. MICHAEL A.
NEWDOW, et al.,
Plaintiff,

v.

NO. CIV. S-05-17 LKK/DAD

THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, et al.,
Defendants.

This case is a continuation of the earlier Newdow flag case which was resolved in the Supreme Court by a ruling that the plaintiff had no standing to bring the case.

Now, the plaintiff has had additional parties join him and has renewed his attack on the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The district court for the Eastern District of California on September 14, 2005 ruled that the California law requiring the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance in classrooms was unconstitutional, even though the usual accommodations were present in the statute for those who did not believe they could say the pledge. The court felt it was controlled by earlier Ninth Circuit opinions. The court further ruled that the saying of the pledge at the city counsel or in the U.S. Congress was constitutional.

American Legion intervened as an amicus curiae. It seems clear that now that Newdow has plaintiffs that don't have his standing problems, since they are the custodial parents of the children for whom they are suing, the matter will again be heard by the Ninth Circuit and ultimately, hopefully, the Supreme Court.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL

Daniel Jeffrey Steich
Plaintiff

S-2371-2005

v.

THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST NO. 575, ET AL

Defendants

The case was filed in Pennsylvania by filing a Praeceptum for Summons and Summons. Under Pennsylvania law, a complaint need not be filed for several years unless the defendant insists. We see no reason to start spending the money. Accordingly, we are

keeping an eye on the case. It cannot go forward until the plaintiff does file his complaint. The court has sent notice it intends to terminate this case unless a party fills out a Statement of Intention to Proceed before October 1, 2008. Despite this, the case is still pending.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND FOR THE COUNTY
OF SAN DIEGO

Philip K. Paulson,

Petitioner

Case No. GC 849667

v.

Charles Abdelnour, in his
Official capacity as the City
Clerk of the City of San Diego;
Mikal Haas, In his Official
Capacity as Registrar
of Voters for the County
of San Diego;
And Does 1 to 10, Inclusive,

Respondents

This case involves the Mount Soledad War Memorial which contains a cross. Plaintiffs have sued in an attempt to have the cross removed and destroyed. A judge ordered the cross removed or the city would pay penalties of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per day. The matter is currently both in the Federal courts and in the California Supreme Court. American Legion was instrumental in obtaining a stay of the penalty order in the US Supreme Court. American Legion has filed its amicus brief in conjunction with the Department of California in the California Supreme Court. The United States Congress has enacted and president signed a statute which would turn the memorial over to the federal government. Hopefully, this will put an end to the state litigation. Nonetheless, we will proceed until we know the veteran's memorial is secure. A Federal Judge ruled the cross did not violate the constitution. The plaintiffs have appealed. We are assisting in opposing the appeal.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT
05-1820-CV

IN RE: "AGENT ORANGE" PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION

JOE ISAACSON AND
PHYLLIS LISA ISAACSON,
Plaintiffs-appellants,

v.

DOW CHEMICAL COL, ET AL.,
Defendants-Appellees,
CAUSE NO. D-1-GN-06-000801

The American Legion has filed an amicus brief in this case in support of the claimants. The plaintiffs were not able to file a claim in the 1984 Agent Orange Settlement because they had not yet manifested any symptoms. Although these plaintiffs received no compensation and were essentially barred from the early case, the defendants have attempted to use the early case to deny them any compensation. Most of the other veteran's organizations have also joined in support of the plaintiffs.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
EASTERN DIVISION

PAUL ASHBY, GERRY WHITEHEAD
AND JESSICA PIGG WHITEHEAD

VERSUS
NO. 1:7CV248-M-D

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI
AND AMERICAN LEGION POST 130

This is a discrimination case based upon the fact that the best man at a wedding reception, during or after the reception, walked into the Post bar of Post No. 130 in Mississippi to order a drink. He objects to waiting fifteen minutes to be served and to the fact that the barmaid would not put his change in his hand, but placed it on the counter.

Plaintiff's lawyer sent a demand to The American Legion requesting The American Legion to waive Service of Process. A response was returned refusing to waive Service of Process citing the cases that show The American Legion is not responsible and giving the plaintiff's attorney a Summary History of The American Legion's position on race relations. Despite the case law showing that The American Legion is not responsible, plaintiff's attorney elected to serve The American Legion.

The insurance company denied coverage and an attorney was obtained. We have filed numerous motions and will be filing a motion for Summary Judgment. The only claim against The American Legion is that it "condoned" discrimination. This makes no sense and is not a tort known to attorneys. The case is proceeding.

2006-3159, 2008-3060
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT

CHRISTIAN M. DEJOHN,
Petitioner,

v.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY,
Respondent.

This case brought by a veteran of Bosnia who was denied a job as an Historian by the U.S. Army in violation of his rights to Veteran's Preference.

The American Legion has filed an amicus brief in the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit supporting Mr. DeJohn's rights to Veteran's Preference. The case is continuing.

IN THE SUPREME COURT
OF THE UNITED STATES

JOE ISAACSON AND
PHYLLIS LISA ISAACSON, ET AL.,
Petitioners

DANIEL RAYMOND STEPHENSON,
SUSAN STEPHENSON, DANIEL
ANTHONY STEPHENSON, AND
EMILY ELIZABETH STEPHENSON,
ET AL.,

v.

05-1826-CV

DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY; MONSANTO
COMPANY; HERCULES, INC., OCCIDENTAL
CHEMICAL CORPORATION; ULTRAMAR
DIAMOND SHAMROCK CORPORATION;
MAXUS ENERGY CORP.; CHEMICAL LAND
HOLDINGS, INC.; T-H AGRICULTURE &
NUTRITION CO.; THOMPSON HAYWARD
CHEMICAL CO.; HARCROS CHEMICALS,
INC.' UNIROYAL, INC.; C.D.U. HOLDING, INC.;
AND UNIROYAL CHEMICAL CO., INC.

Respondents.

These cases involve Agent Orange issues. Neither plaintiff was allowed in the class action because they had not at that time developed symptoms. Since that case is over and closed, the symptoms have been developed. The individuals have, accordingly, sued the chemical companies.

The defense is that the case is over and the chemical companies were already sued in a class action. However, these people were specifically excluded from the class who could recover. Hence, their rights cannot be cut off by the class action.

Notwithstanding this, the Second Circuit has ruled against these plaintiffs. The American Legion has joined them as an amicus curiae in their petition for certiorari to the Supreme Court. If certiorari is granted, we will be filing a brief in support of the individuals.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

PLEASANT GROVE CITY,
Petitioner,

v.

SUMMUM,
Respondent.

On Writ of Certiorari To The United States
Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit

These cases involve the right of private parties to place memorials disparaging veterans on city property merely because there is a private memorial on city property honoring veterans. The 10th Circuit ruled that Sumum, the plaintiff, had the right to place his memorial on the property of the city of Pleasant Grove and Duchan City. This, of course, would have a chilling effect on the placement on veteran's memorials. The American Legion agreed to become an amicus curiae and was joined by the VFW and The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Commissioned Officers Association of the US, The Veterans of the Vietnam War, Inc., Veterans Coalition and The Americans Ex Prisoners of War. The American Legion filed a brief as did the other amici. The Supreme Court reversed saying monuments on public property are government speech and not subject to scrutiny under the Free Speech Clause.

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY OF THE ECUADORIAN
INSTITUTE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Opposer,

v.

SIGNAL INTERNATIONAL CORP.,
Applicant

Request no. 192064/07
Trademark: AMERICAN LEGION
Published in the Intellectual Property
Gazette No. 514 of November 2007

This is a matter in Ecuador in which The American Legion is imposing the attempt of Cignal International Corp. to register the emblem of The American Legion as one of its trademarks. We believe that, should Cignal be successful, it will flood the US with a lot of cheap merchandise bearing the emblem of The American Legion. Accordingly, opposition to their application has been filed in Ecuador. The Cignal application was dismissed in Ecuador.

We are in the process of filing a similar opposition in Panama to get an approved registration in that country cancelled. It is proceeding.

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
MERCER COUNTY-LAW DIVISION

DANIELLE M. ESTEVEZ AND
CARLOS ESTEVEZ
Plaintiff

vs.

Docket No. MER-L-000713-08

SANDRA I. STEWART-DAVIS,
CHARLES T. DAVIS, AMERICAN LEGION,
XYZ CORPORATION (a fictitious company),
John Does and Jane Does (a fictitious designation
representing one or more person)
Defendant

This is, apparently, a dram shop case. The complaint is so poorly drafted that we do not know for sure. It merely alleges that The American Legion is responsible for an unnamed Post who allowed one of the defendants to drink there. There are a number of allegations of carelessness, recklessness and negligence, but no facts.

The case was originally served against the American Legion National Auxiliary on July 9, 2008. Noting that The American Legion was also named, the National Organization of The American Legion waited for service. When it did not come, further investigation revealed that service had been made on the agent for the service of process on April 14, 2008. On learning of this detail, counsel was obtained and an answer filed to avoid default. The matter has been referred to the insurance company, but we have no decision from them yet.

In any event, we have recommended that our attorney be used by the insurance company since he has an outstanding record of representation for The American Legion. He has won sixteen cases with no losses.

On his own motion, trial counsel suggested that he contact plaintiff's attorney to see if the complaint would be dismissed, based on the Urban case, since there is no liability in the National Organization and plaintiffs apparently do not even know if there was consumption of alcohol at a Legion Post or if there was, which post. This has been accomplished and the case is closed.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
BUCKS COUNTY

EVEANN BURCOSKY

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
BUCKS COUNTY

And

EVEANN BURCOSKY, Administratrix of the
Estate of Michael Burcosky,
Deceased

And

ADAM BURCOSKY, minor, by and through his
parent and natural guardian, EVEANN
BURCOSKY

And

JOHN BURCOSKY, minor, by and through his
parent and natural guardian, EVEANN
BURCOSKY

And

AMERICAN LEGION POST 834

And

THE AMERICAN LEGION

NO. 0902835-34-2

This is a dram shop case filed in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The plaintiff claims The American Legion served alcohol and is responsible for the actions of the Post club.

The insurance company is defending us and the case is being strongly apposed. The Post attorney filed an answer on behalf of National which had to be removed from the record before we could file our answer. This has been accomplished.

The National Organization has been dismissed without prejudice.

No. 08-472

In The
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

KEN SALAZAR, Secretary of the Interior, *et al.*,
Petitioners,

v.

FRANK BUONO,
Respondent.

On Writ of Certiorari To The
United States Court of Appeals
For The Ninth Circuit

This case involves the Mojave Cross. The United States government sold the property to an American Legion Post to maintain this monument to World War I veterans. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the district courts of the government could not transfer an acre of property if the cross had to be destroyed. The government has appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The American Legion has joined as an amicus on the side of the government.

The plaintiff is a former forest service worker. The Mojave Cross is miles from a main artery and can only be found if one looks for it. Hence, the case is another one of those where the ACLU and its minions are seeking attorney's fees from the federal government for saving the country from the danger of a cross on private property. The court adopted our concepts and sent the case back, saying Congress could transfer the property. Then the cross was destroyed by "vandals." A reward has been offered.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

ALBERT SNYDER,
Plaintiff

Civil Action No. 06-CV-1389 RDB

v.

FRED W. PHELPS, SR.,
JOHN DOEs, JANE DOEsS, and
WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.
Defendants

This case began when the father of a Marine sued Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church for picketing and doing their best to disrupt the funeral of his son, a United States Marine who was killed in action. The suit involved claims for intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The plaintiffs won in the district court, but the Fourth Circuit reversed and ordered the plaintiffs to pay \$16,500.00 because of a "frivolous appeal?"

The American Legion immediately started an effort to raise the money to pay this outrageous charge and join the case as an amicus. A newscaster actually raised the money, so the over \$18,000.00 raised by The American Legion has been set aside to cover the costs of going to the Supreme Court. The ACLU and a number of law schools are opposed saying the protest that attempted to disrupt the funeral was perfectly proper.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

DAVID L. HENDERSON
Petitioner,

No. 09-1036

v.

ERIC K. SHINSEKI,
Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
Respondent,

This case involves a veteran with 100% service connected disability rating who is challenging the Federal Circuit Court's decision that the deadline to seek judicial review of a VA denial of disability benefits is jurisdictional and may not be extended under the doctrine of equitable tolling. The plaintiff missed the deadline by 15 days because he was bedridden suffering from the very mental and physical disability for which he sought benefits. This decision has already led to the dismissal of hundreds of claims and thus is immensely important to veterans seeking benefits for disabilities resulting from their service to the country.

The American Legion is preparing a brief and will intervene in the case on its way to the Supreme Court.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CLEVELAND COUNTY
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

PHILLIP BOATNER,
Plaintiff,

vs.

BOBBY J. LONGENBAUGH, Individually;

Case No. CV-2010-371-L

DAVID KELLERMAN, Individually/
THE AMERICAN LEGION, a body
corporate; and THE AMERICAN LEGION,
DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA, a distinct
corporate department,
defendants,

This is a case in Oklahoma concerning an individual who allegedly double dipped on expense accounts. He was fired from his state job and expelled from the Legion by the Department Executive Committee since he was a past Department Commander and thus a member of the executive committee. The citation is Article I, Section 8 of the National By-laws, second sentence.

The complaint makes absolutely no charges against The American Legion. Accordingly, we have suggested strongly that plaintiffs counsel that The American Legion be dismissed. The plaintiff keeps trying to insist on conditions that go beyond the National Constitution and By-laws of The American Legion. Plaintiff's attorney has been told that if these conditions are desired he should put them in the court order on the Department if and when he obtains same. As for the National Organization we will only agree to comply with the National Constitution and By-laws and reinstate or otherwise handle the membership of a former member when appropriately notified by the Department.

The National Organization has been dismissed without prejudice.

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 1,156 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 28 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 202 manuscripts have been reviewed and appropriate comments in connection therewith were transmitted, when necessary, to the Publisher or Editor of The American Legion Magazine.

THE AMERICAN LEGION RETIREMENT PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND SUBORDINATE GROUPS THEREOF

In accordance with the requirements of law, The American Legion has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2009 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Retirement Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also reviewed the Summary Annual Report for The American Legion Retirement Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law.

EMPLOYEES' SALARY SAVINGS (401(K)) PLAN

In accordance with the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) The American Legion has filed all of the necessary Annual Return

Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2009 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 reviewed 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 functioned as Secretary for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. and completed the dissolution of the corporation December 31, 2009. The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel on matters involving labor issues, real estate law, postal regulations, corporate organizations and insurance.

In addition, the National Judge Advocate functions as counsel for and a director of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. In that capacity, the National Judge Advocate 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, 24 registrations and reports have been filed. Others will be filed as due. Some counties even attempt to require registrations and reports.

**MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL RETIREMENT COMMITTEE
AND SALARY SAVINGS COMMITTEE**

The National Judge Advocate, a member of The National Retirement Committee of National Headquarters, The American Legion, and Chairman of the Employee's Salary Savings Committee, has attended and participated in the meetings held by these committees during the past year.

I have also, in response to requests, drafted legal and other documents for the use of National Officers of the American Legion and Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary. During the past year I have met with and attended numerous conferences with officials of outside corporations and the government for the purpose of representation or for the rendering of advice and guidance for and on behalf of The American Legion on matters legal and administrative.

In conclusion, the National Judge Advocate wishes to thank all National Officers, Department Officials, and members of the National Executive Committee for the valuable assistance and cooperation extended to him during the past year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Marty Justis, Maryland, Executive Director

Three major responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Director, whose office is located in the National Headquarters, Indianapolis:

During absences of the National Adjutant from The American Legion National Headquarters, he acts for him. He additionally performs duties assigned by the National Adjutant.

He oversees The American Legion Magazine and Administrative Services, which includes the following divisions: Human Resources, Maintenance, Library, and the E. A. Blackmore Museum.

He serves on the Personnel Committee, the Corporate Relationships Committee, the IT Committee, and various other committees as needed.

The Administrative Services Division also provides all secretarial assistance to the executive offices of The American Legion. All Division Directors resident at the Indianapolis National Headquarters report to the Executive Director.

Mail

June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010

Incoming Letters and parcels (distributed to Divisions for processing).....	1,014,430
Incoming Parcels	4,046
Outgoing Letters/Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales).....	10,043,958

Freight and Express

June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010

Out – Cartons.....	4,837
Out – Pounds	168,820
UPS – In	2,341
UPS – Out.....	6,906

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Howard Trace, Librarian and Curator

The mission of The American Legion Library is to provide an information storage and retrieval system for The American Legion.

Indexing of documents continues. Internal and external materials are added to the collection regularly. The Library now has indexes to over 51,000 images, 16,000 books and pamphlets, 83,000 documents, 34,000 resolutions, and 2,000 microforms. Planning for digital access to library materials has been ongoing throughout the year and material should begin to be available in 2011.

A number of researchers made extensive visits to the Library. Areas of research involved World War I cemeteries and memorials in Europe; children and youth programs; drum and bugle corps; Americanism programs; artist Grant Christian; shell shock and PTSD.

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Library

The following books were donated by NADHAL: *The Attack on the Liberty; The Bay of Pigs; For Military Merit: Recipients of the Purple Heart; Admiral "Bull" Halsey; Hero Found: The Greatest POW Escape of the Vietnam War; Cry Havoc: How the Arms Race Drove the World to War, 1931-1941*

Common Cause, Uncommon Courage, donated by James P. Maloney

A Flyer's "Dash": An Autobiography, donated by James Kissick

1937 New York American Legion National Convention Parade scrapbook, donated by Margaret Folk

1927 European tour slides and 1927 souvenir booklet from the Bienvenue Francaise organization, donated by Marshall Hesler

A collection of slides, donated by Bear Fowler

The American Legion Weekly, January 27, 1922, donated by Louis Allyn

The American Legion Magazine, September 1931, donated by Brad Proffitt

Memoirs of War, Veterans of the Villa at Morlatton, donated by Robert S. Krebs

The American Legion Weekly issues dated August 20, 1920 and August 27, 1920, donated by Frederick A. Kralowetz

The Military Railway Service Journal (14 copies), donated by Collier Brown

Battle Cries of the American Flags, donated by Mickey L. Dennis

American Legion News, February 24, 1923, donated by John R. Rieker

HAI QUAN newsletter on Vietnam, donated by Harry J. Hirt

An Electrifying Journey From Belle Isle to Hastings in One Hundred Days: The Story of Thomas A. Edison Post #187's 1959 Run to The American Legion National Championship, donated by Fred Bowen

EVERY NIGHT & EVERY MORN: Portraits of Asian, Hispanic, Jewish, African-American, and Native-American Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor donated by John L. Johnson, Ph.D.

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Museum

American Legion cap – Alameda Women's Post 781, donated by Carole Doddroe

'Welcome American Legion' pin, donated by Andrew L. Hatupis

The American Legion 50th Anniversary commemorative decanter, donated by Clifton A. Nyleen

Photographs of Army Specialized Training Unit #3922 at the University of Utah in 1943-44, and a DVD, *The Ritchie Boys*, donated by Werner A. Hundt

Walking cane from The American Legion's 1930 National Convention in Boston, donated by Andrew Dolan

1923 American Legion membership card, donated by Randy Sanks

WWII WAVE uniform, donated by Deanna L. Heasley

Newsreel, *1945 News Parade*, donated by Helen L. Horowitz

Newsreel, *1947 News Parade*, donated by Michael Harreld

Two framed photos, Fred Hayoz with Carole Lombard and Fred Hayoz, Wendell Willkie and Oscar Brown, donated by Ann Bullington

Copies of the application and temporary charter for Werling-Roberts Post 327 (LA), donated by Michael Escriba

Uniform of a female Legionnaire from USS *Jacob Jones* Post No. 2 and the Legion Post flag of USS *Jacob Jones* Post No. 2, donated by Dennis G. Kurre

1931 Detroit, Michigan National Convention badge, donated by William A. Munson

National Convention medals 1929, 1931, 1936, and 1937; Auxiliary National Convention medals 1938, 1939 and 1940, donated by Eugene R. Pytka

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DIVISION

Jeffrey O. Brown, Indiana, Executive Director

The Information Technology (IT) Division Staff play a key role in the selection of all software to be used by National Headquarters staff. IT also determines and procures the hardware to be used by employees of National Headquarters and is responsible for troubleshooting and maintaining the equipment. The IT Division maintains the telecommunications that inter-connect the two Indianapolis, Indiana offices with our facility in Washington, D.C.

IT is responsible for the computer system which houses The American Legion National Headquarters membership database as well as keeping this database updated with changes to the membership - whether it be adding new members, renewing existing members, changing addresses of members or changing any other membership information. Much of this work is accomplished using a high-speed optical scanner, capable of processing in excess of 100,000 responses a day.

In conjunction with the membership database capabilities, The American Legion has invested in sophisticated list processing software, which the IT Division administers. This software ensures that all mailings are done at the lowest cost by complying with U.S. Postal Service guidelines.

A Post and Department membership tracking software (AIM) is also supported by the IT Division, along with the in-house developed MyLegion.org product, which allows Department and Post leaders to access the National Membership database and to perform certain maintenance functions. This also provides a social networking forum for members who choose to subscribe to this online product.

AMERICANISM COMMISSION

Joseph E. Caouette, New Hampshire, Chairman

Jill Druskis, Nebraska, 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 Americans.

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, American Legion High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program, Boy Scouts of America 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 subversive and terrorist activities, 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. Two current major legislative initiatives of The American Legion are 1) the continuing efforts to effect a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws, and 2) coordinating a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment clause lawsuits.

This Commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of two standing committees: The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education.

Following is a summary of the several programs, which are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 2009-2010 American Legion year.

American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its form of government, it must have a citizenry that has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what The American Legion Boys State program does for the young men of our nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government through the state level.

It was 75 years ago that Legionnaires in the state of Illinois first 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 its future. Established in 1935, the whole idea of American Legion Boys State, then and now, is to show young people that beyond a doubt, our form of government is good; but its preservation depends upon 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 American Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a similar program at the national level

and in 1946, established American Legion Boys Nation. This year, it celebrated its 65th anniversary session.

Both Boys State and Boys Nation are unique programs of The American Legion that emphasize participation and personal experience in a respective model “state” and “nation” that is complete with its governing bodies and elected officials.

Each year nearly 20,000 young Americans take part in American Legion Boys State, and throughout its 75 year history, the program has graduated well over 1,750,000 young men.

Every year, each Boys State selects two outstanding graduates to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation. In 2010 the program was again held in Washington, D.C. during July, and it introduced delegates first-hand to the structure and function of the federal government.

The week of government training in the Nation’s Capital combines lectures and forums with visitations to federal agencies and institutions, shrines and historical points in and about Washington, D.C. Actual participation in the political process is highlighted through the week to include the organization of party conventions and the nomination and election of an American Legion 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 American Legion Boys Nation. Charles Brown of Avon Park, Florida was elected President and Alex Geiger of North Little Rock, Arkansas was elected Vice President of the 65th anniversary session of American Legion Boys Nation.

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 High School Oratorical Contest.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our 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 (randomly selected during the contest from the four topics for the contest year) taking not less than three or 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. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National Organization, there are scholarships awarded by intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 73rd Annual National Oratorical Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana, in April 2010. The three finalists were: First place – Victoria Black, Iva, South Carolina; second place – Elizabeth Blessing, Auburn, Alabama; third place – Brooke Connor, Bridport, Vermont.

Boy Scouts of America

The American Legion charts 2,710 Scout Units in communities across the country involving 71,016 young people. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion continues to be seriously concerned with the continued acts of domestic terrorism by the ACLU and its unrelenting attacks against the Boy Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts' efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to membership and leadership standards.

The American Legion selected Joe Phillips of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as its 2010 Eagle Scout of the Year. Selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive a \$10,000 scholarship from The American Legion.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a \$2,500 scholarship. They are Michael Smith, Alpharetta, Georgia; Justin Knoll, LaPorte, Indiana; and Robert Rasmussen, Hutchinson, Minnesota.

In addition, an estimated 8,000 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

Almost 430 American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members have received The American Legion and Scouting Square Knot award to recognize their dedication and work to assist in furthering the Scouting programs of The American Legion.

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 1,092 active clubs with almost 15,000 young people participating annually.

The 20th Annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 3-8, 2010 at the USA Shooting range facility on the campus of the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The tournament climaxed two rounds of postal matches which began shortly after the first of the year and involved almost 1,300 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in both categories, as well as in each of the prone, kneeling and standing positions.

The 2010 winners were Catherine Green of Coventry, Rhode Island (Precision) and Hannah Black from Yorktown, Virginia (Sporter). Both received \$2,500 scholarships provided by the Sons of The American Legion.

Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund

The American Legion administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship. This scholarship was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in supervision, administration or teaching. These prospective positions must have a direct relationship in the areas of care and prevention as it relates to lung and respiratory diseases. The Eight and Forty, for 2010-2011, awarded ten \$3,000 scholarships to recipients in ten states to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 50 years to 863 scholarships, totaling over \$1.5 million to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 2011-2012 school year.

Flag Education

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, thousands 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.

The American Legion continues distribution and sale of “For Which It Stands”, a multimedia instructional resource about the history of the flag of the United States, the significance and meaning of our flag, and respecting and caring for our flag. It is intended primarily for use with students in the upper elementary and middle/junior high school grades. Over 15,500 copies of the DVD have been sold since its debut in early 2005.

Additionally, over 65,000 copies of the publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* and more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, *Flag of the United States -- How to Display It, How to Respect It* are distributed annually to schools, organizations and individuals. This information is sent at little or no cost to all who request it.

The American Legion continues publication of *Our Country's Flag*, an educational comic book for use in elementary schools. Well over one million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced in 1988. The educational booklet, *I Pledge Allegiance*, published in May 1995, is also for use in elementary schools. *Our Country's Veterans* was added to The American Legion's list of educational publications in 2005.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the United States Flag from physical desecration. All 50 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws. Working with other organizations of the American Legion-founded Citizens Flag Alliance, The American Legion shepherded a flag protection Constitutional amendment through the House of Representatives six times in the past seven Congresses. In June of 2006, The American Legion spearheaded the drive for the amendment in the U.S. Senate, coming within one vote of passage there. The legislation has been introduced in the 111th Congress.

Service to God and Country

A program of fundamental Americanism, “Service to God and Country,” seeks to prevent the spiritual decay of America by charging the electorate with a spirit of unquestionable Americanism, respect for law, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

“Service to God” emphasizes regular public worship, daily family prayer and the religious education of children, while “Service to Country” attempts to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and Nation. These objectives are aimed at preparing young Americans to take up tomorrow's responsibilities by teaching them moral and spiritual values, renewed interest in our Country's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, ideals of loyalty and honesty.

Each year, a Conference for the Department Chaplains of The American Legion is held under the direction of its 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 marks its 85th season in 2010. Over 90,000 players on 4,500 teams participated in this American Legion Americanism youth activity during the past year. The 2009 George W. Rulon American Legion Baseball Player of the Year is Tyler Jacobsen, from Pulaski, Wisconsin. Tyler pitched for the University of Wisconsin, Platteville this spring while working towards a degree in Electrical Engineering.

More than seven million dollars in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. One million dollars is appropriated by The American Legion National Organization to conduct eight Regional Tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Many Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. Over fifty Hall of Fame members played American Legion Baseball, including Jim Rice and Joe Gordon, who were elected in to the Hall of Fame in 2009. Other American Legion Alumni inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame include Tony Gwynn, Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Pee Wee Reese, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Willie Stargel, Stan Musial, Carl Yastrzemski, Warren Spahn, Brooks Robinson, Frank Robinson, and Paul Molitor.

Over 50 percent of the Major League ballplayers and nearly 76 percent of college players competed in American Legion Baseball as teenagers. The lessons learned on the baseball diamond, such as leadership, teamwork and respect for the rules are lessons that are learned for a lifetime.

COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Robert Bournival, New Hampshire, Chairman

Michael Buss, Iowa, Deputy Director

The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee, since its establishment by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 17, 1950, has scrutinized and continues to monitor what is transpiring in the realm of subversion and terrorism. A program of the Americanism Commission, reports of activities may be made to the National Executive Committee at its Spring and Fall Meetings and at National Convention.

The Committee is responsible for furnishing background information on assigned resolutions that are considered by the National Americanism Commission for recommended action to the National Executive Committee or the National Convention.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rev. James T. Akers, Kansas, Chairman

Michael Novak, Indiana, Assistant Director

The National Committee on Education, established in 1976, is comprised of members from both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary, educators, students and other organizations concerned with the well-being of education throughout the Nation.

Education was one of the first major concerns of The American Legion. In 1921, the organization committed itself to a constructive support of education. During the years that followed, The American Legion developed a formal Policy on Education.

The American Legion has always supported the principle that education is a necessary requirement to the successful functioning of a republic. While recognizing the right of private and religious groups to maintain schools, The American Legion vigorously subscribes to the necessity for a publicly supported education system to ensure that every American child has the opportunity for an adequate education. The American Legion believes that popular self-government, as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, cannot continue to exist without a continuing system of free public education. Not only does proper national defense require trained personnel, but every phase of life today demands that we have competent citizens who are qualified, willing and able to discharge their responsibilities.

The availability of educational opportunity for individuals to pursue their own development is a prerequisite to the achievement of all other social goals. Our education system must be designed to provide every person with the means to reach their potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers that it requires. In turn, we will have greater assurance of economic growth, of sound decision-making, and the knowledge necessary to promote our national security.

The American education system should produce citizens who understand and are dedicated to principles of free enterprise; to democratic principles and processes; and whose devotion to freedom and human dignity goes beyond mere lip service.

The Education Program of The American Legion consists of four basic elements: (1) recognition of local systems through observance of American Education Week; (2) dissemination of scholarship and financial aid information through the financial aid guide *Need A Lift?*; (3) participation by American Legion posts and American Legion Auxiliary units in a community-wide effort to enhance the programs and policies of the local schools through the guidelines provided in the handbook PACT (Post, Auxiliary, Community Together); and (4) scholarship programs.

American Education Week is an annual event co-sponsored nationally by The American Legion. The observance was originally established by The American Legion with the help of the National Education Association in 1921. The major objective of the program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." The observance will be November 14-20, 2010.

The financial aid guide *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains 152 pages of scholarship, grant and loan information, work-study cooperative programs and sources of career information for all students. The 2010 edition of *Need A Lift?* is available both online at The American Legion webpage and in a CD-ROM format which features several new interactive elements. A section is 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 \$685,000. To publicize the availability of the website and CD-ROM, The American Legion mailed over 31,000 postcards to high schools nationwide, informing them of the availability of the financial aid guide in an electronic format."

A companion to *Need A Lift?* is the pamphlet *A Guide for Parents and Students* which contains planning and financial aid information for high school students and their

parents. Each year, distribution of more than 100,000 copies of each of these publications is done through American Legion posts, schools, counselors and librarians, by mail and through distribution at national education conventions. Copies of these publications can also be obtained by writing The American Legion National Emblem Sales Division, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46206. Individual copies of *Need A Lift?* are \$1.95 plus shipping and handling, prepaid. *A Guide for Parents and Students* is available at a cost of 10 cents each or \$3.95 per 100, plus shipping and handling, prepaid.

Following the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, The American Legion established the September 11th Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide educational opportunities for the children of American service men and women who die while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. The fund provides “American Legion Legacy Scholarships” to the children to attend college and will be in addition to their governmental entitlements. Fund raising activities are ongoing with an initial goal of 20 million dollars established to fund this scholarship. Other scholarship programs include the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program; Eagle Scout of the Year; American Legion Baseball Leadership Scholarship; Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship; and the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. Through these scholarship programs, The American Legion issues, on average, \$450,000 annually to eligible students to further their education.

The *PACT Handbook* is the guide for American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the education program, ideas and suggestions for activities, coordinating concepts and a typical calendar for a successful program. Programs covered in the handbook include: Citizenship Education, Career Education activities such as career nights, community resource files, Adopt-A-School, how to promote American Education Week, and financial aid nights.

Over 23,000 students are recipients of The American Legion School Award Medal each year. This award is designed to recognize a student for the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. The award is presented to a boy and a 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, Rollinsford, New Hampshire - Chairman
 Larry L. Price, Redfield, South Dakota - Vice-Chairman
 Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska - Commander's Representative
 Luis V. Gonzalez, Henry, Illinois – Consultant
 Steve M. Tatro, Dunkirk, Maryland – Consultant

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Dennis R. Boland, Florida, Chairman
Jill K. Druskis, Nebraska, Director

The American Legion has been a staunch supporter for the children and youth of our nation since our founding in 1919. Our commitment to our nation's children continues to be a paramount concern for the National Commission on Children & Youth as it seeks to improve the well being of all children.

Through the decades that followed our founding, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. The early years were devoted to progressive childcare and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations – the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and the Eight & Forty – many states and communities improved their own child welfare provisions.

The development of new and expanded public programs designed to provide economic security for children made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other problems affecting young people. To date there is no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency - private or governmental - in its ability to expand into every area of concern for child welfare and child health.

As stated in a 1924 resolution adopted by the National Executive Committee, The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'." This remains our ultimate goal and the definitive 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:

1. 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.
2. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth, always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
3. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines for Action, working together:

1. PREVENTION – Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
2. EDUCATION – Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
3. LEGISLATION – Maintaining knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws that affect young people at the national, state and local levels.

4. MATERIAL AID – Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past ninety-two 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. The American Legion has, and will maintain a deep community-centered interest in children to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. There is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. 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.

2009 – 2010 Program

In May of each year, The American Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth meets to consider what programs it wants to emphasize for the following program year. When a decision is made, the National Children & Youth staff is charged to research these areas of concern and produce materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 2009 – 2010, the Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following quality of life issues, which directly impact our young people on the National level:

1. Child Health
2. Child Safety
3. Family Support

Child Health: Since our beginning, the Legion has worked to improve the quality of life for all young people. Our partnership with Children's Miracle Network underscores this mission. Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 17 million children annually in the United States and Canada. These hospitals treat children with all types of afflictions and injuries, rendering service based on need, not the ability to pay. They annually provide \$2.5 billion in uncompensated charity care and are committed to turning no child away.

Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to ensuring that 100 percent of local donations made through CMN Champions (the continuing theme of CMN's fund-raising campaign) stay in the community in which they were raised to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

The Commission encourages American Legion 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. Since our partnership with CMN began in 1998, The American Legion family has donated over \$20 million to this worthy endeavor. This achievement was possible only through the dedicated efforts of Legion family members throughout this nation who have embraced this program and are committed to assisting children.

The position of The American Legion is that all children should have quality health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. To obtain these services, families of seriously ill or injured children often must travel hundreds of miles to seek medical treatment at specialized children's hospitals, thus causing the family to spend days and even weeks away from home. The additional financial burden placed on the family coupled with overwhelming medical costs is difficult, and many times impossible for the family to afford.

Ronald McDonald Houses were created to serve these families by offering them a home-like atmosphere, regardless of the family's ability to pay, where they can get the rest and renewal they need to be most supportive of their sick or injured child. The Ronald McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program generates funds to help offset the costs associated with a family's stay while their child is receiving specialized treatment.

To assist these children and families, The American Legion has adopted the Ronald McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program as a national children and youth project designed to benefit participating Ronald McDonald Houses throughout the country. Through the collective efforts of The American Legion and Ronald McDonald House Charities, we help to provide a home-away-from-home environment for financially challenged families with seriously ill or injured children who must undergo medical treatment at a children's hospital.

Child Safety: The American Legion is very concerned about the welfare of our nation's youth and a major problem that threatens them. Suicide among adolescents, age 15–24, continues to be the third largest cause of death among this age group. The suicide rate among adolescents has grown steadily over the last four decades and has quadrupled since 1960. Over 4,000 young people take their own lives every year. Suicide is a senseless tragedy, but is completely preventable. The National Commission on Children & Youth produces and distributes a brochure, entitled "Know the Warning Signs of Youth Suicide," designed to assist youth and adults in understanding some of the warning signs and facts about suicide.

As long as Halloween activities are sponsored and promoted in our various communities by duly appointed and elected officials, the National Commission on Children & Youth of The American Legion believes children and parents should know how to make this observance as safe as possible. To assist this effort, the National Commission on Children & Youth produces and distributes a brochure, entitled "Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night," to educate children and parents about trick-or-treat safety.

The American Legion is very concerned about young people destroying their lives by using drugs. Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and marijuana are often readily available and considered to be the entryway to a life of drug dependency and delinquency. Gateway drugs are so-called because the use of these drugs often leads to drug abuse, addiction, and to the use of other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD.

Growing up today is hard and peer pressure to use drugs can be extremely intense; however, individuals are ultimately responsible for their own behavior. Decisions made today can have far-reaching effects on one's life for years to come. To help combat this problem and educate our nation's youth about the dangers of gateway drugs, the National Commission produces and distributes a brochure titled "Gateway Drugs...Choose not to use," to equip parents and children with the facts of gateway drugs and help children lead a healthy lifestyle.

Family Support Network: Since September 11, 2001, the nation has been on high alert and National Guard and Reserve units have been activated in record numbers. As a result, the families of these men and women often find themselves unable to meet normal monthly household obligations. Assistance is needed for a variety of everyday tasks and expenses. These needs range from routine household chores, grocery shopping, and childcare, to ensuring that the grass is mowed for the expecting mother whose husband is serving abroad.

To actively address these issues, The American Legion created the Family Support Network. Military families can request assistance by calling a nationwide toll-free telephone number, 1-800-504-4098, for service personnel and their families to call for assistance. Families can also request assistance electronically through the Legion's web site at www.legion.org/fsn. All requests are referred to The American Legion Department, or state, in which the call originated. Departments relay the collected information to a local American Legion Post. The Post then contacts the service member or family to see how assistance can be provided locally. Since the creation of the Family Support Network in 1990, thousands of Posts have responded to meet these families' needs.

As our forces pursue the enemies of freedom around the globe, The American Legion supports our men and women in uniform and their families with the Family Support Network. Those of us in The American Legion, who served our nation in times of adversity, remember how it felt to be separated from those we love. The Family Support Network is successful as a direct result of Legionnaires, at the Post level in communities, responding to the needs of our comrades and their families. As the nation's largest veteran's organization, our commitment to the men and women of our armed forces and their families is absolute. As a grateful nation, we must ensure that no family endures hardships caused by military service that protects American ideals and freedom.

Continuing with our tradition of supporting veterans and their families, The American Legion has partnered with Operation: Military Kids to support the children of activated and deployed members of the armed forces. Spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Army Youth Development Project, Operation: Military Kids recognizes that when National Guard, Reserve, and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs and may lack the community support systems associated with active military installations.

Extensive media coverage of ongoing military operations and dependence on the Reserves and National Guard creates daily anxiety. These "new" military kids seek friends and adults who can empathize and can help them cope with their new world. The American Legion, as a core partner of Operation: Military Kids, will enable this program to harness the benefits of our well-established and successful children and youth programs at the national and local levels to support military youth.

The American Legion in cooperation with State and County Cooperative Extension staff seeks to reach out to military youth before, during, and after their parents deploy. This outreach effort seeks to:

1. Create a community support network for military youth.
2. Deliver recreation, social and educational programs for military youth.
3. Support military kids coping with the stress of having a parent deployed.
4. Collaborate with schools to ensure that staff is attuned to the unique needs of military students.

5. Educate the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on military personnel, families, kids and the community as a whole.

Continuing Programs

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA): This is the landmark program of the Commission on Children & Youth. Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid to veteran's children, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. During the 2009 – 2010 program year, the program aided 1,242 children with \$468,063.05 in grants. From its beginning to present, this fund has assisted veterans' families with millions of dollars in non-repayable grants.

The fund, made possible by the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and medical needs 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 assistance. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because a parent is sick or disabled, deceased, or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program is the vital tool which is used to help meet the maintenance and health needs of veterans' children, thereby allowing the child to develop in the home.

Child Safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920's. In 1992, the National Commission on Children & Youth designated the Child Safety program as one of its annual or continuing programs.

Child Safety is defined as any external event that may present a significant danger to a child or young person. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child Abuse and Neglect
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Indoor/Outdoor Safety
4. School Safety
5. Playground Safety
6. Childhood Communicable Diseases
7. Accidents (automobile, drowning, firearms)
8. Fire Safety
9. Substance Abuse
10. Youth Suicide

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 16,000 children under the age of 21 die in automobile crashes, fires,

through the improper use of firearms, and drowning. In homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary that they have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goals during the 2009 – 2010 program year. At National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, August 26 – 28, 2008 the following resolutions, here summarized, were approved.

Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 321-2008. United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel. In part, because of this, many children in foreign countries are progeny of United States citizens. Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens, but addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982. As The American Legion believes that no child born of a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country, we urge legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Drug Trafficking: Res. 327-2008. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution urges funding for all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of the substances that are being made available in this country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users.

Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature: Res. 319-2008. 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.

Protect Children from the Unrestricted Media: Res. 314-2008. The producers of movies, television shows and news, and the Internet have become very explicit in describing and depicting various types of violence. Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, defend such actions as the author's constitutional right of free speech without regard for the potential consequences to minor children. The American Legion supports appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity, and other forms of moral depravation in movies, TV programs, TV news and on the Internet. In addition, we encourage Departments and Posts to conduct awareness campaigns to educate their members, their families and the general public about the potential dangers the Internet and other forms of electronic media pose to children and teenagers.

School Nutrition Programs: Res. 334-2008. 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. 315-2008. It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well being. Unfortunately, many of our children are not receiving the necessary medical care due to the extreme requirements placed on the financial abilities of the average family. Consequently, children with severe catastrophic illnesses are not receiving the needed medical care. The rising cost of medical care in such cases is not covered by even the best medical policies. The American Legion believes that the state and federal governments should enact legislation to financially assist those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth: Res. 326-2008. Many of our children continue to face health needs that are not properly addressed due to the high cost of our health care delivery system. The American Legion continues to support and endorse the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, the Healthy Start Initiative, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and the Abstinence Education Program.

Support Immunization Programs: Res. 325-2008. The American Legion realizes that in today's society there is no place for communicable disease for which there is a vaccine. Despite available vaccination programs, several childhood diseases breakout annually. We believe 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.

National Family Week: Res. 335-2008. One of the basic principles of the children and youth program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country...the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and stability to our society. We urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

These are the highlights of our 2009 – 2010 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances that deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. The Children & Youth legislative program is a never-ending struggle, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 87 years, the Commission on Children & Youth records activities from The American Legion Family, consisting of over 14,000 Posts of The American Legion, over 5,000 Squadrons of The Sons of The American Legion, 8,500 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, 2009 through May 31, 2010 and combined with these reports.

During the reporting period, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation recorded \$771,499.42 in donations from members of The American Legion Family and

individuals across the country. During the same period, our Temporary Financial Assistance program expended \$468,063.05 in grants to 1,242 children of veterans. For the 2009 – 2010 Children & Youth programs year, including contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation, Posts, Squadrons, Units and Departments of The American Legion and affiliated organizations reported a grand total of \$17,479,064 in expenditures and contributions to benefit the children of America.

Children & Youth Literature

During the 2009 – 2010 program year, 987,242 pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division in order to further the objectives of the total program.

As shown in Table #4, our most popular brochures are related to our major points of emphasis -- Child Health, Child Safety, and Family Support. It is of further interest to note that 1136 citations were distributed to Departments in order to recognize Posts for their contributions to the overall Children & Youth Program.

Appreciation Acknowledged

The Commission on Children & Youth and its Chairman take this opportunity to thank all the dedicated volunteers of The American Legion family. Our members have contributed thousands of unpaid hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice to improve the lives of children and to complete another successful program year. The Commission would also like to thank National Commander Clarence E. Hill and National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler for their continued dedication to serving our nation's youth. Special recognition and appreciation for continued support of Children & Youth programs is also extended to the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion that ensure the continued success of our National Children & Youth Programs.

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH Executive Section

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 Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio – Chairman Emeritus
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 Denver R. Phelps, Sr. - Member
 Gary W. Gifford, Maryland – Member

Table No. 1

Region and Department	Reporting Region Reporting Auxiliary	Temporary Financial Assistance by National	Contributions to Child Welfare Foundations by Posts & Units	Contributions to Other Child Serving Agencies by Region and Auxiliary	Other Expenditures for Children by Region and Auxiliary	Department Administrative Expense by Region and Auxiliary	Total Aid for Children from B/40	Total Number of Children Served Nationally	Total Aid Legion and Auxiliaries 4 thru 10		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
REGION 1											
Connecticut	46%	0%	\$5,855.78	\$2,368.92	\$10,094.00	\$16,457.00	\$235,078.00	\$19,993.00	\$57.00	753	\$289,894
Maine	57%	0%	\$1,189.30	\$90.00	\$20,735.00	\$19,777.00	\$12,988.00	\$7,418.00	\$150.00	2,305	\$62,347
Massachusetts	53%	99%	\$1,807.43	\$809.00	\$97,004.00	\$56,353.00	\$10,005.00	\$19,570.00	\$315.00	7,429	\$185,863
New Hampshire	62%	0%	\$825.00	\$2,953.00	\$104,619.00	\$31,432.00	\$1,225.00	\$17,536.00	\$138.86	4,990	\$168,729
Rhode Island	98%	26%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$61,345.00	\$30,128.00	\$24,182.00	\$476.00	\$50.00	1,302	\$116,181
Vermont	100%	0%	\$0.00	\$928.00	\$118,013.00	\$31,327.00	\$258,189.00	\$11,735.00	\$80.00	5,450	\$420,272
TOTAL:	60%	0%	\$9,871.51	\$7,148.92	\$411,800.00	\$185,474.00	\$541,667.00	\$76,728.00	\$780.86	22,229	\$1,233,286
REGION 2											
Delaware	59%	33%	\$521.00	\$560.00	\$58,307.00	\$15,550.00	\$9,490.44	\$2,555.00	\$0.00	3,106	\$86,983
D.C.	43%	0%	\$1,510.51	\$1,255.00	\$887.00	\$315.00	\$0.00	\$485.00	\$0.00	53	\$4,453
Maryland	68%	62%	\$5,181.41	\$8,356.00	\$374,245.00	\$125,877.00	\$61,017.00	\$38,046.00	\$721.67	43,046	\$613,444
New Jersey	37%	22%	\$3,700.00	\$1,992.00	\$132,812.00	\$59,020.00	\$19,891.00	\$24,641.00	\$110.00	21,191	\$242,166
New York	78%	97%	\$3,254.69	\$5,007.30	\$488,209.00	\$400,968.00	\$41,523.00	\$142,218.00	\$364.00	33,723	\$1,051,744
Pennsylvania	56%	0%	\$9,290.64	\$1,073.50	\$394,086.00	\$288,823.00	\$241,852.00	\$51,014.00	\$385.00	24,614	\$986,524
Virginia	71%	0%	\$18,781.50	\$10,384.00	\$376,578.00	\$114,243.00	\$32,541.00	\$38,098.00	\$725.00	15,929	\$589,351
West Virginia	83%	35%	\$1,733.77	\$236.59	\$104,780.80	\$4,023.75	\$22,103.56	\$9,289.00	\$10.00	18,245	\$181,777
TOTAL:	64%	60%	\$44,073.52	\$28,864.39	\$1,939,904.80	\$1,047,819.75	\$428,418.00	\$304,446.00	\$2,315.67	159,907	\$3,795,842
REGION 3											
Alabama	26%	30%	\$8,270.23	\$4,242.50	\$36,383.00	\$46,935.00	\$19,122.00	\$3,865.35	\$0.00	424	\$129,355
Florida	95%	39%	\$37,427.99	\$36,331.00	\$368,055.00	\$311,292.00	\$184,338.00	\$59,956.00	\$2,497.13	20,410	\$999,897
Georgia	78%	0%	\$3,799.83	\$722.00	\$259,588.00	\$109,015.00	\$26,909.00	\$24,728.00	\$0.00	11,644	\$424,762
Kentucky	67%	27%	\$11,972.16	\$2,158.50	\$177,998.18	\$62,313.00	\$49,687.35	\$13,588.00	\$525.00	11,394	\$318,242
North Carolina	38%	43%	\$17,991.25	\$9,505.32	\$62,068.00	\$26,978.00	\$20,252.00	\$15,002.00	\$0.00	6,681	\$151,877
South Carolina	29%	0%	\$15,379.74	\$4,983.88	\$17,400.00	\$7,947.00	\$46,510.00	\$3,519.00	\$0.00	782	\$95,940
Tennessee	56%	17%	\$3,070.00	\$926.34	\$171,794.00	\$42,460.00	\$48,370.00	\$12,508.00	\$0.00	7,387	\$179,128
TOTAL:	57%	24%	\$97,911.20	\$58,849.54	\$993,266.18	\$606,840.00	\$395,188.35	\$143,358.00	\$3,387.48	58,722	\$2,298,801
REGION 4											
Arkansas	24%	0%	\$0.00	\$180.00	\$22,699.00	\$5,826.00	\$8,040.00	\$2,132.00	\$66.00	632	\$38,943
Louisiana	36%	0%	\$0.00	\$790.00	\$55,130.00	\$46,455.00	\$37,384.00	\$17,676.00	\$50.00	3,038	\$157,485
Mississippi	21%	15%	\$5,269.77	\$1,831.00	\$25,985.98	\$9,912.87	\$640.00	\$2,034.00	\$25.00	3,998	\$44,699
Oklahoma	33%	31%	\$13,290.59	\$745.99	\$85,509.75	\$19,706.00	\$27,685.00	\$8,095.00	\$166.00	4,857	\$155,198
Texas	50%	0%	\$3,272.36	\$7,011.00	\$266,866.00	\$132,579.00	\$116,248.00	\$39,808.00	\$1,175.00	64,210	\$595,959
TOTAL:	36%	0%	\$50,832.72	\$10,557.99	\$456,190.73	\$214,478.87	\$189,997.00	\$69,745.00	\$1,482.00	76,735	\$993,284
REGION 5											
Illinois	44%	45%	\$8,603.84	\$5,730.53	\$141,382.00	\$97,236.00	\$217,833.00	\$97,790.00	\$675.25	15,506	\$569,231
Indiana	59%	35%	\$14,049.05	\$16,035.90	\$222,978.98	\$137,239.00	\$405,546.50	\$29,145.00	\$1,094.00	9,017	\$826,088
Michigan	59%	59%	\$11,992.72	\$4,263.26	\$240,966.00	\$45,363.00	\$209,912.00	\$107,861.00	\$2,274.25	12,446	\$622,632
Missouri	76%	39%	\$8,998.32	\$1,954.48	\$87,345.00	\$80,314.00	\$80,426.00	\$19,360.00	\$175.00	8,988	\$278,573
Ohio	81%	48%	\$10,484.01	\$31,834.65	\$523,365.26	\$329,020.78	\$274,096.56	\$52,964.00	\$5,345.00	67,112	\$1,227,110
Wisconsin	80%	57%	\$8,724.86	\$6,272.47	\$141,552.00	\$97,151.00	\$71,559.61	\$31,737.00	\$0.00	11,901	\$363,997
TOTAL:	68%	48%	\$62,852.80	\$66,091.29	\$1,357,569.24	\$786,323.78	\$1,266,373.67	\$338,857.00	\$9,563.50	124,970	\$2,898,631
REGION 6											
Iowa	74%	0%	\$12,719.38	\$1,268.34	\$66,590.00	\$78,581.40	\$46,951.00	\$17,627.00	\$0.00	25,090	\$223,737
Kansas	64%	35%	\$0.00	\$3,394.33	\$143,873.00	\$70,228.34	\$73,444.34	\$15,183.00	\$205.00	7,902	\$306,328
Minnesota	51%	69%	\$1,312.98	\$1,615.00	\$317,350.00	\$105,866.00	\$72,826.00	\$14,835.00	\$1,540.00	31,871	\$515,245
Nebraska	71%	38%	\$1,191.51	\$4,457.78	\$95,905.00	\$29,660.00	\$50,413.63	\$18,953.00	\$412.50	38,668	\$203,053
North Dakota	85%	0%	\$650.00	\$1,711.00	\$67,239.00	\$37,714.61	\$12,195.00	\$13,128.00	\$0.00	2,036	\$132,638
South Dakota	46%	73%	\$0.00	\$198.00	\$37,231.00	\$8,153.00	\$57,037.37	\$3,778.00	\$620.34	26,874	\$107,018
TOTAL:	65%	39%	\$15,873.87	\$12,844.45	\$788,128.00	\$330,203.35	\$314,927.34	\$83,504.00	\$2,777.84	132,468	\$1,468,319
REGION 7											
Arizona	99%	52%	\$40,882.78	\$2,314.12	\$268,740.00	\$93,797.00	\$365,054.00	\$38,340.00	\$702.82	35,989	\$809,831
California	79%	75%	\$18,985.05	\$5,804.45	\$613,138.00	\$221,063.00	\$193,192.00	\$55,273.00	\$2,805.72	93,050	\$1,110,281
Colorado	15%	29%	\$1283.51	\$283.50	\$204,404.00	\$28,349.00	\$20,747.00	\$3,895.50	\$0.00	7,368	\$86,544
Hawaii	59%	30%	\$0.00	\$201.95	\$1,900.00	\$884.00	\$597,976.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	124	\$4,616
Nevada	64%	0%	\$2,315.18	\$4,415.50	\$34,671.00	\$4,288.00	\$597,976.00	\$1,255.00	\$120.00	791	\$645,041
New Mexico	44%	43%	\$0.00	\$3,493.97	\$87,583.00	\$59,970.00	\$51,534.00	\$12,675.00	\$0.00	7,201	\$214,256
Utah	20%	0%	\$3,475.00	\$913.05	\$35,075.00	\$600.00	\$1,225.00	\$3,096.00	\$0.00	103	\$44,384
TOTAL:	50%	49%	\$78,523.12	\$17,426.54	\$1,061,511.00	\$407,951.00	\$1,231,358.00	\$114,534.00	\$3,628.54	144,626	\$2,914,932
REGION 8											
Alaska	72%	0%	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$56,610.00	\$19,720.00	\$4,700.00	\$3,915.00	\$226.00	3,822	\$85,471
Idaho	100%	43%	\$34,032.73	\$1,699.81	\$19,203.00	\$13,255.00	\$109,448.00	\$4,775.00	\$1,087.15	9,793	\$183,481
Montana	100%	57%	\$4,978.11	\$351.00	\$22,940.00	\$11,355.00	\$20,472.00	\$4,323.00	\$77.00	8,954	\$70,892
Oregon	98%	80%	\$4,907.08	\$2,909.00	\$103,910.00	\$15,837.00	\$41,050.00	\$13,622.00	\$52.00	6,954	\$182,287
Washington	61%	33%	\$53,843.06	\$6,581.99	\$91,983.00	\$25,073.00	\$18,845.00	\$7,480.00	\$1,083.91	6,742	\$204,890
Wyoming	95%	0%	\$7,854.68	\$4,415.57	\$15,656.00	\$7,380.00	\$2,210.00	\$1,530.00	\$0.00	971	\$39,046
TOTAL:	87%	44%	\$105,615.66	\$16,257.37	\$310,302.00	\$92,620.00	\$202,725.00	\$35,645.00	\$2,506.06	36,846	\$765,671
REGION TOTALS:	61%	38%	\$465,360.40	\$216,040.49	\$7,258,731.95	\$3,671,710.75	\$4,570,654.36	\$1,166,817.00	\$26,451.95	756,503	\$12,164,034
FOREIGN											
France	0%	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$650.00	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	603	\$1,350
Mexico	100%	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,050.00	\$900.00	\$0.00	\$2,642.00	\$0.00	409	\$22,592
Philippines	9%	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,990.00	\$1,060.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	75	\$4,050
Puerto Rico	22%	0%	\$2,702.65	\$15.00	\$900.00	\$1,396.00	\$2,008.00	\$2,235.00	\$0.00	25	\$9,257
TOTAL:	27%	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,200.57	\$2,425.00	\$2,008.00	\$4,877.00	\$0.00	1,112	\$16,511
GRAND TOTALS:	60%	38%	\$468,063.05	\$216,055.49	\$7,265,932.52	\$3,674,135.75	\$4,571,949.36	\$1,171,694.00	\$26,451.95	757,615	\$17,396,282

(2) - Not organized in the Department

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary \$20,000
 Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary \$10,000
 Child Welfare Foundation by National B/40 \$686
 Children & Youth Division by National B/40 \$0
 Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary \$0
 Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals \$20,152
 Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation \$4,582
 C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion \$20,960
 Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion \$6,402

GRAND TOTAL \$17,479,064

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2008 - MAY 31, 2009

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-45	1946-65	1966-85	1986-95	1996-2005*	2006-2009*	June 2009 - May 2010	Grand Total
Alabama	29,181.33	51,167.06	76,790.45	165,155.82	137,824.69	42,962.66	8,270.23	511,352.24
Alaska	0.00	1,627.56	1,550.00	0.00	3,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	8,177.56
Arizona	26,061.70	8,752.00	21,380.31	228,396.73	289,526.72	110,695.17	40,882.78	725,695.41
Arkansas	33,873.20	25,962.22	2,861.07	58,723.29	16,181.61	10,161.31	0.00	147,782.70
California	30,106.15	16,026.45	1,550.00	7,559.00	30,034.44	68,632.84	18,965.05	172,893.93
Colorado	41,621.11	22,618.11	1,395.00	13,205.83	17,592.15	48,120.04	12,865.11	157,417.35
Connecticut	1,854.00	440.00	450.00	1,192.00	7,971.56	4,267.83	5,855.78	22,031.17
Delaware	2,035.00	1,000.00	475.00	2,635.00	8,497.64	-	521.00	15,163.64
DC	2,570.00	1,203.50	600.00	26,636.75	2,319.00	-	1,510.51	34,839.76
Florida	33,341.28	25,520.50	2,530.00	33,542.76	64,469.81	83,658.02	37,427.99	280,490.36
Georgia	69,894.07	86,084.42	4,865.00	8,498.51	12,861.80	13,049.01	3,799.83	199,052.64
Hawaii	870.00	0.00	900.00	0.00	6,168.40	2,767.97	0.00	10,706.37
Idaho	7,593.50	5,771.85	7,366.39	24,202.62	195,485.15	87,544.74	34,032.73	361,996.98
Illinois	30,220.79	4,343.53	10,525.73	129,729.07	276,545.19	36,686.06	8,603.84	496,654.21
Indiana	31,850.08	9,066.40	2,920.00	152,703.98	173,400.66	63,656.49	14,049.05	447,646.66
Iowa	17,493.08	597.00	3,928.45	16,982.47	227,865.82	64,979.13	12,719.38	344,565.33
Kansas	20,766.80	42,064.35	8,923.00	9,691.54	16,291.60	3,689.20	0.00	101,426.49
Kentucky	23,843.50	45,527.90	64,854.96	48,497.66	12,445.22	85,665.62	11,972.16	292,807.02
Louisiana	23,400.50	38,454.30	3,395.00	7,640.45	33,897.24	627.39	0.00	107,414.88
Maine	3,618.94	1,910.26	2,676.55	20,812.00	22,305.05	11,354.89	1,189.30	63,866.99
Maryland	5,887.00	3,390.57	3,383.00	4,770.00	31,620.94	4,113.86	5,181.41	58,346.78
Massachusetts	2,754.50	455.00	150.00	7,050.00	18,888.67	11,573.91	1,807.43	42,679.51
Michigan	23,895.33	33,281.24	15,346.62	17,575.76	52,676.96	34,675.38	11,992.72	189,443.91
Minnesota	8,610.77	23,322.79	11,840.33	172,036.26	89,538.19	25,295.40	1,312.98	331,956.72
Mississippi	40,293.63	63,254.14	117,892.56	54,314.88	84,261.79	22,324.69	5,269.77	387,611.46
Missouri	53,073.08	47,799.64	11,056.00	19,362.51	38,984.13	52,457.06	8,998.32	231,730.74
Montana	5,414.25	1,688.85	1,575.30	45,267.56	57,913.91	43,194.85	4,978.11	160,012.83
Nebraska	18,470.10	17,795.68	17,531.06	4,520.25	759.49	2,058.00	1,191.51	62,326.09
Nevada	585.00	766.00	7,272.00	1,495.00	16,818.94	5,214.34	2,315.18	34,466.46
New Hampshire	4,250.50	4,941.50	0.00	55,557.79	12,610.00	14,733.65	825.00	92,918.44
New Jersey	8,995.53	1,946.00	4,478.00	65,437.20	53,194.60	13,378.31	3,700.00	151,129.64
New Mexico	20,074.30	53,098.74	58,723.89	117,760.24	49,262.39	2,649.50	0.00	301,569.06
New York	7,887.54	4,803.00	1,150.00	42,484.24	83,432.27	16,708.70	3,354.69	159,820.44
North Carolina	46,597.50	81,019.60	5,770.00	23,502.67	68,774.55	84,950.80	17,991.25	332,580.37
North Dakota	26,017.45	11,788.21	5,741.32	7,064.40	11,426.94	7,002.01	650.00	69,720.33
Ohio	23,930.43	5,116.25	11,613.89	12,357.65	13,289.44	30,275.18	10,484.01	107,066.85
Oklahoma	40,458.05	65,406.47	88,956.03	171,688.84	203,764.51	90,793.33	13,290.59	674,357.82
Oregon	1,250.50	13,750.15	24,595.95	46,815.83	14,796.00	30,574.68	4,907.08	136,690.19
Panama	675.00	534.00	600.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	1,809.00
Pennsylvania	22,847.41	651.00	19,204.65	38,688.37	29,380.12	33,052.15	9,290.64	153,109.54
Puerto Rico	17,057.00	57,754.00	55,499.50	49,720.00	11,100.00	5,937.78	2,702.65	199,770.93
Rhode Island	1,562.00	1,641.00	1,060.00	19,527.38	16,182.72	3,424.90	0.00	43,398.00
South Carolina	68,453.05	26,693.34	5,339.00	900.00	13,610.16	29,343.00	15,379.74	159,718.29
South Dakota	42,430.27	16,362.05	725.00	46,361.43	5,358.30	-	0.00	111,237.05
Tennessee	31,144.77	54,613.20	20,604.30	61,868.79	36,561.35	48,871.16	3,070.00	256,733.57
Texas	35,373.50	47,392.43	26,714.50	8,534.74	31,484.75	59,477.34	32,273.36	241,249.62
Utah	11,125.48	3,248.00	3,396.00	13,414.42	14,034.34	6,573.50	3,475.00	55,266.74
Vermont	1,824.50	9,251.50	0.00	5,425.00	6,004.26	4,539.26	0.00	27,044.52
Virginia	45,310.31	28,037.78	17,836.00	37,295.82	66,509.94	59,955.93	18,781.50	273,727.28
Washington	3,378.00	427.50	625.00	100,545.28	511,131.69	266,195.67	53,843.06	936,146.20
West Virginia	27,629.98	11,395.94	3,460.00	24,514.68	40,628.59	10,654.20	1,733.77	120,017.16
Wisconsin	15,881.98	8,067.25	9,878.00	19,309.78	74,327.21	40,756.18	8,724.86	176,945.26
Wyoming	8,180.00	1,993.00	1,350.00	2,279.00	13,746.91	6,700.55	7,854.68	42,104.14
Other Depts	560.00	173.50	-	-	-	-	468,063.05	468,796.55
Miscellaneous**	19,499.21	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	19,499.21
TOTAL	\$1,121,572.95	\$1,089,976.73	\$777,325.21	\$2,253,246.25	\$3,327,257.51	\$1,807,477.64	\$468,063.05	\$11,312,982.39

*Includes January 2009 - May 2010

**For the year 1926--Department totals not available

Table 3
 Comparison of Number of Children of WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada/Lebanon, Panama,
 and Gulf War Veterans Receiving Aid from National Children and Youth Division

	World				Grenada/ Lebanon			Totals
	War II	Korea	Vietnam	Gulf War	Panama	Gulf War	Totals	
June			20	10	3	78	111	
July			1	23	3	97	126	
August		2	9	3	3	78	93	
September			16	16	22	107	161	
October			6	11	11	75	103	
November			19	6	14	41	80	
December			12	8	19	86	125	
January			8	4	13	46	71	
February			13	5	5	62	85	
March				2	8	94	104	
April			8	7	6	55	76	
May			4	1	14	88	107	
Totals	0	2	116	96	121	907	1242	
Percentage	0.00%	0.16%	9.34%	7.73%	9.74%	73.03%	100.00%	

Table No. 4

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request
During Period June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010

	Total
8&40 Nursing Scholarship	14,545
American Legion & Children's Miracle Network - Brochure	15,973
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	37,433
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation	85,473
Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	26,030
Children & Youth Department Chairman's Guide	152
Family Support Network	47,465
Gateway Drugs	50,087
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night - Brochure	256,317
Nathan's Visit Comic Books	7,021
National Family Week	29,932
Play It Safe	56,869
Serving America	94,895
Serving Communities	86,769
Serving Veterans	85,956
TFA Applications	2,601
TFA Brochures	42,176
Warning Signs -- Suicide Prevention	44,686

Citations:

Annual Children and Youth Citations	891
Certificate of Meritorious Service	24
National Achievement Award	9
Special Children & Youth Citation	212

Reporting:

Unit Report Form	200
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	1,420
Department Report Forms	106

TOTAL	987,242
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AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.**Dennis R. Boland, Florida, President****Robert K. Caudell, Indiana, Executive Secretary**

In 1954 The American Legion endorsed the separate incorporation of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted over nine 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 2009, the Board of Directors approved grants to 19 non-profit organizations in the amount of \$636,870 for projects to be completed in calendar year 2010. The organizations and amounts are as follows:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grants

<i>American Legion Children's Home</i>	Ponca City, Oklahoma	\$41,000
<i>American Legion of Nevada</i>	Las Vegas, Nevada	\$ 3,037
<i>Boy Scouts of America, Exploring Program</i>	Denver, Colorado	\$35,717
<i>Childhood Leukemia Foundation</i>	Brick, New Jersey	\$48,000
<i>Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD)</i>	Norfolk, Virginia	\$30,050
<i>Children's Institute Inc.</i>	Rochester, New York	\$30,500
<i>Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation</i>	Avon, Connecticut	\$16,744
<i>Diabetes Education and Camping Association</i>	Huntsville, Alabama	\$25,000
<i>Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation</i>	New York, New York	\$39,500
<i>Mercy Medical Airlift</i>	Virginia Beach, Virginia	\$45,700
<i>The MY HERO Project</i>	Laguna Beach, California	\$28,873
<i>National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)</i>	New York, New York	\$45,500
<i>National Exchange Club Foundation</i>	Toledo, Ohio	\$25,000
<i>National Reye's Syndrome Foundation</i>	Bryan, Ohio	\$38,200
<i>PKS Kids</i>	Florissant, Missouri	\$29,500
<i>SADD, Inc.</i>	Marlborough, Massachusetts	\$54,549
<i>Spina Bifida Association</i>	Washington, DC	\$40,000
<i>Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.</i>	Bayside, New York	\$25,000
<i>Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS)</i>	Washington, DC	\$35,000

During the 2009 - 2010 contribution years, donations exceeded \$771,799 with over \$468,907 of that amount coming to the Foundation from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion. Their Posts, Units, Salons, and Squadrons are the primary contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation.

We encourage each member and each local organization to make an annual contribution in support of their Foundation so it can continue to fund projects that will assist children by giving them a better chance at life. It is important to remember that every dollar given to the Foundation is put directly into the trust fund to be used for grants that assist our young people.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation held in Indianapolis on May 2, 2010, the following officers were elected: Dennis R. Boland of Florida (President); Peggy Moon of Minnesota, (Vice President); Joseph J. Frank of Missouri, (Secretary); and Robert Turner of Georgia, (Treasurer). Administrative personnel that were appointed by the Board of Directors were George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Assistant Treasurer) and Robert K. Caudell (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

Michael E. Walton, Illinois, Chairman

Richard D. Holmes, Indiana, Director

The 91st annual National Convention of the American Legion convened in Louisville, Kentucky, Aug. 21 – 27, 2009. National Commander David K. Rehbein of Iowa called the National Convention to order at 9:00AM on Tuesday, Aug. 25, welcoming Legionnaires to Louisville and thanking them for their continuing service to our country and to our veterans. The Honorable Jerry Abramson, Mayor of the City of Louisville, Teddy W. Austin, Commander, the American Legion Department of Kentucky, and Silas Noel, President of the National Convention Corporation of Kentucky welcomed legionnaires to the National Convention. Other guest speakers addressing the 91st National Convention of the American Legion were the Honorable Bob Filner, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Hilda L. Solis, Secretary of the Department of Labor, the Honorable John Yarmuth and Tim Walz, U.S. House of Representatives, Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David H. Petraeus, Commander, U.S. Central Command as well as Lt. General Jack C. Stultz, Chief, U.S. Army Reserve.

There were many highlights during the 2009 National Convention, but three events conducted at the National Convention deserve special mention. The Patriotic Memorial Service and the annual parade, both held on Sunday, Aug. 23 were attended by nearly 5,000 and 8,000 American Legion Family members respectively. On Tuesday, Aug. 25, the National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests was held at the Kentucky International Convention Center. This banquet, featuring country music star Darryl Worley as the entertainment, was attended by 2,200 Legionnaires and guests.

CONVENTION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The National Convention Commission conducted three regular meetings during the year. Revisions of our request for proposal (RFP) continued in 2009. 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 that desire to host an American Legion national convention, providing "blue cap" Legionnaires and their families with varied and enjoyable conventions on an annual basis.

For the 2015 National Convention, the National Convention Commission reviewed bids from Baltimore, Maryland and Chicago, Illinois. Following site visits and after listening to formal presentations from each of these fine cities, the National Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that Baltimore, Maryland be awarded the 2015 national convention for Aug. 28 – Sept. 3. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation.

Future conventions and dates:

Minneapolis, Minnesota	August 26 – September 1, 2011
Indianapolis, Indiana	August 24 – 30, 2012
Houston, Texas	August 23 – 29, 2013
Charlotte, North Carolina	August 22 – 28, 2014
Baltimore, Maryland	August 28 – September 3, 2015

We currently have four cities bidding on the 2016 National Convention. Those cities, supported by the appropriate resolution from their host Department, are Denver, Colorado, Salt Lake City, Utah, Seattle, Washington and Virginia Beach, Virginia. A recommendation for the 2016 host city will be forwarded to the National Executive Committee in May of 2011.

DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE

Charles M. Roessler, Wisconsin, Chairman

The Distinguished Guest Committee exists under the umbrella of the National Convention Commission. Responsibilities include the coordination of activities for all distinguished guests invited to attend the national convention. The committee oversees the arrangements for 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

Randall A. Fisher, Kentucky, Chairman

Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, 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, 2009, through June 30, 2010. Since the commission and the committees always meet concurrently, all future references to the commission in this report will automatically indicate the inclusion of the committees.

The Economic Commission is chaired by Randall A. Fisher (KY). The division consists of Director Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Deputy Director Mark Walker, Assistant Director

Robert Madden, Assistant Director for DOD Outreach/H2H Program Coordinator
Catherine Trombly and Administrative Assistant Jasmine Davis.

National Economic Commission

- *Employment Committee
- *Veteran Preference Committee
- *Awards Subcommittee
- *Small Business Task Force Advisory Board
- *Homeless Veteran Task Force Advisory Board

2009-2010 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, August 22, 2009, in the Kentucky Convention Center, Louisville, Kentucky, in conjunction with the Ninety-first Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, August 24, 2009. 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 14-15, 2009. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 2009.
3. At the 50th Washington Conference, on Monday, March 1, and Wednesday, March 3, 2010 which were held in the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC; commission members and guests met to hear the latest on subjects of concern to them.
4. Members of the commission met May 3-4, 2010, 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 5-6, 2010.

Legislative Appearance

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 staff testified before Congress, and also participated in the preparation of testimony presented by other members of the Legion staff on several occasions.

The following is a synopsis of the Congressional hearings and correspondence held from August 1, 2009, to July 31, 2010, on matters pertaining to the National Economic Commission:

1. On March 11, 2010, the Director testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on "Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Veterans Enterprise."

2. On April 15, 2010, the Deputy Director testified before House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on "Status of Veterans Employment."
3. On April 21, 2010, the Assistant Director testified before the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on "Implementation on the Post 9/11 GI Bill."
4. On April 29, 2010, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, House Committee on Veterans Affairs on "Status of Veterans Small Businesses."
5. On May 12, 2010, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, House Committee on Veterans Affairs on "FY 2011 Budget Priorities."
6. On July 15, 2010, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Contracting and Technology, Committee on Small Business on "Improving Contracting Opportunities and Preventing Fraud for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business."
7. On July 29, 2010, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, House Committee on Veterans Affairs on Licensure and Certification.

Administrative Activities

The National Economic Commission and its two standing subcommittees on Employment and Veterans Preference are responsible for ensuring that America's veterans have the opportunity to provide, with honor and dignity, the economic necessities of life for themselves and their families. In order to achieve this goal, the commission and its committees work closely with governmental agencies and liaison to assist the organization's members.

A 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.

Employer of the Year Awards

One of the commission's major programs is its awards program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who has established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers, and to outstanding members of the state employment security agencies.

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. Prior to this year's Washington Conference, the chairman of the National Economic Commission, Randall A. Fisher (KY), appointed an eight-person

subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 2009 in the Employer of Veterans Awards Program.

The Commission's Awards Subcommittee met to select the following National winners:

Large Employer: BNSF Railway Company, Texas

Medium Size Employer: Regent Security Services, Inc., Georgia

Small Employer: Millennium Security Services, LLC, Georgia

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.

National winners are as follows:

LVER of the Year: Kathy Ford, Colorado

DVOP of the Year: Kenneth Kempf, North Carolina

Employment Local Office: Cumberland County Job Link Center, North Carolina

Other Awards

Employer of the Disabled: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Wisconsin

Employer of Older Workers: Allen Corporation of America, Inc., Virginia

Homeless Veterans Outreach Award: The American Legion Department of Colorado

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey, Chairman

Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, 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. Their Posts and Departments appoint these employment chairmen. Occasionally, Departments also appoint them at the County and District levels.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE

John P. March, Jr., Connecticut, Chairman

Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Director

This committee is charged with the responsibility of promoting veterans' employment opportunities in Federal government and for ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

Federal Veterans' Economic Programs

The following is a brief overview of the Commission's interactions with those Federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

TRANSITION

Job Fairs

The American Legion has formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with RecruitMilitary and Military.com that will allow The American Legion to have a presence in all of their Job Fairs around the country. The main purpose of participation in these Job Fairs is to educate veterans of their benefits, provide veterans outlets for employment and promote The American Legion.

This is an extremely important opportunity that has incredible positive impact for veterans and our organization. Since the beginning of the calendar year, as of July 31, 2010, The American Legion has participated in 56 Job Fairs through our national partnerships. Another 41 Job Fairs are scheduled to occur over the remainder of the year.

Additionally, each Department Employment Chairperson organizes participation in numerous local Job Fairs other than our 2 national partners. Job Fair duties and expectations, instructions and flyers accompany approximately 300 educational brochures from the national office for each Job Fair. Educational material is sent automatically to Departments associated with Military.com and RecruitMilitary and per individual request.

The Economic Division encourages Departments to urge members to volunteer for the upcoming events in their respective departments. We ask that volunteer staff include Service Officers, Employment and Homeless Chairperson, Children and Youth representatives, as well as members from The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS)

Director Joseph Sharpe is a member of the Department of Labor's Veterans' Advisory Committee

Veterans' employment and training programs are designed to help veterans -- those who face employability barriers and those who are job ready. DOL-VETS gives priority service to all veterans, with the highest priority afforded to disabled veterans. VETS also focuses on the special attention to military personnel preparing to separate from active duty.

DOL-VETS programs include the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) program, which VETS funds through state employment security agencies. The following are other programs administered by VETS:

- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects.
- Section 168 of the Workforce Investment Act to fund training of veterans in useful career skills.
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for military service members, funded through states and contractors in partnership with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense.

- Federal Contractor Job Listing Program.
- Federal Veterans' Preference monitoring

With the number of Reserve/National Guard personnel returning from the Middle East, USERRA is going to become more and more of an issue. The Department of Labor has already seen an increase in the number of cases being filed and can only expect that number to increase. The current level of operations along with the greatly downsized military has required the greater use of the Reserve components and many of these persons have been deployed to Iraq, and then were sent to Afghanistan. This is placing a burden on the civilian employers and the deployed soldiers that must be addressed to the mutual satisfaction of both sides. Many of these individuals also have their own businesses that they were unable to maintain while deployed and have lost customers and must start all over again.

Recently separated veterans are most likely to need assistance in finding a job. In many cases, some military combat-arms skills are not easily transferable to the civilian job market. Veterans also face difficulties in establishing and maintaining contacts for employment purposes. Military personnel are usually stationed away from their local community. This is an employment barrier because similarly situated non-veterans from the community are able to develop a network of contacts to help them obtain jobs in their chosen field. Service members stationed away from their community for three years or more lack such a network. Service members serving overseas (as happens in the case of one out of every five service members separating from active duty) further compounds job search efforts.

With the current unemployment rate, recently separated service members (particularly those who are 20 to 24 years of age) suffer the highest unemployment rates of all veterans. DOL-VETS works hard to help these young, recently separated veterans with a multitude of integrated services to prevent extended unemployment and ease their transition to careers in the civilian labor market.

License and Certification

DOD provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel and establishes measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the armed forces. There are many occupational career fields in the armed forces that easily translate to a civilian counterpart in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification. In the Armed Forces, these unique occupations are performed to approved military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria. Upon separation, however, many service members, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement. This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service.

Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) or ratings such as motor transport, corpsman or medic, need to undergo additional training, once out of the service, to work in their career path. This process slows down the veteran in obtaining gainful employment. The American Legion supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. We also support efforts that require DOD take appropriate steps to ensure that service members be trained, tested, evaluated and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian

workforce prior to separation. The American Legion supports efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

SMALL BUSINESS

Director Joseph Sharpe is a member of Small Business Administration's Veterans Advisory Committee

The American Legion views small business as the backbone of the American economy. It is the mobilizing force behind America's past economic growth and will continue to be a major factor as we move through the current recession. Reports show that businesses with fewer than 20 employees account for 90 percent of all U.S. firms and are responsible for more than 75 percent of all new jobs, generated \$993 billion in income in 2006, and employ 58.6 million people. There are 27 million small businesses in the U.S. and 99.7 percent of all firms are small businesses.

In FY 2007, the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Office of Government Contracting reported that of more than \$378.5 billion in Federal contracts identified as small business eligible, small businesses only received a total of \$83 billion in prime contract award and about \$64 billion in subcontracts. Service-disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs) were recipients of \$3.81 billion, or 1.01 percent of those available contract dollars.

From November 2007 to November 2008, more than one quarter of small businesses reported a decline in the number of jobs at their companies. In December 2008, only one in eight small businesses said they planned to hire new employees in the next twelve months, a 48 percent drop since August 2008. In addition, the number of small businesses filing for bankruptcy rose 54 percent from 2007 to 2008.

In FY 2009 according to opening remarks made by Chair Nydia M Velazquez during a Small Business Hearing in March, "federal agencies missed their small business contracting goals by 2 percent. Procurement officers will tell you that number is negligible, and no big deal. But while a 2 percent shortfall may not sound like a lot, it ultimately cost entrepreneurs \$10 billion in missed opportunity. Or, to put it another way, it cost American \$10 billion in lost job creation. Small contractors, like all other small firms, create roughly 70% of new jobs. So when their ability to win contracts is compromised, employment numbers are too".

The 7(a) loan program is the SBA's largest and most used lending program. Under this program, SBA provides a guaranty of up to 85 percent for loans provided by private-sector to small businesses. But because 7(a) loans are offered through private-sector banks, which are reeling from the current crisis, small businesses may not be able to get the relief they need. From the first quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009, the number of loans approved by the 7(a) program dropped 57 percent. Moreover, the SBA is expected to guarantee only about 10 billion dollars in loans this year, down from its historic norm of 20 billion dollars per year.

To help ease the credit crisis for small businesses, The American Legion urges Congress to establish a direct lending program through the SBA. This effort would offer low-interest loans to otherwise healthy veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned business that are having trouble obtaining the credit they need for necessary operating expenses or expansion.

The Commission's Small Business Task Force is extremely effective. It includes members from government and private industry, and is dedicated to creating a favorable

climate for veteran business owners and veteran entrepreneurship. The Small Business Task Force conducted a veterans' Career Fair in Louisville during the Legion's National Convention in August 2009 and will be conducting another one in Milwaukee, Wisconsin during National Convention there in August 2010.

In conjunction with the Career Fair, the Task Force will also be conducting small business development workshops consisting of two days of intensive training for both new and established veteran-owned small businesses to prepare them for bidding on Federal Government contracts.

Through collaboration with government and non-government agencies, and other veteran service organizations, The American Legion's Small Business Task Force assists with development and implementation of effective solutions to create a favorable climate for veteran business owners and entrepreneurs.

The Task Force holds monthly meetings, at the National Headquarters and via telephone conference calls. Staff and members of the Task Force have testified to the Small Business and Entrepreneurship committees in both houses of Congress. In addition, our partners in Vet-Force, a collaboration of VSO's and veteran advocates, and the Small Business Task Force has repeatedly pressured DOD, GSA, SBA, and just about every Federal agency to adhere to:

- PL 106-50; 3 percent of all Federal contracts per government agency are set aside for SDVOB
- PL 108-183; SDVOB's sole source and restricted competition contracts for goods and services used by the U.S. Government
- Executive Order 13360; increases opportunities for SDVOB's

Director Joseph Sharpe currently represents The American Legion on the Small Business Administration's Advisory Committee on Business Affairs and advises on areas of significant interest which include:

- Adequate staffing and funding of the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development and Office of Federal Contract Assistance for Veteran Business Owners;
- The reported inadequacy of SBA Surety Bonding levels necessary to support SDVOB success in the federal marketplace;
- Special access to capital for veterans, service-disabled veterans and self-employed members of the Reserve components of the U.S. Military;
- Improved SBA transition assistance for discharged members of the U.S. military in their transition to civilian status;
- Exploration of changes to the GI Bill to enable the use of benefits for the establishment and operation of small business concerns;
- Exploration of conducting research to determine the material effect of military service on successful small business ownership, for service-disabled veterans, for veterans, and for Reserve component members of the U.S. military; and,
- The extension and permanent establishment of the SBA Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs.

In-sourcing:

The American Legion is concerned about the Administration's direction toward in-sourcing and how that is affecting small business. The Office of Federal Procurement

Policy issued a proposed policy letter in Marcy that defines functions that are “inherently governmental” and therefore should be performed by federal employees. It also calls for federal agencies to give special consideration to using federal employees for functions that are closely associated with inherently governmental functions, and it asks agencies to make sure they have enough employees in-house to manage functions that are critical to the agency’s operations and mission.

The American Legion believes the push to in-source thousands of contractor positions could have severe repercussions for small businesses, particularly veteran and service-disabled owned businesses, across the nation and force small businesses to scale back positions or go out-of-business.

Business Development Workshops held at Louisville and Mid-Winter Conference

The National Economic Commission hosted an extremely successful Business Development Workshop in which 200 participants attended. *The* Northeast Veterans Business Resource Center (NEVBRC) assembled top experts from the private and Federal sectors. Teresa Lewis from Department of Treasury provided tips and tricks when it comes to marketing to the government and Shaunta Johnson, Director of the DC Regional office for Small Business for the Government Services Administration (GSA) presented small business contracting opportunities. Other topics included subcontracting opportunities for small businesses bonding and access to capital, registering with the government start a business, purchase an existing business, and how to begin a franchise.

State Approving Agencies

The American Legion is deeply concerned with the timely manner that veterans, especially returning wartime veterans, receive their education benefits. Annually, approximately 160,000 service members return to the civilian sector and use their earned education benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Any delay in receipt of education benefits or approval of courses taken at institutions of higher learning can adversely affect a veteran’s life.

It should be noted that SAAs have not had an increase in funding in the last four years (inflation rose 14 percent during this time period). As mentioned, VA has recently been allowed to conduct hiring to process new claims. By contrast, SAAs despite the same demand for services have not been allowed to hire additional staff. SAAs will require an additional \$5 million per year for the next three years (total of \$15 million). This funding would allow SAAs to continue to fulfill the following duties:

- Make determinations regarding the quality and integrity of all kinds of learning experiences (institutional, job training, flight, correspondence, etc.);
- Work with employers to develop and enroll veterans in job training programs (Apprenticeships and OJT);
- Assess and approve tests for professional and occupational licensing and certification;
- Perform outreach activities to increase the utilization of the GI Bills including briefings during transition assistance programs (TAP) and retirement seminars, and sending out mailings to recently discharged veterans and Selected Reserve personnel;

- Provide advice and guidance to veterans, guardsmen, reservists, and other GI Bill benefit recipients, as well as educators, trainers, and others who counsel veterans; and,
- Train VA School Certifying Officials at all educational institutions and job training establishments.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill has dramatically changed the work requirement for SAAs. Adequate funding will provide additional staffing and other resources for SAAs to fulfill its mission. The benefit stream flows through SAAs as well as the VA, and without fully functioning SAAs, veterans and other benefit recipients will not receive their educational benefits in an efficient and timely manner.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report in March 2007 entitled “VA Student Financial Aid: Management Actions Needed to Reduce Overlap in Approving Education and Training Programs and to Assess State Approving Agencies” (GAO-07-384) focused on the need to “ensure that Federal dollars are spent efficiently and effectively.” GAO recommended that VA should require SAAs to track and report data on resources spent on approval activities, such as site visits, catalog review, and outreach in a cost-efficient manner. Additionally, GAO recommended that VA establish outcome-oriented performance measures to assess the effectiveness of SAAs efforts. Finally, GAO recommended that VA should collaborate with other agencies to identify any duplicate efforts and use the agency’s administrative and regulatory authority to streamline the approval process. The American Legion fully agrees with these recommendations.

The American Legion strongly supports SAAs and is committed to working with them along with the VA and other Federal agencies to ensure that America’s veterans receive the finest education and training programs so they can live a dignified and successful life after serving this great nation.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service

Administration of VR&E and its programs is a responsibility of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Providing effective employment programs through VR&E must become a priority. Until recently, VR&E’s primary focus has been providing veterans with skills training, rather than providing assistance in obtaining meaningful employment. Clearly, any employability plan that does not achieve the ultimate objective – a job where the veteran succeeds despite his or her disabilities – is falling short of actually helping those veterans seeking assistance in transitioning into the civilian workforce and of VR&E’s mission. Eligible veterans who are enrolled into the education and training programs receive a monthly allowance to offset living costs associated with attending training while not working. Yet, those veterans enrolled in VR&E for direct employment assistance do not receive a monthly living stipend. However, they attend workshops to learn how to write resumes, work on interview skills and attend Job Fairs, all of which take time – 372 days on average, according to VA data; 54 days to enroll, 118 days to develop a rehabilitation plan and 200 days to find a job after the plan has been executed. Anyone who started a new career knows looking for a job can be a full-time job in itself. Not providing a living stipend for veterans seeking direct employment services through VR&E could lead those veterans to a different track and they may miss out on meaningful employment. The American Legion strongly urges Congress and VA leadership to approve a living stipend to all who are enrolled in VR&E regardless of whether their rehabilitation plan calls for training or direct employment.

Another problem hindering the effectiveness of the VR&E program, as cited in reports by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), is exceptionally high workloads for the limited number of staff. This hinders the staff's ability to effectively assist individual veterans with identifying employment opportunities. A recent GAO report noted that 54 percent of all 57 regional offices stated they have fewer counselors than they need and 40 percent said they have fewer employment coordinators than they need. As in the past, achieving ample staffing in VR&E is a major concern, especially with recent numbers stating that each VA counselor maintains a case load of 145 veterans. With 145 cases to manage, counselors simply do not have the time it takes to teach veterans how to apply to Federal jobs or to build the community connections to help veterans find jobs.

Without sufficient staffing, the success of VR&E programs becomes extremely challenging, particularly due to the returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and their more complex cases. Hiring more staff to meet the demands of these veterans is simply a must. The American Legion completely supports fully staffing VR&E with more vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment coordinators to lower case loads so these counselors/coordinators can provide more individualized attention to veterans throughout training and assist them in finding suitable employment.

No VA mission is more important at this time in our history -- given the nation's involvement in two wars and the uncertain economic situation -- than enabling America's veterans to have a seamless transition from military service to the civilian workforce. The success of the VR&E program will significantly be measured by these veterans' ability to obtain gainful employment and achieve a high quality of life. To meet America's obligation to these service-connected veterans, VA leadership must continue to focus on marked improvements in case management, vocational counseling, and most importantly, job placement.

Interagency Cooperation between DOL-VETS and VA

It is our experience that the interagency collaboration and communication between the VR&E program, and the Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) has been lacking in the past; however, there has been improvement recently.

In recent years, many states did not refer veterans from the VR&E program to VETS for assistance in obtaining employment. Veterans with high-tech skills and advanced education were referred to expensive commercial placement agencies that do not specialize in employment assistance for veterans, and difficult to place veterans were sent to VETS. Therefore, to assist in the correction of these deficiencies a Memorandum of Understanding between VA and DOL was developed and signed in October, 2005 stating that each agency would work for the smooth transition of veterans to the civilian work force. This agreement is authorized in accordance with Section 4102A (b) (3), title 38, U.S.C.

In discussions with numerous VETS representatives across the country, The American Legion is hearing a variety of opinions on the current implementation process and progress of the MOU. Some states report a total lack of communication and information sharing while other states already enjoy a strong relationship between the local VETS and VR&E Offices.

A majority of VETS representatives contacted spoke of a markedly improved level of communication between the two agencies, along with other positive developments

such as improvement in local data sharing and combined training on the local and national levels. In addition, national representatives from the two agencies are currently reporting a close and cooperative relationship, and the expectation is that this relationship will continue to improve over time.

In some states, however, it has been reported that the signing of the MOU has not led to an improvement in cooperation between the two agencies. Some problems cited were a difference in the perceptions of the primary mission, differing education levels of VA case managers and the DVOPs and LVERs, and the unenforceable mandate for the two agencies to communicate and cooperate on a local level. The DVOPs and LVERs are controlled by each individual state and have their own requirements, making a state and federal program difficult to synchronize.

While poor coordination between VR&E counselors and their VETS counterparts have contributed to the shortfalls of the VR&E program, a number of states have begun to improve communications. A majority of VETS representatives have commended their VR&E counterparts for their willingness to ensure the successful implementation of the MOU that is designed to improve rehabilitation, training and employment outcomes for disabled veterans.

The American Legion recommends exploring possible training programs geared specifically for VR&E Counselors through the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI). Contracting for standardized or specialized training for VR&E employees could very well strengthen and improve overall program performance. NVTI serves as a valuable resource for VETS employment specialists and has contributed to a marked improvement in VETS performance.

Provide Military Occupational Skills and Experience Translation for Civilian Employment Counseling

The American Legion notes that due to the current demands of the military, greater emphasis on the Reserve component of the Armed Forces created employment hardships for many Reservists. The American Legion supports amending Section 4101(5), title 38, U.S.C., to add Subsection (D) to the list of "Eligible Persons" for Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Service for Veterans, to include members in good standing of Active Reserve and Guard Units of the Armed Forces of the United States who have completed basic and advanced Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) and have been awarded a Military Occupation Specialty.

DOD provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel. DOD establishes measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation with the Armed Forces. There are many occupational career fields in the Armed Forces that can easily translate to a civilian counterpart many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification. In the Armed Forces, these unique occupations are performed to approve military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria.

Upon separation, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement. This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service.

A study by the Presidential Commission on Service members' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 military professions where civilian

credentialing is required. The most easily identifiable job is that of a Commercial Truck Driver in which there is a drastic shortage of qualified drivers. Thousands of veterans must venture through each state's laws instead of a single national test or transfer of credentials from the military. We have testified alongside members of the trucking industry to the U.S. House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for the need for accelerated MGIB payments for these courses and other matters.

The American Legion support efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. Our organization also supports efforts by the DOD to take appropriate steps to ensure that service members be trained, tested, evaluated and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce. The American Legion support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOI-VETS)

The American Legion's position regarding VETS programs is that this is and should remain a national program with Federal oversight and accountability. The American Legion is eager to see this program grow and especially would like to see greater expansion of entrepreneurial based, self-employment opportunity training. The mission of VETS is to promote the economic security of America's veterans. This stated mission is executed by assisting veterans in finding meaningful employment. The American Legion believes that by strengthening American veterans, we in turn strengthen America. Annually, DOD discharges approximately 160,000 service members. Recently separated service personnel will seek immediate employment or increasingly have chosen some form of self-employment. In order for the VETS program to assist these veterans to achieve their goals, it needs to:

- Revamp the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), so veterans can be better informed on education, employment and business opportunities once they transition into the civilian workforce;
- Improve by expanding its outreach efforts with creative initiatives designed to improve employment and training services for veterans;
- Provide employers with a labor pool of quality applicants with marketable and transferable job skills;
- Provide information on identifying military occupations that require licenses, certificates or other credentials at the local, state, or national levels;
- Eliminate barriers to recently separated service personnel and assist in the transition from military service to the civilian labor market;
- Strive to be a proactive agent between the business and veterans' communities in order to provide greater employment opportunities for veterans; and,
- Increase training opportunities, support and options for veterans who seek self-employment and entrepreneurial careers.

The American Legion believes that military experience is essential to understanding the unique needs of the veteran and that all LVERs, as well as all DVOPs, should be veterans and should be additionally educated to be able to address the needs of veterans who desire entrepreneurial support. The American Legion also believes that all employees of the Veterans Employment and Training Services should be eligible veterans including Veteran Program Specialists.

The American Legion supports legislation to restore language to Chapter 41, title 38, USC, that requires that half time DVOP/LVER positions be assigned only after approval of the VETS program, and that the Secretary of Labor be required to monitor all career centers that have veterans on staff. PL 107-288 eliminated the requirement DOL-VETS review all workforce centers annually and this has minimized Federal oversight of the programs. The Assistant Secretary (ASVET) has drastically cut funds for this activity and established a policy that only 2 percent of the centers operated under title 38 will be reviewed. PL 107-288 removed the job descriptions of DVOPs and LVERs from title 38 and gave the States the ability to establish the duties and responsibilities, thus weakening the VETS program across the country by eliminating the language that required these staff positions provide services only to veterans. Additionally, The American Legion seeks legislation that will transfer all DVOPs and LVERs from the State Agencies to DOL-VETS for supervision and oversight in order to ensure that the individuals employed to serve veterans are not used for other programs.

Veterans returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and other tours of duty are not always coming back to a hero's welcome--at least from employers. The jobless rate for veterans between ages 18 to 24 was 21.1 percent in 2009. Numerous national publications have reported veterans are having a more difficult time finding jobs due to physical and mental disabilities, multiple deployments and challenges with translating military skills in civilian workforce language. The employment market is tougher for young veterans. This is a major reason why funding the VETS program is so critical.

Veterans need proper training and tools to begin new careers after they leave military service. The Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) has received \$9.6 million in funding, which allows the program to operate in only 15 states. There are thousands of veterans available for work, but they lack marketable, technological skills, especially for jobs that exist in the Information Age economy. The problem is clearly a lack of adequate funding. Veterans are the only participants in this program. The budget baseline needs to be increased to allow VETS to train eligible veterans in all 50 states in FY 2011.

Make Transitional Assistance Program (Tap)/Disabled Transitional Assistance Program (DTAP) a Mandatory Program

The American Legion is deeply concerned with the timely manner that veterans, especially returning wartime veterans, transition into the civilian sector. Annually, for the past several years, approximately 160,000 service members, a significant amount of them belonging to the National Guard and Reserve, enter the civilian sector each year.

DOD estimates that 68 percent of separating service members attends the full TAP seminars and only 35 percent of the Reserve components attend. The American Legion believes this low attendance number is a disservice to all transitioning service members, especially the Reserve component. Currently, numerous National Guard and Reserve troops have returned from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan only to encounter difficulties with their Federal and civilian employers at home, and the number of destroyed and bankrupt businesses due to military deployment is still being realized.

In numerous cases brought to the attention of The American Legion by veterans and other sources, many of these returning service members have lost jobs, promotions, businesses, homes, and cars and, in a few cases, become homeless. The American Legion strongly endorses the belief that service members would greatly benefit by having access to the resources and knowledge that the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and

Disabled Transitional Assistance Program (DTAP) can provide and the TAP/DTAP program needs to update their program to recognize the large number of guard and reserve business owners who now require training, information and assistance while they attempt to salvage or recover from a business which they abandon to serve their country.

Any delay in reintegration in to the civilian workforce can adversely affect a veteran's life. Every effort should be made to ensure that veterans are afforded all the opportunities that this great country can offer without delay.

The American Legion strongly supports the TAP and DTAP. Additionally, The American Legion supports that DOD require all separating, active-duty service members, including those from Reserve and National Guard units, be given an opportunity to participate in TAP and DTAP training not more than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the Armed Forces.

The DOD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was designed to help smooth the transition of military personnel (and family members) leaving active duty. TAP is a partnership among DOD, DOL, and VA. The program consists of four components:

- DOD Pre-separation Counseling;
- DOL Employment Workshops;
- VA Benefits Briefing; and,
- Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP).

Once a service member has completed the four workshops above, they are eligible for one-on-one counseling and employment assistance training through their service. For demobilizing Guard and Reserve: DOD Pre-separation Counseling, DOL Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) Briefing, VA Benefits Briefing, and VA DTAP Briefing are provided on major military installations by the Transition Assistance Offices.

TAP Employment Workshops are provided to transitioning service members at most military installations in the United States as well as in eight overseas locations. The two and one-half day employment workshops help service members prepare a plan for obtaining meaningful civilian employment when they leave the military. The workshop focuses on skills assessment, resume writing, job counseling and assistance, interviewing and networking skills, labor market information, and familiarization with America's workforce investment system.

Studies have shown that service members who participate in TAP employment workshops find their first civilian jobs three weeks earlier than veterans who do not participate in TAP. According to DOL-VETS, it is estimated that about 65 percent of service members leaving active duty do attend a TAP workshop. VETS is vital in ensuring that every TAP participant leaves the session with a draft resume, a practice interview session, and having visited their state job board.

DOL-VETS program is critical in supporting veterans as they transition from the military and into the private sector, assisting veterans to be awarded federal employment using their earned veterans' preference, and assisting veterans achieve substantially gainful employment.

At the end of the Cold War, DOD dramatically downsized its personnel strength. In an attempt to assist separating service members in making a successful transition back into the civilian workforce, Congress enacted PL 101-510 that authorized the creation of the TAP that provides separating service members with three days of comprehensive training with emphasis on such topics as networking, how to conduct a job search,

résumé writing, career decision-making, and interview techniques, as well as current occupational and labor market conditions.

VETS provide professional veterans' employment personnel, DVOPs and LVERs, to participate in the TAP program. Higher demands placed on LVERs to deliver TAP modules, in addition to their normal employment assistance programs, has the potential for weakening their overall capability.

To ensure that all veterans, both transitioning and those looking for employment assistance well past their discharge, receive the best care, the DOL-VETS program must be adequately funded. However, we feel that the current funding levels are inadequate.

More services and programs are needed and yet since 2002 the VETS program has only received a modest 4 percent increase. Transition assistance, education, and employment are each a pillar of financial stability. They will prevent homelessness, afford the veteran to compete in the private sector, and allow our nation's veterans to contribute their military skills and education to the civilian sector.

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. The necessity and severity of the situation is now.

The American Legion recommends \$404.2 million to DOL-VETS for FY 2011.

Military Transition Program

The American Legion supports the new legislation, H.R. 929 that will authorize \$10 million for per year through FY 2016 to fund the Service Members' Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA). SMOCTA is a training program developed in the early 1990's for those leaving military service with few or no job skills transferable to the civilian market place. SMOCTA has been changed to the Military Transition Program, but the language and intent of the program still applies.

If enacted, the Military Transition Program would be the only Federal job training program available strictly for veterans and the only Federal job training program specifically designed and available for use by state veterans' employment personnel to assist veterans with barriers to employment.

Veterans eligible for assistance under this program are those with a primary or secondary military occupational specialty that DOD has determined is not readily transferable to the civilian workforce or those veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 30 per cent or higher. The Military Transition Program is a unique job training program because there is a job waiting for the newly trained veteran upon completion of training so that they can continue to contribute to the economic well being of the nation.

In March 1993, DOD, VA, and DOL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which defined their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SMOCTA and DOD provided funding for SMOCTA. The VA and DOL were responsible for administering the program. Many LVERs and DVOPs publicly praised the effectiveness of this program because it successfully returned veterans to the civilian workforce.

The American Legion recommends reauthorization of SMOCTA (now Military Transition Program) and \$10 million per year through FY 2016 for the program.

Employment

DVOPs provide outreach services and intensive employment services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans, with priority to disabled veterans and special emphasis placed on those veterans most in need. LVERs conduct outreach to local employers to develop employment opportunities for veterans, and facilitate employment, training and placement services to veterans. In particular, many LVERs are the facilitators for the Transition Assistance Program employment workshops.

There are inadequate appropriations to several states because of policies and practices that cause these states to receive fewer positions and/or less funding. This procedure caused a deterioration of the available services provided to veterans in those states, and adversely impacts the level of services provided.

Homelessness (DOL-VETS)

The American Legion notes that there are approximately 107,000 homeless veterans on the street each night. This number, compounded with 160,000 service members entering the private sector each year with at least a third of them potentially suffering from mental illness, requires that intensive and numerous programs to prevent and assist homeless veterans are available.

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is a competitive grant program. Grants are awarded to states or other public entities and non-profits, including faith-based organizations, to operate employment programs that reach out to homeless veterans and help them become gainfully employed. The purpose of the HVRP is to provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing veterans. HVRP is the only nationwide program focused on assisting homeless veterans to reintegrate into the workforce.

The American Legion recommends \$50 million for this highly successful grant program in FY 2011.

Training

The National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute (NVTI) was established to ensure a high level of proficiency and training for staff that provide veterans' employment services.

NVTI provides training to Federal and state government employment service providers in competency based training courses. Current law requires all DVOPs and LVERs to be trained within 3 years of hiring. We believe that these personnel should be trained within 1 year.

The American Legion recommends \$6 million of funding for NVTI in FY 2011.

Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP)

VWIP grants support efforts to ensure veterans' lifelong learning and skills development in programs designed to serve the most-at-risk veterans, especially those with service-connected disabilities, those with significant barriers to employment, and recently separated veterans. The goal is to provide an effective mix of interventions, including training, retraining, and support services, that lead to long term, higher wage and career potential jobs.

The American Legion recommends funding of \$20 million for VWIP in FY 2011.

Veterans' Preference

The American Legion is deeply concerned with the protection of the veteran and the prevention of illegal hiring practices. Currently, veterans are filing claims after the non-compliance employment event occurred and may become financially disadvantaged while waiting of results of the claim. Proactive measures and continuous oversight must be exercised to protect veterans from unfair hiring practices, not just reactionary investigations.

The following steps taken by the Federal government to protect veterans' employment and demonstrates reactionary measures to assist veterans which may take months to resolve. Many veterans give up or do not file complaints because they must seek employment elsewhere or face serious financial difficulties.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers entitlement to *veterans' preference* in employment. DOL, through VETS, provides assistance to all persons having claims under USERRA. DOL is the enforcement authority for USERRA, and it processes all formal complaints of violations of the law. The veteran may then request that the Department of Justice (DOJ) litigate on their behalf but only after a certain period has passed.

Veterans' Preference is authorized by the Veterans' Preference Act (VPA) of 1944; it only applies to Federal government employment. It provides that most veterans are to receive an extra five points (ten points for disabled veterans) in receiving and keeping Federal jobs. The Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) of 1998 extended certain rights and remedies to recently separated veterans. VETS was given the responsibility to investigate complaints filed by veterans who believe their veterans' preference rights have been violated and to conduct an extensive compliance assistance program.

Veterans Preference is being ignored by numerous agencies. Figures show a decline in claims by newer veterans compared to Gulf War I. In reality employment opportunities are not being broadcast. Federal agencies as well as subcontractors are required by law to notify OPM of job opportunities but these vacancies are rarely made available to the public.

The American Legion reiterates its position that protection of veterans' employment rights should be proactive and continuous oversight must be emplaced to protect veterans from unfair hiring practices. Reactionary investigations and lawsuits are not sufficient. We further believe that the veteran must be protected at the onset of the hiring process, corrective actions to remedy the veteran's situation in the veteran's favor are not guaranteed. We recommend that DOJ provide a detailed description of their veterans' employment activities.

A grateful nation created veterans' preference to ensure fair treatment for those citizens who served this country in the Armed Forces. Veterans' preference should play a large role in employing veterans and their spouses. Federal agencies need to make sure that their Human Resource personnel are properly trained to effectively implement veterans' preference. The Federal government has scores of employment opportunities that educated, well-trained, and motivated veterans can fill given a fair and equitable chance to compete. Working together, all Federal agencies should identify those vocational fields, especially those with high turnover rates, for transitioning veterans who are trying to continue their service within the Federal government.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)

For almost 70 years, Federal law has accorded the right to reemployment to those who have left civilian jobs for voluntary or involuntary service in the uniformed services. In 1940, Congress enacted the Selective Training and Service Act (STSA), which provided for drafting millions of young men for World War II. A provision in the STSA gave those drafted the right to reemployment in their civilian jobs. A year later, as part of the Service Extension Act, Congress expanded the reemployment provision to make it apply to voluntary enlistees as well as draftees. In 1994, Congress enacted USERRA, a long-overdue rewrite of the reemployment statute. USERRA is codified in title 38, United States Code, sections 4301-4335 (38 U.S.C. 4301-4335).

The reemployment statute applies to essentially all employers in this country, including the Federal government, state and local governments, and private employers, regardless of size. This law applies to persons who leave civilian jobs to serve in the regular military, as well as the National Guard and Reserve. To have the right to reemployment under USERRA, an individual must meet five simple conditions:

- Must have left a position of employment for the purpose of performing service in the uniformed services. A period of service can be anything from five hours to five years, and in some cases longer.
- Must have given the employer prior oral or written notice.
- The individual's cumulative period or periods of uniformed service, relating to the employer relationship for which the person seeks reemployment, must not have exceeded five years. All involuntary service and some voluntary service are excluded from the computation of the five-year limit.
- Must have been released from the period of service without having received a punitive or other-than-honorable discharge.
- Must have made a timely application for reemployment with the pre-service employer after release from the period of service.

If the individual meets these conditions, the employer has the legal obligation to reemploy the individual in the position of employment that he or she would have attained if he or she had remained continuously employed, or in another position for which the individual is qualified that is of like seniority, status, and pay. The fact that the job is filled is not a defense to the employer's obligation to reemploy. In some cases, it is necessary for the employer to displace another employee to make room for the returning veteran. The reemployed veteran must be treated *as if he or she had been continuously employed* by the civilian employer, during the time the individual was away from work for service, for seniority and pension purposes. Section 4311 of USERRA makes it unlawful for an employer to deny an individual initial employment, retention in employment, promotion, or a benefit of employment because of the individual's membership in a uniformed service, application to join a uniformed service, performance of uniformed service, or application or obligation to perform future service.

The American Legion favors vigorous and effective enforcement of USERRA with respect to all employers, and especially with respect to the Federal government. USERRA's very first section expresses the "sense of Congress that the Federal Government should be a model employer in carrying out the provisions of this chapter." 38 U.S.C. 4301(b). Congress needs to provide adequate funding for ESGR, DOL-VETS, DOJ, and OSC, with respect to USERRA enforcement.

The American Legion recommends funding of \$61 million for Program Management that encompasses USERRA and VEOA in FY 2011.

Home Loan Guaranty Program

VA's Home Loan Guaranty program has been in effect since 1944 and has afforded approximately 18.6 million veterans the opportunity to purchase homes. The Home Loan programs offer veterans a centralized, affordable and accessible method of purchasing homes in return for their service to this nation. The program has been so successful over past years that not only has the program paid for itself, but has also shown a profit in recent years. Administrative costs constitute a relatively small portion—less than 10 percent—of the total capital and operating costs. The predominant costs are claims costs and other costs associated with foreclosure and alternatives taken to avoid foreclosure. Each claim costs the Federal government about \$20,000. However, revenues that VA collects from different sources, including the funding fee that borrowers pay, property sales, and proceeds from acquired loans and vendee loans, offset this cost.

In 1982, PL 97-253 was enacted and imposed a ½ % funding fee (1/2% of the loan amount) on all veterans using the loan program, with the exception of those veterans in receipt of compensation for a service connected disability. This was considered to be a temporary measure to help reduce the national debt. Unfortunately, this fee has become a fixture of the home loan program and, even more unfortunately, it has been raised numerous times by Congress since 1982. Presently, veterans using the program for the first time pay 2.15% of the loan amount and those using it for a second or subsequent time pay 3.3%.

Although veterans are permitted to include the fee in the loan amount, it constitutes an added financial burden. For example, a veteran using the program for the first time obtaining a \$200,000 loan will pay \$4,300. For a second time user the fee on this loan amount would be \$6,600. While this is substantial in and of itself, it is even more significant when you consider the amount of interest the veteran will pay on these amounts as a 30 year mortgage is amortized.

The following persons are exempt from paying the funding fee:

- Veterans receiving VA compensation for service-connected disabilities.
- Veterans who would be entitled to receive compensation for service-connected disabilities if they did not receive retirement pay.
- Surviving spouses of veterans who died in service or from service-connected disabilities (whether or not such surviving spouses are veterans with their own entitlement and whether or not they are using their own entitlement on the loan).

The American Legion strongly urges Congress to consider either eliminating this fee or significantly reducing it. Veterans should not have to make such a significant financial sacrifice in order to use a benefit that they have earned as a result of their service to America.

Specially Adaptive Housing

The American Legion is pleased to support the VA Secretary's efforts to improve the housing arrangements to better suit disabled veterans' needs, with specific emphasis on severe burn injuries, and to accommodate those veterans with severe burns. The

American Legion additionally applauds efforts to assist disabled veterans to receive adaptive equipment for automobiles.

The American Legion conveys that specially adaptive housing should also include those veterans suffering from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and other debilitating injuries. We are also concerned with the ambiguity of the term “severe” in that there are many different levels of injury where a severe injury to one individual may not be as severe to another.

Homeless Veterans

The American Legion supports the efforts of public and private sector agencies and organizations with the resources necessary to aid homeless veterans and their families. The American Legion supports proposals that will provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families.

Homeless veteran programs should be granted full appropriations to provide supportive services such as, but not limited to, outreach, health care, habilitation and rehabilitation, case management, daily living, personal financial planning, transportation, vocational counseling, employment and training, and education.

Veterans need a sustained, coordinated effort that provides: secure housing and nutritious meals; essential physical health care; substance abuse aftercare and mental health counseling; and personal development and empowerment. Veterans also need job assessment, training and placement assistance. The American Legion believes all programs to assist homeless veterans must focus on helping veterans reach their highest level of self-management.

Homeless Veterans Statistics

The FY 2009 Department of Veterans Affairs Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) report estimates that approximately 107,000 veterans are homeless at any point in time. Prior reports state that one out of every three homeless men sleeping in doorways, alleys or boxes in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, veterans represent 23 percent of all homeless people in America.

In addition to the complex set of factors affecting all homelessness (the extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income, and access to health care), a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and a lack of family and social support networks. Many times these veterans have mental health disorders related to their honorable service to their country, and are unable to compensate for their condition. They unfortunately deteriorate to unrecognizable individuals compared to their pre-military experience.

Potential homeless veterans of Operation Iraq Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF)

Some OIF/OEF veterans are at high risk of becoming homeless. Combat veterans of OIF/OEF and the Global War on Terror who need help – from mental health programs to housing, employment training and job placement assistance – are beginning to trickle into the nation's community-based homeless veterans' service organizations. Already stressed by an increasing need for assistance by post-Vietnam Era veterans and strained budgets, homeless services providers are deeply concerned about the inevitable rising tide of combat veterans who will soon be requesting their support.

Since 9/11, nearly 2 million American men and women have served or are serving in a war zone. Rotations of troops returning home from Iraq are now a common occurrence. Military analysts and government sources say the deployments and repatriation of combat veterans is unlike anything the nation has experienced since the end of the Vietnam War.

VA reports that nearly 65 percent of these homeless veterans experienced combat. Now receiving combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan daily, the VA is reporting that a high percentage of those casualties need treatment for mental health problems. That is consistent with studies conducted by VA and other agencies that conclude anywhere from 15 to more than 35 percent of combat veterans will experience some clinical issues related to PTSD, depression or other psychosocial problems.

Homeless Women Veterans and Children

Homeless veterans' service providers' clients have historically been almost exclusively male. That is changing as more women veterans and women veterans with young children have sought help. Additionally, the approximately 200,000 female Iraq veterans are isolated during and after deployment making it difficult to find gender-specific peer-based support. Reports show that one of every ten homeless veterans under the age of 45 is now a woman. Access to gender-appropriate care for these veterans is essential.

More women are engaging in combat roles in Iraq where there are no traditional front lines. In the past 10 years, the number of homeless women veteran has tripled. In 2002, the VA began a study of women and PTSD. The study includes subjects whose PTSD resulted from stressors that were both military and non-military in nature. Preliminary research shows that women currently serving have much higher exposure to traumatic experiences, rape and assault prior to joining the military. Other reports show extremely high rates of sexual trauma while women are in the service (20-40 percent). Repeated exposure to traumatic stressors increases the likelihood of PTSD. Researchers also suspect that many women join the military, at least in part, to get away from abusive environments. Like the young veterans, these women may have no safe supportive environment to return to, adding yet more risk of homeless outcomes.

CHALENG sites continue to report increases in the number of homeless veterans with families (i.e., dependent children) being served at their programs. It reports that 140 sites (100 percent of all sites) reported a total of 2,368 homeless veteran families seen. This was an 85 percent increase over the previous year's 1,282 homeless veteran families. (FY 2009 VA CHALENG report)

Homeless veteran service providers recognize that they will have to accommodate the needs of the changing homeless veteran population, including increasing numbers of women and veterans with dependents. Access to family housing through the distribution of the thousands of new Section 8 vouchers that will be made available through the HUD-VASH program will offer an important new resource allowing VA staff to assist the veteran and her family. Consequently, The American Legion supports funding for more vouchers so homeless veterans can re-establish their lives and productivity through supportive services in safe and affordable housing.

The American Legion supports the creation of a fund/grant that would assist homeless veterans with security deposits and other essential needs/expenses that occur when moving into housing. The American Legion has also recognized a need for housing specialists to assist those homeless veterans who receive a HUD-VASH voucher with

finding housing as well as being a liaison between the housing authorities and property owners.

Furthermore, The American Legion recommends: more collaboration and civic engagement; access to stable and affordable housing; and economic security to prevent and end homelessness. The American Legion understands that veterans need a sustained coordinated effort that provides secure housing, nutritious meals, essential physical health care, substance abuse aftercare and mental health counseling, as well as personal development and empowerment. Veterans also need job assessment, training and placement assistance. The American Legion believes all programs to assist homeless veterans must focus on helping veterans reach their highest level of self-management.

Finally, The American Legion supports the VA's Five-Year Plan to assist homeless veterans in retaining or acquiring: safe housing; needed treatment services; opportunities to retain or return to employment; and benefits assistance. We also applaud Congress for passing the VA appropriations bill, which contains \$4.2 billion for homeless veterans, including \$151 for HUD-VASH, \$218 for the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program and program liaisons and \$51 million for supportive services for low-income veterans and families. This is a substantial step in the right direction for the health and reintegration of America's homeless veteran community.

FINANCE COMMISSION

Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana, National Treasurer

Shawn T. Long, CPA, Indiana, 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, Director of finance and NEC liaison observers.

The national organization had an operating surplus of \$5,558,591 for 2009. In that year, we received \$13.50 dues per member, allocating \$10.50 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 also directed to the Reports of Committees and Trusts, which can be found in this publication.

Entities include The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.; The American Legion Endowment Fund Corp.; The American Legion Life Insurance and Trust Committee; The American Legion Emblem Committee; and The American Legion Overseas Graves Decoration Trust.

Emblem Sales Committee
Alvan T. Fuller, Massachusetts, Chairman
Richard B. Keith, 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 2009 and for the first three months of 2010.

January 1 to December 31, 2009
(12 months)

<i>Gross Sales</i>	<i>\$11,031,734</i>
<i>Cost of Goods Sold</i>	<i>5,920,795</i>
<i>Overhead</i>	<i>3,433,639</i>
<i>Operating Profit</i>	<i>1,677,300</i>
<i>Total number of 2009 orders processed was</i>	<i>103,111</i>

January 1 to March 31, 2010
(3 months)

<i>Gross Sales</i>	<i>\$ 2,290,038</i>
<i>Cost of Goods Sold</i>	<i>1,222,059</i>
<i>Overhead</i>	<i>792,609</i>
<i>Operating Profit</i>	<i>275,370</i>
<i>Total orders processed for first 3 months of 2010 was</i>	<i>20,808</i>

The American Legion Insurance Committee
Kevin J. Bartlett, Michigan, Chairman
Marianne Bergamo, Deputy Director- Insurance/ Corporate Relations

The American Legion Insurance Committee provides oversight for the several insurance plans previously 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 2010.

American Legion Baseball \$553,190; National Oratorical Contest \$314,729; Junior; Boy's Nation \$195,410; 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.

Birthday Life- Whole Life Insurance

The Birthday Life whole life plan is **currently unavailable** for new coverage. Union Fidelity has terminated their agreement with The American Legion effective December 31, 2005. All current policyholders will still receive the service they have become accustomed to from Union Fidelity Life Insurance Company.

Requests for Birthday Life information for policyholders should be directed to the Administrator, Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., 500 Virginia Dr., Fort Washington, PA 19034; 1-800-621-0393.

Guaranteed Issue Senior Whole Life Insurance

For quotes and other information on this plan for ages 45-85, please contact Mutual of Omaha at 1-800-780-0319.

(Insurance plans may not be available in all states.)

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Doc Simon, Vermont, Chairman

Philip D. Riley, Virginia, Director

The following annual report covers the activities of The American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission and Foreign Relations Council for the 2009-2010 program year ending June 30, 2010.

Overview

The Foreign Relations Commission is guided by two principles: communication and advocacy. The first is primarily to relay major foreign policy changes and international issues affecting the United States to the members and leadership of The American Legion. The second is to advocate the adopted resolutions and positions of the membership to the Congress and Federal Agencies in an effort to enact or promote those policies and programs supported by The American Legion. The Commission also serves as a voice of opposition to policies contrary to The Legion's principles.

The Commission conducts meetings and programs throughout the year to keep the membership fully informed on current foreign policy issues. In addition, the Commission through its guest speaker program encourages debate and discussion on key foreign relations topics with government representatives and policy experts and our grassroots membership. The Commission strives throughout the year to provide diverse and challenging speakers from Ambassadors and policy analysts to Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives and directors. These speakers provide critical information and generate stimulating discussions that are invaluable in keeping our membership informed. These discussions are vital to the direction and development of the foreign relations policies of The American Legion.

The Commission also works to influence the Administration and Congress and encourages the bipartisan development of foreign policies, which are consistent with the principles contained in our entire portfolio of dynamic resolutions. The American Legion works with Congressional Committees, members and staff along with Department of

State agencies throughout the year to generate and advance legislation and policies that are in agreement with the established resolutions adopted by the membership.

Mr. Tim Tetz was named Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission in February 2010 and served in that position until May 2010. Subsequently, Mr. Tetz has accepted the position of Director, Legislative Division at The American Legion's Washington, D.C. Headquarters. Due to Mr. Tetz's new role, Doc Simon of Vermont has been named Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions

The 91st National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky was conducted during a non-renewal year for established resolutions. The American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission meticulously reviewed over 13 newly proposed and established resolutions addressing foreign affairs. With the Convention's approval of the accepted resolutions, The American Legion reconfirmed its steadfast resolve for the full accounting of POWs and MIAs; support for human rights and freedom; secure domestic borders; the promotion of peace; and caring for veterans and their families who live abroad. The Foreign Relations Commission has throughout the year worked diligently to implement resolutions that speak to key foreign relation's issues concerning America's national interests.

This year's Major Issues and Highlights:

Resolution No. 33: Support Secure Borders and War Against Drugs

This resolution supports the President's and Congress's efforts to provide assistance and aid to the Canadian and Mexican governments to secure the borders separating the United States, Canada, and Mexico from trafficking illegal drugs across those borders.

Resolution No. 33: POW/MIA Flag Flying

This resolution requires The American Legion to fly the POW/MIA Flag below the American Flag at all National Conventions whenever possible.

Resolution No. 120: "Smart Power" Support

This resolution urges the President and Congress to continue a strategy that combines military and economic power with foreign aid and human rights promotion.

Resolution No. 121: Expand Foreign Service Officer Corps

This resolution urges the President, Congress, and the Department of State to significantly increase the number of Foreign Service Officers in its ranks and implement a recruiting policy of veterans' preference.

NEC Resolutions

In addition, The American Legion National Executive Committee (NEC) approved a revised version of The American Legion's Policy on the United Nations during the Fall NEC meeting and established a resolution on The American Legion's Policy on Veterans Mail at Overseas Embassies during the Spring NEC meeting. Respectively, they are as follows:

Resolution No. 29 (Fall NEC 2009): The American Legion's Policy on the United Nations

This resolution urges the Congress to use American leverage to encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner; encourages the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs;

encourages the United Nations to recalculate the assessment of nations' funding obligations to be based on the Gross National Product (GNP) of each country with no 'low capita income' factor to distort the proportion of such obligations; and in the absence of such reform of the funding formula, then and only then encourages the United Nations to adopt a weighted voting strength based on the funds contributed by each member nation.

Resolution No. 23 (Spring NEC 2010): Policy On Veterans Mail At Overseas Embassies

This resolution urges Congress to change any applicable law that precludes the Department of Defense from being able to fund ICASS (International Cooperative Administrative Support Services) for the purpose of restoring mail benefits and privileges to military retirees, veterans, along with their dependents, and government employees at all U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions abroad.

Meetings of the Commission

The Foreign Relations Commission met in general sessions over the course of the year on October 12th through 14th, 2009 during the Fall NEC meeting at the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, IN; on February 28th through March 3rd 2010 during the 50th Annual Washington Conference at the Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.; and on May 5th through 6th, 2010 during the Spring NEC meeting also convened at the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. The following is a summary of those sessions:

Fall NEC 2009 Meeting

An executive session of the Foreign Relations Commission met on Monday, October 12, 2009, in the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel, 31 West, Ohio Street, Indianapolis, to address its agenda slated for its session in preparation for the 2009 Fall National Executive Committee Meeting. The Commission was honored to have Past National Commander John Brieden participate in the proceeding.

The meeting was organized in three sections: 1) A review of The American Legion's United Nations Policy identified as 2009 National Convention Resolution No. 119 as referred by the Foreign Relations Convention Committee for further study; 2) A commission review of 17 resolutions without legislative intent, which are dated from years 1977 through 1994—in the interest of bringing a number of these currently valid and relevant positions up to date as required; and 3) A Power Point presentation and discussion on U.S. Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Aid led by Joseph Grassi, Assistant Director, National Security / Foreign Relations Division.

In terms of the commission's sole resolution business for the day, The Legion's United Nations Policy was referred to the Foreign Relations Commission on the basis of whether or not resolved clauses Nos. 2, 3, and 4 are congruent with U.S. National interests and if it correctly articulates The American Legion's desired position. The Foreign Relations Convention Committee communicated concern over these clauses due to some conflicting language discovered during the 2009 National Convention. Mr. Todd White of Wyoming presented research on the topic along with the national staff. PNC Brieden greatly contributed to the discussion and the commission proceeded to deliberate

the issue. The resolution was approved as amended in accordance with the unanimous consensus of the commission.

The commission review of current resolutions without legislative intent included the following issues: Rhodesia, Chapin Foundation Gift, Western Hemisphere Task Force, Opposition of the Sale of Technology for Weapons, Department POW/MIA Committees, POW/MIA Empty Chair Policy, Military Initiatives to Protect U.S. Interests, Voice of America Award, Pearl Harbor 50th Anniversary, Removal of Saddam Hussein, Liberation of Kuwait, America's Future, Control of Military Technology, Japanese Compensation to U.S. POWs of World War II, Support for Viet Nam Assistance for the Handicapped; POW/MIA Flag Flying, and POW/MIA Memorial Highways. In his research, Mr. Grassi came across three resolutions with legislative intent addressing free trade with Canada (1992); free trade with Mexico (1992); and the Iranian Crisis (1980) and brought these topics to the attention of the commission. The commission members agreed that these resolutions deserved to be reviewed and potentially need to be improved, renewed and made current and valid again in the near future.

The meeting continued with Mr. Grassi's presentation covering a wide-range of topics such as the FY 2010 Federal Budget for the U.S. State Department and International Aid and Programs; North Korea; China; Iran; Afghanistan; NATO; Pakistan; Iraq; Mexico; along with important updates on the POW/MIA mission. The meeting concluded with a discussion surrounding the presentation and other issues such as State Department involvement in international environmental policy and a potential one-on-one meeting between the National Commander and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton early next year. PNC Brieden expressed that Secretary Clinton should be reminded of The Legion's support of some of her initiatives during the time she served as Senator as she considers the scheduling of this meeting. The request for this meeting has been made by national staff to the State Department. Also, the history of The Legion's support will be communicated by the national staff to the State Department's Public Affairs Office and appropriate liaison.

On Tuesday, October 13, 2009, the National Security and Foreign Relations Call-Ins and Commission members toured the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center and Camp Atterbury at the invitation of Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Commander, Joint Forces Headquarters. The tour included a briefing on the operations conducted at these critical training areas. These installations provide urban warfare and maneuver training to U.S. Army personnel for the Global War on Terror along with training for the FBI and SWAT Teams. This field trip provided the participating Legionnaires with a unique first-hand view and briefing on two of the most interesting warfare and security training facilities in the United States.

Washington Conference 2010

The Foreign Relations Commission met in a joint session along with the National Security Commission on March 1st and convened for its business session on March 2nd during the 50th annual Washington Conference at the Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C. The following is a summary of those sessions:

The Foreign Relations Commission, met in a joint session with the National Security Commission and both groups were addressed by four speakers: Vikram Singh, U.S. Department of State, Senior Defense Advisor, Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; Major General Reuben Jones, Director of Family and

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, U.S. Army; Dr. Robert Zubrin, author of *Energy Victory*; and George Clark, President of Save the Montagnard People, Inc. (STMP).

Mr. Singh began the session by delving into present diplomatic strategies involving Afghanistan and Pakistan. He explained how current fissures in the relationships between the Taliban and al Qaeda and the indigenous people of the region need to be exposed to pave the way for success. He reported that the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) has the will to fight terrorist extremists but lacks the capacity; therefore the U.S. must not prematurely abandon them. Mr. Singh also discussed the first real manifestation of President Obama's war strategy in connection with his decision to increase troops in the region and the recent successful battle for Marjah in southern Afghanistan led by the U.S. Marine Corps.

He explained how the ANA is partnering with U.S. and NATO forces by providing 40% of the troops in the ongoing battles against the enemy. Mr. Singh said that USAID Teams and State Department Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have been increased and are operating shoulder to shoulder with the military operations. These teams are working hard to establish schools and improved agriculture. He continued by giving insight into the delicate political situation in Pakistan by saying that Pakistan recognizes that it faces the same existential threat from the same enemies as the United States.

He conveyed that the Pakistan Security Forces are improving their cooperation with the United States and their anti-terrorist operations. For this reason, he said, the U.S. will continue to provide substantial military and humanitarian assistance. Before we can draw our forces down in July 2011, he said, the U.S. needs to be confident that both Afghanistan and Pakistan can be supportive of U.S. Security interests.

Major General Jones gave a very comprehensive presentation covering the Army Family Covenant (AFC); Army Family Covenant – Family Programs and Services; Army OneSource (AOS); Army Family Covenant – Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS); Operation: Military Kids (OMK); Army Family Covenant – Soldier and Community Recreation Programs; Warrior Adventure Quest (WAQ); Gifts and Donations; Commercial Sponsorship and Advertising; How the American Legion Can Help Soldiers and Families; and Social Media. Major General Jones also used this opportunity to thank The American Legion for the many ways it is supporting the armed forces with such efforts such as Army Community Covenant; temporary financial support for Soldiers and Families; sponsoring numerous events to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project, Operation Comfort Warriors and the Heroes to Hometowns Program; along with scholarships for Operation Purple Camps; volunteering and sponsoring Yellow Ribbon events; as well as frequently providing transportation to soldiers and their families.

Dr. Zubrin took the stage and proceeded to give an intense presentation, outlining the absolute need for the United States to move from fossil fuel to biomass fuel. He showed the audience that since 2008, we now spend more money on imported oil than the U.S. spends on defense, citing \$600 billion is 120% of the federal defense budget. He said that Saudi Arabia is by far the largest recipient of international oil revenues – as large as the next four OPEC members combined. He continued by saying the Saudis have used this money to finance a worldwide network of institutions to spread Wahhabism – a violently intolerant version of Islam that requires death or enslavement of Christians, Jews, Hindus, Taoists, Buddhists, Pagans, and Atheists. Dr. Zubrin explained that in 1973, the US was 30% dependent on foreign oil, and the Arab embargo sent our

economy into chaos, and today, we are 60% dependent, so the effects of an embargo would be much worse.

Dr. Zubrin reported that in 2008, OPEC cleared \$1.5 trillion in net export profits and that the total worth of the US Fortune 500 is \$18 trillion. At such rates, he said, OPEC will have enough funds to buy majority control in every company in the Fortune 500 within 6 years and that the Saudis have launched a \$900 billion Sovereign Wealth Fund to do such takeovers. Dr. Zubrin said we need to achieve one simple goal to avoid this fate: The Congress should pass a law requiring that all new cars sold in the USA be Flex Fueled. He explained that a Flex Fuel mandate would create a huge advanced-sector market for Third World agricultural production; trade barriers would come down; tropical agricultural countries would be able to secure income for development; manufacturing countries would obtain expanded Third World markets; the oil cartel's vertical monopoly on the world's fuel supply would be broken; terrorist funding would be curtailed; threat of superpower confrontation over Mideast would be halted; and pollution would be reduced.

Rounding out the program, Mr. Clark made a powerful presentation on behalf of the millions of Montagnard people who have been and are currently being illegally imprisoned, denied human rights, raped, tortured, and slaughtered by the Vietnamese government as retribution for the Montagnards' alliance with U.S. Forces during the Vietnam War. Mr. Clark appealed to everyone in attendance to support the Congressional Bill HR 1969 and Senate Bill S 1159. If made into law, these bills would prohibit the federal government from providing the government of Vietnam with non-humanitarian development, trade, economic, and security assistance during any fiscal year that exceeds the amount of the assistance provided in 2009, unless those increases are matched or exceeded by funding for programs focusing on human rights and the promotion of democracy. Also, these bills would make it U.S. policy to overcome jamming of Radio Free Asia by Vietnam and to offer refugee resettlement to Vietnam nationals including the Montagnards who were/are eligible for the Humanitarian Resettlement program and the Orderly Departure Program and associated programs. Mr. Clark said that it is a moral imperative for the U.S. to stop abandoning this group who proved to be amongst the most loyal U.S. allies in history.

Washington Conference 2010 POW/MIA UPDATE

The expert panel on the POW/MIA issues was comprised of Bob Newberry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Affairs (DPM) and Ann Mills Griffiths, Executive Director, National League of POW/MIA Families. The discussion revolved around the construction of a new \$100 million headquarters and lab for identification. Construction is expected to begin in fiscal 2011 at Hickam Air Force Base as the nation steps up efforts to speed the recovery and return of remains to families. Congress recently mandated that by 2015, the U. S. military make 200 identifications a year—more than twice the annual rate now. The 400-member Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) at Hickam has responsibility for investigating, recovering and identifying American dead from the nation's past wars. That personnel total is expected to grow with more search/recovery missions being organized in connection with the new identification requirement. In fiscal 2009, 69 missions were conducted and 95 identifications were made. Defense officials also are looking into the possibility of creating a satellite forensic identification laboratory on the Mainland—where it may be easier to attract anthropologists and where it could be more efficiently

closer to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, a key link in the identification process. A total of 74,213 U.S. service members remain missing from World War II, with 19,000 deemed recoverable. There are also 127 missing from the Cold War, 8,034 from the Korean War, and 1,723 from the Vietnam War, 2 from the Persian Gulf War and 2 from Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom at the time of this report. Lab space to lay out and examine remains has been growing at JPAC. The approximately 22-table lab space at Hickam doubled with a \$680,000 addition, and tripled with the opening of a second lab in Building 220 at Pearl Harbor; recently renovated for \$1.2 million.

Washington Conference 2010 Business Meeting

Newly named Foreign Relations Commission Chairman Tim Tetz organized the business session in two sections: 1) A partial commission assessment of 30 out of 52 resolutions with legislative intent in the interest of a review for the experienced commission and council members as well as the activity of bringing new commission and council members up to speed; and 2) A Power Point presentation and discussion on U.S. Federal Budget and U.S. Foreign Aid led by Joseph Grassi, Assistant Director, National Security / Foreign Relations Division.

The partial review of current resolutions with legislative intent included the following resolutions: Smart Power Support; Expand Foreign Service Officer Corps; Taiwan Straights Dialogue; Support New JPAC Headquarters Facility; Support for Increased Personnel and Funding for JPAC and DPMO; Navy Construction Project for POW/MIA; Secure Borders and War Against Drugs; POW/MIA Flag Flying; Support Environmental Treaty; Central America's Democracy Promotion; Unilateral Action for Vietnam POW/MIA; Use of Navy Vessel for Underwater Accounting; Renew Korean War POW/MIA Discussions; Republic of China; Middle East / Gulf States Foreign Policies; Policy on Africa; Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC); US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs; United Nations Policy; Policy Regarding Support of Republic of Korea; Vietnam Underwater Recovery Policy; Vietnam POW/MIA Policy Objectives; Vietnam Human Rights; Taiwan Defense Arms Sales; POW/MIA Policies; Support for Foreign Exchange Student Education Programs; Global Trade Policies; and The American Legion Foreign Policy Objectives.

Mr. Grassi proceeded by giving a presentation encompassing the FY 2010 Foreign Relations Appropriations and FY 2011 Budget Recommendations. The presentation included the following figures: President Obama's 2010 Recommendation: \$51.7 billion; FY 2010 Enacted (December 2009): \$48.9 Billion; FY 2009 Enacted (December 2008): \$49.9 Billion – Overall Breakdown: State & International = 1.46% of the Federal Budget; Social Security = 20% of the Federal Budget; Department of Defense = 20%; Medicare and Medicaid = 20%; Unemployment and Welfare = 16%; 2010 Foreign Relations and International-Aid Breakdown: \$8.2 Billion for Diplomatic Operations and Increase Foreign Officer Personnel; complies with Res. 121 (2009); \$1.39 Billion for Operating Expenses for USAID; complies with Res. 170 (2008); \$4.5 Billion For "Frontline States", Afghanistan: Increase Foreign Officer initiatives, Assistance to Pakistan, Assistance to Iraq, Middle East Security Assistance: Israel: \$2.2 Billion; Egypt: \$1.5 Billion; Jordan: \$534 Million; Western Hemisphere Security Assistance: Mexico: \$232 Million; Central America: \$83 Million; Caribbean: \$37 Million; Columbia: \$522 Million U.S. Humanitarian Assistance - USAID Global Health and Child Survival: \$10.3 Billion; Global HIV/AIDS, TB, & Malaria Fund: \$5.7 Billion; Global Health and Child Survival:

\$7.8 Billion; UN Peacekeeping Missions: \$2.1 Billion; FY 2011 Budget Recommendations: President Obama's: \$56.8 Billion: The American Legion's: \$52 Billion - Difference: 7%; The American Legion breakdown - \$52 Billion = State Ops \$27.5 Billion and Global Assistance \$24.5

Mr. Grassi concluded the meeting by discussing an upcoming meeting between The American Legion's Foreign Relations staff and the White House scheduled for March 11, 2010 involving the issue of renewing direct bilateral humanitarian talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) for the sole purpose of restoring the processes required to account for unreturned Korean War Veterans.

Spring NEC 2010 Meeting

An executive session of the Foreign Relations Commission met on May 3, 2010 in the Circle Suite of the Sheraton Hotel to discuss current foreign policy issues pertaining to the vital interests of the United States and to review four resolutions before the commission.

Tim Tetz, Chairman, Foreign Relations opened the business session and welcomed National Commander Clarence E. Hill to the meeting. The commission was honored by the visit of National Commander Hill. The National Commander complimented the Foreign Relations Commission on its accomplishments, and gave gifts in appreciation to Chairman Tetz and Joseph Grassi, Assistant Director, National Security/Foreign Relations Division. National Commander Hill concluded his remarks by encouraging the commission to keep up the good work.

The commission proceeded by evaluating the following four resolutions: 1) Save the Montagnards; 2) The American Legion's Policy On Veterans Mail at Overseas Embassies; 3) The American Legion Flex Fuel Resolution; and 4) Urge JPAC to Utilize the Knowledge of World War II Veterans In Accounting Activities resolution (Register Resolution Number 2640).

After the commission conducted a thorough analysis of each proposed resolution and engaged in lively discussions on the issues at hand, the commission reached a consensus and made unanimous recommendations to the National Executive Committee (NEC) to approve three of the four aforementioned resolutions with the exception of the resolution entitled Urge JPAC to Utilize the Knowledge of World War II Veterans in Accounting Activities.

The commission's recommendation on this particular JPAC-related resolution was to hold it to for further study. This recommendation was made on the basis that the underlying principle of the proposed resolution has already been made into law by Congress with the passage of H.R. 2647; Subtitle E; Section 544.

The business meeting also included a foreign relations report by Mr. Grassi. His presentation began with a side by side comparison of the current administration's and the previous administration's Nuclear Posture Review for the purpose of providing necessary background information on the next topic of his presentation: The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (also known as New START) which was signed by President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on April 8, 2010. Mr. Grassi gave an in-depth look into the history of nuclear disarmament treaties between the U.S. and the countries of the former Soviet Union, the New START and the accompanying New Start Protocol to include verification measures contained in the treaty. The treaty had not been ratified by the Senate as of yet.

On a completely different subject, Mr. Grassi also recounted the recent history leading up to the government's policy reversal that subsequently stripped mail privileges from approximately 4,800 military retirees and their family members. For about two years, the State Department and Pentagon have been working to shift mail delivery to State Department facilities overseas from the traditional APO/FPO addresses to a new designation to be known as DPO, for Diplomatic Post Offices. Under the original system, the Defense Department would cover the cost of getting APO/FPO mail from the U.S. port of embarkation to overseas locations, which is the most expensive part of the process. As of January 1, 2010 the Department of State has said it cannot be responsible for the costs of mail going to military retirees at embassies and consulates. Although no firm cost estimates are available, the costs are reported as being considerable.

This discontinuation of mail service for military retirees will adversely impact many aspects of their personal lives, as well as their contact with Federal, state and local government agencies. Most importantly, many veterans use this mail service to receive medications, absentee ballots, legal correspondence just to name a few examples of the important matters at stake. The American Legion National Security / Foreign Relations Division has contacted the following government officials and elected officials by phone, e-mail, and regular mail; to include hand-delivered letters signed by National Commander Hill in regards to this issue: Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State; Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense; Patrick Kennedy, Under Secretary of State; Alan Estevez, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense; Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Rep. Howard Berman, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senator John Kerry, Committee on Foreign Relations; Senator Richard Lugar, Committee on Foreign Relations. During the business meeting, the commission expressed its dissatisfaction with the Department of State's convoluted response in its letter dated April 26, 2010.

Mr. Grassi wrapped up his presentation by covering the recent POW/MIA reports that have been made by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and reviewing the appeals being made by the National League of POW/MIA Families.

DPMO reported that Mr. Bob Newberry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, DPMO, concluded his visit to China after presenting several U.S. MIA cases to Chinese officials and thanking them for past cooperation. He also cited progress in archival research through the arrangements signed in 2008 and 2009. As a result of those arrangements, China has already provided documents related to U.S. air losses in China.

In other POW/MIA-related matters, the National League of POW/MIA Families has made a recent appeal to The American Legion to consider a few issues for potential resolutions. Those issues include, expanded accounting efforts; actions needed from Vietnam; and support for a second identification laboratory.

Mr. Grassi's presentation culminated with the naming of recently identified and repatriated Airmen and Soldiers who were designated as Missing in Action (MIA). They are: World War II MIA Lt. Jack Arnett; Lt. Frank Arhar; F.O. Will Simpson, Tech. Sgt. Charles Goulding; Tech Sgt. Robert Stimson; Staff Sgt. Jimmie Doyle; Staff Sgt. Leland Price; and Staff Sgt. Earl E. Yoh Scott; Korean War MIA U.S. Soldier Cpl. Stanley Arendt; and Five Vietnam MIA U.S. Soldiers CW3 Kenneth Stancil; CW2 Jesse Phelps; Spc. 5 Donald Grella; Spc. 4 Thomas Rice; and Maj. Curtis Daniel Miller.

On Tuesday, May 4th, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session. The Foreign Relations Commission was honored by the visit of Fang Wong, Candidate for National Commander and very much appreciated his attendance in the program.

The main focus of the joint session was the increasingly broadened role of military women in combat in today's asymmetrical warfare. In light of this topic, members of both commissions intently watched the independent film entitled "Lioness" which was directed by Meg McLagan and Daria Sommers. The film traces the stories of five female support soldiers who ultimately became the first women in American history to be sent into direct ground combat. The film encompasses first-hand accounts of women in ground combat in Iraq, archival footage, journal entries, and interviews with military commanders. The consensus of the joint session was that the film contained valuable and eye-opening footage.

The National Security and Foreign Relations Division

The National Security and Foreign Relations Division, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is charged with the responsibility of conducting the extensive day to day work of The American Legion in all matters concerning national defense and foreign policy..

The staff of the Division consists of: Philip Riley, Director; Samuel Gilmore, Deputy Director; Joseph Grassi, Assistant Director, and Roshawn Hyde, Executive Secretary to the Director.

During the year, the Division works diligently to fulfill its responsibility in implementing the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs.

The division coordinates the National Commander's itinerary for international tours in the interest of supporting America's troops in person; honoring the legacy of the U.S. Military; and spreading goodwill among foreign leaders and diplomats. These tours cover Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The division also handles special assignments including the facilitation of the American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors Program and the management and organization of the Policy Coordination and Action Group. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, are also duties of the staff. Also, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security and foreign relations arenas. Numerous press interviews, background briefings and public releases are arranged, coordinated, and given in cooperation with the Media Relations Office. Other duties include answering correspondence, e-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, embassies around the world and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, a continuous variety of contacts are made with other military and veterans service organizations throughout Washington, D.C. along with policy think tanks, and commercial and private associations.

Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense and foreign policy matters to members of both commissions and The American Legion leadership at all levels of the organization as well as Congress, the Department of State and the general public.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Larry J. Besson, Illinois, 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 provides guidance and assistance to the national adjutant on necessary administrative operations.

Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline and commemorative activities. The commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities that potentially affect American Legion posts and departments, recommending appropriate courses of action.

The commission has four standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination: Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials; Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws; and Membership & Post Activities. The latter has separate reporting responsibilities to the national convention and the National Executive Committee.

Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the activities of Sons of The American Legion, which is a major program and not a separate organization. The commission also oversees long-term programs and activities such as Paid-Up-For-Life and the National Emergency Fund.

The American Legion Riders is our fastest growing newer program. This is a great venue for us to reach out to veterans who are not yet members of our ranks. The Legion Riders have raised \$1,486,099 over the last four years for the Legacy Scholarship which supports children of military members who have died since September 11, 2001.

The National American Legion College

Each October, The National American Legion College hosts many talented young Legionnaires at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis for a week of intensive training. These students return to their departments with enhanced knowledge and appreciation for The American Legion. They are taught the core values and contributions of the organization and are challenged to think critically and creatively about issues confronting The American Legion.

Candidates for the National American Legion College must be veterans who served during the Lebanon/Grenada era or later with demonstrated potential for higher leadership roles. Student candidates are nominated by the departments and selected by the National Vice Commander Selection Committee. In October 2009, we had 51 students attend the National American Legion College. Graduates are making a difference in leadership roles and membership teams across the country. Many have already been appointed to department and national level positions while others are used in various leadership and teaching roles within their respective departments.

Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion (S.A.L.) conducted its 39th National Convention at the Frontier Airlines Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin in August 2010.

For the 36th consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion are at an “All Time High” in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 2009 with a record 335,848 members. This number represents a 2.5% percent increase over the previous year. A total of 34 Detachments achieved 100% membership.

In August 2010, the S.A.L. membership figures for 2010 surpassed the 2009 final membership by over 2,000 plus members giving them another “All Time High” for membership year 2010.

The S.A.L., as a major program, continues its support of The American Legion programs and is heavily involved with support to our nation’s veterans in the Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS) program. In 2009, the S.A.L. provided over 252,055 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded \$1,245,504, nationwide. Other projects include Americanism programs of which \$1,669,027 was donated along with 549,224 hours of service. This was remarkable considering only than 20% of the Squadron’s submitted reports. The S.A.L. also raised over \$343,977 in the year 2009 for the Child Welfare Foundation surpassing all previous years. The Sons also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons of The American Legion have contributed over four million dollars to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

The Sons continue to support to Legion programs with major emphasis on VAVS, National Emergency Fund, Fisher House, and the Children’s Miracle Network 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 Emergency Fund

From January 1, 2010 through August 1, 2010, \$34,300 in grants were awarded to American Legion family members. During the same period a total of \$126,101 in donations were received. Our total grant monies awarded since the NEF was reinstated in 1989 is almost \$7 million with annual grant average of approximately \$375,000 to our members and American Legion Posts who incur devastation from a declared natural disaster (i.e., wind, rain, fire and earthquakes). The grants are used for immediate needs – lodging, food and clothing – and not as a substitute for insurance.

Our NEF program is unique 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 agencies. With the help of all the American Legion members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the needs of our American Legion family after local, state and national disasters.

Consolidated Post Reports

The Consolidated Post Report – one of The American Legion’s most valuable documents – is our annual report card of the posts located in 14,000 communities across the country. It provides a summary of the collective assistance provided to the nation from our Legion posts. Sixty-one (61) percent of American Legion posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 2008-2009 reporting year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit color guards, firing squads and other uniformed groups was \$2,741,958; Legion Baseball team support cost, \$7,867,016; cash

contributions to VA Voluntary Services, \$2,211,057 with more than 1,004,747 hours of voluntary services provided; 2,080 Boy Scout Units sponsored, with 58,301 Scouts involved at a cost of \$1,746,975; and a total of 29,766 scholarships presented, collectively valued at \$4,246,462.

In addition, 4,714,123 hours were spent performing community service work, valued at \$5,621,728; a total of 83,796 pints of blood were collected and additional millions of dollars in goods and cash were contributed to programs helping veterans and their families. These facts and figures represent just over half of all American Legion Posts.

Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials
Randall W. Busch, Nebraska, Chairman

This committee oversees the awarding of over sixty official national awards and recommends to the National Executive Committee recipients for The American Legion's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Medal. Some of those awarded over the years have been: General John J. Pershing, Ignace Jan Paderewski of Poland, Henry Ford, Ernie Pyle, Bob Hope, Babe Ruth, Dr. Jonas E. Salk, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the dead & missing of the Vietnam War, 10 men who have served as President of The United States, plus many other citizens of renown who have made lasting and significant contributions. The recipient for the 2009 Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) was General David H. Petraeus, then Commander of the United States Central Command. The recipient for the 2010 DSM is the Boy Scouts of America in honor of the service they have provided to this great nation for 100 years.

Resolutions Assignment Committee
C. Wayne Schrader, Illinois, 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, several hundred resolutions will be assigned.

Constitution And By-Laws
Vincent Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a National Convention.

However, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the Constitution and By-Laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the Revocation, Cancellation, or Suspension of Department and Post Charters of The American Legion.

Membership & Post Activities Committee
Dale Barnett, Georgia, Chairman
Billy R. Johnson, Georgia, Membership Director

Membership and programs go hand in hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide people and resources to serve the needs of veterans and their families. Membership & Post Activities is pleased to report a continuing membership of over 2.4 million members worldwide.

Membership

Final 2008 membership	2,591,732
Final 2009 membership	2,352,250
2010 membership as of Aug. 1, 2010 (projected)	2,400,000

47th Annual National Membership Workshop

The 47th Annual National Membership Workshop convened in Indianapolis on August 6-7, 2010, with more than 300 department and district officers from nearly all 52 departments in attendance.

Many who attended already had a good understanding of The American Legion's membership program, especially as it pertains to their departments and districts. But when the workshop concluded, they are prepared to face day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of the Legion as it relates to potential members.

The goal of the workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to serve The American Legion's membership. Whether they are involved in membership recruitment or program implementation, the workshop teaches veterans to help veterans and provide communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

New Post Development/Revitalization

The Membership & Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996 designed to assist posts, districts and departments in developing and revitalizing posts. The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers, along with practical field application.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization and development of more than 1,000 American Legion posts in the past 14 years. Many departments have succeeded in revitalizing posts without any actual assistance from National Headquarters staff. Whether departments requests field assistance or just send members to the training workshop, positive results follow if they adhere to guidelines.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

James E. Koutz, Indiana, Chairman
Tim Tetz, Nevada, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 15, 2009 through August 13, 2010. During this period, the Commission met four (4) times to review the legislative program and to make recommendations to the National Executive Committee. Reports of these meetings are contained in the published proceedings of the National Executive Committee.

Purpose, Personnel And Organization

The National Legislative Commission represents The American Legion before the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters in which The American Legion is officially interested. The Commission also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of 33 members and five (5) National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee in 1975 created the National Legislative Council, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their elected Members of Congress. There is one council member for each Member of Congress. A Council Chairman heads the Council, and is assisted by a Vice Chairman in each Department. The Chairman, Vice Chairman 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; these mandates are expressed in resolutions adopted at the annual National Convention and by the National Executive Committee at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. The Legislative Division is located in Washington, DC and consists of the director, a deputy director, an assistant director/grassroots coordinator, one secretary, a librarian and a research analyst. The director, deputy director and assistant director are registered lobbyists and submit quarterly lobbying reports to Congress. Because The American Legion is a federally chartered organization, an annual report is also prepared and submitted to Congress.

111th Congress, 1st Session

On October 1, 2009 fiscal year (FY) 2010 officially began. Unfortunately, none of the 12 appropriations measures required to fund the operations of the Federal government were passed and signed into law. Many factors could be cited for this failure of Congress to live up to one of its basic constitutional duties. Although the House of Representatives had passed all 12 of the spending bills by July 30, the Senate lagged far behind by passing only six of these measures by late September.

Consequently, on October 1, the President enacted P.L. 111-68, a bill which not only contained funding for the Legislative Branch for FY 2010, but also a *continuing resolution*. This resolution was a short-term spending mechanism that funded the entire Federal government at spending levels equal to FY 2009 for one month, until October 31. Congress worked on passage of the other appropriations bills, but it was necessary to pass a second continuing resolution to allow more time for both chambers to finish their work. Five more free-standing spending measures were enacted in October and December.

Finally, on December 16, 2009, the President signed into law P.L. 111-117, an omnibus appropriations measure. The law includes appropriations for the six remaining appropriations bills that had not been enacted for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends September 30, 2010. With passage of the omnibus bill, the First Session of the 111th Congress adjourned on December 24, 2009.

Children & Youth

When President Obama signed P.L. 111-117, the FY 2010 omnibus funding measure, this law contained funding for Department of Justice (DoJ) programs supported by The American Legion. These funds include: \$7.9 billion for the FBI; \$3.7 billion for state and local law enforcement assistance grants; \$2 billion for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); \$1.1 billion for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); \$1.1 billion for the U.S. Marshals Service; and, \$424 million for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a program The American Legion has enthusiastically supported since its creation in 1974.

Economics

On November 2, 2009 by a vote of 356-0, the House passed H.R. 1168, the “Veterans Retraining Act of 2009.” Introduced by Rep. John Boozman (AR) – the ranking member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity – H.R. 1168 authorizes \$100 million per year to provide a living stipend and moving assistance to veterans who have been unemployed for at least 4 months, who are not eligible for training or education under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and are enrolled in a Labor Department re-training program. The bill awaits final action by the Senate.

On November 3, by a vote of 382-2, the House approved H.R. 3949, the “Veterans Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act of 2009,” introduced by House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (CA). Among its provisions, this bill would:

- Clarify current law and require VA to verify that firms are veteran-owned small businesses or service disabled veteran-owned small businesses in order to be listed in the Vendor Information Pages database maintained by the VA Secretary;
- Establish a scholarship program for students learning to care for veterans with visual impairments;
- Reauthorize the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education until the end of 2015;
- Expand the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act protections to service members seeking to cancel certain service contracts due to a change in duty station where such service is not provided; and,
- Amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to improve the equitable relief available for service members called to active duty, including allowing greater flexibility for family cell phone plans, rental leases, and motor vehicle leases when a service member has changed duty stations or been deployed.

P.L. 111-117, signed by the President on December 16, 2009, also contains FY 2009 appropriations for the Department of Labor (DOL). The measure funds veterans’ programs under the jurisdiction of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET). The chart below outlines funding for ASVET accounts appropriated for FY 2009 and for FY 2010.

VETS Programs	P.L. 111-8 FY 2009	P.L. 111-117 FY 2010
State Administration Grants	\$168.9 million	\$172.4 million
Federal Administration	\$34.6 million	\$35.3 million
National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI)	\$1.9 million	\$2.4 million
Homeless Veterans Programs	\$26.4 million	\$36.3 million
Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs	\$7.6 million	\$9.6 million
Totals	\$239.4 million	\$256 million

Foreign Relations

Appropriations for the Department of State and Foreign Operations programs for FY 2010 were contained in P.L. 111-117. The measure provides \$48.8 billion in total funding. Specific areas of interest to The American Legion include:

- \$7.8 billion in global assistance to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, measles and malaria;
- \$2.6 billion in combined aid to Afghanistan;
- \$2.2 billion in military assistance to Israel;
- \$1.6 billion for international narcotics control and law enforcement, which now includes the Andean Counterdrug Initiative;
- \$1.5 billion in economic and border security/anti-terrorism military aid to Pakistan;
- \$1.3 billion in economic and military aid to Egypt;
- \$742 million in assistance for nations of Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia; and
- \$543 million in economic and military aid to Jordan.

Internal Affairs

On September 15, House Resolution (H. Res.) 679 was passed by the House of Representatives by a voice vote. This resolution, introduced by Rep. Deborah Halvorson (IL), supports the designation of September 16 – which is the anniversary of The American Legion receiving its Federal charter in 1919 – as “American Legion Day.” The resolution also supported a national day of observance of The American Legion's goals and ideals in which the country may celebrate the long history of The American Legion and its steadfast and patriotic service to communities, states and the nation. A similar Senate resolution, S. Res. 260, passed that chamber on September 10 by unanimous consent.

National Security

On October 28, 2009, President Obama signed P.L. 111-83, the FY 2010 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The measure provides \$42.8 billion in discretionary spending for DHS programs, an increase of \$2.6 billion above FY 2009 funding. Some of the key provisions include:

- \$10.1 billion for the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, \$306 million above the FY 2009 funding levels;
- \$9.9 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, \$776 million more than the previous fiscal year;
- \$7.7 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, \$679 million above last year's spending amounts;
- \$5.4 billion for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which is \$448 million above FY 2009 levels;
- \$4.2 billion in grants for state and local "first responders" which is nearly \$300 million above the amount appropriated for FY 2009;
- \$1.5 billion for the U.S. Secret Service, \$70 million above last year's levels;
- \$860 million for the Federal Air Marshals, an increase of \$41 million from FY 2009; and
- \$800 million for border security along the U.S.-Mexico border (included under the "Customs and Border Protection" account), \$25 million more than last year.

Each year, Congress passes legislation authorizing spending levels for DoD programs, and usually includes a number of policy statements. The President on October 28, 2009 signed into law P.L. 111-84, the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. Some of the major provisions of the law include:

- A 3.4 percent across-the-board pay raise for all military personnel – half a percentage point above the President's request – before special pay or bonuses;
- Authorization for missile defense programs;
- Authorization to fund the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 account;
- Authorization to address equipment shortfalls in the National Guard and Reserves;
- Authorization for 28 F-35s (Joint Strike Fighters);
- Authorization of full funding for 1 *Virginia*-class submarine, and advance procurement for construction of two additional submarines in FY 2011;
- Increases for FY 2010 of 15,000 Army personnel, 8,000 Marines, 14,650 Air Force personnel, and 2,477 Navy sailors;
- Increases in Army personnel by 30,000 for FYs 2011 and 2012;
- Discontinues further production of the F-22 fighter plane;
- Adds production of a second, alternative engine to procurement of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a provision opposed by the White House;
- Authorization for family housing programs;
- Additions to Federal hate-crimes legislation to cover attacks based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and military service;
- An authorization for educational impact aid, with an additional funding authorization for those agencies heavily impacted by force structure changes and BRAC; and,
- Extension of TRICARE eligibility to Reserve component service members so they can receive full TRICARE coverage 180 days before they go on active duty.

Military construction funding was included as part of P.L. 111-117, the omnibus appropriations bill. A total of \$24 billion was set aside to support American military forces and their families at home and overseas. Some specific funding areas include:

- \$11.8 billion for such items as barracks, child care centers and mission-critical operational bases. This includes the modernization of troop housing facilities and for certain energy conservation programs;
- \$7.5 billion for projects involved in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process;
- \$2.3 billion to further eliminate inadequate military family housing, as well as provide expanded mortgage relief assistance for some military families;
- \$1.6 billion to provide readiness centers and operational facilities for National Guard and Reserve forces;
- \$1.4 billion to support additional military construction requirements for operations and deployments to Afghanistan;
- \$497 million to address the large unfunded backlog of environmental cleanup for the 1990 BRAC process; and,
- \$152 million *for the destruction of the United States stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions.*

Selective Service System funding for FY 2010 is contained in P.L. 111-117, the omnibus continuing appropriations measure. The law appropriates \$24 million, an increase of \$2 million over the FY 2009 appropriations. The American Legion continues to support funding for the Selective Service System in case of national emergency.

On December 19, the President signed into law P.L. 111-118, the DoD appropriations measure for FY 2010. The bill totals \$636.3 billion, an increase of \$11 billion over current year funding and \$3.8 billion below the President's request. Funding for specific program areas include:

- \$124.5 billion for all costs to continue military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- \$29.2 billion for DoD health programs;
- \$6.8 billion for the F-35 program, including procurement of 30 planes for the Air Force and Navy;
- \$6.3 billion for further development, procurement and upgrades of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for Iraq and Afghanistan;
- \$3.8 billion for purchase of one Virginia-class attack submarine in FY 2010, and advance procurement for another sub in FY 2011;
- \$2.7 billion in both measures for procurement of 35 V-22 Ospreys for the Air Force and Marine Corps;
- \$2.2 billion for further development and procurement of one additional DDG-51 (*Arleigh Burke*) destroyer;
- \$2 billion for missile defense programs;
- \$1.6 billion for the destruction of chemical agents and munitions;
- \$1.5 billion for procurement of 18 additional F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircraft;
- \$1.4 billion for further development and procurement of the DDG-1000 (*Zumwalt*) destroyer;
- \$1.2 billion for drug interdiction and counter-drug activities; and,

- \$364 million for upgrades and procurement of additional Stryker vehicles.
- The measure contains no funding for closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility for terrorists captured during the Global War on Terrorism. Appropriators stated that once a plan was in place to close the facility, funding would then be requested.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On November 11, 2009, President Obama enacted P.L. 111-98, a measure to authorize a major medical facility project at the VA Medical Center at Walla Walla, WA. The law calls for the construction of a new multiple-specialty outpatient facility, campus renovation and upgrades, and additional parking, with the project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed \$71 million.

FY 2010 funding for VA, military construction programs and related agencies was included in P.L. 111-117, the omnibus appropriations bill. In addition to FY 2010 appropriations, P.L. 111-117 included advance appropriations for FY 2011 for VA's medical care accounts, totaling nearly \$48.2 billion. These FY 2011 accounts include: \$37.1 billion for medical services; \$5.3 billion for medical support and compliance; and, \$5.7 billion for medical facilities.

The chart below presents the major discretionary funding categories of VA's budget, showing funding for the previous year, the final funding totals for P.L. 111-117 and The American Legion's FY 2010 budget proposal as presented in testimony before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in September 2008.

VA Discretionary Programs	P. L. 110-329 FY 2009 Final VA Funding	P.L. 111-117 FY 2010 VA Appropriations	American Legion's FY 2010 Request
Medical Services	\$30.9 billion	\$34.7 billion	\$42.8 billion
Medical Support and Compliance	\$4.4 billion	\$4.9 billion	(includes medical & prosthetic research)
Medical Facilities	\$6 billion#	\$4.9 billion	
<i>Total Medical Care</i>	<i>\$41.3 billion</i>	<i>\$44.5 billion</i>	
Medical Care Collections Funds	[\$2.5 billion]	[\$2.9 billion]	*
Medical and Prosthetic Research	\$510 million	\$581 million	\$532 million
Information Technology	\$2.5 billion#	\$3.3 billion	\$2.7 billion
General Operating Expenses	\$2 billion#	\$2.1 billion	\$2.8 billion
Natl. Cemetery Administration	\$280 million#	\$250 million	\$249 million
Major Construction	\$923 million	\$1.2 billion	\$1.8 billion
Minor Construction	\$742 million	\$703 million	\$1.5 billion
State Homes Construction Grants	\$325 million#	\$100 million	\$275 million
State Cemeteries Construction Grants	\$42 million	\$46 million	\$49 million

Includes supplemental funding from PL 111-5

* The American Legion supports using Medical Care Collections Funds as *supplements*, not *offsets*, to discretionary VA funding.

Funding in this bill for related agencies monitored by The American Legion include: \$63 million for the American Battle Monuments Commission; \$27 million for the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims; \$40 million for operations, maintenance and construction at Arlington National Cemetery; and,

\$134 million for operations, maintenance and new construction at the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

111th Congress, 2nd Session

The Second Session of the 111th Congress convened on January 5, 2010. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers include the Global War on Terrorism, the deepening economic recession and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) budget. To date, The American Legion has participated in 39 congressional hearings during the Second Session.

On February 1, President Obama released his FY 2011 Federal budget request, including funding recommendations for VA. The Administration is requesting \$60.3 billion for VA discretionary spending programs, an increase of \$11 billion over the FY 2010 amounts. Mandatory funding would be set at \$64.7 billion, making the total VA budget request \$125 billion. The gradual expansion of health care will support the health care needs of over 500,000 Priority Group 8 veterans who have been excluded from VA coverage since 2003. This increased funding will also provide the necessary resources to maintain the high-quality and timely care for lower-income and service-disabled veterans who currently use the system. However, millions of Priority Group 8 veterans remained banned from VA enrollment, and The American Legion remains adamant that all Priority Group 8 veterans must be enrolled now.

There are six major areas of emphasis in this new budget that the President has made an integral part of VA's FY 2011 budget request:

Reducing the Claims Backlog: VA is requesting an increase for staffing in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to address a dramatic increase in disability compensation claims. In 2009, for the first time, VA received over one million claims during the course of a single year, which was 75 percent higher than the number of claims received in 2000. The Obama Administration states that the average time to process a disability claim fell from 179 to 161 days in 2009, an improvement of 11 percent. However, this "progress" does not include processing of denied claims on appeal. The progress is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough. The goal for VBA is to reduce the average time to process a claim to no more than 125 days. Reaching this goal will become even more challenging because of additional claims VA expects to receive related to exposure to Agent Orange. The FY 2011 budget request for VBA is \$2.1 billion, a 27 percent increase over the current year, and more than 4,000 additional claims processors for veterans' benefits.

Eliminating Veterans' Homelessness: VA's homeless-specific programs provide a continuum of care for homeless veterans that provide treatment, rehabilitation and supportive services in addressing health, mental health and psychosocial issues. VA also offers a full range of support necessary to end the cycle of homelessness by providing education, jobs, and health care, in addition to housing. Homelessness is primarily a health care issue, often heavily burdened with depression and substance abuse. VA's budget request includes \$4.2 billion in FY 2011 to prevent and reduce homelessness among veterans — over \$3.4 billion for core medical services and \$799 million for specific homeless programs and expanded medical programs.

Automating the GI Bill Education Benefits System: In August 2009, the Post-9/11 GI Bill program was implemented. VA has received more than 397,000 original and 219,000 supplemental applications since the inception of this program. VA has established a

comprehensive strategy to develop an IT solution that utilizes modern technologies to modernize the delivery of education benefits. The automated solution for the Post-9/11 GI Bill education program is scheduled to be implemented by December 2010. The FY 2011 budget request provides \$44.1 million to complete the automated solution for processing claims from the Post-9/11 GI Bill program and to begin the development and implementation of electronic systems to process claims associated with other education programs.

Establishing a Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record: In April 2009, the President charged VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) with building a fully interoperable electronic records system that will provide each member of the Armed Forces a Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER). This VLER will enhance the timely delivery of high-quality benefits and services by capturing key information needed about their history from the day they put on the uniform, through their time as veterans, until the day they are laid to rest. The budget request would provide VA \$52 million in IT funds in FY 2011 to continue the development and implementation of this priority.

Improving Mental Health Care: VA's budget request would provide about \$5.2 billion for mental health, an increase of \$410 million, or 8.5 percent, over the FY 2010 enacted level. VA will expand inpatient, residential, and outpatient mental health programs with an emphasis on integrating mental health services with primary and specialty care. VA will continue to be proactive in screening for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and intervening early in order to prevent chronic problems that could lead to more complex disorders and functional problems. VA will also expand its screening program for other mental health conditions, most notably traumatic brain injury (TBI), depression, and substance use disorders. VA will enhance its suicide prevention advertising campaign to raise awareness among veterans and their families of the services available to them.

Deploying a Veterans Relationship Management System: This system will allow veterans to access comprehensive online information anytime and anywhere via a single consistent entry point. The budget request would provide \$51.6 million for this project, which will also provide veterans with the ability to access VA through multiple methods; complete multiple business processes within VA without having to re-enter identifying information; and seamlessly access VA across multiple lines of business.

Some of the specific budget requests include:

- \$250 million to strengthen access to health care for 3.2 million veterans enrolled in VA's medical system who reside in rural and highly rural areas. Rural outreach includes expanded use of home-based primary care and mental health.
- The FY 2011 budget request would provide \$217.6 million to meet the gender-specific health care needs of women veterans, an increase of \$18.6 million (9.4 percent) over the FY 2010 level. Enhanced primary care for women veterans remains one of VA's top priorities.
- The budget request provides an increase of \$42 million for VA's home telehealth program. The effort already cares for 35,000 patients and is the largest program of its kind in the world.
- During FY 2011, VA expects to treat 6.1 million patients, who will account for more than 800,000 hospitalizations and 83 million outpatient visits. That number includes 439,000 veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, for whom \$2.6 billion is included in the budget proposal.

That's an increase of \$597 million – or 30 percent – from the current budget.

The proposed budget for health care also includes:

- \$54.3 billion in advance appropriations for FY 2012 for health care, an increase of \$2.8 billion over the FY 2010 enacted amount.
- \$6.8 billion for long-term care, an increase of \$859 million (14 percent) over FY 2010. This amount includes \$1.5 billion for non-institutional long-term care.
- Expanding access to VA health care system for more than 99,000 Priority Group 8 veterans who were previously denied care because of their incomes.

The chart below shows VA's discretionary funding programs, with current year (FY 2010) funding totals, the President's proposed FY 2011 budget amounts, and The American Legion's proposed appropriations totals as presented to Congress last September by National Commander Hill.

VA Discretionary Programs	P. L. 111-117 FY 2010 Final VA Funding	President's FY 2011 VA Budget Request	American Legion's FY 2011 VA Budget Request
Medical Services	\$34.7 billion	\$37.1 billion	<i>\$48 billion</i>
Medical Support & Compliance	\$4.9 billion	\$5.3 billion	<i>(includes medical & prosthetic research)</i>
Medical Facilities	\$4.8 billion	\$5.7 billion	
Total Medical Care	<i>\$44.5 billion</i>	<i>\$48.1 billion</i>	
Medical Care Collections Funds	[\$2.9 billion]	[\$3.3 billion]	*
Medical/Prosthetic Research	\$581 million	\$590 million	\$700 million
National Cemetery Administration	\$250 million	\$251 million	\$260 million
General Operating Expenses	\$2.1 billion	\$2.6 billion	\$3.2 billion
Information Technology	\$3.3 billion	\$3.3 billion	\$3.8 billion
Major Construction	\$1.2 billion	\$1.1 billion	\$2.0 billion
Minor Construction	\$703 million	\$468 million	\$1.5 billion
State Veterans' Homes	\$100 million	\$85 million	\$275 million
Construction Grants			
State Veterans' Cemeteries	\$46 million	\$46 million	\$50 million
Construction Grants			

* The American Legion supports using Medical Care Collections Funds as *supplements*, not *offsets*, to discretionary VA funding.

On February 4 and 26, The American Legion testified before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees respectively, giving its views on VA's FY 2011 budget request. The testimony also re-emphasized the VA budget request presented by National Commander Hill last September.

Congressional elections will take place this November. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 37 Senate seats will be in play. As of August 6, ten senators are retiring, two were defeated for re-nomination and one is seeking another office. In the House, 33 members have announced plans to retire, or are running for a Senate seat or a different office. Five House incumbents were defeated while running for nomination to

another office, with four others lost running for re-nomination. There are still several primaries in September.

Americanism

Representative Jo Ann Emerson (MO) introduced House Joint Resolution (HJ Res.) 47, a flag protection constitutional amendment for the 111th Congress. It has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. The measure now has 84 cosponsors. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator David Vitter (LA), Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.) 15. The Senate version now has 26 cosponsors. The American Legion will continue to seek passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag.

Children & Youth

On July 22, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved, by a vote of 17-12, S.3636, the FY 2011 funding measure for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, as well as various science programs. The House Appropriations Committee is still developing its version of this spending measure. Funding for Department of Justice (DoJ) programs supported by The American Legion include:

- \$8.3 billion for the FBI in the Senate measure, \$618 million above FY 2010 levels;
- \$3.7 billion for state and local law enforcement assistance grants in the Senate measure, \$30 million over the current year amount for this account;
- \$2.1 billion for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), \$110 million above FY 2010 amounts;
- \$1.16 billion for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), an increase over current year funding of \$42 million;
- \$1.2 billion for the U.S. Marshals Service, \$65 million more than the current year; and,
- \$490 million for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) – a program The American Legion has enthusiastically supported since its creation in 1974 – an increase of \$66 million over FY 2010 levels.

Economics

On March 22, the House approved H.R. 4810, the “End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010” by a vote of 413-0. Introduced by House Veterans’ Affairs Chairman Filner (CA), this bill contains several provisions to combat veteran homelessness in this country, including:

- Increasing funding to successful programs for homeless veterans;
- Requiring each VA medical center that provides supporting housing services to provide housing counselors;
- Requiring housing counselors to conduct landlord research;
- Strengthening permanent housing programs; and,

- Paying special interest to the needs of homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.
- The measure now awaits further Senate action.

On March 23, by a vote of 416-4, the House passed H.R. 3976, the “Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act of 2009.” This legislation would amend the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-289) to extend, through the end of 2015, specified protections for service members with regard to mortgages and mortgage foreclosures. The bill also adds a new clause that would apply these same mortgage protections to a surviving spouse of a service member who dies while in military service and whose death is service connected.

The House, on March 23, approved H.R. 4592, the “Energy Jobs for Veterans Act.” The recorded vote for passage was 397-19. This measure, introduced by Rep. Teague (NM), would direct the Secretary of Labor to establish a five-year pilot program (to be known as the Veterans Energy-Related Employment Program). This program would award competitive grants to three states to establish and administer a program of grants to energy industry employers and labor management organizations that provide training, apprenticeships, and certification classes to veterans employed by one of these energy companies or employers.

Current law does not provide the same employment and reemployment protections for certain individuals ordered to full-time National Guard duty serving missions domestically as it does for National Guard members serving overseas. On March 24, by a recorded vote of 416-1, the House passed H.R. 1879, the “National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2009.” This legislation, introduced by Rep. Coffman (CO), provides employment and reemployment rights for individuals ordered to full-time National Guard duty. This bill would close a loophole in existing employment protection law that has adversely impacted members called up to serve homeland security missions in the United States.

On April 20, legislation was introduced to address the employment, training and job placement problems of veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). This measure, S. 3234, was introduced by Sen. Murray (WA). It currently has 13 cosponsors. The bill will expand GI Bill education benefits to include apprenticeship and training programs, so that veterans can obtain the licenses and certificates they need for new civilian careers. It also calls for small-business training and counseling, and creates pilot programs to help veterans market their military training more effectively in the civilian sector. Sen. Murray's bill also addresses training requirements for Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs). On August 5, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved a modified version of S. 3234, sending it to the full Senate for further action. Companion legislation, H.R. 5120, was introduced in the House on April 22 by Rep. Smith (WA).

On July 29 the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies approved S. 3686, its version of the FY 2011 spending bill for programs under its jurisdiction, passing the bill by a vote of 17-12. The measure contains funding for programs under Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET). Funding for this agency totals \$262 million, an increase of \$6 million over current year spending amounts.

Since passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008 – included in P.L. 110-252, the supplemental appropriations measure for 2008 – The American Legion and veterans

throughout the nation have asked for certain improvements to the original law necessary to adequately provide the best educational benefits to the new generation of veterans. On August 5 the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved S. 3447, the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010," introduced by Sen. Akaka (HI). Among the suggested corrections in the measure are:

- Inclusion of certain National Guard members called to service under Title 32 orders;
- Increasing the allowable fees and tuition for public institutions and private colleges;
- Providing a stipend for distance learning veterans; and,
- Adding the ability to use the benefit at vocational and technical schools; apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs; and flight schools.

On July 29, Rep. Minnick (ID) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 5933, with 18 original cosponsors. The bill mirrors the Senate bill and has been referred to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Foreign Relations

As part of P.L. 111-212, the FY 2010 supplemental appropriations bill, \$6.2 billion were allocated for State Department and foreign operations programs. These programs include:

- \$1.5 billion for reconstruction and law enforcement programs in Afghanistan;
- \$1.3 billion for State Department operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Haiti;
- \$913 million for humanitarian, economic reconstruction, law enforcement and peacekeeping costs for Haiti. In addition, the bill contains \$465 million for International Disaster assistance and \$220 million to cancel existing debt for Haiti relief and reconstruction;
- \$450 million for start-up costs for Iraqi police programs; and,
- \$344 million in economic, law enforcement and military assistance to Pakistan.

On July 29 the Senate Appropriations Committee, by a recorded vote of 18-12, approved S. 3676, the FY 2011 Department of State and Foreign Operations spending measure. The measure provides \$54.1 billion in total funding, \$5.3 billion more than current year spending and \$2.5 billion less than the President's budget request. Specific areas of interest to The American Legion include:

- \$8.2 billion in global assistance to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, measles and malaria;
- \$2.6 billion in combined aid to Afghanistan;
- \$2.5 billion in economic and border security/anti-terrorism military aid to Pakistan;
- \$3 billion in military assistance to Israel;
- \$1.5 billion for international narcotics control and law enforcement;
- \$1.5 billion in economic and military aid to Egypt;
- \$715 million in assistance for nations of Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia; and

- \$660 million in economic and military aid to Jordan.

National Security

Each year Congress passes legislation authorizing spending levels for DoD programs, and usually includes a number of policy statements. The House of Representatives on May 28 passed H.R. 5136, the FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act, sending the measure to the Senate for further action. The recorded vote for passage was 229-186. The Senate Armed Services Committee passed its version of the measure, S. 3454, on June 4. The measure awaits full Senate deliberation. Some of the major provisions of the law include:

- A 1.9 percent across-the-board pay raise for all military personnel – half a percentage point above the President’s request – in the House bill, 1.4 percent in the Senate version;
- Authorize \$10.3 billion for missile defense programs in the House measure, \$10.2 billion in the Senate bill;
- Authorize \$2.35 billion in funding for the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 account in both versions;
- Authorize a total of 62 F-35s (Joint Strike Fighters) for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps in the House bill, 42 in the Senate measure;
- Increase Army end strength by 22,000 and Navy end strength by 4,400 for FY 2011 in both bills;
- Continue production of a second, alternative engine to procurement of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a provision opposed by the White House in both measures;
- Authorize funding for two Virginia-class submarines in FY 2011, and advance procurement for construction of two additional submarines in FY 2012 in both bills;
- Authorize funding for two DDG-51 (Arleigh Burke) destroyers in both measures;
- Authorize the first increment of \$345 million in construction funds to modernize DoD schools in the House version;
- Authorizes special compensation for military and DoD civilian victims of the Fort Hood, TX and Little Rock, AR attacks, as if those attacks occurred in a combat zone in the House bill;
- Address sexual assault in the military in both measures;
- Restrict the transfer of detainees at the Guantanamo Naval Base to the U.S. in the House bill, while Senate language restricts transfer of detainees to certain foreign nations;
- Repeal language in federal law prohibiting homosexuals from serving in the U.S. armed forces, commonly referred to as “don’t ask, don’t tell;” and,
- Extend TRICARE coverage to cover dependent children up to age 26 in both bills.

On July 15, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S. 3607, the FY 2011 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The measure

provides \$43.8 billion in discretionary spending for DHS programs, an increase of \$1 billion above FY 2010 funding. Some of the key provisions include:

- \$10.4 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard;
- \$9.9 billion for the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection;
- \$8.1 billion for the Transportation Security Administration;
- \$5.5 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement;
- \$4.2 billion in grants for various homeland security grants under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA);
- \$1.6 billion for the U.S. Secret Service;
- \$950 million for the Federal Air Marshals; and
- \$574 billion for border security along the U.S.-Mexico border (included under the “Customs and Border Protection” account), an amount are less than last year’s appropriated amount of \$800 million.

On July 29 President Obama signed P.L. 111-212, the FY 2010 supplemental appropriation measure. The House passed the final version of the measure on July 27 by a vote of 308-114. The bill contains \$33.4 billion for continued prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism. Some of the various DoD earmarks include:

- \$4.9 billion to fund procurement of military equipment lost during combat operations;
- \$3.6 billion for the training and equipping Afghan and Iraqi security forces;
- \$1.8 billion for military personnel programs;
- \$1.1 billion for procurement of more Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles; and,
- \$657 million for military construction in Afghanistan to support ongoing operations.

In addition, the bill contains \$13.3 billion in mandatory funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to implement a recent VA decision for disability compensation of Vietnam veterans for illnesses related to exposure to Agent Orange.

The House on July 28 passed H.R. 5822, the FY 2011 Military Construction-Department of Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, sending the measure to the Senate for further action. This measure contains a total of \$13.7 billion in funding for construction projects related to the military, an increase of \$1 billion over current year spending totals. Among these projects are:

- \$2.35 billion in funding for Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects for the latest round;
- \$1.8 billion for family housing construction, operations and maintenance, and homeowners’ assistance accounts;
- \$1.35 billion for Army National Guard and Army Reserve construction projects;
- \$439 million for the recapitalization of DoD dependent schools; and,
- \$125 million for the design and construction of full-scale chemical disposal facilities and associated projects to upgrade installation support facilities and infrastructures required to support the Chemical Demilitarization program.

Selective Service System funding for FY 2011 is contained in S. 3677, the Financial Services and General Government appropriations measure. The bill appropriates \$25

million, an increase of \$1.1 million over the FY 2010 appropriations. These funds are intended to upgrade the agency's IT systems. The American Legion continues to support funding for the Selective Service System in case of national emergency.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On February 1, 2010 President Obama signed P.L. 111-137, a measure that would allow reimbursements to veterans who receive emergency treatment at a non-VA facility. The bill would require VA to pay for a nonservice-connected condition if a third-party insurer does not cover the full cost of care, including the difference between the amount paid by the insurer and the maximum VA allowable amount. Veterans would still be responsible for co-payments to third party insurers. The measure is retroactive, meaning it would allow for reimbursements for emergency treatment provided at a non-department facility at any time before the date of bill's enactment.

During the recent debate on national health care overhaul, one of the controversies raised by the process involved both the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) health care systems. During the debate, it was claimed by some opponents that one of the primary pillars of this legislation would endanger the status of persons who currently use the DoD and VA health care systems, especially those persons using TRICARE. According to P.L. 111-148, the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," a new definition for the term "minimum essential coverage" was established. The law requires all individuals to obtain this minimum level of health insurance or be subject to a penalty tax.

To allay any fears, the chairmen of five House committees, including Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Filner (CA) and Armed Services Chairman Ike Skelton (MO), released a joint letter stating that the legislation, as written, would protect those persons receiving care from TRICARE or VA. Further, on March 20, the House passed H.R. 4887, the "TRICARE Affirmation Act," a bill authored by Rep. Skelton, by a vote of 403-0. This measure amends the U.S tax code to provide that all TRICARE plans, even health care plans for DoD non-appropriated fund employees, met the "minimum essential coverage" criteria in the P.L. 111-148. The Senate passed H.R. 4887 by unanimous consent on April 12. The measure was signed by the President on April 26, and is now P.L. 111-159.

Another area of the health care overhaul debate would affect children of TRICARE beneficiaries. Under TRICARE, children are covered until the age of 21, or until 23 if they attend college. P.L. 111-148 requires commercial insurance firms to cover children until they are 26 years of age. In order to insure that this gap in coverage is met, Rep. Martin Heinrich (NM) introduced H.R. 4923, the "TRICARE Dependent Coverage Extension Act." The measure has 46 cosponsors. Similar Senate legislation, S. 3201, was introduced by Sen. Mark Udall (CO), with 21 cosponsors. Both of these measures are expected to be considered by their respective Armed Services committees, and will also be included within the FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act.

On May 5, President Obama signed P.L. 111-163, the "Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010." This legislation contains many widely-supported provisions that offer innovative solutions to the many major challenges facing returning service members, veterans and their families by making significant enhancements to VA's health care services.

Many severely disabled veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq need caregivers in the home, especially those living in rural area where VA health care services are often limited. In those situations, the burden of caring for a severely disabled veteran falls on individual family members. P.L. 111-163 will provide support services to family caregivers of veterans of the OEF/OIF era, including:

- Training and education;
- Counseling and mental health services;
- Respite care of no less than 30 days annually, including 24 hour in-home respite care;
- Lodging and subsistence payments when accompanying the veteran on medical care visits;
- Health care through the CHAMPVA program; and,
- A monthly financial stipend as determined appropriate by the VA Secretary based on the amount and degree of personal care services provided, and no less than the monthly amount of a commercial home health care entity.

In addition, a program for caregivers of veterans of a wartime period prior to OEF/OIF will be established. Their supports services will include: training and education; counseling and mental health services; respite care including 24 hours in-home care; and, information on the support services available to caregivers through other public, private and non-profit agencies.

Further, P.L. 111-163 will expand VA health care for women veterans. Provisions of the legislation will require VA to:

- Conduct a study to determine the reasons why women veterans are not using the VA medical system;
- Provide education and training for mental health professionals who are caring for veterans with sexual trauma;
- Implement a pilot program to help women veterans who were deployed overseas to receive reintegration and readjustment counseling;
- Establish a pilot program to provide child care for women veterans receiving regular and intensive mental health care and intensive health care services, or who are in need of such services, but do not seek care due to the lack of child care services; and,
- Provide up to seven days of post-delivery health care to a newborn child of a woman veteran.

This measure also makes improvements to VA rural health services. These changes include:

- Establishing a grant program for veterans' service organizations (VSOs) to provide transportation options to veterans living in highly rural areas;
- Authorizing a demonstration project to expand care for veterans in rural areas by having VA partner with the Department of Health and Human Services;
- Giving VA the flexibility to contract with community mental health centers and other qualified entities in areas that are not adequately served by VA; and,

- Creating a pilot program to provide a financial incentive for VA physicians who maintain inpatient privileges at community hospitals in rural areas that are short of qualified health professionals.

In addition, P.L. 111-163 makes provision for mental health care matters for former members of the armed forces. The legislation will require VA to provide readjustment services to any member of the armed forces and requires VA to make referrals for non-VA counseling services for veterans who are not otherwise eligible for readjustment counseling. It would further require VA to conduct a veterans' suicide study, coordinating with DoD, VSOs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the state public health offices and veterans' agencies.

Other provisions included in the bill would:

- Require VA to provide hospital care, medical services and nursing home care for certain Vietnam-era veterans exposed to herbicides, and to Gulf-War era veterans who have insufficient medical evidence to establish a service-connected disability;
- Place Medal of Honor recipients in Priority Group 3;
- Prohibit VA from collecting copayments from veterans who are catastrophically disabled;
- Authorize VA to make per diem payments to organizations that met some but not all of the criteria for the receipt of payments under the Grant and Per Diem Program; and,
- Authorize funds for the construction of major medical facilities in FY 2010, including Livermore, CA; Denver, CO; Bay Pines, FL; Louisville, KY; St. Louis, MO; and, Dallas, TX.

On May 24 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1017, the "Chiropractic Care to All Veterans Act," by a vote of 365-6. The measure was introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Filner (CA), and would require the VA to expand veterans' access to chiropractic care and services at their local VA facilities. The bill would further require VA chiropractic care to be available at no fewer than 75 VA medical centers (VAMCs) by December 31, 2011, and then at all VAMCs two years later. This care is intended to help veterans get necessary treatments, especially those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and continue to report musculoskeletal ailments. The bill now goes to the Senate for further action.

On May 25 the House passed by a recorded vote of 403-4 H.R. 3885, the "Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act," which was introduced by Rep. Hank Brown (SC). This legislation requires VA to conduct a 5-year pilot program for relieving veterans' post-deployment mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms through training service dogs for veterans with disabilities. The program would be available in at least three and up to five VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) for veterans who volunteer to participate in training and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or post-deployment mental health issues. It now advances to the Senate for action.

Finally, the committee approved H.R. 5145, the "Assuring Quality Care for Veterans Act." The House passed this bill on May 25 by a vote of 413-2, sending it to the Senate for action. Introduced by Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA), H.R. 5145 would increase the reimbursement for continuing professional education for all board-certified health care professionals employed by the VA from \$1000 a year to \$1600 a year. Current law limits the reimbursements to only physicians and dentists.

On June 30, the House of Representatives by a vote of 420-0 passed H.R. 4505, a bill to allow State veterans' homes to furnish nursing home care to parents who have any children that died while serving in the armed forces. It was introduced in January by Representative Mack Thornberry (TX).

Although admission to a State veterans' home is determined by each individual state, each home is required to maintain a residency of at least 75 percent veterans. Non-veterans may be admitted to a State veterans' home if they meet certain criteria. Under current law, eligible non-veterans are veterans' spouses, widows, and Gold Star parents who have lost all of their children in military service.

There are currently 137 State veterans' homes in the 50 States, with each one determining the priority level about admissions. The average occupancy rate across the country is presently 86 percent. Therefore, H.R. 4505 allows an added group of Gold Star parents who have lost a child while serving in the military to be eligible to fill those beds. The measure now awaits further Senate action.

On July 15, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S. 3615, legislation for FY 2011 funding for VA and military construction programs. The House passed similar legislation, H.R. 5822, on July 28 by a vote of 411-6. For the coming fiscal year, VA would be funded at \$120 billion, the largest overall budget in the agency's history. The chart below compares discretionary funding allocations for individual accounts from the current fiscal year, the President's FY 2011 budget request, the Senate Appropriations Committee's recommendation and the recommendation of the House Appropriations Committee.

VA Discretionary Programs	P. L. 111-117 FY 2010 Final VA Funding	President's FY 2011 VA Budget Request	S. 3615 FY 2011 Recommendation	H.R. 5822 FY 2011 Recommendation
Medical Services	\$34.7 billion	\$37.1 billion	\$37.1 billion	\$37.1 billion
Medical Support & Compliance	\$4.9 billion	\$5.3 billion	\$5.3 billion	\$5.3 billion
Medical Facilities	\$4.8 billion	\$5.7 billion	\$5.7 billion	\$5.7 billion
<i>Total Medical Care</i>	<i>\$44.5 billion</i>	<i>\$48.1 billion</i>	<i>\$48.1 billion</i>	<i>\$48.1 billion</i>
Medical Care	[\$2.9 billion]	[\$3.3 billion]	[\$3.4 billion]	[\$3.4 billion]
Collections Funds				
Medical/Prosthetic Research	\$581 million	\$590 million	\$590 million	\$590 million
National Cemetery Administration	\$250 million	\$251 million	\$251 million	\$259 million
General Operating Expenses	\$2.1 billion	\$2.6 billion	\$2.6 billion	\$2.6 billion
Information Technology	\$3.3 billion	\$3.3 billion	\$3.1 billion	\$3.2 billion
Major Construction	\$1.2 billion	\$1.1 billion	\$1.2 billion	\$1.2 billion
Minor Construction	\$703 million	\$468 million	\$486 million	\$508 million
State Veterans' Homes Construction Grants	\$100 million	\$85 million	\$85 million	\$85 million
State Veterans' Cemeteries	\$46 million	\$46 million	\$46 million	\$46 million
Construction Grants				

In addition, both measures allocate advance appropriations for VA medical care accounts for FY 2012 in the following amounts: \$39.65 billion for medical services; \$5.54 billion for medical support and compliance; and, \$5.42 billion for medical facilities, a total of \$50.61 billion.

Funding levels for related agencies that are of interest to The American Legion include:

- \$67 million for the American Battle Monuments Commission in the Senate bill, \$66 million in the House measure;
- \$90 million in the House measure for the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, \$53 million in the Senate bill;
- \$43 million for Army Cemeterial Expenses – which maintains Arlington National Cemetery – in the Senate bill, while the House measure would fund this account at \$40 million; and,
- \$71 million for the Armed Forces Retirement Home in both bills.

On July 30 Rep. Halvorson (IL) introduced H.R. 5993, the “Securing America’s Veterans Insurance Needs and Goals Act of 2010,” or the “SAVINGS Act.” She introduced this measure after news reports came out concerning big insurance companies using group life insurance policies to obtain profits by duping the families of fallen soldiers. The legislation would mandate the VA Secretary to require insurance companies that provide group life coverage to provide financial counseling and disclosure information to family members of fallen service members. It would also require an annual report to Congress by VA to ensure that insurance companies are being responsive to military families.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION

Daniel Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman

Philip D. Riley, Virginia, Director

The following annual report covers the activities of The American Legion’s National Security Commission and National Security Council for the 2009-2010 program year ending June 30, 2010.

Overview

The National Security Division of The American Legion represents the Legion’s positions on national defense, homeland security and the quality of life our service members and their families enjoy. The American Legion has historically supported a strong national defense and our position has not changed in that regard. The National Security Division monitors the issues that are most relevant to our nation’s vital security interests. We work closely with our contacts from each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces in an effort to stay well-informed about the issues that affect our troops and our military families. As such, The American Legion continues to make troop strength and the military quality of life a top priority.

The American Legion recognizes that a strain exists on many service members in the Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve, as well as on their equipment and training needs, which is caused by the continuing overseas contingencies conducted against global terrorism. The American Legion urges Congress to fully support DoD budgets; to reset units with new equipment and replacement parts; and to provide training for specific skills that are required for critical mission performance across the full spectrum of conflict. The American Legion urges an increase in military personnel end strengths to

levels that reduce the frequency of deployments on service members, to reduce the stress on service members and their families, and to reduce the risk to national security that results from conventional warfare missions being relegated to a lower priority for training, planning and resourcing purposes.

Disabled military retirees earned and deserve full concurrent receipt of their DoD retirement pay and their VA disability compensation, which come from separate budgets for separate purposes. Today, most disabled military retirees are forced to choose one or the other in what has become known as the “disabled veterans’ tax.” Military health-care programs must be fully funded without additional enrollment fees or copayment increases for beneficiaries. TRICARE coverage should be made permanent for members of the reserve components, as well. Military personnel who sustain injuries or illnesses while on duty must be given fair and timely discharge processing, and their transition to civilian life and/or VA health care made seamless. The American Legion strongly supports a continuum of care for disabled veterans after they re-integrate to civilian life. The Legion encourages swift and efficient action to integrate various federal departments, agencies and programs to improve the transition process and sustain that continuum of care.

The threat of terrorist attacks or other catastrophic disasters in the United States came painfully to light on Sept. 11, 2001, and following the devastating hurricane season of 2005. The American Legion works closely with government at all levels to improve disaster readiness in local communities and, at the national level, to assure a well-funded and efficient Department of Homeland Security is prepared for any contingency. Since the Department of Homeland Security’s creation after the terrorist attacks of 2001, The American Legion has supported its intent, purpose and arrangement: to harmonize myriad agencies, offices, businesses, community groups and others with readiness responsibilities and quick-response capabilities. The American Legion is an active contributor to that synergy from local to national levels. The Legion concurs with DHS’ mission to coordinate domestic security, including effective customs operations and drug interdiction. To help with that effort, the Legion supports funding for the U.S. Coast Guard’s “Deepwater” initiatives to rebuild its fleet and modernize assets to more effectively fulfill responsibilities in maritime safety, law enforcement, homeland security, environmental protection and defense.

National Security Commission Resolutions

The 91st National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky was conducted during a non-renewal year for established resolutions. The American Legion’s National Security Commission reviewed over 13 newly proposed and established resolutions addressing National Security. With the Convention’s approval of the accepted resolutions, The American Legion reconfirmed its steadfast resolve for improvements in the Military Healthcare System (MHS); support for military families and improving the military quality of life; secure domestic borders; the promotion of peace; and caring for veterans and their families who live abroad. The National Security Commission has worked diligently throughout the year to implement resolutions that speak to key issues concerning America’s national security interests.

The following resolutions were considered during the year and express some of the core principles of the National Security Commission:

Resolution 2 – (Pre-Convention NEC) The American Legion Policy On DOD's Medical Health System And National Health Care Reform

This resolution was a result of an AD HOC Committee on TRICARE that convened on August 5, 2009. The resolution states The American Legion's support for reform of the Military Health System that assures all active-duty service members, members of the Reserve components, military retirees (to include Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) and Chapter 61 retirees), and their families, especially those who are uninsured or underinsured, have timely access to quality health care within DOD's Medical Health System; and, that The American Legion urge Congress to ensure that DOD's Medical Health System beneficiaries are not adversely impacted by any provision in the national health care reform legislation.

Resolution 115 – Military Families And Modernizing The Family Readiness Group (FRG) (Approved)

This resolution calls for increasing support for military families by actively reaching out to military families. It also urges the Department of Defense (DOD) to make the necessary changes to the Family Readiness Group support model that increases professionalism, accountability, and dependability of all involved. Finally, the resolution asks DOD to consider the following suggestions to improve professionalism, accountability, and dependability in the FRG support model:

Establishing sufficient, qualified, paid civilian positions to manage and supervise all FRGs; and that such persons be qualified in the areas of social work and psychology; and that they work in tandem with unit Officers and Noncommissioned Officers

Create a military operational specialty (MOS) to effectively develop the training and specific job requirements of rear detachment leaders who would work with their civilian counterparts and the military families; and DOD create a detailed rating system for FRG supervisors and rear detachment leaders establishing accountability for their performance.

At the 91st National Convention, a broad range of resolutions were adopted which collectively support our strong national security principles, and especially the support of military service members and their dependents.

Resolution 97 – Selective Service Registration Program To Include Registration Of Females (Approved)

This resolution may be controversial as some may object to having women register for the draft. Women can serve critical roles in the military. There is no reason that in the 21st century that they should not also be registered for the selective service. Keep in mind, just because they are registered, does not mean that if a draft was renewed that DOD would include them equally with eligible males. It would depend on the needs of DOD at that time.

Resolution 113 - Designation Of National World War I Memorial (Referred to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs)

This resolution was approved by the National Security Convention Committee. However, the resolution should have been voted on by the Internal Affairs Convention Committee. As such, the National Security Convention Committee reconvened and referred the resolution to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs.

The following National Security resolution was rejected:

Resolution 59 - The American Legion Support For The CIA In The Global War On Terror

The CIA is not a military agency. Therefore, questions about it being germane to The American Legion arose in the meeting of the Convention Delegates. The Resolution also sought to give the same support to the CIA as in Resolution 169. Resolution 169 supports the "Congress and the President and the Military in the War on Terror". This resolution would support the agency over some elected officials who are having internal disagreements. As such it is different in many ways from resolution 169.

Meetings of the Commission

The National Security Commission met in general sessions over the course of the year on October 12th through 14th, 2009 during the Fall NEC meeting at the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, IN; on February 28th through March 3rd 2010 during the 50th Annual Washington Conference at the Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.; and on May 5th through 6th, 2010 during the Spring NEC meeting also convened at the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. The following is a summary of those sessions:

2009 Fall NEC Meetings

An executive session of the National Security Commission met in the Circle West Room of the Sheraton Hotel on October 12, 2009 to consider resolutions properly before it and to conduct other business. A total of ten resolutions were considered, five are recommended for approval. Of the other five resolutions, one was Received and Recorded; one was Referred to Americanism; one is being held for further study and two were rejected. National Security and Foreign relations Deputy Director, Sam Gilmore briefly outlined key provisions in the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Appropriations budget. Division Director Phil Riley clarified the finer points of the Defense Authorization Bill concerning military health care. In addition to the resolutions that were originally on the agenda, Commission Chairman Fang Wong opened a discussion on comments that were made by President Obama on Saturday. The President spoke before a group of gay rights advocates and stated, "I will end Don't ask; Don't tell." As a result, the National Security Committee motioned to affirm The American Legion's position on the subject. Many viewpoints were discussed but the consensus among the National Security Commission members was that the current national policy ("Don't ask; Don't tell") is sufficient. A new resolution was drafted that is consistent with this policy.

Among the topics that were addressed in the meeting was healthcare for military families. The American Legion established an Ad Hoc Committee on TRICARE, which met for the first time on August 5, 2009 at the American Legion Headquarters in Washington D.C. The committee's second meeting was held on September 28, 2009. The report on military healthcare published by this committee is attached.

In the National Executive Committee's (NEC) Fall Meeting, the commission reviewed The Legion's Don't Ask; Don't Tell policy and recommended a revised version of this resolution based on the current DoD directed study on the affects of ending on troop readiness during the Spring NEC meetings. As a result a new resolution was adopted, which supplements the Legion's current position. At the Spring Meetings, commission members conducted business sessions to expedite proposed resolutions and other important issues within the commission's purview.

DOD FY2010 Request

On May 7, 2009, the President sent to Congress a proposed defense budget of \$663.8 billion for fiscal 2010. The budget request for the Department of Defense (DoD) includes \$533.8 billion in discretionary budget authority to fund base defense programs and \$130 billion to support overseas contingency operations, primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The proposed DoD base budget represents an increase of \$20.5 billion over the \$513.3 billion enacted for fiscal 2009. This is an increase of 4 percent, or 2.1 percent real growth after adjusting for inflation.

The fiscal 2010 budget proposal will end the planned use of supplemental requests to fund overseas operations, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The inclusion of these expenses as a separate category in the department's annual budget request will ensure greater transparency and accountability to Congress and the American people. The budget will also request funds in the base that were previously in supplemental for programs such as those supporting our military families and providing long-term medical care to injured service members.

The nation's attention has been focused primarily on the economy. Unemployment is expected to reach 10 percent by the end of the year and there is still instability in the stock market and the housing industry. In addition, the rising cost of health care, which has been a growing concern for many Americans, is now a part of a broader discussion about the economy. During this challenging period, we must urge congress to fully fund the United States military.

National Security Chairman, Fang Wong reported that the nation's vital interests are at risk around the world. Terrorism simply must be defeated. As threats from rogue nation-states continue to grow, North Korea, Pakistan, and Iran quickly come to mind as countries that threaten the security of the U.S. and our allies. Russia must also be closely monitored as it reemerges as a world power. We must remain diligent in our effort to protect our interests' over-seas as we also strive to protect our borders here at home. Today the violence along our Mexican border has escalated to unprecedented levels. The credibility of the United States in an unstable world needs to be maintained by retaining the requisite military capabilities to deal with actual and potential threats. Such a strategy requires that the Armed Forces be more fully structured, equipped and budgeted to achieve this strategy.

Chairman Fang Wong recommended that the Commission support some of the proposed increases in the 2010 budget; specifically, the \$20.5 billion increase above the Department of Defense FY09 base budget, the \$4.5 billion increase for modernization, the \$13.2 billion increase for military pay and healthcare, and a \$4.5 billion increase for readiness and support.

The commission should be concerned about the following proposed cuts.

- Reduce by \$1.4 billion the missile defense agency.
- The 2.1 billion decrease in the proposed budget for military family housing and facilities.

As we contend with the difficult challenges of the war on terror, we must urge our government to continue to proceed on the path of transforming America's armed forces into a modern force capable of providing for the security of all Americans, strengthening

and expanding military capabilities, and in honoring America's commitments worldwide as well as on the home front.

On Tuesday, October 13, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commission members went on a field trip to Muscatatuck Urban Training Center and Camp Atterbury at the invitation of the commander of the joint forces headquarters, General R. Martin Umbarger. The tour included a briefing on the operations conducted at the facility's critical training areas. The facility provides urban warfare and maneuver training for U.S. Army personnel for the Global War on Terror along with FBI and SWAT Teams. This field trip provided the participating Legionnaires with a firsthand view and briefing of one of the most modern urban warfare and security training facilities in the United States.

Following the 2009 Fall NEC Meetings Fang Wong became a candidate for National Commander. As such, he relinquished his position and his duties as Chairman of the National Security Commission and was succeeded by Daniel Dellinger (VA) who began his duties as Chairman of the National Security Commission in November 2009.

Washington Conference

The National Security Commission met in a joint session along with the Foreign Relations Commission on March 1st and convened for its business session on March 2nd during the 50th annual Washington Conference at the Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C. The following is a summary of those sessions:

During the joint session, both groups were addressed by four speakers: Vikram Singh, U.S. Department of State, Senior Defense Advisor, Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; Major General Reuben Jones, Director of Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, U.S. Army; Dr. Robert Zubrin, author of *Energy Victory*; and George Clark, President of Save the Montagnard People, Inc. (STMP).

Mr. Singh began the session by delving into present diplomatic strategies involving Afghanistan and Pakistan. He explained how current fissures in the relationships between the Taliban and al Qaeda and the indigenous people of the region need to be exposed to pave the way for success. He reported that the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) has the will to fight terrorist extremists but lacks the capacity; therefore, the U.S. must not prematurely abandon them. Mr. Singh also discussed the first real manifestation of President Obama's war strategy in connection with his decision to increase troops in the region and the recent successful battle for Marjah in southern Afghanistan led by the U.S. Marine Corps.

He explained how the ANA is partnering with U.S. and NATO forces by providing 40% of the troops in the ongoing battles against the enemy. Mr. Singh said that USAID Teams and State Department Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have been increased and are operating shoulder to shoulder with the military operations. These teams are working hard to establish schools and improve agriculture. He continued by giving insight into the delicate political situation in Pakistan by saying that Pakistan recognizes that it faces the same existential threat from the same enemies as the United States.

He conveyed that the Pakistan Security Forces are improving their cooperation with the United States and their anti-terrorist operations. For this reason, he said, the U.S. will continue to provide substantial military and humanitarian assistance. Before we can draw

our forces down in July 2011, he said, the U.S. needs to be confident that both Afghanistan and Pakistan can be supportive of U.S. Security interests.

Major General Jones gave a very comprehensive presentation covering the Army Family Covenant (AFC); Army Family Covenant – Family Programs and Services; Army OneSource (AOS); Army Family Covenant – Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS); Operation: Military Kids (OMK); Army Family Covenant – Soldier and Community Recreation Programs; Warrior Adventure Quest (WAQ); Gifts and Donations; Commercial Sponsorship and Advertising; How the American Legion Can Help Soldiers and Families; and Social Media. Major General Jones also used this opportunity to thank The American Legion for the many ways it is supporting the armed forces with such efforts as the Army Community Covenant; Temporary Financial Support for Soldiers and Families; sponsoring numerous events to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project, Operation Comfort Warriors and the Heroes to Hometowns Program; along with scholarships for Operation Purple Camps; volunteering and sponsoring Yellow Ribbon events; as well as frequently providing transportation to soldiers and their families.

Dr. Zubrin took the stage and proceeded to give an intense presentation outlining the absolute need for the United States to move from fossil fuel to biomass fuel. He showed the audience that since 2008, we now spend more money on imported oil than the U.S. spends on defense, citing \$600 billion is 120% of the federal defense budget. He said that Saudi Arabia is by far the largest recipient of international oil revenues – as large as the next four OPEC members combined. He continued by saying the Saudis have used this money to finance a worldwide network of institutions to spread Wahhabism – a violently intolerant version of Islam that requires death or enslavement of Christians, Jews, Hindus, Taoists, Buddhists, Pagans, and Atheists. Dr. Zubrin explained that in 1973, the US was 30% dependent on foreign oil, and the Arab embargo sent our economy into chaos, and today, we are 60% dependent, so the effects of an embargo would be much worse.

Dr. Zubrin reported that in 2008, OPEC cleared \$1.5 trillion in net export profits and that the total worth of the US Fortune 500 is \$18 trillion. At such rates, he said, OPEC will have enough funds to buy majority control in every company in the Fortune 500 within 6 years and that the Saudis have launched a \$900 billion Sovereign Wealth Fund to do such takeovers. Dr. Zubrin said we need to achieve one simple goal to avoid this fate: The Congress should pass a law requiring that all new cars sold in the USA be Flex Fueled. He explained that a Flex Fuel mandate would create a huge advanced-sector market for Third World agricultural production; trade barriers would come down; tropical agricultural countries would be able to secure income for development; manufacturing countries would obtain expanded Third World markets; the oil cartel's vertical monopoly on the world's fuel supply would be broken; terrorist funding would be curtailed; threat of superpower confrontation over Mideast would be halted; and pollution would be reduced.

Rounding out the program, Mr. George Clark made a powerful presentation on behalf of the millions of Montagnard people who have been and are currently being illegally imprisoned, denied human rights, raped, tortured, and slaughtered by the Vietnamese government as retribution for the Montagnards' alliance with U.S. Forces during the Vietnam War. Mr. Clark appealed to everyone in attendance to support the Congressional Bill HR 1969 and Senate Bill S 1159. If made into law, these bills would prohibit the federal government from providing the government of Vietnam with humanitarian development, trade, economic, and security assistance during any fiscal

year that exceeds the amount of the assistance provided in 2009, unless those increases are matched or exceeded by funding for programs focusing on human rights and the promotion of democracy. Also, these bills would make it U.S. policy to overcome jamming of Radio Free Asia by Vietnam and to offer refugee resettlement to Vietnam nationals including the Montagnards who were/are eligible for the Humanitarian Resettlement program and the Orderly Departure Program and associated programs. Mr. Clark said that it is a moral imperative for the U.S. to stop abandoning this group who proved to be amongst the most loyal U.S. allies in history.

Washington Conference 2010 POW/MIA UPDATE

The expert panel on the POW/MIA issues was comprised of Bob Newberry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Affairs (DPM) and Ann Mills Griffiths, Executive Director, National League of POW/MIA Families. The discussion revolved around the construction of a new \$100 million headquarters and lab for identification. Construction is expected to begin in fiscal 2011 at Hickam Air Force Base as the nation steps up efforts to speed the recovery and return of remains to families. Congress recently mandated that by 2015, the U. S. military make 200 identifications a year—more than twice the annual rate now. The 400-member Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) at Hickam has responsibility for investigating, recovering and identifying American dead from the nation's past wars. That personnel total is expected to grow with more search/recovery missions being organized in connection with the new identification requirement. In fiscal 2009, 69 missions were conducted and 95 identifications were made. Defense officials also are looking into the possibility of creating a satellite forensic identification laboratory on the Mainland—where it may be easier to attract anthropologists, more efficient, and closer to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory - a key link in the identification process. A total of 74,213 U.S. service members remain missing from World War II, with 19,000 deemed recoverable. There are also 127 missing from the Cold War, 8,034 from the Korean War, and 1,723 from the Vietnam War, 2 from the Persian Gulf War and 2 from Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom at the time of this report. Lab space to examine remains has been growing at JPAC. The approximately 22-table lab space at Hickam doubled with a \$680,000 addition, and tripled with the opening of a second lab in Building 220 at Pearl Harbor; recently renovated for \$1.2 million.

Business Session

The National Security Commission met in business session on Wednesday morning, March 3, 2010. After Chairman Dellinger's opening remarks and introductions, he invited Diane Duscheck, the National Security Commission Chairwoman of the American Legion Auxiliary to briefly address the session. She was followed by LTC. Robert L. Chandler (ret), who gave a very informed presentation on boarder security. Deputy Director Sam Gilmore then gave an update on the preconference trip to Wisconsin's 128 ARW on August 27, 2010. He then briefly addressed the role that the commissions should play to encourage more relevant resolutions that address current disparities in national security from the departments. The program was then turned back over to Chairman Dan Dellinger who then reviewed the National Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the year reports.

Budget Summary

Having steered the economy back from the brink of a depression, the Administration is committed to moving the Nation from recession to recovery by sparking job creation to get millions of Americans back to work and building a new foundation for the long-term prosperity for all American families. To do this, the 2011 Budget makes critical investments in the key areas that will help to reverse the decline in economic security that American families have experienced over the past decade with investments in education, clean energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

But even as we meet the challenge of the recession and work to build an economy that works for all American families, we must also change the way Washington does business – ending programs that don't work, streamlining those that do, cracking down on special interest access, and bringing a new responsibility to how tax dollars are spent. The President's Budget takes the steps to help jumpstart job creation, works to strengthen the economic security of American families, and makes the tough choices to put our nation back on the path to fiscal responsibility.

Defending our country are the men and women of our military, and the families that love and support them deserve a grateful Nation's support. To stand by military families, the Budget will:

Increase Military Pay and Housing Allowances. The Budget continues the Administration's commitment to caring for our Nation's men and women in uniform and promoting the well-being of the families who support them. To meet this objective, the Budget includes funding for a 1.4 percent basic pay raise that will keep military pay increases in line with those in the private sector. In addition to this pay raise, the Budget also includes an average housing increase of 4.2 percent, as well as a variety of monthly special skill-based payments, enlistment and reenlistment bonuses, and other benefits.

Boost Funding for Family Support Programs. The strength of our troops relies on the strength and stability of the families that support them, and the Budget supports these military families as our servicemembers answer our country's call to service. Overall, family support programs grow over 3 percent above the 2010 enacted level to \$8.8 billion. Examples include:

\$1.3 billion (an increase of \$87 million over the 2010 enacted level) to expand availability for affordable, high-quality child care services at over 800 child development centers both in the United States and overseas.

\$1.9 billion (an increase of \$37 million over the 2010 enacted level) for expanded counseling and assistance services, from financial counseling to transition and relocation assistance, to help families meet the challenges brought on by repeated deployments and family separations .

\$84 million (an increase of \$12 million over the 2010 enacted level) for enhanced career and educational opportunities for military spouses through tuition assistance and Federal internship programs.

Replace or Renovate 103 schools by 2015. To give our children the world-class education they deserve, they need world-class facilities. To this end, the Department of Defense is investing substantial resources to replace and renovate 103 DOD Education Activity schools by 2015, starting with \$439 million to build 10 new schools funded in the FY 2011 budget.

Care for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Servicemembers. The 2011 Budget sustains ongoing efforts to provide high quality medical care to the over 9.5 million

servicemembers and military family and retiree beneficiaries. This includes support for wounded warrior transition units and centers of excellence in vision, hearing, traumatic brain injury, and other areas to continuously improve the care provided to wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers, including:

\$30.9 billion overall for medical care, an increase of 5.8 percent over the 2010 enacted level.

\$669 million to provide care for traumatic brain injury and psychological health.

\$250 million for continued support of mental health and traumatic brain injury research, such as the development of tools to detect and treat post-traumatic stress, and enhancements to suicide prevention measures.

Increase Employment and Job Training for Veterans and Military Spouses. The 2011 Budget provides \$262 million for the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service, which is a \$6 million (2 percent) increase over the 2010 enacted level. Of the increase, \$5 million is for an initiative to assist homeless women veterans and homeless families. The remaining \$1 million will be used to make employment workshops more accessible to spouses of separating servicemembers.

Expand Access to Veterans Medical Care. The men and women who have worn the uniform of our armed forces deserve the best medical care. That is why the 2011 Budget requests \$50.6 billion in advance appropriations for the VA medical care program so that care for the Nation's veterans is not hindered by budget delays. This funding will enable the Department to have timely and predictable funding from year to year, ultimately making it easier for veterans to rely on accessible VA care. In addition, for the first time, highly-disabled veterans who are medically retired from service will be eligible for concurrent receipt of disability benefits from VA in addition to DOD retirement benefits. All medically retired servicemembers will be eligible for concurrent receipt of VA and DOD benefits by 2015. Finally, the President's Budget continues enrolling more than 500,000 moderate-income veterans into the VA health care system by 2013 while maintaining high-quality and timely care for the lower-income and disabled veterans who currently rely on VA.

Support Timely and High-Quality Delivery of Health Care and Benefits through 21st Century Technology. VA and the Department of Defense are jointly implementing VLER, which will enable VA to maintain a complete health record for each Veteran and to deliver care and benefits to veterans with efficiency and accuracy. The President's Budget also invests over \$200 million in automated processing to directly improve the accuracy and timeliness of veterans benefits, particularly disability compensation and the new Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit.

Spring NEC:

An executive session of the National Security Commission met on May 3, 2010 in the Circle Room of the Sheraton Hotel to discuss current national security issues pertaining to the vital interests of the United States and to review the nine resolutions before the commission.

Dan Dellinger, Chairman of the National Security Commission, opened the meeting and shortly thereafter, welcomed National Commander Clarence E. Hill. National Commander Hill spoke briefly and complimented the National Security Commission on its accomplishments and gave gifts in appreciation to Chairman Dellinger and Director Phil Riley. National Commander Hill concluded his remarks by encouraging the commission to keep up the good work.

The following seven proposed resolutions were evaluated by the commission and recommended for approval:

Establish a Unified Military Medical Command

Support Mandatory Separation/Retirement Physicals and Mental Examinations for Servicemembers at Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States

Open Eligibility for TRICARE for Life to All Military Retirees and Their Dependents

Repeal the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate Federal Statute

Streamline TRICARE Practices to Reduce Costs

The American Legion Policy on the Nuclear Posture Review 2010

The American Legion Urges Congress Not to Pre-Empt the Completion of the Department of Defense Directed Study on Don't Ask; Don't Tell (DADT) Policy

Resolution 96, Disrespectful Exploitation of Military Insignia, which had had been held for further study from the fall NEC, was evaluated and rejected. Foreign Relations Commission joined the National Security meeting and presented The American Legion Flex Fuel Resolution for purposes of discussion between the two commissions regarding the overlapping national security issues. The American Legion's position on the current DOD policy on the "Don't Ask; Don't Tell" Policy is one of combat readiness. As such, The American Legion adopted a new resolution in consideration of the current DOD directed study, which examines the impact of ending "Don't Ask; Don't Tell" on combat readiness. The National Security Commission adopted, The American Legion Urges Congress Not to Pre-Empt the Completion of the Department of Defense Directed Study on "Don't Ask; Don't Tell" (DADT) Policy

On Tuesday, May 4, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session and viewed a feature length documentary on women who serve in combat, entitled Lioness. NSFR Assistant Director, Joseph Grassi gave an introduction which placed the film in context for the joint session. He spoke briefly on the topic of women serving in combat before introducing National Security Chairman Daniel Dellinger and Foreign Relations Chairman Tim Tetz, who each spoke briefly. National Security and Foreign Relations Division Director Phil Riley, addressed the joint session prior to the start of the documentary regarding Operation Comfort Warrior (OCW) and his recent trip to Fort Gordon, GA.

In addition, Phil Riley addressed the current issue of troop strength in the United States Army. The Army has filled 15,000 of the 22,000 slots and this end strength is authorized through FY 2015. The Legion urges Congress and DOD to fill the additional 7,000 authorized slots and not draw down end strength further as has been done with negative effects after previous conflicts. The Legion must urge Congress to resource and man the armed forces for the missions and requirements they must be ready to perform. The Legion urges this end strength and resourcing to reduce the current level of unacceptable moderate risks in vital national security mission areas. (See Resolution 95).

The National Security and Foreign Relations Division

The National Security and Foreign Relations Division, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is charged with the responsibility of conducting the extensive day to day work of The American Legion in all matters concerning national defense and foreign policy.

The staff of the division consists of: Philip Riley, Director; Samuel Gilmore, Deputy Director; Joseph Grassi, Assistant Director, and Roshawn Hyde, Executive Secretary to the Director.

During the year, the division works diligently to fulfill its responsibility in implementing the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs.

The division coordinates the National Commander's itinerary for international tours in the interest of supporting America's troops in person; honoring the legacy of the U.S. Military; and spreading goodwill among foreign leaders and diplomats. These tours cover Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The division also handles special assignments including the facilitation of the American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors Program and the management and organization of the Policy Coordination and Action Group. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, are also duties of the staff. Also, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security and foreign relations arenas. Numerous press interviews, background briefings and public releases are arranged, coordinated, and given in cooperation with the Media Relations Office. Other duties include answering correspondence, e-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, embassies around the world and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, a continuous variety of contacts are made with other military and veterans service organizations throughout Washington, D.C. along with policy think tanks, and commercial and private associations.

Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense and foreign policy matters to members of both commissions and The American Legion leadership at all levels of the organization as well as Congress, the Department of State and the general public.

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.

As part of the strategic initiative to promote the Four Pillars of The American Legion and educate the public about the work and services of the organization, the commission launched the new "Powerful Force for Our Nation" campaign. Based on the "Pledge to Service" video that was presented at the Washington Conference, the campaign features on DVD the 3:55 min., "Pledge to Service" video, six television spots, 5 Web site ads, six print ads/posters/handbills and a marketing support guide containing suggestions on getting the materials placed in a variety of media. The print materials can be localized with contact information. The television spots were marketed nationally in October to more than 500 major cable systems across the nation in addition to local marketing efforts by the 14,000 posts around the country.

On Sept. 16, The American Legion Day, posts began a three month community relations effort to expand visibility and provide information about the services they

render to the community. The “Legiontown U.S.A. campaign package provided a sample proclamation, suggested community events and media support tools in a booklet, the Complete Guide to Your Post’s Legiontown U.S.A. Campaign. The suggested annual campaign was designed to assist posts in conducting membership and renewal recruiting and public relations. The commission also promoted the availability of the “Military Experience” posters, available as a free-download in the small window size with editable fields or the large 18 X 24 inch version, suitable for framing, from National Flag and Emblem Sales.

Blackhorse Productions completed the History of The American Legion: A National Legacy in early June. It is available for \$19.95 at www.emblem.legion.org. A portion of the proceeds of the 48-minute DVD goes to the Legacy Scholarship Fund, the NEF and the Child Welfare Foundation.

The American Legion’s Operation Comfort Warriors won \$250,000 as the top Internet vote-getter in February’s Pepsi Refresh Everything Project. The money was used to assist wounded warriors at Fort Gordon, Ga., Landstuhl, Germany, Walter Reed, Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton and other military hospitals and warrior transition units.

Audiovisual projects during the year included supporting the AC&Y Division with video production and web streaming coordination for Boys Nation and Junior Shooting Sports. At American Legion Boys Nation, approximately 10 hours of content was streamed live on the Web and pre-produced daily video packages were placed on Legion TV to highlight each day’s activities in Washington. In addition to The American Legion Baseball World Series, events at National Convention in Milwaukee were streamed live this year.

Media Relations

The new Media Marketing Division was established in Washington, D.C., to enhance The American Legion’s outreach to media in the nation’s capital and beyond. Highlights included appearances by Executive Director Peter Gaytan on Fox News and C-SPAN’s “Washington Journal,” discussing how recent healthcare reform affects veterans. CNN, NBC and Fox News covered The American Legion’s involvement and reaction to the Supreme Court’s “Mojave Cross” decision and how it was a victory for the veterans’ community. Staff experts at The American Legion National Headquarters in Washington were interviewed by The Associated Press, Washington Post, Washington Times, Military Times, Stars & Stripes, National Journal, McClatchy Newspapers, Richmond Times-Dispatch and numerous radio/television stations. Topics included veterans’ unemployment, GI Bill benefits, the VA disability claims backlog, national security issues, and the Arlington National Cemetery report. National Commander Clarence Hill’s visits were covered by media in cities he visited across the country. Legion testimony before Congress is now being covered consistently, with stories being distributed via www.legion.org, the Public Relations Division, and PR Newswire. The division also provided the national Web site with many stories, photos and video clips.

The American Legion’s Media News Center was established on Twitter, with daily “tweets” targeting veterans and defense affairs reporters, producers, talk radio and television hosts, assignment editors and columnists.

Awards

At the 50th Washington Conference, The National Commander’s Public Relations Award was presented to the GI Film Festival for its work in promoting the honorable nature of military service. Since 2007 the annual festival has honored works that

exclusively celebrate the successes and sacrifices of the American military through the medium of film. As the GIFF Web site states, films are presented “that honor the heroic stories of the American Armed Forces and the worldwide struggle for freedom and liberty.”

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award was presented at the 92nd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisc., to the ABA Journal for its publication of “The Cemetery Sea.” Reporter Lynda Edwards chronicled the sinking of the Alaska Ranger, a 203-foot mackerel boat 120 miles off the Alaskan coast during a severe storm of a catastrophic hull breach. It was a compelling story of a disaster at sea and the role the legal and regulatory system played in allowing the disaster to happen. Subsequently, legislation was introduced to increase maritime safety.

The Future

The National Public Relations Commission will continue to engage emerging communication technologies to provide the most accurate, timely information to veterans and their families. In so doing, The American Legion will continue to be the preeminent voice of, and for, the American veteran in our nation.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE COMMISSION

Dennis J. Henkemeyer, Minnesota, Chairman

Jeff Stoffer, Indiana, Director

The American Legion Magazine Division continues to evolve into a multi-media communications arm for the organization. On Nov. 10, 2009, the division launched a reconstructed American Legion Web site and began daily coverage, including stories, links, photos, videos and advertisements. With that development and the creation of *The Dugout* e-newsletter for American Legion Baseball, the division now handles a portfolio of media assets that includes: *The American Legion Magazine* (circulation of approximately 2.3 million), *The American Legion Dispatch* (circulation of approximately 20,000), *The American Legion Web site* (approximately 250,000 unique visitors per month), *The American Legion Online Update* e-newsletter (approximately 235,000 subscribers), *The Dugout* e-newsletter (approximately 4,300 subscribers), *The Four Pillars* annual report (20,000 circulation), the *Burn Pit* blog site and *The American Legion National Convention Program*.

Visitation to The American Legion’s electronic media has grown substantially through 2010, including a near tripling of page visitations, to over 404,000 in August 2010.

The magazine itself continues to serve as the organization’s media flagship. And while much of the print-publications industry has struggled through a difficult economy, *The American Legion Magazine* has stayed on budget, with over \$5,725,178 in advertising sales through the first eight months of the year, and careful cost management.

The American Legion Magazine, Dispatch and all other electronic and printed media produced in the division continue to uphold its core values, defined by the Four Pillars of the organization – Americanism, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security and Children and Youth. Throughout the year, the division has addressed the most prominent issues related to those pillars, including veteran homelessness, the challenges faced by military families, transition assistance, the VA claims backlog and more. The

division has continued to let “America’s leaders speak to America through the pages of *The American Legion Magazine*” by publishing interviews with such national figures as VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and House Minority Leader John Boehner.

Foremost, *The American Legion Magazine* division uses all media channels available to deliver messages of importance and meaning to its members and all other interested parties.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

Michael D. Helm, Kansas, Chairman

Barry A. Searle, Pennsylvania, Director

The following report covers the activities of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff during the program year ending June 30, 2010.

The Twentieth Annual National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, 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, respectively. The approved resolutions are set forth as follows:

2009 National Convention, Louisville, Kentucky

Resolution 2 (SD): Uniform Payment Policy for Emergency Care at Non-Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center Facilities

Resolution 11 (SD): Amend Section 110, Title 38, United States Code, To Provide that Disability Evaluations Continuously In Effect at the Same Evaluation Rating Be Protected After Period of 10 Years

Resolution 12 (SD): Support Legislation to Repeal the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Authority to Impose a Deductible for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans from the Amount Payable for Beneficiary Travel Pay for Medical Examination, Treatment or Care

Resolution 29 (GA): Open-Ended Presumptive Period for Undiagnosed Illnesses for Persian Gulf War Veterans

Resolution 35 (ID): The American Legion Position on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Means Test

Resolution 51 (MD): The American Legion Develop a Suicide Prevention and Outreach Referral Program

Resolution 53 (MD): The American Legion Policy on Accreditation of Representatives by the Department of Veterans Affairs

Resolution 105 (VA&R): The American Legion Support Legislation to Establish a Caregiver Program

Resolution 106 (VA&R): The American Legion Supports Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Opportunities

Resolution 107 (VA&R): The American Legion Withdraws Support for the Commission on the Future of America’s Veterans

Resolution 108 (VA&R): The American Legion Supports Veterans of Valor Organization

Resolution 109 (VA&R): The American Legion Supports the Veteran Housing Program of the Rebuilding Together Organization

Resolution 110 (VA&R): The American Legion Supports the Operation Home Front Organization

**National Executive Committee
August 24, 2009**

Resolution 1 (VA&R): The American Legion Policy on VA and National Health Care Reform

**National Executive Committee Meeting
October 14-15, 2009**

Resolution 21: The American Legion Position on The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) Policy

(Origin: Resolution 47 (CA) 2009 Convention)

Resolution 22: Support for The 2010 National Veterans Wheelchair Games

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution 23: Support of Admission to State Veterans Homes For Any Parent Whose Child Perished While Serving On Active Duty in the Armed Forces of the United States

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution 24: The American Legion Policy on State Veterans Home Per Diem Reimbursement

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution 26: Service on Veterans of Valor Board of Directors

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution 27: Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Clarify the Treatment of a Veteran As Adjudicated Mentally Incompetent For Certain Purposes

Resolution 37: The American Legion Policy on Federal Contractors

Resolution 38: The American Legion Policy Protecting Veterans and Military Retirees Healthcare

**National Executive Committee Meeting
May 5-6, 2010**

Resolution 11: Creation of Ad Hoc Committee to Streamline the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Processes to Address the Backlog of Claims

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution 12: The American Legion Policy on Hazardous Environmental Exposures

(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

National Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held four meetings during the period August 22, 2009, through May 6, 2010.

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met on August 22, 2009, during the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky and a report was subsequently made to the National Executive Committee relative to the Commission's meeting.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the VA&R Commission met at National Headquarters, October 10-11, 2009, for the purpose of considering those matters, which had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a broad range of other veteran related matters. A report of that meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on October 12, 2009.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 86th consecutive year in Washington, DC, on February 27, 2010, in conjunction with the 50th Annual Washington Conference.

Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference

The 87th Annual Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Conference was held at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. on March 1, 2010. The agenda included presentations by officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs and other guest speakers, who discussed matters relative to veterans' benefits and health care.

This year, The VA&R Commission had their presentation on the National Commander's Volunteer of the Year from Orlando VA Medical Center. Presenters on various topics included Catherine Rick, Chief Nursing Officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Bradley Mayes, Director, Compensation and Pension Service for the Department of Veterans Affairs and three panels on Third Party Billing, Volunteering and Women Veterans.

The third party panel included representatives from VA's Chief Business Office, VA's Health Information Management and the Government Accountability Office discussed what steps VA can take to improve on third-party billing and the current status of these initiatives.

The VA&R Commission hosted a first-of-its kind "Legion Volunteering" Panel with representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program and newly established partnerships with Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, VA Suicide Prevention Program and Ride to Recovery. Each of the panelists discussed their program area and how The American Legion makes a difference in terms of volunteers and hours in their communities as well as explained new projects in 2010 designed to help service members and veterans.

A Women Veterans panel also was convened at the conference to discuss VA's outreach, services and treatment. In 2008, 453,250 women veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system for care. The number of women veterans enrolled in the system is expected to grow by 33 percent in the next three years. These numbers will continue to increase and VA has to be prepared for the influx of younger female veterans. The American Legion remains concerned about the gaps that still exist in the VA healthcare delivery practices towards our women veterans.

The panel included highly qualified panelist from both the VA and other VSOs. The overall intent is to have the individuals from both entities have an open and honest discussion about the barriers the women veterans encounter when receiving care through the VA. In addition, they highlighted the difficulties that they face when filing disability claims for their combat related injuries.

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 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 January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010, on matters pertaining to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

- On January 20, 2010, Barry A. Searle, Director of VA&R participated in a round table hosted by the Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on the claims backlog and ways to reduce it.
- On February 4, 2010, Denise Williams, Assistant Director for Research before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee with Respect to Project Hero status.
- On February 23, 2010, Joe Wilson, Deputy Director for Health Care before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on The 2010 VA Budget
- On February 24, 2010, Denise Williams, Assistant Director for Research before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on Suicide Prevention
- On March 4, 2010, Ian DePlanque, Deputy Director for Legislative Action before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, on Numerous proposed legislations benefiting veterans.
- On March 18, 2010, Barry A. Searle Director of VA&R Claims Summit
- On March 24, 2010, Ian DePlanque, Deputy Director of VA&R before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on The quality review process for VBA (STAR)
- On March 25, 2010, Denise Williams, Assistant Director of VA&R to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health on TAL's position on numerous legislations to benefit veterans.
- On March 22, 2010, Jake Gadd, Deputy Director of VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Fiduciary Program.
- On May 20, 2010, Denise Williams, Assistant Director of VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Military Sexual Trauma
- On May 27, 2010, Barry A. Searle, Director of VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health TAL Position on numerous legislations concerning veteran issues. On June 15, 2010, Ian DePlanque, Deputy Director of VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on The State of The BVA on June 23, 2010, Barry A. Searle Director of VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee VA Emergency Preparedness the "Fourth Mission".
- On June 24, 2010, Denise Williams, Assistant Director to VA&R before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Rural Health Care.

Informational Services/Distribution of VA Releases

The American Legion has several pamphlets and brochures available upon request to further strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs' Health Care information system. Highest in demand and most helpful among Women Veterans is, "*The American Legion Guide: Women Veterans- Identifying Risks, Services, and Prevention.*" Previously widely popular brochures, which are now temporarily under revision are, "*The American Legion Guide to: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder- What is it? Who gets it? What can be done?*" and "*The Sourcebook for Military Personnel and Veterans*". The newest publication, which aims toward community service, is "*Veterans Serving Veterans- A summary on The American Legion volunteer programs in the community.*"

The following brochures are also informatively helpful for every veteran in need and can be requested from The Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Division:

- "What to do Before A Veteran Dies: A guide to pre-planning."
- "Agent Orange Benefits & Programs: A Guide for Vietnam Veterans and Their Families."
- "Gulf War Era Benefits & Programs: A Guide for Veterans and Their Families."
- "Welcome Home: Operation Iraqi Freedom & Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans. Know Your Benefits."
- "The American Legion. Post Service Officers Guide." (Updated every year)

These handbooks and pamphlets, as well as those in regards to the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program are also used as handouts at seminars, conferences, and Department Conventions. Supplies of these and other VA&R pamphlets are maintained at The American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana and distributed upon request through The American Legion Washington Headquarters at 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

2010 Report On The National Cemetery Administration

Members of the VA&R Cemetery Committee met to discuss current issues affective veterans in the operations of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), on Monday, March 1, 2010, at the Marriott, Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel.

Topics discussed included H.R. 761: Parental Burial in National Cemeteries (Corey Shea Act). To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the eligibility of parents of certain deceased veterans for interment in national cemeteries sponsored Rep Frank, Barney [MA-4] (introduced 1/28/2009) as well as Related Bill H.R.3949. The "Corey Shea Act" intends to provide for parents of service members who die without spouses to be interred with their service member child. Response from membership of The American Legion has been mixed on this issue, and there is no current position. The decision was made by the Committee to continue to record member opinions on the legislation, but take no action to support a formal opinion at this time.

New Cemetery openings were discussed, including Bakersfield, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Sarasota County, Fla.; southeastern Pennsylvania; and Columbia-Greenville, S.C. All six areas have veteran populations exceeding 170,000, which is the threshold VA has established for new national cemeteries. Ft. Jackson, Jacksonville,

Sarasota, Alabama and Bakersfield National Cemeteries opened for interments in 2009. An update on the medallions discussed last year for application to fixed memorial markers that do not identify the deceased as a veteran as the medallions will be available to families of the deceased service members on April 30, 2010.

State Cemetery Grants Program

In addition to building, operating, and maintaining national cemeteries, VA also administers the State Cemetery Grants program, which provides grants to states for up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, expanding, or improving state veterans cemeteries. Increasing the availability of state veterans' cemeteries is a means to provide a burial option to those veterans who may not have reasonable access to a national cemetery.

Since the program began in 1980, VA has awarded 174 grants totaling more than \$340 million to establish, expand or improve 73 veterans' cemeteries in 38 states, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands. There are 65 operational cemeteries. In 2006, state veterans cemeteries performed 22,434 interments of veterans and eligible family members. For FY 2009 NCA requested \$42 million for the State Cemetery Grants program.

NCA Performance Ratings

In a report released in 2007, VA's national cemeteries received the highest rating ever achieved by a public or private organization in a nationwide customer satisfaction survey. The survey was the 2007 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). VA scored a rating of 95 out of a possible 100 points. The survey found that 98 percent of respondents believed that NCA served their loved ones in a respectful way. For FY 2009, NCA reported that 87.4 percent of the veteran population was within 75 miles of a national veterans cemetery with its strategic goal being 90 percent.

Headstones and Markers

VA furnishes headstones and markers for the graves of eligible persons in national, state, other public and private cemeteries. VA also furnishes memorial headstones and markers bearing the inscription "In Memory of" to memorialize eligible veterans whose remains were not recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science, or cremated and scattered. VA furnishes headstones and markers for national cemeteries administered by the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior, as well as for state veterans cemeteries, and contracts for all columbaria niche inscriptions at Arlington National Cemetery. In FY 2009 VA processed 352,207 applications for headstones and markers for placement in national, state, other public or private cemeteries.

Presidential Memorial Certificate

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, bearing the signature of the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Family members and loved ones may request a certificate, and more than one may be provided. Only proof of eligible service is required. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy began the practice of issuing Presidential Memorial Certificates as a way for the President of the United States, on behalf of all Americans, to

express appreciation for the service and sacrifice of honorably discharged deceased veterans. All subsequent Presidents have continued the program. Five million PMCs have been issued since the National Cemetery Administration became responsible for administration of the program in 1987. In fiscal year 2009 VA provided more than 655,752PMCs to the loved ones of deceased veterans.

National Shrine Commitment

Maintaining cemeteries as National Shrines is one of NCA's top priorities. This Commitment includes the establishment of standards of appearance for national cemeteries that are equal to the standards of the finest cemeteries in the world and involves raising, realigning and cleaning headstones and markers to renovate gravesites. Delivered to Congress in 2002, the National Shrine Commitment Report identified 928 projects for repairs, alterations and improvements. The rows of pristine, white headstones that are set at the proper height and correct alignment provide the vista that is the hallmark of many VA national cemeteries. In 2007 VA collected data that showed that 76 percent of headstones and/or markers in national cemeteries are at the proper height and alignment; 83 percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers are clean and free of debris or objectionable accumulations; and 90 percent of gravesites in national cemeteries had grades that were level and blended with adjacent grade levels.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CONSULTANT

Dr. Ann Marie Gordon joined the Staff as the Senior Medical Consultant on September 18, 2000. She is a practicing physician with experience in internal medicine and occupational and environmental medicine.

The Medical Consultant acts as a source of medical and technical knowledge to the Appeals Representatives at the Appeals and Special Claims Unit at the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the Claims Representatives at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office, Washington, D.C. These representatives discuss cases during case development and submit inquiries to the Medical Consultant with the VA claims folder for review and evaluation as to the appropriate course of action in presenting the case to the either the Board of Veterans Appeals, the VA Regional Office, or the Director, Compensation and Pension Service. The Medical Consultant after reviewing and evaluating the case may (1) discuss the case with the representative and/or (2) prepare a statement explaining the case including providing medical references and a medical opinion relative to the issues.

The American Legion Service Officers in the field also submit difficult cases for review and evaluation to the Medical Consultant. This is accomplished by requesting that the case be called-in for an administrative review or by submitting copies of appropriate portions of the VA claims folder. The Medical Consultant responds directly to the Service Officers.

The Medical Consultant is an advisor to the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical matters, as well as, the attorneys at NVSLP. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and discussed among several key VA&R staff members.

A laptop personal computer has been purchased for the Medical Consultant's use to enable her to keep in touch with daily operations and to present lectures at various schools of training.

During the past year, the Medical Consultant has discussed medical questions with individual Appeals Representatives and Claims Representatives for about 216 cases. She has reviewed 60 cases and submitted written reports on 36 of these cases. The research and medical opinions provided by the Medical Consultant have resulted in numerous grants and remands for additional development.

Additionally, the Medical Consultant has conducted four medical training sessions for the Appeals and Special Claims Unit staff this year and has also conducted presentations at the Indianapolis Department Service Officer Schools and the Washington DC Service Officer training.

Government Life Insurance Activities

The United States Government, acting through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), 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 (SDVI - Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance), and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) for totally disabled veterans who are approved grants for specially adapted housing purposes by the DVA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 1.2 million policies in force as of May 31, 2010, with a combined life insurance coverage of some \$ 14.1 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately \$350 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 100,000-120,000 claims annually in addition to a very high number of other policy transactions as the program's policies are individual in nature and are composed of diverse plans of insurance. The VMLI program insures some 2305 veterans with approximately \$169.8 million dollars of coverage in force. Currently these programs are operated out of the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners approved the use of the 2001 Commissioners Standard Mortality Table as the new mortality standard for life insurance. Since the law allows the VA Secretary to set the mortality table for the VMLI program, VA began using the 2001 table, rather than the previous 1958 table, effective October 1, 2006. This reduced premiums for the program an average of 37 percent.

In addition to the life insurance programs directly operated by the DVA, the Department also has supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the Service member'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), spouses and dependents, and to separated veterans and to retired and separated reservists (VGLI). The SGLI and VGLI programs are administered by the Prudential Insurance Company at a center in Roseland, NJ (the Office of Servicemembers Group Life Insurance – OSGLI), 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 DVA's NSLI program. On May 31, 2010 SGLI provided some 5.6 million active duty and reserve personnel, spouses and dependents with more than \$ 1.33 trillion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 428,234 veterans with insurance in excess of \$ 58.6 billion dollars. Of these policy accounts the OSGLI center in Roseland, NJ maintains only VGLI, with the various military service departments maintaining the rest. The OSGLI center processes between 2500-3500 death claims annually with minimal other transactions due to the very limited nature of the coverage as group term insurance only. Currently, claims arising from military operations in the Middle East and Central Asia are processed in less than two business days from the time the last required document is received at OSGLI. In 1992 VGLI became lifetime 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 be covered under VGLI if desired. In addition, veterans are now permitted to convert their SGLI/VGLI insurance, in partial amounts at different times or in whole, to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial insurance carrier as they leave service, or at any time they are in the VGLI program, without having to wait a stipulated period as was previously the case. Effective April 1, 2001 those entering active duty were automatically covered for a full \$250,000 under SGLI as authorized by Public Law 106-419, and members of the Individual Ready Reserve who have volunteered for assignment to a mobilization category were also made eligible for SGLI coverage under that law. In addition, Public Law 107-14 authorized other program enhancements to the SGLI program, effective November 1, 2001, which allows up to \$100,000 in spousal coverage on a paid premium basis, and provides \$10,000 free life insurance coverage for a member's children. These dependent coverages still cannot, at present, be carried over into the VGLI program and cannot be doubled in the case of both parents being in service. However, while the member's SGLI is in force, spousal coverage can be converted to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial company upon written application in the same manner as a VGLI policy may be so converted. The American Legion insurance unit presented supporting testimony on these legislative changes as they improved greatly the range of financial options available to veterans in these programs, not only at the time of their separation from service, but in later years as their life situation changed as well, and as they permit the SGLI and VGLI programs to more effectively compete with private insurers who have the privilege of excluding applicants as desired and who may, in the case of certain military associations, be co-located on military bases.

New SGLI legislation was enacted in May 2005. Public Law (PL) 109-13, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief of 2005, was signed into law May 11, 2005 and contained provisions for increases in the Dept. of Defense (DOD) Death Gratuity, for increases in the amount of maximum coverage under the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program, and for a new SGLI group policy rider for Traumatic Injury Protection. The SGLI Traumatic Injury Protection Rider became effective December 1, 2005 and currently provides over \$231.8 billion dollars in traumatic injury coverage as per a published schedule of losses caused by such physical injuries. On November 26, 2008 VA issued

new regulations as a result of extensive reviews to expand the TSGLI schedule of losses and the time period involved. Additions to the TSGLI schedule included expansion of definitions for total and permanent loss of sight, hearing, speech, and various types of paralysis. Other additions included certain types of amputation, limb salvage, facial reconstruction, burns, injuries resulting from authorized use of controlled substances and traumatic brain injury effects. Effective September 1, 2005 regular SGLI coverage was automatically increased to \$400,000 from the previous \$250,000, and is the current maximum amount of SGLI coverage permitted. Servicemembers electing lesser amounts must do so in \$50,000 increments. Spousal and dependent coverage was not impacted by the legislation. The Act specified certain spousal and beneficiary notification requirements for members changing beneficiary designations or electing lesser amounts of coverage. The Act also provided for the group traumatic injury insurance rider to be attached to the group coverage provided under SGLI, the premium cost of which to the insured was to be \$1.00 per month. This injury protection ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 in accordance with a disability schedule which has been published and which is composed of a list of physical traumatic injuries involving significant loss of use of physical or mental abilities caused by such injury. Coverage under this rider began December 1, 2005. A retroactive provision for qualifying injuries (Iraq and Afghanistan service) from October 7, 2001 to the effective date was also provided for. The Secretary of Defense certifies to the SGLI center the individuals qualifying for retroactive payments. Servicemembers must be covered by SGLI to have this rider, and for members insured under SGLI the rider is mandatory. Rider coverage ceases on midnight on the date the member separates from the uniformed service. No retroactive period was contained in the legislation for the \$150,000 SGLI increase, but this was addressed through the Dept. of Defense's Death Gratuity benefit instead, as insurance underwriting requirements did not permit new coverage increases to be applied retroactively.

On September 30, 2005 the SGLI enhancement Act of 2005 (PL 109-80) was enacted which made permanent the increase in the maximum allowable SGLI regular coverage from \$250,000 to \$400,000, and which included various spousal notification requirements for beneficiary changes. This last requirement, for an insured married at the time of making a beneficiary election, that the Secretary of Defense notify the insured's spouse should the insured at any time take action to either reduce the amount of coverage or to name a beneficiary other than the insured's spouse, did not meet with the support of The American Legion. It has historically been the belief of The American Legion that this type of fundamental insurance benefit is a special contract between the service member (or veteran in the case of veteran's coverage) and the federal government, and is a matter personal and sacrosanct to those who serve (or have served) the nation in uniform, and that an insured's beneficiary information should not be released to third parties without the consent of the insured. Such spousal notification, however, does not affect a member's right to elect or change his/her beneficiary designation or amount of SGLI coverage at any time.

Further legislative changes in the SGLI program included PL 109-163, enacted January 6, 2006, which authorized the payment of an allowance to service members serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom for an amount equal to the premium of \$150,000 of SGLI coverage, affording them \$150,000 of free SGLI coverage provided they did not decline such coverage, and PL 109-233 enacted June 15, 2006. PL 109-233 extends the duration of SGLI coverage from one to two years for service members who are totally disabled upon the date of their separation from

active duty or reserve status, effective upon the date of enactment for members released before October 1, 2011. For members released on or after October 1, 2011 this period is reduced to eighteen months. Service members who were released within one year of the enactment date were also eligible for this extended coverage period. This legislation also provided the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the sole authority to determine the period of time between the date of a traumatic event and the date a member suffers a qualifying loss for all losses under the Traumatic SGLI (TSGLI) program. The law also removed the previously existing statutory requirement that quadriplegia, paraplegia, or hemiplegia occur within one year of the traumatic injury. For all losses this period has now been extended to two years.

The American Legion's National VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA center had initiated and worked with the DVA 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 out process 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 DVA disability compensation, policy liens for past due premiums, and closer contacts between the SGLI/VGLI administering office and veterans in this category. DVA insurance management completed a staff study through the military service departments, the Defense Manpower Data Center, DPC Austin and OSGLI on the methods such individuals can be identified, and has created an Outreach program to contact by telephone and with additional letters veterans in this class, and advise them of their VGLI options as needed. Currently, separating service members who have been discharged on disability retirement at a rating of 50% to 100% by their branch of service are contacted. Of those contacted by phone, some 83% apply for either the SGLI Disability Extension (free coverage for two years) or VGLI coverages. An on-line SGLI/VGLI manual is available to all military out processing centers and veterans 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, and in February 2004 a detailed Insurance Needs Calculator was added to the VA Insurance website, for veterans to use to assess their life insurance needs and compare VGLI coverage to other insurance options. The Calculator includes VA, Social Security and military benefits in the final assessment. VGLI policyholders also have the ability now to access their policy information through the VA website as well, using passwords and policy information. In 2002-2003 both VGLI and SGLI premiums were reduced; VGLI an overall 40% from 1998 levels, and a 19% reduction for SGLI premiums effective July 1, 2003 with a simultaneous reduction in SGLI spousal rates as well. Effective July 1, 2006, however, a slight increase in SGLI basic premium rates from the previous rate of 6.5 cents per month per \$1,000 of coverage to one of 7 cents per month per \$1,000 took place due to program costs. Also effective July 1, 2006 premium rates for dependent SGLI coverage were reduced for all age groups by an average of 10%, reflecting a better than forecasted claims experience in the Family SGLI program portion. A further premium rate decrease took effect on July 1, 2008 for both the SGLI (to \$26 monthly for full coverage from \$28 monthly) and VGLI programs (for veterans aged 30 to 64). In addition, a premium rate decrease for Family SGLI coverage of 8% for all age

groups will take place effective July 1, 2010. For all programs the Department of Veterans Affairs administers and/or supervises some 6.1 million insurance policies for military personnel, spouses, dependents and veterans, with a total in-force coverage of over \$ 1.33 trillion dollars.

In the SDVI 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 Supplemental \$20,000 of coverage may be purchased by those veterans having a basic Service-Disabled policy and who become totally disabled before age 65. This option has a limited time period of one year from a grant of premium waiver and if application is made before age 65. The American Legion VA&R insurance 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 Veterans Insurance (SDVI) coverage to ensure they are informed as early as possible of these additional benefits. The notification system has been expanded to include compilation of a database of those qualifying for Supplemental coverage and the release of additional reminder notifications to them prior to expiration of their Supplemental insurance option. This is particularly needful as the current DVA system may, in certain areas such as during the time period while a disability compensation claim is awaiting adjudication in a VA Regional Office, be faulty in communicating information on benefits such as disability premium waivers and supplemental coverage to veterans who may qualify for it and who may very well be in life threatening (and therefore time constrained) conditions. A special activity was initiated in this benefit area in 2004 and continued into 2005 by the VA Compensation and Pension Service to address concerns that many service-connected disabled veterans were not being informed enough on the program. A mailing on SDVI notification was included with the annual cost-of-living increase letters, reaching approximately 2.3 million veterans, resulting in many thousands of new applications being received, and continuing to be received, from both veterans directly and through DSO/VSO offices nationwide. To assist in this project, SDVI applications have also been made available on the VA's Insurance website through an Autoform program whereby applications can be made, saved, printed for mailing or submitted electronically as desired. This new tool became active March 5, 2004.

The DVA 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 DVA area networks and through the Internet, and placing ever more records and transaction activities, previously done on paper, into their on-line computer systems. Beginning in Summer 2001, the DVA Insurance Center accelerated a planned program of transforming their insurance operation into a wholly computerized system no longer utilizing paper insurance files, but using imaging technology instead to replace paper files with electronic ones. The impetus for this was to create space in the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center for one of the three regional Pension Centers which have been organized to assist in the reduction of the national backlog in compensation and pension cases. The insurance system, known as VICTARS (Veterans Insurance Claims Tracking and Response System) permits on-screen display of all file documents that would previously have been maintained in a paper insurance folder, and gives VA insurance specialists the ability to input and process claims, transactions and responses to inquiries with far greater speed than any earlier system used to date, and to maintain a full history of such in the policyholder's new electronic file. In connection with this new

software package, VA employees have been provided with dual screen display monitors and updated capacity high speed computers required by the new programming. Currently, over 6 million images are available to insurance specialists via their desktop computers. All previous paper insurance folders (over 2.5 million) have been retired to a nearby Federal Records Center, but are still available for recall as may be needed on certain cases. This accomplishment has resulted in savings of some \$1 million annually. Insurance services are further augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit has been completed to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries and transaction requests received at the VA insurance Internet address (<http://www.insurance.va.gov/>), and by providing comprehensive insurance information through links to the VA's Home Page and VA's insurance Home Page. Additionally, in accordance with the federal initiative to have all or most government disbursements done by Direct Deposit (Electronic Transfer of Funds) the VA Insurance Center has completed actions for the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. All monthly insurance award/annuity payments are by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees unless otherwise requested by the payee. In this vein, all policy loan, dividend refund and cash surrender payments are also sent to an insured's bank account if VA benefits are or were on direct deposit, or if an insured is paying premiums by automatic deduction from a checking account, unless requested otherwise. New settlement claim forms for death settlements contain blocks for beneficiaries to include bank information should they wish insurance settlement checks transferred to them electronically. As with the VGLI program, NSLI policyholders may now also access their account information through the VA's insurance website with a PIN number, and perform certain transactions such as policy loan applications. For VMLI there is now also an on-line Insurance Needs Calculator, similar to that for VGLI, available as well.

Several insurance initiatives remain pending in Congress for 2010.

S. 728, is a proposal to provide for an increase in the VA's regular Supplemental Service-Disabled insurance program to \$30,000 maximum coverage from the \$20,000 presently allowed. The American Legion presented testimony previously that all or part of a coverage increase for the regular SDVI program should rather apply to the basic SDVI coverage which, unlike Supplemental coverage, has a disability waiver of premiums provision. This would benefit far more veterans in need of insurance protection who are unable to afford the high cost of Supplemental SDVI premiums, and who subsequently must forego such increased protection.

S.728 additionally provides an increase in Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) to a maximum coverage level of \$150,000 (\$200,000 after January 1, 2012) from the current maximum of \$90,000.

Lastly, several further legislative proposals, in Committee as of June 2010, are H.R. 2379 which would allow participants in the VGLI program to purchase up to an additional \$25,000 in life insurance coverage once every five year policy term period, H.R. 2713 to increase basic SDVI from its present \$10,000 maximum to a maximum coverage of \$100,000, plus increase Supplemental SDVI to a new maximum of \$50,000 from the current \$20,000, with an open period of two years for those meeting SDVI requirements, but who had not applied for such previously, H.R. 2774 to make permanent the two year free SGLI extension period for totally disabled veterans mentioned earlier,

and H.R. 2968 for a technical adjustment in accelerated insurance benefits in certain terminal cases under SGLI and VGLI.

**Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Service Units:
DVA Insurance Center at Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN DMC Center**

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Staff at Philadelphia consists of a Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative and a Pension Benefits Representative. An associated office at the St. Paul center has one Supervisor/VA&R Representative and a Pension Benefits Representative, plus a National Staff Pension Representative has also been added at the VA Regional Office in Milwaukee, WI, which also has a VA Pension Center as well as Philadelphia and St. Paul.

The Chief of Insurance Activities / Insurance Representative must have a thorough knowledge of government life insurance laws, regulations, and transaction and adjudication procedures, and be able to analyze them correctly in order to properly represent insured veterans and their beneficiaries. The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Director and other interested personnel are kept informed on policy matters, changes in DVA 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 coverages continues to be an American Legion legislative effort. Coordination has also been effected with the DVA Pension Center management in both Philadelphia, St. Paul and Milwaukee for the creation of a system whereby the national VA&R staff personnel can process pension inquiries from Department and Veterans Service Officers as they may require.

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 DVA 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 DVA 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. An insurance guidebook for Veterans Service Officers was composed by the Philadelphia insurance unit in 2007 to assist DSO/VSO personnel in identifying insurance needs and processing insurance applications and claims for their clients, and this has been distributed, beginning in April 2007, to hundreds of American Legion and affiliated veterans service offices nationwide. Coordination with DVA 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, particularly in emergency cases. The Philadelphia office remains heavily involved in the large increase in SDVI applications and related appeals cases beginning in 2004 and 2005, occasioned by the mass mailing of SDVI notifications to

virtually all service-connected veterans mentioned earlier. Information, staff analysis, and testimony/comments for the recent major legislative insurance benefit increases, described above, was provided to the Director, National VA&R Commission for presentation to Congress on these issues.

The Philadelphia office is provided with newer computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the DVA networks and the Internet. These are operational and have Internet and VA Benefits Delivery Network, SHARE and Virtual VA access. The St. Paul office provides similar operations, staff representation and nationwide veteran's service in the field of DVA Debt Management operations (The DVA's Debt Management Center is located at the VA St. Paul center), which now comprise its main mission as transfer of all insurance accounts to Philadelphia has been completed, and in casework involving the VA Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) also located at the St. Paul facility.

A major new addition to the Philadelphia National VA&R unit occurred effective January 2010 with the acquisition of an experienced service officer for the new role of Pension Benefits Representative, to include all necessary computer and high capacity Fax equipment. A new National Staff representative was also added to the VA Regional office and PMC in Milwaukee as well. The mission of the PMC representatives is to assist in all VA pension, DIC, accrued benefits, burial and dual entitlement claims where The American Legion holds power of attorney. As of June 2010 the VA PMCs had some 233,954 claim and award actions of all categories pending with some 107,369 located at the Philadelphia PMC. In May 2010, due to extremely large case backlogs in the PMCs (Philadelphia PMC alone had a backlog of over 100,000 cases), VACO mandated all DIC, accrued benefits, burial, death pension and dual entitlement claims would be processed at their home VA Regional Offices for a 120 day period beginning June 1, 2010.

For the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported:

(DMC = Debt Management Center)

Letters Received	19,122
Letters Written.....	17,991
Disability Insurance Claims.....	2,195
Death Insurance Claims.....	1,258
Insurance Folders Reviewed.....	5,304
In-Force Insurance Policy Accounts Reviewed.....	6,289
New Insurance Accounts – SDVI.....	4,982
Telephone Contacts	9,388
Personal Contacts	6,750
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	5,232
DVA Case Responses Processed: Insurance, Pension and Debt Management cases.....	25,324
*Live Claims, Evidence and Other Submittals Presented.....	41,870
<i>*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, master record data changes, general inquiries, Debt Management and Pension case claims and supporting documents.</i>	

DMC Original Claims	2,935
DMC & Pension Case Audits	13,894
DMC Debt Waiver Cases	1,819
Pension Claims, Inquiries/Transactions.....	13,240

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 twenty-seven Appeals Representatives.

Within the Table of Organization, the Deputy Director for Claims Service is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans' Appeals and Special Claims Unit, the Appeals Management Center and Washington Regional Office staff.

Cases at the Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted on the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a Veterans Law Judge of the Board of Veterans' Appeals with the appellant. The Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit consists of an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, three secretaries, one file clerk and thirteen Appeals Representatives. The staff has been augmented by accredited American Legion service officers from across the country participating in The American Legion/National Veterans Legal Services Program Veterans Law Internship Program. This intense veteran's law training program provides hands-on education for interested service officers.

One Appeals Representative and one secretary are located at the Washington, D.C. Regional Office (WRO) to provide claims service to individuals residing within the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Region. In addition to our representative at the WRO, two additional appeals representatives work exclusively on remands that are processed at the Appeals Management Center located at the WRO.

The Military Review Boards Units, supervised by the Director of VA&R, review, record, prepare written briefs and also appear 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 Appeal Representatives are assigned to this unit.

Board of Veterans Appeals

This report reflects the activities of The American Legion's Board of Appeals and Special Claims Unit (Appeals Unit) during the period of June 30, 2009, through June 30, 2010. The Office Manager of the Appeals and Special Claims Unit was Samuel Gilmore from June 30, 2009 – July 2009 and Verna Jones from July 2009 – May 2010.

During the past twelve months, our Appeals Representatives reviewed a total of 6,970 cases. Included in this total were 99 (American Legion represented) personal hearings conducted at the Board of Veterans' Appeals Central Office (CO) in Washington, DC.

During this reporting period, the Board of Veterans' Appeals rendered a total of 49,287 decisions, which 8,508 (17%) had American Legion representation. These decisions consisted of 2,246 (21.9%) approvals, 3,551 (13.9%) remands, 2,370 (20.8%)

denials, and 341 (0.69%) others. The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases, deaths, and dismissals. These figures represent a 1.6% decrease in appeal approvals, a 1% decrease in remands and a 4% increase in denials over the previous 12-month period.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed and disposed of 2 cases involving requests by Department Service Officers of The American Legion in obtaining Administrative Review by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office, Compensation and Pension Service.

As recorded in last year's report, the two most significant challenges for Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 were to continue to eliminate avoidable remands and to reduce the backlog of pending appeals, this continues to be a challenge, and however, the Board continues to focus on methods to increase decision output and the quality of the decisions rendered. The Board also focused on efforts to reduce the backlog which included the use of voluntary third year law school students to screen appeals. As of June 30, 2010 there were 3,827 American Legion represented cases in the Appeals Management Center (AMC) system, inclusive of brokered cases to Nashville, TN, Huntington, WVA and Seattle, WA.

These cases are given expeditious treatment, in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations. Due to the backlog the Board is currently adjudicating appeals with docket dates on or before February 2009. The American Legion has custody of approximately 4,732 pre- February 2009 original appeals. Quality remains our first priority. However, due to the increase in productivity by the BVA, The American Legion Appeals and Special Claims unit is faced with the challenge of meeting the demands of the Board's increase in productivity. Currently each American Legion appeals representative at the Board of Veterans' Appeals is required to review and complete three (3) appeals per day. The BVA unit is a part of a Board-wide initiative to identify all appeals in our possession belonging to appellants 75 years and older and advance them on the Boards docket so that these appeals can be adjudicated most expeditiously (per CFR). During this reporting period, The American Legion BVA Unit has identified and returned and completed over 1,250 appeals to the Board for review and final decision. This is an on-going project that will continue until such time the BVA determines that this special project is no longer necessary.

Military Review Boards Unit

Title 10, United States Code, sections 1552 and 1554, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Military Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for Correction of Military Records. The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of these boards shortly after World War II and has represented former service members petitioning these boards for relief since.

During the period 1 July 2009 through 30 June 2010 the staff of the Military Review Boards Unit provided counsel, guidance and representation to former service members seeking correction of their service record by the Army, Air Force, Navy / Marine Corps and Coast Guard discharge review and correction boards. These requests involved wide variety issues including character of service upgrades, reason for discharge changes, entitlement or amendment of physical disability severance or retirement, issuance or reissuance of military awards and decorations, request for service and medical records, and administrative corrections to military records.

The following breaks down the individual administrative actions taken by the staff of the Military Review Board Unit in assisting former service members prepare their cases for review by the respective boards.

**Case Development / Office Task
Volume Communications**

Phone Calls.....	2520
Emails.....	3065
Mail/Fax.....	657
Appointments.....	155
Consultations	
Applicant.....	3285
Petitioner.....	913
VSO/Agency.....	433
Veteran/Other.....	327
Administration	
Correspondence.....	1487
Tracking Actions.....	1794
Research/Training.....	727
Clerical Tasks.....	2068

The following classifies the types of reviews that were presented to the respective service boards.

Military Discharge Review Boards

	Record Reviews	Hearing Reviews	Reconsiderations
Air Force	14	30	03
Army	19	29	04
Navy	48	22	02
Marine Corps	41	11	01
Coast Guard	00	00	00

Boards for Correction of Military Records

	Record Reviews	Hearing Reviews	Reconsiderations
Air Force	40	00	03
Army	51	00	07
Navy	34	00	04
Marine Corps	22	00	03
Coast Guard	01	00	00

This final breakdown provides the total number of cases received back from the boards, the number of favorable decisions and the percentage of petitions that were corrected.

Military Discharge Review Boards

	Total Decided	Total Corrected	Percentage
Air Force	38	05	13
Army	56	10	17
Navy	36	09	25
Marine Corps	17	05	30
Coast Guard	00	00	00

Boards for Correction of Military Records

	Total Decided	Total Corrected	Percentage
Air Force	39	02	05
Army	60	10	16
Navy	20	02	10
Marine Corps	12	01	08
Coast Guard	00	00	00

Each of the boards is under a congressional mandate to adjudicate cases within one year from the date of acceptance. Currently all are meeting or exceeding their requirements with timeframes ranging from 8 to 12 months.

The Military Review Board Unit also produces supplies and presents training material for our Department Service Officers as well as instructional guides for our applicants and petitioners seeking relief from the boards.

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, tens of thousands of 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 8,700 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 9,500 pieces, with over 15,800 casework responses to DSOs/VSOs processed for both the Insurance (Philadelphia) and Debt Management (St. Paul) offices. The St. Paul office also handled almost 23,000 pension case responses to DSOs/VSOs.

The combined workload for the Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards Unit, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 12,000 cases.

Department Service Officers School

The National Organization continues to authorize the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission to conduct twice yearly training schools for the Department Service Officers and other accredited representatives of The American Legion. It represents the organization's ongoing commitment to developing a network of highly trained and experience service officers who can carry out the VA&R program at the department level.

The purpose of these sessions is to provide current information about changes in veterans' law and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adjudication policies and help accredited American Legion service officers to improve their advocacy skills. The program of instruction includes basic training for new service officers, and advanced

training on issues relating to claims processing, disability ratings, personal hearings, development of appeals, and the interpretation and application of precedent decisions by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Instructors include members of the National Association of Department Service Officers; Mr. Ron Abrams, Esq., Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP); and staff of the VA&R Division. Guest speakers from the Department of Defense, VA and other agencies are also invited to brief participants on relevant and timely issues.

The primary goal of this training program, which began in 1985, is to enhance the skills and effectiveness of accredited American Legion service officers. A secondary goal is to provide the school participants with the latest information on veterans' benefits, which they can, then, share with other service officers in their respective departments.

The Departments' participation in and support for the program remains very high. The first session of the 2008 school was held March 26-28, 2008 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. There were more than 100 service officers in attendance. The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Washington Conference took place the following week. The second session of 2008 was held July 31-August 2, 2008 at the Sheraton City Center Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 119 service officers in attendance.

A full day of training for new service officers was held on July 30, 2008. This training replaced the 4-hour breakout session previously conducted on the first day of the DSO School. VA&R staff, senior Department Service Officers and officers of the National Association of Department Service Officers conducted the training. The National VA&R Division provided direct support and assistance as necessary. Thirty-five service officers attended the training.

Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

The VAVS National Deputy Representative attended the sixty-fourth meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) that was held in Cincinnati, OH during April 7-9, 2010. The American Legion's Deputy National Representative, Jacob Gadd, also served as the NAC EC Chairman and emcee for the conference. The meeting also included several volunteer business sessions and educational workshops, and presentations of NAC Volunteer of the Year Awards and the James H. Parke Scholarship Award. 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 and is awarded annually to an exceptional VAVS student volunteer. The highlight of the NAC Conference was the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki's speech on volunteerism. The Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Petzel also attended and provided remarks.

During FY 2009, The American Legion had 6,307 members that volunteered over 916,598 hours of service to hospitalized veterans and those in their communities. Based on an independent sector volunteer rate of \$20.25 per volunteer hour in 2010, this is a total cost savings of \$18.4 million to VA. The American Legion also had an additional 202 new volunteers added in 2009 and an increase of 7,118 hours.

In addition, The American Legion also partnered with other organizations in 2009 such as Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together to ensure veterans are able to live in quality housing. The American Legion created a Suicide Prevention Program within VA Medical Centers to help connect a service member or veteran experiencing a mental

health crisis with VA's National Suicide Prevention Hot line. The American Legion also supported the Ride to Recovery program, a weeklong cycling event in several locations across the United States to help injured veterans speed up their recovery and rehabilitation process.

National Field Service

The National Field Service unit division has undergone several staff changes in 2009-2010. Former Deputy Director for Health Care Joseph Wilson transferred to the Board of Veterans Appeals. Jacob B. Gadd, Assistant Director for Program Management, became the Deputy Director for Health Care. The National Field Service unit now includes James Woodson, Denise Bullock and Antonio Merrick. Two National Field Service Representatives positions are open and are currently being hired.

From January 2010 to June 2010, the Field Service Unit conducted 32 site visits throughout the VA Medical Center system with the System Worth Saving Taskforce members to collect data for the 2010 System Worth Saving Report. This year's report will focus on services provided by Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers.

Field Service Unit continues to assist veterans who were severely wounded or soldiers experiencing readjustment issues related to their combat service in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, assistance is also offered to their families to mitigate any burdens placed on them due to their current situations. This assistance includes providing information on VA or DoD programs and maintaining contact to remain aware of progress in their cases. Each representative continues to monitor the issues he/she was assigned.

Accredited Representatives

In completing VA Form 21-22, "Power of Attorney", the claimant appoints The American Legion as accredited representative in a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is the duty of the organization to provide assistance, advice, and counsel to veterans, survivors and dependents so as to ensure their rights are protected and they receive all benefits to which they may be entitled under the law. The American Legion, as a Congressionally chartered organization, conducts this service program through the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Accredited Representatives of The American Legion provide formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals. Their respective Departments have recommended these representatives for accreditation because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of federal benefit programs, especially those provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To become an Accredited Representative of The American Legion, a formal application (VA Form 2-21) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, with an accompanying endorsement signed by the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. The Director, as the National Certifying Officer, or the Deputy Director for Claims Service, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of VA for action. This form is never sent directly to the General Counsel, as accreditation will not be granted unless the request has been certified by the organization. Upon approval of the application, the individual is recognized by VA as an Accredited Representative of The American Legion and will receive official notification of this action from VA. The accreditation will remain in

effect until such time as the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission receive 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 319 requests for accreditation and 116 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 2010, there were 2,373 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion with 169 pending accreditation. Any questions concerning the proper procedure or regulations pertaining to accreditation of individuals or their activities should be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission in the Washington office.

Personnel and Organization

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division at the Washington office from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

The American Legion Heroes To Hometowns Program was transferred to the Economics Division. Numerous new employees were added to the staff as well as new positions.

The most current table of organization of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 2010, is as follows:

Director.....	1
Administrative Assistant.....	1
Deputy Director for Health Care	1
Field Representatives.....	4
Secretary.....	1
Deputy Director for Claims Services.....	1
Administrative Assistant	
Deputy Director for Legislative Action and Operations.....	1
Supervisor, Review and Correction Boards.....	1
Review Board Representative.....	2
Office Manager, Board of Vets. Appeals Unit.....	1
Appeals Representatives.....	12
Secretaries.....	4
Medical Consultant.....	1
Assistant Director for Policy and Research	1
Regional Office Manager	1
Appeals Representatives.....	2
Secretary.....	1
Total Personnel — Washington office.....	36
 Insurance Field Office: Philadelphia, PA	
Chief of Insurance Activities	1
 Pension Management Center: Philadelphia	1

Debt Management Center/PMC St. Paul, MN
 Assistant Director 1
 PMC Representative 1
 Pension Management Center Milwaukee 1
 Benefits Delivery at Discharge Winston Salem..... 1
 Benefits Delivery at Discharge Salt Lake City 1
VA&R TOTAL 43

Staff Field Assignments

The staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, including the director, deputy director and assistant directors attended various Legion functions around the country, such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, the Conferences and fact-finding trips. The Field Service staff visited 32 hospitals along with The System Worth Saving Task Force. Select VA&R staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

Certificates of Appreciation

Under authority of May 1958 NEC Resolution, we have continued the program of awarding a Certificate of Appreciation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon their retirement or resignation, For Services Rendered and Cooperation Extended in Connection with The American Legion’s Rehabilitation Program. Under criteria established in line with the enabling resolution, nominations for the award are submitted by Department or National officials of The American Legion twice a year. The nominations are considered by a committee of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission at meetings preceding the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, and the National Convention. The Committee recommends to the Commission the names of those considered deserving of the Certificate.

Four Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010, for an overall total of 1,321 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.

Twelve Citations for Meritorious Service and Loyal Cooperation in The American Legion’s Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program were presented during the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Since this type of recognition and appreciation began, 5,059 citations for meritorious service have been presented.

The American Legion Auxiliary

It’s been my privilege to travel this year as the national president and to have the terrific opportunity to see firsthand the incredible work being done by members of the American Legion Auxiliary in our almost 10,000 communities nationwide. The work done by our volunteers in their communities, in veterans hospitals and homes, and children’s hospitals and homes is very impressive.

I was uniquely privileged to travel to the Far East and Europe where the national commander and I were honored to lay wreaths at memorials and cemeteries to pay tribute to our fallen service members from previous wars. I was truly amazed at the reverence and respect shown to our heroes by the people of these foreign countries as we participated in these ceremonies. We were always among military honor guards, village officials, even bands on some occasions, as we paid homage to those who previously protected our freedoms and the freedom of those nations.

We celebrated Pearl Harbor Day in Hawaii and D-Day in Normandy and enjoyed the hospitality of the French people in Sainte Mere Eglise and dedicated a World War II museum in honor of our military.

We had the opportunity to spend some time with members of both The American Legion and the Auxiliary from the Department of France and to be hosted at several of their fine Legion posts. We were charmed by their friendship and dedication to our organizations.

We were able to visit both our military hospitals in Ramstein and Landstuhl and to see a storage area full of comfort items sent by our members to help the recovery process of our wounded and hundreds of coupons sent to augment the family resources. Additionally our members welcomed the troops home, sent hundreds of pocket flags and continued to help the military families while the service member is deployed. The need is great and our members are there to help in a myriad of ways.

Children have been a major focus of this year's activities starting with our special endowment fund "Educating Children of Warriors," to our understanding the need to include our Junior members in our many programs and projects, to our Girls State programs offered to high school Juniors to attend our premier program teaching of all levels of government and then the ultimate Girls Nation program in Washington, D.C. How proud we are of all these young women as they embrace the opportunity to learn more about lobbying, how to write a bill and pass legislation and to run for office. Unquestionably it's a challenging opportunity that helps to equip them for their future.

We are also very proud of our Americanism Youth Conference at Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. Helping children of our nation understand the Constitution and the Bill of Rights by using the heroes from the past such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and others brings history to life in a dramatic but fun way to help them better understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

We were privileged that the four recipients of our Public Spirit award this year at our Awareness Assembly luncheon were all Auxiliary members contributing to making a better life for our military. I doubt there was a dry eye in the audience as these members related their true life stories of their four organizations and how they help every day to bring comfort and caring to our service members.

Our many hospital volunteers bring that same comfort and caring to our hospitalized veterans and those in nursing homes. They bring a bit of home with them as they make their visits and talk to these individuals. Day in, day out, like postmen making their rounds, our volunteers serve in these institutions to make each day a bit better for those who gave so much in service to our country.

This was an eventful year with our first ever strategic planning, "A New Day is Dawning," event at Awareness where our members were able to participate in a full day's activities to help them understand the process as well as be informed about the three initiatives developed by the retreat group last September. The NEC approved the

plan and so we will move forward this coming year to start to implement those initiatives with both volunteers and staff working together to forge ahead.

We continue to support the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and the Spirit of Youth Fund for scholarships. At unit levels, much is done and accomplished to support the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

We moved our office farther north on Meridian Street and now are about 95 percent settled in the new building. We invite you to visit when you are in Indianapolis. It is truly beautiful and you will be pleased to see many beautiful articles from our Cavalcade of Memories displayed throughout the offices. We now have meeting space for some of our smaller meetings, so we don't have to rent expensive hotel space. We will be able to invite community organizations to utilize the space as well. So please stop by and visit when you are in the area; you will be warmly welcomed by staff.

This year, we were granted approval of our application to become a 501c3 organization which permits us to seek corporate grants. The NEC approved our recommendation for board members for the Foundation and they have elected their officers and have held one meeting to date. You will be receiving information on this entity as time goes on. They are really just in the primary stages of development but aggressively pursuing their agenda of getting off the ground and on their feet, raring to go.

Our organization worked under the theme "Forward Thinking – A Ripple Today, a Wave Tomorrow" knowing that some of the work that was started during this administrative year would not be finished, but that it would be ongoing under the new leadership. Our work doesn't start and stop with the national president who is serving, but rather it continues to evolve and becomes a better year - each year.

Our goal of service is to improve each year, to provide inspiration so that others will want to join and to celebrate our successes.

We need to strengthen our organization each year, follow our motto of "Service, not Self" and move forward each year into a brighter future for the American Legion Auxiliary.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
National President Rita Navarreté, New Mexico

A year ago as members filed out of the Kentucky International Convention Center, there was a sense of excitement in the air as the newly elected officers and newly appointed Chairmen set forth to Reconnect and Energize – with their programs and plans for the upcoming year. Each armed with a completed Plan of Action, the goals for the 2009-2010 year were clearly established. The tagline for the plan was BELIEVE, and as I declared in my installation last year, "If we believe we can do things, then the outcome will be successful as members need to believe in themselves to accomplish tasks that face our organization."

I believe we accomplished a great deal in the past 12 months. To date, our organization collectively volunteered nearly 10 million volunteer service hours in the 2010 reporting period, putting us on pace for 15 million total service hours for the year. In addition, we collectively raised more than \$12 million to support veterans' causes and military families.

During my year of service, I traveled many miles and participated in many mission-driven programs. I visited with veterans at VA Medical Centers, nursing homes and

homeless centers in 30 states. I also visited troops serving throughout the United States, Europe and Far East. I love hearing their stories, and I know they appreciate our support.

The highlights of the year were many, but two specific events stood out among them that directly relate to the mission of our organization:

In October, I attended the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in San Antonio. The American Legion Auxiliary is a national co-sponsor of this event, which celebrates the rehabilitating power of art. I saw some amazing works of visual art using paint, metal and wood. But the performing artists truly moved me. I love patriotic music—I get teary-eyed hearing the National Anthem at ball games. So can you imagine the effect of hearing these songs sung by the voices of veterans who have given so selflessly to protect the freedom they were singing about? Words can't describe this experience.

Equally inspiring were the wounded warriors in Ride 2 Recovery, a cycling program which aids in the mental and physical rehabilitation of disabled veterans. I was especially touched by Nathan Hunt, a double amputee who gave both his legs in service during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nathan rode a handcycle more than 350 miles across the state of Florida. I also was touched by the passion and commitment of the thousands of volunteers of The American Legion Family who make these events possible in California, Texas, Florida, Virginia, Wyoming and Colorado.

A Call to Service Corps VISTA grant from The Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) made it possible for the American Legion Auxiliary to bring in volunteers for much needed help during tough economic times when we were forced to do more work with less staff. Working together, they helped in our goal to increase membership in the Auxiliary and encourage community service.

I also was passionate about "Milestones Over the Years." Historians at Unit, District, Department, and National levels dug deep in looking back at the beginning of our great organization and sharing those stories within the Auxiliary and their communities. Our National Marketing and Communications team got involved, introducing a Decades of Making a Difference series in Auxiliary magazine and recapping our 90-year history in the convention program book you're reading now.

Stories and connections go hand in hand. Everyone has a story. Stories are powerful tools for connecting and inspiring...and attracting new members! My vision is to have everyone in our communities know who we are so that when we celebrate our 100th year of service, the American Legion Auxiliary's name is known throughout this great country! That's why it is so vital that each of these stories be told! Let us enter our next year of service reminding ourselves to promote all that is good in the nation today, tomorrow and for generations to come through serving those who have served us and fought for the freedom we enjoy today.

**National Vice President
Carlene Ashworth, Texas**

It has been an honor to serve as National Vice President of the world's largest women's patriotic service organization. While the responsibilities of this office do not compare to that of National President, they still present a demanding pace as you serve the organization and National President and prepare for your next year of service.

Every activity and event was a meaningful experience, but several stand out as extra special moments and once-in-a-lifetime experiences: Shortly after the 2009 National Convention, I was privileged to attend the National Commander's Testimony in

Washington, DC along with other Auxiliary leaders. The next week I represented the ALA in my own hometown as guest speaker at the opening ceremony for the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall.

In November 2009, I attended a Homeless Veteran's Luncheon hosted by our National Headquarters staff. The opportunity to interact with these men who have served their country, gone through difficult times and are now being given another chance to get their lives back in order was very meaningful to me. They were very grateful to our staff for hosting this first ever event, but I was extremely grateful to them for their service and determination to make positive changes in their life. The following day, I represented the national president at Veteran's Day Council of Indianapolis events, which included a moving ceremony, a parade and the 45th Annual Veterans Day Banquet.

Representing the National President at the Mid Year Conference hosted by The American Legion Family in New York State in January was an opportunity to share fun and fellowship with many members and speak before their delegation. It was an honor to be treated so royally and with such wonderful hospitality.

Representing ALA in Independence, MO for the Truman Day Pilgrimage in May, I was honored to lay a wreath in the name of our American Legion Auxiliary national organization during ceremonies. I also had the honor of representing President Rita at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, where I presented the American Legion Auxiliary Women's Varsity Swimming MVP Award to Tara Marie Chapmon. This special award is presented to the team midshipman who best exemplifies the high caliber of leadership and athletic skill expected of a student at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Participating in the Veteran's Creative Arts Festival in San Antonio in October was a truly meaningful hands-on experience. Our members volunteer thousands of hours to this event which is a core part of our mission.

Representing the national organization at President Rita's Homecoming in Albuquerque, we visited many beautiful sights, including Rita's own church, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where we learned that some of the beams from the World Trade Center formed a significant part of its rich history. Two of the 20-foot steel beams were donated to the church to build a new bell tower that will memorialize victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Participating in Washington, D.C. briefings in March, 2010, other ALA national leaders and I met with Retired General Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to be briefed on his plans for handling veterans' claims and the plight of homeless veterans. Briefings were also given by members of The American Legion Washington, DC staff who head the VA&R, Legislative, and Economic Divisions.

While volunteering my personal time as a support vehicle driver in the Ride2Recovery Texas Challenge in April, I had the honor of meeting General George W. Casey, Jr., the 36th and current Chief of Staff of the United States Army. More significantly, however, was the opportunity to participate hands-on in a program whose only purpose is the rehabilitation of our wounded warriors and their families. Over 160 cyclists and many of their families from across the country joined together to share war stories, form lasting bonds of friendship, and overcome obstacles they never thought possible due to their injuries. This truly is a "see it to believe it" kind of program that is directed by our mission.

I participated in many meetings and workshops designed to prepare the NVP and other future leaders for the transition into upcoming leadership roles. These meetings included the Presidents & Secretaries Conference in October; ALA Foundation Board Meetings in October and May; Long Range Strategic Planning, Membership, National

Finance Committee and Three-Year Budget Planning sessions; Awareness Assembly and NEC and National Finance Committee meetings in February/March; National Chairman's Workshop in April; and The American Legion Membership Workshop in Indianapolis in August.

Serving as National Vice President with our 89th National President Rita Navarette at the helm has been a very special year filled with excitement, hard work, and unforgettable moments. President Rita's indomitable spirit and enthusiasm has no comparison as she continues serving our organization with her love of God and Country.

National Secretary
Mary "Dubbie" Buckler, Indiana

In the year since joining the leadership team of the American Legion Auxiliary, many longstanding and new challenges have emerged amidst a nonprofit environment of increased public and regulatory scrutiny and decreased revenue. Analogous to a marathon, we are pushed to the max. And "going the distance" is about enduring pressures, believing in possibilities, adapting to change, and strategically focusing on the vision: an ALA harmoniously poised to advance its mission with sufficient resources to achieve its strategic goals.

At your National Headquarters, we have been operating at a 30% staffing vacancy and are now honed to the bone. Having moved from silos to teams, talented staff met challenges by cutting, curtailing, and postponing expenditures, foregoing compensation adjustments, and saving the organization over 10% in budgeted Headquarters expenses on top on the nearly 20% cut at the end of FY09 in the wake of a national dues structure unchanged in 16 years.

My priorities were to build organizational capacity and improve communications. With unparalleled creativity, dedication, and hard work, we are realizing some pretty significant achievements.

The American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA project is a stellar first for the ALA. With the \$6 million-dollar federal grant, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) became the ALA's largest external investor to build the capacity of the organization to advance its core mission – service to our US veterans. Seventeen Volunteers in Service to America whose living expenses are underwritten by the CNCS will have completed their one-year ALA Call to Service Corps commitment, developing leadership support tools that will be made available on the new website to help departments and units grow and serve, and participating in inaugural Department field sites to reach out to military families and veterans facing poverty. The report on this program fully funded by the federal government is provided to the 2010 convention body and highlights the outcomes of these exceptionally talented individuals. This evolving project revealed such potential that the ALA will be applying for a second year CNCS VISTA grant to develop additional support tools. The ALA Call to Service Corps provided human resources to implement many elements of our strategic plan and the plans of action. What a success so far – we wish we could hire them all!

During a time when national grant-making declined by over 8%, the American Legion Auxiliary recently achieved another monumental first - a 2010 AmeriCorps competitive grant award enabling the Auxiliary to establish the ALA Call to Service Corps Consortium. The ALA award assigns 15 AmeriCorps members, two to be retained by the Auxiliary and 13 to be assigned to the other inaugural consortium members:

National Fraternal Congress of America, National Military Family Association, Operation Homefront, and Ride to Recovery. This exciting opportunity positions the ALA as a premier veterans service organization, advancing the ALA mission by working collaboratively with military/veteran support organizations and voluntary associations to individually and collaboratively generate and provide volunteer service to military servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Communications and technology are critical to organizational effectiveness. The ALA IT initiatives, with involvement of members, staff, and experts, meet strategic plan goals. The beta launches of the new ALAMIS, ALA Gateway to Services, and revamped website this year will place the ALA at the forefront of member and public interactive technology. These are really big projects!

Your response to the improvements in our communications is appreciated by those of us who have re-shaped the magazine and e-News to better inform and inspire our most important customer –YOU, our member. Improved marketing materials will be incorporated into the enhanced website to take full advantage of the opportunities for member and public interaction via ALAMIS.

Realizing that corporate donors will not fund membership organizations operating expenses, we are pursuing opportunities for the ALA Foundation to grow its mission endowment fund, and our new direction in fundraising efforts targets member appeals, generating unprecedented results.

As the American Legion Auxiliary concludes its celebration of 90 years of service, many thanks to the NHQ management team and staff who help our leadership so that all members realize the value of this great organization.

**National Treasurer
Marta Hedding, Indiana**

The American Legion Auxiliary is more than 90 years old, but the desire to help our veterans and fellow citizens has existed throughout the history of our nation. It is a timeless sensitivity and a timeless mission.

As your National Treasurer for the past 16 years, I've had the opportunity to be a part of many history-making moments in the life of the American Legion Auxiliary. The Auxiliary was very different then. Today, we must address many new federal government reporting regulations in response to Sarbanes Oxley, new IRS regulations, and the completely revised IRS Form 990, a nonprofit 's annual report to the IRS. These new regulations have created greater challenges, but also greater accountability. The economy, investment environment and budget shortfalls have forced us all to do more with less. And the information superhighway brought member demand for better service, faster response times, and more user-friendly processes and systems. We're stepping up to meet these challenges.

This year the American Legion Auxiliary received its first ever AmeriCorps VISTA grant. What a great addition of human talent. I had the pleasure of supervising the "Volunteer Development" VISTAs who were charged with building ALA capacity by developing tools to assist unit and department officers, chairmen and other members become more effective leaders. Leadership support tools they have worked on include curricula, presentations and collateral materials on various leadership and management topics, Auxiliary policies, and programs.

Our VISTAs helped with a very important undertaking this past year – to identify and quantify the needs of the organization by conducting a member survey. We were excited to receive more than 2000 detailed responses.

The survey generated a wealth of information, which has been shared in sections in the past three issues of *Auxiliary* magazine. There were many detailed responses. It was disappointing that the members responding reported discrimination, discord, and mistreatment as the primary reasons members do not renew their membership.

This year's Membership Workshop received great reviews, particularly for the sessions presented by our Volunteer Development VISTAs on Recruitment, PR and "Engage to Retain". These programs were designed to be part of the leadership tools our VISTAs have created for a volunteer recruitment, retention and engagement campaign. The tools were put to the test and used to recruit new volunteers for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS), one of the primary goals of the ALA Call to Service Corps VISTA project. As part of this project, Volunteer Development VISTAs took advantage of the iParticipate website to recruit more than 100 new volunteers for the VAVS and worked with Department VA&R chairmen to place the volunteers.

As a member of the ALAMIS design and implementation team, I've witnessed the progression of a dream becoming a reality. In 2006, an IT consultant was retained to analyze ALA's technical needs, options were reviewed and recommendations presented to leadership. In 2008 the NEC authorized funding, the vendor selected, and contracts were signed. In 2009 requirements were gathered with member input collected in a variety of ways, including on-line surveys, on-site visits, meetings and consultation with Departments, the Strategic Planning Tech Team and NHQ staff. In 2010 the requirements were prioritized and the system designed. In June 2010, after much work and system refining, the first phase of the membership component of the ALA MIS went "live" at National Headquarters and Departments. The system will continue to roll out new functionality in phases and will become available to those units that are authorized by their departments later this year.

These are difficult financial times for all non-profits and there is no sign of this situation getting easier anytime soon. Costs continue to be carefully controlled. During these down economic times, we at NHQ continue to hold the line on costs in the face of the depressed investment markets and declining dues revenue. We will continue to explore how we can address the gaps in declining membership and dues revenue with the greater needs of a growing veteran population. Our mission is still as relevant today as it was 90 years ago.

We all value the mission, and need to ensure it is sustained with healthy financial underpinnings.

National Chaplain
Beverly J. Wolff, North Dakota

The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purpose of his heart through all generations. – Psalm 33:11

"For God and Country, Having a Compassionate Heart, as we Re-Connect with our Heritage to Strengthen our Future."

After reading each department's report, I know that the hearts of the department chaplains were compassionate. You were National President Rita Navaretté's "sparks" as you energized the hearts of the members within your departments.

Our chaplains demonstrated love for God and country as they reached out not only to The Legion Family but also to all of those with needs in their communities, states and nation. They hosted cookouts, picnics and homecomings for soldiers being deployed or returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many took part in the Relay For Life, Operation Comfort and memorial services for those members of the Armed Forces killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Another department collected over 2,000 decks of playing cards to send overseas, along with the “prayer deck of cards.”

Donations were collected for the Child Welfare Foundation, CMN, VA Homes and Medical Centers, hospice, Fisher House, cancer funds, Auxiliary Emergency Fund and Creative Arts, among others.

The reporting departments gave us the sad news that a total of 5,435 senior and Junior members left us during the year to go on to a greater life. This included 126 Gold Star Mothers and several past department presidents.

With 45 departments reporting, more than \$302,480 was collected and distributed. The Four Chaplains Chapel received over \$11,800.

The department chaplains reviewed and educated their units on the principles of service to God and country and studied the actual wording of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution with regards to religious expression.

Your chaplains have compassionate hearts for God and country and have helped reconnect and energize The American Legion Family. To those chaplains with whom I served this year, I say, “thank you” for an awesome job. It was a privilege and honor to be your national chaplain. To the members of the American Legion Auxiliary, thank you. May you always be blessed and continue to be a blessing to others.

**National Historian
Joyce Arent, Arizona**

Celebrating ninety years of Service for God and Country was indeed a “milestone” for the American Legion Auxiliary for the 2009-2010 administrative year.

Historians on all levels were encouraged to write their histories and hopefully the flyer that was sent out at the beginning of the year was helpful as they began their year of recording events and happenings.

To “Reconnect and Energize” was the task set before us in all of our programs. For Historians the “Milestones” project was designed so that they would research things that happened in past years in their posts, units, districts or department. One suggestion was to research why a post was named after a veteran. Another was to write about any national or department president from their unit. All that were received were outstanding and have been compiled into a book for President Rita Navarreté. Twenty-one departments participated and seventy-nine Milestones were recorded. One submission that really stood out was from Frank Stull American Legion Post and Unit # 152, Ness City, Kansas. Soldier Frank Stull was called to battle in the Muse Argonne battle during World War I. He was reported missing in action and telegrams were sent from the War Department. Weeks later a second telegram was received that he was a prisoner of war, and then another reported him in a hospital. He was not found until 7 years later when his remains were identified in 1925. What agony this must have been for his family.

While reading these submissions of Milestones this historian used up an entire box of Kleenex and cried many tears.

The annual reports reflected that 804 unit histories were written; 761 by Senior Historians and 43 by Junior Historians. It was also reported that 426 senior members and 96 junior members participated in the Veterans History Project with a total of 522 veterans interviewed.

Twenty-five department historians indicated that they were submitting a history in competition for the National Toomey Trophy.

Recording President Rita's official visits to the departments was very informative and reports showed a diversity in events she participated in. One example was while she was visiting the Department of Maine. She actually had a tour of the Rockland Coast Guard Station. She went for a ride on a Search and Rescue Cutter and actually got to drive the cutter for 3 miles! The captain reported that she did an excellent job.

The Ride2Recovery program was also introduced this year which helps soldiers returning from war with disabilities. Bicycles are custom made to fit the soldier so they can ride in bike rallies. This program helps them regain their self esteem. It is great to be adding to our history with new traditions and events, as well as to recognize the events of the past.

It has been such an honor to serve as your National Historian. I thank you all for electing me to this position and giving me this opportunity.

Americanism
Krisann Owens, Oregon, Chairman

Respect is both earned and learned. The fundamental value of the American Legion Auxiliary is showing respect for our Country and our nation's flag. The Auxiliary creates opportunities for Americans to do both. We share practical things everyone can do to better live as grateful, patriotic citizens. The Auxiliary provides learning opportunities and instructional resources for important things every good citizen should know such as learning about the Constitution, flying the flag on patriotic holidays, folding pocket flags to send to our troops overseas, and presenting flags to local schools and businesses.

The Auxiliary is very serious about this part of our mission. Last year Americanism program participants donated 67,000 flags to schools across America and mailed 300,000 pocket flags to soldiers overseas! The Auxiliary is a member of the Citizens Flag Alliance and advocates for a constitutional amendment to protect the flag by supporting the federal legislation and encouraging other people to do so.

To help our country's most promising young citizens learn firsthand the principles of our free republic guided by the principles of democracy, the Auxiliary promotes many patriotic youth programs, and for twenty years sponsored the Americanism Youth Conference at the Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Other youth programs sponsored by the Auxiliary include the Americanism Essay Contest, which is conducted in local school systems, and the Girl Scout Achievement Award, a national-level scholarship.

We believe promoting a spirit of patriotism by teaching about it develops lifelong respect for what we hold dear, our Country and her flag.

The American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program is still going strong after 90 years. We began this year promoting patriotism and the fundamentals of Americanism within our communities, and our units and departments have enjoyed great success spreading the spirit that is God and country.

This year we participated in flag education programs, presented a staggering amount of flags to schools and organizations and have taken the pocket flag program to new heights. We recognized businesses and individuals who showed their American spirit by flying the flag and have distributed Blue and Gold Star Banners throughout the country.

The Americanism Youth Conference enjoyed great success this year with very enthusiastic, wonderful students—the “best ever,” according to the Freedoms Foundation staff. Participation in the Americanism Essay Contest and the Girl Scout Achievement Award proved to be a highlight once again. Operation Military Kids was especially important to our members, and the money spent in support of it is amazing.

Once again we showed our true colors by supporting our service members and their families, sponsoring deployment ceremonies and welcome-home events and, more importantly, providing for the everyday needs of families in their homes while their loved one is deployed. Our support of The American Legion and its Junior Shooting Sports Program, Oratorical Contest and The American Legion Baseball Program are all testaments to our belief in the mission of both organizations.

Members across the country participated in the “Get Out the Vote” campaign and encouraged people to exercise their rights as citizens. We should all be very proud of the amount of time and effort our members have put into spreading the spirit of Americanism. It is quite amazing to realize how much we as members of the American Legion Auxiliary have accomplished.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	29
Units reporting.....	6,003
Volunteer hours served	163,030
Total spent on veterans and their families	\$285,298
Flags Donated to Schools	47,769
Pocket Flags Mailed	64,765
Number of Students Attending AYC	55
Number of Essays Submitted.....	13,283
Spent on Operation Mil. Kids	\$65,958
Total spent on Flags to schools and org.....	\$44,113
Total spent on Patriotic Holidays.....	\$132,413

**Auxiliary Emergency Fund
Kathy Dungan, Mississippi, Chairman**

When a sudden financial crisis befalls an eligible Auxiliary member, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund may be able to provide temporary emergency assistance when no other source of help is available. The AEF, on occasion, could be the helping hand for a struggling member in need of food, shelter or utilities for her family when a natural disaster or other calamity strikes.

Established in 1969 by the National Executive Committee and funded initially through a generous legacy gift from Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wis., the AEF is now able to continue to grant assistance through voluntary contributions. The Auxiliary promotes awareness of the fund, disseminates information about the application process, and solicits donations from units, departments and

individual members in order to continue its availability as a resource to help members in certain dire straits. A national AEF grant review committee awards AEF grants to applicants based on criteria, membership, and fund availability.

In 1981, the AEF program was expanded to include a fund to help members who find themselves needing to support themselves due to unexpected life-changing circumstances such as death or illness of a spouse, divorce, or desertion, and who are without the job skills necessary to obtain adequate employment. Short-term assistance may be provided to help the member acquire marketable job skills through schooling or job training when all other sources of financial aid have been exhausted.

Applications stemming from a catastrophe for basic needs such as shelter and food are considered; applications for medical expenses are not considered. To be eligible to apply for AEF funds, the applicant must be an Auxiliary member who has maintained her membership for three consecutive years and whose membership dues for the current year are paid. Only through the generosity of ALA members has the AEF remained an available resource for members in tragic times.

“Members helping members in a time of crisis” – these words are as relevant today as they were 40 years ago when a bequest from Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisconsin, began the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

A recent AEF recipient shared these words of appreciation: *“I wish to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the recent financial help you have given me. You don’t know what a relief it was not to have to worry about my...mortgage and the electric [bill].”*

That’s what AEF is all about! And that’s what makes me proud to have served as national chairman for a committee that provides so much for our members.

Here’s a Snapshot of Your Creativity:

- Units were asked to send in 40 cents per member.
- An “AEF jug” was placed in meeting rooms or posts to collect change at each meeting.
- Minnesota held a silent auction at its fall conference.
- An Indiana unit held an evening with a local celebrity whose performance included renditions of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin songs.
- Wisconsin issued a challenge to have every unit donate at least \$10 to the fund.
- Mississippi had “bee banks” at each fall conference where members contributed 10 cents per pair of shoes they owned.
- Illinois used the theme “Musicians Helping Musicians in Financial Crisis.”
- Alabama started its meeting by passing the hat.
- Florida units held monthly dinners.
- Units held cake walks, bake sales and raffles.
- Members were asked to contribute \$1 on their birthday or pay a penny for their age.

Mission Impact Numbers

Total contributions.....	\$145,743
Total grants	\$110,899

Total number of grants 115

Data above reflects donations and grants 09/01/2009 through 06/30/2010.

**Cavalcade of Memories
Kenya Ostermeier, Indiana, Chairman**

Just as birthdays and anniversaries are traditional times for families to open the photo albums and share their memories, the Auxiliary’s 90th anniversary year has been a special time for members to look back and reconnect with our organization’s rich past. Preserving, displaying and sharing our history, traditions and milestones was the purpose behind the establishment of the Cavalcade of Memories in 1972 at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Memorabilia contributed by members and departments representing the 90 years of Auxiliary history is continually collected, reviewed and appropriately selected, chronicled, preserved, and displayed in the Cavalcade of Memories, located at the Cavalcade of Memories room at National Headquarters and throughout the Headquarters office space. The Cavalcade of Memories is a valuable resource for members, as well as the general public. Many Cavalcade photos and memories were published in a recent three-part series in *Auxiliary Magazine*, “Decades of Making a Difference.”

In addition to our national Cavalcade, departments and units have developed their own unique ways in which to note the history of their local organizations. Some are developing virtual cavalcades, using computer technology to preserve their mementoes, historical documents and artifacts for future generations of Auxiliary members to learn from and enjoy.

Any member who has a significant Auxiliary keepsake may contact the Cavalcade of Memories chairman or her department or unit to inquire about donating it to the organization.

Although there is no report required for this committee, we have received wonderful letters describing Auxiliary “museums” of all sizes; our members have used unique ideas to create their own cavalcades.

There have been creative uses of space and ways to get members and the public to view their accomplishments in honoring our members and our veterans. Most departments have pictures, awards and plaques hung on walls and scrapbooks and photo albums displayed. Some are fortunate to have larger rooms at their headquarters where items can be displayed. Members have cleaned out closets and boxes, revealing many items to share with members.

Some are using new technologies to preserve items for posterity, such as saving lists on computers, disks and flash drives. Ohio created a CD and book about their national and department officers, Girls State directors and honorary junior officers. This information is also in a database. Texas is even going to tackle developing a virtual tour of its headquarters.

Some departments put together a display table during department meetings for members to observe and enjoy. Tennessee has created a new display with artifacts just donated by Past National President Vara Gray’s family. A unit in Florida “borrows” the public library during the month of May to display plates, books, pictures and poppy items.

While there is some overlapping of purpose and goals with your historian, that's alright. You can help each other in recording all the good things done in your unit and department. You can also use the Cavalcade as a publicity and/or membership tool. Have your Juniors assist with the program. Juniors have donated display cases to their units and/or departments.

Since the National Headquarters office is a fairly new home, there are several more artifacts to be displayed and some room for rotating displays. We have been very fortunate to have Gaby Kienitz, the textile conservator at the Indiana State Museum, and Sunae Park-Evans from the Smithsonian American History Museum advise us on enclosing and preserving Mrs. Edith Hobart's Inaugural dress. They have both been very generous with their time and expertise. We will be ordering an acrylic case for the dress and are looking for a good place to display it in National Headquarters.

We hope you are all celebrating our 90th anniversary by sharing your own inspiring memories.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	19
Units reporting	95
New Cavalcades Established	6

Liaison To The Child Welfare Foundation Katherine Morris, Texas, Chairman

We take action. Because helping children matters. It matters so much to American Legion Auxiliary members that since CWF's inception in 1954 we have contributed more than \$9 million in grant money. We know our dollars count. They support everything from childhood disease education and prevention to resources and research for military families. And that's why we give year after year. The American Legion handles the majority of the administrative costs so every dollar collected is entered into the trust fund to be used for grants. Every child needs to know....someone does care.

At its annual meeting in October 2009, the board of directors approved \$636,869.75 in grants to 19 nonprofit organizations for projects to be completed in calendar year 2010. These grants were awarded to support worthwhile projects and disseminate information about them to the general public and specific target groups. The following is a brief summary of the grants awarded this year:

- American Legion Children's Home of Ponca City, OK was awarded \$41,000 for their project "American Legion Children's Home National Awareness Initiative Phase II."
- American Legion of Nevada of Las Vegas, NV was awarded \$3,037 for their project "Hear Today-Learn Tomorrow (HT-LT)."
- Boy Scouts of America, Exploring Program of Denver, CO was awarded \$35,717 for their project "Experience 9 to 5."
- Childhood Leukemia Foundation of Brick, NJ was awarded \$48,000 for their project "Hope Binders."

- Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters (CHKD) of Norfolk, VA was awarded \$30,050 for their project “A Guide to Chest Wall Deformities in Children: Info for parents, patients and physicians.”
- Children’s Institute Inc. of Rochester, NY was awarded \$30,500 for their project “Building Connections for Military Families through Play.”
- Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation of Avon, CT was awarded \$16,744 for their project “Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Screening Checklist for Medical Professionals.”
- Diabetes Education and Camping Association of Huntsville, AL was awarded \$25,000 for their project “Ready, View, Go – Diabetes Camp Web Training Project.”
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of New York, NY was awarded \$39,500 for their project “I’m Aaron and I’m Bionic.”
- Mercy Medical Airlift of Virginia Beach, VA was awarded \$45,700 for their project “Child Health Program-Info Dissemination Upgrade.”
- The MY HERO Project of Laguna Beach, CA was awarded \$28,872.50 for their project “The MY HERO Report-Youth Edition, Volume Two.”
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) of New York, NY was awarded \$45,500 for their project “Empowering Parents to Advocate for their Children with Learning Disabilities.”
- National Exchange Club Foundation of Toledo, OH was awarded \$25,000 for their project “Child Abuse Prevention Kits.”
- National Reye’s Syndrome Foundation of Bryan, OH was awarded \$38,200 for their project “Reye’s Syndrome/Influenza Awareness School Mailing.”
- PKS Kids of Florissant, MO was awarded \$29,500 for their project “Recognizing A Pallister-Killian Child.”
- SADD, Inc. (Students Against Destructive Decisions) of Marlborough, MA, was awarded \$54,549 for their project “SADD’s Parents’ Corner Program.”
- Spina Bifida Association of Washington, DC was awarded \$40,000 for their project “Faces of Spina Bifida.”
- Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. of Bayside, NY was awarded \$25,000 for their project titled “The Tourette Youth Ambassador Program: Kids Teaching Kids.”
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS) of Washington, DC, was awarded \$35,000 for their project “TAPS Children’s Grief Kit and Interactive Website.”

During 2009, donations exceeded \$594,032, with more than \$343,688 coming from Sons of The American Legion.

Children & Youth
Peggy Thomas, Virginia, Chairman

Knowledge is power. A core element of the Auxiliary’s mission, caring for our children and youth, is sharply focused on educating adults about the needs of our young people. We believe that the more people know and understand about the needs of the

children in their communities, the more interest they will have in learning how they can help meet those needs.

In the American Legion Auxiliary, we do more than talk about it. The Auxiliary provides significant cash assistance and direct service, and supports legislation that affects children at the local, state and national levels. And while all children are important, the Auxiliary particularly focuses on helping the children of our veterans and active military.

Members all across this country joined hands to give support to the needs of our children and youth. We strived to bring awareness to the children of our active military and our veterans and to all children in need.

By working collaboratively with The American Legion, the units were able to expand their efforts to provide needed services to these children. Christmas parties were hosted, Easter egg hunts were organized, cookies were sent to deployed warriors and school clothes were provided to children who needed them.

This year our main focus was the Youth Hero Award. This award was presented to 76 people under the age of 18 years who performed heroic acts when faced with an emergency situation. Local units took pride in hosting special recognition programs to present the deserving recipient with this prestigious award. Local officials and the media were invited to these functions, as well as family and friends.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	34
Units reporting.....	3,641
Volunteer hours served	592,711
Total \$ raised for children.....	3,521,952
Number of Youth Hero Awards.....	76
Number of Youth Good Deed Awards	26
Given in Direct Aid to Children	174,706
Child Welfare Foundation	110,303
Children’s Miracle Network	72,399
Children helped w/goods	105,086
Children served under Special Programs	455,912

**Community Service
Denise Delaney-Wrolen, Indiana**

As major outreach program of the Auxiliary since 1926, Community Service also demonstrates our long-standing commitment to supporting the work of American Legion posts and other organizations in providing assistance with blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, support for women in shelters, , and disaster and emergency preparedness programs. All community projects point toward improving life for our veterans and their families, and the most important Auxiliary Community Service projects involve making donations to and supporting shelters for homeless veterans. Working together, we can have a greater impact on our communities.

ALA volunteers are incredibly dedicated to improving the lives of our veterans and determined to make a difference in their communities. This year was no exception as our members’ efforts to “Reconnect and Energize” were evident in their volunteerism.

Our focus was on our military and their families. A total of 1,138 units reported 237,977 hours volunteering in the communities in which our military are based as they continue to secure the blessings of freedom. A total of \$603,286 was spent on showing community support for our troops.

We had 318 units came out to meet and greet our soldiers, sailors and airmen to show our appreciation. A total of 19,296 hours and \$53,449 was reported in activities. In the Army Community Covenant program, 184 units volunteered 23,285 hours and contributed \$71,068 to participate in ceremonies to honor service personnel and their families.

Units and members were encouraged to participate in activities during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, focusing their activities on our veterans and the families of our deployed troops. A total of 103 units participated, volunteering 4,157 hours in various activities such as volunteering at VA facilities, nursing homes, standdowns and homeless shelters. A total of \$12,870 was realized for the day.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training was held in many communities across the nation to train citizens to be better prepared to respond in emergencies. Members from 119 units volunteered 8,665 hours for a total of \$5,413 as they learned to help themselves and their neighbors during a crisis.

Homeless shelters, food banks and domestic violence centers saw members from 2,173 units volunteering 160,033 hours to help those who are less fortunate during these hard times. Money and items totaling \$627,009 were donated.

Community Service offers a variety of opportunities for our members to serve their communities to make them a better place to live and raise a family. Community beautification, recycling, adopt-a-highway, libraries, Habitat for Humanity, senior centers and nursing homes were all projects that members took to heart to improve their communities. Volunteers contributed 690,277 hours to their communities and donated \$505,176.

An array of community service projects targeted for the individual and unique needs of communities were reported. Volunteers reported 825,825 hours and spent \$1,320,668 providing volunteer service in their communities.

To quote one chairman, "Volunteerism builds communities and is known to be satisfying and beneficial to one's health." Another chairman wrote, "It doesn't take any money to say 'yes' to volunteering. What an investment in our community! Our unit is proud to call our city our hometown."

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	39
Units reporting.....	3,258
Volunteer hours served.....	2,619,570
Make a Difference Day.....	\$119,486
Homeless Shelters.....	\$222,045
Nursing Homes.....	\$128,408
Senior Centers	\$87,189
Food Banks.....	\$303,384
Habitat for Humanity.....	\$24,052
Community Support for our Troops	\$605,988

Constitution & Bylaws
Coral May Grout, Massachusetts, Chairman

The Constitution & Bylaws committee encourages all members to familiarize themselves with the Auxiliary's adopted policies and procedures in order to better understand how the organization is structured and operates, as well as to better understand the rights and benefits of one's individual membership.

Insuring that the Auxiliary's governance documents are up-to-date and in line with current expectations for nonprofit governance is an ongoing process that requires dedication and diligence from its members. When a change to the Auxiliary's constitution, bylaws or standing rules is deemed necessary and in the best interest of the organization, the Constitution & Bylaws Committee is responsible for carefully considering and then proposing these revisions for consideration by the appropriate voting body.

The Constitution & Bylaws program also educates members about the importance and availability of resources to properly write, review and update governing documents such as their constitutions, bylaws and standing rules. The national Constitution and Bylaws committee communicates with departments to inform them about pertinent information and resources available to provide guidance.

Imagine 90 years! Our organization has survived when many others have failed, partly because our predecessors built a set of constitution and bylaws to drive the American Legion Auxiliary forward. Over the years, there have been some additions to these documents, but the substance has remained the same.

Our Constitution & Bylaws Committee had two major goals this year. The first was to assist departments in updating their written governing documents; the second was to educate members about the importance and availability of resources to properly write, review and update governing documents.

When we were not certain as to an appropriate response, we requested assistance from the judge advocate of The American Legion through our national secretary. We thank both of them for being so helpful. To entice units to update their documents, department chairmen used a variety of tools, including prizes for units submitting their updated documents by a specified date, presenting workshops at group meetings, sending bulletins regularly, including information on Web sites and preparing various games for unit members to play as they learned about the constitution and bylaws.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	13
Departments submitted their documents	37
Departments requesting assistance	18

Education
Mary Davis, Washington, Chairman

The American Legion Auxiliary believes education is vital to democracy, and that investing time and money to educate our youth is literally an investment in America's future. Our Education program involves fostering learning for children in our own communities, with our main focus on the children of our military and veterans.

We know the sacrifices of our veterans are the reason we live in freedom; easing the burden of the cost of their children's education is one way we can express our gratitude to them. To that purpose, the Auxiliary supports a number of scholarship programs. These include the National President's Scholarship educating Children of Warriors, awarded annually to 15 outstanding students who are the children of veterans; the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship, awarded annually to five students who are members of The American Legion, Auxiliary, or Sons of The American Legion; and the Spirit of Youth Scholarship, awarded annually to one Junior Auxiliary member in each of the Auxiliary's 5 national geographic divisions. Units and departments are encouraged to publicize the availability of these scholarship programs in their communities and to establish new scholarships at the local level.

Educating our communities about the sacrifices of our military men and women is another goal of the Auxiliary. Units and departments are encouraged to participate in our organization's national education initiatives and those of The American Legion. One of these initiatives—Veterans in the Classroom—is an effort to bring history to life by having local veterans speak to students about their real life experiences in the military. Other initiatives include collaborating with Family Readiness Groups, known as FRGs, to assist with special projects for the schools on military bases, and conducting local projects to donate school supplies to children in need.

During the year, units and departments shared a vision to create and improve the educational experiences for children in their local communities. Among those achieving that goal were 14 Oregon units whose members helped students by participating in a reading program. They spent 1,827 hours serving 29 schools and 150 hours helping to combat adult illiteracy. Ohio units donated 18,520 hours to help 9,621 adults in their communities better their lives through their literacy program.

Also this year, members of Florida Unit 333 Key Largo read stories to children and then had the children retell the stories and read their versions aloud. In a session at the public library, unit members read America's White Table by Margot Raven to 90 excited children. Using a hands-on experience of setting the table, they helped the students understand the meaning of the story. Unit 333 was only one of the 767 units that reported providing meaningful learn-to-read experiences.

Students at an Ohio middle school also learned about veterans firsthand. Unit 183 Freedom interacted directly with 6th grade students by sponsoring the Veterans in the Classroom program. This hands-on classroom experience involved taking 130 students to four area cemeteries where they helped The American Legion post adorn the graves of 350 veterans. At each cemetery they learned about one of the first Congressional Medal of Honor winners, the city's only Vietnam soldier killed in action and the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Auxiliary members in Georgia supported educational growth by purchasing books for primary and elementary students and public libraries. They also donated book bags and school supplies as part of their "Give 10 to Education" program.

Across America, 753 units participated in the Auxiliary Education program, donating 12,858 hours to educate students about veterans. In this, our 90th anniversary year, American Legion Auxiliary units continue to share their vision of improving education for our future generations through their generous contributions of time and money.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	30
Units reporting.....	6,810
Volunteer hours served	339,703
Unit, District & Department scholarships	\$1,403,080
Dispersed to NPSF.....	\$50,713
Students served excluding scholarships.....	35,313
Students Receiving Scholarships	350
Give “10” donations	109,927

Finance

Linda Boone, Oregon

Looking ahead to the future financial needs of the American Legion Auxiliary’s national strategic plan is a critical responsibility for the National Finance Committee in conjunction with the National Headquarters staff. The national strategic plan sets the priority goals for the organization and financial resources need to be in place to ensure those priorities are met. Annual budgets to support these priorities are developed along with longer range resource development plans and presented to our governing body, the National Executive Committee, for adoption.

The National Finance Committee, in addition to developing the annual budget, oversees the financial policy of the organization and makes recommendations to the National Executive Committee for action, to ensure the organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and government mandates. Additionally, financial information needs to be reported to a variety of public audiences and the finance committee ensures this information is readily available.

An annual audit of the organization’s financial records and policies is completed by a professional auditing firm specializing in nonprofit organizations. The audit report is reviewed by the committee and then presented to the National Executive Committee for adoption. The National Headquarters staff works with the auditing firm and the committee to implement any recommendations that might arise from the audit. With the establishment of the national Audit Committee, the process of the annual audit and risk assessment responsibilities will now be transferred to this new committee, conforming with best practices for charitable reporting to the Internal Revenue Service.

The last two fiscal years have caused traumatic economic issues for our organization and the world. While our investment policies plan for ups and downs by ensuring diversity in our types of investments, this economic environment created downturns in so many areas we suffered significant losses.

The National Headquarters staff and volunteer leadership have worked together to reduce spending, which has challenged us to weigh and select options.

The annual audit of FY10 will be included in the convention proceedings, and I encourage you to review this financial data.

Developing and reviewing financial policies continued to be a priority activity; the committee seeks to eliminate risk with our financial activities.

A new process to develop the annual budget was implemented, beginning with the FY10 budget cycle, to assist us in enhanced decision making.

As the nonprofit community learns more about the Internal Revenue Service's new filing requirements, new policies and practices will need to be implemented to ensure compliance. One such requirement is the establishment of an Audit Committee. The constitution and bylaws change to add the committee was adopted by convention action last year. The Audit Committee members are being selected and will be functioning in FY11.

Members need to actively ensure that financial management practices are in place at the unit and department levels and nonprofit financial benchmarks are being met. The IRS has detailed information available for nonprofits on its Web site.

A national dues increase needs to be supported to assist in the organization's recovery from the impact of the economic downturn. Expenses have been reduced significantly, and revenue now needs to be increased to ensure our financial future will support our mission of serving veterans and their families through financial stability. Financial stability provides the organization with the ability to support the many valuable programs that have been the core of our mission for 90 years, such as Veterans Affairs, Children & Youth, and Community Service.

Mission Impact Numbers
Nonprofit ALA Actual

	Benchmark	FY09	FY08	FY07
Expenses Management	<20%	5%	8%	5%
Fundraising	<10%	6%	10%	10%
Programs	>70%	89%	82%	85%

Girls State / Girls Nation
Janet Jefford, Connecticut

Auxiliary units in 49 states proudly host American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, an amazing week of learning focused on responsible citizenship and love for God and Country. Students are assigned to mock cities where, divided into the "Federalist Party" and "Nationalist Party", they are immersed into learning about the political process from dedicated volunteers, making sure the program's nonpartisan governmental, patriotic and civic objectives are carried out with intense learning along with some fun. The program directors also stay vigilant about raising the girls' awareness of the importance of service, particularly to our veterans, their families and their communities.

Two girls are selected from each ALA Girls State program to attend American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, where they become "senators" who meet for a weeklong immersive learning in Washington, D.C. After running for office, electing a mock U.S. Girls Nation President, and campaigning for the passage of mock legislation, the participants meet with real-life national government leaders. The highlight of the week includes a visit to the White House where for most years, the ALA Girls Nation senators have visited with the President of the United State. While Girls State/Girls Nation may impact the career aspirations of the participants, the program also encourages these bright young women to take their places as future leaders in the Auxiliary. With 20,000 girls participating annually, what an impact they could have on our organization when enticed to become future members.

To provide an outstanding educational opportunity that instills the basic ideals and principle of American government and to teach responsible citizenship and love for God and country—this is the essence of the mission of Girls State and Girls Nation. Our goals this year focused on utilizing the Internet and social media sites to increase visibility, engage young women to get involved in Auxiliary volunteer programs and to grow our programs by keeping them relevant and current.

We were asked to reconnect and reenergize. Girls States across the country responded by reconnecting to the mission and values of the American Legion Auxiliary and by reenergizing their programs with new ideas. The sharing of best practices began with the Girls State Director Conference in Indiana. Fifty-eight attendees representing 28 departments spent the weekend learning from each other. Indiana shared its success with alumni groups; Connecticut talked about using technology for online registration and materials; Oregon gave us a lesson on how to structure the government staff and prepare elected senators for Girls Nation; and national staff talked about using FaceBook and other social networks to promote Girls State programs. And who better than Louisiana to talk about implementing a disaster emergency preparedness exercise as a town project?

President Rita Navarreté asked that we embrace Girls State as an opportunity to let young women know what the ALA is about and how they can join and get involved. We were asked to include some type of service-learning project that connected to our mission. I am proud to report that departments have heeded her message.

Across the country, Girls State citizens donated money and supplies to Family Readiness Groups. They wrote letters to our troops and patients in VA hospitals and taped community messages to soldiers overseas. They donated money, clothing, books and writing materials to men and women in VA facilities. They brought items and assembled backpacks for Operation Military Kids and folded and sent thousands of pocket flags to our troops.

Girls State participants learned about the Auxiliary from department presidents and program chairmen and through information expos and fairs. They held veteran appreciation nights, heard personal stories from veterans, witnessed POW/MIA ceremonies, learned the poppy story and assembled poppy wreaths for monuments and cemeteries. They were moved as fellow citizens were presented with Blue Star Banners and realized the unique problems facing military families.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	29
Units Sponsoring GS Programs	Averages about 50% of units per department
Number of GS Participants	29 departments 10,194 participants

Junior Activities

Martha Corriher, North Carolina, Chairman

Engaging the next generation to become members in the American Legion Auxiliary is the important purpose of the Junior Activities program. Junior membership is open to girls from infancy through age 17. The Junior Activities prepares girls under the age of 18 to become active adult members of the organization by providing positive volunteer experiences that instill the ideals of the Auxiliary. These young ladies develop leadership skills while having fun, and will hopefully become the future leaders of our organization.

Junior members plan their own community service projects along with supporting projects sponsored by the Auxiliary and The American Legion Family.

The Juniors Patch Program is designed to foster the ideals of volunteer service in our communities and for our veterans. The Patch Program incentivizes active participation and helps Junior members learn about the Auxiliary. An annual Junior Meeting is held to provide these young members with an opportunity to become acquainted with girls from different states, experience multi-cultural team building while forming exciting new friendships.

Junior members are eligible to apply for the Auxiliary's National Spirit of Youth Scholarship. Each year, five young women are competitively selected to each receive a 4-year scholarship to pursue a college education, currently awarded at \$1,000 per year for four years.

The Auxiliary's Junior members have been busy doing the programs of the auxiliary. Twenty-two departments sent in annual reports with a total of 4,717 Junior units, and of those units, 2,288 sent reports to their department chairmen. Junior participation in the Patch Program has promoted activity in many of the Auxiliary's programs.

A few of the programs Juniors found easy and rewarding to do work in were VA&R, Community Service, National Security, Children & Youth, Poppy and Americanism. Juniors interviewed veterans to gather information for the History Project, made favors and cards for the VA hospitals and nursing homes, assisted with Operation Home Front and collected pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. They called many games of Bingo for veterans and gave parties throughout the year in their honor. Care packages were collected, assembled and sent to our troops, while coupons were cut, clipped and sent for use by our soldiers and their families. The reported hours for the coupon program is 15,813, with a staggering value of \$68,129.53.

Juniors have put their creativity to work planning and executing fundraisers in and for their communities. Soup suppers were held as well as "penny wars" and chili cook-offs. They created cookbooks, held car washes—the list goes on and on. The monies raised were used immediately to assist veterans, the homeless and children in their communities.

Juniors also took the challenge to "Recruit One" new member from the Plan of Action. Many took it a step further by recruiting two or three. One Junior didn't stop until she had recruited 12 new Junior members for her department. Many signed up sisters, cousins and classmates.

One Junior unit thought it would be nice to let the veterans in their community know how much they appreciated the sacrifices they made when serving our country, so they started the "You've Been Flagged" program. They place American flags and "thank you" signs in a veteran's yard where they can be seen by all. What a great way to show your thanks!

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	22
Units reporting.....	2,288
Units who served	1,653
Raised/donated for veterans and their families	\$1,385*

(Most Juniors did activities, donating their time and money, but did not list total amounts.)

Number of Active Junior Units.....	760
Volunteer Hours Served	89,960
Junior members in Junior Patch Program.....	1,708
Community Service hours	35,710
New Junior members reported.....	1,712
Patch Program sheets completed	932

Leadership

Sharon Conatser, Illinois, Chairman

The Auxiliary is an organization that provides women of all ages junior and adult members, the opportunity to develop and hone their leadership skills. Our organization depends upon an ever emerging stream of competent new leaders, trained and guided by experienced leaders, to assume leadership within the Auxiliary and advance its mission long into the future.

The Auxiliary offers a variety of opportunities for members to serve in leadership roles – from chairing a short-term community service project at the unit level to running for a national office. The Leadership Program prepares future leaders and helps develop their skills so that everyone from our youngest Junior member to our young adults and young in heart can step into a leadership role with confidence. Training courses and materials are currently in place for members to improve their leadership skills, and new ALA Support Tools being developed by the ALA Call to Service Corps VISTA project volunteers are being developed and will be available from National Headquarters for departments and units as an important member benefit that will invoke members' awareness of leadership opportunities and responsibilities. The national organization provides and promotes a variety of tools to units, departments and districts to develop future leaders and showcase successful ALA leadership activities. The Leadership program materials and support tools are periodically updated to ensure that relevant information is available to the Auxiliary's leaders and aspiring leaders.

The Auxiliary encourages and supports new leaders with Leadership program resources and activities that educate, motivate, and mentor leaders of all ages and at all levels. Developing talented leadership ensures both the success of the individual leader and also the growth and stability of the national grassroots organization.

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter said, "A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be." There are many leaders in our units, and without our friendship and encouragement, they do not learn. It is important to remember that we all learn by example. Are you a leader in your unit?

Leadership reports were submitted by 1,655 units in 37 departments. Officer training was shared in 930 units, and 2,752 units taught members about our programs. Units reported that 639 members completed the correspondence course; at least three mini-courses were held in 189 units.

Effective leadership is shared in our departments. A leader must have a "we-can-do-it" optimism in order to encourage our unit members to continue to grow in our organization. Veterans served with a can-do attitude and pride, and so should we.

Leadership chairmen across the nation held leadership workshops throughout their departments. They developed new training in seven of the reporting departments. They used printed materials, PowerPoint presentations, games like "Jeopardy" and "Who

Wants to Be a Millionaire” and skits such as “As the Table Turns.” Make it fun and everyone will learn more.

Our unit members are taking new members under their wings and mentoring them to become leaders. Fifty-seven units reported establishing a new mentor relationship. Find a member in your unit and help her understand the importance of being an active part of her unit. Everyone has something to offer; find that special talent. A mentor needs to educate, motivate, encourage and help develop and implement the new members’ ideas.

Reconnecting through leadership is vital to our success. Be part of the success in your unit and reconnect with your members to build a bridge to the future of our organization.

Walt Disney said, “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.” Are you ready to begin in your unit and help build leaders for the future?

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	34
Units reporting.....	1,655
Units that taught about ALA programs.....	2,752
Units having 3 leadership training sessions	189
Units that did officer training.....	930
Depts. that implemented or developed leadership training	29

Legislative

Vickie Koutz, Indiana, Chairman

The American Legion Auxiliary supports the legislative priorities adopted by The American Legion. The American Legion’s Legislative Division in Washington D.C. keeps abreast of current legislation relating to veterans’ benefits, national security, and children and youth. Auxiliary members are encouraged to subscribe to The Dispatch, published by The American Legion to keep The Legion Family aware of legislative issues and the official positions of The American Legion on those issues.

Armed with information and enthusiasm, Auxiliary members “take to The Hill” to make their voices heard. The Legislative program periodically provides members with specific reasons to contact their legislators and provides them with summaries about issues of importance to our veterans.

While we may think that one voice may not make a difference on its own, that one voice added to the voice of others with the same goals and sentiments quickly becomes a collective voice of influence that can impact the decisions of our elected officials. Joining together, Auxiliary members can and do make a difference when they advocate for veterans, their families and their communities.

As we’ve celebrated our 90th Anniversary this year, American Legion Auxiliary members definitely reconnected with their heritage and strengthened our future by being true advocates for veterans’ issues. We joined together as The Legion Family to promote The American Legion’s priorities on veterans’ issues.

There were 2,533 unit members who subscribed to The Dispatch, with several units displaying it on bulletin boards in their post homes. A few units read it at their meetings,

and copies were donated to local libraries. One unit in Indiana gave each senior member a subscription.

Members from the Department of Mississippi were given handouts that contained all the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of their legislators and were urged to contact them.

Members formed good relationships with their elected officials and reported that 20,056 pieces of correspondence were sent to senators, representatives, state and local officials, and the White House. Unit members received back 10,708 replies.

The Department of Illinois reported that technology has made communication with legislators much easier and timelier. Within minutes, legislators can be blitzed with phone calls, e-mails and faxes.

Legislators in Texas were urged to pass legislation to enhance benefits for our veterans and their families, including more job opportunities and better health care. They were asked to provide more support for our troops and to make America a safer place to live.

This year more than ever, women veterans have been more prominent and in the news. A total of 790 units promoted and supported women veterans in their communities, with several units presenting them with complimentary paid membership dues to the ALA. Many units send women service members care packages while they are on active duty. After their arrival home, they are honored at luncheons and are given gift certificates for their families.

Another 242 units promoted military absentee voting at local fairs and contacted military families about getting their absentee ballots early to make sure their votes were counted. The Department of Georgia passes out leaflets at the USO and deployments.

On Election Day, units offered assistance to neighbors, family and friends, offering to babysit with their children and provide transportation to and from the polls. Several members worked at the polls.

The president's project and services from the Department of Maryland were presented to the 111th Congress and put into the Congressional Record.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	45
Units reporting.....	4,072
Number of Replies Received	10,708
Personal Visits made by Unit Members.....	5,230
Unit members subscribed to the eNews	2,016
Unit activities submitted to Congressional Record	116
Number of letters, emails, phone calls to US Senators/ Rep/White House concerning veterans issues.....	18,156

Membership

Nancy Brown-Park, California, Chairman

Current members renew when they believe the Auxiliary continues to offer them something of value for their lives. The American Legion Auxiliary National Strategic Plan has set forth a goal for the organization to attract new members and retain 95 percent of its current membership year after year, and the Membership program has the responsibility to reach that goal. The Membership program educates departments and

units on national member benefits and encourages them to implement member benefits of their own. The Auxiliary’s Call to Service Corps VISTA project volunteers used the results of a membership survey to develop new tools to aid departments and units in recruiting, engaging and retaining their members.

Reaching out to a new generation of potential members requires innovative strategies. The Membership program’s new ALA Support Tools will serve as a valuable resource to provide instruction on utilizing social networking media such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter to engage younger women in ways that are standard for today’s multi-media multi-tasking generations. Other electronic outreach tools, such as Webinars and Skype, are methods that the Auxiliary is beginning to take advantage of for cost-effective membership engagement. The next wave of membership growth will come from the expansion of e-units, so that virtually any woman with an interest in participating in the mission of the Auxiliary may do so conveniently and effectively.

“Membership Begins With Me” was the rallying call this year as the membership train made its way across America to create a new beginning and a promise for our future. Goals were established based on the National Executive Committee-approved Strategic Plan, and we far exceeded one of those objectives, increasing new membership by 38,000.

Members worked hard to retain our current membership, sending personal notes, making phone calls and hosting special events to encourage renewals. One unit membership chairman wrote to her members, “Think of it...just paying \$25 a year can make a significant difference in the lives of those who put their lives on the line to protect and preserve our freedoms and way of life. And, if that isn’t enough, our dues entitle us to insurance, savings, a bimonthly magazine and the knowledge that we are making a difference in our world.”

The national Membership Committee worked to reconnect and energize department membership programs by supplying weekly membership bulletins. Information shared included tools to use social networking sites and set up new e-units. At the grass-roots level, Web sites and Facebook pages were established to engage new members and inform current members about our programs and activities. The value of diversity was emphasized, along with the power of creating strong leaders to keep our units viable.

VISTA volunteers became a great think tank for this committee, taking a membership survey and creating tools from it, such as helpful publications like “Engage to Retain and Recruitment” and “Recruitment and Public Relations.” These will benefit us for years to come.

With hard work from our members and staff, the new ALA MIS system and Web site are just about ready to be rolled out, and this will bring a new look to our membership program.

It’s now each member’s responsibility to have a positive attitude, think differently and get involved. Our membership year is not finished, and we encourage each member to make that personal call for one more renewal before the end of 2010.

Mission Impact Numbers

Members as of May 11, 2010	764,925
(89.5% of goal)	
New charters	46
New PUFLs	1,032

RECRUIT 3 – 1,076 Recruit 3 pins sent out to our members
 FL 80, CA 77, and AZ 70 mailed in the most R3 forms

SILVER BRIGADE – 98 Silver Brigade forms received Kendall Madsen CA submitted the most forms with 300 new members recruited, Arizona (12) submitted the most Silver Brigade forms followed by Florida (10)

100% Units by January 31 – 240 total submitted from 8 different Depts. Wisconsin had the most with 63, Pennsylvania with 48, Texas with 35

TARGET DATES: Target 1 – 10 Depts; Target 2 – 13 Depts; Target 3 – 15 Depts; Target 4 – 31 Depts

Poppy

Diane Spencer, Kentucky, Chairman

Connecting the visual image of the poppy with the sacrifice of service made by our veterans has been the number one goal of the American Legion Auxiliary poppy program since its inception in 1921. On Memorial Day and Veterans Day, millions of red crepe paper poppies—all hand made by veterans as part of their therapeutic rehabilitation—are distributed across this country in exchange for donations that go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our communities.

The poppy program raises community awareness and respect for our veterans by educating Auxiliary members and the public about the symbol of the poppy, memorialized from a line in the poem “In Flanders Fields” written on the battlefield during WWI by Col. John McCrae, M.D.

The financial benefit realized by our nation’s veterans as a result of poppy distribution is huge; nearly 5 million poppies were distributed to units last year, raising nearly \$2 million. Children are involved in spreading the poppy message, too. Poppy poster contests are held in local schools for students in grades 2 to 12. The Miss Poppy Contest is a fun event for Junior members who develop local programs to promote the Auxiliary memorial poppy.

Meeting the continuing needs of our veterans should be the concern of every American who values his or her freedom. The Auxiliary promotes the poppy as a symbol of the sacrifices our military have made, a symbol to open people’s hearts and inspire them to donate.

It has been an exciting time as the American Legion Auxiliary celebrates its 90th year of serving our disabled veterans and their families with our poppy program. I want to thank the two departments that sent in reports. The poppy program was promoted in so many ways this year as The Legion Family took on the challenge in our Plan of Action by increasing their efforts.

A Department of Michigan post reports that a Poppy Museum was started by the Auxiliary past president from that unit. She has researched the history of the American Legion Auxiliary poppy flower and poppy flowers from other countries and wars. Some of the interesting things that she has found include a “Look Who’s Wearing a Poppy” feature with a photograph of Angelina Jolie with Brad Pitt wearing a British poppy.

The department of West Virginia’s chairman reports that a special veteran poppy maker has made all the poppies for their department for the past five years. From his residence at the West Virginia Veterans Home, he has supplied 35,000 poppies each year. The Department of Tennessee’s Miss Poppy participated in a Memorial Day ceremony, “For Whom the Bells Toll,” at the State Veteran Cemetery; as 375 veterans’ names were read, she placed a wreath at the podium and recited “In Flanders Fields.”

Units in California, Illinois, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin got the word out to the public about the poppy program through the media. They increased awareness of the poppy and increased donations by contacting local officials and media personalities, getting them to agree to wear a poppy, make a proclamation or do a promotion about the poppy and Poppy Day. The Ladies Home Journal ran a “Salute the Soldiers” for Memorial Day in its May issue.

A Department of California unit had a Poppy Luau, Poppy Fish Fry and Poppy Fashion Salute to Veterans, raising over \$5,700 that covered the poppies they ordered. Department Chairmen reported that units in their departments also promoted the Poppy Poster Contest and the Miss Poppy Contest programs.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	25
Units reporting.....	2,070
Units Ordering Poppies.....	2,168
Poppies Ordered	2,127,506
Received in Donations for Poppies.....	2,152,214
Veterans Who Made Poppies.....	765
Poppies Made by Veterans	3,446,501
Veterans Earned by Making Poppies.....	249,550

The Poppy Corsage Contest raised \$9,260 at the Awareness Assemble in Washington, D.C. for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

A total of 65 facilities made poppies this year.

**National Security
Diane Duscheck**

The Auxiliary’s National Security program operates in similar fashion. By providing for the needs of our military families on the home front, we hope to ease our deployed service members from worrying about their loved ones back home so that they can focus on the monumental task of protecting our Country.

Auxiliary members step up and reach out to help military families during deployments in very practical ways, such as assisting with their needs for child care and lawn work, or by providing a listening ear to a stressed out spouse. Members do helpful things such as collecting coupons and sending them to overseas commissaries, hosting warm send-off and welcome-home events for our troops and providing them with pocket flags, and showing the gratitude of our nation by providing military families with Blue Star and Gold Star Banners. Auxiliary units are encouraged to partner with other organizations that serve the military, such as local USO affiliates and ROTC/JROTC units.

Auxiliary members also assist our communities in times of natural and manmade disasters through Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) courses. These trainings prepare members to act as an emergency response resource in times of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes and blizzards, as well as during man-made disasters. The Auxiliary’s National Security program works collaboratively with the FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Division in keeping with a standing agreement.

National Security is a wide-reaching program that includes supporting our troops, preparing members to act as emergency management resource personnel in their communities and participating in additional military-related initiatives. Active military and their families were shown how much their sacrifices were appreciated both during and after deployment. Care packages of needed materials and fun goodies were sent to active-duty troops, and upon their return, our military were given heartfelt welcome-home greetings by 747 units. To alleviate troops’ concerns while on active duty, 259 units assisted their families with yard work and repairs around the house, 349 units provided child care, and 954 units provided meals. Social visits were made by 770 units just to let both the troops and their families know how much Auxiliary members care about them.

In conjunction with the Community Service Committee and the Corporation for National and Community Service, 126 units hosted Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) instruction. These classes trained 748 Auxiliary members to help their families and community members prepare for the natural disasters that would most likely affect their community and their state, as well as potential manmade disasters.

Blood donor programs were sponsored by 8,167 volunteers in 571 units; the blood obtained saved the lives of millions of recipients this year. Additional military initiatives were also supported. Blue Star Banners were provided to the families of 3,436 deployed military. To show our deepest gratitude and respect, 333 Gold Star Banners were presented to the immediate families of troops who sacrificed their lives.

Auxiliary units continue to partner with the USO to provide troops with morale-boosting programs and services that enhance the quality of life for them and their families. In 424 units, 1,846 volunteers donated 28,001 hours to the USO and donated \$102,717 to provide the troops with “a little bit of home.”

Another 444 units adopted ROTC and JROTC groups to lend support and funding to ensure the success of these programs.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	36
Units reporting.....	3,271
Volunteers who served with the USO.....	1,846
Volunteer hours served.....	28,001
Donated to USO activities	\$102,717
Units providing welcome-home greetings	747
Units that adopted ROTC/ JROTC units	217

- 748 members participated in CERT training
- 770 units supported military families by making social visits
- 954 units supported military families by providing meals
- Presented 3,436 Blue Star and 333 Gold Star banners
- 571 units sponsored blood donor programs and provided 8,167 volunteers
- 217 units adopted ROTC/JROTC groups

Past President Parley
Elsie Bailey, New Jersey

The Past Presidents Parley is a forum that brings together the experience of our former presidents to utilize their expertise in active service to the organization. Women who have been president of a unit, department or the national organization are encouraged to contribute to the Auxiliary as members of the Past Presidents Parley. These leaders share their wisdom and provide ongoing mentorship to empower and bolster the Auxiliary's present leaders, ensuring the continuity and strength of the organization at all levels.

The Past Presidents Parley convenes under the leadership of a Past National President appointed by the current Auxiliary National President. The many connections made by Parley members during their respective years as president positions the parley as a wealth of fundraising ambassadors poised to reach out as the American Legion Auxiliary expands its horizons for future financial health. A special focus of the Parley is serving women veterans and active duty servicewomen, letting them know how much we appreciate the daily sacrifices they make in order to serve the nation. The Parley is the primary source of support for hospitalized women veterans, and the members contribute to the "Women in Military Service" memorial. The Past Presidents Parley recognizes the outstanding contributions of active unit members through the Unit Member of the Year award program.

At the department level, the Parley also supports scholarships for nursing students to relieve the country's nursing shortage and to improve the quality of health care in America. They encourage members to provide monetary support for these scholarships as well and to publicize the availability of the scholarships to deserving students pursuing an education in the nursing field.

All phases of the Past Presidents Parley Plan of Action were supported throughout the 2009-2010 administrative year of the American Legion Auxiliary. Past presidents reconnected through the formation of several parleys and by mentoring new members and leaders. Through their mentoring, our organization's ideals, principles and purpose were preserved and strengthened.

Twenty-eight members who voluntarily gave of themselves with dignity and loyalty were named outstanding Unit Members of the Year. Special recognition was given to these members whose dedication energized the American Legion Auxiliary, and it will be our honor to present these special ladies to the membership during the Auxiliary's 90th Annual Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Their accomplishments include the following:

Sharing the history of their year as president, including an explanation of themes, goals and objectives.

Collecting 90 cents per member to donate to the nurse's scholarship fund and presenting thousands of dollars in Past Presidents Nurses Scholarships Adopting Go Start Mothers and visiting past presidents with limited mobility or who are in nursing Homes Mentoring new members and future leaders to secure our growth and strength.

The Past Presidents Parley Preamble was distributed at many gatherings and was published in department bulletins, reminding members of our purpose, goals and beliefs. Members reached out and touched someone as they gifted and honored hundreds of hospitalized female veterans and active duty servicewomen during social events, and especially on Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Day on February 14, 2010. U.S. military

personnel who have sacrificed themselves for our country's security were spotlighted, and one member of each branch of the service will be presented during the national convention.

Reporting is not required of this committee, and with only 28 departments actually reporting, the actual monetary value of scholarships and veterans' aid is unknown. However, chairing this committee and learning of the many unique happenings of parleys across our country has been a most meaningful educational experience. The opportunity to share this information with members and to mentor future leaders has been most rewarding, fulfilling and phenomenal. My recommendation on gathering specific statistics on scholarships and veterans' aid is to include an annual report form in the Plan of Action early in the year asking for this most important information.

Public Relations

Linda Moseman Raymond, New York, Chairman

Karen Lowe, Indiana, Vice Chairman

An organized communication network is critical in order for the public to become aware of the American Legion Auxiliary's timeless mission, the many programs in place to advance our mission, and how the hard-working members of the largest women's patriotic service organization make a difference in the lives of our veterans, our military, their families, and our communities. The Auxiliary's growth depends on strong grass roots public relations efforts. The Public Relations program works collaboratively at all levels – the unit, department and national – to positively promote and advance the objectives and programs of the Auxiliary beyond our membership.

Great public relations not only increases the public's awareness of the Auxiliary's good works, ensuring continued support of its programs, but also enhances the organization's efforts to recruit and retain members. Ongoing and consistent communication with community leaders and media outlets is vital to making our impact known. *Auxiliary Magazine*, a quarterly national publication, the ALA's national website, and the National ALA e-News newsletter are the primary communication vehicles between national leaders and unit members. The Public Relations program is keeping the Auxiliary in step with modern media, engaging new audiences with new media such as Facebook and YouTube. The technology of new media targets and engages a new generation of Auxiliary members and potential members. Also vital to the Auxiliary's image in the public's eye is promoting electronic communication and websites at the department and unit levels. Websites are the most efficient method for connecting internally with members, and with the emphasis on nonprofit transparency, is now even more important as an internal and external communications tool.

A variety of helpful resources are available through the Auxiliary website to provide guidance in the area of public relations so that our departments, units, and members can effectively promote actions and events that demonstrate the Auxiliary's service within our communities.

When people stop asking about Public Relations and start asking about our other programs, this committee has succeeded!

Members, units and departments promoted and educated our members and our communities about the American Legion Auxiliary and our programs this year.

The Department of Alaska promoted Facebook, Twitter and MySpace to connect its members. California promoted both printed and electronic media, while Florida promoted and publicized its participation in the Ride 2 Recovery.

Louisiana stressed the importance of personal contact with members. Maine provided media kits and the contact information for every newspaper and TV station in the state to its chairmen. Michigan held a public relations instruction session at its Fall Conference, distributing valuable materials for the units to use.

New Hampshire members donated gift subscriptions for National News to be placed in doctors’ and dentists’ offices, Veterans’ centers and nursing homes. Ohio distributed its Department Digest to each of its 459 units on a monthly basis through the posts and e-mail. Vermont used radio and television to help the “ones left at home,” reminding everyone that our active-duty soldiers are not the only ones who serve.

Public Relations department awards went to the following: Department of Louisiana, Outstanding Public Relations Program; Department of Mississippi, Best Overall Web Site; and the Department of Ohio, Best Press Book/More Than 35,000 Members.

A unit award went to Robert H. Burns Unit 16, Covington, La., for its new Web site launch.

Congratulations and thanks are extended to every member, unit and department that took the time to explain who we are, what we do and why we do it.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	31
Units reporting.....	2,281
Unit Web sites	322
Published Articles and/or Ads	8,213

**Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation
Kris Nelson, Minnesota, Chairman**

Coming home may be the end of one journey for many of our veterans; it is also the beginning of a new journey to transition to a “new normal”. At the core of the purpose and service of the American Legion Auxiliary is helping them get there. Auxiliary members are passionate about providing care and comfort to our heroic U.S. service members who are so highly deserving of everything we can possibly do for them.

Last year, the American Legion Auxiliary invested nearly 2 million volunteer VA&R hours in our veterans and contributed more than \$6 million toward meeting their needs through the Auxiliary’s Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation efforts. Auxiliary members serve hospitalized, handicapped and homebound veterans in Veterans Administration (VA) medical facilities, veterans’ homes, nursing homes, as well as in the veterans’ own homes.

At VA facilities, Auxiliary-sponsored gift shops and holiday parties have become a revered tradition and valued program. Members, units and departments also purchase essential equipment and supplies for these facilities.

The Auxiliary joins with the VA as a national co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Auxiliary members also support special rehabilitative programs

for our veterans such as Ride 2 Recovery. The Auxiliary's poppy program provides therapy for handicapped and hospitalized veterans and allows them to earn ancillary spending money through their hand-crafting of the Auxiliary memorial poppies.

The American Legion Auxiliary continues to sponsor the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The 2010 festival was hosted by the South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio, Texas. Hundreds of our members volunteered throughout the week, assisting with a multitude of duties.

National President Rita Navareté chose Ride 2 Recovery as her special project this year, and again our members rallied to volunteer at the group's five major rides, Spinning Nation, cycle fests, and in the "Dollar Making a Difference" campaign. Many departments reported how emotional it was for their members as they volunteered to assist these wounded warriors, our American heroes. Our members took up the challenge of increasing the number of our volunteers by recruiting new volunteers; we had 346 in VAVS, 437 in Field Service and 437 in Home Service.

Collaboration with the American Legion Auxiliary VISTA volunteers to help indigent veterans resulted in the VAVS Task Force, toolkits for volunteers, job fairs, days of service, recruiting Web sites, and partnerships with Collaboration Within Communities and other nonprofits.

Departments hosted standdowns, volunteering in shelters and soup kitchens to assist our homeless veterans and resulting in 709 initiatives, 2,670 volunteers and \$40,364. Members also donated clothing, furniture and comfort items.

Wyoming Unit 42 hosts an Angel Tree project, asking members throughout the community to share in giving to veterans at Christmas, and their generosity was overwhelming. North Carolina Unit 109 donated golf clubs and bags to the Wounded Warrior program at Fayetteville. In California, Unit 328 placed 5,500 poppies and 5,500 flags on the graves of deceased veterans. The Junior members of Unit 88 in Iowa created hundreds of tray favors, greeting cards, patriotic bookmarks, messages, posters and pictures for their hospitalized veterans. Members of Unit 423 in Illinois decorated the doors of veterans in their nursing home every month. An annual picnic for veterans, including dancing, games and horseshoes, is hosted by Unit 532 in Ohio. In Michigan, Unit 48 hosted a "Battle of the Bartenders," raising \$1,000 in one day for homeless veterans.

Mission Impact Numbers

Departments reporting	42
Units reporting.....	4,761
Volunteers who served	119,724
Volunteer hours served	927,273
Raised/donated for veterans & their families.....	3,413,824
Spent on veterans and their families	996,964
Volunteers at VA Facilities.....	2,669
Volunteer Hours at VA facilities	36,286
Donated to support above initiatives.....	273,144
Donated to NVCAF	74,959
Donated to Homeless Vet Initiatives	273,144
Regularly Scheduled Volunteers at VA Facilities.....	2,669
New VAVS volunteers this year.....	346
New Field Service and.....	437

American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
Carol Moye, New Mexico

Longevity. Permanence. These are words we want associated with the American Legion Auxiliary, because we believe our programs dedicated to veterans and their families are needed and necessary. That's why we established the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. As a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation the ALA Foundation provides a way for individuals and corporations to support the Auxiliary's charitable and educational outreach programs through endowed gifts, grants and scholarships. It is a way to secure our legacy and heritage of Service Not Self and ultimately, enhance the quality of life for future generations of veterans, our military and their families. We invite you to donate today!

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has enjoyed a busy and productive year. Responding to a request from the National Executive Committee for foundation information, a comprehensive presentation was developed and presented to the committee and the Awareness Assembly in Washington, D.C. Two pieces of information were distributed: a who-what-where-when-why overview flyer and a trifold brochure. In addition, an informational DVD and a tabletop display were created to invite conversation, answer questions and generate interest in the foundation.

To complement the presentation and sustain member interest, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation launched the Ambassador program. Through this creative concept, Auxiliary members serve as ambassadors throughout departments, providing information, encouraging participation, identifying partnering opportunities for the foundation with departments or units and extending a personal invitation to potential donors in support of Auxiliary programs and services. Ambassador materials are provided at no cost to the member. To date, 25 ambassadors have been recruited, and requests for program information continue to grow.

The foundation's Board of Directors made the decision to go on the road and take the foundation message directly to departments and unit members. The goal was to interact with members and talk about the foundation's purpose and role; provide clear, concise and accurate information; enlist member support; and introduce the Ambassador program. Auxiliary members were invited to attend the board meeting, sit in on the discussion and express their ideas and concerns.

The Department of Colorado hosted the first on-the-road foundation board meeting. We visited with Firestone Unit 1985, Boulder Unit 10 and Aurora Unit 23. Working together, we created positive foundation name recognition; built trust, understanding and acceptance; and recruited a host of new ambassadors to carry the foundation message.

Foundation board members Patricia Ward, Deborah McBride and Carol Van Kirk deserve credit and thanks for developing a professional and effective public relations and marketing program for the foundation. The foundation continues to search for a celebrity name to associate with our mission and to use to increase Auxiliary program and service awareness and build a strong donor base.

Under budget for FY 2010, the foundation has exercised strict oversight, diligently adhering to financial parameters. Expenses and revenues have been tracked and costs estimated for all in-kind donations. Budget projections for FY 2011 are conservative and reasonable. The Auxiliary is strategically positioned to meet the September 30, 2011 IRS

deadline for maintaining public charity status. The board conducted four business meetings this year: one in Indianapolis, two conference calls and the on-the-road meeting in Colorado. Foundation bylaws and policies were reviewed, and the foundation board ratified minor changes and revisions.

It has indeed been a busy and productive year. As I conclude my term of office and my role as the first president of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, let me thank the board members for their commitment and the American Legion Auxiliary leadership for its visionary foresight. Together we have built a solid infrastructure for the foundation, enabling us to focus on the acquisition of additional resources to support the programs and services of the Auxiliary. The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation allows future generations to access veteran outreach, educational and good citizenship programs and ensures that the Auxiliary will be able to provide scholarships, grants and partnership opportunities, thereby continuing our heritage of Service not Self.

**Crowe Horwath**SM

REPORT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

Crowe Horwath LLP
Independent Member Crowe Horwath International

Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statements of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters (Legion) as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 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 consolidated financial statements based on our audits. We did not audit the 2008 financial statements of Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Legion, which statements reflect total assets of \$1,855,741 and total revenues of \$4,162,777 for the year ended December 31, 2008. Those statements were audited by other auditors whose report has been furnished to us, and our opinion, insofar as it relates to the 2008 amounts included for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., is based solely on the report of the other auditors.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits and the report of other auditors provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, based on our audits and the report of the other auditors, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters as of December 31, 2009 and 2008, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audits were made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The supplementary information listed in the table of contents is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. The consolidating information is presented for purposes of additional analysis of the consolidated financial statements rather than to present the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the individual entities. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and, in our opinion, based on our audits and the report of the other auditors, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.


Crowe Horwath LLP

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidated Statements of Financial Position December 31, 2009 and 2008

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,692,062	\$ 2,049,362
Accounts receivable	2,649,794	2,025,137
Prepaid expenses and deposits	1,138,606	828,408
Deferred membership expense	8,425,988	2,306,766
Inventory	2,208,297	2,610,762
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	46,652	23,345
Beneficial interest in trust	351,492	389,000
Prepaid pension expense	144,950	221,413
	<u>16,657,841</u>	<u>10,454,193</u>
Investments		
General	27,300,171	24,726,658
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved Funds	26,971,287	26,218,794
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	26,896,801	29,438,344
Samsung scholarship fund	7,526,356	7,534,315
Building funds	3,981,907	3,632,095
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	4,242,352	2,952,670
Special account - Endowment Fund	2,212,498	2,169,380
General account - Endowment Fund	6,505,030	6,305,337
National Emergency Fund	2,550,982	2,302,634
Other	3,002,376	4,606,562
	<u>111,189,760</u>	<u>109,886,789</u>
Property, plant and equipment, net	7,116,479	6,864,478
	<u>134,964,080</u>	<u>127,205,460</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 1,745,507	\$ 1,863,765
Scholarships payable	1,208,547	1,092,632
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	157,669	92,150
Deferred income	214,704	454,039
Deferred dues income	27,841,215	26,785,977
Deferred income - direct membership solicitation	2,336,883	117,667
Accrued vacation benefits	676,332	628,167
Other liabilities	159,581	427,010
Notes payable	2,082,865	2,269,625
Deferred dues income-Paid-Up-For-Life membership	23,591,073	22,993,502
Life memberships due to state and local posts	24,084,511	25,667,562
	<u>84,098,887</u>	<u>82,392,096</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	27,626,666	22,838,589
Temporarily restricted	11,100,971	9,990,610
Permanently restricted	12,137,556	11,984,165
Total net assets	<u>50,865,193</u>	<u>44,813,364</u>
	<u>\$ 134,964,080</u>	<u>\$ 127,205,460</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidated Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2009

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support				
National member dues	\$ 31,571,415	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,571,415
Direct membership solicitations	366,876	-	-	366,876
Member service fees income	1,208,786	-	-	1,208,786
Affinity income	309,293	-	-	309,293
Sales of emblem items	11,030,222	-	-	11,030,222
Advertising	9,545,830	-	-	9,545,830
Contributions	539,991	1,791,641	45,692	2,377,324
Label and printing fees	1,229,691	-	-	1,229,691
Sales - HPC	293,927	-	-	293,927
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of \$261,674	1,656,165	837,933	-	2,494,098
Net realized gains (losses)	(257,793)	9,386	91,451	(156,956)
Other	2,327,184	-	-	2,327,184
	<u>59,821,587</u>	<u>2,638,960</u>	<u>137,143</u>	<u>62,597,690</u>
Net assets released from restriction	932,469	(932,469)	-	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support	<u>60,754,056</u>	<u>1,706,491</u>	<u>137,143</u>	<u>62,597,690</u>
Expenses				
Salaries	13,162,728	-	-	13,162,728
Employee benefits	2,404,942	-	-	2,404,942
Cost of sales - Legion	8,033,171	-	-	8,033,171
Cost of sales - HPC	264,414	-	-	264,414
Direct publication	11,970,525	-	-	11,970,525
Executive and staff travel	880,681	-	-	880,681
Commission and committee	1,626,714	-	-	1,626,714
Printing and postage	1,770,499	-	-	1,770,499
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,224,558	-	-	1,224,558
Office and other operating	7,894,444	-	-	7,894,444
Occupancy and usage	2,178,278	-	-	2,178,278
Special projects and programs	3,241,779	-	-	3,241,779
	<u>54,652,733</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,652,733</u>
Change in net assets from operations	6,101,323	1,706,491	137,143	7,944,957
Net unrealized gains - investments	141,239	61,179	16,248	218,666
Net unrealized loss - PUFL	(1,256,780)	-	-	(1,256,780)
Amortization of pension loss	(880,835)	-	-	(880,835)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	25,821	-	-	25,821
	<u>4,130,768</u>	<u>1,767,670</u>	<u>153,391</u>	<u>6,051,829</u>
Change in net assets				
Reclassification (Note 1)	657,309	(657,309)	-	-
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>22,838,589</u>	<u>9,990,610</u>	<u>11,984,165</u>	<u>44,813,364</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 27,626,666</u>	<u>\$ 11,100,971</u>	<u>\$ 12,137,556</u>	<u>\$ 50,865,193</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidated Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2008

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support				
National member dues	\$ 32,327,410	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32,327,410
Direct membership solicitations	4,087,127	-	-	4,087,127
Member service fees income	1,456,547	-	-	1,456,547
Affinity income	346,632	-	-	346,632
Sales of emblem items	10,674,782	-	-	10,674,782
Advertising	8,766,045	-	-	8,766,045
Contributions	578,791	1,372,724	91,848	2,043,363
Label and printing fees	1,554,059	-	-	1,554,059
Sales - HPC	1,614,695	-	-	1,614,695
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of \$215,062	2,035,815	899,274	-	2,935,089
Net realized gains (losses)	(90,572)	7,900	97,929	15,257
Other	2,135,077	60	-	2,135,137
	<u>65,486,408</u>	<u>2,279,958</u>	<u>189,777</u>	<u>67,956,143</u>
Net assets released from restriction	1,339,171	(1,339,171)	-	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support	<u>66,825,579</u>	<u>940,787</u>	<u>189,777</u>	<u>67,956,143</u>
Expenses				
Salaries	12,604,488	-	-	12,604,488
Employee benefits	3,523,221	-	-	3,523,221
Cost of sales - Legion	7,922,688	-	-	7,922,688
Cost of sales - HPC	1,077,575	-	-	1,077,575
Direct publication	11,840,989	-	-	11,840,989
Executive and staff travel	869,637	-	-	869,637
Commission and committee	1,734,318	-	-	1,734,318
Printing and postage	3,388,321	-	-	3,388,321
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,550,354	-	-	1,550,354
Office and other operating	12,968,602	-	-	12,968,602
Occupancy and usage	2,330,814	-	-	2,330,814
Special projects and programs	3,614,336	-	-	3,614,336
	<u>63,425,343</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,425,343</u>
Change in net assets from operations	3,400,236	940,787	189,777	4,530,800
Net unrealized gains - investments	(122,174)	(227,677)	4,266	(345,585)
Net unrealized loss - PUFL	(11,273,623)	-	-	(11,273,623)
Amortization of pension loss	(305,066)	-	-	(305,066)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(5,294,377)	-	-	(5,294,377)
Change in net assets	<u>(13,595,04)</u>	<u>713,110</u>	<u>194,043</u>	<u>(12,687,851)</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>36,433,593</u>	<u>9,277,500</u>	<u>11,790,122</u>	<u>57,501,215</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 22,838,589</u>	<u>\$ 9,990,610</u>	<u>\$ 11,984,165</u>	<u>\$ 44,813,364</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows Years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$ 6,051,829	\$ (12,687,851)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities		
Depreciation expense	878,735	782,234
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	1,924	-
Realized (gain) loss on sale of investments	156,956	(15,257)
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	(218,666)	345,585
Loss on Paid-Up-For-Life annuity	1,256,780	11,273,623
Amortization of pension loss	880,835	305,066
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(25,821)	5,294,377
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	(45,692)	(91,848)
Accounts receivable	(624,657)	867,341
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(1,088,749)	145,589
Deferred membership expense	(6,119,222)	6,123,035
Inventories	402,465	(253,915)
Beneficial interest in trust	37,508	(12,000)
Accounts and scholarships payable	(2,343)	539,204
Deferred income	858,378	(11,220,057)
Other accrued liabilities	(219,264)	(168,616)
Net cash from operating activities	<u>2,180,996</u>	<u>1,226,510</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(1,135,460)	(1,046,936)
Sales of property and equipment	2,800	-
Purchase of investments	(125,135,770)	(160,058,013)
Sales and maturities of investments	123,894,509	159,079,866
Investments in affiliate (CFA)	(23,307)	26,062
Net cash from investing activities	<u>(2,397,228)</u>	<u>(1,999,021)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	45,692	91,848
Payments on loan	(186,760)	(177,140)
Net cash from financing activities	<u>(141,068)</u>	<u>(85,292)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(357,300)	(857,803)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>2,049,362</u>	<u>2,907,165</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>1,692,062</u>	<u>2,049,362</u>
Supplemental cash flows information		
Income taxes paid, net of refunds received	(69,605)	(18,167)
Interest paid	115,797	125,417

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

The American Legion National Headquarters

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements December 31, 2009 and 2008

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Nature of Organization: The American Legion National Headquarters (the Legion) is a national veterans organization that was declared a corporate body by an act of the U.S. Congress on Sept. 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 percent of the Legion's income is derived from membership dues (including amounts allocated for magazine subscriptions). An additional 15 percent is generated through advertising for *The American Legion Magazine*. Another significant source of income is Emblem Sales, which includes the sale of apparel, jewelry, and other items bearing the American Legion emblem. Income is expended by the Legion on several different programs, including *The American Legion Magazine*, Emblem Sales, veterans assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion Baseball, the National Oratorical Contest and Boys Nation.

Principles of Consolidation: The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly-owned subsidiaries: Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC), The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (ALEF), and the National Emergency Fund (NEF) (collectively, the Legion). All material interorganizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation. Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., an Indiana corporation, is a full-service direct-marketing and advertising agency. Its 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 American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, a tax-exempt Indiana corporation, was created to provide permanent funding for the rehabilitation of U.S. veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans. The National Emergency Fund is a tax-exempt trust established to provide gifts and grants to relieve suffering and ameliorate financial hardship incurred by American Legion members, families and posts.

Basis of Accounting: The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting, in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in the United States of America.

Financial Statement Presentation: The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally-accepted accounting principles for financial statements of not-for-profit organizations. Generally-accepted accounting principles require, among other things, that 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 or 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.

Use of Estimates in Preparation of Financial Statements: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses,

gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reported period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents consist of bank deposits in accounts that are federally insured for up to \$250,000 per financial institution. Additionally, the Legion holds funds at financial institutions that are participating in the FDIC's transaction account guarantee program. Under this program, non-interest-bearing and certain low-interest accounts are FDIC-insured in full through 2009 in addition to and separate from the coverage available under FDIC's general deposit-insurance rules.

For purposes of the consolidated statement of cash flows, the Legion considers all highly-liquid investments purchased with an original maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Inventory: Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market. In 2008, inventory items were valued at average cost. In 2009, the Legion changed the method for which they account for their inventory by switching to the first-in, first-out (FIFO) method. Supplies not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

Investments: Investments held by Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Legion, are classified as held-to-maturity securities and are carried at amortized cost. Realized gains or losses are determined based on the amortized cost of the specific security sold. Interest and dividend income, adjusted by amortization of purchase premium or discount, is included in earnings. Securities with declines in fair value below amortized cost that are other than temporary are written down to fair value by a charge to earnings.

All other Legion investments are carried at fair value. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the consolidated statements 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 and are greater than \$500, are capitalized at cost. The Legion provides for depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designated to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives.

Depreciation on buildings is computed on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from three to seven years.

Collections: The Legion owns many collectible military-related items and historical documents that were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and, accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized. These items have been, or are in the process of being, appraised for insurance purposes.

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 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 membership year.

Income Taxes: The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(19) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The ALEF and the NEF are exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. None of these organizations is considered a private foundation. The Legion is subject to income tax on unrelated business income. The Legion incurred \$75,958 of tax expense and paid \$116,348 of income taxes (including estimated payments, net of refunds) in 2009. In 2008, the Legion incurred and paid no income taxes.

HPC records income-tax expense based on the amount of taxes due on its tax return plus deferred taxes computed, based on the expected future tax consequences of temporary differences between the carrying amounts and tax bases of assets and liabilities, using enacted tax rates. Federal and state income-tax expense is recorded for HPC, a for-profit corporation, as incurred, and is disclosed in Note 17.

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Fair Value of Financial Instruments: The carrying amount of all financial instruments of the Legion, which include cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, beneficial interest in trust, investments, and notes payable, approximate fair value, with the exception of held-to-maturity investments held by HPC, as disclosed in Note 5.

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 spent by Legion employees performing services for these departments.

Changes in Accounting Principles: In 2009, the Legion changed the method for which it accounts for inventory by switching from the average-cost method to the first-in, first-out (FIFO) method. This change was not applied retrospectively, as management reviewed the effect of the change on the prior-year balance and determined it to be immaterial to the financial statements.

Subsequent Events: Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to Dec. 31, 2009, to determine the need for any adjustments or disclosures to the audited financial statements for the year ended Dec. 31, 2009. Management has performed its analysis through April 19, 2010, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

Effective after the close of business on Dec. 31, 2009, HPC merged with the Legion and the corporation was dissolved. The amounts are reflected in the financial statements as a wholly-owned subsidiary through Dec. 31, 2009. Effective Jan. 1, 2010, the activities and balances of the former entity will be reported as the HPC Division in the Legion's operations.

Adoption of New Accounting Standards: In 2009, the Legion adopted new accounting guidance related to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. This guidance requires the Legion to recognize a tax benefit only if it is more likely than not that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with the examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit greater than 50 percent likely to be realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the more-likely-than-not test, no tax benefit is recorded. The Legion has examined this issue and has determined there are no material contingent tax liabilities or questionable tax positions.

The Legion is no longer subject to examination by taxing authorities for the years before 2006. The Legion does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months. The Legion recognizes interest and/or penalties related to income-tax matters in income-tax expense. The Legion did not have any amounts accrued for interest and penalties at Dec. 31, 2009.

Re-classifications: Certain re-classifications have been made to present last year's financial statements on a basis comparable to the current year's financial statements. These re-classifications had no effect on the change in net assets.

In addition, \$657,309 of net assets were re-classified from temporarily restricted net assets to unrestricted net assets as of Dec. 31, 2009, based on the clarification of the original contribution. This re-classification had no effect on the change in net assets or total net assets.

NOTE 2 – COLLECTIONS

The Legion owns many collectible military-related items and historical documents that were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and, accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized. These items have been appraised, or are in the process of being appraised, for insurance purposes and are as follows:

	Appraisal date	Replacement value
World War I Posters	2/10/2005	\$ 461,769
World War II Posters	3/11/2005	472,919
Military Unit Histories	3/18/2005	112,410
Fine-Art Collection	10/14/2005	695,600
Firearms and Uniforms Collection	3/24/2006	99,950
Original GI Bill	not complete	-
Other collections	not complete	-

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENT IN AFFILIATE

The Legion, in conjunction with approximately 120 other organizations, has created a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. (CFA) for the purpose of aiding in the

campaign to secure a constitutional amendment empowering Congress and the states to enact legislation to protect the flag of the United States of America from physical desecration. CFA recognized an increase in net assets of \$23,307 and a decrease of \$26,062 in 2009 and 2008, respectively. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been changed by these amounts and corresponding adjustments have been reflected in unrestricted designated net assets for 2009 and 2008.

NOTE 4 – BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN CHARITABLE LEAD TRUST

The ALEF has been named a beneficiary of a charitable lead trust. Under the charitable trust, the ALEF is to receive quarterly distributions in the amount of \$9,919 until December 2020 or the funds of the trust are exhausted. Based on the terms of the trust and a 4.01-percent discount rate in 2009 and a 3.4-percent discount rate in 2008, the present value of future benefits expected to be received by the ALEF was estimated to be \$351,492 and \$389,000 at Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

NOTE 5 – INVESTMENTS

The carrying amount, unrealized gains and losses, and fair value of agency and municipal bonds held-to-maturity held by HPC at Dec. 31, 2008, are listed below. At Dec. 31, 2009, HPC did not hold any agency or municipal bonds.

2008	Carrying amount	Unrealized gains	Unrealized losses	Fair value
Due within 1 year	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Due 1-5 years	76,282	5,305	-	81,587
Due more than 10 years	96,000	-	-	96,000
Total	\$ 172,282	\$ 5,305	\$ -	\$ 177,587

The carrying amount plus accrued interest for these investments was \$174,515 at Dec. 31, 2008.

The market values for all other investments held by the Legion at Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, are as follows:

	2009	2008
Money market accounts	\$ 26,225,691	\$ 25,271,409
U.S. government obligations	67,813,468	60,832,707
State and municipal bonds	735,414	301,688
Corporate bonds	15,747,990	17,191,281
Common and preferred stocks	-	5,230,854
Accrued interest	667,197	884,335
	\$ 111,189,760	\$ 109,712,274

NOTE 6 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The Legion's property and equipment, and the related accumulated depreciation at Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, are as follows:

	2009	2008
Washington, D.C., real estate		
Land	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
Building	4,913,577	4,905,977
Construction in progress	290,905	-
Indianapolis real estate		
Land	389,264	389,264
Building	3,661,494	3,611,779
Construction in progress	314,570	49,715
Furniture, fixtures and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis	5,659,156	5,433,091
Washington, D.C.	859,089	851,076
Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc.	904,588	1,104,051
	17,072,643	16,424,953
Less accumulated depreciation	(9,956,164)	(9,560,475)
	\$ 7,116,479	\$ 6,864,478

Depreciation expense for the years ended Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, was \$878,735 and \$782,234, respectively.

NOTE 7 – LONG-TERM DEBT

In 2003, the Legion refinanced its long-term debt on its facility for Emblem Sales, Information Technology, Member Benefits and HPC. This debt is payable in monthly installments of \$25,213, including interest, beginning July 30, 2003, with a stated rate of 5.3 percent and

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final payment due Aug. 1, 2018. The outstanding balance on long-term debt is \$2,082,865 and \$2,269,625 for 2009 and 2008.

The future maturities of the long-term debt are as follows:

2010	\$ 196,036
2011	206,682
2012	217,907
2013	229,740
2014	242,217
Thereafter	990,283
Total	\$ 2,082,865

Interest expense was \$115,797 and \$125,417 for the years ended Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

NOTE 8 – LEASES

The Legion has several noncancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, and copiers, that expire at various dates through the year 2013. HPC leases equipment under operating leases that expire at various dates through 2012. Rent expense under these leases for the years ended Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, was \$487,433 and \$502,505, respectively.

Minimum lease commitments are as follows:

2010	\$ 474,900
2011	463,732
2012	372,588
2013	194,869
Total	\$ 1,506,089

In addition, the Legion has a lease with the State of Indiana for rental of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis through June 30, 2010. The lease can be renewed at the option of the Legion for eight 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 for 2009 and 2008 was approximately \$589,000 and \$623,000, respectively. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

NOTE 9 – 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 (PUFL) 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. Under the terms of the PUFL program, a participating member's national, state and local dues are paid by the Legion for the remainder of the individual's life. Management has estimated and recognized a liability for the future payments to state and local Legion organizations. Likewise, management has deferred recognition of the national-dues portion of the member's payment. Deferred PUFL dues are recognized in annual amounts equal to the national dues in effect each year. The liability and deferred-revenue amounts are estimated by the Legion's actuaries using PUFL membership summaries and discount rates comparable to the Legion's recent investment performance.

NOTE 10 – RESTRICTED AND RESERVE DESIGNATED FUNDS

The restricted fund is designated for use by the Legion's National Finance Commission and the National Executive Committee. 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 percent of the prior year's defined net income from operations to the restricted fund. The Legion made no transfers to the restricted fund in 2009 and 2008.

The reserve fund is also designated for use by the National Finance Commission and the National Executive Committee. However, earnings of the reserve fund may be used for 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 11 – LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

During October 1992, the National Executive Committee approved a resolution to terminate the Legion's Life Insurance Trust. Upon its dissolution in April 1993, funds remaining in the trust totaling \$4,285,984 were transferred to a segregated bank trust account (named The American Legion Life Insurance Plan) under control of the Legion, for use in youth programs.

The Legion's National Executive Committee has directed that monies within The American Legion Life Insurance Plan be used to fund the Oratorical Contest, Boys Nation, American Legion Baseball, and other youth programs of the Legion. At Dec. 31, 2009, approximately \$1,100,000 in funds had been approved for use in designated programs during 2010.

NOTE 12 – TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Temporarily restricted net assets are donor-restricted for specific purposes. At Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, the restricted purposes are as follows:

	2009	2008
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	\$ 1,046,268	\$ 1,039,431
Samsung Scholarship	2,526,356	2,534,316
Legacy Scholarship Fund	4,289,729	2,980,461
National Emergency Fund	2,555,482	2,259,434
Boy Scouts	467,899	467,899
Others	215,237	85,593
	\$ 11,100,971	\$ 9,990,610

NOTE 13 – PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Permanently restricted net assets represent donor-restricted gifts that have been invested and are to be maintained in perpetuity. Income from the Samsung Scholarship Fund is to be used to fund undergraduate scholarships for descendants of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U.S. servicemembers participated. Income from the American Legion Endowment Fund is to be used to support the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth activities.

At Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, the permanently restricted net assets are as follows:

	2009	2008
Samsung Scholarships	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	7,137,556	6,984,165
	\$ 12,137,556	\$ 11,984,165

NOTE 14 – 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.

	2009	2008
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Overseas graves decoration	\$ 5,600	\$ 5,600
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	637,237	1,039,505
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth programs	289,632	294,066
	\$ 932,469	\$ 1,339,171

NOTE 15 – FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Fair value is defined as the price that would be received for an asset, or paid to transfer a liability (an exit price), in the foundation's principal or most advantageous market for the asset or liability in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. GAAP establishes a fair-value hierarchy which requires an entity to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. GAAP describes three levels of inputs that may be used to measure fair value:

Level 1: Quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the entity has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices, such as quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities, quoted prices in markets that are not active, or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect a reporting entity's own assumptions about the assumptions that market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from

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multiple levels of the fair-value hierarchy. The lowest level of significant input determines the placement of the entire fair-value measurement in the hierarchy. The fair value of money markets, U.S. government obligations and common stock are based on quoted prices in active markets. This is considered a Level 1 input. The fair value of asset-backed securities, corporate and state bonds, and municipal bonds are based on quoted market prices of similar securities with similar due dates. These are considered Level 2 inputs.

The fair value of beneficial interest in trust assets (or any type of beneficial interest) is based on a valuation model that calculates the present value of estimated distributed income. The valuation model incorporates assumptions that market participants would use in estimating future distributed income. The Legion is able to compare the valuation-model inputs and results to widely-available published industry data for reasonableness (Level 2 inputs). If not readily comparable to published data, then the Legion would have to develop a model similar to the above for a Level 3 input.

Assets and Liabilities Measured on a Recurring Basis: Assets and liabilities measured at fair value on a recurring basis are summarized below:

	Fair-Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2009, using			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Other Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)	
Assets:				
Beneficial interest in trust	\$ -	\$ 351,492	\$ -	\$ -
Money market accounts	26,225,691	-	-	-
U.S. government obligations	67,813,468	-	-	-
State and municipal bonds	-	735,414	-	-
Corporate bonds	-	15,747,990	-	-
Accrued interest	667,197	-	-	-
	\$ 94,706,356	\$ 16,834,896	\$ -	\$ -

	Fair-Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2008, using			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Other Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)	
Assets:				
Beneficial interest in trust	\$ -	\$ 389,000	\$ -	\$ -
Investments	\$ 92,219,305	\$ 17,667,484	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 92,219,305	\$ 18,056,484	\$ -	\$ -

NOTE 16 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION

The Legion's endowments include donor restricted endowment funds, and comprise two separate funds: the American Legion Endowment Fund and the Samsung Scholarship Fund. In accordance with generally-accepted accounting principles, net assets associated with endowment funds, including funds designated by the National Executive Committee to function as endowments, are classified and reported based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The National Executive Committee has interpreted the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the gift date of the donor-restricted endowment funds, absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Legion classifies as permanently restricted net assets (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the governing documents of the Legion. The remaining portion of the donor-restricted endowment fund not classified in permanently restricted net assets is classified as temporarily restricted net assets until those amounts are appropriated for expenditure by the Legion in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA. In accordance with UPMIFA, the Legion considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

- (1) The duration and preservation of the fund
- (2) The purposes of the Legion and the donor-restricted endowment fund
- (3) General economic conditions
- (4) The possible effects of inflation and deflation
- (5) The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments
- (6) Other resources of the Legion
- (7) The investment policies of the Legion

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of Dec. 31, 2009:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Permanently restricted	Total
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ (53,401)	\$ 2,526,356	\$ 12,137,556	\$ 14,610,511
Total funds	\$ (53,401)	\$ 2,526,356	\$ 12,137,556	\$ 14,610,511

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of Dec. 31, 2008:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Permanently restricted	Total
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ (97,700)	\$ 2,534,316	\$ 11,984,165	\$ 14,421,281
Total funds	\$ (97,700)	\$ 2,534,316	\$ 11,984,165	\$ 14,421,281

Changes in endowment net assets for the year ended Dec. 31, 2009:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Permanently restricted	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ (97,200)	\$ 2,534,316	\$ 11,984,165	\$ 14,421,281
Investment return				
Investment income, net of fees	94,736	587,162	-	681,898
Net appreciation (realized and unrealized)	38,885	(1,490)	107,699	145,094
Total investment return	133,621	585,672	107,699	826,992
New gifts	-	-	45,692	45,692
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(89,822)	(593,632)	-	(683,454)
Net assets, end of year	\$ (53,401)	\$ 2,526,356	\$ 12,137,556	\$ 14,610,511

Changes in endowment net assets for the year Dec. 31, 2008:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Permanently restricted	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ (156,195)	\$ 2,553,839	\$ 11,790,122	\$ 14,187,766
Investment return				
Investment income, net of fees	94,840	628,260	-	723,100
Net appreciation (realized and unrealized)	40,603	(62,275)	102,195	80,523
Total investment return	135,443	565,985	102,195	803,623
New gifts	-	-	91,848	91,848
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(76,448)	(585,508)	-	(661,956)
Net assets, end of year	\$ (97,200)	\$ 2,534,316	\$ 11,984,165	\$ 14,421,281

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Funds with Deficiencies: From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor-restricted endowment funds may fall below the level that the donor or UPMIFA requires the Legion to retain as a fund of perpetual duration. In accordance with generally-accepted accounting principles, deficiencies of this nature reported on unrestricted net assets were \$53,401 and \$97,200 as of Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008, respectively.

Return Objectives and Risk Parameters: The Legion has adopted investment and spending policies for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding to programs supported by its endowment, while seeking to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment assets. Endowment assets include those assets of donor-restricted funds that the Legion must hold in perpetuity or for a donor-specified period(s). Under this policy, as approved by the National Executive Committee, the endowment assets are invested in a manner intended to produce income while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives: To satisfy its long-term rate-of-return objectives, the Legion relies on a total return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation (realized and unrealized) and current yield (interest and dividends). The Legion targets fixed-income securities to achieve its long-term return objectives within prudent risk constraints.

Spending Policy and How the Investment Objectives Relate to Spending Policy: Distributions will be limited to interest, net of fees. Capital appreciation (realized and unrealized) is added to the principal of the American Legion Endowment Fund; however, capital appreciation from the Samsung Scholarship Fund is temporarily restricted and can be spent according to the spending policy. Endowment-fund principal, unless otherwise directed by the donor, shall not be disbursed except for emergency situations. In order to make a principal disbursement, a majority vote by the National Executive Committee will be required.

NOTE 17 – INCOME TAXES

The provision (benefit) for income taxes of HPC consists of the following:

Income-tax expense	2009	2008
Current		
Federal	\$ (4,406)	\$ (71,530)
State	(174,010)	(25,756)
Deferred		
Federal	-	(12,700)
State	-	1,500
	\$ (178,416)	\$ 108,486

The components of the net deferred tax (liability) asset are as follows:

	2008
Asset	
Net operating loss carry-forward	\$ 19,900
Liability	
Other	(54,500)
	\$ (34,600)

The deferred tax asset and liability are included in other prepaid expenses and deposits and other liabilities, respectively, in the 2008 statement of financial position. There is no deferred tax asset or liability at Dec. 31, 2009, as HPC merged with the Legion. See Note 1, Subsequent Events.

The tax provision (benefit) is lower than the statutory provision, due primarily to the effect of non-deductible expenses, non-taxable income and the effect of state taxes.

NOTE 18 – 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.

In May 2008, the Legion voted to freeze the plan effective June 30, 2008, and adopt a 401(k) savings plan with a qualified automatic-contribution arrangement effective July 1, 2008. The result of the freeze is that current employees will still receive the benefits they had earned as of June 30, 2008, but no future benefits will be earned and no new employees will be added. As a result, the benefit obligation decreased by \$1,192,643. The 401(k) savings plan calls for a 100-percent match of the first 1 percent contributed by the employee, and

a 50-percent match of the net 5 percent contributed by the employee. Thus, the maximum matching percentage an employee will receive is 3.5.

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 Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008:

	2009	2008
Benefit obligation	\$ (46,800,137)	\$ (45,786,609)
Fair value of plan assets	46,945,087	46,008,022
Funded status	\$ 144,950	\$ 221,413
Service cost	\$ -	\$ 1,343,110
Interest cost	2,671,209	2,612,541
Actual return on assets	(3,470,842)	3,452,480
Amortization of prior service costs	121,085	420,337
Amortization of loss	880,835	305,066
Difference between expected and actual return on assets	(100,003)	(7,492,195)
Benefit cost	\$ 102,284	\$ 641,339
Net loss	\$ 95,264	\$ 5,714,714
Prior service cost	(121,085)	(420,337)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	\$ (25,821)	\$ 5,294,377
Prepaid benefit cost	\$ 14,212,848	\$ 14,315,132
Accumulated benefit obligation	46,352,307	47,427,798
Vested benefit obligation	46,800,137	46,880,911
Benefit cost	102,284	641,339
Benefits paid	2,533,777	1,968,142
Measurement date	12/31/2009	12/31/2008

Estimated future benefit payments:

2010	\$ 3,006,971
2011	3,046,129
2012	3,118,564
2013	3,175,933
2014	3,235,096
Years 2015-2019	\$ 16,683,227

The asset investment policy is a lower-risk strategy. The fair value of the Legion's defined-benefit plan assets at Dec. 31, 2009, are as follows. See Note 15 for descriptions of inputs for each type of asset.

	Fair-Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2009, using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Money market accounts	\$ 884,944	\$ -	\$ -
U.S. government and agency obligations	\$ 13,574,717	\$ -	\$ -
Asset-backed securities	-	6,813,718	-
Municipal bonds	-	687,819	-
Corporate bonds	-	13,142,847	-
Common stock			
Materials	769,466	-	-
Industrials	1,478,597	-	-
Consumer discretionary	1,135,973	-	-
Consumer staples	677,412	-	-
Energy	1,515,032	-	-
Health care	1,334,862	-	-
Financials	1,533,788	-	-
Telecommunication	322,302	-	-
Technology	1,555,324	-	-
Utilities	578,111	-	-

The American Legion National Headquarters
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements December 31, 2009 and 2008

Other	550,350	-	-
Accrued interest	389,825	-	-
	\$ 26,300,703	\$ 20,644,384	\$-

Historical returns of multiple asset classes were analyzed to develop a risk-free real rate of return and risk premium for each asset class. The overall rate for each asset class was developed by combining a long-term inflation component, the risk-free real rate of return, and the associated risk premium. A weighted average rate was developed based on those overall rates and the target asset allocation of the plan.

Weighted-average assumptions	2009	2008
Discount rate	5.96%	5.80%
Expected return on plan assets	8.00%	9.00%
Rate of compensation increase	0.00%	0.00%

The amounts of net loss and net prior-service cost expected to be recognized as components of net periodic-benefit cost for the year ending Dec. 31, 2010, are \$783,605 and \$121,085, respectively.

HPC maintains a defined-contribution plan under Section 401(k) of the Internal Revenue Code. Elective deferrals are available to employees 21 years of age who have completed one year of eligible service. HPC may make discretionary contributions to this plan. HPC's contributions to the plan in 2009 and 2008 were \$304,444 and \$142,742, respectively.

NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

The following represents a functional breakdown of The American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

	2009	2008
Program services		
Veterans programs and services	\$ 34,528,071	\$ 33,956,797
Americanism, Children & Youth activities	3,881,481	4,248,437
	38,409,552	38,205,234
Supporting services		
Management and general	11,616,671	13,167,219
Member development	4,469,488	11,845,827
Fundraising	157,022	207,063
	\$ 54,652,733	\$ 63,425,343

Member development includes direct-response advertising expense of \$768,462 and \$7,285,972 for the years ended Dec. 31, 2009 and 2008.

NOTE 20 – 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 that any ultimate liability of the Legion with respect to these actions will not materially affect the financial position of the Legion.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2009

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communicati ons, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,652,940	\$ 11,945	\$ 4,500	\$ 22,677	\$ -	\$ 1,692,062
Accounts receivable	2,518,235	1,533	-	560,663	(430,637)	2,649,794
Prepaid expenses and deposits	897,939	1,657	-	239,010	-	1,138,606
Deferred membership expense	8,425,988	-	-	-	-	8,425,988
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	2,208,297	-	-	-	-	2,208,297
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	46,652	-	-	-	-	46,652
Beneficial interest in trust	-	351,492	-	-	-	351,492
Prepaid pension expense	144,950	-	-	-	-	144,950
	17,895,001	366,627	4,500	822,350	(2,430,637)	16,657,841
Investments						
General	27,300,171	-	-	-	-	27,300,171
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	26,971,287	-	-	-	-	26,971,287
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	26,896,801	-	-	-	-	26,896,801
Samsung scholarship fund	7,526,356	-	-	-	-	7,526,356
Building funds	3,981,907	-	-	-	-	3,981,907
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	4,242,352	-	-	-	-	4,242,352
Special account – Endowment Fund	-	2,212,498	-	-	-	2,212,498
General account – Endowment Fund	-	6,505,030	-	-	-	6,505,030
National Emergency Fund	-	-	2,550,982	-	-	2,550,982
Investment in HPC	949,698	-	-	-	(949,698)	-
Other	3,002,376	-	-	-	-	3,002,376
	100,870,948	8,717,528	2,550,982	-	(949,698)	111,189,760
Property, plant and equipment, net	6,912,515	-	-	203,964	-	7,116,479
Total assets	\$ 125,678,464	\$ 9,084,155	\$ 2,555,482	\$ 1,026,314	\$ (3,380,335)	\$ 134,964,080

**The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2009**

LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	\$ 1,740,397	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 44,252	\$ (39,142)	\$ 1,745,507
Scholarships payable	1,208,547	-	-	-	-	1,208,547
Accounts payable - Legion	-	2,000,000	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	157,669	-	-	-	-	157,669
Deferred income	214,704	-	-	-	-	214,704
Deferred dues income	27,841,215	-	-	-	-	27,841,215
Deferred income - direct membership solicitation	2,336,883	-	-	-	-	2,336,883
Accrued vacation benefits	676,332	-	-	-	-	676,332
Other liabilities	518,712	-	-	32,364	(391,495)	159,581
Notes payable	2,082,865	-	-	-	-	2,082,865
Deferred dues income - Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	23,591,073	-	-	-	-	23,591,073
Life memberships due to state and local posts	24,084,511	-	-	-	-	24,084,511
	<u>84,452,908</u>	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>76,616</u>	<u>(2,430,637)</u>	<u>84,098,887</u>
NET ASSETS						
Unrestricted	27,680,067	(53,401)	-	-	-	27,626,666
Temporarily restricted	8,545,489	-	2,555,482	-	-	11,100,971
Permanently restricted	5,000,000	7,137,556	-	-	-	12,137,556
Shareholders' Equity	-	-	-	949,698	(949,698)	-
Total net assets	<u>41,225,556</u>	<u>7,084,155</u>	<u>2,555,482</u>	<u>949,698</u>	<u>(949,698)</u>	<u>50,865,193</u>
	<u>\$ 125,678,464</u>	<u>\$ 9,084,155</u>	<u>\$ 2,555,482</u>	<u>\$ 1,026,314</u>	<u>\$ (3,380,335)</u>	<u>\$ 134,964,080</u>

**The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2008**

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communicati ons, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,364,442	\$ 21,442	\$ -	\$ 663,478	\$ -	\$ 2,049,362
Accounts receivable	1,824,125	-	-	602,729	(401,717)	2,025,137
Prepaid expenses and deposits	626,662	1,806	-	199,940	-	828,408
Deferred membership expense	2,306,766	-	-	-	-	2,306,766
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	2,610,762	-	-	-	-	2,610,762
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	23,345	-	-	-	-	23,345
Beneficial interest in trust	-	389,000	-	-	-	389,000
Prepaid pension expense	221,413	-	-	-	-	221,413
	<u>10,977,515</u>	<u>412,248</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,466,147</u>	<u>(2,401,717)</u>	<u>10,454,193</u>
Investments						
General	24,726,658	-	-	-	-	24,726,658
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	26,218,794	-	-	-	-	26,218,794
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	29,438,344	-	-	-	-	29,438,344
Samsung scholarship fund	7,534,315	-	-	-	-	7,534,315
Building funds	3,632,095	-	-	-	-	3,632,095
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	2,952,670	-	-	-	-	2,952,670
Special account - Endowment Fund	-	2,169,380	-	-	-	2,169,380
General account - Endowment Fund	-	6,305,337	-	-	-	6,305,337
National Emergency Fund	-	-	2,302,634	-	-	2,302,634
Investment in HPC	1,346,608	-	-	-	(1,346,608)	-
Other	4,432,047	-	-	174,515	-	4,606,562
	<u>100,281,531</u>	<u>8,474,717</u>	<u>2,302,634</u>	<u>174,515</u>	<u>(1,346,608)</u>	<u>109,886,789</u>
Property, plant and equipment, net	6,649,399	-	-	215,079	-	6,864,478
Total assets	<u>\$ 117,908,445</u>	<u>\$ 8,886,965</u>	<u>\$ 2,302,634</u>	<u>\$ 1,855,741</u>	<u>\$ (3,748,325)</u>	<u>\$ 127,205,460</u>

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2008

LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	\$ 1,840,484	\$ -	\$ 6,200	\$ 344,740	\$ (327,659)	\$ 1,863,765
Scholarships payable	1,092,632	-	-	-	-	1,092,632
Accounts payable - Legion	-	2,000,000	37,000	37,058	(2,074,058)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	92,150	-	-	-	-	92,150
Deferred income	454,039	-	-	-	-	454,039
Deferred dues income	26,785,977	-	-	-	-	26,785,977
Deferred income - direct membership solicitation	117,667	-	-	-	-	117,667
Accrued vacation benefits	628,167	-	-	-	-	628,167
Other liabilities	299,675	-	-	127,355	-	427,010
Notes payable	2,269,625	-	-	-	-	2,269,625
Deferred dues income - Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	22,993,502	-	-	-	-	22,993,502
Life memberships due to state and local posts	25,667,562	-	-	-	-	25,667,562
	<u>82,241,480</u>	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>43,200</u>	<u>509,133</u>	<u>(2,401,717)</u>	<u>82,392,096</u>
NET ASSETS						
Unrestricted	22,935,789	(97,200)	-	-	-	22,838,589
Temporarily restricted	7,731,176	-	2,259,434	-	-	9,990,610
Permanently restricted	5,000,000	6,984,165	-	-	-	11,984,165
Shareholders' Equity	-	-	-	1,346,608	(1,346,608)	-
Total net assets	<u>35,666,965</u>	<u>6,886,965</u>	<u>2,259,434</u>	<u>1,346,608</u>	<u>(1,346,608)</u>	<u>44,813,364</u>
	<u>\$ 117,908,445</u>	<u>\$ 8,886,965</u>	<u>\$ 2,302,634</u>	<u>\$ 1,855,741</u>	<u>\$ (3,748,325)</u>	<u>\$ 127,205,460</u>

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2009

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communicat ions, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	\$ 31,571,415	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 31,571,415
Direct membership solicitation	366,876	-	-	-	-	366,876
Member service fees income	1,208,786	-	-	-	-	1,208,786
Affinity income	309,293	-	-	-	-	309,293
Sales of emblem items	11,030,222	-	-	-	-	11,030,222
Advertising	9,545,830	-	-	-	-	9,545,830
Contributions	2,012,115	45,692	319,517	-	-	2,377,324
Label and printing fees	1,467,249	-	-	-	(237,558)	1,229,691
Sales - HPC	-	-	-	7,164,063	(6,870,136)	293,927
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,042,340	384,368	61,707	5,683	-	2,494,098
Net realized gains (losses)	(293,293)	127,492	8,845	-	-	(156,956)
American Legion Endowment Fund income	347,596	-	-	-	(347,596)	-
Net loss in subsidiary	(396,910)	-	-	-	396,910	-
Other	2,523,735	-	-	20,154	(216,705)	2,327,184
	<u>61,735,254</u>	<u>557,552</u>	<u>390,069</u>	<u>7,189,900</u>	<u>(7,275,085)</u>	<u>62,597,690</u>

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2009

Expenses						
Salaries	13,162,728	-	-	-	-	13,162,728
Employee benefits	2,404,942	-	-	-	-	2,404,942
Cost of sales	8,270,729	-	-	-	(237,558)	8,033,171
Cost of sales - HPC	-	-	-	6,444,713	(6,180,299)	264,414
Direct publications	11,970,525	-	-	-	-	11,970,525
Executive and staff travel	880,681	-	-	-	-	880,681
Commission and committee	1,626,714	-	-	-	-	1,626,714
Printing and postage	1,770,499	-	-	-	-	1,770,499
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,224,558	-	-	-	-	1,224,558
Office and other operating	7,687,612	31,857	-	864,812	(689,837)	7,894,444
Occupancy and usage	2,117,698	-	-	277,285	(216,705)	2,178,278
Special projects and programs	3,198,013	347,596	43,766	-	(347,596)	3,241,779
	<u>54,314,699</u>	<u>379,453</u>	<u>43,766</u>	<u>7,586,810</u>	<u>(7,671,995)</u>	<u>54,652,733</u>
Change in net assets from operations	7,420,555	178,099	346,303	(396,910)	396,910	7,944,957
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investment	249,830	19,091	(50,255)	-	-	218,666
Net unrealized loss - PUFLL	(1,256,780)	-	-	-	-	(1,256,780)
Amortization of pension loss	(880,835)	-	-	-	-	(880,835)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	25,821	-	-	-	-	25,821
Change in net assets	5,558,591	197,190	296,048	(396,910)	396,910	6,051,829
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>35,666,965</u>	<u>6,886,965</u>	<u>2,259,434</u>	<u>1,346,608</u>	<u>(1,346,608)</u>	<u>44,813,364</u>
Net assets, end of year	\$ 41,225,556	\$ 7,084,155	\$ 2,555,482	\$ 949,698	\$ (949,698)	\$ 50,865,193

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2008

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	\$ 32,327,410	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32,327,410
Direct membership solicitation	4,087,127	-	-	-	-	4,087,127
Member service fees income	1,456,547	-	-	-	-	1,456,547
Affinity income	346,632	-	-	-	-	346,632
Sales of emblem items	10,674,782	-	-	-	-	10,674,782
Advertising	8,766,045	-	-	-	-	8,766,045
Contributions	1,519,790	91,848	431,725	-	-	2,043,363
Label and printing fees	1,710,238	-	-	-	(156,179)	1,554,059
Sales - HPC	-	-	-	4,145,481	(2,530,786)	1,614,695
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,428,468	388,906	100,419	17,296	-	2,935,089
Net realized gains (losses)	(122,573)	137,830	-	-	-	15,257
American Legion Endowment Fund income	344,297	-	-	-	(344,297)	-
Net loss in subsidiary	(154,964)	-	-	-	154,964	-
Other	2,332,108	-	-	-	(196,971)	2,135,137
	<u>65,715,907</u>	<u>618,584</u>	<u>532,144</u>	<u>4,162,777</u>	<u>(3,073,269)</u>	<u>67,956,143</u>

The American Legion National Headquarters
Consolidating Statement of Activities Year ended December 31, 2008

Expenses						
Salaries	12,604,488	-	-	-	-	12,604,488
Employee benefits	3,523,221	-	-	-	-	3,523,221
Cost of sales	8,012,877	-	-	-	(90,189)	7,922,688
Cost of sales - HPC	-	-	-	3,167,474	(2,089,899)	1,077,575
Direct publications	11,840,989	-	-	-	-	11,840,989
Executive and staff travel	869,637	-	-	-	-	869,637
Commission and committee	1,734,318	-	-	-	-	1,734,318
Printing and postage	3,388,321	-	-	-	-	3,388,321
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,550,354	-	-	-	-	1,550,354
Office and other operating	12,571,450	26,217	-	877,812	(506,877)	12,968,602
Occupancy and usage	2,255,330	-	-	272,455	(196,971)	2,330,814
Special projects and programs	3,029,246	344,297	585,090	-	(344,297)	3,614,336
	<u>61,380,231</u>	<u>370,514</u>	<u>585,090</u>	<u>4,317,741</u>	<u>(3,228,233)</u>	<u>63,425,343</u>
Change in net assets from operations	4,335,676	248,070	(52,946)	(154,964)	154,964	4,530,800
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investment	(351,137)	4,968	584	-	-	(345,585)
Net unrealized loss - PUFLL	(11,273,623)	-	-	-	-	-
Amortization of pension loss	(305,066)	-	-	-	-	-
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(5,297,377)	-	-	-	-	-
Change in net assets	<u>(12,888,527)</u>	<u>253,038</u>	<u>(52,362)</u>	<u>(154,964)</u>	<u>154,964</u>	<u>(12,687,851)</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>48,555,492</u>	<u>6,633,927</u>	<u>2,311,796</u>	<u>1,501,572</u>	<u>(1,501,572)</u>	<u>57,501,215</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 35,666,965</u>	<u>\$ 6,886,965</u>	<u>\$ 2,259,434</u>	<u>\$ 1,346,608</u>	<u>\$ (1,346,608)</u>	<u>\$ 44,813,364</u>