

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT  
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

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COMMUNICATION

FROM

**THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE  
COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION**

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 80TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE  
AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, FROM  
SEPTEMBER 8, 9, AND 10, 1998, AS WELL AS A FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT AND INDEPENDENT AUDIT, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C.  
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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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THE AMERICAN LEGION,  
*Washington, DC, January 20, 1999.*

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In compliance with current public law we herewith transmit for printing as a House document a financial statement and independent audit of The American Legion, proceedings of our 80th annual National Convention held in New Orleans, Louisiana, from September 8, 9, and 10, 1998, and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

Sincerely,

STEVE A. ROBERTSON,  
*Director, National Legislative Commission.*





## Contents

	<u>Page</u>
National Conventions and Officers of The American Legion, 1919-1998 .....	ix
<b>Tuesday Session -- September 8, 1998</b>	
Call to Order -- National Commander Anthony Jordan .....	1
Invocation -- National Chaplain Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart .....	1
Presentation -- Representatives of The American Legion Youth Programs .....	3
Addresses:	
Honorable Murphy J. Foster, Jr., Governor of the State of Louisiana .....	8
Honorable Mary Landrieu, United States Senate (LA) .....	9
Honorable William Jefferson, U.S. House of Representatives (LA) .....	11
Honorable Marc Morial, Mayor of the City of New Orleans .....	12
J.E. "Al" Gibson, 1997-98 Department Commander, Dept. of Louisiana .....	13
William Detweiler, President, National Convention Commission .....	14
Honorable John Breaux, United States Senate (LA) .....	15
Reading of Convention Call -- National Adjutant Robert Spanogle .....	16
Report of Committees:	
Credentials and Internal Affairs, Section I .....	18
Legislation and Rules .....	19
Finance .....	21
Address -- Gary Bauer, President, Family Research Council .....	23
Greetings -- Barbara Kranig, National President, American Legion Auxiliary .....	26
Special Report -- Maj. Gen. Patrick Brady (USA Ret.), Chrmn., Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. ...	27
Addresses:	
Bishop Paul Morton, Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, New Orleans LA .....	33
Dr. Bernard Rostker, Special Assistant For Gulf War Illnesses, DoD .....	35
Frederick Smith, Co-Chairman, World War II Memorial .....	38
Presentation -- Certificate of Appreciation to National Chaplain Eisenhart .....	42
Presentation -- Plaque to City of Orlando, FL by Past National Commander Frank .....	42
National Commander's Convention Report .....	43
Greetings -- Byron Robichaux, National Commander, Sons of the American Legion .....	47
Message to Convention -- George Bentley, Society of American Legion Founders .....	48
Addresses:	
Akmal Khan, Past President, Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans In Canada .....	49
John Champ, Chairman, Royal British Legion .....	50
Gen. Yang Ting-Yun, Chrmn., Veterans Affairs Cmsn., Republic of China .....	52
Lt. Gen. Choi Kap-Jin, Secretary General, Korean Veterans Association .....	53
<b>Wednesday Session -- September 9, 1998</b>	
Call to Order -- National Commander Anthony Jordan .....	55
Addresses:	
Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, Secretary of State .....	56
Mary Lou Retton, Olympic Gold Medalist, Children's Miracle Network .....	62
Honorable Togo West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs .....	64
General Henry Shelton, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff .....	69

Stephen E. Ambrose, Author .....	72
Presentation -- Spirit of Normandy Award to Steven Spielberg .....	76
Addresses:	
Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught (USAF Retired), President, Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation .....	77
Diane Carlson Evans, Chair & Founder, Vietnam Women's Memorial Project .....	79
Lt. Gen. Claude Kicklighter (USA Ret.), Deputy Under Secretary of the Army .....	80
Presentation -- 1998 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year .....	83
Address -- Honorable Alexis Herman, Secretary of Labor .....	84
Report of Committee -- Employment, Veterans' Preference & Other Economic Matters .....	85
Awards -- Employer of the Year .....	103
Presentation -- Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion .....	105
Report of Committee -- Americanism .....	107
Award -- William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy .....	120
Report of Committee -- Credentials and Internal Affairs, Section III .....	121
Presentation -- Department Membership Awards .....	122
Report of Committee -- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation .....	125
Presentation -- William F. Lenker National Service Award to Dept. of Minnesota .....	156
Report of Committee -- Credentials and Internal Affairs, Section II .....	157
Donations to National Emergency Fund .....	164
Report of Committee -- Children and Youth .....	166
Presentation -- Garland Murphy Award to Department of Florida .....	172
Report of Committee -- Constitutional Amendments .....	173
<b>Thursday Session -- September 10, 1998</b>	
Call to Order -- National Commander Anthony Jordan .....	175
Presentation -- Fourth Estate Award .....	176
Report of Committees:	
Foreign Relations .....	178
National Security .....	195
Presentation -- Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander .....	234
Election of National Commander .....	236
Acceptance Speech -- National Commander "Butch" Miller .....	243
Election of National Officers .....	249
Greetings -- Mrs. Virginia Hobbs, President, American Legion Auxiliary .....	253
Benediction -- Outgoing National Chaplain, Rev. Henry Eisenhart .....	255
<b>Appendix</b>	
Annual Awards .....	257
<b>The American Legion 80th Annual Report</b>	
Foreword, National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle .....	264
Excerpts from the Constitution of The American Legion .....	265
National Executive Committee .....	269

<b>Reports of National Vice Commanders:</b>	
Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho .....	269
Gerald L. "Jerry" Moore, Ohio .....	271
Dr. Norris W. Preston, Missouri .....	271
Robert E. Vass, Sr., West Virginia .....	273
Erwin "Gus" Williams, Connecticut .....	274
<b>Reports:</b>	
National Chaplain .....	277
National Historian .....	278
National Judge Advocate .....	279
Administrative Services .....	291
Library, Museum and Internet Operations .....	292
Management Information Services .....	295
Americanism Commission .....	296
Counter-Subversive Activities Committee .....	300
Education Committee .....	300
Children & Youth Commission .....	302
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. ....	316
Convention Commission .....	317
Economic Commission .....	319
Employment Committee .....	322
Veterans Preference Committee .....	322
Finance Commission .....	325
Emblem Committee .....	325
American Legion Life Insurance Committee .....	326
Foreign Relations Commission .....	328
Internal Affairs Commission .....	333
Constitution and By-Laws Committee .....	337
Resolutions Assignment Committee .....	337
Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee .....	338
Membership and Post Activities Committee .....	338
The Sons of the American Legion .....	343
Legislative Commission .....	343
National Security Commission .....	363
Aerospace Committee .....	369
Defense Civil Preparedness Committee .....	369
Law and Order Committee .....	370
Merchant Marine Committee .....	371
Military Affairs Committee .....	371
Naval Affairs Committee .....	372
National Security Council .....	372
Public Relations Commission .....	372
American Legion Magazine Commission .....	374
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission .....	375
Report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary .....	398
Consolidated Financial Statements with Supplementary Information .....	405



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

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

\* indicates deceased.

**HONORARY COMMANDERS**

General John J. Pershing\*  
Marshall Ferdinand Foch\*

**PARIS CAUCUS**

Paris France, March 15 to 17, 1919

Temporary Chairman: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention.)

Permanent Chairman: Bennett C. Clark\*, Missouri. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1926 National Convention.)

Chairman Pro Tempore: Thomas W. Miller\*, Delaware. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1968 National Convention.)

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention.)

At the Paris Caucus an Executive Committee was elected to complete arrangements, the chairman and secretary of which were:

Chairman: Milton J. Foreman\*, Illinois. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention.)

Secretary: George A. White\*, Oregon.

**ST. LOUIS CAUCUS**

St. Louis, Missouri, May 8 to 10, 1919

Temporary Chairman: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. \*, New York. (Voted title of Past National Commander at 1949 National Convention.)

Permanent Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley\*, Texas.

Vice Chairmen: John J. Sullivan\*, Washington; Fred Humphrey\*, New Mexico; P.C. Calhoun\*, Connecticut. (Voted titles of Past National Vice Commanders at 1933 National Convention.)

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania.

Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles\*, Colorado. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention.)

**1st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10 to 12, 1919

Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley\*, Texas. (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention.)

Vice Chairman: Bennett C. Clark\*, Missouri.

Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood\*, Pennsylvania.

Treasurer: Gasper G. Bacon\*, Massachusetts.

Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles\*, Colorado.

### 2nd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Cleveland, Ohio, September 27 to 29, 1920

Commander: Franklin D'Olier\*, Pennsylvania.

Vice Commanders: James O'Brien\*, California; Allan 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.

### 3rd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Kansas City, Missouri, October 31 to November 2, 1921

Commander: Frederic W. Galbraith, Jr. \*, (killed June 9), succeeded by John G. Emery\*, Michigan.

Vice Commanders: John G. Emery\*, Michigan; Thomas Goldingay\*, New Jersey; Claudius G. Pendill\*, Wisconsin; James G. Scrugham\*, Nevada; E. Jackson Winslett\*, Alabama.

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington.

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. John W. Inzer\*, Tennessee.

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts.

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana.

### 4th NATIONAL CONVENTION

New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16 to 20, 1922

Commander: Hanford MacNider\*, Iowa.

Vice Commanders: H. Nelson Jackson\*, Vermont; George L. Berry\*, Tennessee; Raymond O. Brackett\*, Massachusetts; Charles H. Kendrick, California; John A. McCormack\*, Colorado.

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington.

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. Earl A. Blackman\*,

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 F. 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 Albert\*, Idaho; Celora M. Stoddard, Arizona; William B. Healey\*, Pennsylvania; F. Ryan Duffy\*, Wisconsin; Dr. I. Thurman Mann\*, North Carolina.

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles\*, Washington.

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. Ezra Clemens\*, Minnesota.

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts.

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana.

**7th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Omaha, Nebraska, October 5 to 9, 1925

Commander: James A. Drain\*, Washington.

Vice Commanders: Frank H. McFarland\*, Kansas; Eugene P. Armstrong\*, Connecticut; A.L. Perry, Panama; Peyton H. Hoge, Jr\*, Kentucky; William Stern\*, North Dakota. Adjutant: Russell G. Creviston\*, Indiana (resigned), succeeded by James F. Barton\*, Iowa.

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. Joseph M. Lonergan\*, Illinois.

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts.

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana.

**8th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 11 to 15, 1926

Commander: John R. McQuigg\*, Ohio.

Vice Commanders: Joseph Y. Cheney\*, Florida; Hughes B. Davis\*, Oklahoma; Vincent A. Carroll\*, Pennsylvania; Raymond B. Littlefield\*, Rhode Island; James A. Howell\*, Utah.

Adjutant: James F. Barton\*, Iowa.

Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. William E. Patrick\*, California.

Historian: Eben Putnam\*, Massachusetts.

Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams\*, Indiana.

**9th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New York, New York, October 18, 1927

Paris, France, September 19 to 22, 1927

Commander: Howard P. Savage\*, Illinois.

Vice Commanders: C. Thomas Busha, Jr. \*, Montana; Stafford King\*, Minnesota; John G. Sims, Tennessee; John E. Curtis\*, Nebraska; 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\*, Ohio.

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 K. 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.



**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. H.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  
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. 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; Lewis R. Probst\*,  
Wyoming.

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas.

Chaplain: Rev. Thomas D. Kennedy\*, Missouri.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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 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\*, Texas.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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 Conley, West Virginia; Harry M.  
Johnson\*, Montana; James F. Daniel,  
Jr. \*, South Carolina; James R. Mahaffy\*, Hawaii.

Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel\*, Kansas.

Chaplain: Rev. Frank J. Lawler\*, Illinois.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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. Frank J. Lawler\*, Illinois.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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: Rev. Patrick N. McDermott\*, Iowa.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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: Brigadier William G. Gilks, Texas.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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 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: Rev. Paul De Forrest Mortimore\*, Idaho.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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: Rev. Paul F. McManus\*, Kansas.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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. McCuffrey, Rhode Island; Dan M. McDade\*, Oregon; Ray S. Plerson\*, Kansas; William P. Shadoan\*, Kentucky.

Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff\*, Michigan.

Chaplain: Rev. DeWitt C. Mallory\*, Florida.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John 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 Ruddick\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**29th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New York, New York, August 28-31, 1947

Commander: Paul H. Griffith\*, Pennsylvania.

Vice Commanders: Joseph W. Brown\*, New Hampshire; Martin B. Buckner, Michigan; Richard C. Cadwallader\*, Louisiana; Earnest 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: John Ruddick\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**30th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Florida, October 18 to 20, 1948

Commander: James F. O'Neill\*, New Hampshire.

Vice Commanders: L.W. 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. Frank L. Harrington\*, Montana.

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. \*, Alabama.

Treasurer: John Ruddick\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**31st NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 1, 1949

Commander: S. Perry Brown\*, Texas.

Vice Commanders: James Lane, Alabama; Leonard W. Moody\*, Arkansas; James Annin\*, Montana; Walter E. 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. 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: Earl Cocke, Jr., Georgia.

Vice Commanders: Joe 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 18, 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 2, 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. John E. Duff\*, Ohio.

Historian: Monte C. Sandlin\*, Alabama.

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**36th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 2, 1954

Commander: Arthur J. Connell\*, Connecticut.

Vice Commanders: John A. High\*, New Hampshire; Dr. Deward H. Reed\*, New  
Mexico; Truman C. Wold, North Dakota; Thomas W. Bird\*, North Carolina; Herbert M.  
Walker\*, Pennsylvania.

Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley\*, Nebraska.

Chaplain: Dr. Tom B. Clark\*, Oklahoma.

Historian: Robert T. Fairey\*, South Carolina.

Treasurer: Neal Grider\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**37th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami, Florida, October 10 to 13, 1955

Commander: Seaborn P. Collins\*, New Mexico.

Vice Commanders: Leonard H. 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 MacCaroll\*, 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. Joseph MacCaroll\*, New Jersey.

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; Isador Levine\*, Indiana.

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming.

Chaplain: Rev. 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 24-27, 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg\*, Indiana.

**42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Beach, Florida, October 15 to 20, 1960

Commander: Martin B. McKneally\*, New York.

Vice Commanders: William A. Brennan, Jr., Indiana; A. Layman Harman\*, South Carolina; Nate V. Keller\*, Minnesota; Irven Frank Gianotti\*, Minnesota (appointed September 14, 1960, to fill vacancy created July 25 by the death of Nate V. Keller); Willard W. Brandt, North Dakota; Charles McGonegal\*, California; Corydon T. Hill\*, California (appointed May 4, 1960, to fill vacancy created January 27 by the death of Charles McGonegal).

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming.

Chaplain: Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, D.H.L., Texas.

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

Treasurer: 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 Kretzler\*, Washington; R.C. Godwin\*, North Carolina.

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming.

Chaplain: Rev. William H. Moss\*, Tennessee.

Historian: Glenn B. Hoover\*, Iowa.

Treasurer: 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. Robert G. Keating\*, Connecticut.

Historian: Earl David Young\*, Colorado.

Treasurer: 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**46th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Dallas, Texas, September 22 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. John J. Howard\*, Virginia.

Historian: H. Armand de Masi\*, Italy.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**47th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Portland, Oregon, August 24 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. Morris N. Dummet\*, Louisiana.

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**48th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 1, 1966

Commander: L. Eldon James\*, Virginia.

Vice Commanders: Dr. A.R. Choppin\*, Louisiana; William E. Galbraith, Nebraska; Robert O. Phillips\*, Philippines; William J. Rogers, Maine; Soleng Tom, Arizona.

Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore\*, Wyoming.

Chaplain: Rev. Alfred C. Thompson, New York.

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**49th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Boston, Massachusetts, August 29 to 21, 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: Earnest N. Schmit, North Dakota.

Chaplain: Rev. Anthony J. O'Driscoll\*, New York.

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**50th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, September 6 to 12, 1968

Commander: William E. Galbraith, Nebraska.

Vice Commanders: Coleman Nolen\*, Oklahoma; Louis R.J. Malo, Rhode Island; Roscoe D. Curtiss\*, Tennessee; Dr. Edward L. Peterson, Utah; Marvin W. Roth, Wisconsin.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. Edward P. Nolan\*, Pennsylvania.

Historian: Harold A. Shindler\*, Indiana.

Treasurer: 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: 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. William D. Curtis, Minnesota.

Historian: John A. May\*, South Carolina.

Treasurer: 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**54th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, August 22 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. Paul J. Schwaab, Nebraska

Historian: G. Greer McCallister\*, Ohio.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**55th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Honolulu, Hawaii, August 21 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**56th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Miami Beach, Florida, August 20 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**57th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 19 to 21, 1975

Commander: James M. Wagonseller, Ohio.

Vice Commanders: Boyd H. Clemens, North Dakota; Jack W. Flynt, Texas; Jay E. Harville, Tennessee; Donald H. Jeffery, Pennsylvania; William A. Lindsay, Montana.

Adjutant: William F. Hauck\*, Indiana.

Chaplain: Rev. Harvey T. Goodling\*, Oregon.

Historian: Nolie C. Deas, Sr., Florida.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**58th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Seattle, Washington, August 24 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: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**59th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Denver, Colorado, August 23 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. James C. Tuxbury, North Dakota.

Historian: Alton H. Carpenter, New York.

Treasurer: Francis Polen\*, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**60th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, August 22 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. 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 21 to 23, 1979

Commander: John M. Carey, Michigan.

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 19 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, September 1 to 3, 1981

Commander: Michael J. Kogutek, New York.

Vice Commanders: Ralph M. Godwin\*, Mississippi; Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah; Matthew W. Jamieson\*, Michigan; Robert W. Lowry, Nebraska; Dr. Almo J. Sebastianelli, Pennsylvania.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: Rev. George S. Macres\*, Minnesota.

Historian: Neal S. Sundeen, Arizona.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis\*, New York.

**64th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Chicago, Illinois, August 24-26, 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 23 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. John D. Kempf \*, Ohio.

Historian: James W. Conway, Massachusetts.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis \*, New York.

**66th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3 to 5, 1984

Commander: Keith Kreul, Wisconsin.

Vice Commanders: J. Leslie Brown, Jr., Kentucky; Roberto Gonzalez, Puerto Rico; Charles R. Green \*, Ohio; Robert W. Groccia, Massachusetts; John N. Lockhart \*, Hawaii.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: James Clay McKee, Utah.

Historian: Herberta T. Stark \*, New Hampshire.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland.

**67th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana, August 26-28, 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, September 2 to 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. 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 25 to 27, 1987

Commander: James P. Dean, Mississippi.

Vice Commanders: William M. Detweiler, Louisiana; Doris R. Gross, Washington;  
Donald E. Neil, Delaware; Allen L. Titus, Indiana; Ervin F. Van Dyke, Wisconsin.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: Rev. Arthur J. Jakobiak, New Mexico.

Historian: J. Ruffin Apperson, Virginia.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland.

**70th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Louisville, Kentucky, September 6 to 8, 1988

Commander: John P. "Jake" Comer, Massachusetts.

Vice Commanders: Neale V. Cabral\*, Connecticut; Joe Frank, Jr., Missouri; W.P. "Bill"  
Peterson, Montana; Paul B. Phifer, Jr., Virginia; Leon Reed, Arkansas.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: Rev. Jerry 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, 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. Caoette, 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. Stolf, 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 7 to 9, 1993

Commander: Roger A. Munson, Ohio.

Vice Commanders: Joseph V. Adams, Pennsylvania; Paul Andrejewski, Minnesota; John Wm. (Bill) Murphy, Arizona; Louis A. (Tony) Santillanes, New Mexico.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: Rev. James R. Wagner, Mississippi.

Historian: Delfo Barabani, Massachusetts.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland.

**76th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 6 to 8, 1994

Commander: Bruce Thiesen, California.

Vice Commanders: Juan H. Cintron, Puerto Rico; Douglas A. Mason, Utah; John J. Mulkern, Massachusetts; K. W. Ohl, Indiana; Curtis O. Twete, North Dakota.

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan.

Chaplain: Masgr. Raymond J. Kozlowski\*, New York.

Historian: Marjorie T. Simpson, Georgia.

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana.

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland.



**77th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Indianapolis, Indiana, September 4 to 6, 1995

Commander : William M. Detweiler, Louisiana

Vice Commanders: Joseph T. Craig, Alaska; Silas M. Noel, Kentucky; Calvin E. Patton, Maryland; H. Gordon Burleigh, New York; Vernon K. Grosenick, Wisconsin

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor, South Carolina

Historian: Carl S. Wipperman, Washington

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

**78th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

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

Commander: Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota

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

Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Joseph E. Reynolds, Texas

Historian: R. Paul Tenney, Vermont

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk

**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

Chaplain: Charles H. Richmond, Oklahoma

Historian: Barbara "Bobbe" Stuvengen, Wisconsin

Treasurer: Webber LaGrange

Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk

**80th NATIONAL CONVENTION**

New Orleans, Louisiana September 4 to 10, 1998

Commander: Anthony Jorgan, 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



## FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive resumé, in as small space as possible, of what took place at the Eightieth Annual National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8-10, 1998.

The final report of the National Organization for the period ending December 31, 1997, and Balance sheet as of December 31, 1997 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997 are included in the Summary.

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

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

Robert W. Spanogle  
National Adjutant

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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: Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut; Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho; Norris Preston, Missouri; and Robert E. Vass, West Virginia.

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**of the**  
**80TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**of**  
**THE AMERICAN LEGION**

**Tuesday, September 8, 1998**

...At 8:30 a.m., the Delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole, our organist.  
...At 9:00 a.m., the Delegates assembled for the 80th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted:

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The 80th National Convention will come to order. Please rise as the Speedway Color Guard of The American Legion Post 500 from Speedway, Indiana, presents the Colors and Gerry Thibodeau sings the National Anthem.

...Speedway Color Guard of American Legion Post 500 in Speedway, Indiana, presented the Colors, following which the Delegates sang the National Anthem.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: For the invocation, our National Chaplain, Reverend Henry E. Eisenhart from American Legion Post 242 in Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

**Invocation**  
**Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania, National Chaplain**

Most glorious God, from Whom we come, with Whom we live, and under Whom we return, as we assemble together and turn another page in the annals of The American Legion, we entreat Your presence at this opening of its 80th Annual National Convention. With a perseverance of purpose, devotion of duty, and single-heartedness of spirit, strengthen us to discharge our responsibilities of memorializing comrades promoted to the ranks of everlasting life, hearing and applauding speakers, accepting committee reports, debating issues, resolving resolutions, adopting constitutional changes, and electing National Officers. When we light the peace candle in holy memory of all comrades who have responded to the beckoning call of the Supreme Commander, pour Your boundless compassion upon us. Make Yourself manifest in the living flame to recall the promise of eternal life. Make us a channel of your peace and let it shine forth in us daily to portray the spiritually en masse of God and Country. Amen.

**Post Everlasting Ceremony and**  
**Lighting of the Peace Candle**

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN EISENHART: As we begin the 80th National Convention in New Orleans, we pause to remember four leaders of The American Legion. These four men are representative of countless Legionnaires whose hallmarks were their unflinching service to God and Country. Albert L. Keller, Jr., Department of Illinois, National

Commander 1982 to 1983, a World War II Army Corps veteran and a member of Post 85 for 52 years, passed away November 12, 1997. Harry G. Wiles, Department of Kansas, National Commander 1975 to 1976, a World War II Navy Veteran and a member of Post 1 in Kansas for 51 years, passed away June 2, 1998. George Gagnon, Department of Maine, National Sergeant-at-Arms 1997 to 1998, a Vietnam veteran of the United States Army and a member of Post 80, he passed away March 15, 1998. Gerald L. Moore, Department of Ohio, National Vice Commander 1997 to 1998, a United States Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars and a member of Post 526 for 43 years, passed away March 24, 1998. I ask you to pause for a moment of silent prayer for the service of these men.

...A moment of silence was observed.

COMMANDER JORDAN: I'd like now to call upon the National Sergeant-at-Arms Ernest Paradis of Maine to light the peace candle.

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

### **POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: We pause to remember those who are listed as Prisoners of War, Missing in Action from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. This is a solemn time during our convention because The American Legion remains committed to determining the fate of those who so valiantly served. This morning, our POW/MIA flag will be placed on the Empty Chair by Mrs. Betty Patureau, her son, Harold Hellbach, Jr., and Mabel Rousselle. Mrs. Patureau's first husband, Captain Harold Hellbach, United States Marine Corps, was lost on a mission over Vietnam. Within the past year, his remains were identified and returned to the family for burial. Mrs. Rousselle is the sister of United States Marine Corps' Corporal Lawrence LeBocuf, who disappeared in Korea in 1950. His remains were recently discovered during a rare mission in North Korea in search of missing Americans. These family members will be assisted in placing the POW/MIA flag by Past National Commander Robert Turner of Georgia, Chairman of the Special POW/MIA Committee and John Brieden, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: We are thankful, for these two missing Americans have finally been returned to their native soil. At this time, we vow to these family members and to the thousands they represent this morning, that we will not waver in our resolve to determine the fate of thousands of our comrades who continue to be listed as POW/MIAs. I want to thank these families very much for participating in this ceremony. We in The American Legion understand what this issue means.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

...At this time the Delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then recited the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution. Then the Color Guard was dismissed.

### **Presentation: Representatives of The American Legion Youth Programs**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Change is my passion as I've told everyone who would listen this past year. Change can be good. Today, you'll experience a change, a change which will inspire you, I'm sure. A change that brings statistics alive for

you. In the process, you'll meet outstanding American leaders of today and of tomorrow. Our 80th National Convention opening is called 'change.' Since the first convention in 1919 one constant 'vision' has endured—the 'vision' of America's veterans, joined together in The American Legion, a vision which sees each generation of American youth as individuals. These are individuals to whom we must pass traditional values such as justice, freedom and democracy, values that guide not only The American Legion—but generations of Americans.

Author Edna Ferber wrote: "Living in the past is a dull and lonely business." For the men and women of The American Legion, there hasn't been time for that. For 79 years, dedicated Legionnaires have been looking to go forward at all times.

There is no better example of the collective vision of Legionnaires—spanning four generations—than the thousands of graduates of American Legion programs. By giving so many youth the opportunity to achieve success in Legion programs, the legacy of those World War I veterans who founded The American Legion is sustained.

As we gather for the 80th National Convention of The American Legion, it's a fitting tribute to those visionary founders of World War I that we hear from youth champions, past and present.

Our first guest is familiar to each and every one of you, the man to whom I was proud to present the American Legion Public Relations Award, *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw.

**Video: Tom Brokaw**

Greetings everyone and I'm happy to be with you once again to talk about my experiences with Boys State. It was the summer of—it was a long time ago—1957 when I was elected governor of Boys State in South Dakota. I was just 17 years of age. It was a high honor in that state and it was a continuation of my interest in student politics and my interest in journalism. Later that summer, I went off to work in my uncle's rock quarry in northern Iowa and temperatures had reached about 120 degrees. I was on the end of an air hammer when the real governor of South Dakota, who had become a friend of mine during Boys State, Joe Foss, the Congressional Medal of Honor winner, called to invite me to be his partner on a quiz show in New York. I accepted with alacrity.

I was happy to get off the air hammer, out of the rock quarry and make my first trip to New York. And it was on that trip that I began to think, maybe I could do the kind of work that I'm doing today. So, it was the beginning, really, of my career, that election of Boys State governor. I'm very happy, also, to offer my congratulations to Kevin Sladek of Texas who has been elected President of Boys Nation. That too is a singular honor. I wish you all the best. I hope you have a great Convention.

ANNOUNCER: Mr. Brokaw acknowledged the 1998 President of American Legion Boys Nation and now it's our turn to meet him. Please welcome to our national convention a young man sponsored by Post 144 in his hometown of San Marcos, Texas, Kevin Sladek.

**1998 Boys Nation President  
Kevin Sladek, San Marcos, Texas**

My participation in Boys State and Boys Nation is one of the most amazing experiences that I have had in 17 years of life. I learned many things about my country and my

government. And I will treasure these lessons always. I saw, for the first time, the most intimate workings of our democracy. And my teachers were the leaders of the most powerful nation in the world. But in this school of government, I learned something more important than fact. I learned the value of good people. In my brief tenure as governor of Texas, and as the president, I came to realize that the single most important aspect that a group can possess is the quality of the individuals that comprise it. When one surrounds oneself with competent, committed people, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. As a result of my time at Boys State and Boys Nation, I will move into the future with a greater understanding of the human potential and a greater appreciation for what together we can accomplish for the future of ourselves and the future of this great nation. Thank you very, very much and God bless.

ANNOUNCER: Our next guest is not a graduate of an American Legion youth program, but over the years he has certainly worked with many of them, General Manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers—Tommy Lasorda.

**Video: Tommy Lasorda**

The American Legion program is such a wonderful program. You know, I've been part of people who have graduated from those series, people who have performed in The American Legion Baseball program. I think it's great, it's great for America because it gives youngsters the opportunity to express themselves on the baseball field. It teaches them how to react. It teaches them that whatever they do on that baseball field will be beneficial to them for the rest of their life. In American Legion Baseball, we have some of the greatest people who have spent their time coaching these young men. These are the people that we must commend because they are the unsung heroes of our communities and of our country. The American Legion, one of the greatest organizations this country will ever produce, will continue running the baseball program because it develops strength, character and great citizens for this great nation of ours. God bless The American Legion Baseball program and God bless you.

ANNOUNCER: Now it's time to meet a young man that might find himself playing for the Dodgers in the future—the 1997 American Legion Baseball George W. Rulon Player of the Year—sponsored by American Legion Post 15 in Medford, Oregon. Please welcome Nate Philo.

**1997 Baseball Player of the Year  
Nathan Andrew Philo, Medford, Oregon**

Receiving the title of American Legion Baseball Player of the Year last year was the single greatest accomplishment of my life. And through the glory of God and through The American Legion, I was able to experience blessings that were beyond my comprehension.

It wasn't my greatest accomplishment though because of the publicity that I received or for the people that I met. It was because I was able to witness the direct result of my moral leadership and the pride one can obtain by playing and living each day by the moral and just standards that The American Legion epitomizes. Through American Legion Baseball and its code of conduct, I learned such life qualities as having a love for God, having a positive attitude, fairness, humbleness, self-control and respect for my great country. As my team and I went through the ranks of national competition, the stress that

was placed on these virtues grew even more intense. So, therefore, when the time came for the Player of the Year to be chosen, I was honored, extremely honored to be the one chosen out of 70,000 players around the nation to represent these virtues so cherished by The American Legion. It is an experience that will never leave my memory and I have you, The American Legion, to thank for your support in my dream.

**Video: Zach Thomas**

Hello, my name is Zachary Lee Thomas. I was 1995 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year. I am currently a senior at The United States Military Academy. I was really involved in Scouting throughout my junior high and high school career. I really enjoyed Scouting and was very involved. I felt like my biggest goal in Scouting was to become an Eagle Scout. From there, I decided that I wanted to become Eagle Scout of the Year.

I found out about The American Legion Scout of the Year through a friend who was actually in The American Legion. I applied for American Legion Scout of the Year in 1994 and I made it to state. I won state but decided to pursue the scholarship and went on for it again in 1995 when I received National Scout of the Year. It was really a great honor to be able to receive Eagle Scout of the Year. I feel like I owe a lot not only to my parents and to God, but just to the people that helped me get there and The American Legion for helping me get that award.

**ANNOUNCER:** The newest American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year is sponsored by Bennington Post 266 in Bennington, Nebraska, Mark David Sukraw.

**1998 Boy Scout of the Year**

**Mark D. Sukraw, Bennington, Nebraska**

It is a privilege and an honor to share with you what Scouting has done for me. Money cannot buy the treasures I have received as benefits of Scouting. The ideals and high standards of Scouting stated in the oath, law and motto have become part of my character and helped me to find who I am and what I stand for. Scouting is action-packed and has allowed me to learn, explore, adventure, serve and grow. Scouting is developing a love of and respect for God, Country, others, myself and nature, practicing survival, emergency and first aid skills, learning flag etiquette and the duties of effective citizenship, traveling, camping, hiking, canoeing, participating in community service projects and making friends. The badges on my uniform are colorful symbols that represent accomplishments in areas that interest me. The advancement trail invites achievement. Scouting has motivated me to learn group dynamics and develop leadership skills that have rewarded me in spiritual, academic, physical and social pursuits. Unforgettable treks, thrilling adventures, and common tasks taught me the necessity of honor, perseverance, empathy, cooperation, flexibility, patience and a sense of humor. Skills were taught through hands-on activities and hard work. And I found very quickly that you can have a lot of fun while you're at it.

My memory bank is overflowing with Scouting moments and my investment of time and energy in scouts has produced dividends that will pay handsomely as I draw upon these experiences. I am indebted to those who chartered, supported, led and challenged our troop. Especially, The American Legion Post 266 of Bennington, Nebraska which holds the charter for our varsity Scout team. I am proud to be a Boy Scout and I intend to reinvest myself and return part of what I have been given by serving as an adult leader, doing what I can to



encourage others to get involved in the Scouting adventure. Thank you, American Legion for your partnership with the Boy Scouts of America. Together we serve and we make a difference.

**Video: Launi Meili**

Hello, my name is Launi Meili. As a former Olympic gold medalist, I know the thrill and challenge of competition. I attribute a lot of the skills that I used in competition to my beginning experience as a shooter in The American Legion Junior Shooting Sport. Every Thursday night for four years, my parents would drop me off at the local range. And there, volunteers from The American Legion would come down to help junior shooters perfect their skills. They would also help us learn the responsibility of using and owning a fire arm and we would also set goals and that was very important for me later in my career. The volunteers really created a positive environment that we learned the sport in and made it a sport for life.

I try to use those skills today. I work with the NRA on its coaching program where we try to give coaches experience and knowledge to help their junior shooters. I also work at the NRA junior camp where I try to create that same positive atmosphere for the shooters coming in to make them enjoy the sport as long as they can and make them a sport for life.

ANNOUNCER: This morning another young lady joins us as the 1998 Precision National Champion of the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program. Sponsored by Madison County, Georgia, American Legion Post 39—please greet Kelly Dove.

**1998 Gold Medalist, Precision Category  
Junior Shooting Sports Program  
Kelly Dove, Comer, Georgia**

I'm involved in a sport that's often stereotyped as a 'guy' sport. But in recent years, it has proven itself to be an area that girls can excel in also. For me, competitive shooting began on my local 4-H BB team. From there, I went on to compete on my high school rifle team as well as in national competitions such as the Junior Olympics, the NRA Sectionals, USA Shooting Nationals, the World Team tryouts and, just recently, The American Legion Nationals in Colorado Springs, Colorado at the Olympic Training Center. The American Legion has given me the opportunity to go to many new and exciting places, meet many interesting people and proven to me that anything is possible if you're willing to make the sacrifices and work hard enough to achieve your goals.

**Video: Jennifer Demmon**

The American Legion is helping me through college to the tune of \$16,000. I won The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest. If you're a high school student, you, too, can earn money to help with your college education and learn more about the U.S. Constitution at the same time. Ask your school to look into the Legion's Oratorical Contest. I'm glad I did.

JENNIFER DEMMON: Twelve years have passed since I recorded that message. And The American Legion contest remains one of the greatest experiences of my life. In addition to the obvious benefits of learning about the Constitution and improving my speaking skills,

the contest gave me the opportunity to visit new cities and meet people from all over the country. The scholarship money was another great benefit. That money could not have been more needed or more appreciated. Combining that award with other awards, allowed me to complete seven years of college with little or no help from my family and very little in student loans. These days, that is rare. Another great benefit was the support I received from the local American Legion. Whenever and wherever I competed, the Iowa Legionnaires were there cheering me on. If you're a high school student today, I urge you to take part in The American Legion contest. The hours I spent practicing and preparing my speech were worth every minute.

ANNOUNCER: Perhaps waiting to follow in the footsteps of Jennifer Demmon is the 1998 National High School Oratorical champion from Parkton, Maryland. She is sponsored by Parkville Post 183 of Parkville, Maryland. Please welcome, Erin Plettenberg.

**1998 1st Place Winner National Oratorical Contest  
Erin L. Plettenberg, Parkton, Maryland**

I woke up this morning with that feeling in my stomach again. The one that means that I'm going to have to speak in front of a large group of strangers before the day is out. I tried to reason with that feeling, I thought "I shouldn't be nervous. There's no one here to judge me. There won't be any timers. There's no money on the line. Besides, I've done this so many times before. It should be easy by now." But the feeling wouldn't listen.

Then I realized that my speech here today is the most important one I've made so far. I'm not here to win scholarship money or to impress judges. I have a much greater purpose. I am here to represent to you over 30,000 exemplary young people, the participants in the National American Legion High School Oratorical Contest.

I can tell you a lot of things about my involvement in the contest. I could tell you how it furthers patriotism by focusing on the Constitution, the thing that makes America great. I could tell you how it teaches determination by requiring hard work and lots of practice. Or I could tell you about how it encourages education by granting young people the means to continue their studies. But I'd rather tell you about the most important thing that I gained from my involvement—vision, positive, realistic vision for the future.

Throughout this weekend and throughout my life, I've heard the echoes that come from the media's focus on the negative side of young people. It may be hard to believe, but sometimes even I feel discouraged when faced with the actions of my peers. But through my involvement in the local, district, departmental and especially the national levels of this contest, I was able to interact with some amazingly talented youths, youths who supported and encouraged each other.

Scientists have proven that performing in front of a large audience, being all by yourself up on stage is the scariest thing a human being can do. I'm not sure whether or not I disagree with that. But I am sure that in a situation that stressful, what could have turned competitive and ugly, I saw young people come together instead of split apart. It was a miracle that I was blessed to take part in and one that I hope to carry with me throughout my life into other areas.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Before us are representatives of thousands of young citizens who benefit from your active role in your hometown. The vast majority of graduates of American Legion youth programs can be found in business, industry and government—from one end of America to the other, each working in their own way to shape

this great country of ours. For these champions with us this morning, they, too, will soon complete their education and move forward to lead in their own special way.

At this 80th National Convention of The American Legion we salute our youth champions—past and present—for they are the embodiment of the vision of our founders. They are our present and our future.

**NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN:** Joining us to offer a special welcome to Louisiana is the first businessman to be elected Louisiana governor in recent political history. He became active in politics because he was frustrated with the non-responsiveness of state government. In 1987, he was elected to the Louisiana Senate, becoming a voice for business and of less government intrusion into people's lives. It's worth noting that his business and political combination is rooted in family history. His grandfather, Murphy Foster, was Louisiana's governor from 1892 to 1900. As Louisiana prepares for the turn of another century, it does so with another Foster at the helm.

Please welcome a U.S. Air Force veteran of the Korean War and a member of American Legion Post 63 in Franklin, Louisiana, the Governor of Louisiana, the Honorable M. J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

**Address: The Honorable Murphy J. Foster, Jr.  
Governor of the State of Louisiana**

As a veteran and a Legionnaire, I want to welcome you, Mr. Commander, Madame President, National and State Officers and Committee members, city of New Orleans officials and distinguished guests, and fellow American Legion and Auxiliary members, to New Orleans in Louisiana. I'm proud and honored that you have chosen Louisiana and New Orleans to host the 80th National Convention. I welcome you and bring greetings on behalf of Louisiana Veterans Affairs Commission and the 378,000 veterans of Louisiana. I hope you're having a good time in New Orleans. We have a saying down here in Louisiana "*Laissez les bon temps rouler!*" That means, "have a good time", but in French it means "let the good times roll". So, if you're not having a good time, that's your fault.

Louisiana is called 'the Sportsman's Paradise'. It's on the back of our license plates. If time permits, you ought to go out and try the fishing; hunting is just beginning. We're a state that understands conservation. We have more game today in our forests and more fish today off our coast than we did 20 or 30 years ago. So, we're headed in the right direction.

Also, Louisiana believes in educating it's young people. We probably have one of the finest programs that exist anywhere in the United States. If a youngster in this state makes an average ACT and takes a few tough courses, he can get his college paid for by this state. We think that's where the future is in Louisiana. Sort of like the GI Bill.

Something else you might like about Louisiana. We really think the victims of crime have a lot more rights than criminals. If someone breaks into your home, or your place of business, or tries to car jack you in this state, you do whatever you have to do to stop them and you're not going to have to face a grand jury. You can get a [gun] permit to carry in this state if you're in a high crime area and you won't get locked up for doing that. Let me tell you what else we do in this state. We're trying to clean it up and we use our prisoners as hard labor to clean our highways. Something else I hope you would like—and knowing all of us or some are at the upper end of the scale, as veterans go in age—hopefully we don't have to face this very soon, but Louisiana's probably the first state in the union to do away

with the death tax. In a few years, there will be no inheritance tax in Louisiana. We're phasing it out. You work all your life, you ought to be able to keep what you make.

Last but not least, Louisiana is a patriotic state. You burn a flag at your own risk in Louisiana. In fact, when we had a state senator here a few years ago and he couldn't figure out a way to pass the bill that I'm sure the courts declared null and void. He couldn't figure out how to do it. But he said if someone happened to burn a flag and you did something to the flag burner, there were no criminal charges. This state is dead serious about encouraging our Congress to move forward with a Constitutional Amendment. I'll lead the fight. I'll guarantee you that if the Congress does it, Louisiana will be one of the first states to endorse that Constitutional Amendment.

**NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN:** Our second guest hails from Louisiana. She was just 23 when she began her political career as a member of the Louisiana Legislature. After two terms, she became the Louisiana State Treasurer and then was elected to the United States Senate in 1996. Today she serves on three key Senate committees: The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry; The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; and The Committee on Small Business. Please welcome the Honorable Senator Mary Landrieu.

**Address: The Honorable Mary Landrieu  
United States Senate, Louisiana**

I see here our mayor and our Congressman Bill Jefferson and our mayor Marc Morial. Two wonderful leaders for this very dynamic city and part of our leadership team for this great state. I also want to acknowledge our good friend, Bill Detweiler, your former National Commander, who has been just a tremendous leader and has brought great honor to Louisiana. We like it when our people are in charge of big organizations and this is one of the largest in the world. There's no hotter place to be, unfortunately, for a convention, than in August and September. But New Orleans is hot in more ways than one. It's a wonderful, spicy city and I hope you all have eaten a lot of our great food and danced at so many places and enjoyed our wonderful music. I ran into Paul Buckley, who manages this hotel and I said, "Well, how did they do?" He says it's been the best group he's ever had, they didn't cause any trouble over the weekend and they don't listen loudly to that music. You can come back to the Hilton anytime according to the manager.

I know you have a great program this morning, so I just really want to be brief in my remarks, mindful of the 13th Beatitude which is "Blessed are the brief, they shall be invited back".

Your volunteerism is extraordinary. In this day and age, in the late 90's, as we enter into the next century, it's so important for us to realize that government can't do everything. It can tackle problems and it should be an active partner in solutions. But the private sector and individual effort have always been and will always be important.

I was with many of you in Philadelphia, as the President and leaders such as Colin Powell and others, called our nation to a higher degree of service. Thank you for the work you do with the Children's Miracle Network, for all the hospitals that you fund, for the work that you do with our young people. As you veterans and your sons and your daughters and your spouses have said "We're not giving up on our young people. We're not going to classify them all as not being able to be helped and to be citizens of our country. We're going to reach out." So, I want to thank you, because here in Louisiana, we believe in that.

Along with the mayor, Congressman Jefferson, the governor and others, we've launched a couple of partnerships between our state and individuals to reach out into every community and every neighborhood, whether it's for health care, to getting children off to an early start, to teaching a child to read, to reaching out to a young person who's had a problem with drugs. We believe in volunteerism and thank you that your service never ends and you continue to serve our great country in a wonderful way.

I also want to reiterate my support today for tobacco legislation. I'm hopeful. I have supported the effort. I know that there are some critics but I believe that we do need to increase the cost of a pack of cigarettes and redirect that money into health care benefits and discourage people from smoking, young people as well as old. And there's no more effective way to do that than to raise the cost of a product and discourage people from purchasing it. But for the veteran, the members of The American Legion who were in the service when cigarettes were provided to you, you were actually encouraged to become addicted. I've heard stories from veterans. Some of the veterans have told me that when they were in service, they let them off duty to take a cigarette break. But those who were just sitting around not doing anything, they put to work. So, it's sort of a way of encouraging people to smoke, and it was wrong. We didn't know what we know now [about smoking]. I'm fully supportive of 100% funding for veterans with smoking related illnesses. I was proud to co-sponsor the amendment along with Jay Rockefeller and others to reinstate the money in the budget 100% so that veterans with tobacco-related illnesses can be covered in this package when and whenever it's put together. Hopefully sooner than later. But you can count on me.

My father was in the army for a brief period and served in the Pentagon. In fact I was born for just about \$8.00 in the army hospital right there in Washington, I said I came cheap, but I haven't been that cheap since.

I'm going to support the flag burning amendment. I believe it's the least we can do to protect this symbol of freedom that so many have given their lives, given everything dear to them. And I'll be with you at that vote. Now, I do believe that vote will come up before we break for this Congress. You can count on me to stand with you as I said I would two years ago. Remember the words of Margaret Mead who said that "a small group of committed and dedicated individuals can change the world". In fact, it's never been done any other way. You have helped literally to change the world to protect our freedom, to force back communism, to save the world from tyranny. And you've done it bravely and courageously. I'm proud to be a small part of that effort with a family that has a great history of service to the country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next guest is serving his second term as a U.S. Congressman representing Louisiana's 2nd District—which includes his hometown of New Orleans. He serves on the Ways and Means Committee and on its subcommittees on Trade and Human Resources. A graduate of Southern University A & M and of Harvard University Law School this man is only the second member of the U.S. House of Representatives in recent years to obtain a Master of Laws in Taxation from Georgetown University while serving in Congress. This man is a flag supporter, you can be assured, because he wrote an article in our magazine in the past. Please welcome a fine lawmaker—and a co-sponsor of the Flag Protection Amendment in 1997 when it overwhelmingly passed in the house—the Honorable William J. Jefferson.

**Address: The Honorable William Jefferson  
United States House of Representatives, Louisiana**

This is an important time in the history of our country. A time, when largely, we are a country at peace in a conventional sense, but a time when we are challenged in very unique ways, in very non-traditional ways. We are at war with terrorists around the world. It calls upon all of us to have a different approach, a different resolve, really, and different strategies for dealing with this almost invisible enemy. At a time like this, it's important for all of us to think about how we can better serve our country in this regard. I'm very pleased to see that this organization is taking up this issue to help us think through how best to make the appropriate response, and how best to make the right strategy, how best to win this war that we must win to make sure that our people across this world are safe wherever they work, wherever they carry out their missions for our country, for the people we represent. So, thank you for what you're doing in this regard.

I have supported, as your Commander said, the flag amendment for all the time that I have served in the Congress. It turns out to be my 4th term, I wish it were my 2nd, I would be younger, as I just told the mayor. But I think the flag amendment is important. I think it is an important values issue and important moral issue. I have tried my best to be there on this question and I think that while it is not easy to be done, that if we keep pressing and working on it, sooner or later, the right will win out on this issue and we will get this done.

In the Congress this year, not only are we working on the flag amendment, but also on the GI Bill of Health which is obviously important to so many people. We're working on health care issues, such as the Patient's Protection Act, particularly how it applies to men and women who served in the armed forces. I have also worked hard on this piece of legislation. We may not get it done as you would like to see it done, but you've made tremendous progress in this area with the influence you've given on this question and, believe me, it's an important issue that I continue to support.

I voted also, I'm proud to say, against using veterans money to pay for transportation bills. I think it's wrong for our country to deny veterans who have tobacco-related illnesses tied to their military service denied those benefits. I don't know why veterans ought to be singled out on this quest for all other Americans. And so, I have supported this area. The VA budget, the DoD budget, the VETS budget, every year that it comes up, every time I have a chance to speak for veterans, every time I have a chance to support quality of life issues for the military, generally speaking, I have supported your line on the budget. I continue to support this year.

I did have the pleasure of serving in the armed forces myself. When I talk to the old vets on Veterans Day at the hospitals, they kind of chuckle at the nature of my service. I was a judge advocate general lawyer. But none the less, I was there, I am a veteran. I understand. Veterans understand how important it is to have our soldiers taken care of when they serve and after they serve. And it's been important to me to have been a part of the Army. The expanded veterans preference program that John Mica has, I support his bill. The Montgomery GI Bill for education benefits, I continue to support. I think the work that you do to underline how critical military forces are to our country continue to be, how strong it is, how important it is to keep it strong around the world, I stand with you. I will, so long as I serve. I thank you for your support of me over the years and, believe me, it's a mutual support society. I will continue to support you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: As we begin our 80th National Convention in New Orleans, it is an honor to have our next guest stop by to bring us greetings. He is one of the youngest mayors in New Orleans' history. And that youth has helped him bring vitality, energy and a renewed sense of pride to this great city. His most significant accomplishment as mayor is reducing crime and restoring public confidence. The city has launched new partnerships to revitalize neighborhoods. The city's economy is growing and beginning to move. He has earned quite a positive reputation which has given him the opportunity to serve in key leadership roles such as at the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Council of Elected County Executives. Now, the Honorable Marc Morial, the Mayor of New Orleans.

**Address: The Honorable Marc Morial  
Mayor of the City of New Orleans**

Welcome to New Orleans. As Senator Landrieu said, it is hot here and our food is hot and our politics is also very hot. But don't be bashful about spending a lot of money here. I can assure you, you can eat, you can drink, you can be merry, or you can take advantage of all of the wonderful cultural, historical and other attractions that New Orleans has to offer. We are very proud that for the fifth time in your history, we're the host of this very important gathering.

We're also very proud that you gather here just two years away from the beginning of a new millennium, a new century. We acknowledge the important role that the American military has played in this, the 20th century. We cannot forget, and we cannot let our children forget, and our children's children forget, all of the wars, all of the battles and all of the struggles that have taken place in the 20th century. Struggles based on principle, struggles for the cause of freedom and justice and equality, not only for those who happen to be American citizens, but for people throughout the world. Indeed, your organization is dedicated to service, to assisting those who have served, assisting their families, and to assisting those who might be in service.

In our city, in an effort to better acknowledge the role that the military has played, we created the Mayor's Military Advisory Council, four years ago. As I took office, it became clear that the role of the military in the economy and the social affairs of this city were quite significant but, often, and too often, overlooked.

I'll tell you a story. It happened when I was running as all candidates for mayor do, to have to sit at the knees of the editors of our daily newspaper, beseeching them for an endorsement. And a question came up. "What sector of the New Orleans economy, what industry do you believe we should make a very special effort to maintain in this community?" Now, mind you, at the time, we were going through the Base Realignment & Closure process. We were very concerned in this community about losing the important military presence. I said, "I think we need to make a better effort to maintain and strengthen our military presence." And one of the editors said, "No, you misunderstand the question." I said, "No, let me explain my answer. Any organization that has a multi-billion dollar economic impact in terms of its spending, has over ten thousand employees, has Navy and Coast Guard and Marine establishments here in our community, and has people who are educated, who work with youth, who work with seniors and who work with the elderly, and when combined, employs more people than the largest private sector employer in our community, I think we need to make a special effort."

In cities all across this nation, New Orleans being no exception, we are fighting to rebuild our economy, fighting to push crime down, fighting to attract people who have moved out to move back in. And in this city, the partnership that we've developed with the military, through the Mayor's Military Advisory Council, has been one of the significant accomplishments in this community in the last five years. Because of it, we withstood the BRAC process virtually unscathed. Because of it, now even our newspapers and others in this community recognize that the military is an important entity and institution here in our community. As you meet here, and as you return to your local communities, I hope that you will reach out to all of your local elected officials, mayors and county councilmen and city council members, state legislators and others all around the nation to beseech them and implore them to recognize the importance that the military plays in the everyday lives of our communities. In New Orleans, we have done that and in New Orleans we are going to continue to commit to make that relationship even more meaningful and even more successful for the people of this community.

Now I want to make two presentations. Firstly, to Commander Jordan, on behalf of the Mayor's Military Advisory Committee. I am very proud to confer upon him a declaration of merit and appreciation for service to the city of New Orleans, its citizens, and members of the United States military in furtherance of the mission and goals of our committee. Congratulations. And secondly, is a certificate of appreciation, which makes Commander Jordan an honorary citizen of New Orleans. Everything is included, all rights, duties and privileges, except you can't vote here and the key to the treasury is in my pocket. Also, certainly, to the National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle. I'm also proud to confer upon you the same certificate of merit and appreciation. Congratulations for your work. We appreciate your commitment to the mission and goals of our committee.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Great job, Mayor. Each year it takes a lot of hard work, many countless hours and many volunteers to stage an American Legion National Convention. Our next guest put in long hours helping pull all the volunteers together in preparation for this week. He has served The American Legion well. I present to you from Post 15 in Crowley, Louisiana, J. E. "Al" Gibson.

**J. E. 'Al' Gibson, 1997-98 Department Commander  
The American Legion of Louisiana**

As a 42-year member of The American Legion, it's always a pleasure to be here. I told my governor, earlier when he came up, I was a Democrat but I was going to vote Republican again, for the second time because he's doing such a good job and he supports us in Louisiana as veterans. I told him he's one of the first I've seen in the United States of America who had a title that read 'Governor of Louisiana' on his Legion cap. I said you might be setting a first all throughout the United States.

Also, I think it's important that we always recognize friends of The American Legion. I'd like to introduce to you our executive director of Veterans Affairs. He's a retired colonel of 29 years and a combat veteran of Post 38, Jerry Strickland. Our National Commander has a tie in Louisiana that I did not realize until he came down to Monroe, Louisiana for our state convention. He tells me that he has a brother-in-law named Thibodeau. Now, he doesn't spell it the way we do in Louisiana, he just left the 'x' off is what he did. So, if he ever moves to Louisiana, all he has to do with his birth certificate is add the 'x' and he'll be an honorable Cajun.



The 38,000 plus Legion members welcome you to Louisiana to its southern hospitality. We hope that your stay in New Orleans will always be remembered as *'L'aissez les bon temps rouler en Louisian'*. It means let the good times roll in Louisiana. The Convention Corporation has put forth much effort to make this a well-remembered convention. If we can be of any service to you during your stay, please feel free to ask any Legionnaire with a pelican on his or her cap and I'm sure they will be well received to help you in any way possible. Commander Jordan, I wish you a most successful convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: You know, we know it must be a great honor to host an American Legion National Convention. It is also the focal point of years of hard work by dedicated volunteers in the host city and state. It is a pleasure to present a guy that probably needs no introduction here this morning, a guy that has served The American Legion very well. He is a Vietnam Veteran of the United States Army and has served The American Legion faithfully for over thirty years. Please welcome the Chairman of the Louisiana Convention Corporation and Past National Commander William 'Bill' Detweiler.

**William M. Detweiler, President  
The American Legion National Convention  
Corporation of Louisiana, Inc.**

Mr. Commander, welcome to the city of New Orleans. We are happy to host this 80th Convention, the fifth convention that this city has hosted and my fourth. I wasn't here in '22. I don't know if I was thought about in '22. I'm happy to have the opportunity to help host it. What makes it all worthwhile are the smiling faces and the friendly comments that we receive. A lot of people in the First District of The American Legion here in Louisiana, as well as our neighboring districts and throughout the state, have worked long and hard to host this convention, to prepare for this convention. But I hope that while you're here in the city that you will enjoy some of the treasures of New Orleans that make this city unique.

Probably one of the most important is the lifeblood of this city and that's our river. When the Pope came to New Orleans a few years ago, one of his regrets was that he was here for three days and did not get a chance to see the river. Because, unlike living in the Midwest or walking across the Mississippi in Minnesota, you have to go up on our levy system in order to see the river. It's a mile wide, over a hundred feet deep here at the turn, and we're protected by levies. You're sitting in a city that's 6 feet below sea level. Apparently, the river was a little low on Sunday and God decided that we needed to have a little water to put in the river to fill it up. So, unfortunately, as a result of that, you did not get an opportunity to see or participate in our parade and in particular you did not get an opportunity to see the representatives of the military organizations that the mayor talked about that are housed in this city. We are very proud of the economic impact and we work very hard on the state level through the Governor's Military Commission, as well as the Mayor's Military Commission, to take care of our military, to make them feel and welcome them here.

As the governor mentioned, we're getting rid of inheritance taxes. That's a big thing. And we've changed our inheritance tax laws in this state to make people welcome and to let them have the opportunity to deal with their own property.

I hope you've had an opportunity to see some of our museums. And without doubt, I know that you've experienced one of the products or one of the beverages that was invented here in the city of New Orleans, and that is the cocktail. Here, the battle of New Orleans was

fought. Here, it was planned by Jean Lafitte, not PNC Dan 'the Pirate' Foley, if you haven't seen it. Here was planned the Battle of New Orleans to save the city. We also house some fabulous antique shops and I'm sure you've had an opportunity to go through the French Quarter, which actually is built of Spanish architecture, because the original quarter burned and the Spaniards came in and rebuilt it. Those buildings are preserved. We have very strict preservation laws in this city. And we try to maintain the uniqueness that the French historian De Tocqueville wrote about when he came through America in the 1850s. He thought that the most unique city in the United States was New Orleans, although he didn't consider it an American city.

We are now proud to also call ourselves the home of the National D-Day museum. You will hear from Stephen Ambrose tomorrow. But it is here that the Higgins boats, the landing craft that made those invasions possible, the successful invasions of the Pacific, were built. We are very proud of that and very proud that on June 6, 2000, the National D-Day museum will open, not only to celebrate and to remember the invasion of Normandy, but also to remember other invasions, particularly in the Pacific.

We are a city of great tradition. We are a city of a blend of cultures. And we are happy that you have come to join to with us for the fifth time. I hope that you have had an opportunity to get out and about to see our fair city. We want you to come back, and as the mayor said, we're a poor city so leave some money.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Thank you to all our speakers for their welcome. You can be proud of your city, your state and the work you have done to host this 80th National Convention of The American Legion. The hospitality of everyone has made the days before convention most enjoyable to each and every one of us. Please tell all of the Legionnaires and their families and the volunteers thank you on behalf of the delegates and the guests to this convention, a job well done.

The majority of the men and women we elect to serve as our U.S. Senators are back in Washington today, as the final days of the 105th Congress begin to wind down. They are facing many important issues, including a vote on the Flag Protection Amendment. That is why Senator John Breaux is unable to be here with us this morning in New Orleans. However, he has taken the time from his schedule to send video greetings to us.

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**Address: The Honorable John B. Breaux**  
**United States Senate, Louisiana**

Hello, I'm Senator John Breaux of Louisiana. I'm sorry I'm unable to be with you all in New Orleans this week. As set forth your legislative agenda for the year, I'd like to talk about some of the issues that I know are important to you. Today, you all are holding a rally here in Washington on the steps of the United States Capitol that show your support for the flag protection amendment. As an original co-sponsor for this legislation, I think it is important that we protect the American flag and all of the honor and prestige that it represents. I think we have a real chance of getting this legislation passed. Our support has been growing in the Senate. We now have a total of 61 co-sponsors.

Possibly one of the most important issues facing veterans today is adequate and affordable health care for all of our veterans. I voted recently to increase the funding for the veterans' health care programs by \$320 million dollars. While I'm very disappointed that this particular measure didn't pass, I will continue working to help increase our funding for the veterans health care program. Luckily, increased funding isn't the only solution as there

are many structural changes in the way that we provide health care that can help us operate more efficiently. I recently sponsored a bill that would look at the possibility of using the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to provide adequate health care for our Medicare eligible military beneficiaries. And as the chairman of the National Bi-Partisan Commission on the future of Medicare, I'm working to find real solutions to help save one of our most important national health care programs. Quality, affordable health care is something that we all want. I wish you good luck this week in New Orleans and much success in the coming year.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Now to our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle.

**Call for Convention  
Robert W. Spanogle  
National Adjutant**

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The call to the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the Eightieth National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8th through the 10th, 1998. The Convention business sessions will be held in the Hilton Riverside Hotel Grand Ballroom, first 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 By-Laws, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it. At twelve o'clock noon of the final session, or at the conclusion of all other business of the National Convention, whichever first occurs on Thursday, September 10, 1998, 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. (Sec. 3, Art. V).

"...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 August 10th, 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." (Sec. 3, Art. V).

In addition to the above, the members of the National Executive Committee are delegates to the National Convention with vote, which shall be exercised with their respective departments, except the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention. (Sec. 3, Art. VII)

"Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote." (Sec. 4, Art. 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 Department Commander, the Department Adjutant at the time of certification required by the National Constitution, or at any time prior to the adjournment of the first session of the National Convention.

#### **ALTERNATES**

Alternates shall have the power to vote only in the absence of regular delegates.

The selection of alternates who represent absent delegates is a matter for decision within the respective delegations.

The vote of any registered delegates absent or not represented by an alternate shall be cast with the majority of registered delegates present from his or her department.

#### **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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

#### **DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS**

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

#### **CONVENTION COMMITTEES**

<b>Convention Committee</b>	<b>No. of Members to which each Dept. is entitled:</b>
Americanism	One Delegate
Children & Youth	One Delegate
Constitutional Amendments	One Delegate
Credentials and Internal Affairs	
Credentials and Other Internal Matters, (Sections I & II)	One Delegate
Membership (Sec. III)	One Delegate
Economic	
Employment & Veteran Preference	One Delegate
Other Economic Matters	One Delegate
Finance	One Delegate
Foreign Relations	One Delegate
Legislation & Rules	One Delegate
National Security Committee; Joint Meeting (Includes Aerospace, Defense Civil Preparedness, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs, Law and Order Convention Committee)	
Immediately following national security joint meeting:	
Aerospace	One Delegate
Defense Civil Preparedness	One Delegate

Merchant Marine	One Delegate
Military Affairs	One Delegate
Naval Affairs	One Delegate
Law and Order	One Delegate
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	
Claims Rating	One Delegate
Hospital and Medical Services	One Delegate

That concludes the Call to the Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I now declare the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened. The chair recognizes Herm Harrington of New York, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs for the purposes of making a report.

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

To the Eightieth Annual National Convention of The American Legion, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998.

Forty-two members and guests of the section on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs met at 9:00 a.m., September 6, 1998, in the Melrose Room, 3rd Level of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Herman G. Harrington of New York was elected Chairman, and Larry J. Besson of Illinois was elected Secretary.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried to accept the Delegate Strength Report as reported by the National Adjutant certifying membership 30 days prior to National Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the report be based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution: Five delegates for each Department, plus one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the Convention (August 10, 1998); and one alternate for each delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) National Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention.

All living Past National Commanders are members of the National Executive Committee without vote and life delegates to the National Convention with vote, which is exercised in their respective Departments. (Voting strength figures attached.)

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

In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on August 10, 1998, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 3,161 allocated as follows:

Alabama	31	Montana	18
Alaska	15	Nebraska	66
Arizona	44	Nevada	13
Arkansas	29	New Hampshire	31
California	150	New Jersey	86
Colorado	31	New Mexico	20
Connecticut	39	New York	206
Delaware	16	North Carolina	53
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	31
Florida	126	Ohio	164
France	8	Oklahoma	37
Georgia	52	Oregon	34
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	259
Idaho	18	Philippines	8
Illinois	156	Puerto Rico	15
Indiana	140	Rhode Island	17
Iowa	82	South Carolina	31
Kansas	57	South Dakota	34
Kentucky	38	Tennessee	40
Louisiana	45	Texas	98
Maine	34	Utah	15
Maryland	87	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	74	Virginia	56
Mexico	8	Washington	45
Michigan	102	West Virginia	36
Minnesota	130	Wisconsin	83
Mississippi	26	Wyoming	14
Missouri	72		

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Do I hear it seconded?

...Motion seconded.

All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? The ayes have it. It's adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The chair recognizes Charlie Pessa of New York, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules for the purposes of making his report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules**  
**Charles Pessa, New York, Chairman**

The Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 AM on Sunday, September 6, 1998 in the Rosedown Room of the Riverside Hilton Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. Forty-two (42) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus twenty (20) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, Charles Pessio, a delegate from the Department of New York, was elected Permanent Chairman. Claude Carpenter, a delegate from the Department of Arkansas, was elected Permanent Secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to the business agenda by considering the Rules of the Convention. A motion was unanimously approved by the Committee to recommend the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Conventions as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion. A second unanimously approved motion allows the Secretary and Chairman to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate. Finally, an approved motion authorizes the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules.

Committee Delegates heard remarks from the Honorable Hershel Gober, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Gober's comments addressed improvements made throughout the Department during his tenure. He also discussed his vision for VA in the 21st Century. Deputy Secretary Gober's presentation concluded with a "question and answer" session. The Committee is currently in recess subject to the "Call of the Chair."

The Legislation and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action. However, the Legislation and Rules Committee would like to offer the Convention Delegates a brief report on current congressional developments impacting issues of primary interest to The American Legion.

The American Legion is in the final stages of the legislative process to secure a constitutional amendment to protect the flag of the United States against physical desecration. Reports are coming in from across the country of excellent grassroots lobbying being done by The American Legion family and the Citizens Flag Alliance. The next thirty days will be extremely critical in this legislative campaign. We need maximum effort by everyone in The American Legion family during this final push for passage. Cards, letters, phone calls, and personal visits with all one hundred Senators are absolutely imperative to the success of this effort.

Today, Members of the House of Representatives return from their August recess to resume work, with Members of the Senate, to finalize the Fiscal Year 1999 budget. All thirteen appropriations bills are still pending. Differences between the House and Senate passed versions must be settled before going to the White House for Presidential action. The American Legion is closely monitoring the final negotiations on these bills, especially funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Labor, and the Department of Defense.

On October 6, Legionnaires from across the country will accompany the newly elected National Commander to Capitol Hill. Their purpose will be to discuss the legislative mandates adopted by the Delegates at this National Convention. The highlight of this event will be the National Commander's testimony before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.

National Commander Jordan, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of New York, 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.

Commander Jordan, as a duly authorized delegate to this Convention from the Department of New York, 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 JORDAN: It's been moved. Seconded?

...The motion was seconded.

All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? The Report of Legislation and Rules is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The chair recognizes George Boucek of Illinois, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance for the purposes of making his report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Finance**  
**George W. Boucek, Illinois, Chairman**

Forty-two (42) members met at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, Grand Salon 21, 1st Level, at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 6, 1998, New Orleans, Louisiana. Paul M. Allen (Minnesota), National Finance Director, opened the meeting as staff liaison and made general announcements concerning convention activities. He then informed the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary. George W. Boucek (Illinois) was elected Chairman and Kenneth D. Danilson (Iowa) was elected Secretary, both by unanimous vote.

Before recognizing National Treasurer Webber LaGrange (Indiana) for his annual report, Chairman Boucek informed the Committee that Treasurer LaGrange will be retiring at the end of this convention. The committee expressed their appreciation to Treasurer LaGrange for his over twenty (20) years of dedication and service to The American Legion.

Treasurer LaGrange then informed the committee that The American Legion is solid financially and is being well managed. He made some financial comparison during his tenure as Treasurer such as in 1977 national revenues were \$15,800,000 and in 1997 \$56,000,000, a 250% increase. Dues income in 1977 was \$4,600,000 and in 1997 \$17,000,000. Non-dues income in 1977 was \$11,000,000 and in 1997 \$39,000,000, a 250% increase.

The Paid-Up-For-Life trust was \$636,000 in 1977 and \$26,000,000 in 1997, a 4000% increase.

Treasurer LaGrange then recommended that National dues be set at \$9.00. A motion was made by Neil Boatwright (Georgia) that the 1999 per capita dues remain at \$9.00. Emmott Sharp (California) seconded the motion and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chairman then recognized Dick McNally (Wisconsin), the newly appointed Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of *The American Legion Magazine*. Mr. McNally reported that the Magazine is projecting an \$832,000 surplus this year.

Mr. McNally reported that even though advertising revenues are down compared to 1997, he anticipates ending the year with advertising income of \$8,533,000. The 5% expected increase in paper costs did not materialize due to an oversupply, apparently brought on by a weakness in the Asian and European market.

Concerning postage prices, Mr. McNally reported that the Magazine had received a 1 to 2% increase in October the last two years and another increase is expected this October.



It also appears that effective January 10, 1999, there will be an overall postage increase of 7%.

Mr. McNally indicated that with prudent management the Magazine should have a 1999 surplus of approximately \$900,000.

Chairman Boucek reported that the 1997 George S. Olive & Co. certified annual audit, which was distributed to each delegate plus published in the Convention program, shows our total assets were at \$101 million and our year-end surplus at \$2,204,188.

Bill Goede (Minnesota) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee of Finance. Tony Riley (Indiana) seconded the motion, which was adapted by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Comrade Commander, as a duly authorized delegate to this convention I now make a motion that this report be accepted and approved. And, incidentally, you must have missed a point, there will be no dues increase.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

All those in favor indicate with the usual sign. Opposed? The Report of Finance is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: It wouldn't be fit for me to go out of office without recognizing the next gentleman. He was mentioned in George's report. Webber LaGrange, please come forward. Over twenty years, your National Treasurer has served this great organization. He is a member of Post 205 in Franklin, Indiana. He has been a dedicated servant to The American Legion, a true friend, a friend of each and every one of you and a personal friend of mine. As National Commander, I wanted to recognize Webber LaGrange before this 80th Convention of The American Legion. Webber, I wish you well, hit 'em straight.

NATIONAL TREASURER LAGRANGE: I'm afraid I wasn't prepared for this. But I deeply appreciate having served this organization for twenty years. I know all of you started in a Legion Post as I did. I realized I could make a contribution, but never dreamed that I would become a National Officer. But it was fun to be your treasurer and see the advances that we have made in our management, how we invest our money, and how we try to take care of this great country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next guest is a special American. He is a man who understands the fundamental values of our country, a man who has worked tirelessly to hold that our nation's leaders continue to see a vision for America anchored in those values that have served us well for over 200 years. They are values such as respect, love of God, service to others. And, yes, protection of "Old Glory" from disgusting acts of desecration. He is the president of the Family Research Council, directing the course of the pro-family policy and lobbying group in its nationwide efforts to address family issues. This man served as Assistant to President Reagan for Policy Development; Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; and Chairman of President Reagan's Special Working Group on the Family. It is my distinct pleasure once again to present to an American Legion audience a fine American, Gary Bauer.

**Address: Gary L. Bauer, President  
Family Research Council**

I think they were just showing the ad that we have running here, in Louisiana this week, in favor of the Flag Protection Amendment. We were really pleased to be able to do that. I appreciate the wonderful introduction this morning. It is a great honor to be able to stand at this podium in front of men and women like you. I spend much time in Washington, D.C. I have to tell you that in the last year all of the messages coming out of Washington, D.C. seem to say that character doesn't matter but you are living proof that character does matter.

I wanted to come here today to spend some time with you, to talk to you about our country. We all love America. That's the thing that brings us together, whether we're Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives, whatever we may do, we all love America. We are getting ready in about sixteen months to begin a new century, a new millennium. The evidence is overwhelming that this new century is going to be a dangerous time for our country. You can see the evidence everywhere. The unraveling of Russia, the missile tests by North Korea a few days ago, countries like Iraq and Iran getting the bomb. It is going to be a dangerous century for the United States and for freedom and for liberty. And for us to get through that century, we're going to need men and women like you again.

Before we go into that new century, I want to take a few minutes with you to remind you about the century that we're leaving, the century, that is being called "The American Century". There is one reason and one reason only that it's being called "The American Century" and that is because men and women like you—Freedom's Army—made it America's Century. You made the sacrifices time and time again. Twice you led the free nations of the world to defeat the -isms of this century.

In World War II there was Nazism. What an unbelievable time that was. I was born as that war was winding down, but my father served in the First Marine Corp Division in the South Pacific. Sometimes at night he would tell me unbelievable things that he saw, things that he had to do in service to his country. My father was a tough marine, his nickname was 'Spike'. Yet every 4th of July, when the flag would go by, my father would get a tear in his eye. On every 4th of July when the firecrackers were going off—of course as a kid I loved that—he would jump. It would remind him of the things that he saw, the things that he had to do.

My mother sometimes would tell us what it was like to wake up and hear the news of Pearl Harbor and realize that the United States had been the victim of a surprise attack, that we could lose the war and lose our liberty. But I read in Winston Churchill's diary that he had the soundest sleep of the war the night after the Pearl Harbor, because he knew that what Pearl Harbor meant was that men and women like you—Freedom's Army—would come to the front lines and that there was no way that Hitler and his legions would prevail once you were willing to make the sacrifices that you made. Churchill was right. He knew the American people, the American race, he called us, better than we knew ourselves.

Well, that war was no sooner over when men like you my father came home. You wanted to begin your jobs and start your families but before you could do that, you were called to sacrifice again. This time in the great stare down with the Soviet Union and with Communist China that we called the Cold War. And once again, you stepped up and defended liberty. You drew a line in the sand in Europe and in Asia and you said to the Communists "this far and no further. We will make the sacrifices for liberty". In the years

that followed, we did. We spent billions of dollars of your money for foreign aid and for the weapons programs and all the things that had to be bought, but we did something more important, we sent you to places that sometimes seemed to be Godforsaken, places like Pork Chop Hill and Da Nang and Khe Sanh and, there, blood of our blood, flesh of our flesh, many of you paid the ultimate price for liberty. You left friends behind there, men who gave it all. And the history books will record that that was one of the most noble sacrifices that has ever been made in the history of the world.

You changed history in this century. Not just because you had better planes and bigger bombs and better weapons than anybody else, you changed history because you brought with you an idea. Every place you planted the flag, the world knew that you were planting an idea, an idea of the founding fathers, the idea that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. That idea is transforming the world. It is the central idea of the American experience. You and I know that that idea that our founding fathers put on the table was just not meant for Americans. It does not say that all Americans are created equal. It doesn't say all Frenchmen or all Englishmen or all white men, it says all men. It was a universal vision and it has transformed the globe. That is why nine years ago, when the students in Tiananmen Square in China revolted against their Communist masters, they did not wave copies of "The Wisdom of Mao" or the sayings of Confucius. They waved copies of our Declaration of Independence. They built papier mache models of our Statue of Liberty. It was American values they were embracing. It was that founding value that you fought for from one end of the globe to the other.

I read in a magazine many years ago, that when the Communists thugs took power in Cambodia, one of the first things they did was round up anybody who wore glasses, took them away and either killed or imprisoned them. Because, glasses meant that you were a reader, you read books, and they were afraid that your mind had already been infected with those words "all men are created equal". There is not a tyrant in the world who will rest easy, whether he's in Iraq or Iran, in Beijing or North Korea, in Bosnia or Cuba, because his people may have already read those words, the words that you—Freedom's Army—carried, from one end of the globe to the other.

Through the centuries, armies have marched for conquests, they've marched for money, they've marched for power, but you marched for liberty time and time again. You occupied no nation. You brought freedom with you wherever you went. You always made it possible for people to have a better life, to make their own choices about governing. You have been Freedom's Army and you march behind Old Glory and that is why we must protect it.

An American Congressman a few months ago told me an unbelievable story. He said that he was in one of those eastern European countries that had been saved from behind the Iron Curtain. He was there on the day they were first going to vote after decades of living in slavery. Hundreds of thousands, millions of people showed up to vote that day. They stood in long lines for the liberty that we so often take for granted. When they voted, they didn't go back home to watch television or go out on a picnic, but they gathered in the public square of the nation's capitol in this country in eastern Europe. They stood there for hours, because they wanted to hear what the election results were. This Congressman described the crowd to me, if you can imagine it, on that day, hundreds of thousands of people, and guess what they were carrying in their hands? American flags. He said he was watching the crowd and suddenly from way in the back, hundreds of thousands of people behind him, he could hear them yelling something. He couldn't quite make it out, but the yelling continued and it built up through the crowd, sweeping up to the front and finally he

heard what they were saying over and over and over again, "USA! USA! USA!". And the chant would die out at the front of the crowd and at the front they would pick it up again, and that same chant would sweep back through the crowd over and over again. They weren't singing songs of their nation, they weren't singing their national anthem, they were chanting the name of your country. They knew we have been Freedom's Army.

When you form a multi-national force under the United Nations flag, and you take soldiers from every country with twenty different flags on their helmets, it's the guy with the American flag on his helmet that the bad guys shoot first. They know he represents Freedom's Army. Now, I don't know what you all think about the United Nations. There's probably a dozen different opinions in this room, but let me tell you something that we should agree on and it's simply this: it isn't the United Nations that's guaranteed liberty in this century, it's not the United Nations that caused the dictators in the Middle East to step down, it's the American fleet standing off shore, it's Freedom's Army that makes the difference.

I'm here to tell you that this American Century, with all that it's meant, will amount to nothing, if in the next century we forget what you have done and what America stands for and what our values mean. The signs are everywhere, a Supreme Court that suddenly finds a right to burn the flag in the United States Constitution. My friends, I've read that Constitution and time and time again there is nothing in it that should permit the most sacred symbol of our country to be desecrated and burned. If the learned men of the Supreme Court don't understand that, they understand nothing. The signs are everywhere, a major American television network that ran a story a few weeks ago suggesting that American soldiers used nerve gas on fellow American soldiers in Vietnam. I heard that story and I knew in my gut it had to be a lie. You knew it had to be a lie. Only in the precincts of the media at that particular network could they believe such a terrible thing about America. They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

There are other signs. I think one of the most worrisome is that our children and grandchildren are not being taught what you did, the sacrifices you made. They're not being taught why America was called by the founding fathers "a shining city upon a hill". The bureaucrats in Washington a year or so ago decided they were going to come up with history standards, things that every American child ought to know about. Well, leave it to Washington to mess it up. They came up with thousands of pages of all kinds of stuff about Madonna and the pop culture and about the Ku Klux Klan and every mistake America has ever made. Not one word about The American Legion, or the VFW or Patrick Henry or the Wright Brothers or the first Constitutional Convention. The bureaucrats in Washington couldn't even get that right.

When I was Under-Secretary of Education, under President Ronald Reagan, I was able to do a lot of things during those years. And I found out about what our children are not being taught. You can go outside of Washington, D.C. to Antietam, Maryland, a couple of hours drive and climb up on a hillside next to the whitewash Dunkard Church. Then you can look down on the field below where sons of the North met sons of the South, fighting, both of them, for what they thought was a great cause. Before the sun went down that night, many years ago, the bloodiest day in American history took place, thousands were lying dead or dying on that battlefield. Our children don't know about Antietam. In fact, we discovered that one-half of our children could not place the American Civil War in the correct half-century. Unbelievable! Every one of our children ought to be taught who said "Give me liberty or give me death," and who said "I regret I have but one life to give for my country."

They ought to know what happened at Concord Bridge and on the beaches of Normandy and how their liberty was born and nurtured in those places. They ought to know what Constitution Hall looks like, what good music sounds like, what the lady in New York Harbor stands for, why there was a Berlin Wall and what the forces were that brought that wall down. They ought to be taught why grown men cry when Old Glory walks by. In short, they need to be taught to love the things we love and to honor the things we honor and nothing less than that will do.

In Washington, D.C. there are many wonderful monuments. I'm sure you've seen them all. The Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Washington Monument, they are all incredible places. Each of them remind us about something in our past. But there's one place that has become the shrine to American liberty. How ironic it would be the Vietnam War Memorial, the war that divided us the most. That place is a special place, an unbelievable place. If you've been there, you know that's true. When I left Washington, D.C. this morning I know what was happening at the Vietnam Memorial, the same thing that happens every morning. Men and women, like you, rich, poor, middle class, white, black, it doesn't matter, come to that memorial every morning and leave mementoes at the base of it. They leave maybe a tear stained handkerchief, maybe a single rose or perhaps a family Bible with the names of those who went before written in the cover. Every morning little American flags lean against that memorial. Every night, when the sun goes down, the park police collect it all and lovingly store it away. The next day, rain or shine, that process will begin all over again. Presidents come and go, Supreme Court Justices come and go, Speakers of the House come and go, but those things at the base of the Vietnam Memorial are the permanent things of family, faith and freedom. Those were the things you fought for. Those were the things you believed in. Those were the only things that can take America into the next century.

I am going to go back to Washington D.C. and, with you, I am going to fight for those things. I am going to defend those things. And, with you, I am going to teach our children and grandchildren to stand for those things. I am convinced that if, together, we do that, then a year from now, and five years from now, and a hundred years from now the world will be able to say, because of Freedom's Army, this great country is still a shining city upon a hill. Never give up.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next speaker heads the world's largest patriotic women's service organization. During her 43 years of service in The American Legion Auxiliary, she served in various leadership roles at both the national, state and local levels. Nationally, she has served on 10 national committees including Education, National Security, Children and Youth, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, a lady that I've always called a professional. She and her husband, Jerry, have become very close friends of Claudette and I. It's my pleasure to introduce to you from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, the National President of The American Legion Auxiliary, Mrs. Barbara Kranig.

**Mrs. Barbara Kranig, Wisconsin, National President  
The American Legion Auxiliary**

It is a pleasure to greet you this morning on behalf of the nearly one million members of the American Legion Auxiliary in the storied city of New Orleans. This year, the American Legion Auxiliary has emphasized service to families. We have donated \$5.25 million dollars to children and youth projects this year with special concern for foster

children, children with family abuse and violence, donations to Spinoza Buddy Bear for Children facing trauma. Members gave more than \$1.5 million dollars through family enhancement in their communities in the community service program. We raised awareness of hunger in America and over \$30,000 to help combat it through the Taste of the NFL, the National President's special project. We assisted veterans through the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program to the tune of 5.7 million dollars. And we worked as a team with The American Legion. A woman to woman project was initiated to try to persuade four woman senators to join in support of the flag amendment. We are continuing our efforts in that project. The members enthusiastically joined The American Legion to raise money and to work for phone banks for The Children's Miracle Network. And we have continued with all of the traditional programs as well.

It was a further delight to travel with the National Commander and his wife to the Far East to pay respect to allies and friends, to visit troops, and to experience first hand the isolation, the loneliness that separation from family and loved ones brings. We visited American cemeteries abroad and from Flanders Field, where 368 bodies lie, to St. Avoild, where more than 11,000 are buried to Fort Bonifacio in the Pacific, where more than 17,000 Americans lay at rest. We gained new appreciation for the high price that this country has paid for freedom.

It has been a joy and an honor to serve with Tony Jordan, an outstanding patriot and Commander. Commander, I wish for you a most successful Convention and when it's all over, a most productive and happy retirement.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: We're a great team. We went to the Far East traveled many miles together for you and The American Legion Auxiliary.

The next guest is no stranger to an American Legion National Convention—or any other Legion event. And when it comes to values and protecting the American flag from the acts of physical desecration he is what I call a committed citizen. He is a U.S. Army veteran who earned many decorations during his 34 years on active duty, among them the Medal of Honor for a series of missions in Vietnam. He also received the nation's second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross. Today, he is still serving our great nation as the Chairman of the Board of the Citizens Flag Alliance. Please welcome a member of Post 800 in Idyllwild, California, retired Major General Patrick Brady.

**Special Report: Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.  
Major General Patrick H. Brady (USA Ret.)  
Chairman of the Board**

It's always such a great pleasure for me to be with you, with all the great veterans out here and I have some special people with me here today whom I know you're going to want to meet. I recently went to see the movie *Saving Private Ryan*. I think the greatest lesson in the movie may have been lost in the blood and the gore. Not only was it about exceptional leadership that we saw in World War II, but it was about purpose, the purpose of the sacrifices of all our veterans, especially the World War II veteran. He's a great hero in my life. The veterans of Vietnam are my brothers, but the great heroes were those guys from World War II who gave us, really, all that we have today. But the simple, haunting burning question that *Private Ryan* had was whether or not he was worthy of the sacrifices of those who saved him. His great hope was that he was a good man, that he had lived a good life, that he was worth their sacrifices. I think we should all ask ourselves the *Private Ryan*

question. Are we the kind of people the veterans, not only of World War II, but of all our wars, gave so much of body and soul for? Is this the America of their dreams and aspirations of all that blood and gore? Are we worth it? The quest for the flag is a search in part for the answer to Private Ryan's question.

I know that in the midst of a devaluing of America and of patriotism that the one issue which would hurt the most which would turn over Private Ryan's saviors in their graves is to see that it is legal to desecrate the flag for which they fought, America's only family portrait. It's the sacred shroud that embraced their coffins. It was the tissue for the tears of their loved ones. They would be outraged by a Supreme Court which took away our freedoms to protect their flag. The Justices did it in the same year that veterans efforts brought down the Berlin Wall and won freedom for so many. They would be horrified to hear those elitists in this country say they died on the battlefields of America so that their flag could be burned on the street corners of America. It's not the elitists in the media who gave us freedom of the press, our patriots did. It's not the courts or the ACLU who gave us freedom of speech, our veterans did. It's not the radical demonstrators burning our flag who contribute to peace, it's the men and women who served under that flag, who respect the values it embodied who are the real peace demonstrators in our society. If Private Ryan's saviors, those who saved all our freedoms, could come back, they would be in the front lines fighting to recapture our flag.

I have with us today five who did come back from the great wars of this century. Two from Private Ryan's war. They are in the front lines fighting to recapture Old Glory. They represent the Army, the Navy, and the Marines. These five men wear the Medal of Honor. They trace their roots to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. They cover the full spectrum of the American experience, every aspect of our culture. Their names are on rolls that will ever be a part of American history. I'm going to tell you their story. And then they will tell you, in their own words, what the flag means to them.

In June of 1944, near Goville, France, this man under intense hostile fire led his men against heavily defended enemy strongholds. In the first attack, he killed four of the enemy in direct confrontation. He then singlehandedly took out an enemy machine gun crew. Next, he attacked two mortar sections, killing three enemy and routing the rest. Then, he personally knocked out another enemy machine gun. The next day, deep in enemy held territory, he found himself and his men surrounded and was ordered to withdraw. He wouldn't do it. He stood alone, held off the enemy while his men escaped to safety. He was wounded in that action, but he still managed to carry a wounded automatic rifleman to safety. He then went back and got the automatic weapon—and I question that! Because the battle continued to rage, he refused evacuation, had his wound treated and stayed with his men. I reported to you last year that we had managed to put into the hands of President Clinton a copy of our resource book. This is the man who put it there. Walter Ehlers, World War II.

MR. EHLERS: All of the cops in the country know why I went back for that automatic rifle. More fire power. If there is a day that changed the rest of my life, it was the day that I had to get my mother's signature and dad's signature on my army enlistment papers. My dad said he would sign and my mother said she would sign on one condition, if I promised to be a Christian soldier. I told her I'd do my best. It was not easy to be a Christian soldier. There were many times and many temptations and every time I was tempted, I could see the tears in my mother's eyes and I was not about to cause her any disappointment.

I was born in Kansas, raised on a farm. The first nine years of my life were great. Then came the Great Depression and the worst drought of the century in the Midwest, in 1935 the worst flood. We were able to survive but it wasn't easy. My dad and mother worked hard and set a good example for family life. I joined the Army on October 4, 1940. I went to Fort Ord and on the day war was declared, December 7, 1941, I was on Mount Rainier in Washington State. I was about 8,000 feet altitude, strapping on a pair of skis and I had never been on skis before. I hadn't been on a hill over 200 feet high. When the radio at the ski shack announced the bombing of Japan, followed up with the announcement that all servicemen were to return to their units immediately, it probably saved my life. I never went down that mountain and I shudder to think what might have happened if I had.

In October, 1942, we set sail for our overseas destination. We were briefed about our landing objectives and it was to be in French Morocco, North Africa. If I hadn't been so seasick, I would probably have been scared but it didn't take the seasickness long to wear off. The casualties on the beach and the strafing soon gave me much more to worry about. I was transferred to the First Infantry Division. My brother and I were in the same company. We fought through Africa and Sicily. My brother was wounded in Sicily and sent to a hospital in Africa. I finished up in Sicily and we were sent to England. We trained constantly until we boarded ships for the Normandy invasion. My brother had returned from the hospital in Africa and the embarkation was the last time that I saw him. He was killed on D-Day, landing on Omaha Beach.

I went on to receive several decorations including three Purple Hearts and the Medal of Honor. I am a survivor. My brother and many of my close friends paid the supreme sacrifice. Because of them, hundreds of thousands of them, you and I are here today. What I have written about is typical of the World War II veteran. He knows why he was going to war. Many veterans who have gone to later wars have not been so sure of the reason of their being there. We, the people, are the government and it is our duty to make sure we are not wasting lives and becoming involved in military actions that cannot be resolved or come to an honorable conclusion. We do not work for the Congress or the administration, they work for us. We live in the greatest country in the world. After all I have seen of the world, I would not trade any of our states for you. Our country is unique. We have all colors, races, nationalities and ethnic groups. We have the greatest freedom of any country in the world. We have problems but all nations do. However, we have many more good things in this country than bad. One of the unfortunate things is that there is so much crime reporting on the television and other news media that we very seldom hear about the good things.

But wherever Americans go, we can be proud of our heritage. Our flag, the red, white and blue is the most respected emblem in the world. I am a strong supporter of a Constitutional Amendment to protect that flag. I believe that the flag did change me. I have come to have more respect for our country and realize that we have the best of everything: people, government, freedom and opportunity. And Old Glory is a symbol of all those things and God help the guy that tried to burn the flag that covered my brother's coffin.

GENERAL BRADY: Now, we go from the European theater to the Pacific. This man was severely wounded in heavy action in the most violent battle in Marine Corps history on Iwo Jima. Despite his wounds he refused evacuation and remained on the battlefield continually advancing forward on the front lines under withering enemy fire to treat and carry wounded marines back to safety. After he had cared for the battlefield wounded of his own unit, he turned to an adjacent unit and rescued 14 casualties there, many of whom would have died without his help. He then returned to his own unit and was wounded a



second time. Refusing evacuation, he moved across 600 yards of open terrain, again under intense enemy fire to rescue many wounded comrades. During this action, he was wounded a third time. And he could not walk, so guess what? He crawled 50 yards to care for yet another wounded marine. His heroism was inspirational to his fellow warriors and contributed immeasurably to their victory. Let me present George Wahlen, World War II, Iwo Jima.

MR. WAHLEN: The Stars and Stripes of our nation's flag is to me a symbol of our nation's values. It represents our loyalty, patriotism and our love of country. It reminds me of the great patriots of our past. Nathan Hale's statement "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." Or Patrick Henry's immortal quote, "Give me liberty or give me death" are two examples of such patriotism. In my front yard stands a flag pole at the top of which waves the American flag. Often when I turn onto my street and see that flag in the light of the day or illuminated by spotlight at night, I am reminded of the sacrifices of many servicemen who preserved our freedoms. Especially I remember the brave men who were wounded or gave their lives on a little volcanic island in the Pacific where I served. I proudly witnessed the raising of the American flag in the top of Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima from a distance and recognize those marines and navy corpsmen who participated in doing so, as great patriots, as many of our service men and women have been. I realize how blessed and proud I am to be an American and to have raised a family in the freedom of this great country. The flag in my mind is a sacred emblem of our country's greatness and is deserving of respect and protection above all the monuments in this great country.

GENERAL BRADY: Now we go from World War II to Korea. In the bitter cold of Korea, our next recipient skillfully led his battalion in a daring attack on the enemy. Purpose to relieve a surrounded and badly outnumbered rifle company and secure a strategic mountain pass that was vital for the safe deployment of two marine regiments. During the initial attack, he personally led his men up the ice covered mountain slopes to engage the enemy in hand to hand combat. He then continued the attack over three more ridges covered in deep snow to within 1500 meters of the rifle company. Although wounded by shell fragments, his clothing pierced by enemy bullets, he led his men once again to the objective, rescuing the rifle company. Then he held the pass while the two regiments deployed to safety. During this entire period of intense combat, his unit suffered many, many casualties. But he never left one single patient behind. He carried every single wounded with him to eventual safety. This man is perhaps the greatest living hero of the Korean War, not just because of his actions on the battlefield but because his efforts were instrumental in erecting the memorial to remember the great warriors of that forgotten war. This is General Ray Davis of World War II, of Korea, and of Vietnam, retired as a four star general and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

GENERAL DAVIS: Certainly one of the most generous groups I've had the privilege of speaking to, but as an aside, I can't see back there, but I know somewhere there's a gang of fellow Legion members from Georgia. Could they hear a shout from you?

The true wonder of Old Glory is the inspiration it has provided for all the patriots in our history. Respect for the flag has inspired throughout our history, the values that our veterans fought for, values that make us the most respected nation on earth, values vital to the inspiration of our children. They are values that will insure that the sacrifices necessary to our future will be made. When I think of the flag, I recall all those legions of young Americans who stood tall when their flag was near and gave their lives to defend the values it embodies. Recall Fort McHenry in 1814, our gallant defenders withstood 25 hours of

boarderment from the enemy ships and then repelled a landing force as they refused to lower our great flag. That flag inspired our national anthem, the only flag in the world for such purpose or for that matter a flag code and a flag day. You cannot deface any national monument which symbolizes a great person or event in our history. Yet you can deface the greatest national symbol, Old Glory, which symbolizes all the great people and events of our nation's history. The time has come for Americans to stand up for the symbol that stands for all we are. Significant to me is the fact that in these days of trouble, when our nation seems to be on a downward slide internally, we would attack the very symbol which could lead us to victory.

GENERAL BRADY: The next soldier, from my home state, was in a bunker with three of his fellow soldiers when a company of North Vietnamese sappers attacked. At the onset of the attack, he saw three explosive charges which had been thrown into his bunker. Realizing the danger to his comrades, complete disregard for his own safety, he hurled two of the charges out of the bunker. He then threw his flak vest and himself over the remaining charge. By his courageous act, he absorbed the blast and shielded his fellow soldiers. Although suffering from serious multiple wounds and partial loss of his sight, he charged out of the bunker and engaged the enemy in hand to hand combat until his rifle was damaged by the blast of an enemy hand grenade. While in search of another weapon, he encountered and overcame additional enemy sappers in hand to hand combat. Having obtained another weapon, he returned to his original fighting position and inflicted additional casualties on the attacking enemy. Although seriously wounded, he refused medical evacuation, preferring to remain at his post. His extraordinary heroism and action at the risk of his life, caused the successful defense of his position and saved the lives of any of his fellow soldiers. Michael John Fitzmorris of South Dakota, born in North Dakota, two key CFA states.

MR. FITZMORRIS: It's good to see South Dakota right up here in the front. Recently, I went to a friend's wake. There on his casket in front of the church for everyone to see was a neatly folded American flag, given to the family from a grateful nation. Ray was a veteran who served his nation honorably. That flag was the inspiration for sacrifices, the symbol of the values he fought for. It will be treasured by Ray's family forever. I couldn't help but think about the flag mean as much to the family of the deceased veteran or any American if we continue to allow people to burn it, spit on it, do whatever else they do in the name of free speech? If we don't do something soon, the day will come when the flag will just be a rag to all Americans as it is today for those who say we should be able to burn it. Our flag has no other character than that which we give it. It represents our own character, the kind of people we are. What kind of people would allow the symbol of their character to be defiled? As a veteran, I am sick of it and feel that the flag should be protected for future generations.

GENERAL BRADY: This next marine led his company against the heavily fortified village of Dai Do in Vietnam, which had been seized by the enemy on the preceding evening, isolating a marine company from the remainder of their battalion. Ignoring hostile sounds impacting near him, he fearlessly led his men in a savage assault against enemy placements within the village. Although twice painfully wounded by grenade fragments, which will give you an idea how close the enemy was, he refused medical treatment and courageously maneuvered his men in the destruction of over 100 mutually supporting bunkers. He drove the remaining enemy from their position and relieved the stranded company. As the two companies consolidated on the adjacent village of Dinh To, they were threatened by a furious counterattack of an enemy battalion. Swiftly assessing the situation,

disregarding the heavy volume of fire, he boldly maneuvered the remaining men of his company forward, joined forces with the heavily engaged marine and halted the enemy's counterattack. Wounded yet a third time, and unable to walk, he steadfastly remained in the dangerously exposed area, deploying his men to more tenable position and supervising the evacuation of casualties. Only when assured of the safety of his men did he allow himself to be evacuated. We have General James Livingston, New Orleans.

GENERAL LIVINGSTON: I must tell you, first of all, I was born in Georgia but I now live in the great city of New Orleans in the great state of Louisiana. So, welcome to Louisiana and I hope you have a great stay in this great city.

Senator Goldwater said, "We cannot allow the American flag to be shot at anywhere on earth if we are to retain our respect and prestige". We certainly should not allow it to be shot at here at home. The flag, our flag, is that one symbol which represents to the world the commitment of our great country to freedom. When our flag is present, people throughout the world, both friends and foes, recognize this flag may have been tarnished at times in our history, but even tarnished it represents a people, a people who will not compromise under any circumstance. Americans have never waved a white flag but we will wave the red white and blue flag until the Congress returns to us the right to protect the greatest symbol of freedom on this planet. Old Glory ignited a fire in the hearts of our patriots. Burning the flag will help put that fire out. Today, veterans, friends of veterans, let us stand together and send a message. It is time to fix this problem! It is time to quit making excuses! And let's insure that those who have defended the flag in combat, don't have to defend the flag, our flag, on the streets of this great homeland!

GENERAL BRADY: These military men know that military weakness will guarantee war and it will guarantee defeat. Moral weakness will guarantee the defeat of democracy. Burning the American flag is a sign of moral weakness in an individual. To legalize the burning of the American flag is the sign of moral weakness in America. When we have lost the symbol of our liberty, how long will it be before we lose the substance of our liberty?

There's a doctrine on grace and it teaches that there's a treasure chest and it's filled with grace. It was filled by the sacrifices of Jesus and the Saints and it's available to all of us to help us in our struggles with life. We can all draw from the treasure chest of grace through no particular merits of our own but simply because of God's love for us. Our freedom is like grace, a treasure chest. It was filled by the sacrifices of our great heroes and patriots, by our veterans, by our POWs, by our MIAs, by the saviors of Private Ryan. We all draw from the treasure chest of freedom, often through no particular merits of our own, but simply because of their love for us. The chest of grace is inexhaustible because it comes from God. Not so the chest of freedom, it must continuously be replenished by our sacrifices, by growing and nurturing patriots who are the source of all our freedom. Remembrance is precious, but it's what we resolve to do about those remembrances that is priceless. It's what we do that replenishes the chest of freedom. I don't think there's anything that we can do to show our resolve to preserve what they died for more so than by flying our flag.

So, I ask you, in closing, to fly your flag. Fly Old Glory from your houses, from your businesses, from your schools, and fly it next to the crosses or the sacred symbols in your churches. Both remind us of salvation, one of our soul and the other of our freedom. Captain Miller's last words to Private Ryan, his very death rattle, was simply, "Earn this". Our flag wasn't earned to be burned. I said that our quest for the flag was a search for the answer to

Private Ryan's question. Part of the answer will be: when the Senate returns to the people the right to protect our flag. And I hope that you will all write to your senators.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I would like each and every one of you to render the proper respect to these distinct gentlemen who served their country in need. We have been very fortunate to have them with us here.

There's no one person at this convention who does not know of The American Legion's steadfast and untiring efforts to see that the American flag is protected from desecration. Going on nine years since the stunning Supreme Court decision, Legionnaires have reaffirmed their commitment for a Constitutional Amendment to protect Old Glory at each National Convention. The support for the amendment is broad-based. Now it is a very special honor and a distinct pleasure for me to present to the delegates of this convention, a man of God and a true friend of The American Legion, but most of all of the American flag. I first met him three months ago in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I was so impressed and inspired by his message. I am so very pleased that he is able to be here with us this morning through his busy schedule as he hails from this city where he teaches the word of God at the Greater St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church. Welcome Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr.

**Address: Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr.  
Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship  
New Orleans, Louisiana**

This is a great honor for me to share with you today in this great 80th Annual Convention of The American Legion. I'm excited about being here. I really am because I admire what you are doing. I enjoyed meeting your National Commander three months ago. I was so impressed with him that I wanted him to come and preach at our church. He is a great, gifted man and I thank God for him.

I'm glad to be a part of this great day because I believe that we must take pride in what is uniquely ours. I believe that when we look at our flag that represents the symbol of truth that is so necessary for us today to understand who we really are, what we are all about. So, to me, that is important, the symbol of truth. The Bible says "Know the truth. The truth will make you free." Once you really understand what freedom is all about, you realize that you have to be hooked to something in order to be free. If you're not hooked to anything, you're not really free. I know that there are people that say "just let me do what I want to do, let me say what I want to say", but it's just like allowing someone in an automobile who says "I just want to drive like I want to drive, if I want to drive 200 miles an hour, let me drive 200 miles an hour, it's my car, it's my life." But if that person does that, he is going to end up around a tree, he is going to end up around something, he is going to lose his life because he thinks that's what freedom is all about. But, no, freedom lets you know that you must be hooked to something. And I'm thankful in America that I'm hooked to the flag. We cannot allow the evil powers of this world to dictate to us that this freedom that has been given to us by those that gave their life, who gave their blood for our freedom, we cannot allow anyone to trample upon that. I want to thank you for standing up. I thank God for Americans who are standing up, who appreciate what is happening as it relates to the flag.

The Bible, in Isaiah 1:17 says "Learn to do well". You don't have to learn to do bad. That's just going to come automatically! Nobody has to teach you how to do bad things. It's just there. It's just in you. But it takes a certain kind of discipline to do well. There are three major ingredients, if you're going to do well, and if we're going to teach others to do well.

First of all, there has to be a pattern. There has to be a role model. There has to be something that we can look at, something that we believe in, to say this is the role model, this is the pattern. I thank God that here in America that our flag is a great pattern, it's a great symbol. It lets us know who we are. We have to teach our young people: "yes, we respect our pattern" because if we don't have a pattern, then we destroy our future. And we cannot afford to destroy our future.

The second key that is very important is the fact that if we're going to learn to do well, then there must be a power greater than us. I believe that there is a power greater than I am that allows me to respect God. And when I respect God, I respect myself. And then when I respect myself, I respect others. And when I respect God, when I respect myself, when I respect others, then I'm going to respect my flag. So, we have to teach people to store up the power that is within them. To understand "look what we have, how great it is". We cannot allow it to be destroyed. Because this power within us lets us know that we must respect those things that are good for us, the things that are right, the things that are pure, the things that hold value and certainly all they have gone through.

I look around at this great gathering, at this great Convention, and think what many people have gone through so that we could have the right to raise our flag. One song writer said "the greatest love of all, it's inside of me". That's where the greatest love is, that's where the greatest power is. It's inside of me. And that song goes on to say "I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadow". I'll walk in somebody's sunshine but not in their shadow. Because a shadow represents darkness. A shadow represents something that is not real. In fact, a shadow can scare you. So, I don't want to walk in a shadow, but I want to look at lives that are full of sunshine, people that have accomplished things in their lives. Because if I fail or if I succeed, one thing that you cannot take, you cannot take this dignity away from me, because the greatest love of all is inside of me. But I have to know who I am in order to understand that. And it's unfortunate that there are some people who don't know who they are. And I pray to God that Senators, I pray to God that Representatives know who they are because you have to know who you are. And if you're going to represent America, then we have to understand how important it is.

Finally, if I am going to learn to do well, I must practice. In other words, I must do well. That's why I'm here today, because I'm excited about what you are doing. You're not laying in the background and keeping your mouth closed as it relates to the flag. "Well, let's forget about it. It doesn't seem like people want to do anything about it. They seem quiet about it." But you have an army that is so strong and you better believe you've got some people out there who believe just like you believe. And I'm one who believes just like you believe. And that's why we have to stand strong. Whenever you feel like you're going to get discouraged and about to give up, you take strength today and you hold on and you hold out. The race is not given to the swift nor the battle to the strong. It's given to the one who endures to the end. I believe today that here at The American Legion Convention that you're going to endure to the end. We're going to stand here because we're going to win this battle. We're not going to lose because this flag is our flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: A few weeks ago, I sent a letter to every American Legion Post, to the Post Commander, asking them to take part in a project we called "One Million Post Cards to Victory". I asked them to get hundreds of post cards in support for the flag amendment, fill them out and mail them to their senators, and then report to me here at the Convention the number mailed. Our goal is to send one post card to the Senate for every man and woman who has died in defense of our great country since 1776.

One million post cards represents a million people who died serving under the greatest banner of freedom this world has ever known.

This morning, I was sitting in my office and at 7:45 a.m., the first report came in from Post 273 in Grand Marsh, Wisconsin, a small town, less than 300 people. Grand Marsh is a small number but big in support of the flag. Commander Bernie Polezynski told me his 28 member post has mailed 95 post cards to Senator Feingold and he said that they are not done yet. Even though they got all the adults in Grand Marsh, they are ready to spread out to the surrounding towns and villages. The calls are coming in from all over this great nation of ours. I know that you'll want to give your big round of applause to Commander Bernie and Post 273 for being the first in the nation to report its one million post cards to victory. Make sure post reports are in. Ask your Commander to call the Commander center here at New Orleans, 1-888-801-3506. Let me know how many post cards you've mailed in Project One Million Post Cards to Victory.

Our next speaker is the Pentagon's coordinator of activities related to investigating the nature and causes of Gulf War illness. He has worked with The American Legion's Persian Gulf Initiative, communicating the findings of his investigation directly to veterans. He's an economist, who holds a bachelor's degree in economics and education from New York University, as well as master's and doctorate degrees in economics from Syracuse University. He has worked with and within the Department of Defense for most of his distinguished career. Welcome the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Defense for Gulf War Illnesses, Dr. Bernard Rostker.

**Address: Dr. Bernard Rostker  
Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses  
Department of Defense**

Last March at our Washington Conference, I spoke to you about a very important topic, the health of the men and women who protected us all by their service in the armed forces. My remarks centered around the question: could the unexplained illnesses affecting many of those who served in the Gulf be the result of exposure to depleted uranium or DU? I told you then that the best answer I could give you was based on three things. Testing conducted prior to fielding depleted uranium, testing after the war of the environment on the battlefields of Kuwait, and medical research and monitoring conducted after the war of those we know who have injuries. The best current information suggests that the actual exposure to depleted uranium during the Gulf War was not medically significant. Another interpretation of this statement was suggested in a recent letter to me by The American Legion's Persian Gulf Task Force. And let me quote that letter. "The American Legion is waiting the completion of the ongoing research agenda before it will concur with definitive statements regarding the cause of Gulf War Illnesses. We, The American Legion, acknowledge, however, that the available scientific evidence weighs against DU as a likely risk factor for Gulf War Illnesses." I certainly concur in the position of The American Legion, both that research should go on and what available scientific evidence is telling us.

Today, I would like to clear up any misconceptions concerning what I meant when I said that exposure to DU was not medically significant and what medical science has been telling us. But before that, I'd like to reiterate another conclusion I spoke about in Washington, namely, that the use of DU during the Gulf War undoubtedly saved thousands of American lives. As I noted in March, the soldiers on the battlefield who should have been

most concerned about depleted uranium during the Gulf War were the Iraqi soldiers, not because it might result in a long term illness, but because their tanks and army personnel carriers provided them no protection from our DU munitions. DU rounds ripped through their tanks and guns like a hot knife through butter, and totally, and I mean totally, protected American troops that were shielded with depleted uranium armor. There was no incidence in which DU armor on any of our tanks was breached by Iraqi shells. DU did have an effect on the battlefield. Just ask any American tanker if he would want to face the Republican Guard in battle without every advantage we can provide him, including DU shielding and DU sabot rounds.

For the past several months, it has become clear that there remains confusion about several issues concerning depleted uranium exposure and dose. There are two points that I want to make clear that may help to address this confusion. First, in assessing DU, it is important to understand the distinction that medical toxicologists and environmental health experts make concerning the concepts of exposure and dose. Or, as medical science has long known, the dose makes the poison. Second, I'd like to share with you the overwhelming consensus concerning DU by the medical review groups that have been looking into this issue for a number of years.

First, what is meant by exposure and dose and why are these concepts important? My office recently published our first environmental exposure report on depleted uranium in the Gulf. This report is available by calling my office at 800-497-6261 or over the Internet. Also our booth is set up at the Sheraton Hotel for this Convention. In the report, we estimate the health risk from depleted uranium by using a health risk assessment methodology modeled on one developed by the National Academy of Sciences. It consists of four steps.

- Hazard identification or exposure
- Toxicity assessment
- Dose assessment
- Risk characterization

Clearly, just because a person may have been exposed to a substance does not mean he or she received a dose that will prove to adversely affect their health. A dose is measured in terms of quantity, frequency and length of exposure. Not all doses are medically significant. We need to know the dose and toxicity of the substance to determine if exposure or dose presents a medical risk.

By way of comparison, let me use lead as an example. Many of you know that we are completely remodeling the Pentagon. One of the first tasks is to identify lead paint before it's removed. If, during a visit to the Pentagon, you were briefly exposed to dust from lead paint being removed, you would not immediately assume that you were going to have lead poisoning. It all depends on the quantity, frequency and length of exposure or the dose you would receive over time. Nevertheless, we insist on strict environmental limits to lead exposure and dosage. The concept is called 'ALARA'. It stands for 'as low as reasonably achievable'. Much is the same for Depleted Uranium. And here's what we know about DU.

First in terms of hazard identification, we group the exposures during and after the Gulf War into three levels based on the activity of the soldiers involved and the resulting potential for direct contact with depleted uranium dust. These three levels provide a prioritization approach and I'll describe that in a moment.

Second, in terms of dose assessment, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, CHPPM, has reviewed existing test data on depleted uranium exposure to develop dose estimates for the highest level of exposure. To estimate the intake that

amount of DU taken into the body by inhalation, CHPPM developed a worst case estimate, which is twice as large as any known exposure in the Gulf. The worst case, as it turns out, provides a dose that is the same as living in the United States for three years and importantly is less than one-fifth the annual dose limits allowed by the nuclear regulatory commission for industrial workers. Most medical experts agree that DU heavy metal toxicity is the primary health concern, not DU's radiological hazard.

And this leads us to the next topic, toxicity assessment and risk characterization. Work continues on two fronts. Several organizations have reviewed the existing medical literature on depleted uranium and a much more voluminous literature on natural uranium. In addition, the VA has been monitoring of 33 soldiers who were the most exposed to DU. Here is a sample of what these various reviews have been telling us. First, from the VA in their 1997 Annual Report to Congress published last March, "preliminary results from clinical follow-up studies at the VA in Baltimore of 33 Gulf War with embedded DU fragments show neither evidence of renal damage nor any other long term consequences to date". This clinical study complements two important animal toxicological studies conducted by the Armed Forces Radio-biological Research Institute that examined cancer and non-cancer endpoints in laboratory animals with embedded DU. And I should say only 16 soldiers during the Gulf War received wounds with embedded DU. From the National Institute of Health published in 1994 in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, "the symptoms reported among the Persian Gulf veterans do not appear to be related to heavy metal uranium." From the President's Advisory Committee report of 1996, "it is unlikely that health affects reported by Gulf War veterans today are the result of exposure to DU during the gulf war." And finally, from the Independent Consultants Report prepared for the Senate Veterans Committee Report and released just last week, Dr. Melissa McDermott, the physician who is caring for those who have DU wounds, wrote "because the radioactivity of DU is very low, the chemical toxicity of DU may be the most significant contributor of human health risk. Other heavy metals such as lead, chromium, tungsten and natural uranium are also chemically toxic." In summary, Dr. McDermott writes, "while DU is a radiological hazard, it's relative low radioactivity level, the low likelihood of prolonged duration of exposure except for those groups with retained metal fragments, suggest that a significant cancer risk for DU exposure is small."

To assess the health of Gulf War veterans exposed to DU, we have also information from medical evaluation of those that we know have been most heavily exposed. This is a unique source. For friendly fire incidents enables us to evaluate these exposures directly. From Dr. McDermott, "since 1993, the Department of Veterans Affairs has been monitoring 33 vets who were seriously injured by friendly fire incidents involving depleted uranium. These veterans although they continue to have medical problems, especially problems related to physical injuries they received during friendly fire incidents, about half of this group still has depleted uranium fragments in their bodies. Those with higher than normal levels of uranium in their urine since monitoring began in 1993 have embedded DU fragments." These veterans are being followed very carefully and a number of different medical tests are being done to determine if the depleted uranium fragments are causing any health problems. The veterans being followed who were in friendly fire incidents but who did not receive depleted uranium fragments, generally speaking, have not shown higher than normal levels of uranium in their urine. For the 33 veterans in the program, tests for kidney functions have all been normal. In addition, the reproductive health of this group appears



to be normal in that all babies fathered by these veterans between 1991 and 1997 have no observable birth defects.

This last July, the DoD and VA instituted a medical follow-up program to evaluate the remaining veterans who received the largest dosage during the Gulf War, some 300 additional soldiers. The follow-up program is aimed at insuring that Gulf War veterans with higher than normal levels of uranium in their body are identified and given appropriate monitoring and treatment. The follow-up will be extended in phases. Should any health problems be detected, there will be opportunities for medical follow-up with a local primary care physician. The staff of the Baltimore VA is available for consultations. And let me make this perfectly clear, while we are focusing on soldiers with the highest levels, highest exposure to DU, the implementation directive from the VA states, "if the veterans were not identified by the DoD as a possible DU exposure, but of a high level of concern after consultation by DoD or VA, a DU protocol examination will be completed." DoD and VA plans to evaluate the tests, results and will then determine if further testing is warranted.

Let me raise one final point, The American Legion has been the leader in pressing the Department of Defense to improve our DU training. Deputy Secretary of Defense ordered a thorough review and asked me to monitor this training. After the first of the fiscal year, I will be sending field teams to visit training sites to determine if the training is up to par. The Deputy Secretary of Defense has asked me to be proactive to ensure that all of our soldiers receive the required training for dealing with DU in peace time and in war. Again, in closing, let me say that I concur with the position taken by our organizations. Specifically, The American Legion is awaiting the completion of the ongoing research before it will concur with definitive statements regarding the cause of Gulf War illnesses. We, The American Legion, acknowledge however that the available scientific evidence weighs against DU as a risk factor for Gulf War illness.

...At this time, the Delegates viewed a video.

**NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN:** When veterans rise to high levels of business, there is seldom a mention of their veteran status in the news media. Yet, Legionnaires know our fellow veterans are making a difference in businesses, government and hometowns everywhere. Today, a very special, successful veteran is joining us as our next guest here in New Orleans. He's best known for setting industry standards with innovative use of technology and service excellence. He is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of a \$16 billion dollar global transportation and logistics holding company. The one most recognized is Federal Express. He also is co-chairman of the national World War II Memorial Committee. Please welcome a man who served four years in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War—and one of the newest members of The American Legion—the Chairman of FDX Corporation, Fred Smith.

**Address: Frederick W. Smith**  
**Chairman, President and CEO - Federal Express Corporation**  
**Co-Chairman - World War II Memorial**

Last year, I accepted the honor of being the National Co-Chairman of the World War II Memorial Campaign to serve along with the National Campaign Chairman, former Senator, Senate Majority Leader and Presidential candidate, Bob Dole. I'm sure you will agree it is a very worthwhile national endeavor. Our task is to raise sufficient funds from the private sector to build a lasting tribute to the World War II generation and place this

memorial on the national mall in Washington, D.C. I should point out that while Senator Dole is the Chairman and I am the Co-Chairman of the campaign, most of the real hard day to day work is done by a dedicated group of men and women in the World War II Memorial staff group. And in charge of that is the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, General John Herrling of the U.S. Army Retired, who's here with me on the stage.

Now, I accepted this challenge for many reasons and I can assure you with 175,000 employees around the world, I've got plenty to do everyday. But when Senator Dole—a man who served this country honorably and paid a tremendous personal sacrifice during World War II—when he asked me to do this, I really did not see how I could fail to respond. From a very personal standpoint, my family was heavily involved in World War II. My father was a commander in the U.S. Navy and passed away in 1948. My stepfather was a fighter pilot in the 14th Air Force in China during the war. My uncle, Sam, was in an antitank unit in Europe. My uncle, Arthur, was an infantry man on New Guinea. And my uncle, Bill, was a Navy radio operator on torpedo bombers. So, from a personal standpoint, it did not seem to me that I could fail to honor their memory and all of them are now gone. But I feel strongly that our nation owes those relatives of mine and the many millions of others who served in World War II an appropriate tribute.

As a former marine and a Vietnam veteran, I think I understand the nature and magnitude of the sacrifices made by service men and women and their families during war and peace. I believe strongly that the recognition of those sacrifices is important to both those who served and probably even more important to the education of future generations. But the more involved in the campaign I became, the more I realized the enormity of the responsibility that I'd accepted. The World War II Memorial will actually pay tribute to an entire generation of men and women, those who fought on the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific and those who built and maintained the greatest arsenal of democracy that humankind had ever known. But there's something else involved in the commemoration of the World War II era that is an even larger issue and more important for subsequent generations to see and understand.

This memorial will stand forever as a tribute to the values and ideals that made our United States of America the greatest country in the world. It will be a testament to all of the things that our country stands for, for the greater good over evil, for freedom and individual rights over tyranny and for liberty over dictatorship. The memorial will represent, I believe, the spirit and collective will of an entire people. Never before or since has our country been so united and dedicated to achieving a common goal. Subsequent generations of Americans, those who fought in Korea and Vietnam, can now walk the National Mall in Washington and see firsthand the symbols of the nation's gratitude carved in metal and stone for all time. These veterans and their families have achieved a richly deserved measure of closure and healing from the Korean and Vietnam War Memorials. I know, certainly, I have. Future generations will know and recognize the sacrifices made by the brave men and women who served and fought in those conflicts. However, you will not find, currently, any tangible evidence or recognition of the debt owed to the veterans and families of the World War II generation on our National Mall. Probably this was because when World War II ended, these citizen soldiers of 1940s America, these heroes came home from the battlefields, put their uniforms in the attic, carefully places the pictures of proud men and women in uniform on the piano or mantle and returned to the business of rebuilding their lives and their country. They returned to the mills and the factories and began to build new homes and families. I

think the World War II generation almost uniquely asked for no tribute or glory other than the simple right to begin to enjoy the freedoms they had won for themselves and with our allies for the entire world. Our nation clearly emerged from that war changed forever. Everyday all around us, we can see the fruits of these enormous sacrifices, relative peace, freedom and prosperity unparalleled in the world. We, as a nation, owe a debt to these heroes that can, I'm sure you'll agree, never be adequately repaid. All we can do is commemorate these events and hope that future generations to come somehow will learn to appreciate and admire what these courageous men and women sacrificed on their behalf. At the same time, we pray that our children and their children will never have to choose between life and death on the battlefield.

Sadly, each year, we lose more World War II veterans than were killed in action during the entire four years of the war. A good example of that are the five relatives of mine that I listed at the onset of this talk. Hundreds of thousands of these citizens will never see their achievements memorialized on the National Mall unless we raise the funds necessary to begin construction as soon as possible. I would imagine the question in many of your minds was the same that was in mine when Senator Dole asked me to do this. Why in the world did it take so long to do this? It's a good question and quite frankly, it has no simple answer. I can only give you my personal opinion. World War II was and it remains for many a great scar much like a grievous scar on your body. But this scar is on the heart and soul of our nation. It was won with pride and honor at the cost of many tens of thousands of American lives. But it's healed. Like most things, when you live with it for so long and it's so close to you, after a time, you don't see it anymore.

World War II was so close to every family in America and so much a part of the fabric of our daily lives that perhaps we just didn't see it anymore. Hopefully, as a result of this effort, the entire country is seeing it now. And we're going to do something about it. We're going to correct an oversight and we're going to do it right. The World War II Memorial will be located on the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument in a place of honor on the axis of the Avenue of Democracy. But this memorial must be America's memorial. It cannot belong to only a few who can donate huge sums of money although we very much need and appreciate such large contributions. Each stone and trowel full of mortar must equally represent the 10 to 20 dollar donation from a World War II widow on a fixed income and the 2 million dollar donation from a major American corporation. It took all Americans on the home front and the battlefields to fight and win World War II. And it will take all Americans to build this beautiful memorial befitting the great sacrifices of World War II. With this in mind, I came to you here today to ask you to support your leadership and their renewed efforts to raise funds on behalf of the World War II Memorial Project.

Members of The American Legion have already contributed more than one million dollars to the campaign and I know that this was done at the same time you were conducting a major campaign for the Citizen's Flag Alliance. Your support to these levels is even more admirable when put in that perspective. For this effort we are very grateful but it will take much more to achieve our goal of breaking ground on Veterans Day of the year 2000. By law, we must have all the funds in the bank before we can begin construction. That estimated figure now stands at 100 million dollars. To date, our campaign has raised over 28 million dollars and this has been done in about a year and a half. This breaks all kinds of records when compared to the private funds used to build say, the Vietnam, the Korean or the FDR Memorials. I think you'll agree, it's going to take an enormous effort to raise

another 72 million dollars in two years. For this, we need your help. We need the same kind of unity and complete dedication that it took to win World War II. This country did it before and we can do it again, but only if the entire country is concerned and involved enough to mobilize as it did 57 years ago in support of a common cause. On behalf of our Chairman, Senator Bob Dole, and the entire World War II Memorial Campaign staff, and on behalf of the 7 million living World War II veterans, I ask you to do all you can to support this very worthwhile and long, long overdue project. My faith in this country of ours and in the generosity of its people tells me we can make this happen. And together we will make it happen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I believe the Department Commander of the Volunteer state would like to come forward with a presentation, I believe.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER PERRY ROBERTS: I know many of you are saying "Why didn't he join earlier?" No one asked him. I'm proud to say that he's joining Post 1 in Memphis, Tennessee. Mr. Smith, we welcome you with open arms. We also present him a lifetime membership in Post 1 in Memphis, Tennessee. Here, also, is his cap, which, I'm sure, he's going to wear with much pride. And last, but not least, the Volunteer State, the great state of Tennessee, proudly presents from The American Legion \$5,000 to the World War II Memorial.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: What a wonderful donation from the proud Legionnaires of Tennessee. Are there any other posts that might want to make a donation to this worthwhile cause? I want to be alive and you want to be alive when this memorial is built.

FANG A. WONG, New York: I'm the adjutant of Lieutenant Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post 1291 of the great Department of New York. I'm very honored to make this presentation. Just a short year ago in Orlando, for our 79th National Convention, we heard Senator Bob Dole talk to us about the World War II Memorial. At that time, we knew that this particular project was long overdue. Earlier this year, my post adopted a resolution. The resolution is to sponsor all our post's active World War II veterans and all our post charter members to be charter members of the World War II Memorial Society. The resolution allows our post to donate on behalf of each one of our eligible members \$35.00 so that they could be included as charter members of the World War II Memorial Society. We have four reasons to do this.

- To help build the World War II Memorial
- To record the contributions and sacrifices of those American soldiers of Chinese ancestry who helped win World War II
- To show our deepest gratitude and respect to you World War II wonderful veterans who are still kicking and living
- To show our continued support to our national organization and also to the great Department of New York.

So, for those reasons, I'm extremely proud represent Lieutenant B. R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post 1291, from the great Department of New York to present you, Commander, and you, Chairman, a check of \$20,105 representing 519 eligible members from my Post.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Are there any other donations?

MR. ROBERT F. WOODRUFF, Georgia: The Legionnaires of the great state of Georgia, in a quick effort to gather funds for this great endeavor. We gathered up \$2,000 toward the cause, and this is just a seed that's going to plant a garden.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Mr. Smith, it sounds to me that the men and women of The American Legion surely are ready to make a good commitment to you and the World War II Memorial, because it's truly justified to be built.

I would like to ask the National Chaplain to please come forward.

**Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation  
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine  
National Commander**

It has been a pleasure to have served this past year with a man who lives a life for "God and for Country." Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart of Pennsylvania, is a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran of World War II. For 38 years he has been a member of The American Legion Wallace Willard Keller Post 242 in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. It is with great pleasure that I present to the Rev. Eisenhart a Certificate of Appreciation for his caring and devoted service to The American Legion. The Certificate reads: Certificate of appreciation, presented to the Reverend Henry E. Eisenhart, appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion, 1997-1998. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN EISENHART: With a deep sense of humility, and with a heartfelt gratitude to the National Commander, the National Adjutant, and fellow Legionnaires, I accept this certificate of appreciation. Spiritually, it was a most enriching and rewarding year. Coupled with an unforgettable and enlightening experience, I will be forever grateful for the distinct privilege and tremendous honor of serving as National Chaplain of The American Legion from the Department of Pennsylvania.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The next order of business is to recognize Orlando, Florida for hosting the 79th National Convention of The American Legion. Of course, I hold a special place in my heart for Orlando—the city where the delegates elected me to serve as National Commander. To help with this order of business I'd like to call upon immediate Past National Commander Joe Frank of Missouri.

**Presentation: Plaque of Appreciation  
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri  
Past National Commander**

I'm extremely honored to be back on the lectern again and the platform. It looks like we're downsizing a little bit here. I was looking for my lectern and I couldn't find that but things will go on. It gives me great pleasure and honor to present this plaque on behalf of The American Legion National Organization. It reads: "The American Legion in appreciation of the hospitality of the city of Orlando and commemorating the 79th Annual National Convention of The American Legion of Orlando, Florida 1997. Signed by, then National Commander Joseph J. Frank and Robert Spanogle, Adjutant, Robert J. Proctor, President, The American Legion Convention Corporation."

MR. PROCTOR: It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to stand before you today to accept this award on behalf of 120,000 members of the Florida American Legion, the citizens of Orlando, and Mayor Hood. On my return to Orlando, I will present this plaque and it will be in City Hall in Orlando. We were indeed honored and privileged to host the 79th National Convention. I hope you enjoyed yourself, because we enjoyed having you.

At this time, I'd like to have my fellow Legionnaires please stand from the great state of Florida, because without their help, this wasn't possible.

**Report: National Commander's Report to the Convention**  
**Anthony G. Jordan, Maine**  
**National Commander**

I want to introduce some people who have stuck by this Commander all year long. First, I want to introduce the First Lady of The American Legion, my wife Claudette, our daughter Stephanie, our daughter Renee, our son Mark, my daughter Kimberly, her husband John, and a month old grandson that we love. I hope to have a future son-in-law in this guy right here, Nate. Last but not least, Kevin, he's the next to the oldest son. I have a brother here somewhere acting as aide, his wife, my sister-in-law, Eileen.

From the day I was elected your Commander, and presented testimony in Congress to this very day here in New Orleans, serving as your National Commander, has been fun and rewarding because of each and every one of you. It is truly an unforgettable experience, the greatest experience of my life. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your National Commander. But more than anything, serving as your National Commander, I honestly believe, has strengthened me. Maybe there's three ways and three outstanding beliefs that I could share with you. One, the American way of life is the best. I've learned that. Our troops are the world's finest, the cream of the crop, everywhere this National Commander has gone. I also realize that The American Legion, supported by the Auxiliary and the Sons is the finest organization you can belong to. The greatness of this organization is a reflection of your dedication to God and to Country. You are The American Legion. Everywhere this Commander went, I represented you with pride, dignity, dedication and respect for those founding ideals of a great organization.

I sat across the table from Vietnamese government officials and I told them to their face that they must do more to provide the fullest possible accounting of our missing and our POW and MIAs. I stood in the breach separating the democracy from tyranny, between the two Koreas, and informed our troops in the DMZ that we are so proud of them. I can remember standing there as if it was today, with my wife, my aide, the National President and her husband. What a feeling, what a class act, what troops we have that serve us on the DMZ. What a feeling it is to be there. Be proud of your troops. They're the greatest.

After being elected National Commander in Orlando last year, I issued a call, a call for change. I dealt with change all year long and today I congratulate you on meeting that challenge of change. I've seen it everywhere I've gone, all over this great country of ours. You are willing to sacrifice, willing to make a positive change in this great nation. But more so, it starts with The American Legion at the post level. That's where it counts, that's where the changes are made. The changes aren't on a national level. They start at the post level. We have done a great job during my term. For 80 years, Legionnaires have done what I believe they were set out to do. My term was no different because we live by the same motto that they did years ago, we live by the same motto as I believe many of you learned when you served the military. We will not fail those whom we serve.

Twelve months in office, that doesn't seem possible. Not one month went by that I felt that The American Legion didn't make a difference. We make an impression on the ripples across this great nation of ours. We're making an impact. We affect people's lives as The American Legion makes a difference, positive changes. And we've had fun. It's been

enjoyable. And it all started back in September. And I want to share some of these months as they've gone by.

We helped to change the perception of the Land Mine Treaty in September. If the United States had abandoned land mines our troops between the two Koreas and elsewhere would have become more vulnerable to attack. Polls showed that two-thirds of the nation supported the treaty even though Russia, China, and North Korea didn't want any part of it. Thanks in part to the influence of The American Legion, the administration backed away from a land mine treaty. We still have clout, I believe where it counts.

In October, we helped to change the North Korean perspective on the POW and the MIA issue. North Koreans entered into a joint field operation to recover the remains of American POWs and MIAs. A representative of The American Legion went to Panmunjom for a repatriation ceremony. This was not the same North Korea that many of you in this room know, believe me. Signs of change came and can come, come from unlikely places. Three days before my Far East trip, something unprecedented happened in Washington. For the first time, a senior North Korean official held talks with his American counterparts at the State Department. An exchange of diplomatic and cooperation on accounting of the Americans POW and the MIAs were on the agenda for the first time. That's a change that we can live with.

In November of '97 our Persian Gulf initiative in Washington helped to change the way our government deals with sick Gulf War veterans. The administration created a permanent statutory program that would allow sick Gulf War veterans to receive treatment for their ailments. Under the new program, veterans needed proof that chemical or biological exposures caused their problems. This policy makes sense. When a healthy service man or woman comes home in bad shape along with the thousands of others, it doesn't take Colombo to figure out that their illnesses are service-connected. It sets aside, in addition, \$15 million for scientific research into what makes them sick. Further improvements in the processing of Gulf War illnesses claims were implemented in January and February, among them, training claims, processors insuring clear-cut guidance on the handling of the each of them, decentralizing the process to the 58 regional offices. In other words, we got what we wanted, change in the way Gulf War veterans are treated. I spoke all year long saying how do you figure this out? We ask young men and women to go to the Persian Gulf, put their lives on the line and they come home sick and the government felt they didn't have an obligation? Hog wash! I said that all year long, it's baloney! Thanks to you, thanks to The American Legion there will be no repeat of Agent Orange horror stories either. When it comes to service connected illnesses, The American Legion will hold our leaders accountable for insuring that our troops are taken care of. There's no compromise. That's why I was so delighted to see our GI Bill of Health move closer to reality this year.

By January, Representative Bob Stump from Arizona and Representative Bill Thomas of California, I believe, cleared the way for a test of the key provisions of the GI Bill of Health, allowing VA medical centers to except veterans Medicare payments. It will be awhile before the whole GI Bill of Health becomes a reality. But this test proves that we're on the right track in The American Legion, more than any other veterans organization that you can belong to. The American Legion again takes the lead. Those who sacrificed for freedom in our nation's armed forces deserve access to health care in a system set up to serve them. Your American Legion is changing the way veterans health care is provided. Change in that area, I believe, is long overdue.

I want to reflect on something that happened in December of 1997 and it's about Arlington. Boy, that's a tough one. When it appeared that someone was unjustly buried in Arlington National Cemetery, I called for an immediate Congressional investigation. I called for the investigation after I asked God to calm me down just a little bit because I was in the Far East trip at the time and the news hit me and hit me hard. Representative Terry Everett of Alabama grabbed the bull by the horns, as I like to say, and as a result the Army changed the way it handles waivers for burial in our nation's most hallowed ground. No disrespect to Ambassador Larry Lawrence, whose politics had nothing to do with his body being relocated from Arlington. The American Legion position is very clear about that. To allow one person to be buried in Arlington fraudulently dishonors the memory of those who are buried in Arlington rightfully.

In January, we orchestrated a change in the foolhardy federal policy denying per diem to state veterans homes under a short-lived policy. The VA wanted to provide either per diem or Medicare, not both. At the Orlando convention, delegates adopted a resolution opposing this policy, if you remember. And officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I'm delighted to report, changed the policy. Now, state homes get their per diem at the same time eligible veterans in those homes receive Medicare. Once again, our voice was heard in Washington. And veterans in state nursing home have not only the VA to thank, they also have you, the men and women of The American Legion to thank.

In February, we changed the scope of veterans employment opportunities, all with our partnership with Hire Quality. This created a nation-wide pipeline of jobs for America's newest wartime veterans. After they get settled into their new jobs, those veterans who are not members of The American Legion before they received employment and assistance, had good reason to join The American Legion afterwards.

In March, we scored a victory for the veterans who used today's GI Bill. The administration's budget called for long overdue increase in Montgomery GI Bill funding and Congress agreed.

In April, members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee pulled a fast one on us. They slid \$17 billion into the highway construction bill. The money came from health care for veterans with smoking related illnesses related to the military service. And as soon as I found out about this, got a hold of Senator McCain and others, who tried to put some of the money back. This is an issue that The American Legion will not let just fade away. Working together, we as Legionnaires will change a perspective in Congress that they can short change sick veterans without feeling our heart. Baloney!

In May, we launched a *Show Your Colors, America!* campaign across this great country of ours. It was an American campaign, I call it, through encouraging American's to fly the American flag, fly Old Glory, help to change the ridiculous notion that's out there that patriotism is only for patriots. Our nation's flag flies from porches, flies from businesses, flies everywhere that it's never flown before. This message is clear: Americans love their flag. Americans will not stand for the legal desecration of that which the blood of patriots sanctify.

In June, Congress showed a keen understanding of what we've been saying for years, that our military cannot do more with less. This was indeed a refreshing change for this Commander. The Senate passed an amendment in June making it harder for the administration to close bases. It was an amendment to the Pentagon's \$270 billion spending bill. Longer and more frequent deployments poise a non-win situation for our national interests. A non-win situation for those who serve.



In July, the flag protection amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 40, cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee. And as soon as that committee approved the bill, we saw a change in our opposition. The ACLU and others decided to take the amendment and you more seriously. They started running ads against the amendment in key states that I traveled and they urged newspapers to run negative editorials. Your contacts with members of Congress made a difference. Keep it up and I know this senate will pass this flag protection constitutional amendment. There is no question about it. Send this issue back to where I've been saying all year, send it back to the American people. Let them decide on the ratification of this process.

I represented you in Bosnia recently, in August. It was very successful, I think changing the perspective of The American Legion among some of our younger veterans to whom I spoke. When I was in Bosnia, I had General Brooks from my staff with me. What a great man to take. When I went to Bosnia, I had no idea what I was going to see. But, I wore myself out signing *American Legion Magazines* that were visible all over Bosnia, stacks of them. While they were speaking and briefing me, I'm signing Legion magazines. Signed up new members as well. I think it's important for you to know how visible we are. And if they didn't belong, you know how they knew about The American Legion? From their fathers and grandfathers and relatives. We're visible, ladies and gentlemen, and I thank you for allowing us to be visible in Bosnia by sending the magazine. When later these troops come home, please welcome them back, these most recent veterans. Fit them into your post and, more than that, make them part of the community, as your post should be. I've always said you must adapt your post to the community in which you serve. They must see us as Legionnaires, not as a bunch of old men. Because we make a difference.

They, too, are concerned about our flag. They, too, are concerned about health care. Considering we need younger veterans to keep this organization going, we must reach out as we've done for many, many years. You know we help veterans. We reach in our pockets to pay dues and we reach in our pockets to help with the emergency fund. We reach because we care. We always have a helping hand. But I ask you to get these most recent veterans involved. Get them involved and make them feel welcome. I believe it's a fast way to build up our membership and keep our programs strong because with a strong membership base, you will have the most beautiful programs you've ever had in your life.

We must adapt all our posts to those respected communities in which we serve. Soon we will be commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War I, a war of our American Legion founders. I can't help thinking that our founders are now looking on us, as many of my friends are who are no longer with us, those that gave me the opportunity to serve, looking down on our accomplishments with pride. Our founders had a passion to get things done for veterans and the widows and the orphans, to preserve the core values of this great nation of ours, and to insure that our men and women of the armed forces go to a well prepared war. They need to be prepared and we need a strong military. And we can win any war. What bothers me, as your National Commander, before I close, is as you travel, we have a tendency to take things for granted. We all think we're living in peace. I ask you to be on your guard at all times. But our founding fathers were never afraid to make a difference. I think we've carried on a tradition as they gave us the GI Bill of Health. What was that all about? We keep those things going, I mean, the GI Bill. The GI Bill keeps going. We reinforce things. We have to change. We have to adapt to this world today. I ask you, in changing, the way you do business, look to the 21st century as you change. You've made a difference for me this year, and I am so proud of you. I have felt this year, so proud

of representing the greatest organization. This cap does not belong to me. This cap belongs to you.

...At this time, the delegates watched a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: You've heard me speak of The American Legion family this year. During my travels I've tried to emphasize the role of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion in making our communities a much better place to live. The man I'm going to introduce to you has been a member for more than 20 years. Now, it's time for you to meet the new leader of the Sons of The American Legion. He's a high school teacher and he's very active in his hometown of Raceland—right here in the Pelican State. He understands what a great state he lives in, I don't have to tell him. Serving the Sons on the national level he has been Membership Chairman, Finance Chairman and Education Chairman. He's also served as the Sons of The American Legion National Chaplain. Today, he comes before this body as the newly elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. How fitting to be elected in this community, with a theme of "Serving Together Today for a Stronger American Legion Family Tomorrow." Welcome from Squadron 349 of the Detachment of Louisiana, National Commander Byron Robichaux.

**Byron Robichaux, Louisiana, National Commander  
Sons of the American Legion**

On behalf of the 207,495 members of the Sons of the American Legion, I bring you greetings and wish to you, Mr. Commander, the best success in this Convention. As you said, I'm from Louisiana, so it was especially exciting and gratifying to be here, my very home state, to be installed as the National Commander. For my family and friends to be able to witness that was an excitement that's really hard to explain.

Each year, Sons of the American Legion strives to increase its participation in American Legion programs. And hopefully, we will have that success again this year. For the past year, we were able to reach a new all time high in membership, reaching 103% and still growing. Child welfare donations this year was another all time high with the Sons of The American Legion donating \$167,473.66 to the Child Welfare Foundation. That total puts us just shy of \$900,000 since our association with the foundation. And this year we will reach \$1 million plus in donations to the Child Welfare Foundation since our affiliation with the foundation. VA&R reports showed 153,577 hours of volunteer service along with over \$649,000 of donations. And that's not it. You go from detachment to detachment, you see tens of thousands of dollars being raised for other programs in the community, support for the Citizens Flag Alliance and *Show Your Colors, America!* program. Citizens Flag Alliance and the passage of that amendment are important. You know, a lot of times, they bring up the issue with the Citizens Flag Alliance and the flag amendment about freedom of speech. The biggest infringement on freedom of speech would be the failure of the United States Congress to allow the people's voice to be heard. That's the biggest infringement of speech. We hope to continue the work of many American Legion programs, to put emphasis on veterans programs. We must make sure that we never forget the underlying purpose of why we're here: to assist American veterans. We will push this year to help with the World War II Memorial and many other programs of The American Legion.

It is also important, as we turn the century, to keep pace with technology. If we do not keep pace with the technology and the things that are out there, then we might not keep pace

with the people out there who are our members or could be our members. Our success and growth, ability to be open to new ideas and changes in technology will determine our success in the future.

I put a lot of emphasis on the youth in our organization. A lot of times, I think the younger members get left aside. We're trying to develop programs such as youth soccer and child welfare walkers, encouraging walks or runs to raise money for child welfare so that any member of the Sons of The American Legion at any age can be involved. The younger members are a part of our family too. As National Commander Jordan said, family, The American Legion family is important. The stronger we grow as a family, then the stronger force we can be in America.

While up here, I have a couple of people I want to introduce as well. We have with us the person who has served as our National Adjutant for the past 12 years and he is stepping down this year, retiring from that position and that's Mr. Woodrow Mudge from Colorado. We also have with us the person who's replacing him, our new National Adjutant, Mr. Brian O'Hearne from Massachusetts. Once again, Mr. Commander, it's been a pleasure to be able to come before The American Legion and bring greetings.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: As we gather in New Orleans, The Society of the Founders of The American Legion has only one man living who was present at that first National Convention. I'd like to read a brief message from George Bentley, chairman of the Executive Board of the Society of American Legion Founders. Unfortunately, he is unable to be with us today but I am pleased to read something to you from him. As you know, Judge Foley and myself had a great opportunity to spend some time with him when I visited Minnesota.

#### **Message to the Convention George Bentley, The Society of American Legion Founders**

"I am pleased to send greetings to the National Convention of The American Legion. Unfortunately, I cannot be there in New Orleans with you but I do remember the good times that I have had when attending past conventions. Those conventions always proudly displayed the American flag. It is very unfortunate that some Americans do not show proper respect to our colors. I am confident that Congress will pass the appropriate legislation this year that will protect our flag. It would be a shame if that does not happen.

If you attended the convention in Orlando last year, this message came from both myself and John Gable, the other Founder. But sadly, John passed to Post Everlasting last year, at the age of 96. I am now the only living Legionnaire who attended in 1919 one of the two caucuses that brought about our great American Legion. Good luck on your National Convention. As the last living Founder, I pray that you achieve all the goals that you have in front of you. God bless The American Legion and God bless America."

...At this time, the delegates watched a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Pat Boone has definitely taken a beautiful step in the production of this video, *American Glory*. The combination of songs and pictures brings to life the beauty that abounds across our great nation. If you'd like to see more on this, *American Glory*, stops by the Citizens Flag Alliance booth here in the Convention Center. Pat is a true believer in the campaign to protect Old Glory from physical desecration. That's why he has given the Citizens Flag Alliance the opportunity to offer this video tape for \$24.95 which includes shipping. Every tape purchased provides funding for the flag

protection campaign. As a special, to the Convention goes here in New Orleans, you can order *American Glory* for just \$20.00. Take advantage of that. It brings me back, makes me feel young again.

The American Legion online is joining with the National American Legion Press Association to provide an award for The American Legion Home Page of the Month. Stop by the Internet booth and learn more about this award program and how the Internet can be a resource for your post.

Men and women of The American Legion share a source of pride with our next guest. That source is our common, unprotected border which stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Born in what is now Pakistan, he was educated in British public schools until his family immigrated to Canada in 1960. He became a career military man. My next guest retired from the Air Force in 1980. He went to work for the Registry of Motor Vehicles in the Province of Nova Scotia. He serves as an inspector with that Registry. As a veteran and a man who is concerned with his fellow veterans, he has been active in the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans In Canada and has risen to that highest position. He is the outgoing President of the Dominion. Welcome Past Dominion President of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans In Canada, Akmal Khan.

**Address: Akmal Khan, Past Dominion President  
Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada**

It is my honor and pleasure to bring you greetings from the Executive Members of the Army Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, Canada's oldest veterans organization at 158 years of age. I had the pleasure of the company of your National Commander, Tony Jordan, at our last convention held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, just this mid-August. Also there were two of your past national commanders. It made us very proud to be able to welcome them to Canada. Our aims and objects are basically the same: to look after the needs of the veterans and their spouses and to lobby on behalf of them with the government to see that their needs are met. We must be ever vigilant that what benefits we have now are not taken away and to keep pushing for reform to the pension system. We must never forget that it was you, the veteran, who served for your country to be proud and free. You have paid the price for freedom that our young people take for granted. National Commander, it gives me great pleasure to present you with a small token of our appreciation and respect for the comradeship that our organizations share.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Each year at our national convention, representatives of veterans advocate groups from other countries always join us. Today, we are honored to have in New Orleans with us a man who served his nation in uniform at home in England as well as in Egypt and Germany during the early 1950s. After military service he followed a career in secondary education, becoming a senior lecturer. After taking early retirement in 1993 he was able to devote more time to his volunteer service with the Royal British Legion. He has served in many roles with the Legion—and he has made the trip to America to visit with us as their top leader. Welcome the National Chairman of The Royal British Legion, John Champ.

**Address: John Champ, Chairman  
The Royal British Legion**

I find it very difficult as I'm such a new boy, having just been elected, and to follow all these fine orators who have gone before me today, especially, those young people this morning. They were brilliant, I thought. It might be of interest to know that we are trustees of a scholarship where we send two young people to university in Korea where these Korean veterans have been. My wife, Jill, and myself are extremely grateful for the way people have looked after us here since we've arrived. They've been very kind to us and have taken us around. Otherwise, as it's our first visit to the United States of America, I think we would have been lost without the assistance we have received. So, we're extremely grateful.

I wish to extend to you, National Commander, and all the delegates and the guests, the best wishes of the Royal British Legion for a successful annual Convention. I can appreciate that you have a very busy time ahead of you. I must mention a couple of points which I feel are for both of us, in which we are both interested in. Last week, I was with the Australian veterans Congress. They also are having a fight similar to yours over their flag being desecrated and they obviously wish you every success.

The other point that I have been specifically asked to mention was to express the Legion's thanks for the friendship and hospitality you gave the skipper and the crew of a yacht *Pause to Remember* in last years British Telecom Around the World race. They are so grateful to all you have done. The skipper [Tom O'Connor] of the boat is an army Captain in the Republic of Ireland's army. He is a glider pilot. You can see he's a very versatile young man. He is so grateful for all the assistance he had from all of the veteran organizations all the way around the world, especially in Boston. My wife and I actually went off to see the start of this race. We went off in a little boat in the channel and it was the foulest weather you can imagine, Force 9 gales and it wasn't really pleasant. From all those little windows or port holes, there were a tremendous number of people hanging out and I don't think they were giving good wishes or anything to the crew.

It took the message of remembrance around the world, something which you, I'm sure, feel the same as we, in Britain and in Canada. People feel that we are custodians of remembrance in their country. There are a number of ways this is carried out around the world. For instance in Ypres in Belgium, every single night of the year, the traffic is stopped and the Last Post which is similar to your Taps is sounded and a salute occurs. I was there last month and it was really fantastic. I'm a little emotional around things like this, to have seen the men in gate with all those thousands of names of all those people who were lost in the First World War, with no known grave. I just came to the few there and I got up to 6,000 in Australia. And such a little country in the First World War period, no population at all. I've also received an invitation to a birthday party. There are three people who have their birthday within one month of one another. And we're going to have a special little birthday party and it's going to be in a hotel in Ypres in Belgium. Their ages are 100, 103, and 106. And all of those are Executive Director-servicemen from the First World War. They actually included in the invitation to me if I wouldn't mind a couple of youngsters also coming along of 98 and 99. One of these old veterans served in the Cameron Highlanders and his name happens to be Robert Burns.

People have to understand the sacrifices made by the people who actually did go to war. We have to make them understand what was given up by these people, the supreme sacrifices made by these people. A lot of this has already been said today but we are trying

to attempt with our young people to point out that we are not glorifying war, but we are hoping that by remembering what happened in these war periods, we can continue to have relative peace in this world. As we all know, we haven't had it at all really this century. Similar to yourself, we have been involved in a number of actions other than those two world wars and in actual fact there is only one year this century we haven't had troops killed and that was 1968, the only year this century. So, we fully understand your situation on this particular thing.

When our troops are killed, they are buried in the country where they are killed. And this has meant that we have had people killed in Burma, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, places like this. The widow that is left behind, only has a memory that he is there somewhere. We managed to get our government to pay seven-eighths of the cost of the widow going to see her husband's grave. And we, the Royal British Legion, administer this. For people who escort them, it is the hardest physical, mental and emotional period they'll ever go through. If you could only hear a lady sitting by a grave, Johnny is her son, she explains to her husband her Johnny had done this, had gone to this school, had done this sort of work. Did he remember little Mary who is the daughter of so-and-so along the road. They'd been married and they go on for the last fifty years, explaining what had happened to the family. Then they get up and appear to be released, relaxed having got this out of their system. It's a most wonderful emotional period.

The other thing is we have resuscitated now the two minute silence on the 11th of November, whatever day it falls on. We have had it on the nearest Sunday up to now. This has been really hard work. We had to struggle with the government and local authorities. Last year, we managed to get over 70% of the adult population and a larger percentage of the young people, which surprised me that they would be so involved in that. It meant that the supermarkets stopped taking any cash for those two minutes. Large departmental stores stopped selling anything. The radios stopped broadcasting. The television stations stopped transmitting. Drivers, buses, things like this are all stopping in the road and everyone getting out and standing for the two minute silence which we thought was a great achievement. We are hoping that as we are approaching the millennium, that we could possibly have something like this held all around the world. As we go through all the different time zones, there could possibly be a two minute wave of silence, if you wish to call it, going around the world on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour. I think it would make a wonderful effect on those people. We are trying to work out a scheme and have got a tremendous support on this actually. Australia, New Zealand, Canada have spoken of interest, as well as many of the European countries and African countries, all showing interest in this. We are writing a plan and sending it to all the veterans organizations to see if they would be interested in joining us on this millennium with two minutes wave of silence around the world. We think it would be very effective.

There is one other thing I would like to mention, an advertisement. It's a thing called "Challenge 99". I'm not sure the word's gotten over to you here about this yet. But it's the Executive Director-service wheel chair and amputee world millennium games. This is going to be held in the United Kingdom. If you remember a couple of years ago, they were going to hold one in South Africa but the security couldn't be insured. So, they've asked us to put it on in the UK and we are hoping it will be in September next year. We're hoping as many of the Executive Director-service organizations around the world will get competitors in for this. It is a wonderful event. We had one once before and it is so important that these people get on and get joined together like that.

I'm intensely proud to have been allowed to address your Convention. There are strong bonds between our two countries, especially amongst the service people in particular.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The friendship of American veterans spans borders and oceans. It is an honor to have with us today a man who has a distinguished career in the service of his country, the Republic of China. Today, he continues to serve the needs of his country's veterans as the Chairman, Veterans Affairs Commission. Welcome Yang Ting-yun.

**Address: General Yang Ting-Yun, Chairman  
Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China**

It is a great honor for me to represent veterans of the Republic of China at your National Convention. I'm exceptionally pleased to be among such a distinguished group of allied veterans here in this historic city of New Orleans. And I'm very happy to again see your National Commander Jordan, who visited our country last December.

Since your 1997 National Convention, the Far East has experienced some severe economic upheavals. Countries whose economies were thought to be stable and growing unexpectedly found themselves in extreme difficulty. Certain countries depreciated certain currencies, depreciated to only half of their former value of just one year ago, leading to political instability and ouster of presidents and prime ministers.

The Republic of China has been comparatively less affected in these circumstances. We believe that the main reason our prosperity has continued is the fact that our economic strength is based on the firm foundation of the free enterprise structure under democracy. Our economy is actually composed of over 1,003,000 medium and small businesses, which account for 97.92% of our nation's business activities. Consequently, the capital in our society has been so widely and popularly distributed, we can flexibly meet the challenges and absorb the impacts from different directions. And this system was originally promoted by our founding father, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen.

As many of you know, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen lived in Hawaii and absorbed the vast ideals of the American society which he transplanted in China. It is therefore little wonder that the people of the Republic of China have maintained a great deal of respect and admiration for the United States.

In fact, the friendship resulting from our common goals and aspirations led to our formal alliance during World War II and subsequent conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. Names like MacArthur, Chennault, and Wedemeyer are as much a part of our history as they are of yours.

The promise of freedom and democracy in the Far East region in recent years should be largely attributed to the United States military power and resolve. Therefore, American veterans can be truly proud of their inestimable contribution to the world peace. You have clearly and consistently articulated your positions to the executive and legislative branches of U.S. government on a number of vital issues including the sale of an advanced military weapon to our country. Your efforts are most appreciated by the people of the Republic of China.

The Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China is dedicated to furthering our excellent cooperation with The American Legion to enhance our mutual interests, promote comprehensive and effective veterans assistance programs, and to advance the goals of justice, freedom and democracy around the world.

In closing, I give each and every one of you best regards for your health, happiness and a most successful Convention.

GENERAL YANG, TING-YUN (translated): On behalf of the President of the Republic of China, I present a National Medal of the Republic of China, the order of the Cloud and Banner medal, to your National Commander Mr. Jordan. The citation reads: "Mr. Anthony Jordan, National Commander, The American Legion, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the people of the United States of America and the Republic of China and to the enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries. In appreciation of his meritorious service, National Commander Jordan, is hereby presented to the Order of Cloud and Banner with cravat, by the government of the Republic of China in accordance with article 11 of the Armed Forces Declaration Regulations."

I will now present a commemorative silver plate to the National Commander. It reads: "Presented to Mr. Anthony G. Jordan, National Commander, The American Legion, in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China."

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Another strong advocate for Korean veterans is our next guest. He retired from the Republic of Korea Marine Corps as a Lieutenant General. Upon his retirement after 30 years of military service, he became chairman of his country's Marine Corps Veterans Association. Today he is the Secretary General and Vice President of the Korean Veterans Association.

**Address: Lt. General (Ret.) Choi Kap-Jin, Secretary General  
The Korean Veterans Association**

I congratulate The American Legion on the 80th National Convention being held in this beautiful, historical city of New Orleans. I would like to express thanks for the invitation to this important Convention and to convey sincere regards to you all from President Chang Tae-Wan and the members of The Korean Veterans Association. After being chartered in 1919, as a patriotic mutual help, war-time veterans organization, your American Legion with nearly 3 million members and 15,000 posts and its excellent programs, has become an exemplary model for all veterans associations world wide. Many of your members participated in the Korean War and contributed the survival of the Republic of Korea during and since the Korean War. The American Legion has steadfastly supported our position in security matters at home and abroad. We are grateful your nation continues to station 7,000 troops in Korea to help insure peace and security in the Korean and Northeast Asia. On behalf of the people of the Republic of Korea, I thank you from bottom of my heart.

From 1964 to 1973, Korea fought in Vietnam together with the United States and other allies. Korea provided 220,000 personnel to protect the free democratic nation against the Communist aggression. More recently, Korea dispatched an engineer unit and a medical unit to Somalia, Saudi Arabia and the Sub-Sahara area in supporting United Nations peace keeping operations. Many Korean officers are still working as United Nations observers in disputed areas such as the border of India and Pakistan. So, this activities may be perceived as a partial compensation for United Nations help to Korea in the 1950s. The Republic of Korea is trying to do its best to promote peace throughout the world.



While cooperative talks between the United States and North Korea progress, South Korea is sending engineers and equipment to the North to construct a valuable nuclear plant in their territory. South Korea Red Cross is delivering flood relief to North to avert starvation. One of the businessmen in the South gave 500 cows to the North as a humanitarian gesture. Can you believe North Korea, on the other hand, sent infiltrators by submarines to the South two years ago and twice this year? On Monday, last week, North Korea test fired a ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean over the space of Japan. This fact renewed worries over security in Asia and raised a matter of concern to United States, Japan and Korea. However, our government has been paid great effort to pursue its northern policy based on reconciliation, cooperation and peaceful coexistence by providing North Korea all assistance to open up their country to the outside world. But in spite of this trend, the North's belligerence is still going on. As I mentioned before, they raise tension in the Northeast Asia and bring up much worry. This is the sentiment among the countries in the region.

In addition to the security burden, our nation is now experiencing serious economic hardship, considered to be the biggest national disaster since the Korean War. However, the Korean people and government are trying hard to overcome these hardships through united effort. I am certain we will prevail. In your recognition of a security situation in Korea, I hope you will continue to extend us your support to maintain peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and to help us to overcome our current economic crisis.

I congratulate you again on your magnificent National Convention. I pray for continued success of American Legion and for the good health and prosperity of each and every Legionnaire. At this time, I'd like to present the National Commander Jordan a plaque of appreciation from President Chang Tae-Wan.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: It is an honor for me to present The American Legion International Amity Award. It is presented 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. Bill Bishop, the retiring NEC from Alaska, will assist me. Delegates to this Convention and guests, it is with great pleasure that I present The American Legion International Amity award to Lt. General Choi Kap-Jin.

*The American Legion Dispatch* has a new design. And that new *Dispatch* offers more current and up-to-date information on veterans issues and Legion programs and goals. And it's in an easy to read format. Subscribe to the *Dispatch* at this convention and receive the special rate of \$12 for 22 issues and receive your collector's *Dispatch* pin.

*The American Legion Magazine*, the recipient of several national awards this year, as you may be aware, is being offered at a special rate to this convention. Give a subscription to your local library, high school, maybe your doctors office or facility.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Pay our respects to our beautiful colors with a right hand salute. One, two! This convention will stand in recess until 9:00 tomorrow morning.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**PROCEEDINGS  
SECOND DAY**

**Wednesday, September 9, 1998**

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

...At 9:00 a.m., the delegates assembled for the second day of the 80th Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER ANTHONY G. JORDAN: I'm the guy that liked change. So, this morning we're doing something a little different. We have the pleasure of welcoming to our 80th National Convention a proud American and a solid entertainer. He hails from Mississippi. He is a man who has presented his program "Listen to the Eagle" to the State Governors Conventions and to more than a half million school children. He has performed from the *Grand Ol' Opry* to NBC's *First Tuesday* and now he is here to perform two special numbers for us. Please welcome Paul Ott.

PAUL OTT: Thank you, Commander. How many folks are here from the South? We're going to welcome the folks from the North. We love all of you and this is a song especially for you.

...At this time, the delegates listened to a special musical presentation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I understand you're a veteran. Is that true?

PAUL OTT: Yes, sir. Fort Hood with Elvis Presley. '57.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: What were your dates?

PAUL OTT: My dates were from 1956 to 1958..

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Oh, I thought you might be eligible.

PAUL OTT: Oh, I'm not eligible?

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: No, but I thought you might. I always ask. We'll find out if you are eligible for the Sons of the American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Convention will come to order. Delegates, please stand. Right hand salute to our colors. One! Two!

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: For the invocation I would like to call on your National Chaplain, Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart of Pennsylvania.

**Invocation**

**Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania, National Chaplain**

God of our fathers, we pause in solemn prayer before You at the second session of the 80th National Convention of The American Legion, seeking Divine Guidance for the accountability placed on us, strength for the tasks of this day and wisdom for the decisions we have to make. Speak to us through our minds to foster constructive program, to recruit, reinstate and retain membership so there will be an American Legion well nigh through the next millennium. Speak to us through our intellect to relieve the sufferings of victims made homeless by natural disasters, with shelter, food, clothing, medical and financial aide. Speak to us through our hearts to cast blessings upon our armed forces, especially the airmen flying in the skies amidst terrorist turmoil. Speak to us through our wills to stand up, step up and speak up fearlessly for what is right, not only in what we are doing, but also in what we ought to be doing. In truly serving God and Country. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Join me for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Convention is now in session.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Cold War is over. The American people have a sense of security, a sense that all is right with the world. Yet, we—and our distinguished guest—know all too well, that is simply not the case. Just a few weeks ago this remarkable woman had the solemn responsibility of escorting the bodies of Americans killed in coordinated U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania back to U.S. soil. As the first woman to serve as America's Secretary of State, she undertook the challenges with a foundation anchored on the years of study and experience in international relations. We are very honored by having this outstanding public servant appear here this morning with us. Please welcome Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State.

**Address: The Honorable Madeleine K. Albright  
Secretary of State**

I know that you will be addressed later by Secretary Togo West and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Hugh Shelton, and I'm delighted to be able to be here today with them. Congratulations to you because in New Orleans, just being awake at 9 a.m. is quite an accomplishment.

For my part, I am delighted and honored to participate in this convention. The American Legion is one of our country's truly great organizations. For almost 80 years, you have helped the United States remain strong and free, from sponsoring baseball, to promoting child welfare, to insuring that veterans receive the respect they have earned. You serve our country well and you remind us daily of what it means to be Americans. As Secretary of State and a very proud citizen, I salute you and wish you many more decades of success.

This convention is a wonderful occasion for bringing veterans together. But it's more than that. For it's also a time to remember those who are not here—the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for us. May we never cease to honor their memory. Unfortunately, sacrifice has been much on my mind in recent weeks. And as the Commander said, about a month ago, I had the sad duty of bringing ten of the twelve Americans who perished in the embassy bombing in Kenya back home to U.S. soil. As I flew on that mission, of pride and sorrow, accompanying the flag draped coffins, I studied the pictures I'd been given of our fallen colleagues. Among them, the marine guard, the career foreign service officer and his son, the epidemiologist from here in New Orleans, the army sergeant with a boyish expression and the future in his eyes. Theirs were the faces of America. Like the members of this Legion and your compatriots of long and not so long ago, they went in harm's way for our country. But there's a difference between them and you. For they were not participants in a war as we have long understood that term. They were caught up instead in a new kind of confrontation that looms as a new century is about to begin. This is a confrontation, not so much of armies, as of values and emotions, of reason versus hate, of faith versus fear. It is not as much a clash between cultures or civilizations, it is a clash between civilization itself and anarchy, between the rule of law and no rules at all. In this struggle, our adversaries are likely to avoid traditional battlefield situations because there American dominance is well established. We must be concerned instead by weapons of mass destruction and by the cowardly instruments of sabotage and hidden bombs.

These unconventional threats endanger not only our armed forces but all Americans and America's friends everywhere. We must understand that this confrontation is long term. It doesn't lend itself to quick victories. To prevail we must summon our courage and we must equip ourselves with a full range of foreign policy tools. Our armed forces must remain the best led, best trained, best equipped and most respected in the world. And as President Clinton has pledged and Defense Secretary Cohen and General Shelton insure, they will. But we also need first class diplomacy force and the credible possibility of its use are essential. On most occasions, we rely on diplomacy to cement our alliances, build coalitions and find ways to defend our interests without putting our fighting men and women at risk. At the same time, our diplomacy is stronger because we have the threat of force behind it. In this way, force and diplomacy compliment each other. It's a little like having the best pitchers in the league and also having Mark McGuire to bat clean-up.

I would like to discuss with you the new struggle we face and describe our efforts using diplomacy backed by the threat of force to keep Americans secure. First, there is the challenge posed by international terror. This plague is not new. We've been fighting it a long time, but what is new is the emergence of terrorist coalitions that do not answer fully to any government, that operate across national borders and have access to advanced technology. Well-financed terrorist leaders, such as Osama bin Laden, have vowed to kill Americans world-wide. Their goal is to cause America to abandon its friends, allies and responsibility. To that I can only say, and to use an old U.S. Army expression, 'nuts'. The nation whose finest planted the flag at Iwo Jima and plunged into Hell at Omaha Beach, will not be intimidated. In the aftermath of the embassy bombings, President Clinton did the right thing by striking back hard. We are grateful to Commander Jordan and The American Legion for your support. The terrorists should have no illusion. Old Glory will continue to fly wherever we have interests to defend. We will meet our commitments. We will strive to protect our people. And we will wage the struggle against terror on every front, on every continent, with every tool, everyday.

For example, although we don't publicize it, we often use law enforcement and other assets to disrupt and prevent planned terrorist attacks. We use the courts to bring suspected terrorists before the bar of justice as we're trying to do in the case of PanAm 103 and as we have done in the World Trade Center case, the CIA murders and already in the Nairobi bombing. At home, we have changed our laws to prevent terrorists from raising funds here and allowing us to bar foreigners who support them. At anti-terrorist instruction facilities here in Louisiana and elsewhere, we've trained more than 19,000 law enforcement officers from more than 90 countries. Around the world, we're pressing other nations to crack down hard on terrorism and have imposed economic sanctions against state sponsors of terror. Every nation has a responsibility to arrest or expel terrorists, shut down their businesses and deny them safe haven. Despite this, some regimes still help terrorists train like bin Laden. Those regimes help terrorists acquire funds, train, and get the travel documents they need to commit crimes and escape punishment for their murderous acts. That's not legal, it's not right and it's got to stop.

Finally, as our recent actions demonstrate, we will employ military force where necessary and appropriate to prevent and punish terrorist attacks. Some suggest that by striking back we risk more bombings in retaliation. Unfortunately, risks are present either way. Firmness provides no guarantee but it is far less dangerous than allowing the belief that Americans can be assaulted with impunity. And as President Clinton has said, our people are not expendable. Amidst the emotions stirred by recent events, it is vital to understand

that our struggle is directed against terror, not against Islam as our adversaries want the world to believe. Terror is not a legitimate form of political expression and it's certainly not a manifestation of religious faith. It is murder, plain and simple, and we must strive to insure that sooner or later, one way or another, terrorists are accountable for their crimes. America has been targeted by terror because we are the strongest force for peace, freedom, progress and law in the world. But no threat, no bomb, no terrorist can diminish America's determination to lead.

A second major threat to America's security also has entered a new phase and that is through weapons of mass destruction and the systems that deliver them. For decades, we viewed this threat primarily through a narrow Cold War lens. Now our concerns have broadened. We are deeply disturbed by regional tensions in South Asia where both India and Pakistan have conducted nuclear tests, by Iran's tests of a new missile and its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, and by clandestine chemical and biological weapons programs particularly in the Middle East and North Africa.

Some point to this array of threats and throw up their hands. They say there is no way to stop the spread of such weapons and that because nonproliferation standards are sometimes violated, we ought to accept a world with no standards at all. That is dangerous nonsense. Certainly, it will take more than arms control treaties to keep Americans secure. We need the best defense we can devise, the best intelligence we can develop, and the best emergency planning we can prepare. We must and we are taking steps to protect our troops against exposure to biological weapons and poisoned gas. But we also need the best legal framework we can create to detect and diminish these threats and discredit those who brandish them. By so doing, we can cut the number of such weapons we might one day face and reduce the chance that the deadliest arms will fall into the wrong hands.

For example, we will be safer if the United States and Russia are able further to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We will be safer if we continue to work with Russia as we pledged during last week's summit, to share data on missile launches world-wide, dispose of bomb-usable plutonium and prevent nuclear smuggling. No nukes should become loose nukes. We will be safer if the agreed framework can be fulfilled. If North Korea's dangerous nuclear program is forever put to rest and if we're able to persuade North Korea to end its reckless development and sale of missile technologies, we will be safer. If the Chemical Weapons Convention is implemented, the Biological Weapons Convention is strengthened, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is ratified by the Senate and enters into force, and if a treaty to halt the production of missile materials is negotiated, we will be safer.

Finally, we will be safer if we can develop an effective bipartisan approach here at home to the issue of ballistic missile defense. We all worry about long-range missiles in the hands of potential adversaries. Missiles are fast flyers. They can be fitted with nuclear, chemical or biological war heads and they are devilishly difficult to shoot down. That's why we've pressed hard and successfully to reduce the number of countries that develop ballistic missiles. In the early 1980s, for example, Argentina agreed to stop its Condor project which it was developing with, of all nations, Iraq. In 1987, many of the world's leading nations agreed to President Reagan's plan to limit missile related exports. Since then, South Africa and most central and eastern European countries have voluntarily terminated their missile programs and we're continuing to press nations that have advanced missile technology to keep that technology to themselves. Because of these efforts, combined with the formidable difficulties and costs of developing intercontinental ballistic missiles or ICBM's, Russia and China are the only countries, thus far, to develop missiles capable of reaching the United

States. The intelligence community tells us that of the nations that now concern us most, none, except perhaps North Korea, is likely to deploy a missile able to reach our shores before the year 2010. A panel of outside experts, however, has expressed a more pessimistic view, warning that Iran, for example, could be ready to deploy such an ICBM within five years of a decision to do so. In addition, there is the more immediate threat posed by shorter range or theater missiles in hot spots such as the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Korea. The risks for us are twofold. The first is that we will be complacent and leave ourselves unprepared to deal with emerging missile threats. The second is that we will rush to deploy systems that don't work or that cost so much they hurt other defense priorities.

As General Shelton recently wrote, the threats we confront must be addressed consistent with a balanced judgement of risks and resources. The Administration's strategy is to develop missile defense systems to protect our territory, troops, friends, and allies as a complement to other deterrents and nonproliferation measures. Currently, six theater missile defense programs are underway and we are committed to developing and testing a National Missile Defense System by the year 2000 for deployment if circumstances warrant as early as 2003. But even as we develop missile defenses we know it would be foolhardy to put all our hopes in that technologically unproven basket.

Just as it would be foolhardy to entrust our security entirely to the prescriptions of arms control, we must devote attention and resources to all the capabilities we need to deter and defeat potential adversaries. We must be prepared, as recent events demonstrate we are, to act preemptively if American lives are in danger. Countering terror is one aspect of our struggle to maintain international security and peace. Limiting the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction is a second. Saddam Hussein's Iraq encompasses both of these challenges while posing yet a third. Unlike World War II, the Persian Gulf War did not end with the surrender and prosecution of enemy leaders. Although humiliated and weakened, Saddam Hussein and his military survived. Since then the goal of the UN Security Council has been to deny Saddam the capacity to strike again. Its tools have included the toughest economic and military sanctions ever imposed, and weapons inspections by the UN Special Commission or UNSCOM.

In recent weeks, some in Washington have suggested that the United States has not done enough to support the UN inspectors. It has even been suggested that we've tried to prevent UNSCOM from doing its job. The critics are sincere. We are, after all, on the same side. But they are sincerely wrong when they blame America for the world's failure to uncover the full truth about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. In fact, the United States has been by far the strongest international backer of UNSCOM. I, along with Secretary Cohen and other members of the President's Foreign Policy Team, have traveled the world demanding that Iraq cooperate with UNSCOM. We have provided indispensable technical and logistical support. We've pushed and pushed and pushed, some more to help UNSCOM break through the smoke screen of lies and deception put out by Iraqi regime. And we have made important progress.

Thanks to UNSCOM, more Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capacity have been destroyed since the Gulf War than during it. And just this summer, UNSCOM was able for the first time to conduct inspections of sensitive sites where it found new evidence that Iraq had lied about the size of its chemical weapons stocks.

Now, we have reached another critical point. In August, Saddam decided, once again, to cease cooperation with UN inspectors. This is a direct challenge to the authority of the Security Council and a rebuff to the Secretary-General. As a council member, the United

States seeks a firm and principled response. But I don't have to tell this audience the value in any confrontation of being able to choose your own timing and terrain. Saddam's tantrums have a political purpose to spark a reaction, divide the Security Council, isolate the United States, and diminish support for sanctions. We have not taken any option off the table including military force which we have used against Iraq on three separate occasions since the end of the Gulf War. Our strategy is to keep the world spotlight, not on us but on Saddam's ongoing failure to meet his obligations.

In the Security Council, even the members that have been most sympathetic to Iraq's point of view can find no excuse nor even any sense in Saddam's latest actions. The Council is united in demanding that Iraq resume its cooperation with UNSCOM. From the perspective of our own security, we're in a position of strength. Our ability is significantly more robust now than it was a year ago. We've added a rapid reinforcement capability with our allies. We are tracking Iraqi troops closely through the enforcement of operations Northern and Southern Watch. The Multinational Maritime Interception Force is keeping the teeth in UN sanctions having seized more than 30 vessels since January. For all its bluster, Iraq remains within the strategic box Saddam Hussein's folly created for it seven years ago. And as we look ahead, we will decide how and when to respond to Iraq's actions based on the threat they pose to Iraq's neighbors, to regional security, and to U.S. vital interests. Our assessment will include Saddam's capacity to reconstitute, use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. The bottom line is, if Iraq tries to break out of the strategic box, our response will be swift and strong.

Now, I will say a few words about resources, both for our military and our diplomats. When I go overseas, I always try to visit with the men and women of our armed forces. It's a testament to their skills and to the unsettled nature of the world that they are present in many trouble spots from the Gulf, to the Balkans, to the Korean peninsula. The risks are always present, the tangible rewards few, and the living conditions are never the best. But they are doing a magnificent job for America. And so I will tell you what I tell them. As long as I am Secretary of State, I will do all I can to see that the operational tempo of our armed forces is the right one, so that training is sufficient and equipment doesn't run down, and that whenever and wherever U.S. forces are deployed, important American interests must be at stake, the mission must be clear, and our military must have all the tools and backing they need to get the job done.

And I have to tell this audience that our diplomats, too, deserve backing. This month Congress will take final action on President Clinton's request for funds for the entire range of international affairs programs. It will also consider a special emergency request we intend to put forward in response to the recent terrorist bombings. After what happened in Africa last month, we can no longer consider any American mission overseas to be a low threat post. We will seek funds to restore our operations in Kenya and Tanzania and increase security world-wide. We will seek, as well, to augment our anti-terrorism training program and improve our ability to track terrorists and their munitions, seize their assets, and respond to terrorist threats. I hope we will have your support whether the specific challenge is building a security fence, easing a financial crisis, or preventing regional rivalry from erupting into violence. We cannot lead without resources and we cannot be secure unless we lead.

Fifty years ago, President Harry Truman told this convention that America will continue to take a firm position where our rights are threatened but our firmness should not be mistaken for a war-like spirit. Those words still ring true. History has taught us that

firmness in defense of reason and law is the best way, perhaps the only way, to ensure not only peace but also freedom. In this century, we have endured Depression, prevailed with our allies in two global wars, defended liberty through decades of Cold War, and answered the call in numerous other crises and conflicts. Now, we confront new dangers at a time of great turbulence and complexity. We're learning, as former Secretary of State Dean Acheson said, that the problems of American foreign policy are not like headaches, when you take a powder and they're gone. We've got to understand all our lives, that the danger, the uncertainty, the need for alertness, for effort and for discipline will be upon us. Notwithstanding all this, we are not weary. We are confident. We look to the future with optimism and faith.

Long ago, when Hitler invaded my native Czechoslovakia, my family sought and found refuge in London. Europe was our world then and the war a battle for its survival. When my family was not in the bomb shelter, we were glued to the radio. Through the darkness, we were sustained by the inspiring words of Eisenhower, Roosevelt, and Churchill and by the courage of allied soldiers. I was just a little girl. Even then, I developed deep admiration for those brave enough to fight for freedom. And I fell in love with Americans in uniform. The story of my family has been repeated in millions of variations over more than two centuries in the lives of those around the world who have been liberated or sheltered by American soldiers, empowered by American assistance, or inspired by American ideals. For our country there are no final frontiers. We are doers. Whatever threats the future may hold, we will meet them. With the memory alive in our hearts of past sacrifice, we will defend our freedom. Together we will honor our flag, meet our responsibilities, and live up to our principles. That, this morning, is my pledge to you, the heroes of our past, the guardians of our present, the builders of our future, the members of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: You talk about a National Commander wanting his convention to be complete, well, this lady does it.

This morning in our nation's capitol Senator Orrin Hatch is holding a news conference to announce the results of a Gallup Poll, and to discuss the upcoming vote on Senate Joint Resolution 40, The Flag Protection Amendment. At this time we take you to the Mansfield Room in the U.S. Capitol for Senator Hatch's conference.

...At this time, the delegates viewed a video. [Video of press conference held in Washington, D.C. on September 9, 1998]

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next speaker has a face that is well known to each and every one of us that are present here today. Yet, she will become better known to us through her dedicated work with an organization The American Legion has become involved with. Before we meet her, I'd like you to hear from a good friend of The American Legion. If you'll look to the screens, as I present to you the man from the Dukes of Hazzard, John Schneider.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: (via video tape) Thank you, Commander Jordan. I want to thank everyone for being here today. You all are so terrific. I'm sorry that I'm not there. You know, I've been there before, singing about Old Glory. I want to thank you for your support on the flag protection amendment. We're going to get this thing done, by golly, we have to. Folks my age, I think, owe it, certainly, to you, to my grandfather, to my dad, to make sure that the flag of the United States is once again protected. I can't imagine that it's not. But I'm actually here to talk about a whole different thing that's very near and dear to my heart.

Seventeen years ago, a couple of friends of mine and I started an organization called the Children's Miracle Network. What we do is we raise money for children's hospitals all



throughout the United States and Canada. We had a room full of experts, not quite as many people as there are in this room today, but we had a substantial room full of experts telling us we were out of our minds. And something that I've learned is if you can get enough people, enough experts to tell you that it's a bad idea, it's probably a very good idea so run out and get it done.

So, we started the Children's Miracle Network. In our first year we raised \$4.5 million. One hundred percent of the money went to children's hospitals. Seventeen years later, just this last year, on the last weekend in May, we raised \$174 million to bring our total over \$1,250,000,000. All of that money has gone to help kids in children's hospitals. This last year was your first year in being involved in the Children's Miracle Network. I want to thank you. You're a wonderful organization and you will help our organization help kids like no one else possibly could. I've seen what you could do when you put your hearts in the right place. And it's tremendous what you folks do. Now, someone is going to come out and talk to you more about the Children's Miracle Network who's been a friend of mine now for, gosh, I don't know how many years. She's a wonderful lady. She's an Olympian. She's a gold medalist. She's a mom. She's a wife. She's a delightful woman. Please listen to her as she talks about the Children's Miracle Network because it's a great, great organization helping our kids have better lives through medical health. You never know when your child will need the services provided by a children's hospital. So, please welcome one of the finest people I've ever met. Mary Lou Retton.

**Address: Mary Lou Retton, Olympic Gold Medalist  
Children's Miracle Network**

Before I get into why I'm really here, I want to say as an Olympian, I stood on that top stand at the podium at the Olympic games, and someone put a gold medal around my neck. I wore the great U.S. of A. on the back of my warm-up suit, and waited a lifetime to watch that unbelievable flag of ours rise. I thank you from the bottom of my heart of what you guys are doing for the flag protection bill. So, thank you. To me, it means a lot.

What a pleasure it is for me to be here today. Of all the worthy causes out there, and folks, I've been in the public eye now for close to 15 years, if you can believe that, none has ever touched my heart like the Children's Miracle Network. And it's been almost seven years that I have been working with this organization. And it really didn't touch me until I became a mom myself. I have two small daughters, a three year old and a one year old. Let me ask, how many of you have children? Then you all know exactly what I'm talking about. From the first time I held those little angels in my arms, there was nothing, and I mean nothing, more important than the health and happiness of that child. And the bottom line is that's what CMN champions is all about, having a healthy and happy future for children all over America and Canada.

One special thing that is very special about the Children's Miracle Network is that 100% of the money that is raised in your community stays in your community. Something could happen to someone in your family, a family friend, a neighbor. You know that the effort and the time and the money and the hard dollars that you raise will stay in your own local community. That means a lot to me. The different hospitals in your community choose to spend that money however they choose, whatever the hospital needs. And I really encourage each one of you to go into the hospital, go into your local CMN hospital and say, "Hey, I'm from The American Legion. We're a big supporter of this cause. Show us what

you're doing with this money we're raising." And they will. They'll go into the Neonatal Intensive Care and show you the premature babies in a new incubator that they just bought with CMN dollars. Or they'll take you to the pediatric unit and show you a new heart lung machine that is keeping a small young boy alive. They will show you. You go in there and they put the hook on you because it gets your heart, and your heart will stay there. I promise you.

You all are such a strong, big, huge organization and you can do so much for us. You can make a huge difference for children here in the United States and in Canada. And we really are so proud that you are on board.

Whenever I do an appearance in a different city, I will go to a CMN hospital and just walk around. Sometimes I let them know I'm coming, sometimes I don't. I just walk in, go around and see the kids. In the past, if I haven't been pregnant, I've actually put on a little exhibition for the kids and they actually like that. Being pregnant, it wasn't a pretty sight.

I really want to challenge you to get into the CMN mode, y'all. It can be bake sales, it can be car washes, it can be dunking machines, anything you want to do that you see fit to raise money for our kids. It doesn't matter who and what kind of child will go to a CMN hospital, someone who has a lot of money from a very wealthy family, to someone who doesn't. Regardless of the family's ability to pay, that child will be treated. That is huge in my heart. Huge. If you all are looking for ideas, you can get the fund raising guide book that is available from the Legion and is also published on the Legion website. Also, I have autographed an Olympic t-shirt that is going to be available at the silent auction and, of course, all the proceeds go to CMN. We appreciate that. Everyone saying is there anything special about this t-shirt? No, not really, it's just an Olympic t-shirt with the Olympic rings with Mary Lou Retton's signature on it. But I can tell them that Mark McGwire touched it. But he really didn't. That's my story that I'm going with, I'm sticking with it. Also, I'm telling everyone, I will be at the CMN booth, signing autographs. Normally, I never charge money for autographs, but we are charging a \$5 fee and all proceeds will go to CMN Champions to help our kids. Right now, I want to introduce to you a very special CMN Champion. His name is David Pearson. Take a look at the video screens. You'll see what our dollars are doing.

...At this time, the delegates watched a video.

MARY LOU RETTON: Welcome David Pearson. Amazing, isn't it? David, actually, how many surgeries did you have to undergo?

DAVID PEARSON: Four so far and I just had my last one about five months ago to correct my vision.

MARY LOU RETTON: To correct your vision. This is unbelievable. This is the Children's Hospital in New Orleans. Anything you want to say to the doctors and nurses and people at the hospital that treated you?

DAVID PEARSON: Thank you and I love you all. The care that I got was phenomenal. They always came in, they always kept me light-hearted, joking around and just really kept me from thinking the bad things. They always reassured me that everything would be all right. And they made me feel really good.

MARY LOU RETTON: Have you been back on a four-wheeler? [Such as involved in the accident.]

DAVID PEARSON: I was for a little while but not the way I used to ride. I try to keep all four tires on the ground.

MARY LOU RETTON: And are you playing sports this year in high school?

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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DAVID PEARSON: Yes, I'm playing football right now.

MARY LOU RETTON: So, you're really back to normal, doing things.

DAVID PEARSON: Back to normal, I wouldn't say normal.

MARY LOU RETTON: I think his mother would disagree on that. Staying out of trouble? Well, we thank you so much.

We wanted to bring somebody here to show you that your dollars really do care and they work. It's a living example of what they can do. Thank you, David. Thank you American Legion. We're so glad to have you on board. Let's go out there and help raise funds for CMN champion kids. We got a champion right here.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next guest, I consider a friend and a veteran. He's a Legionnaire, an Eagle Scout and was named a Distinguished Eagle Scout in 1995 by the Boy Scouts of America. I mention this because the men and women of The American Legion are proud to reflect on our own association with Scouting. It was the very first youth program embraced by our great organization. We know that his job is a challenge, for we know that the responsibility for a nationwide system of health-care services, benefit programs and national cemeteries for America's veterans and dependents is daunting. This man served America in the uniform of a United States Army officer during the Vietnam War. I got to know him as he was Secretary of the Army. He is a member of the Lloyd E. Hutcheson Post 113 in Meridian, Idaho. Welcome Secretary of Veterans Affairs—The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.

**Address: The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.  
Secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs**

Thank you for the opportunity to join you, my fellow Legionnaires, in this, your annual convention. Tony referred to my membership in the Idaho Department, that's, as you know, fairly recent. In fact, it was at the Mid-Winter meeting in Washington that you handed me my cap and placed it on my head. And like a good new Legionnaire, I have carefully studied the activities and the written documents of The American Legion. I have read, as you would hope I would, and studied the Preamble to the Constitution of the Legion, which your National Commander recited to you yesterday at this, your convention. In the years since the founding of the Legion, in 1919, no words in that Preamble have changed. It outlines, not just for us, the Legion, but for all who care about America, a program of ideas and ideals, a mission statement, if you will. It states the things that matter to us in the Legion, to us as veterans and that should matter to all Americans. Remember them again, at least a few of the ten elements. The first three, you know them: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, to maintain, secondly, law and order, and to foster and to promote 100% Americanism. Those are goals worthy of a great organization. Throughout its history, the Legion has done just that. I congratulate you on the most recent example of our commitment in the Legion to Americanism. This morning's event, at which once again the Legion underscored its support for the symbol of America, the flag of the United States. I know the way of constitutional amendments. I know that they require passage in the House and Senate by a certain number. I know that the executive branch of which I'm a part, has no role, that once a constitutional amendment passes the House and Senate, it goes directly to the states for ratification.

But I know also that I am a citizen of this nation. I was born in North Carolina and grew up there. I have seen this country grow and mature in 56 years of my life. I have two

daughters now who can do anything in this land of freedom, because of this nation's commitment to its ideals. Because men and women are willing to go abroad in uniform and fight for that flag. Though we in the executive branch have no official role, I say this to you today: I will not criticize, I will not oppose any organization or any person who seeks to preserve under law the sanctity of our flag.

The fifth element in our Preamble speaks to inculcating an individual's sense of commitment and obligation to community and state and nation. And the ninth element talks of transmitting to perpetuity the principles of justice and freedom and democracy. In its years of existence, the Legion has done that, has lived up to those principles in its Preamble. By your support of our youth, through your support of Scouting, through your support of Boys Nation and Boys State, through your support of American Legion Baseball, youngsters can learn examples, not just of fitness, not just of competitiveness, but of manliness, of leadership, of standing up and being counted, of being straight. Examples of the sort of one product of American Legion Baseball, young man from California, by the name of Mark McGwire, who I guess is doing all right right now.

The tenth element in the Preamble to our Constitution to the Legion Constitution, speaks of the sacred nature of our bond of comradeship which will be strengthened by our commitment to mutual helpfulness. The Legion has lived this throughout its life by programs in support of veterans, by volunteer services, by volunteer participation, by all the programs of which you are appropriately proud, by a lifetime of advocacy, of service, and of commitment to this nation. But perhaps most of all, in living out the ideals in the Preamble, the Legion has sent a message to all America. In your support of youth, by your example, the Legion has said not just to our youth, but to every American: we cannot have enough good citizens, we cannot have enough patriots, and we can never love our country too much.

Today, as we meet in this National Convention, we stand as a nation and as a world, at the dawn of a new millennium. Oh, I know, even though I count just something less than 18 months before January the 1st of 2000, there are experts out there that say "well, that's not the millennium, West. The Millennium's not until January 1, 2001." But, you and I know that come New Years Eve, December 31, 1999, it's going to feel like a new millennium to us and that's just as good as the real thing. That's a big change, a new millennium. Growing up as a young man, I thought a new year was a big deal. You changed the last number of the date and you had to remember that for the first couple of months but kept forgetting it. Then as I got a little more mature, or at least a little older, hopefully more mature, a new decade was a big deal. But now a new century is a big deal. Most people won't see the change of the century. My dad was born in 1906 and died in 1973. He never saw and will not see a change in the century, God rest his soul. But we will see the change of millennium. And that has to mean a very big deal to us. Indeed, it means change. And change has already begun. It's all around us. John Kennedy said some thirty plus years ago, "Change is the law of life." And those of us who stand with our eyes too firmly fixed on the past, and our feet too firmly rooted in the present, are sure to miss out on the opportunities of the future. So, change is coming to us. It is coming to your Department of Veterans Affairs. It is coming into our lives. And our challenge is to make sure that it is not change just for change's sake, but it is change that brings improvement in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Already, fairly significant change, almost radical change is underway in the delivery of health affairs. You have heard us over the last several years saying our mission is this: to

deliver more health care to more veterans. And to make it better. Change that simply brings a different way of doing health care is of no use to veterans. We must be changing because we are improving. That must be our mission. And so we will continue to open more outpatient clinics. We will continue to go where veterans are and in so doing, we will make sure that we keep the quality of our care as good as it was, but that we make it better.

There are some changes, however, in health care that will not occur. Let me mention those. Everywhere I traveled, I've heard the same rumor. "Mr. Secretary, you're going to be closing Vet Centers soon." Well, I have an idea for you, a short answer. Not on my watch! I don't have to explain this to you, you already know it. But I think I need to remind others. Vet Centers are a particularly American way of responding to a particular set of circumstances. At the end of the Vietnam War, we needed to react to the unique requirements of our veterans of Vietnam. We did it, as military say, by thinking outside the box. And we are not going to give up that way of dealing with that situation. It is one of the better things that we, in bureaucracy, have done.

Secondly, it is true that the Congress has required that beginning next month, eligible veterans to receive health care from a VA facility must be enrolled. But I say to you, no eligible veteran who comes to a VA facility for health care even after October 1st, even if he or she has not been previously enrolled, will be turned away. We will enroll them then. And I suspect you know that, but I will say it again. Some eligible veterans have been receiving health care, over the last two years since 1996. We have already processed their enrollment so that they can come without fear to continue to receive the health care to which they are entitled.

It has been my fortune and my honor to serve you, America's veterans and citizens, in several capacities, most recently as Secretary of the Army and now as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. But my profession, the work in which I spent the greater part of my professional life, has been as a lawyer. We have a saying in the practice of law that justice delayed is justice denied. As we proceed, as we deal with one of the most important matters to veterans, their claims for benefits, we must be mindful that every day of delay in resolving a veterans claim for benefits operates, in fact, is a day when that veteran has been denied benefits that he or she has earned. We will, then, as part of the change that is taking place in the VA, improve the timeliness of our processing of claims and, more importantly, improve the accuracy. Let me tell you why the latter is important. It serves our veterans no good at all if we give them fast answers but the answers are wrong. No veterans should have to wait for a decision and then seek reviews and appeals to get the VA to give the correct answer. So, under Joe Thompson, our new Under Secretary for Veterans Benefits, we will not only take as our mission the improvement of timeliness, we are going to improve the accuracy of our decisions on veterans claims for benefits. We can do no less, because veterans deserve it.

As I travel around the country, as I walk the halls of the headquarters in Washington, I've heard the words that I'm sure you hear. As we talk about ourselves at the Department and of the things we hope to do, to improve ourselves as we serve those who served this nation, one of the phrases I hear often is: "One VA". Now, that sounds mighty good to me. But what does it mean? Well, it doesn't matter what it means to us in the Department. What matters is what we make it mean to the veterans and their families who come for care. What it should mean is this. First of all, that we, in the Department, recognize that outside every one of our facilities are signs. And whether they say VA Medical Center of New Orleans or VA Regional Office or Vet Center or Outpatient Clinic, the most important word on those

signs is the word 'veterans'. Because it says to the veteran who enters those portals, inside are people who care, people who will help whatever the problem. And if we understand that to be what that means to our veteran, then, to us, it should mean this: even if a veteran comes to a medical center when she should have gone to the regional office or to a regional office when he should have gone to an outpatient clinic, our answer should not be just you're in the wrong place or you came at the wrong time or you should have called ahead. Our answer should be "and we will help you get where you need to be". To put it another way, "one VA" should mean that we recognize that a veteran has earned the right to expect that when he or she walks through our doors that his or her case or cause will be helped in some way before he leaves. No veteran should leave a VA facility without feeling helped in some way. And that is what "one VA" will mean to your VA, not just in the millennium but in the weeks and months ahead.

It has been my fortune to be in many places with our veterans. I've spoken to the Legion before about the time some years ago when I was privileged to be in Normandy, at the 50th commemoration of D-day. I'm reminded of that because yesterday, as I stood in the waiting room of the medical center right here in New Orleans, I spoke to a veteran. I'm always hesitant to disturb them as they sit there but how best can I learn how well we're serving than to talk to those who have come to be served, and those who have served. I asked him about his service, the things we all ask each other, what was his branch, when did he serve, where was he stationed. He was at D-day. And I was reminded that only a few short months ago, a veteran said to me in another part of the country, "Mr. Secretary, I was at the Battle of the Bulge. I fear that no one remembers." As is so often the case with a statement like that, there's some truth and some incorrectness about it. It is true that for two and a quarter centuries, America's veterans have stood up for this nation. Now we have growing to adulthood a new generation of Americans who take their freedoms and liberties for granted. They have not endured the fear of an armed assault on this nation. That is the precious gift that America's veterans have given them. But it is also true that as long as there is a nation, there will be those who will remind Americans of how we got where we are.

Stephen Spielberg's new movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, has caught attention all across America. I do not offer an opinion as to whether one should see it or not. But I offer you these observations, these points of view, one by Mr. Spielberg. He said in an interview, "If the best thing that ever happens with this movie is that someone has been to see it and is coming from seeing it and passes a veterans memorial cemetery," his words, "a veterans memorial cemetery, and looks over at the grave markers, and dwells for a moment on why they're there, the price they paid, and who we are as a people and what we owe them for their sacrifice, then I will believe this movie has accomplished all I could hope for." Well, bravo, Mr. Spielberg. I offer you this other view by a woman who wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper in Tennessee. She said she'd seen the movie with her veteran of World War II husband. She said that when it was ended and they drove home there were no words spoken for hours except for one sentence by him. "Welcome to my world." She said that as she saw the movie, she began to weep. These are her words. "I wept for the dead. I wept for those who came back. I wept for their families. I wept for the part of my husband I will never know and the part that his family will never see again." Then she closed with a message, not for you, not for veterans, but for all Americans. Her message was this: "See *Saving Private Ryan*. Visit a veterans cemetery. Pause when you pass the American flag and offer a silent prayer for peace. But most of all, thank a veteran for giving up a piece of his or her soul for each one of us."

Forty-six years ago, at an American Legion Convention, an event happened not unlike what happened here. You had speak to you earlier today the former UN Ambassador, the Secretary of State. In part of her message—she told us about it at breakfast—was about the awful menace of terrorists to our nation. Well, 46 years ago, at The American Legion Convention, Senator Adlai Stevenson, who would one day be Ambassador to the UN, also spoke about the challenges to our nation, to The American Legion. He pointed out several things. One thing he said was that the single most important bond that binds the Legion together, the heart of the Legion, is its devotion to patriotism. He said “in the life of our nation, the voices that are most clearly heard are the voices that speak with the accents of patriotism.” He said then, and it is true in many respects today, that “our world is alive with dangers to our country both here and abroad and yet we are on the eve of a great endeavor.” He said that if we are true to ourselves and to our traditions, we can place the cause of liberty so high and, I might add, the cause of our nation, that no power, no nation, no organization, no terrorist can ever pull it down. That effort, that mission, of placing the cause of liberty and the cause of our nation so high that no one in the world can pull it down is precisely the mission that The American Legion has taken on itself since 1919. Speaking for our nation, caring for our nation, planning for our nation’s future, and leading, yes, leading through advocacy, through legislative activity and through our example, leading our nation and the cause of peace and democracy. That is a high tradition and a high legacy indeed.

To you, all my fellow Legionnaires, I offer this prayer that God will bless you and your families. May God bless all who served this nation’s veterans, all 41 million since the birth of this nation, some 26 million of whom still live. God bless all whom they love and all who love them. God bless every man and woman in the uniform of the United States, who serves today and their families. On this day at this convention and many such conventions to come, whether in good times or times of social or economic challenge, whether in peace, for which we all pray, or, if need be, at war, may God bless, as well, the dear and noble nation that takes its majesty and strength from the souls of its citizens and takes its nobility from the hearts, the loyalty and the patriotism of its veterans.

...At this time, the delegates viewed a video.

...At this time, National Vice Commander Chisholm assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CHISHOLM: In reaching out to younger veterans, the Internet is a natural. Your Post and Department will find an Internet presence an important part of your overall communications strategy. To learn more about the Internet and how you can take advantage of services offered by The American Legion, see Dan Brannon at the Internet booth.

Please don’t forget the National Convention Blood Drive which continues until 3 p.m. today. This tradition of leaving a lasting impression of our Convention city must be sustained. While space limitations have put the drive in a mobile unit outside, the extra effort to donate blood is still worth it. We hope everyone will make that effort. I’m counting on you to help make a difference for veterans and others in the greater New Orleans area. Roll up your sleeve and give a unit of blood.

At the Spring National Executive Committee Meeting, two paintings were dedicated and hung in the NEC room in Indianapolis. *Ever Vigilant* and *Desert Storm* were painted by artist Mike Hagel. *Ever Vigilant* highlights the services of our men and women involved in Lebanon, Panama, and Grenada. *Desert Storm* recognizes the contributions by those who

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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fought in the forces of the Persian Gulf. Limited edition prints have been produced and are available for purchase at the Resolutions Assignment Office in the staff office.

...National Commander Jordan resumes the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: It is indeed an honor to have with us a career military man with a lengthy record filled with accomplishments. He served as the Assistant Division Commander for Operations of the 101st Airborne Division—Air Assault—which included a seven-month deployment for Operation Desert Storm. He's been the Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The Commander of the 18th Airborne Corps which included "Operation Uphold Democracy" in Haiti in 1994. Most recently he was Commander in Chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command. His military awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star Medal with V device and three oak leaf clusters and the Purple Heart. It is a distinct honor to present to you the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton.

**Address: General Henry H. Shelton, USA  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff**

It's great to be here with you today in Cajun country, here in the great state of Louisiana. And, of course, it's always great to talk to groups like The American Legion. As a youngster, growing up in the state of North Carolina, I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by veterans. And even then I was aware of what they had done for me, for my community, and for my country. I looked up to our veterans then and I still do today. So, let me right up front, thank you for what you are and for what you have done.

The other group I really enjoy talking to, of course, are the great young men and women who have followed in your footsteps. The soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the coast guardsmen, the marines who carry on your legacy and who carry on the great job of defending our nation and protecting our constitution. In every sense, they are your legacy. They carry on your traditions and they uphold your standards. I can assure you, you can be very proud of them today. Today, I'd like to tell you a little bit about what they are doing for our great nation. One of those fine young soldiers who worked for me was quite a fisherman. And we sometimes would talk about fishing and places we'd fished and the type of bait we used. Of course, inevitably it would turn into one of those fish telling stories. One day, he was telling me a story about a 300 lb. salmon that he'd caught and what a struggle it had been to get that fish in the boat. Of course, I'd never caught a salmon that was quite that large so I told him about the time when I got my hook caught on the bottom, at least I thought it was caught on the bottom. And I struggled with that and finally was able to pull up what it was hung on. And it turned out to be an old lantern. It was a water-proof lantern with a tag on it that said 1912. So, I told him that the phenomenal thing about that lantern was is that the light was still lit. Now I guess the young soldier had heard quite a few fishing tales, so he looked at me and he kind of rolled his eyes back in his head and he rubbed his chin and he said, "I tell you what, General, I'll take 200 lbs. off that salmon if you'll put out the light in your lantern." So, I promise today I'm not going to tell you any fishing tales.

But instead I would like to give you a brief sense of what America's armed forces are doing today. In many ways, I feel like that I stand here this morning giving a report to the stock holders. Because, in essence, that's what you are, in a very real sense. After all, many of you have made the biggest investment in our national security that our nation could ask.



You gave your youth, your time, your sweat, and in many cases, your blood to keep this nation strong and to keep it free.

I recently had the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform when I saw Steven Spielberg's movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. I know that many of you here today have either seen the movie or you've heard about it. I think that you would agree that it is a very powerful and a very moving film. The vivid scenes of Americans fighting at Normandy in 1944 unmask the stark realities of war, the pain, the suffering, the terror and, of course, the death. At the same time, I think that that movie shows us the very human face of courage, the ability of people to do their duty under extreme conditions, the dedication of the generation that fought to win World War II and to save the world from darkness. I think, personally, that the timing of that movie could not be better. It reminds a new generation of Americans, many of whom have no idea of the deadly horror of war, that ordinary people like you, from all of our wars, did extraordinary things under unbelievable conditions. It reminds all of us that freedom doesn't come easily or cheaply and that our heritage of freedom was purchased through courage, through determination and blood. In my mind, the movie is a statement about sacrifice and a wake-up call for anyone who would contemplate going to war for less than vital reasons.

Today, our nation's military faces some new and exciting challenges, challenges, I think, that require the leadership of The American Legion once again. Today's military needs your help. They need your help to bring us into the next century. We're going to need your strength, your ideas, your experience, and, of course, your continuing support. I think that all of you here today are well aware of the deep budget and personnel cuts that we've made since the Berlin Wall came down, cuts that needed to be made in order to adapt to a new and a very different security environment. Our forces and our budgets have basically been cut 40% over the last 10 years. But let me put that percentage in some real terms for you. Since 1989, we have reduced our active duty force alone by some 700,000 people. These cuts are larger than the combined manpower of the British, the German, the Dutch and the Danish forces put together. The army went from 18 active divisions to 10, the navy from 566 ships down to 354 and the air force from 36 to 20 fighter wings. In fact, as many of you are aware, I'm sure, we spend a smaller percentage of our nation's wealth on defense today than we have at any time since before World War II.

But even before we drew down, we became much busier. The end of our rivalry with the Soviet Union left a more volatile, complex, and uncertain world. Many ethnic, tribal and religious conflicts that lay dormant during the Cold War have revived. With ethnic warfare in Kosovo, tribal conflict continuing in the Congo, with an obstinate Saddam Hussein bent on reversing the order of the United Nations, and with terrorists like Osama bin Laden committed to killing Americans, the world remains a very dangerous place. When you study the history of this century, a history that many of you helped shape, you realize that an investment in stability now is far better than paying for the alternative—war and destruction—down the road. That is really the essence of our current strategy, to shape the international environment through our military, diplomatic, and economic strength, to help prevent conflict from escalating and getting out of hand.

In the past four years we have conducted some 48 major operations and today in support of our national strategy, we have over 125,000 troops deployed in dozens of countries around the world. These deployments, though difficult, are an investment in stability. If necessary, of course, we're willing and ready to respond with military force. We can conduct operations that send a very clear signal to terrorists, like the recent attacks on

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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their camps. While at North Korea the same time, we stand ready, if needed, to defeat a large scale invasion by and to deploy to the Persian Gulf if Saddam Hussein threatens the peace in the Middle East. This ability to respond when and where we are required makes us the preeminent power. Other nations can be important regional powers but only the United States is truly a global power. The ability to project our military power anywhere in the world and overwhelming strength is crucial, crucial not only to our security and stability and prosperity, but also to peace and stability of the entire world. As I'm sure you appreciate, staying as busy as we are also affects our readiness, our ability to perform our missions. At the strategic level, we are in fairly good shape. We can execute the national security strategy with all confidence. At the tactical level, where the rubber meets the road, however, we have some concerns, concerns in areas like pilot retention and in recruiting. With the booming economy that we have today, enlistment shows signs of falling off and recruiting is more of a challenge. Our units in the field, and more to the point, our men and women in uniform, and their families are having difficulty keeping up with the demanding pace of rigorous training, and frequent deployments. Recruiting and retention are just part of the bigger challenge of balancing our operational requirements with overall readiness and the quality of life for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen, while at the same time we try to prepare for tomorrow.

Not only will the future be a dangerous place, but our current projections indicate that by the year 2020, we could face a major power that could compete with us on a global scale. To maintain a decisive edge, to make sure that we are prepared for the future battlefield, especially with our much smaller force, we must modernize tomorrow's force with the best available technology and insure that we have the best available doctrine. All this is a very tall order and especially challenging in an era of balanced budgets, given the tremendous demands on our operational forces and the high cost of new weapon systems.

So, in short, I need your help to get the job done. First and foremost, we need The American Legion to keep fighting for our veterans. That's critical to us because our young service members and their families and even potential recruits watch what happens to retirees and to veterans benefits very carefully. Young people today are planning for the long run. They're looking at future benefits when they make their decision as to whether or not to enter or to stay with the military. They talk in terms of lifetime earnings, something I never thought about when I was their age. If we want to keep good people in the military, it is important for our country then to live up to the commitments made to our veterans. How you are treated sends out a very strong message to anyone contemplating a career in the military. We must offer a good package, one that our recruits recognize that has a solid commitment behind it. Of course, The American Legion has been fighting for veterans since it was founded in 1919. And we know that we can count on your continued support.

We will also need your help in another area. Our general population, of course, is losing military experience and the wisdom and understanding that comes along with military service. Preparing our military forces for the future, to be as ready tomorrow as we are today, will not come cheaply or easily. We need you to continue to educate the American people on national security issues. We need you to continue to speak out about the importance of military preparedness and the reason this nation needs to maintain a strong defense. Some of you fought in combat units that were probably not well-equipped, well-manned or as well trained as they should have been. You saw the price of not being ready, a price that was usually paid in the lives and blood of Americans. The American Legion has been a wise and influential voice on national security issues in the past and has provided

service to our veterans, the local communities, and the nation. And now more than ever we need you to send a clear message to the American people and their representatives.

There is some good news in my speech today. We are approaching the 21st century, I think, from a position of great strength and prosperity. We know who helped get us where we are. It was you, the proud veterans who served when times were tough and who made us the world's strongest force for peace and stability. From the battlefields of Europe to the Pacific, from Korea to Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, to the halls of Congress, you have helped make America what it is today. In many ways, I think, we are only beginning to realize the profound contributions that the members of The American Legion have made to our nation over the years. You can be proud of the legacy that you have left for your children and for your grandchildren. Because of you, we stand on the threshold of a century that promises to be the best that America has ever known.

As the movie *Saving Private Ryan* ends, there was an old veteran standing there many years after the war, looking down at the cemetery at Omaha beach and, at that point, looking down over a long and endless row of white crosses that adorn the graves of soldiers who died in the fighting at Normandy. The man is consumed by his memories, the memories of his lost comrades. He wonders why, why of all his fellow soldiers was he miraculously saved from death. He wonders if he earned all the blessings that he asked. With tears of grief, he turns to his wife and he asks "Tell me that I've been a good man. Tell me that I've lived a good life." Every one of you here this morning has fought the good fight and you've lived a noble life. Every one of you has earned our blessings and you've helped create a better world. Our nation owes you a great debt. I opened this morning by saying thank you and I close by saying thank you. Thank you for asking me to be here today and thank you for your service and sacrifice. May God bless you and may God bless the men and women who serve in deadly and dangerous places throughout the world.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: When Legionnaires recite the Preamble to our Constitution, I always am drawn to one of our guiding principles, the need to preserve the memory and incidents of our involvement in the great wars. Our next guest is a man who has done just that for years. He is a distinguished historian, an acclaimed author of more than 20 books, Director Emeritus of the Eisenhower Center, retired Boyd Professor of History at the University of New Orleans and President of the National D-Day Museum. Among his books: *Citizen Soldiers*, *The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany*; and *D-Day June 6, 1944: The Climatic Battle of World War II*. He is a dynamic and inspiring speaker who taps into the pulse of today's societal need to gain insight to the future through knowledge of the past. It is a distinct honor to present to you Stephen Ambrose.

**Address: Stephen E. Ambrose, Author**

It's a thrill beyond words to be so privileged to have an opportunity to speak at The American Legion 80th National Convention, which is quite an accomplishment. But I think things have been a little bit heavy around here this morning, so I'm going to open with a joke that one or two of you may feel speaks directly to you. This older couple sold the house and bought an apartment in a condominium. And they moved in and went out to dinner that night. The next morning, their neighbors had a little coffee for them, a get together, to get to know one another. They were chatting and a man said to the new arrival, "You think you're gonna like it here?" He said, "Yeah, I'm pretty sure we're going to be very happy

here, it's a very nice place. And by the way, the wife and I went out last night to a neighborhood restaurant for dinner and it was just great, a very nice place, good ambiance, imaginative menu, wonderful cooking, good service, reasonable prices. Boy, we're going back there." And the man said to him, "Well, what's the name of that restaurant?" And his face went blank. And something akin to panic began to set in. And he said, "Listen you're gonna have to help me out here. My memory's a little short. You're going to have to help me out." He said, "Now tell me what is the name of that flower that comes in many different colors, it grows on a real thick stem that's got thorns on it." And the guy said "Rose". He said, "That's it. Rose." He turned to his wife and said, "Rose, what was the name of that restaurant?"

Well, that speaks to memory which is the business I'm in. I make my living reading other people's mail, their memoirs, doing interviews and oral histories. Nineteen forty-five was the worst year in the world's history. More people were killed violently in 1945 than in any year, more high explosives were set off, more buildings destroyed, more homes burned down. Nineteen forty-five was also the worst year in the history for another more philosophical reason. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a nearly universal belief in the western world in the idea of progress. Now, this was a new thought. In the beginning of the 19th century, nobody even knew what the word 'progress' meant. Because at the beginning of the 19th century, everything was the way it always had been and, so far as anyone could tell, always would be. At the beginning of the 19th century, nothing moved faster than the speed of a horse. Nothing ever had, nothing ever would. And then came the scientific and technological revolutions that gave us the railroad and the steam ship and the automobile and right on the verge of the airplane at the beginning of the 20th century and the telephone and the telegraph. And people developed this new philosophical concept of progress, best expressed by the saying, "Everyday in every way things are getting better and better." And then came 1914. And after the first World War it was a lot harder to believe in progress than it had been in 1910. Then came the Depression. Then came an even greater war, the cataclysm of World War II. And by 1945, it was impossible to believe in progress. It seemed certain that the scientific and technological revolution was going to lead to the end of history, that there would be a World War III, that it would be nuclear and that we would destroy ourselves as a race.

In that year of 1945, in the midst of all this gloom and catastrophe and destruction, around the world the sight of twelve teenage boys, a squad, in uniform, carrying rifles, struck terror into people's hearts, everywhere. Whether this was a squad of Russian troops in Berlin or Krakow or Dresden or Leipzig or Warsaw or a German squad in Holland or a Japanese squad in Seoul or Canton or Manila, the sight of that squad of boys armed in uniform meant for sure to civilians wherever they were: rape, pillage, looting, senseless destruction, wanton murder. There was a single exception. That was the sight of a squad of twelve American GIs, teenage boys, in uniform, carrying weapons. Wherever they were around the world, in Germany itself, in France, in Italy, in Luxembourg, in Belgium, in Holland, in the Philippines, in Japan after September, in Korea, in China, the sight of those twelve American teenage boys brought the biggest smiles to the lips of the people who saw them that they have ever smiled in their lives and brought joy to their heart because those American kids meant candy and cigarettes and C-rations and freedom. We had the best of our young men half way around the world in both directions, not to terrorize, not to conquer, but to liberate. And we have sent halfway around the world in both directions, young men, boys, who knew the difference between right and wrong. That's something those Russian

boys had never learned. That's something that those boys in Germany had not learned. That's something that the Japanese boys had never learned. But the American boys had learned it and they practiced it.

When Hitler declared war on the United States on December 10, 1941, he made a bet. His bet was that the Hitler youth would always out-fight the 'Boy Scouts'. That the spoiled sons of democracy could never stand up to the tough and hardened warriors of a totalitarian state. Hitler lost that bet. And it was the 'Boy Scouts' who prevailed and won. In the process they learned a lot, the most important was they learned responsibility at an astonishingly young age. I am sure there are guys here in this room right now who at age 19 or 20 commanded a B-17. There are guys I've known who at age 19 or 20 commanded rifle companies in action. I know a guy, Tony Duke is his name, at 20 years old, commanded an LST, took it across the Atlantic and brought it in at Omaha Beach. Boy, those were powerful lessons in leadership and responsibility those young men learned and they brought that home with them. And they brought home with them a sense of team work, what the team can do.

And they came home having seen enough of death and destruction, having seen all the blood flow they ever wanted to see in their lives. They wanted to build. So they went to college on the GI Bill of Rights, the best single piece of legislation the United States Congress ever passed. And then they went out to build. They built the interstate highway system. And they built the St. Lawrence Seaway and they built the modern suburbs and they built the medical and educational institutions that we are privileged enough to have today, the best in the whole world. They built the modern corporations. They built thousands and tens of thousands and ultimately hundreds of thousands small businesses. These guys didn't want any more war. But they had seen in their youth the folly of isolationism. And they had seen in their youth the folly of trying to stay out of the next war by unilaterally disarming. So they changed our foreign and defense policy from what it had been when they were in high school to a new policy, one of support for the Department of Defense, one of support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. They didn't want any more war, but they had seen tyranny at work. They knew what totalitarianism was. So, they stood up to Stalin and his successors. They did something else, that generation. Here at home they stood up to Jim Crow. And thank God Almighty they got him out of our lives.

So, today, 53 years after 1945, because of that generation and what it did, we can believe in progress again. In fact, it's impossible to not believe in progress. We see it all around us and things really are getting better every day in every way and now for everyone. Around the world democracy is on the march and totalitarians of the 20th century have been thrown into the ash can of history where they belong.

I spend a lot of my time with veterans. Talking to them about what they did when they were young. When I end interviews whether it's a group interview or an individual interview, I try to conclude by asking if they want to say something about what it all meant. Well, about half of the them shrug that off. They say, "What the hell am I supposed to say to that question?" And they just let it drop. Others give a joke. I fought for mom and I fought for apple pie and so on. And others can give me some very, and do thoughtful answers. One guy told me when I asked him what did it all mean? How could you have kept going in the bulge, below 0° every night, your foxhole alternately freezing and thawing, shells coming it at any time, can't smoke a cigarette at night, total sleep deprivation? Haven't had a hot meal in weeks, haven't changed your underwear in weeks, people shooting at you, trench foot setting in? How the hell did you endure all that? And one guy

said to me, "Listen, Steve, I was 18 years old. I had my whole life ahead of me. I knew the difference between right and wrong. So, I fought because I didn't want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed." And another GI said to me, in response to a similar question, "I feel like I did my part in turning the 20th century from a century of darkness into a century of light." And that's what that generation, born 10 years before and 10 years after 1920, that's what that generation of Americans, men and women have given to the world. They've changed the 20th century from a century of darkness to one of light.

We're trying here in New Orleans to do our best to honor the men and women of the Second World War. One of the ways that we're doing it is with the National D-Day Museum, which is on Magazine Street, not very far from here, the convention center. The National D-Day Museum will commemorate all the D-Days of the Second World War, North Africa, the Mediterranean, the Pacific, and, of course, Normandy. I am often asked why New Orleans? The answer goes back to my very first meeting with General Eisenhower, who had called me Gettysburg to talk about the possibility of my writing his biography. After we had spent a day together, he asked me, "You're living in New Orleans. I'd be interested, did you ever know Andy Higgins?" I said "No, sir. Mr. Higgins died the year before I moved to New Orleans." And Ike said, "That's too bad. He's the man that won the war for us." And my jaw just dropped. I mean that's an awful strong statement from such a source. And he saw my astonishment and he said, "No, it's true. If Andy Higgins hadn't designed and built those landing craft, we never could have gone in over an open beach and the whole strategy of the war would have been changed." From the moment I heard that statement, I wanted to do something here in New Orleans to honor Andy Higgins. I and many others in town have been working on this National D-Day Museum for a long time. We are close to over the top. Like any museum in the world, we need help. Steven Spielberg has sure helped out a lot with the movie and with a very generous contribution of his own, as has Tom Hanks. And I would like to ask your help in getting this museum completed. We've got a booth right outside the main door here and we're now going to show you a short film clip to remind you of who Andy Higgins was and what he did in turning out those LCV's and so many others.

...At this time, the delegates watched a video.

MR. AMBROSE: That gives you a bit of an introduction to the D-Day Museum. We are opening on the 6th of June, the year 2000 and y'all come.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Mr. Ambrose, please remain with me. You have honored us by your presence here today and an entire generation by your writings. I'm talking about the World War II generation. Before you leave us to return to your summer home, it is a privilege and honor to present to you a special Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of your work. The award reads: "Certificate of Appreciation, Presented to Stephen Ambrose, Author and Historian. Your research and writing in *Citizen Soldiers* captured the resolve and determination of the World War II generation. Your recognition of the pivotal role of this generation in American history will continue to serve as an inspiration to future generations. Presented on behalf of the 2.9 million men and women of The American Legion in appreciation of your contributions to preserving the memories and incidents of Americans in World War II. Given on September 9, 1998, during the 80th National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana."

**Presentation: The Spirit of Normandy Award**  
**Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The by-lined column begins, "Once upon a time, there was a war..." The writer is Sharon Randall, the column entitled "War stories from Dad were G-rated." Her writings were sparked by a movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. In her moving commentary she tells of her father's stories from World War II and how they all began that gentle way. As her column continues she writes, "Unlike Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, my father's stories had no battles, no bullets, no blood or bowels or severed limbs. No soldiers crying for their mothers. They were about history and geography, not heroics or gore. He cleaned them up, the way he always tried to clean up everything for me." I'd say that Sharon Randall's father was like countless other World War II veterans—men and women who have given so much for America. It's because Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* has had such an impact on nearly every person who has seen the film, that we decided to create a special award for him. "The Spirit of Normandy" Award. What a beautiful title. The greatness of the film will be measured by those who do such things, while the greatness of the World War II generation is measured by its accomplishments. Before we present the award, you must watch this video.

...At this time the delegates watched a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Spirit of Normandy Award is being presented to Steven Spielberg for extraordinary service to American veterans through production of the motion picture *Saving Private Ryan*. The inscription on the award reads: "Your unflinching eye for detail and masterful cinematic talent astutely capture the combat-tested loyalty, bravery and sacrifice of America's World War II patriots; men and women who lived, and in many instances died, by a simple credo: I will not fail those with whom I serve. Your timeless work will enable future generations to understand the pain, thirst and exhaustion of dedicated men and women who asked little of their country and gave everything they had to preserve freedom. Presented this 9th day of September, 1998, at the 80th National Convention of The American Legion in New Orleans, Louisiana."

I want to emphasize, it is highly unusual for The American Legion to present an award to an individual who is not present to accept it. But Steven Spielberg is going to be a rare exception. Mr. Spielberg wanted to be with us today in New Orleans. However his schedule would not permit it. He is in Europe where the film is just being released. He did take time to send a very special video message of acceptance. It is almost as powerful as the film.

STEVEN SPIELBERG: (via video tape) Hello, Commander Jordan and all the Legionnaires in New Orleans. If I didn't have to be in Europe for the first openings there of *Saving Private Ryan*, I would be with you tonight personally, to thank as many of you as I could for what you have done for this country and for this world. I made the film to honor the service, the sacrifice of all the veterans. Even those before you are really the ones to be honored. This award, this Spirit of Normandy Award, may be given to me but it is a tribute to all of those who are here and those who we can only remember.

Now, for 80 years, The American Legion has been one of their most consistent champions. It's fitting that your convention is actually in New Orleans because that will also be the site of the D-Day museum which will open in the year 2000. Now, although I never had to serve in the military and thankfully, never had to face combat, I grew up with a respect for the men and women of our armed forces. World War II, the defining event of the 20th century in my opinion has always been part of my family's life because I grew up with

my father's stories and of the stories of his comrades. In many other families, the younger generations may never have had the opportunity to know what their fathers and grandfathers went through. For some, the pain of their remembrances might have been too much. But what's important is that we know our collective path, in order to protect our collective future. Now, with response to *Saving Private Ryan*, generations are coming together to understand and appreciate how fortunate we are today to live in a free world because of what you and the millions of other veterans did for us. So, on behalf of everyone who made the film, I thank you for The Spirit of Normandy Award and Legionnaires, I salute you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: "The Spirit of Normandy Award." will hold an honored spot among all the awards Mr. Spielberg will ever earn. As for his film *Saving Private Ryan*, its impact on today's movie-goers and future generations is an unknown. But, for writer Sharon Randall, the close of her column, I believe, says it all. "Is *Saving Private Ryan* every bit as violent, as graphic and as offensive as you've heard? Absolutely, it is. And that is how it should be. It's a story my father wouldn't tell me, and one I needed to hear. The best I can say about the movie is that I wish my dad were still alive to see it. I wish we could see it together, he and I. After the credits, we could go out for coffee and dessert—on me. Then I'd say, 'Tell me a story, Daddy!'" Thank you Mr. Spielberg for helping us all to gain a higher level of respect for those brave men and women and their families who fought and won World War II for us and for the future.

Our next guest is a retired Air Force Brigadier General, and President of the Board of Directors of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation. This woman is so enthusiastic that I believe she could sell ice cubes to an Eskimo. She's dynamic. She gets the job done, a woman who knows how to get things done, she has for several years led the nation's effort to build a memorial for all women of military service. She is a member of American Legion Post 477 in Chrisman, Illinois. Please welcome, Wilma Vaught.

**Address: Brig. General Wilma L. Vaught, USAF (Ret.), President  
Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc.**

A memorial or a monument, at its best should speak to the past, be relevant to the present and an inspiration in the future. When you finish one of these things as we did and dedicated this one last October, you wonder if you've really succeeded in doing that. The other day I received a letter from a Major, a woman. She said to me, "Participating in dedication day in the candlelight march was the highlight of my military career. Saying thank you, however, just doesn't seem to be adequate so I thought I would tell you just what the memorial means to me. I am a member of the United States Air Force Nurse Corps in the Reserves. I have 16 years total service time with nearly 8 years active duty. I have greatly enjoyed my military career over the years. Over the past four years, however, I have constantly struggled to balance the demands of a full time job, raising a family, and my reserve IMA position. Many times it would have been easy for me to give up the reserves. Every time I started to feel overwhelmed, I would receive a newsletter or other communication from the Memorial Foundation. It would remind me of all the women that had gone before me and all the women that are traveling the path with me now. Countless times, the memorial has inspired me to go on with my military career. Dedication day was truly inspiring because I talked with so many women who did not have the opportunities that I do. I hear their voices of encouragement now when I'm tempted to give up." I want to speak a moment to what we have done, what we're doing and what we're going to do.



What we have done is, that we have the memorial built. It isn't finished yet. We still have exhibits to do, a theater to equip and a few things like that, but it is done at a cost of about \$22 million. And for the first time, in my life, the entranceway to Arlington National Cemetery looks like the entranceway ought to look and we can be proud of it. And, Tony, you've got to hear this because the second thing we did was we formed a book publishing company. We've published this book in concurrent with dedication, called *In Defense of a Nation: the Service Women in World War II*. I'm going to give you a copy of this book. And you're going to give me \$20 for it. when you regain your voice and get back to Maine, you can take this to the library there so that they'll have the definitive history of the women who served in World War II. And I'll autograph it. I want to propose to other of the Legion Posts, that you too get one of these books. We're selling them over here at the entranceway to the VA health area. Take it to the library because the women in World War II, just as did the men, did things women had never done before. They went places American women had never gone before and perhaps never have gone since. And they did a tremendous job. I've had a wonderful career as a result of what they did. We also, as most of you know, got Congressional approval of a coin, some years ago. We're still selling those. And the day you see me not wearing this one, you'll know we've sold the last of the 24,000 we still have left. We convinced the Postmaster General, Marvin Runyon, to issue a stamp, the second one in the history of the United States honoring military service women. And that was issued in conjunction with the dedication. We now have a store where women service members and veterans can buy memorabilia. We help veterans, even though we're not a veterans service organization, both men and women. We're a voice on military women's issues. I believe that The American Legion is going to take a stand supporting gender integrated training. I hope you'll do that, that is a step in the right direction for our women today. We have generated visibility of women veterans and service women.

We're working to finish the memorial. We're scanning pictures in. We're posting records because we concentrated on getting the memorial built rather than doing those kinds of things. And we're learning to operate the memorial seven days a week, and open every day except Christmas. I hope that when you're in Washington, D.C., you will come and visit it. It's America's newest and, we believe, one of its best memorials. We're working to raise money still because we ended with a debt of about \$5 million. The American Legion, to date, has contributed \$233,402 toward the building of this memorial. And soon your name will go on one of the exhibit alcoves. It already is on our donor recognition wall at the entranceway. We're also having a series of programs to keep the memorial alive. We're having programs on women's health and we're going to be doing a variety of things like that so that it means something to those who serve today and those who serve tomorrow.

I want to close with a quotation that is now inscribed in one of the glass tablets that form the skylight of the memorial because it's something a nurse from World War II, who served in the China, Burma, India theater, wrote me back in 1988 or 1989. It became a charge to me of what I felt we had to do with this memorial. She said, "Let the generations know that the women in uniform also guaranteed our freedom. That our resolve was just as great as the brave men who stood among us. And with victory, our hearts were just as full and beat just as fast. That the tears fell just as hard for those we left behind us." That's what we have done. That's what we're doing. That's what we're going to continue to do is let the generations know that the women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom. And I hope that you will continue to support us, as we work to resolve our debt. Believe me, I don't plan to leave until that debt is paid.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The National Commander has asked me to read correspondence that we received from our next scheduled guest. Due to the Northwest strike, Diane Carlson Evans could not be with us today. However, she has sent the following letter to be read at the 80th Annual National Convention.

**Address: Diane Carlson Evans, Chair and Founder  
Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, Inc.**

To my fellow Legionnaires and friends,

I regret that I am unable to be with you this week due to Northwest Airlines canceling my flight out of Minnesota. Today I want to thank you for your steadfast pledge to ensure that the legacy of women's service to our country is forever etched in history. Your extraordinary support made it possible for us to honor Vietnam women veterans with a beautiful memorial near the Wall of names at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Please join us there on November 11, this Veteran's Day for the 5th Anniversary Celebration of the Dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial. The stories of Vietnam veterans, who are represented in the compelling bronze statue will come to life "in their own voices" as these men and women express their feelings and experiences through poetry, song and speeches. Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., U.S. Navy, Retired, Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff will serve as Honorary Chair of the Commemoration and join us on that special day. Five years ago at the dedication he said, "Perhaps the most enduring aspect of this memorial will be its impact on the future. It says something profound about what vigorous, courageous and determined individuals can do in time of crisis. What a marvelous example—role model so to speak—it will be for coming generations of young American women. Hopefully, it will inspire them to dream, to strive, to challenge adversity, and not to be intimidated by peril. What a magnificent legacy for the women who served during the Vietnam War to leave to our great Republic."

As many of you know, the long awaited date for dedication was met by securing a construction loan. With the same loyalty and conviction that helped build the Memorial, our friends and volunteers substantially reduced the loan this summer by working with us on a special fundraising event. We thank them and each of you who have supported us over these many challenging years. We ask for your continued support as we retire what is left of the cost of constructing the Memorial and funding for our ongoing education and research efforts.

I wish to extend personal thanks to Roger Olson, Minnesota Department American Legion Commander, this year for his outstanding support of women veterans and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project. His efforts on our behalf are deeply appreciated and an example to all.

I look forward to seeing you on Veteran's Day at the 5th Anniversary activities at the Vietnam Women's Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., as we commemorate and remember the service of our sister and brother veterans who made profound sacrifices for our country. A reunion and dance will take place at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel on the evening of November 11, 1998. Please contact our Washington, D.C. office at 202-328-7253 for more information.

On a personal note, I am moving to Helena, Montana in October. My husband has taken a position in the Department of Surgery with the Veterans Affairs Hospital at Ft.

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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Harrison. We both look forward to getting to know veterans in Montana and are eager to meet you in Big Sky Country!

Best wishes to each and everyone of you for a fabulous convention. I miss you. And my special thanks go to our wonderful commander this year, Tony Jordan.

Sincerely,  
Diane Carlson Evans, RN

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Our next guest is no stranger to The American Legion National Convention. He has appeared before delegates on many occasions since 1991 when he was the Executive Director of the Department of Defense 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemoration Committee. We all know that his challenge was great—and the results magnificent. Today he is the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for International Affairs. This is a job that involves acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Army on all international activities and affairs—including coordination, integration and oversight. He is a retired United States Army Lieutenant General and a member of Raymond E. Maxie Post 141, Richmond, Virginia. Please welcome, Claude Kicklighter.

**Address: Lt. General Claude M. Kicklighter, USA (Ret.)  
Deputy Under Secretary of the Army, International Affairs**

National Commander Tony Jordan, former National Commanders, National Officers, fellow veterans, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for the opportunity to participate and be at our 80th Annual Convention. This afternoon, I'd like to briefly provide you an overview on the planning for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. Congress has asked that the Department of Defense in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs help our nation organize this very important effort.

But before I begin, I'd like to thank the Legion for all you did to help a grateful nation in thanking, honoring our World War II veterans and their families as we together commemorated the 50th anniversary of World War II. The Legion was a major force in what was accomplished. You greatly assisted in recruiting World War II commemorative communities, to assisting, honoring our veterans where they lived in Home Town, America. You provided superb educational materials and veterans to talk to our schools and produced some great publications to tell the story of the World War II veterans and their sacrifice. Your National Commanders, during this period, played a major role and the National Headquarters helped plan and support our national effort throughout this time.

As this organization knows, the World War II generation was asked to fight the most destructive war in history, which you've heard a lot about this morning, a war that we were not prepared for. We had to buy time to get ready for that war and we bought that time with the lives of young Americans. Our World War II veterans fought and won that war and literally saved the world. When that war ended, they came home, took off their uniforms, rolled up their sleeves and many went back to school on the GI Bill, but together, they worked to build this strong and free and beautiful America. At the end of World War II, we were the most powerful military force the world had ever known. Five short years later, on June the 25th, 1950, over 150,000-man North Korean army invaded South Korea with a surprise attack. We had almost dismantled our defense establishment. And again, we were unprepared to fight. Once again, we bought that time to get ready to fight with the lives of

young Americans. And in fact, many of you in this audience, have the wounds of our nations unpreparedness. We should never be unprepared again.

The lessons from World War II and the Korean War are clear. If we want peace, freedom and prosperity, we as a nation must remain strong, prepared, and engaged. By the Korean War's end, three years, one month and 2 days later, United Nations forces from 22 countries, led by the United States, had fought Communism to a stand-still. It halted the Soviet-supplied and supported North Korean-Chinese forces, which at one point during that war were three times the size of the United Nations forces. This victory halted Communist aggression in Asia and saved South Korea. This was a major turning point in world history, and the beginning of the end of Communism. This was the first time that war had been fought under the United Nations flag. Had the United States and the United Nations not stepped in so promptly in June 1950, in spite of the heroics of South Korean forces, that nation would have fallen within a few weeks. If South Korea had fallen, this world would have had extreme consequences. The outcome of the Cold War and the world that we live in today would have been greatly different than it is.

By the time the armistice was signed and the guns fell silent on July 27, 1953, the casualty toll of the United Nations forces alone were nearly 100,000 killed and 295,000 wounded. The United Nations prisoners-of-war suffered terribly. In addition to those who died of starvation and of freezing weather, almost 12,000 were murdered by their captors. Of the millions of refugees, hundreds of thousands became casualties, and many are still unaccounted for today. The death and destructions for that war was horrendous. Once again, when they were needed American soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen were fighting a desperate and intense war far from home in some of the worst weather and terrain imaginable. U.S. service members, many of them veterans of World War II, paid a severe price. In the three years of that war, more than 35,000 U.S. servicemen were killed, more than 100,000 were wounded, and several thousand were missing. These are the official casualties. But as all of you know, no one who serves in war is left unchanged. The freedom of South Korea came at a high price. Just ask the veterans who fought there and their families who waited at home, especially the families that lost loved ones, the Gold Star Mothers and Fathers, the Gold Star Wives, and the Gold Star Children. This group, like you, know that freedom is not free.

Although the Korean War was a combined effort, it would not have been fought for very long without American service members and material. American men and women left a proud legacy at places like Pusan, Inchon, the Chosin Reservoir, Bloody Ridge, Pork Chop Hill, Mig Alley, and a hundred other battlefields on the rugged peninsula, places that will forever live in the minds and hearts of those who fought and served there. Although the fighting has stopped, that war has not ended. Almost half the century since the 1953 armistice was signed, American and South Korean forces have been standing a vigilant guard along a very fortified and very dangerous demilitarized zone near the 38th parallel. The passage of time has revealed much about the lasting legacy of those who fought in Korea, the land of the morning calm.

You will recall many questioned our involvement in that far off war. How wrong they were. The results speak for themselves. Today, South Korea is a strong growing democracy of almost 50 million hardworking, productive people who in just two short generations have created an astonishing prosperity and democracy on the ashes of that war. Compare this with North Korea. For half a century, a heavily armed police state is ruled by a tyrannical dictator and tied to a bankrupt Communist ideology. Presently they're experiencing financial decay

and nationwide malnutrition. This nation, although on the verge of collapse, is still a very dangerous country, one of the largest military forces in the world today. Recent firing of the missiles across Japan is an example of the danger and capability that exists in North Korea. What a contrast. The miracle of the South Korean people was brought about as a result of the courage, valor, selfless service, and sacrifice of the United States, South Korea and United Nations forces. Without them, South Korea would have been subjugated under communism and the history of Asia and the rest of the world would have been changed for the worst. The light of freedom that burns so brightly in South Korea and many other nations today, would have been extinguished. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the number of nations that enjoy freedom, would have been greatly altered. The legacy of our Korean War veterans is a strong and free South Korea. The war was a major victory in ending the Cold War, and produced a much safer and better world for our children and our grandchildren to grow up in and live in. I'd like to ask the Korean War veterans to please stand and let us recognize and thank you.

In closing, let me briefly outline the planning for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. This is a very important mission for our nation and it needs all of us, and especially The American Legion. And I know that we have that support. Our goal together is to insure that every Korean War veteran and family know that our nation, our grateful nation, remembers their service 50 years ago. The Korean War veterans have never been properly thanked and honored for what they accomplished and this may be the last chance. We as a nation have the chance to right that wrong. Together we must find our veterans in communities, veteran hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes all across this great land and ensure they know that what they accomplished has not been forgotten. We must also insure America knows that these veterans saved a great nation and its people from enslavement and stopped Communism dead in its tracks. The world is a much safer place as a result of their service and sacrifice.

We must make a special effort to remember the prisoners-of-war and the missing-in-action. Over 7,000 U.S. troops were captured and more than 3,000 died in captivity, many of which were murdered, 4400 survived unbelievable conditions. Today, Americans who fought in that war, are still missing. We will make a special effort to recognize the contributions of women and minorities. But most importantly, this program will be organized and our efforts will be focused on Home Town, America. As we did during the 50th Anniversary of World War II, we want to get our communities, our civic and veterans organizations involved all across this nation to insure that we find those veterans.

There are only about 12-14% of the Korean War veterans who belong to veterans service organizations, so we've got to go to Home Town, America to find them. There were more than 7,700 commemorative communities as we supported the 50th Anniversary of World War II. The Legion helped us recruit those communities. And we need you, our Legion posts, to get our communities involved and support our local schools. Together we will provide materials, posters, lesson plans, teachers guides and CD-ROMs to the classrooms. We will remember all the services, the Army, the Marines, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Coast Guard and all the components, the active, the guard, the reserve and the civilians that supported that war. The commemorations will begin on June 25, 2000, the 50th anniversary of the attack on South Korea and will end on July 27, 2003 on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the armistice. Throughout this period, we'll commemorate the key events of the war in Korea and all across this nation. We're asking organizations of the annual veterans events, such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day, to insure the Korean War

veterans are the centerpiece during the period 2000-2003. We've already had many cities and states to volunteer to sponsor major events during the commemorations. The Commander in Chief of the U.S. forces in Korea, General Shalikashvili has organized a task force and is planning events in Korea and as an organization to assist veterans, as they return to Korea. And so has the Korean government. We briefed The American Legion national leadership in November and will continue to provide annual updates to your senior leaders. We're counting on the Legion to help organize and support this effort. In partnership with The American Legion, Department of Veterans Affairs, and other veterans service organizations, we will recruit commemorative communities and organizations all across America to thank and honor our veterans, where they live in Home Town, America. It's now time to start the recruiting and organizing for this effort.

Our commemorative communities will be issued a flag, as shown here. This flag that you see on the screen, the blue and white streamer through the middle represents the Korean War battle streamer. The 22 stars represent around that item in the middle represent the 22 allied nations that fought and supported each other in that war. And the words "Freedom is not free" was the phrase that was added to that flag by our veterans. This flag also will be used by the Korean nation, South Korea, as its commemorative flag. Together we want to make sure that this flag is flying across all the communities in America as we go through this commemoration. Each community will get a certificate signed by the Secretary of Defense and materials to help support their program. Together we'll provide educational materials to the schools.

The World War II veterans were issued an honorable service lapel pin at the end of World War II and they affectionately call that pin, as you recall, the ruptured duck. The Korean veterans were never issued a Korean War service lapel pin. Working with the Veterans Administration, we plan to issue the pin that you see on the screen to the veterans during the commemorative period, who fought this war. It's been said that any nation that forgets its veteran ceases to be a great nation. America and The American Legion will never forget its veterans. I want to thank you for the support that you provide every day to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guardsmen around the world and I want to thank the Legion for all you've done in the 80 years. You gave our nation the GI Bill, you supported our youth, our needy, our health programs, you protect our flag, and the list goes on and on. I know we can count on you.

**Presentation: 1998 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year  
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

The American Legion—since 1919—has been a strong advocate of law and order in our nation. The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is an honor bestowed on an individual for setting the example in community service as a law enforcement officer. The man we honor with this award today takes community service and involvement to a very high level. He's a deputy with the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office who goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens he serves. In 1985, he was one of the organizers of the Plaquemines Parish Junior Deputy Organization. It's a youth program that gets young people involved in law enforcement activities. He's a dedicated Crime Prevention Officer who visits schools, churches, military bases and senior citizen homes, organizing citizens to protect themselves from crime. He and Joan, his wife of 18 years, are partners in holy matrimony and crime prevention as well. An inspiration to all of

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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us, this public servant helps his Crime Prevention Office to distribute Christmas toys and goodies to underprivileged children. I'm honored today to present the 1998 American Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to a Legionnaire from Post 329, in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. Please give a warm American Legion welcome to Deputy Sheriff Earl P. 'Pete' McDonald Jr. "America's Finest, National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Presented to Deputy Sheriff Earl P. McDonald, Jr. for Distinguished Service above and beyond your assigned duties, rendered through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievement. By your demonstrated performance, you have personified the versatile police officer who represents America's Finest."

The American Legion congratulates you and wishes you continued success in your career. Presented at the 80th Annual National Convention New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8-10, 1998.

EARL P. MCDONALD: It's a great honor to be able to receive this plaque today. First of all, I thank my Post Commander, Mr. Dan Leonard, who helped me on what I got today. Another gentleman I'd like to recognize, who gave me my state award, my Department Commander, Mr. Al Gibson. Thank you Legionnaires, it's an honor to be able to represent the United States with this beautiful award today and being the Outstanding Lawman of the Year.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The American Legion has a long and proud history of helping our fellow veterans find employment. To assure successful efforts we work closely with the Department of Labor. Today, the Secretary of Labor is hard at work in Washington, D.C. She wanted to be with us, but her schedule was too full. She took the time recently to record a message for us. I invite you to watch as we hear from The Honorable Alexis Herman, Secretary of Labor.

**Address via video tape: The Honorable Alexis M. Herman  
Secretary of Department of Labor**

It's a pleasure to extend my greetings to the members of America's largest veterans service organization, your families and honored guests, as you gather for your 80th Annual Convention, in New Orleans. Since 1919, you have been on guard for America, serving as the nation's conscience for the rights that veterans have earned by their dedication and sacrifice. The commitment of the local posts to activities supporting family and community have helped to sow freedom's heritage into the very fabric of our daily lives. I enjoyed being with you in person last year in Orlando and I want to personally thank The American Legion for its resolution of support for the Department of Labor, its programs and its people.

As we enter the 21st century, we at the Department of Labor are helping Americans manage change and meet challenge. That is your mission, too. Working together, we form a powerful coalition united in common values. Veterans issues are America's issues. Your goals for veterans are the Department's goals for all working people. I want you to know that our Veterans Employment and Training Service is making sure that your voice is heard at all levels of decision-making at the Department of Labor, whether in expanding opportunities for young people, helping Americans of all ages find and keep good jobs, or giving families the tools to build a secure retirement. That is our common agenda.

And that is why right now, we at the Department of Labor are doing things like conducting pilot programs in five states to evaluate how veterans can continue to enjoy priority of service for development, counseling and job placement services. Because it's

simple, the nation's employment system is changing and veterans must have priority accessing its publicly funded services.

I also want you to know the work of the task force on certification and licensing of military personnel has begun. The goal of this task force is to establish an ongoing program over the Internet. Military personnel will simply log on to a computer and get the information they need about certification and licenses in different civilian jobs, what kind of credit they will be given for their military experience, where they can obtain any training or tests and how to apply and receive certificates or licenses before they separate from military service so that they can get a good job much faster. We're also working to see the reservists and national guard members who are called to active duty or training don't have to worry about their job back home.

As your Secretary of Labor, I want you to know we will stand with you to make sure that no Americans lose their job for serving their country. You can also count on me to fight to insure that no veteran faces employment discrimination because of service-connected disabilities, that no veterans will have their pension and health benefits cut if they're called to duty, and that our veterans receive hiring preferences for government jobs if they qualify. I am determined to marshal all of the resources at my disposal to make sure that every veteran who sacrificed career and family to protect and to preserve our democratic values has the opportunity to find and keep good jobs and enjoy security and dignity in retirement.

Once again, thank you for your invitation. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice. Let's keep working together to keep American strong.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Chair recognizes Ray Smith of North Carolina, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics for the purposes of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference  
and  
Other Economic Matters  
Ray G. Smith, North Carolina, Chairman**

At 9:00 a.m. on September 6, 1998, a total of 75 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in the Marlborough Room of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, to consider 65 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. Ray Smith of North Carolina was elected general chairman and Wayne Slade of South Dakota was appointed general secretary. Henry Field of South Carolina was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and Len Shaw of Iowa was appointed secretary. James McMahon of Maine was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Delbert Fuhrman of Texas was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of Ray Smith (NC), chairman, James McMahon (ME), William Christoffersen (UT), Wayne Slade (SD), and Robert Boxdorfer (MO), met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 4, in the Windsor Room of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, to make recommendations to the Convention Committees on Economics. The report of the screening committee was presented to the convention committees and was adopted.



A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing the meaning. The meeting was recessed at 9:45 a.m.

**Committee on Employment and Veterans' Preference  
Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 40: Support LVER Program**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

WHEREAS, Under Title 38, Chapter 41, U.S. Code, Section 2004a(2)(A), the regulation states that at least one LVER shall be assigned to each local employment office having at least 1,100 veterans registered and an additional LVER be assigned for each additional 1,600 veterans registered above the 1,100 base; and

WHEREAS, Under the current LVER allocation formula as utilized by the Department of Labor, there are inadequate appropriations to several states because of policies and practices which cause these states to receive fewer positions and/or less funding; and

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

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law 100-323, the level of funding for these mandated positions has been below the level required for the program to be effective; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion petition the Congress and the Secretary of Labor to adhere to the requirements of Title 38, Chapter 41, Section 4104 and assign Local Veterans Employment Representative positions on the basis required by law.

**Resolution No. 41: Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA)**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As amended.

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

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

- Have a primary or secondary military occupational specialty that the Department of Defense has determined is not readily transferable to the civilian work force; or

- Be entitled to compensation (or would be entitled to compensation but for the receipt of military retired pay) for a VA service-connected disability rate of 30 percent or more; or
- Be unemployed and have been unemployed for at least eight of the last 15 work weeks before filing an application; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek continuation of the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program; and, be it finally

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

#### **Resolution No. 49: Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 54 (UT) and 223 (MD)

WHEREAS, Our federal government specially selected as mentally, morally, and physically fit certain members from its society, specially trained this group, subjected them to stringent rules and regulations, removed them from home, family and employment, asked of them a special sacrifice, and required some of them to suffer wounds they will live with forever; and

WHEREAS, A grateful nation, through its representatives in the Congress of the United States and state legislatures, has, in recognition of the special service and loss of employment opportunity while defending the country in time of need, extended a long history of employing the returning veterans by enacting the Veterans Preference Act as contained in Title 5, USC, and Chapter 3-3, South Dakota Code; and

WHEREAS, The term "veteran" includes every category of society—sex, age, religion, ethnic group, race, and creed; and

WHEREAS, Absence from the highly competitive job market due to military service creates an unfair and unequal burden on veterans in competing for employment with non-veteran peers upon completion of military service; and

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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WHEREAS, The Veterans Preference Act accomplished the legislative purpose of honoring veterans and provides a small advantage in competing for federal and state jobs; and

WHEREAS, There are prominent groups and individuals in the United States today who ignore the employment disadvantages accrued by individuals due to military service, who blindly allege that preference is "discriminatory," who ignore the many judicial determinations upholding veterans preference, who blatantly overemphasize the advantages of veterans preference although presumably aware of the fact that approximately 28 million veterans in our population have not chosen or been successful in obtaining a federal or state position; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That the President of the United States, the Congress, the governor of each state, and the state legislatures be informed that The American Legion deplors each and every attempt to degrade, dilute, or modify the historical precedent of giving job eligibility preference to those who were taken from their communities to serve their country in time of war, and that the President and governors reject any and all proposed legislation that would reduce the employment opportunities for veterans in the federal or state workforce.

**Resolution No. 57: Transition Assistance Program to be Permanently Mandated and Fully Funded**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 95 (UT), 195 (MD), 221 (MD) and 258 (NY)

WHEREAS, The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to assist separating military personnel to make the transition back to civilian life and is currently administered by the Department of Labor, Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, An independent commission was formed to study the effectiveness of TAP, to recommend changes if necessary based on their findings, and to determine if the above named agencies should continue to administer the TAP concept; and

WHEREAS, A Department of Defense memo dated May 28, 1998, signed by Jayson L. Sigal, acting assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, calls for TAP funding to be eliminated by fiscal year 2000; and

WHEREAS, Eliminating funding for TAP would leave service personnel scheduled for discharge without adequate transitional assistance benefits, which include counseling by the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Labor, and by Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists, who are highly motivated to assist those who are separating to assimilate back into civilian employment; and

WHEREAS, If the Transition Assistance Program is reduced or eliminated such treatment of military personnel soon to become veterans who have honorably served their country will adversely affect military recruiting programs; and

WHEREAS, It has been proven that veterans who receive such transitional services before being discharged find employment much faster than those who have not attended TAP, resulting in savings of hundreds of millions of dollars for the Department of Defense in unemployment compensation; and

WHEREAS, These savings are significantly more than the costs of the present TAP; and

WHEREAS, Potential employers have found that trained military veterans who have had pre-employment counseling that ties their military skills to similar civilian occupations become highly skilled, motivated and disciplined employees, saving time and money for the hiring companies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion holds that as long as there are military personnel being discharged from the Armed Forces there will be a need for Transition Assistance Programs and that the Congress and the Department of Defense must continue to provide the necessary funding to retain the Transition Assistance Program; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this program must be permanently mandated and fully funded as long as the United States of America maintains a military establishment.

**Resolution No. 58: President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**  
Origin: UT

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 224 (MD).

WHEREAS, The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (PCEH) was established at the end of World War II by a grateful nation for the purpose of promoting employment opportunities for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, The mission of PCEH grew over the years and now that federal agency is known as the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities because it promotes employment opportunities for all disabled Americans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has enjoyed a long and fruitful working relationship with both the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and its Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans; and

WHEREAS, One of the many fruits of our mutual efforts was the 1990 enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and

WHEREAS, On August 21, 1974, at its 56th Annual National Convention, The American Legion adopted Resolution No. 557, which put the Legion on record as endorsing a "National Policy for a Barrier Free Environment"; and

WHEREAS, That resolution spoke of the need to remove the physical barriers that deny disabled veterans and other disabled persons access to work places, public buildings, places of worship and recreational and entertainment facilities; and

WHEREAS, While ADA requires the removal of physical barriers to the employment of disabled veterans and non-veterans, there are still other barriers such as the negative perceptions that some employers have about persons with disabilities that cannot be addressed by the law; and

WHEREAS, The best way of overcoming these false perceptions and prejudices is by educating the public about the many positive attributes that disabled persons bring to the work place; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion reaffirm its long-standing support of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and its Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reaffirm its commitment to removing all barriers that prevent disabled Americans from leading full and productive lives.

**Resolution No. 59: The National Veterans' Training Institute**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans Preference

As consolidated with 23 (CO), 160 (DC) and 225 (MD)

WHEREAS, Public Law 100-323 established the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) as the primary training center for veteran program staff and state employment security agency staff nationwide; and

WHEREAS, The National Veterans' Training Institute has had an immeasurable impact on the quality of services provided the veterans of this nation by improving the level and quality of services provided; and

WHEREAS, The FY 1997 administration's budget does not include any funds for the National Veterans' Training Institute; and

WHEREAS, The NVTI has trained over 12,000 State Employment Security Agency staff, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff and Department of Defense staff, which has resulted in improved job opportunities for veterans; and

WHEREAS, The current downsizing of the armed forces will force many veterans into the work force who will need the services of those individuals currently trained by NVTI; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion petition Congress to support full funding of the National Veterans' Training Institute as required by Public Law 100-323.

**Resolution No. 96: Maintain the Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

Origin: TX

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 107 (TX) and 269 (OK)

WHEREAS, The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training has served as an effective advocate for the employment and training services operated by the United States Department of Labor by requesting and administering the budget for the operations of the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program; and

WHEREAS, This office has continued to effectively promote the employment of this nation's veterans since over 300,000 were successfully employed during the previous program year after utilizing these programs; and

WHEREAS, The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training has effectively enforced the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994 and reduced the length of time required to settle cases filed under this law from a two year average to less than 90 days; and

WHEREAS, The recent study conducted by the Commission on Transition of Military Service Members (known as the Dole Commission) has recommended that the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training be deleted as a cost saving measure and transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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WHEREAS, This study also recommends that the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and the Local Veterans Employment Representative program be transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of subcontracting these programs to private agencies; and

WHEREAS, The proposals will dilute and reduce the oversight and overall effectiveness of these programs by allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer programs in which the agency has no experience and separate the veterans' employment and training programs from the remaining Department of Labor's Employment and Training program which contain a tremendously greater mandated funding source; and

WHEREAS, The proposals will eliminate the close supervision of the utilization of funds that by law must be dedicated to meeting the employment and training needs of the veterans who have served this great country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion voice its total opposition to any attempts to delete the office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training and the agency this office administers; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion go on record in opposition to the transfer of the programs currently operated by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Disabled Veterans Outreach and Local Veterans Employment Representative, the National Veterans Training Institute, and Title IV-C Job Training Partnership Act programs.

**Resolution No. 99: Support Funding of Employment and Training Programs Administered by Department of Labor**

Origin: TX

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 42 (MA) and 259 (NY)

WHEREAS, It is a national responsibility to provide disabled veterans and veterans preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The House Appropriations Committee, Labor-HHS-Ed subcommittee has proposed cuts to the veterans employment and training programs of \$11.8 million while increasing the funds for the transportation system; and

WHEREAS, This funding level represents a 7.5 percent cut in the President's budget request for VETS which will adversely affect the same programs that have endured a 30% funding reduction over the past four years; and

WHEREAS, This reduction in funding will cause a drastic reduction in the quality and level of employment and training services available to disabled veterans and all veterans; and

WHEREAS, The House Appropriations Committee proposes to cut \$19 million with no funds for the Transition Assistant Program and a cut of \$2 million for the JTPA Title IV-C programs and the President's request would effectively eliminate all funding for the National Veterans Training Institute; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion hereby petition each member of the Congress to support full funding for all of the employment and training programs that are administered by the Department of Labor.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Resolution No. 222: Oppose Federal Funding for Any Service Whose Maximum Priority Is Not the Veteran**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As amended and consolidated with 53 (UT), 60 (UT) and 226 (MD)

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

WHEREAS, It is imperative that veterans still receive priority (preference) of service prior to their non-veteran counterpart; and

WHEREAS, Once the funding is handed down from the department to the states, the governor of each state will decide who will operate the One-Stop Centers; and

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

WHEREAS, The JTPA has historically been deaf to veteran needs and will oppose veterans' priority in most states; and

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

WHEREAS, These actions will eventually lead to cutting corners and ultimately be detrimental to veterans; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service to veterans as outlined by law (Title 38, USC, and 20 CFR) will be satisfied with the federally funded service provider, no matter whom the governors select, so that each veteran or eligible is afforded the full array of services for which she or he is eligible in order to gain advantages in the labor market; and

WHEREAS, The full array of services include, but are not limited to, job search workshops; labor market information; resume development; interviewing techniques; classroom training; support services; job restructuring; job recommendations; training; career counseling; job placement; employer information; case management; skills enhancement; selective placement; job development; child care information; temporary housing; transportation assistance and discharge upgrade assistance; and

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

WHEREAS, If the SESA is not the service provider the staff stand to lose their jobs; and

WHEREAS, If the states elect to operate a joint endeavor with JTPA, the staff stand to lose their jobs or be transitioned into the JTPA as county employees; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion oppose federal funding for any employment service provider unless they adopt as a policy that eligible veterans receive maximum priority of the above noted services; and, be it further

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

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

**Resolution No. 244: Veterans Employment and Training Priority to be Codified by Congress**

Origin: NC

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As consolidated with 31 (SD), 110 (TX) and 264 (NM)

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds that veterans seeking employment in North Carolina have been served well by the Employment Security Commission's Employment Service Division; and

WHEREAS, While such service is attributable, in a large measure, to the excellent staff across the state that it has been the Commission's good fortune to employ, we also find and believe that the practice of "priority" is no less responsible for the results of the employability and employment services to veterans received; and

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion affirm the practice and definition of "priority" as herein defined, and ask that such definition and practice be formally codified by the Congress in Title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41, and that the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training require and extend the policy and practice of "priority" of service to all service providers in America's system of workforce development through the authority granted them under Section 4102 of Title 38, United States Code.

**Resolution No. 245: Credit Military Training Toward Civilian Certification and Licensing Requirements**

Origin: NC

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As amended and consolidated with 25 (CO)

WHEREAS, The several services of the Departments of Defense and Transportation are responsible for the welfare of the men and women who serve in America's armed forces; and

WHEREAS, In fulfilling that responsibility, the services train and employ many service members in a wide variety of technical fields to provide certain medical and other specialized, professional services to other service members and their family members; and

WHEREAS, As practiced in the civilian sector, many of these occupations require that the practitioners' skills be validated, through testing or other appropriate means, by the competent authority for that skill in the appropriate geographic or political subdivision; and

WHEREAS, Though trained and having practiced the skill or trade while on active military duty, these former service members must have their competency validated by the civilian authorities; and



*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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WHEREAS, Before having their competency validated, many cognizant authorities require that the former service member acquire additional training from civilian training facilities; and

WHEREAS, This additional training requirement constitutes an unreasonable, costly and unnecessary barrier to these veterans' full transition and integration into the civilian economy; and

WHEREAS, We find that it would be a disservice to the members of America's armed forces and a dichotomy in the standards of practices, if the several services were not training these service members to the same standards required of civilian practitioners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion ask that the Secretary of Defense, assisted by the Secretary of Labor, seek appropriate recognition and validation for these service members, of the comparability of the standards of training and practice, conducted and performed on active duty, to that of civilian practitioners, so as to secure for them the right to practice their trades promptly upon the completion of their honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion hereby urges the Department of Defense, with the assistance of the Department of Labor, to establish a program that outlines specific details to translate military job skills into accreditation accepted by business and industry throughout this nation, for those veterans with these specialized skills transitioning to the civilian workforce; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the United States Congress to pass legislation to allow veterans to receive educational accreditation for military training and schools they attend while in the military to assist them in the civilian employment world.

**Resolution No. 266: Veterans Hiring Preference for Federal Contractors**

Origin: OK

Submitted By: Employment and Veterans' Preference

As amended.

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to provide affirmative action to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, 38 USC in the employment and advancement with federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, The mandated VETS 100 reports indicate that the majority of the employers covered under the section cited above have ignored or failed to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code by removing the terms Vietnam era and special disabled and replacing with "veteran" and "special emphasis on disabled veterans."

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 267 (OK) 1998 NC Amend Appointment Requirements for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists**

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Referred to the Standing Economic Commission**

**Resolution No. 268 (OK) 1998 NC Support Task Force to Amend Title 38, Chapter 41  
United States Code**

**Resolution No. 280 (WA) 1998 NC Allow Retired Veterans to Apply Military Service  
for Accrual of Annual Leave in Federal Employment**

**Committee on Other Economic Matters  
Recommended Action on Resolution  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 46: Support the Small Business Administration**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 51 (MA)

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a traditional veterans' benefit that dates back to the passage of 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support the efforts of the United States Small Business Administration, Office of Veterans Affairs in its initiatives to provide outreach to military personnel who will be affected by the downsizing of the military; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation that would permit the Office of Veterans Affairs of the United States Small Business Administration to enter into contracts, grants and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals.

**Resolution No. 62: Homestead Privilege to Veterans**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 166 (DC) and 227 (MD)

WHEREAS, America has always honored their veterans by granting them homestead acreage ever since the Revolutionary War because of their service to our country; and

WHEREAS, Congress is considering granting Alaskan Native Vietnam veterans limited rights to obtain public land allotment; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are the most homeless group of the population that ever existed in our country; and

WHEREAS, Our federal government has ample public lands available to grant veterans homestead lots; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That Congress be petitioned to open up homestead privileges to United States military veterans on a priority basis.

**Resolution No. 66: Preference for Veterans in Housing and Urban Development**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 231 (MD)

WHEREAS, There are nearly 12,000,000 living American veterans over the age of 60; and

WHEREAS, Because many of those veterans are living on fixed incomes, it is often difficult if not impossible for them to provide adequate housing for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates affordable housing programs for senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, Many needy and deserving veterans are unable to participate in those housing programs because of long waiting lists; and

WHEREAS, A large percentage of those occupying HUD housing are legal and illegal aliens who have never served this country's armed forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports any legislative or administrative initiative that will give preference to American veterans and their families in obtaining housing through the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Resolution No. 70: Support for Homeless Shelter Funding**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: Economics

As consolidated with 236 (MD)

WHEREAS, As many as one third of the male homeless population in the United States consists of veterans of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, Many of these homeless veterans have availed themselves of programs offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs which are designed to rid veterans of alcohol and substance dependencies; and

WHEREAS, When these veterans leave the detoxification programs they need a structured living environment in order to put their lives back together; and

WHEREAS, Due to lack of funds from any source, shelters offering the necessary environment do not exist in most places where they are needed; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania has demonstrated how a successful transitional veterans' shelter can greatly assist in the healing process; and

WHEREAS, The National Service Life Insurance program, the Veterans Group Life Insurance program, and the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program all maintain trust funds; and

WHEREAS, The National Service Life Insurance trust fund maintains a value of approximately \$13 billion dollars, all invested in U.S. Government securities; and

WHEREAS, The revenue from these investments is used to pay dividends to holders of National Service Life Insurance policies, dividends which are not mandated in statutes; and

WHEREAS, Both the Veterans Group Life Insurance trust fund, and the Servicemembers' Group Life insurance trust funds can be invested in stable securities other than U.S. Government securities; and

WHEREAS, Funding for homeless shelters which meet the needs of veterans leaving detoxification programs might be obtained from commercial lenders provided that loan guarantees were available from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of "pay-go", the Congressional Budget Office would require that funds be set aside in a certain amount to back up these loan guarantees; and

WHEREAS, The additional funds necessary to back up loan guarantees could be available from investing National Service Life Insurance trust funds in appropriate investments which normally yield a much higher rate of interest than U.S. Government securities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports legislation which would allow National Service Life Insurance trust funds to be invested in bonds rated no less than "investment grade" by Standard and Poor's, Moody's Investors Service and Fitch's Investment Service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That interest received from this new investment plan shall be placed in a separate interest-bearing trust fund after the amount equal to the rate of return from investments in the U.S. Government Securities has been returned to the National Service Life Insurance trust funds; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the additional revenue over and above that generated by investments in U.S. Government securities be used to guarantee loans by non-profit groups seeking to borrow funds to open and operate shelters for homeless veterans leaving rehabilitation facilities operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the investments be authorized and funds be actually invested for at least twelve months to generate the funds necessary for the guarantees prior to any money being loaned to support this program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs must approve the plan and be interactive with the program to include at least an annual inspection and financial audit of the facility; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That any changes in the plan must be agreed to by the Department of Veterans Affairs before being authorized; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That liability insurance to cover the value of the Department of Veterans Affairs guarantee must be maintained thus relieving the Department of Veterans Affairs of its obligation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the plan to operate these shelters include participation of the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists from the local State Employment Security Office to provide professional job placement assistance; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That these shelters be operated solely for the benefit of veterans, both male and female, needing assistance.

**Resolution No. 88: Home Loan Guaranty Program**

Origin: VA

Submitted By: Economics

As amended.

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has been in effect since 1944; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program has afforded more than 25 million veterans the opportunity to purchase homes; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration Home Loan Guaranty program offers veterans a centralized, affordable and accessible method of purchasing homes in return for their service to our nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty limit be raised to \$227,150.

**Resolution No. 139: Support for Decennial Census in the Year 2000**

Origin: VT

Submitted By: Economics

WHEREAS, The 2000 Census of Population and Housing marks the 210th anniversary of the first national census of 1790, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS, The census serves as the statistical foundation for the nation, providing information for equal representation in the U.S. House of Representatives, state legislatures, and local elected governing bodies; and

WHEREAS, The census produces the information used by the federal and state governments at all levels and to the private sector for the economic benefit of all communities; and

WHEREAS, The decennial census will produce valuable facts about America's veterans that will be essential for The American Legion in developing its policies and programs; and

WHEREAS, A successful decennial census requires cooperation from all residents of the United States of America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion endorses the Year 2000 Decennial Census; encourages its members to support public cooperation with the Year 2000 Decennial Census by undertaking various employment, promotion and outreach projects in conjunction with their local government leaders and the Bureau of the Census; and agrees to publicize this endorsement to patriotic and veterans communities, as well as the public at large.

**Resolution No. 161: Home Improvements and Structural Alterations Grants**

Origin: DC

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 64 (UT) and 229 (MD)

WHEREAS, Service connected and non-service connected veterans who have disabilities require home improvements and structural alterations to make their homes handicapped accessible; and

WHEREAS, The home improvement grant available is a \$4,100 one-time grant for service connected disabilities and a \$1,200 one-time grant for non-service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Many young veterans with disabilities may be relocating several times over the course of their lives and furthermore the \$4,100 and \$1,200 respectively are not adequate given rising construction costs; now, therefore, be it

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation that will increase the amount and number of times veterans may receive the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations Grant.

**Resolution No. 162: Support Millennium Stand-downs**

Origin: DC

Submitted By: Economics

WHEREAS, There are, by some estimates, as many as a quarter-million veterans who are homeless in America; and

WHEREAS, Since 1987, hundreds of communities from Hawaii to Florida to Washington have come together to provide assistance to those veterans by organizing "Stand Downs" and "Benefits Assistance Fairs"; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of volunteers, including many members of The American Legion, have participated as volunteers in organizing and providing direct care and services to these veterans and their family members; and

WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of veterans come to these one, two, or three day events in order to obtain medical care, benefits assistance, employment and training help and other assistance; and

WHEREAS, These events are part of our nation's attempt to give these veterans a hand up, and not a handout; and

WHEREAS, As our nation moves toward a new millennium, we recognize and appreciate the past, present and future contributions of our nation's veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion pledges its support to these community-based efforts to assist veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That as we enter the new millennium, our nation should recommit itself so that no homeless veteran should be left without medical care and support.

**Resolution No. 163: Funding for Homeless Programs**

Origin: DC

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 68 (UT) and 233 (MD)

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has passed legislation to fund the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill (HCMI) program, the Homeless Domiciliary Care Program and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) rehabilitation program; and

WHEREAS, Some of these programs have been in partnership with veterans service organizations and other non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, There are estimates ranging from 250,000 to one million veterans who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been an active partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with the HCMI and CWT programs; and

WHEREAS, These programs have proved to be successful in rehabilitation of the veteran in helping him/her to become a productive citizen again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion shall call on the Congress of the United States to keep the Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill program, the Homeless Domiciliary program and the Compensated Work Therapy Rehabilitation program funded separately from general United States Department of Veterans Affairs funding.

**Resolution No. 228: Support the Small Business Loan Program**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 48 (MA) and 63 (UT)

WHEREAS, Small business is the backbone of the American economy; and

WHEREAS, More than nine out of every ten businesses are small firms which produce almost one-half of the Gross National Product; and

WHEREAS, Over one-half of the nation's work force is employed by small business, with the average company employing approximately 11 persons; and

WHEREAS, America has benefited immeasurably from the service of its 27 million living veterans, who made great sacrifices in the defense of freedom, the preservation of democracy, and the protection of the free enterprise system; and

WHEREAS, Reliable sources have estimated that 20 percent of all small businesses are owned and operated by veterans; and

WHEREAS, Because of the status of the economy over the past few years, many thousands of workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and have been unsuccessful in finding new employment; and

WHEREAS, One way of combating unemployment is through the creation of new jobs; and

WHEREAS, Government can help to create new jobs by encouraging qualified entrepreneurs to start new small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs either do not qualify for the direct or guaranteed loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA), or do not apply for such a loan because of the red tape involved in obtaining an SBA loan; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed legislation in the early 1980s that amended Chapter 37 of Title 38, United States Code, to establish a pilot veterans' small business program that was to be administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and

WHEREAS, The DVA's small business loan program was never funded and was allowed to sunset on Sept. 30, 1986; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs could realize their dreams of going into business if the DVA's small business loan programs were available to them; and

WHEREAS, The DVA estimates that if its small business loan program is authorized it will help to cushion the impact of the downsizing of the military by creating a million new jobs over the next five years; and

WHEREAS, If the DVA's small business loan program is re-authorized, it should be opened to post-Vietnam-era veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that would re-authorize and fund a Department of Veterans Affairs small business loan program for disabled, Vietnam-era and post-Vietnam-era veterans.

**Resolution No. 230: Support for Low-interest Loans**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 65 (UT)

WHEREAS, Many military retirees and self-employed reservists were called to serve during Operation Desert Shield/Storm and were given a minimum of time to settle their affairs before reporting for duty; and

WHEREAS, Self employed reservists, both those owning small business enterprises and those engaged in professional medical or legal practices, did not have the protection of law guaranteeing them a job to return to after they had completed their tours of duty; and

WHEREAS, As many as 15,000 of these recalled reservists and retirees found themselves in destitute financial circumstances, often in bankruptcy, following their tour of duty during Operation Desert Shield/Storm or in subsequent service in Bosnia because their source of income completely dried up when they entered military service; and

WHEREAS, The Small Business Administration will not offer low cost loan assistance because of the bankruptcy or poor credit status of these veterans as a result of their recalled service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports legislation that would provide self-employed recalled reservists or members of the National Guard with the opportunity to apply for low interest, long term loans through a program to be funded by the Small Business Administration which would provide the financial support sufficient to restore their credit rating to its status prior to their entry into active military service.

**Resolution No. 232: Reestablish Adjustable Rate Mortgages for Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Program**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 67 (UT)

WHEREAS, The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P. L.346, 78th Congress) established, among other things, a home loan guaranty program that was to be administered by the Veterans Administration, which later became the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and

WHEREAS, The two purposes of the original program were to help returning World War II veterans in their readjustment to civilian life and to stimulate the economy by assisting those veterans in obtaining mortgage financing from the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Because of the popularity and success of the DVA Loan Guaranty Program, and because it 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 15 million loans to eligible veterans and has, for the most part, maintained a default rate that compares very favorably with the default rate on private sector mortgages; and

WHEREAS, While many of the veterans who have participated in this program could have obtained private sector financing, many others could not have qualified for conventional mortgages; and



*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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WHEREAS, Congress has made numerous changes over the years in attempts to improve this VA program, including authorizing certain pilot programs; and

WHEREAS, In 1992 Congress authorized DVA to conduct a three-year pilot program which allowed VA to guarantee Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs); and

WHEREAS, During that three-year period the DVA's ARM program became very popular and accounted for approximately 22 percent of all loans guaranteed by the DVA; and

WHEREAS, One of the attractive features of an ARM is that it allows the borrower to obtain a home loan with an interest rate below that of a normal fixed rate loan, thus allowing that person to select the financing option that best suits their needs; and

WHEREAS, Because the DVA's ARM program was underwritten much more conservatively than ARMs available in the conventional market, very few loans went into default; and

WHEREAS, Although the DVA and Congress were in favor of making the program permanent, the Congressional Budget Office blocked a permanent extension because it believed that the cost would be \$36 million per year, even though the DVA had proven that it could run that program at a lower cost; and

WHEREAS, A proposal to reinstate DVA's authority to guarantee ARMs has been submitted for inclusion in DVA's legislative program for the 1st Session of the 105th Congress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation to reinstate the Department of Veterans Affairs' Adjustable Rate Mortgage program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reaffirm its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Loan Guaranty Service and its programs; 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. 234: United States Savings Bonds Program**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 69 (UT)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has traditionally promoted the United States Savings Bonds Program; and

WHEREAS, United States Savings Bonds have long provided a safe opportunity for systematic investments, with a fair return, and an attractive federal income tax deferral and state and local income tax exemption; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion reaffirm its long-standing support of the United States Savings Bonds Program.

**Resolution No. 235: Reimbursement for Correspondence Courses**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics

Consolidated with 61 (UT)

WHEREAS, Over 1.2 million veterans have chosen to study via correspondence training since 1970; and

WHEREAS, Fewer than 4,000 veterans using the G.I. Bill are actively enrolled in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are reimbursed only 55% of the total course tuition, a reimbursement rate that has remained unchanged for over 16 years; and

WHEREAS, The average total cost of an accredited correspondence course is just over \$1,000, the most cost effective method of education today; and

WHEREAS, Correspondence training is often the only educational opportunity available to veterans who are homebound, hospitalized, incarcerated or living in a rural area where no colleges or schools are within reach; and

WHEREAS, Accredited correspondence institutions offer valuable, salable vocational and professional skills in such in-demand fields as computer programming, health care topics, management, electronics technology, and hundreds of other jobs that will help our nation's deserving veterans get better jobs faster and with up-to-date training delivered with convenience and flexible learning techniques such as Internet-based education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly supports an effort to amend Title 38 to restore the reimbursement rate for correspondence training to the 90% of tuition level where it had been in the 1970s.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SMITH: Mr. Commander this completes the report of the Convention Committees on Economics and as a duly elected delegate from the great Department of North Carolina, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Do I hear it seconded?

...Motion seconded.

Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The report is adopted.

**Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans****Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The American Legion is very proud of the employers of America who make hiring veterans a matter of good business. To honor those companies The American Legion has come up with the Employer of the Year Award. The companies we honor today have demonstrated a keen sense of understanding in hiring veterans. We recognize three such organizations as our 1997 Employers of the Year. The awards are given in three categories: one for companies employing 50 or less people, another for companies employing from 51 to 200 people, and a third for companies with more than 200 workers. Each is nominated by a Post and advances through Department and National competition levels. The 1997 Employer of the Year Award in the under 50 category goes to Jak's Stripping and Refinishing of Garden City, Idaho. Jack Benson, owner of the company, is here to accept.

**Jack Benson, Owner  
Jak's Stripping and Refinishing  
Garden City, Idaho**

MR. JACK BENSON: I'd like to thank the state of Idaho, three men in particular from the state of Idaho, Legionnaire Mel Napier, Legionnaire Frank Shelton, and our Attorney General of Idaho, Legionnaire Al Lance. It is a privilege and an honor for me to be invited to The American Legion National Convention as an award winner and distinguished guest. I am a DAV of the Vietnam War and I am humbled to be among this prestigious group of fellow veterans. Thank you one and all for the royal VIP treatment that you have given me and my wife. This award is more meaningful than words can express.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The award in the 51 - 200 category goes to Atlas Roofing Corporation, of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Here to accept the award is Frank Drobil, Human Resources Manager. The award reads: "The American Legion National Award...Outstanding Employer of the Year...1997...Presented to Atlas Roofing Corporation, for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 80th Annual National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 9, 1998."

**Frank Drobil, Human Resources Manager  
Atlas Roofing Corporation  
Ardmore, Oklahoma**

MR. FRANK DROBIL: The ownership and management of Atlas Roofing Corporation consider this a great honor to be awarded The American Legion's medium Employer of the Year. It is our intention to display this beautiful plaque in our office lobby in Ardmore for our customers, business associates and guests to view. At this time, I would like to also formally thank Mr. Weldon Brown, the veterans representative from the Oklahoma Work Force Commission for nominating our company to The American Legion Committee. We at Atlas put a strong emphasis on hiring veterans because of the military training they received. It is our belief that the military provides discipline, order, and training to their military personnel to face the job responsibilities in civilian life. In this great country of ours, we challenge all companies, large and small, to follow our lead at Atlas Roofing in Ardmore to actively recruit, hire, and retain our many fine veterans who have served us and this nation in the armed service. On behalf of Bob Moore, our plant manager, his lovely wife LuAnn, as well as my beautiful bride, Sherry, we would like to thank The American Legion for their warm and gracious hospitality during our stay in New Orleans and it is our hope to see you again.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The award for more than 200 employees category goes to Lear Seigler Services, Inc. of Milton, Florida. Here to accept the award is Paul Stokesville, vice president. The award reads: "The American Legion National Award...Outstanding Employer of the Year...1997...Presented to Lear Seigler Services, Inc. for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 80th Annual National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 9, 1998."

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Paul Stokesville, Vice President  
Lear Seigler Services Inc.  
Milton, Florida**

MR. PAUL STOKESVILLE: Being a Legionnaire and a past Post Commander, this is really a special occasion for me to be here to accept the award. Commander, on behalf of all our employees, our company, it really is a prestigious award and our employees are proud of it. They're waiting for me to bring it home. We have representative in our veterans from all branches of the services. It's the training, their leadership, the professionalism that the veterans bring to us. Without that mix of veterans with our civilian employees I don't think we would be where we are today. And a significant point of the professionalism that our veterans have, especially in the aviation community, is the sincerity of safety. Since the December of 1981, until this date, we have just surpassed 1.2 million hours of maintenance free accidents. That's unheard of in the aviation business. And it can only be because of the training these people received in the service. To our special friend in the Department of Florida, John R. White, I must say to you you're doing a wonderful job, the Department of Florida should be proud. He's the employment chairman. He puts his heart and soul in this and I'm sure the rest of your Department Chairmen in other states do as well.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Gentlemen, please accept my thanks on behalf of The American Legion to all veterans for your commendable employment efforts. At this time, it is my pleasure to introduce Suzanne Tanzberger, for the purpose of a presentation.

**Presentation: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion  
Suzanne Tanzberger, Chapel Trustee  
The Chapel of Four Chaplains**

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national non-profit organization is founded upon one shining manifestation of our heritage, that of four Army Chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the U.S. Army transport *USAT Dorchester* after it was torpedoed on February 3, 1943. This historic event during World War II began at Torpedo Junction, the U-Boat infested icy waters of the North Atlantic. On January 23, 1943, the transport *Dorchester* an old coaster steamer pressed into military service, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland. The *Dorchester* was escorted by three coast guard cutters, two patrolled the flanks, the third, the *Tampa*, was 3,000 yards ahead. The weather was bitterly cold with gale force winds. Ice began building up on the decks slowing the *Dorchester* to 10 knots.

Moving among the men were four Army Chaplains. George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling, and John P. Washington. On February 2, 1943, the *Tampa's* sonar detected the presence of a submarine. She dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy but failed to find the submarine position. They were only 150 miles from Greenland, with daylight they would have air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight on February 3, 1943, an enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the *Dorchester's* flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electrical supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many onboard died instantly, some were trapped below deck. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard. The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and only fragment of hope in the chaos came from the four Chaplains who calmly guided men to their stations.

They opened a storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of life jackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the four Chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own four life jackets. These four men of God, Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling and Father Washington, two Protestants, a Catholic and a Jew gathered together and led the men around them in a prayer and hymn. They linked arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. In just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank below the waves. Of the 902 men aboard, 230 survived.

Today, as it has since 1951, after the Chapel's dedication by President Harry S. Truman, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of inter-faith cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country. To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the founders of the Chapel established the Legion of Honor program. The bronze medallion is an award given by the Chapel to a person who has rendered to humanity exceptional selfless service without regard to race, religion or creed.

Commander Jordan, we believe the service you have rendered is worthy of recognition and are pleased to induct you into the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor and present you with a bronze medallion and a framed award certificate which depicts in symbolic form the inter-faith credo of the Chapel.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Thank you very, very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Chair recognizes Joe Caouette of New Hampshire, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism for the purposes of a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Americanism**  
**Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., Chairman**

To the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998:

Forty-eight members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 6, 1998, in the Belle Chase Room - 3rd level of the Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, to discuss Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the Committee.

The Committee organized by electing Joseph Caouette, Jr. (NH), Chairman; Paul Phiifer (VA), Vice Chairman; and David Rehbein (IA) as the Secretary.

Before I move ahead on the agenda - I want to express my appreciation and that of the National Americanism Commission to the Buick Motor Division of the General Motors Corporation for its continuing support of The American Legion Baseball Program. During the past year, Buick has provided over one-and-a-half million dollars of assistance to this outstanding Americanism Program.

The Committee discussed 38 resolutions which were assigned to the Committee. The resolutions which were considered continue to reflect the desire by many Departments of The American Legion to address matters of patriotism and government, and to maintain strong general Americanism programs that complement the organization and benefit the Nation.

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

Thirty-eight resolutions were considered with 18 being approved; six were received and recorded; and 14 were referred to the standing Americanism Commission.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 1: Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: 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 more than 100 civic, veteran, business and fraternal organizations which have come together to persuade Congress to propose a flag protection constitutional amendment; and

WHEREAS, The legislatures of forty-nine states have indicated by memorial resolutions to the US Congress that such an amendment to the US Constitution is needed in view of the 1989 decision of the United States Supreme Court (*Texas v. Johnson*) that invalidated all Flag protection laws; and

WHEREAS, Surveys have shown that over 80% of the American people support the passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the flag from desecration; and

WHEREAS, Since the time of the American Revolution millions of men and women have proudly defended our Country under the "Stars & Stripes" and, as a last gesture of gratitude this emblem of our Country is placed upon the coffin of veterans as a token of respect for services rendered to a grateful nation; and

WHEREAS, In the last (104th) Session of Congress, the US House of Representatives passed a proposed flag protection amendment, 312-120, while the US Senate failed, 63-36, to reach the necessary two-thirds required to approve such an amendment to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion continue to urge the Congress of the United States to propose and approve an amendment to the US Constitution that would allow the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue its efforts through affiliation with The Citizens Flag Alliance, to bring to a successful conclusion the grass roots campaign to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in order to provide protection of the Flag from acts of physical desecration.

**Resolution No. 313: United States Citizenship Process**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has actively promoted and advocated the inclusion of a formal Naturalization Ceremony, conducted in the English language and in a U.S. District Court, as a step in the process of becoming a United States naturalized citizen; and

WHEREAS, In August 1995, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began its Citizenship USA program to naturalize 1.3 million new citizens by increasing the speed and efficiency of the naturalization process; and

WHEREAS, The increased activity at INS offices created problems in the processing of applications, resulting in an estimated 180,000 being approved without the proper screening by the FBI and the INS; and

WHEREAS, A survey conducted by the Center for Equal Opportunity has revealed disturbing information that there are no uniform standards for testing citizenship applicants within the INS and that many applicants become United States citizens without having the ability to speak the English language or possess even a rudimentary knowledge about U.S. history and civics, despite federal laws to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, Many Legionnaires and Posts of The American Legion have traditionally participated in naturalization ceremonies as part of its Americanism program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage Members of Congress to conduct oversight hearings of the INS naturalization process to insure comprehensive background checks are made on all applicants for U.S. citizenship; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress take necessary actions, including corrective legislation, to prohibit the demeaning of the naturalization process and ceremonies by groups and individuals entrusted with naturalization responsibilities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be provided to all members of Congress, the U.S. Attorney General and the Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

**Resolution No. 314: Illegal Aliens**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, Current law, as established within "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986" (IRCA) has not achieved the results desired by The American Legion for addressing the many and varied problems created by illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, A 1996 study by the Center for Immigration Studies estimated the cost of the IRCA amnesty after 10 years at \$76.7 billion for the 2.7 million illegal aliens who received amnesty which represents a government subsidy of \$28,727 for each illegal alien; and

WHEREAS, The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has reported that, even with IRCA regulations in effect, 1.3 million illegal aliens were apprehended at our borders during 1997; and

WHEREAS, Illegal aliens in the United States create serious economic problems which include increased welfare costs, adverse effects on the American labor market, and the expense of detecting, detaining, processing and deporting of apprehended illegals; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are displaced from employment by the employment of illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, There must be a broad exchange of information and related action among those Executive Departments responsible for dealing with various aspects of immigration law and illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion wishes to reiterate its opposition to any type of amnesty ("legalization") program, that excuses and rewards the law-breaking illegal aliens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports strict enforcement of employer sanctions as called for in current law that provide heavy penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) be provided the monies necessary to ensure both the thorough performance of their duties and the security of the borders of the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That aliens illegally in the U.S. should be denied Social Security, unemployment, and other types of public assistance programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the Congress of the United States not to extend or enhance the legalization program beyond what is specifically outlined in current laws; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls for legislation to guarantee a free flow of information and technical assistance between the agencies of government tasked with the various aspects of the illegal alien issue.

**Resolution No. 315: Injured or Disabled Non-citizen Veterans Applying for Naturalization**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, During our Nation's call to arms in the preservation of our liberty, our Nation has been blessed with the services of individuals from many nations who cherish liberty; and

WHEREAS, Our Congress has recognized that through service in our Armed Forces these servicemen have forged a bond with our Country; and

WHEREAS, Under the present Immigration and Nationality Act the non-citizen soldier is allowed to apply for naturalization only upon completion of three (3) years of active duty; and

WHEREAS, Some non-citizen servicemen were injured or became disabled while on active duty and were medically discharged from the Armed Forces for these said injuries or medical conditions prior to three years of active duty service; and

WHEREAS, Admitting men and women with service-connected disabilities into the U.S. does not increase the taxpayer's obligation, since all U. S. veterans, without regard to their citizenship or residence, are currently entitled to both disability compensation and medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation that will amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow non-citizen veterans with less



than three years of active duty—because of injuries incurred or aggravated while on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces—to seek naturalization or admission to the U.S.

**Resolution No. 316: Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States of America provides for the common defense of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms we enjoy and the security of our Nation that we desire rests on the individual determination of each of us to help preserve it; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would allow conscientious objectors to elect to have their taxes spent for non-military purposes; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of such a practice could affect military strength and national security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion is opposed to legislation that would give conscientious objectors a voice in diverting monies from military spending.

**Resolution No. 317: Opposition to a Constitutional Convention**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion remains committed to the defense of the Constitution of the United States of America, including any legal defense against those who intend to change the document's intent or expand its purpose; and

WHEREAS, The integrity of the Constitution is being challenged by persons who state that it does not meet the requirements or demands of modern society; and

WHEREAS, Efforts are underway to convene a Constitutional Convention ostensibly to mandate a balanced federal budget, although convening such a convention could result in radical Constitutional changes that would go far beyond budgetary matters; and

WHEREAS, The potential exists for any Constitutional Convention to yield to the demands of varied special interests, and, in so doing, to fundamentally alter the basic provisions of our nation's government document; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion express firm opposition to convening a Constitutional Convention and to any efforts seeking to rewrite the U. S. Constitution beyond the existing procedures required for amending the document.

**Resolution No. 318: English Language be Used in Naturalization Ceremonies**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 567, entitled, "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 makes the traditional naturalization ceremony conducted in a U.S. District Court optional and allows naturalization by mail, thereby removing an integral and indelible step in the naturalization process; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires and Posts of The American Legion 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage the U.S. Congress to repeal that portion of Title 8, USC, Sec. 1448, that makes the court ceremony optional for naturalization and reinstate language that makes a naturalization ceremony in a U. S. District Court a mandatory step in the process of acquiring U.S. citizenship; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress, the U.S. Justice Department and the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to require that all Citizenship Naturalization Ceremonies be conducted in the English language.

#### **Resolution No. 319: Internal Security of the United States**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always recognized the importance of investigations that expose the truth about subversive activities that may harm or seek to destroy our Constitutional government; and

WHEREAS, The Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, both security agencies of this Nation, perform functions essential to the maintenance of our national security; and

WHEREAS, The U. S. Office of Personnel Management has virtually abandoned any investigation of government employment applicants for subversive activities, or membership in subversive organizations, to include membership in the Communist Party, which contributes to the weakening of the internal security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges all members of the House of Representatives to support legislation to restore the U. S. House Internal Security Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and the Congress of the United States to immediately take such action as may be appropriate and necessary to significantly strengthen both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and all other intelligence and security agencies that protect us from foreign espionage, organized crime and subversive activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and the Congress of the United States to approve legislation and executive action necessary to deny subversive individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate and subsequently destroy our government agencies and institutions through federal employment.

**Resolution No. 320: School Prayer**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The majority of Americans have historically believed in seeking God's protection and guidance through prayer; and

WHEREAS, The value of expressing spiritual convictions through public prayer has been recognized as a firm basis on which to conduct public proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court decisions during the early 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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 further

RESOLVED, That Congress pass legislation to promote the concept of school prayer in order to insure that our Nation's public school children have a daily opportunity to pray.

**Resolution No. 321: Pledge of Allegiance**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives begin each daily session acknowledging the presence and guidance of a Supreme Being through prayer; and

WHEREAS, It is customary in the opening of public meetings to recite the Pledge of Allegiance following the prayer; and

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives of the 104th Congress began its sessions with the Pledge of Allegiance while the Senate did not; and

WHEREAS, By Act of Congress, dated August 3, 1949, June 14 of each year was designated "National Flag Day" and the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Association in Baltimore, Maryland, has been the official sponsor since 1952 of National Flag Day for the United States; and

WHEREAS, On June 14, 1980, the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Association developed a national campaign to encourage all Americans to Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of National Flag Day ceremonies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage the President of the U. S. Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives or their designee to lead the members of their respective House in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of each daily session; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to designate the Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of the celebration of National Flag Day throughout the Nation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all Americans be urged to participate in Flag Day observances by reciting in unison, the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nation's Flag on June 14 of each year.

**Resolution No. 322: Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The dates of certain patriotic holidays have been changed from their original dates to create "three-day weekends"; and

WHEREAS, The time-honored traditional observances of these holidays has been eroded; and

WHEREAS, The majority of Americans view Memorial Day as a time for relaxation and leisure recreation rather than as a solemn occasion and a time to reflect and pay tribute to the American servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives in defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, By urging the ringing of the bells in our communities for one minute on traditional Memorial Day, May 30, it will help Americans to realize that the true purpose of this day is to pay tribute to those who have given so much for their country; and

WHEREAS, Our hope for the future has been made possible because our servicemen and women have made sacrifices in order to secure freedom for America and the ringing of community bells is a fitting way to observe traditional Memorial Day in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion calls upon the Congress of the United States to restore the official observance of Washington's Birthday to February 22, Memorial Day to May 30 and Columbus Day to October 12 each year; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the passage of federal legislation that would result in an annual Presidential proclamation calling on all American institutions, public and private, to toll their bells for one minute, beginning at 11:00 a.m. on traditional Memorial Day, May 30, in remembrance of the servicemen and women who died defending our Nation and our freedom.

**Resolution No. 323: "Star Spangled Banner"**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, *The Star Spangled Banner* became our National Anthem on March 3, 1931, when President Herbert Hoover signed Public Law 823; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that many millions of Americans cherish and respect the currently accepted version, both words and music, of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, such version being the "Service Version" prepared in 1918 by the War Department for use in Army and Navy song books; and

WHEREAS, It has become customary and traditional to sing or play *The Star-Spangled Banner* before sporting events and other large gatherings of people in this country in a traditional manner reflecting a solemn pride, dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, Many American Legionnaires have been offended by disrespectful and unconventional playing and singing of the National Anthem at sporting events; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, by action of the 78th National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, went on record supporting establishment of a national day of observance for *The Star-Spangled Banner*; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention, assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage and recommend the playing of the National Anthem at all sporting events and that it be performed in its original customary and traditional rendition; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge radio and television networks and stations to desist from pre-empting with commercial advertisements the singing and playing of our National Anthem and the raising and/or lowering of our Flag; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is opposed to any changes in the words and music of the National Anthem as adopted under Public Law 823 of the 71st Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion promote the establishment of March 3 of each year as a national day of observance for *The Star Spangled Banner* and that the patriotic observance of this day stress the origin of *The Star Spangled Banner* and that of the Flag of the United States.

**Resolution No. 324: Award Congressional Medal of Honor to the Four Chaplains**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Maryland has received a resolution proposed by American Legion Arick Lore Post #274 and supported unanimously by their county and district organization, the object being the awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously, to U. S. Army Chaplains, Lt. John P. Washington, Lt. Clark V. Poling, Lt. George L. Fox, and Lt. Alexander D. Goode, based on the following; and

WHEREAS, On a frigid night of February 3, 1943, at approximately 12:55 a.m., the United States troop transport ship, *Dorchester*, was torpedoed 150 miles off the coast of Greenland throwing the total ship into complete darkness amid shrieks of escaping steam and the frantic blast of the ship; and

WHEREAS, The Four Chaplains moved quickly among the bewildered troops, calming them and directing them to lifeboats and urging and assisting them to escape the quickly sinking vessel; and

WHEREAS, When there were no more life jackets available, the Four Chaplains aforesaid took off their own life jackets and made others accept them and use them in escaping the sinking vessel and, further, the Four Chaplains remained on the ship's slanted aft deck with arms linked together, heads bowed in prayer as the *Dorchester* slipped beneath the waves; and

WHEREAS, By their heroic actions, the Four Chaplains have become a legend with memorials to "their three faiths and one God" arising around this nation to promote brotherhood, to fight bigotry, and to encourage interfaith and interracial unity; and

WHEREAS, The actions and at the personal sacrifice of their own lives they have become a beacon of faith for the young people of this country to emulate with their traits of compassion and understanding based upon interracial and interfaith lessons as illustrated by the personal action of the Four Chaplains and is the basis for building bridges of understanding among all people of different faiths, religious and racial backgrounds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion requests the Congress of the United States, by special legislative action, award posthumously to U.S.

Army Chaplains, Lt. John P. Washington, Lt. Clark V. Poling, Lt. George L. Fox and Lt. Alexander D. Goode, the Congressional Medal of Honor for their heroism which cost them their lives on the night of February 3, 1943.

**Resolution No. 325: Reopen Period for Filipino Filing of Naturalization Applications**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, Sec. 405 of the Immigration Reform Act of 1990 recognized the military service of Filipino WWII veterans as a basis for their petitions for U.S. naturalization; and

WHEREAS, This legislation represented a landmark break-through for the Filipino WWII veterans, who since the enactment of the rescission Act of 1946 have been sending annual representations/delegations to the Congress of the United States in their struggle for justice and equalization of benefits; and

WHEREAS, Out of an estimated 50,000 surviving veterans, most of whom are in their 70's, only 32,000 were able to apply, out of which 25,044 were approved (13,424 filed their applications in the Philippines and 11,620 in the US., Hawaii, Guam, or Alaska) before the closing date February 2, 1995; and

WHEREAS, Many of those who were not able to file their applications are residents of far-flung islands of the Philippine Archipelago where communication is still slow and difficult, while others were simply discouraged in view of the reports regarding outright rejections of applications not supported by war service records of the U.S. Army Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion hereby manifests its full support and endorses to both Houses of U.S. Congress the request of the Philippine Department for the enactment of legislation, in the interest of justice, to re-open the period for the filing of applications for naturalization under Sec. 405 of the Immigration Reform Act of 1990 for another period of two years.

**Resolution No. 326: Oppose Foreign Manufacture of American Flags**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The Flag of the United States is a uniquely American symbol; and

WHEREAS, The Flag Code of the United States as listed in Title 36, United States Code, Chapter 10, subsection 176(j) states that: "The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing"; and

WHEREAS, It has come to our attention that foreign manufacturers have begun making and importing United States Flags and/or merchandise which violate certain provisions of the United States Flag Code; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 191, 1982 National Convention, Chicago, Illinois resolves that The American Legion promote through its Posts and Departments the purchase of American manufactured goods; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage its membership, the general public, and all local, state and federal government agencies to purchase and display only American manufactured Flags of the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation through the United States Congress to prohibit the importation of foreign made Flags of the United States.

**Resolution No. 327: The English Language be Declared as the Official United States Language**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The United States has over the many years been a haven and in most cases a new home for people of many ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, These people, although keeping their ethnic background alive, were urged to take advantage of the educational system that taught them the English language and American history; and

WHEREAS, Many of preferred visitors and new citizens, although clinging to their ethnic backgrounds did with pride take advantage of learning the language of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Bilingual programs funded by the Department of Education are designed to teach with the primary instruction in the student's home language, while English is subjected to a secondary status; and

WHEREAS, These programs tend to encourage separatism, rather than a unification of purpose; and

WHEREAS, There exists alternative bilingual education programs which provide a more efficient transition to proficiency in the English language; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage legislation which would establish English as the official national language; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to designate English as the official language of government in the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to encourage and fund alternative bilingual education programs to serve, as was intended, as a short intermediate step to achieve proficiency in the English language.

**Resolution No. 328: Immigration Reform**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The inability and/or unwillingness of certain government agencies to enforce immigration quotas, laws and policies has resulted in an influx of illegal immigrants in this country; and

WHEREAS, It has been estimated and reported in testimony in Congress that about one-fourth of criminals incarcerated in federal prisons are illegal immigrants costing the criminal justice system more than \$800 million a year; and

WHEREAS, It has been reported that the smuggling of illegal immigrants by crime syndicates has increased dramatically and that terrorist acts by illegal immigrants has caused loss of life and millions of dollars in property damage; and

WHEREAS, The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) apprehended and returned 1.3 million illegal aliens in 1997 and, in addition, deported more than 76,400 illegal aliens without formal proceedings; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, INS removed a record number of over 110,000 criminal and other deportable aliens from the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion is unalterably opposed to illegal immigration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress and the states, the United States Justice Department and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service to take necessary action to stop the invasion of illegal immigration in this country by means which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Hire and train additional Border Patrol agents with employment preference afforded former military personnel.
2. Urge Congress to pass legislation to empower all our nation's law enforcement personnel to apprehend, hold and incarcerate those individuals who are in this country illegally.
3. Initiate immediate deportation proceedings at major points of embarkation for those arriving in this country without valid passport visas.
4. Require that all legal aliens carry a counterfeit resistant registration card and that they be required to report, in a specified length of time, to local officials their location and place of employment.
5. Petition the President of the United States and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration Services and the U. S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as will prevent smuggling of illegal aliens and stop, detain and deport potential terrorists or those with ties to terrorist groups.
6. That as appropriate, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country, and all of the resources of the United States of America be utilized to enforce the security of our country's borders; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to seek ways in which to ease the strain on federal, state and local forms of public assistance by reducing or eliminating demands on these services by illegal immigrants; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the following INS programs: the IDENT system - an automated fingerprint ID system that accurately identifies criminal aliens and repeat crossers and allows the Border Patrol to track changes in crossing patterns; ENFORCE - an automated case processing system that allows Border Patrol agents to reduce paperwork processing time, enabling more agent staff hours to be applied to front-line enforcement activities; and IBIS - the Interagency Border Inspection System that is a joint U.S. Customs/INS "look out" system used at ports of entry to identify criminals and reduces the time to check databases for criminal records; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion initiate an information campaign to alert its members, federal and state elected officials, and the general public of the invasion of the country by illegal immigrants which has reached crisis proportions.



**Resolution No. 329: Support Expedition of Naturalization of Hmong Special Guerrilla Forces**

Origin: Americanism

Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War produced many paramilitary indigenous units who assisted the United States forces in Indochina, often with enormous sacrifice to themselves and to their families; and

WHEREAS, The Central Intelligence Agency, carrying out the foreign policy of the United States, enlisted the support of the Hmong tribe of Laos to assist the U.S. military in fighting the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese; and

WHEREAS, The Hmong Guerrilla Forces rescued downed American pilots, guarded radar sites and guided U.S. bomber pilots to targets while displaying incredible bravery and tenacity, greatly slowing the advance of the North Vietnamese into Laos and South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, While serving in these special guerrilla units during the Vietnam War, between 10,000 and 20,000 Hmong men, women and children were killed and more than 100,000 fled to Thai refugee camps to escape retaliation by the tyrannical governments of Laos and North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, When the United States military left Southeast Asia in 1974, the Hmong guerrillas were left to continue the fight alone with many slaughtered as they waited for evacuation planes that never came; and

WHEREAS, The Hmong people gave up literally everything for the U.S. military forces, their country, their homes, their agrarian culture with the belief that the United States would provide refuge for them if the war effort failed; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of Hmong came to the United States seeking the refuge that was promised to them by the United States government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourage Congress to pass legislation that would provide preferential consideration for U.S. Citizenship and would expedite the naturalization of the Hmong people who served honorably with the special guerrilla units in Laos on the side of the United States during the Vietnam War.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 33 (SD) 1998 NC: Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States**

**Resolution No. 47 (MA) 1998 NC Oppose Foreign Manufacture of American Flags**

**Resolution No. 81 (MT) 1998 NC Patriotic Holidays - Memorial Day**

**Resolution No. 154 (NE) 1998 NC Flag Display in Churches**

**Resolution No. 262 (NY) 1998 NC The English Language Be Declared the Official United States Language**

**Resolution No. 285 (MN) 1998 NC Constitutional Amendment to Protect the United States Flag**

**Referred to the Standing Americanism Commission**

**Resolution No. 8 (ND) 1998 NC Oratorical National Finals Site**  
**Resolution No. 35 (SD) 1998 NC American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame**  
**Resolution No. 89 (VA) 1998 NC Pearl Harbor Attack Anniversary Recognition**  
**Resolution No. 103 (TX) 1998 NC Passports for Veterans**  
**Resolution No. 104 (TX) 1998 NC Oratorical National Finals Site**  
**Resolution No. 113 (IL) 1998 NC Observance of Veterans Day by School Children**  
**Resolution No. 117 (IL) 1998 NC The English Language Be Declared the Official United States Language**  
**Resolution No. 134 (NJ) 1998 NC Oratorical National Finals Site**  
**Resolution No. 150 (OH) 1998 NC Support Department of Ohio Flag Education Efforts**  
**Resolution No. 156 (AZ) 1998 NC Oratorical National Finals Site**  
**Resolution No. 248 (CO) 1998 NC Oratorical National Finals Site**  
**Resolution No. 254 (NY) 1998 NC National Awards Program for Educators**  
**Resolution No. 276 (WA) 1998 NC Pearl Harbor Day**  
**Resolution No. 281 (WA) 1998 NC American Legion Tutoring Program**

Mr. Commander, in regard to the referral of Resolution No. 35 from South Dakota concerning their efforts to erect a National American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame, I want to acknowledge the hard work and enthusiasm of the Legionnaires from Milbank who have pursued this idea. The concept of a National American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame is an exciting prospect for those who revere the program. Taking that concept to reality, however, is nothing short of a major business venture for The American Legion, one that demands some solid answers to some very difficult questions.

From previous consideration on this matter, we know there are areas that need careful and close consideration before moving forward. With the establishment of a National Baseball Hall of Fame, two liabilities exist, legal and financial. As with existing facilities owned by The American Legion in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C. a third facility to house a National Hall of Fame would require additional measures to protect the corporation from legal liabilities. Anticipated need in building funds is approximately \$6 million with an additional \$3 million needed to establish a trust to perpetuate the operation of such a facility. This concern warrants greater consideration by the National Americanism Commission, the National Finance Commission and the National Executive Committee of The American Legion. Referral as requested by the Commission of this Resolution to the standing Commission will allow that. In addition, many of the delegates may not know that our American Legion Baseball Player of the Year is enshrined in the Major League Hall of Fame at Cooperstown each year which provides for a lasting tribute to our program on an annual basis. Also some of our Departments, Pennsylvania and Connecticut for example, have already established a Baseball Hall of Fame in their Departments. So, I wanted to make that explanation in regards to this resolution, Mr. Commander.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAQUETTE: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of New Hampshire, I move for the adoption of this report.

...Motion seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Been moved and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report of the Americanism Commission is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: With the adoption of the Americanism Report, I find it appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. The Frank Belgrano, Jr. Award is given annually to the Department rendering the most outstanding service during the 12 - month period beginning August first to the Boys Scout of America program. This year's winner is the Department of Florida.

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Award is given to the Department within the United States documenting the greatest activity in using The American Legion School Medal Program. This winning department shows what can be accomplished by an active, involved organization. The winner is the Department of Wisconsin.

At this time we recognize the ONE department achieving the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs. The winning Department is selected by the National Americanism Commission on the basis of total resources—manpower as well as financial—devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year. The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is an impressive award named in honor of one of American journalism's most prominent and influential figures.

With us today to announce the winner of the 1998 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is Aubrey Webb, Vice President and Publisher Beaumont Enterprise of Beaumont, Texas.

**Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy  
Aubrey L. Webb, Vice President and Publisher  
*Beaumont Enterprise, Beaumont, Texas***

Thank you for allowing me the honor of presenting the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. For all 80 years that the members of The American Legion have been serving this country, Hearst newspapers have been enjoying the freedom of the press that you have helped so magnificently to preserve, a right that is essential to our democratic traditions. Protecting basic freedoms was a commitment of our founder, William Randolph Hearst. That commitment began before the Spanish American War and continues today wherever this country and its interests are challenged. We at Hearst realize that the success of our company probably could not have happened in any other nation. The Hearst Corporation has grown to include 19 newspapers, 26 broadcast stations in 20 states, 16 consumer magazines with 95 international editions distributed in more than 100 countries, partnerships with cable TV that includes *A&E*, *ESPN*, *Lifetime*, *History Channel* and other venues that help provide our citizens with the information that they need to help keep our country free and strong. It's a record of which we are proud.

But we know our freedom to publish and prosper did not come without cost. That freedom over tyrants has been guaranteed by millions of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who would not let a foreign tyrant take it away. We were prepared to pay whatever price was necessary, even the ultimate sacrifice. And our military extended those same freedoms to others across the globe who had no where else to turn when chaos threatened them. Because of that tremendous defense of liberty and for countless other reasons, America is recognized throughout the world as a truly special place, a standard for those

abroad and a friend who can be counted on no matter how desperate the situation. Let no one ever come to regard the United States as just another country. It is the world's lighthouse of liberty and the only super power and it will remain that as long as future generations carry on the ideas of their parents and of their grandparents. That is why it is so important that our children learn not to take the freedoms we enjoy for granted. Future generations must continue to give our military the tools to do their job and the civilian backing at home to feel right about that job. They should understand that we must always be ready to defend our interests anywhere on the globe. And above all, they must remember that we have responsibilities as well as rights that we must contribute more to our families, our communities, and to our nation than we take away.

America is special for many reasons. And one of the most important is our sense of nationhood. Whether we were born here or became naturalized citizens, most Americans share a common love for our country and a deep reverence for its traditions and culture. Years ago, that kind of patriotism was a given. It was one of our innate strengths. Without question or complaint, we answered the bell when our military called. We trusted our government. In recent decades, that sense of national unity has ebbed and flowed as political crises and unpopular wars have divided us. Now, knowing that we cannot even take something that fundamental for granted—national unity—we must work even harder to insure that pride and patriotism remain strong throughout this nation. The American Legion has been on the front line of that fight for 80 years and you have the deepest appreciation of citizens who know that you will continue to stand up for what's right. It is in that same spirit of sacrifice and service that the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy was created and I, as an employee of the Hearst Corporation, as an Executive Director-Marine, and above all, as an American, am pleased and honored to present this year's Americanism trophy to a Department that has exemplified our country's ideas. That winning Department is Virginia.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Here to accept the award is the delegation Chairman, Jim LaShure, Department Commander Roger Clevinger, and the Americanism Chairman, Jerry Wendtz and Department Adjutant Connie O'Neill.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LASHURE: Mr. Commander, when we recite the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, we pledge ourselves to the Americanism team. It is our honor and privilege to receive this award for all the proud Legionnaires of Virginia.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Chair recognizes Ken Sercerchi of Maine, Chair of the National Convention Committee on Membership and Post Activities, for the purpose of making a report.

...At this time National Vice Commander Chisholm assumes the Chair.

**Report: Section on Membership  
(Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)  
Kenneth Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman**

Fifty members of the Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs Section III, Membership, and guests, met at 9:00 a.m., September 6, 1998, in the Magnolia Room of the Riverside Hilton Hotel, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Kenneth A. Sercerchi of Maine was elected Chairman and Gerald Goetzinger of South Dakota was elected Secretary.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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National staff provided reports on current activity and future strategies for the following topics: the 1998 Membership Year, the New Post Development/Revitalization Task Force, the 1999 Membership Promotion, and the DMS and Direct Renewal Programs.

As of Friday, September 4, 1998, membership for the 1998 year stands at 2,803,130.

Our awards programs consisted of recognition to those Departments achieving target date goals. For a 75% target date, December 10, 1997, an eagle statue was awarded to 31 Department Commanders and Membership Chairmen. At the reach of the 90% target date, February 9, 1998, American Legion his and her watches were sent to 21 Department Commanders and Membership Chairmen. Seventeen Departments were awarded a crystal emblem for achieving the 95% target date, April 8, 1998. And for the 100% target date, May 6, 1998, one Department earned an embroidered American Legion denim jacket and 100% American Legion cap. The Department of Arizona attained an all-time high in membership for 1998. During the 1998 Membership Workshop, a drawing was held from among the 1998 members of the Gold Brigade for an award of a \$1000 gift certificate. The winners of these certificates are: Steve Batchelde, Indiana, Doug Hare, New Hampshire, Raymond D. Effinger, New Jersey, Hazel B. Taylor, Georgia, and John B. Doane, Missouri.

Three Resolutions were referred by the Committee. All three resolutions were Referred to the Membership and Post Activities Committee, for further action.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions**

**Referred to Standing Committee on Membership and Post Activities**

**Resolution No. 85 (IA) 1998 NC: Direct Renewal Notices**

**Resolution No. 109 (TX) 1998 NC: Consolidated Post Report**

**Resolution No. 251 (SC) 1998 NC: Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans**

As of Friday, September 4, 1998, membership for 1999 stands at 1,237,422. Mr. Commander, this is a 79,516 increase compared to membership last year at the same time.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SERCERCHI: Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Maine, I move for the adoption of this report.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CHISHOLM: Been duly moved and seconded. All those in favor, indicate by the usual sign. All opposed? Carried.

**Presentation: Department Membership Awards**

**Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho, National Vice Commander  
for Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

We've come to a portion of the agenda that every National Commander looks forward to. It's time for Membership Award presentations. Membership continues to be critical to The American Legion. Without an active, growing membership, our programs will lose strength and our voice will be weakened. Our commitment of service to veterans, their families and communities will suffer. During the past year one Department took their

membership efforts to a higher level by posting All-Time-Highs. I ask that Bobby Reyes, Department Commander of Arizona, join me at the lectern.

Bobby, the efforts of the men and women you represent in your department are heartening. Through determination, hard work, and commitment your membership grew to its highest level ever. It is with sincere gratitude that I present a plaque and rings to both you and your membership chairman. Congratulations!

I have another set of membership awards to present. Would the following Legion leaders join me here: Bobby Reyes and Tom Gleason the Membership Chairman of Arizona; William Powell, Department Commander of Maine and Lawrence Dearborn, Department of Maine Membership Chairman; Robert Campbell, Department Commander of Georgia and Robert Woodruff, Department of Georgia Membership Chairman; H.B. Williams, Department Commander of Nevada and Pat Burch, Department of Nevada Membership Chairman; Frank Stancil, Department Commander of North Carolina and Dale Punch, Department of North Carolina Membership Chairman; Willis Dent, Department Commander of South Carolina and Billy Bell, Department of South Carolina Membership Chairman; Eugene Pytko, Department Commander of Rhode Island and Anthony DeQuattro, Department of Rhode Island Membership Chairman.

These awards are made because each of these departments met or exceeded 100% of their membership goal. Gentlemen, please join me at the lectern. I would like to note the Department of Rhode Island was the only Department of these seven to achieve their goal of 100% by the May 6, 1998 Target Date.

It is with gratitude I present to each of your Departments a plaque signifying your accomplishment along with a specially designed shirt and bag. As you can see, the gentlemen are wearing their shirts. Furthermore, two additional Departments have just recently attained this milestone - South Dakota and Philippines. Their awards will be sent to them upon returning home. Congratulations to each of you!

You've heard it before—and you'll hear it again in the years to come—membership is the lifeblood of our organization. The next award I am privileged to make is to a man who set the standard. The National Recruiter of the Year gathered 257 new members to The American Legion fold to earn this honor. Please give a warm round of applause to the dedicated Legionnaire from John Ratliff Post 164, in Virginia, Clarence Short.

Clarence, this is but a small token of our appreciation for the job you have done and continue to do in your membership efforts for The American Legion in "Still Serving America." I would like to present a jacket and shirt to you along with this crystal Eagle. Thank you for a job well done.

...National Commander Jordan resumes the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: At this time, the Department of Utah would like to make a special presentation. I must note this is becoming a familiar site during this time of year for Utah.

The Final Burial of "Comrade Chicken"  
(1998 National Convention)

*(Jazz funeral music begins to play. Seven past Department Commanders (Leslie McKittrick (MA), William Daves (HI), Frank Larson (CA), Steve Hall (KY), Jerry Rogers (AR), and William Christofferson (UT)) each having entertained "Comrade Chicken" throughout his travels, will act as pall-bearers for coffin. Each pall-bearer will wear the customary black-feathered arm band on left arm. They will already be seated on stage. Coffin w/chicken is*

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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*pre-positioned on stage and National Executive Committeeman, William Christofferson, of Utah, will be spokesman for all.)*

MR. CHRISTOFFERSON: They say, "What goes around, comes around." And, I'm sorry to report, that is particularly true in this particular case, we've got kind of a "fowl" smell here. *(As he holds up Comrade Chicken. Christofferson places Chicken in coffin)* Last year, because of this, whatever it is, we in Utah were so close to this podium, we could see the whites of the eyes of everybody. This year, because of this, we're clear back there, we can't even see the podium.

Anyway, today I stand before you, to put to rest this "fowl" smelling chicken. My fellow pall-bearers and I have each had the misfortune .... and some with cackles ..... of entertaining this bird over the past year. And, it's my understanding he developed quite a diverse wardrobe throughout his notorious travels.

Leaving Utah, we were glad to get rid of that whatever it is, he ventured to Massachusetts ...

*(Christofferson pause while MA Commander bows and clucks)*

And while he was in Massachusetts, he went from there and proceeded to Alaska ... there, while in Alaska, he donned a tuxedo and fur coat. Having no feathers, you know what that is, kind of cold, he needed the fur! From there, he flew, "although, chickens don't fly!", and especially this one, he went to Hawaii ...

*(Pause while HI Commander bows and clucks)*

... and from there he was stripped of the fur and tux for a grass skirt.

Anyway, upon proceeding to California ...

*(Pause while CA Commander bows and clucks)*

... his anticipated attire became somewhat questionable, and therefore was skipped entirely. Probably in San Francisco.

Moving on to Kentucky where there's all kinds of chickens...

*(Pause while KY Commander bows and clucks)*

... from there he went to Arkansas ...

*(Pause while AR Commander bows and clucks)*

...down there, I guess with the razorbacks. Anyway, he became official and was given a bag. Because routine can sometimes be futile, old "Comrade Chicken" found himself, again, and I hate to say this, back in Utah.

*(Pause while UT representative bows and clucks)*

You know, his mission was well-served for some, but not all, and I thank God and it's now time to bid him a final farewell.

To the city of New Orleans, that's referred to as the "City of the Dead." Thus, it is only fitting we stand before you to bury the bird. I ask those on the stage to give the proper respect now and remove your Legion cap while we proceed to bury the bird.

*(Legion caps are removed and placed over heart with solemn expressions and funeral music playing. Voodoo doctor then appears. Voodoo doctor does incantation and spell. Spell dispels of chicken and replaces with rhino. Spell gives rhino powers and honors of success, as well as failure. When incantation is complete, - chicken is replaced with rhino. Voodoo doctor summons rhino—(staff member in costume)—and addresses assembly.)*

VOODOO DOCTOR: Hiya kids, hiya hiya. I am Murray. I'll be your Voodoo chief for today's incantation. Herman Harrington, I haven't seen you since the year 1610. And you don't look a day over 1610. You guys want to get rid of that chicken? You want that chick

to go? We're going to make it go. Got a little spell for you. Abracadabra and abracado, get your membership going, make your little hearts glow, do it quick, and make it grow, get rid of that chick, bring me the rhino. Well, folks you got rid of the chick. You got something better for you. By the powers vested in me, voodoo chief Murray, I bestow upon thee great powers and honor. On the eve of each Target Date, you're going to lay those dainty little hooves of yours on those most deserving, all those that reach their Target Dates. Your presence will give them greater strength, knowledge and enthusiasm to do their jobs. But for those of you who don't cut the mustard, he's still going to see you and he's going to leave his mark here. A nice little bag of "whew" that he leaves behind. For those of you in New Jersey, it's fertilizer.

*(Voodoo doctor lifts up bag of fertilizer)*

This bag of humus will render membership fertility to all who spread it. He's going to do a good job and show you how to do it the fun way. Commander Jordan, he's all yours.

*(Commander Jordan approaches coffin and pall-bearers. Voodoo doctor passes fertilizer to Commander Jordan. The voodoo doctor disappears from stage.)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Well, I knew strange things were known to occur in this "City of the Dead," but I had no inkling to this type of thing. Since I have heard many people say, "National Headquarters is a zoo!", I feel it only appropriate to pass this thick-skinned mammal, and his "di-stink-tive" baggage to the Chairman of the Membership and Post Activities Committee. Where's Ken Sercerchi?

*(Sercherchi stands up from guest seating on stage.)*

SERCERCHI: Right here, sir.

*(Sercherchi moves to down stage to Commander)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Ken, I'm placing this animal in your care, and trust you to make the appropriate arrangements to have him forwarded to National Headquarters for further care, until such time he is to call upon the respective departments.

*(Sercherchi takes rhino and leads stage group off-stage to conclude ceremony.)* The effort of the men and the women you represent in your Department were heartening. Through the determination, hard work and the commitment, your membership grew to its highest level it has ever had. It is with sincere gratitude that I present a plaque....oh, that's the wrong thing, you didn't tell me that. No wonder, they set me up. Look what the rhino did! You set me up for the kill. Well, I've always said we gotta have change but I said we gotta have fun. So, somebody's going to put up with that rhino all year long. He's a little bit bigger than that duck was. I wish you well.

The Chair recognizes Chet Stellar of Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation for the purposes of making his report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation  
Chester F. Stellar, Ohio, Chairman**

Eighty-two members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on September 6, 1998 in the Hilton Riverside, Versailles, Third Level and agreed on the following report which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Carroll Williams (MD), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Philip Wilkerson (MD), Deputy Director, VA&R Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. Chester F.



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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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Stellar (OH), Chairman of the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman appointed Pat Phillips (GA), as Committee Secretary; Thomas Cadmus (MI), Chairman, and Leo Maynard (CA), Secretary of the Medical and Hospital Subcommittee; and Tracy Taylor (FL), Chairman, and Teddy Duckworth (WI), Secretary of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Harold T. Kelly (VA), Assistant Director, Carroll Williams, Director, to Claims and Rating; and Philip Wilkerson, Deputy Director, to Medical and Hospital.

As has been the custom for the 54 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolutions, in a three day pre-convention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their analysis, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. The Screening Committee was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

REGION 3— William A. Metcalf (KY)  
 REGION 4— Robert C. Mackey (OK)  
 REGION 5— John W. Hickey (IN), Chairman  
 REGION 6— Steve Meyer (MN)  
 REGION 7— John C. McCartney (CO), Secretary

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Eighty-First National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 70 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee. One resolution emanated from the Convention Committee.

The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved as Amended	32
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	17
Referred to the Standing Commission	12
Received and Recorded	5
Rejected	4

A report of action taken on the 12 resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned, and, in addition, will be contained in the National Adjutant's report to the Eighty-First Annual National Convention.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 17: Support Veterans Nursing Home at Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center**

Origin: CO

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The battle of turning the Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center (FAMC), Aurora, Colorado, into a state veterans nursing home continues; and

WHEREAS, The veteran organizations in Colorado and the United Veterans Committee of Colorado back and support the concept of the state veterans nursing home to be located at the FAMC; and

WHEREAS, The support also comes from the Colorado Department of Veterans Affairs, the City of Aurora and the Fitzsimmons Redevelopment Authority; and

WHEREAS, Even though the Colorado state legislature has passed SB-186 to provide initial funding for the state nursing home, additional funding is required, both by the state of Colorado and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to complete the project and include the proposed 100 bed domiciliary; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion go formally on record in support of a state veterans nursing home at the proposed site of Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion take steps to secure the remaining funding from the Department of Veterans Affairs in support of this state veterans nursing home.

**Resolution No. 28: The American Legion Policy on Tobacco-Related Disabilities**

Origin: CO

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 24 (CO), 137 (NJ), 249 (SC), and 271 (WA)

WHEREAS, For the last 78 years, The American Legion has fought to ensure that disabled veterans receive benefits and medical care for injuries and diseases related to their period of military service; and

WHEREAS, This would include certain diseases developing years after service which can be related to nicotine addiction resulting from the use of tobacco products during service; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, agencies of the Federal Government, most notably, the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA, have promoted, condoned, fostered, and encouraged the use of tobacco products by members of the Armed Forces and veterans; and

WHEREAS, DoD continues to be the nation's largest distributor of tobacco products to active duty, reserve, national guard personnel and their dependents through the military supply system stateside and overseas to post and base exchanges, canteens, ship's stores, and commissaries; and

WHEREAS, Historically, DoD took little or no action to discourage the use of tobacco products by making them readily accessible and affordable (in some instances they were free) to military personnel and has only recently established physical fitness policies to discourage tobacco use by active duty and reserve personnel; and

WHEREAS, VA hospitals up until 1991 continued to provide tobacco products at discounted prices; and

WHEREAS, Although the Federal Government has required a health warning on cigarette packages and other tobacco products sold to the public beginning in 1965, such warning labels were not required on tobacco products distributed through DoD until 1970; and

WHEREAS, Until the early 1990s, most all claims for disability and death due to smoking were generally denied by the courts and VA due to the lack of scientific evidence of a relationship between nicotine addiction, tobacco use, and certain diseases, such as cancers of the lip, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, larynx, lung, pancreas, bladder, urinary tract, and kidney, coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, other circulatory diseases, chronic bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and

WHEREAS, Within the last several years, there has been increasing scientific data establishing a causal link between tobacco use and an increased prevalence of certain diseases among those who used tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, There have been ongoing revelations in the course of recent litigation against the tobacco companies about the addictive effects of nicotine and its consequences, and the efforts of the tobacco companies to conceal and withhold such information and scientific data from the public, the Federal Government, the Congress, and the courts; and

WHEREAS, In 1993 the VA General Counsel issued a precedent opinion which held that a claim for service connection for a smoking-related disability or death was legally possible; and

WHEREAS, From 1993 until May 1997 tobacco-related illness claims were held in abeyance while VA officials debated the practical and budgetary implications of this change in VA policy; and

WHEREAS, The four specific evidence requirements for a tobacco-related illness claim were finally set forth in a May 13, 1997 VA General Counsel precedent opinion:

1. there must be a statement from the veteran that he or she used tobacco products (i.e. smoked, chewed tobacco, or used snuff) during service; and
2. there must be a currently diagnosed medical condition, such as emphysema, chronic obstructive lung disease, lung cancer, etc.; and
3. a medical opinion must state this condition is related to tobacco use; and
4. a medical opinion must also state that the veteran was dependent on nicotine; and

WHEREAS, The VA General Counsel Opinion concluded that, providing these four requirements are met, it would be consistent with the historical concept of service connection for VA to grant direct service connection for nicotine dependence and service connection on a secondary basis for a subsequently developing tobacco-related disease; and

WHEREAS, VA has estimated there would be some 2.5 million smoking-related claims filed over the next five years resulting in additional benefit costs of some \$17 billion, which VA believes would have a devastating impact on the VA budget, in particular, and the Federal budget, as a whole, while ignoring the plight of veterans who used tobacco on active duty and especially those who were introduced to tobacco during such service; and

WHEREAS, The President's FY 1999 budget request for VA was predicated on legislation barring the grant of service connection of any disability or death due in whole or in part to tobacco use as well as entitlement to VA medical care for such disability; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in the course of debate on the FY 1999 Federal budget, used the \$15 billion identified as savings resulting from the bar to veterans' claims for tobacco-related illnesses as a funding source for the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA-21); and

WHEREAS, TEA-21, signed by the President as PL 105-178 on June 9, 1998, made the veterans' use of tobacco products in service synonymous with willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, According to current VA data, in the period 1993 to June 1998, VA received approximately 8,830 tobacco-related claims and, of these, approximately 4,977 have been adjudicated with benefits granted in 359 cases and 3,718 are still in process; and

WHEREAS, Certain technical corrections were made to PL 105-178 by the TEA Restoration Act signed by the President on July 9, 1998 as PL 105-206 which affirmed the bar to VA benefits for tobacco-related illnesses, but deleted the reference to willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, Several Members of Congress have subsequently introduced legislation seeking repeal of the current bar to VA benefits for tobacco-related illnesses; however, it is anticipated that no action will be taken on such legislation before the 105th Congress adjourns sine die; and

WHEREAS, New legislation will have to be introduced in the 106th Congress; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes action taken by the President and the Congress has been clearly anti-veteran and a violation of veterans' constitutional rights, since no other group of citizens, who are ill from tobacco-related causes, is being singled out and stripped of their eligibility for federal benefits and medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek 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; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also seek Congressional appropriation of sufficient funds to pay compensation benefits for tobacco-related illness claims.

**Resolution No. 36: Allow Concurrent Payment of Compensation or DIC and Educational Benefits to Dependent Children**

Origin: SD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, 38 USC, Chapter 35 provides for education benefits for dependents of veterans determined to be 100% service-connected by VA or that cause of death is service-connected; and

WHEREAS, 38 USC allows for concurrent payment of Education Assistance Allowance and Compensation or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for the spouse or surviving spouse; and

WHEREAS, The conditions covering the bar to concurrent payment of Compensation or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Education Assistance Allowance to dependent children are set forth in 38 USC, Chapter 35, section 3562; and

WHEREAS, The cost of education of the spouse or surviving spouse would be the same or less than the cost for a dependent child; and

WHEREAS, The veteran or surviving spouse still must provide some support for the dependent child while attending school; and

WHEREAS, The monetary benefit provided by VA does not cover the cost of higher education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That 38 USC, Chapter 35 be changed to allow for concurrent payment of Compensation or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Education Assistance Allowance for dependent children.

**Resolution No. 75: Seek Legislation to Pay Accrued Benefits in a Pending Claim to the Date the Deceased Veterans Claim was Filed**

Origin: IN

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to service to the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran should die while a claim is pending, including an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals or the Court of Veterans Appeals under 38 USC 5121, the surviving spouse, dependents, or other eligibles are limited to two years retroactive accrued benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who have filed a benefit claim are having to wait six months to a year or more for a decision by the regional office and following that, wait over three years or more for a decision by the Board of Veterans Appeals and another year or more on their case by the Court of Veterans Appeals; and

WHEREAS, Given the fact that a claim can be in a pending status for upwards of 4 or more years, many veterans whose cases are in this category will die before a final decision is rendered; and

WHEREAS, The families of these deceased veterans receive only a small portion of the benefits that would have been due and otherwise payable to the veteran had he or she remained alive; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend 38 USC 5121 to provide for the payment of accrued benefits in a pending claim, including an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals or the Court of Veterans Appeals to the date the deceased veteran's claim was filed.

**Resolution No. 76: The American Legion Policy on Dependency and Indemnity Compensation**

Origin: IN

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion strongly supports improvements which enhance and protect veterans' compensation benefits and programs; and

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) may be paid to an honorably discharged veteran's surviving spouse, children or parents if the veteran died of a service-connected disability or died while in the active military, naval, or air service after December 31, 1956; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program is to provide an appropriate level of economic support and security for the surviving spouse, children or parents; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that DIC benefits be periodically adjusted to reflect increases in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, The Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Reform Act of 1992, PL 102-568, established a single monthly benefit rate for the survivors of individuals who died on active duty and veterans who died of service-connected causes after December 31, 1992; and

WHEREAS, Survivors in receipt of DIC under the prior law which was based on the veteran's military pay grade were "grandfathered" under this legislation and could elect to either continue to receive DIC based on military pay grade or change over to the new DIC program; and

WHEREAS, Congress in enacting the DIC Reform Act expressed its intentions that those survivors remaining under the prior law DIC program would continue to receive periodic cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in their benefits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes recipients under the prior DIC law are entitled to the same percentage cost-of-living adjustment as those under the current DIC program; and

WHEREAS, Surviving spouses with no dependents in receipt of VA death pension in Medicaid covered nursing homes are entitled to receive \$90.00 monthly for personal needs and wants, none of which can be used to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, surviving spouses having no dependents in receipt of or a parent(s) in receipt of DIC and who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are required to utilize all funds received from VA towards the cost of their nursing home care, leaving them without any or very limited funds for personal needs and wants; and

WHEREAS, It would be very beneficial for those surviving parent(s) to receive the \$90.00 payment the same as allowed surviving spouses in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) who are in nursing homes under Medicaid; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation to provide for periodic cost-of-living adjustments in DIC at the same percentage rate to both current law and prior law DIC recipients; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall seek legislation authorizing the payment of VA DIC to surviving spouses having no dependents who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes of at least \$90.00 per month, but also prohibiting any part of the DIC payment from being applied to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to allow parents in receipt of DIC who are patients in nursing homes under Medicaid to be entitled to a payment up to \$90.00 per month from VA.

**Resolution No. 77: Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program**

Origin: IN

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-588, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Improvement Act of 1978, provided major changes in the disability and death pension program for the

veterans in World War I, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars, and their surviving spouses and children; and

WHEREAS, This pension program established different guaranteed annual income levels for necessary economic support; and

WHEREAS, After extensive study, The American Legion concludes that certain inequities exist in the Improved Pension program that need to be addressed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Under the current death pension program for 1998, the annual benefit rate for a surviving spouse with no income and no dependents is \$5,808 or sixty-seven percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income and no dependents; and

WHEREAS, Current regulations provide that surviving spouses are not entitled to pension benefits for the month in which the veteran dies, if they are not found eligible for death pension; and

WHEREAS, The majority of these surviving spouses are elderly and disabled and are living at or below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, Under the current death pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving child with no income where there is no surviving spouse is \$1,476 or seventeen percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income or dependents; and

WHEREAS, This limited amount may impose a severe financial hardship on the surviving child; and

WHEREAS, Under 38 USC 1543 where the surviving child is residing with a person who is legally responsible for such child's support, the income and corpus of estate of that person is countable for the purposes of determining entitlement or continued entitlement to pension benefits; and

WHEREAS, Currently when two veterans are married to one another where both meet the disability, service, and income requirements, basic pension benefits are payable only at the rate of a "veteran with one dependent" which is currently \$11,349 annually; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, believes that since each veteran in their own right meets the eligibility criteria for pension with the exception of being married to another veteran, this discriminatory provision of the law should be eliminated and each veteran should be paid at the basic pension rate of a single veteran without dependents which is \$8,246, reduced by the amount of countable family income; and

WHEREAS, In the determination of annual income, payments under all Government Life Insurance programs are countable, but proceeds from fire and casualty insurance policies may be excluded; and

WHEREAS, Previous pension programs have excluded the proceeds of Government Life Insurance policies in the determination of annual income; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the effective date of reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income shall be the last day of the month in which the change occurred; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes it would lessen the financial hardship of such adjustments to pension if any such change would be made as of the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek amendments to Title 38, United States Code, to accomplish the following:

1. Establish the pension rates of surviving spouses at ninety percent of the rate for a veteran without dependents;
2. Establish the pension rate for a surviving child where there is no surviving spouse entitled at ninety percent of the rate of a veteran without dependents;
3. Delete the requirement that the income and corpus of estate of a person legally responsible for the support of a surviving child be counted in the determination of annual income of such child;
4. Provide that when two veterans who meet the service, disability, and income requirements for pension eligibility are married to one another, each shall be paid at the rate of a single veteran without dependents reduced by the amount of countable family income;
5. Exclude in the determination of annual income payments all proceeds from Government Life Insurance policies;
6. Change the effective date for reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income from the last day of the month in which the change occurred to the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred.

**Resolution No. 78: The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans Home Program**

Origin: IN

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 11 (ND), 74 (RI) and 240(NH)

WHEREAS, State Veterans' Homes were founded for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans beginning in the late 1800s and have continued to serve subsequent generations of veterans for over one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of Title 38, United States Code, VA is authorized to make payments to states to assist in the construction and maintenance of State Veterans' Homes; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are 89 State Veterans' Home facilities in 42 states with over 23,000 beds providing nursing home, hospital, and domiciliary care; and

WHEREAS, The State Veterans' Home Program has proven to be a cost-effective provider of quality care to many of the nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, This program is an important adjunct to VA's own nursing, hospital, and domiciliary programs; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Grants for Construction of State Veterans' Homes Program which provides funding for 65% of the total cost of building new veterans' homes; and

WHEREAS, VA has not been able to keep pace with the number of Grant applications and currently, there is over \$228 million in unfunded new construction projects pending; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes per diem payments for veterans residing in State Homes which covers only about twenty percent of the cost of domiciliary care and twenty five percent of the cost of nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, Under Title 38, United States Code, veterans who are paid increased compensation or pension at the aid and attendance (A&A) rate while a patient in a State Veterans' Home are entitled to receive drugs and medication from VA; and



WHEREAS, VA is seeking to impose restrictions on this program whereby it will pay either the authorized nursing care per diem rate or provide drugs and medication to eligible state home A&A veterans; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the growing long-term health care needs of older veterans, it is essential that the State Veterans' Home Program be maintained as a viable and important alternative health care provider to the VA system; now, therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports increasing the amount of per diem authorized for nursing home and domiciliary care provided to veterans in State Veterans' Homes, as required; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the provision of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medication to state home aid & attendance patients, along with the payment of authorized per diem to State Veterans' Homes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress be urged to fully fund approved State Veterans' Home construction grant applications; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the President and the Congress be urged to pledge their full support to the State Veterans' Home Program as a cost-effective alternative to the VA health care system; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Association of State Veterans' Homes and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs be urged to support mutual planning efforts, enhanced medical sharing agreements, and enhanced-use construction contracts with qualified providers.

#### **Resolution No. 79: The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation**

Origin: IN

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The current disability compensation program has proven to be a fair and equitable manner in which to indemnify veterans suffering disabilities that are incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the military, naval, or air service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is totally supportive of every benefit that is currently provided to veterans for their past contributions to their country and its welfare; and

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on a schedule of ratings of reduction in earning capacity from specific injuries as set forth in Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of The American Legion that there is no way to adequately compensate a veteran for loss of ability to be a working, productive member of society, and that the current monthly rates do not adequately compensate these disabled veterans for the loss due to reduced earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes Congress should periodically review the amount of disability compensation veterans are receiving and provide a cost-of-living adjustment to assure they have sufficient economic support; and

WHEREAS, Periodically, proposals are made to tax VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, Taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Veterans in receipt of VA disability pension benefits who have no dependents and are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are entitled to receive \$90 monthly for personal needs and wants (Public Law 101-58), none of which can be used to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, veterans having no dependents in receipt of VA disability compensation benefits and who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are required to utilize all funds received from the VA towards the cost of their nursing home costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion vigorously oppose any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any administrative or legislative proposal to dilute or eliminate any provision of the disability compensation program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, section 1114, to provide a periodic COLA increase and to increase the monthly rates of disability compensation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any legislative effort to automatically index such cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security recipients, nonservice-connected disability recipients and death pension beneficiaries; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the American Legion seek legislation authorizing the payment of VA disability compensation to veterans having no dependents who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes of at least \$90 per month, but also prohibiting any part of the compensation payment from being applied to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility.

**Resolution No. 90: Protect Disability Rating after 10 Years**

Origin: VA

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Section 110, Title 38, United States Code, provides for the protection of all disability compensation evaluations that have been continuously in effect for twenty or more years; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is convinced that the length of time for the preservation should be the same as that which currently applies to the protection of service connection vis-a-vis, ten years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation to amend section 110, Title 38, United States Code, to provide that any disability which has been continuously rated at or above any evaluation for ten years or more for compensation purposes under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall not thereafter be rated at less than such evaluation, except upon a showing that such rating was based on fraud.

**Resolution No. 93: The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery System**

Origin: VA

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 14 (ND) and 45 (MA)

WHEREAS, VA's National Cemetery System (NCS) comprises 115 cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monuments. It was established by Congress and approved by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 to provide for the proper burial and registration of graves of Civil War dead; and

WHEREAS, The system has been under the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs since 1973, when Public Law 93-43 transferred 82 national cemeteries (except Arlington) from the Department of the Army. Another 21 were already part of VA. In 1978, VA established the National Cemetery System to administer the cemeteries and related programs; and

WHEREAS, Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the Armed Forces and veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, as well as spouses, unremarried widows or widowers, minor children and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children. The first decedent to be buried need not be the veteran. Also eligible for burial are members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, the Army and Air National Guard, and the Reserve Officers Training Corps who die while on active duty for training or performing full-time service. Public Law 103-240, signed by the President on May 4, 1994, approved legislation that extends eligibility for burial in a national cemetery to any member or former member of the Armed Forces (and his or her dependents) who has performed at least 20 years of service as members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces under honorable conditions and who is eligible for retired pay; and

WHEREAS, Since 1973, annual interments in the NCS have increased from 36,400 to 68,000 in 1997. Annual burials will increase to more than 115,000 in the year 2010 as the veteran population ages; and

WHEREAS, Of the 115 national cemeteries, 54 are closed, having reached capacity for casket burials. Most of these can accept cremation burials, however, and all of them can inter the spouse or eligible children of a family member already buried. Another 22 national cemeteries would close by the year 2000, but efforts are underway to forestall some of these closures by acquiring adjacent properties; and

WHEREAS, NCS administers a program of grants to states to assist them in establishing or improving state-operated veterans cemeteries. The matched-funds program helps to provide additional burial space for veterans in locations where there are no nearby national cemeteries. To date more than \$30 million in 68 grants have been awarded to 18 states and the Territory of Guam; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned that the predicated increase in veteran burials will overwhelm the capacity of the existing National Cemetery System. Also, new eligibility entitlement may be extended to retired members and eligible dependents of the Select Reserve, further increasing the demands placed on the NCS; and

WHEREAS, Funding for maintenance and renovations of the current National Cemetery System, staff levels, cemetery expansions, and equipment procurement has been consistently inadequate since the heavy demands on the NCS began in the early 1980s. Through the periods 1990-1998, Congress has provided the NCS some necessary funding relief. Although operations funding has increased to respectable levels, significant funding

shortfalls still exist with regard to equipment and both major and minor construction projects; and

WHEREAS, Operations and maintenance and renovations construction funding must continually be adjusted to reflect the true requirements of the National Cemetery System; and

WHEREAS, Congress must provide sufficient major construction appropriations to VA to permit the NCS to accomplish its stated goal of ensuring that burial in a national or state cemetery is a realistic option by locating cemeteries within 75 miles of three out of every four veterans by the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, The 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act restricted the plot allowance of \$150, which was previously paid to all honorably discharged wartime veterans and eliminated the headstone allowance of \$85, which was paid to all eligible veterans in lieu of a government-provided headstone or marker. The 1990 Act limited the plot allowance benefit to veterans who are indigent or are in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension payments. The plot allowance would still be payable to state veterans cemeteries. While veterans would still be entitled to receive a government-provided headstone or marker for their interment site, the headstone or marker allowance was eliminated entirely; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran passes away in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary, or in an institution at which the individual was receiving hospital or nursing care at the expense of the United States at the time of death, VA will pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial; however, a veteran who passes away in a State Veterans Home is not allowed transportation cost for the remains to place of burial by VA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and to petition the Congress to provide required operations and construction funding to ensure VA burial in a national or state veterans cemetery is a realistic option for veterans and their eligible dependents; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the current 50/50 Federal/State construction cost of veterans' cemeteries to 65 percent Federal/35 percent State. In addition, up to 50 percent of the states' cost could be contributed through a land donation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion go on record as being opposed to any attempt, now or in the future, to collect "User Fees" for burials in any national or state veterans cemetery; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support restoration of the pre-1981 burial allowance and an increase of the burial benefit to \$400. We also support the restoration of the pre-1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act criteria to provide eligibility for a government furnished headstone or marker allowance and restoration and increase of the burial plot allowance from \$150 to \$300; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support action to provide that where 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.

**Resolution No. 97: Provide Full Medical Care for World War II Veterans**

Origin: TX

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, World War II veterans ages range from 70 to 90 years; and

WHEREAS, Their need for medical care has increased to exceed most of their disposable income; and

WHEREAS, Their hazardous military duty is a contributing factor to their need for increased medical care; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 fails to provide reasonable medical care for World War II veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998 That The American Legion goes on record as supporting amendment of Title 38 USC and/or other applicable statutes to provide for both inpatient hospital care and outpatient medical services for World War II veterans on a priority basis.

**Resolution No. 126: Urge the Congress to Exempt the VAMCs from Copyright Infringement Laws**

Origin: IL

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The showing of video tapes at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers is an integral activity of recreational therapy for the patients; and

WHEREAS, The movie industry's union is claiming infringement of copyright laws that provide royalties to the artists; and

WHEREAS, These videos are owned by the Department of Veterans Affairs and are not viewed by the public, but are only for the patients' enjoyment and viewing; and

WHEREAS, Most of these videos were donated by veterans' organizations and civic groups; and

WHEREAS, Nursing homes and State Veterans' Homes are exempt from the copyright infringement laws and we feel that Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers should also be exempted from copyright laws; and

WHEREAS, Recent videos are not being shown at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, because VA cannot bear the cost of these royalties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urges the Congress of the United States to also exempt the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers from the copyright infringement laws.

**Resolution No. 131: Enhanced Education and Training Readjustment Program for Service Persons (GI Bill)**

Origin: FL

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The end of the Vietnam era eligibility for the original GI Bill left a number of service members without sufficient resources to go to college or a training program as they attempted to re-enter the civilian work force; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's historical position was that the original GI Bill, and its successors were necessary to help people who had been called away from their homes

and jobs, and needed some assistance catching up with those who either were not drafted or did not enlist in a time of crisis; and

WHEREAS, The current Montgomery GI Bill is less of a readjustment benefit than it is a recruitment and retention tool. It requires a first year contribution of \$1200, paid monthly, by service members who wish to participate, and it currently returns to participants \$12 for every dollar contributed, at the rate of \$400 per month; and

WHEREAS, While the overall return is excellent, the monthly rate is only paid if a veteran is in school full time, and \$400 per month is about half the average cost of attending a state school as a state resident. As a result, only about one-third of the men and women who contribute to this program actually use it; and

WHEREAS, To contrast it with the GI Bill that ended with the Vietnam era, the payments to veterans (with no contribution other than time required) covered between 90 and 100 percent of college costs; and

WHEREAS, The \$1200 contribution is not refundable to the veteran if the veteran decides not to use it; and

WHEREAS, With the current rush to save money and "build government down," any program that requires spending money is often seen as a target for cutting, regardless of its wisdom. Because today's congressional budget rules require new spending to be offset by corresponding savings, the mission to accomplish the goal of a new GI Bill will be much tougher than in previous years; and

WHEREAS, In the minds of The American Legion, educational assistance for veterans has consistently proven to be a winning concept. People who are trained make more money, and pay more taxes than those people who do not improve their earning power. A GI Bill that provides what its predecessors did is not an expense, it is a wise investment for the country to make; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion endorse a new GI Bill that includes:

- Comparable benefits for honorably discharged veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces Reserves and National Guard;
- Health care, child care, and all other benefits granted for people eligible for National Service Plan benefits also be available to veterans using the GI Bill, and serving members of the Armed Forces Reserves and National Guard;
- Annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in education assistance benefits;
- Tax exemptions for GI Bill payments to veterans;
- Continuing the requirement for out-of-pocket contributions before service members are eligible for the program;
- Expanding the time that service members can make monthly contributions toward educational benefits from the current one year to four years;
- Using GI Bill benefits to pay for education debts incurred before people joined the military;
- Maintaining the current 12-1 contribution/payback ratio;
- Provide that, if, after 10 years, a veteran decides not to access the fund, he or she would be able to receive the money put into the fund, with no interest being accrued.

**Resolution No. 132: The American Legion Policy on DVA-NSLI Insurance**

Origin: FL

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation:

Consolidated with No. 289 (MI)

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 era serving on active duty during the period beginning September 29, 1965 through May 7, 1975 were covered under either the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program or, later, the Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program; and

WHEREAS, Upon discharge or separation from service individuals had only 120 days within which to convert their government life insurance to a private commercial policy, with Veterans Group Life Insurance not becoming available until August 1974 with a retroactive open period to 1970 for unconverted active or inactive SGLI policies, but not applying to the major portion of the Vietnam era; 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 era veterans who did not convert their government life insurance to a private policy, as well as veterans of the World War II and Korean War period whose NSLI 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 era veterans with disabilities who had been eligible to apply for NSLI on or after October 8, 1940 through December 31, 1956, (disabilities could have been service-connected and/or nonservice-connected); and

WHEREAS, Since 1951, veterans granted a service-connected disability and who are otherwise in good health may purchase up to a basic \$10,000 of NSLI Service-Disabled insurance at standard rates within two years from the date the VA notifies them of the grant of service connection (one year prior to September 1, 1991); and

WHEREAS, Many such eligible veterans, due to financial hardships and problems associated with their service-connected disabilities and adjustments to civilian life, or to notification problems resulting from VA procedures, did not apply for NSLI Service-Disabled insurance within the prescribed eligibility period; and

WHEREAS, 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek 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. 133: Provide Funding for DVA Construction Program**

Origin: FL

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are increasingly aging physical plants in need of replacement, substantial renovation and modernization, as well as reconfiguration to meet the demands of the advances of medicine and improvements relating to fire, safety and privacy standards; and

WHEREAS, The increasing demands placed upon the outpatient/ambulatory care facilities of VA require substantial alterations to meet space needs; and

WHEREAS, Major and minor construction appropriations for VA have been consistently targeted for reduction since such funding is regrettably the most vulnerable to annual assault; and

WHEREAS, No health care delivery system can be expected to deliver quality care if the physical settings charged with providing that care are allowed to deteriorate to a state which places them beyond redemption; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to sufficiently fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction program to allow it to carry out a program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a rational system for setting construction priorities, to ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) receive the necessary funding to carry out VA's transition from hospital based care to enhanced primary care and increase access to a modern VA health care system.

**Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill of Health**

Origin: FL

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 155 (NE), 255 (NY), 256 (NY) and 283 (MN)

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system was created to provide medical treatment to veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA initially provided care to disabled veterans, indigent veterans, and other veterans based on a resource and space available basis; and

WHEREAS, Since its establishment, Congress has significantly expanded the health care responsibilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Today, this is accomplished by VHA through the operation of 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) that provide inpatient and outpatient care across a spectrum of treatment milieus, and is committed to four primary missions:

- To develop, maintain and operate an equitable veterans' health care delivery system.
- To carry out a program of education and training of health care personnel.
- To carry out a program of medical care research.



- To furnish health care services to members of the armed forces during a war or national emergency; and to civilians during national emergencies; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, VHA has been progressively impeded by funding shortages and geographic constraints; and

WHEREAS, The impact of recent Congressional budget shortfalls places the system in serious jeopardy, and prevents VA from accomplishing its myriad of missions which would have a deleterious effect on veterans seeking care for service-connected and nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the Federal Government must live up to its legal and moral obligations and expectations of veterans and the American people with regard to access to VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, This legislation will revolutionize the way VA delivers and pays for health care benefits to our nation's veterans and their dependents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion accept as its policy on veterans health care, "The GI Bill of Health" (formerly known as "The American Legion Veterans Health Care Security Plan"), which will:

1. Reorganize the Veterans Health Administration to improve access, quality, and efficiency of the medical care provided to veterans;
2. Operate the veterans health care system based upon the principles of "coordinated care";
3. Assure all veterans with service-connected illnesses and disabilities access to all services necessary for the treatment of their disabilities at no charge to the veteran;
4. Assure all veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, access to all VA health care services at no cost;
5. Assure all special category veterans, indigent veterans and service-connected veterans rated under 50 percent disabled, access to VA health care services at no charge or reduced charge;
6. Assure the long-term viability of VHA by encouraging veterans who presently are unable to receive VA care, self-employed veterans, and veterans' dependents, to enroll in a Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Plan;
7. Improve the long-term financial health of the veterans' health care system by increasing other resources of the system to include other federal programs;
8. Federal appropriations for the VHA shall be based upon a capitated method using the calculation of fully-allocated costs of care to service-connected and other veterans receiving care at no charge;
9. Require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report to the Congress at designated intervals on the financial soundness of the system, the budget-neutrality of the system and the quality of care rendered.

**Resolution No. 143: Urge Congress to Amend Title 38 USC, Section 107 to Recognize Filipinos as Veterans**

Origin: PI

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of The American Legion on October 19-20, 1994 unanimously adopted NEC Resolution No. 21, entitled "Urge Congress To Amend Title 38, Section 107 To Recognize The Status Of Filipino Veterans;" and

WHEREAS, The 78th National Convention of The American Legion held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on September 3-5, 1996, also adopted Resolution No. 97 entitled "To Urge Congress To Amend Title 38 USC, Section 107 to recognize the status of Filipino veterans;" and

WHEREAS, There are pending in the 105th U.S. Congress, Senate bill S. 623 entitled "Filipino Veterans Equity Act Of 1996," filed by Senators Inouye and Akaka and a similar bill in the House, H.R. 836 filed by Congressmen Filner and Gilman. Both bills pertain to the subject matter of NEC Resolution No. 20, but these bills remain pending action before Congress due to the partisan battle between Republicans and Democrats on budget matters and with the possibility that they will not be acted upon during the present 105th Congress; and

WHEREAS, American Legion Resolution No. 21 and Resolution No. 98 will remain in effect as part of the Legion's legislative mandate only until the close of the 105th Congress in November 1998; and

WHEREAS, The Philippine Department Convention on April 24-26, 1998 unanimously approved to urge The American Legion to continue seeking justice for the Filipino veterans by taking up in the 106th U.S. Congress the enactment of legislation to amend USC, Title 38, section 107 to grant recognition to the status and services of Filipino soldiers as WWII veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion shall seek legislation through the 106th U.S. Congress for the amendment of USC, Title 38, section 107 to recognize Filipino WWII veterans as members of the active military service in the U.S. Armed Forces and grant full benefits for each such service and to appropriate sufficient additional funds therefore.

**Resolution No. 144: Urge Congress to Provide Equal Benefits to Naturalized Filipino Veterans**

Origin: PI

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of The American Legion on October 19-20, 1994 unanimously adopted NEC Resolution 20 entitled: "Urge Congress To Provide Equal Benefits To Naturalized Filipino Veterans" in recognition of, and in support, to the just cause of Filipino veterans who were naturalized as United States citizens to seek equal benefits enjoyed by American veterans, which resolution forms part of the legislative program of The American Legion before the 105th Congress. This legislation constitutes an amendment to USC, Title 38, section 107; and

WHEREAS, The 78th National Convention of The American Legion held in Salt Lake City, Utah on September 3-5, 1996, also adopted Resolution No. 97 entitled "Urge Congress

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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To Provide Equal Benefits To Naturalized Filipino Veterans,” as an amendment to USC, Title 38, section 107; and

WHEREAS, There are pending in the 105th Congress Senate Bill S. 623 entitled: “Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 1996,” filed by Senators Inouye and Akaka, and a similar bill in the House, H.R. 836 filed by Congressmen Filner and Gilman. Both bills cover the subject matter of NEC Resolution No. 20 but they remain pending action before Congress due to the partisan battle between Republicans and Democrats on budget matters and with the possibility that they will not be acted upon during the present 105th Congress; and

WHEREAS, American Legion Resolution No. 20 and Resolution No. 97 will remain in effect as part of the Legion’s mandate only until the close of the 105th Congress in November 1998; and

WHEREAS, The Philippine Department Convention on April 24-26, 1998 unanimously approved to urge The American Legion to continue justice for the Filipino veterans by taking up in the 106th Congress the enactment of legislation that will grant equal benefits to naturalized veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion shall seek legislation through the 106th Congress for the amendment of USC, Title 38, section 107 granting equal benefits enjoyed by American veterans to Filipino World War II veterans who became naturalized U.S. citizens.

**Resolution No. 145: Establishment of a New Cemetery in Northern California**

Origin: CA

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Approximately three million veterans, constituting 11% of the total national veterans population, plus eligible dependents, reside in the state of California; and

WHEREAS, There are no national cemeteries between the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery and the Oregon border, approximately 450 miles; and

WHEREAS, This places an unnecessary burden on the families due to the distance involved; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has data (based on demographics) that support establishing a new cemetery in northern California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That this resolution be forwarded to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in support of the establishment of a new veterans cemetery in northern California.

**Resolution No. 164: Support Increase in Claims Personnel for VA**

Origin: DC

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Due to persistent personnel cuts in recent years, regional office staffing levels are increasingly unable to handle the growing backlog of pending claims and appeals in a proper and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, The precedent decisions of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals continue to add to the overall claims adjudication and appeals workload; and

WHEREAS, Frequent errors and processing delays have resulted in poor quality customer service and customer dissatisfaction which contributes to the sustained heavy volume of appellate activity in the regional offices and at the Board of Veterans Appeals; and

WHEREAS, The delay in the processing of claims and appeals by the regional offices is excessive and imposes a great hardship on many veterans and other claimants, including severe stress, additional medical and psychiatric problems, actual or attempted suicides, and many die while their appeals are pending; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support an increase in regional office staffing sufficient to provide timely adjudication of benefit claims and appeals.

**Resolution No. 165: Eliminate All Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records**

Origin: DC

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided for the recognition of representatives of The American Legion, and other organizations, to serve as counsel before the discharge and retirement boards of the Armed Forces, and this recognition was extended to cover the Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) when they were created under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was actively involved in the legislative process that established the Correction Boards under section 1552 of Title 10, USC; and

WHEREAS, Although under provision of Title 10, USC 1552, a three year statute of limitations was created which begins as of the date of discovery of an error or injustice on the military records of a former serviceperson, the Boards are also authorized, under statute, to excuse filings beyond the three year period if it is in the interest of justice to do so; and

WHEREAS, For many years the Boards routinely waived the three year statute of limitation so as to provide veterans the opportunity to correct any error or injustice in their records; and

WHEREAS, In the past the BCMRs have considered that the effective date of commencement of the three year limit was effective the date of the final separation from service; and

WHEREAS, The Congress is investigating the fairness and independence of the BCMRs and the effective date for the commencement of the correction of records by active service members; and

WHEREAS, Section 205 of The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides for the waiver of periods of limitation for persons in military service with respect to civil proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in the case of *Detweiler v. Pena*, held that the three year rule does not apply to active duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, The Senate and DoD are supporting enactment of section 538 of the Defense Appropriations Act of 1996 to overturn the Court's decision that this act applied to military proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Such an enactment would effectively change the time of commencement of the limitation from the date of discovery to the date of occurrence; and

WHEREAS, The Discharge Review Board, considered to be a lower review agency has a 15 year statute of limitation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 10, USC, so as to eliminate all time limitations.

**Resolution No. 170: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange**

Origin: MD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 12 (ND)

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was the most common herbicide used in Southeast Asia by the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam Conflict 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 Era 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 PL 96-151 which mandated that VA fund a non-government scientific body to conduct a major epidemiology study of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has still not funded the major epidemiology study mandated by public law; and

WHEREAS, In view of the current absence of alternative judicial recourse to remedy the injustice perpetuated on so many disabled Vietnam veterans, their families and survivors, The American Legion will continue to monitor other pending dioxin-related suits; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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 finally

RESOLVED, That Vietnam veterans reporting to VA medical care facilities claiming exposure to Agent Orange be provided examinations and treatment which is thorough and appropriate, and that VA physicians demonstrate compassion in responding to the medical needs of these veterans.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Resolution No. 171: The American Legion Policy Regarding the Use of Depleted Uranium**

Origin: MD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The military services have come to depend on Depleted Uranium, a toxic and radioactive heavy metal as a kinetic energy penetrator fired from tank and aircraft cannons against enemy armor; and

WHEREAS, Depleted Uranium burns after hitting a target, releasing aerosolized uranium particles into the air, exposing troops who come in contact with the target; and

WHEREAS, The scientific community and the Armed Forces do not have adequate medical or exposure information to determine the exact health effects caused by exposure to aerosolized Depleted Uranium particles; and

WHEREAS, Depleted Uranium munitions were fired at, and destroyed, thousands of Iraqi tanks and vehicles during the Gulf War, scattering tons of Depleted Uranium throughout the theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, A 1993 United States General Accounting Office report found that most American ground troops were inadequately informed about the use and danger of Depleted Uranium munitions, and as a result, entered destroyed Iraqi tanks and vehicles and were exposed to Depleted Uranium particles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That the Department of Defense require Commanders to adequately inform their subordinates about the dangers of approaching targets that have been destroyed by Depleted Uranium munitions; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense immediately conduct peer-reviewed scientific studies to determine the extent of fallout near targets struck by Depleted Uranium munitions.

**Resolution No. 172: Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses**

Origin: MD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 43 (MA)

WHEREAS, Approximately 700,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War veterans were exposed to many environmental hazards during Operation Desert Storm, and thousands of them consequently suffer from an illness, or illnesses, known as "Gulf War Illnesses"; and

WHEREAS, Over 100 scientific, medical and clinical studies are investigating the health effects of most of the environmental hazards Gulf War veterans were exposed to during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine has completed, and is currently preparing reports that evaluate the Department of Veterans Affairs Gulf War veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, Most Gulf War veterans filing disability compensation claims have been denied service connection for undiagnosed illnesses caused by their Persian Gulf service, or for diagnosable illnesses related to their undiagnosed illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's ongoing contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization accomplish its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion encourages the scientific community to consider all likely causes of "Gulf War Illnesses" until the weight of the findings from peer-reviewed scientific studies suggests otherwise; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Department of Veterans Affairs to immediately implement any recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports regarding its Gulf War veterans programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the United States Congress to consider legislation that would grant the benefit of the doubt to Gulf War veterans concerning exposure to environmental hazards and toxins in the Persian Gulf as was done for Vietnam veterans and Agent Orange in 1991; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the United States Congress to oversee the adjudication of Gulf War veterans' disability compensation claims to ensure that they are processed efficiently and properly, and to reevaluate the merits of undiagnosed illness disability compensation regulations as currently written in United States Code, Chapter 38; 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. 173: The American Legion Policy on Long-term Care**

Origin: MD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Consolidated with No. 148 (GA)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to developing a comprehensive solution to preserve and improve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. This goal includes providing a coordinated continuum of long-term care to meet the needs of the individual veteran. This continuum is linked to acute care and ambulatory care services which are provided as needed; and

WHEREAS, Long-Term Care (LTC) within the Department of Veterans Affairs is a continuum of primary care provided to veterans over a period of time who suffer from severe chronic service-connected disabilities and the conditions of aging and/or the disease process. Within VA, long-term care includes skilled and unskilled care; nursing home care; home health care; adult day care; community residential care; specialized rehabilitation care, including Alzheimer's and Dementia care; psychogeriatric care; domiciliary care; assisted living; hospice and respite care; geriatric assessment and management programs; and Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCS); and

WHEREAS, Veterans who are accepted into the system of care provided by VA, under whatever provision of the law, remain the responsibility of the Department. It matters not whether the law changes, because it can only change for the future. VA's charge includes providing quality improvement oversight for long-term care provided by the Department or through private contract. If a veteran is accepted as a long-term care patient, no matter when or under which existent provision of the law, he or she remains the responsibility of the VA medical care system. To do anything other is ethically and morally wrong and breaks the benevolent contract established with veterans by the nation; and

WHEREAS, The GI Bill of Health proposes important changes to the VA health care system that are needed to meet current and future challenges; and

WHEREAS, There is currently a substantial aging veteran population that will present significant demands on the VA health care system well into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, Congress and the Executive Branch must recognize that there are generations of veterans who were promised "health care for life" by the Department of Defense and who have held this promise as truth; and

WHEREAS, To accomplish the long-term care objectives of the GI Bill of Health, VA must recognize the changing health care needs of the population and provide veterans access to the appropriate level of care as change occurs. VA must develop needed services in the least restrictive and most cost effective environment while promoting the maximum level of independence and quality of life for the veteran; and

WHEREAS, The VA health care system is a budget-driven system that is not able to sufficiently meet the demands of the veteran community for long-term care. Without significant budgetary reform, VA will continue to reduce long-term care programs and services and place greater reliance on community, state and other federal programs to provide health care to aging veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion commend a VA long-term care policy that provides a mandatory continuum of care to all 100 percent service-connected veterans; to service-connected veterans whose medical condition requires such care; to eligible veterans whose medical condition requires long-term treatment; and all other eligible veterans through the establishment of a health benefit plan that operates on a premium and co-payment basis, as recommended by the GI Bill of Health; and, be it further

RESOLVED, At which time an effective date for a mandatory long-term care benefit plan is established by the Congress, those veterans already receiving such care will be grandfathered into the plan, and will continue to receive an appropriate level of care with no future obligation for payment; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, The Veterans Health Administration will develop a unified strategy to ensure that comprehensive long-term care services are provided in all 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), as outlined in the GI Bill of Health and as recommended by the Advisory Committee on the Future of VA Long-Term Care.

**Resolution No. 237: Request Congress Provide VA Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research Activities**

Origin: MD

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Service is very productive in advancing medical knowledge and improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; and

WHEREAS, Basic biomedical research provides the most rational and cost-effective means of preventive health care and provides treatments and cures for many diseases; and

WHEREAS, Continued research is urgently needed for many diseases if medical science is to overcome cancer, heart disease, AIDS, prostate cancer, new strains of tuberculosis, and others, to help spare veterans and citizens from prolonged illness and permanent disabilities; and



WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research leads to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and serves as a successful model in lowering long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, The need to reduce the nation's budget deficit must not compromise the efforts to maintain and improve health productivity and develop new preventive and therapeutic procedures through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that Congress and the Administration support strong medical and prosthetic research programs within VA so that veterans and all citizens continue to benefit from the exceptional research capability of the Department; and

WHEREAS, In 1996 the Department of Veterans Affairs' Research Realignment and Advisory Committee recommended that VA realign research priorities to serve the needs of the veterans population; and

WHEREAS, The Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is a new venture undertaken by the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Service that will create and implement a national system to translate research discoveries, innovation, effective and efficient diagnostic and treatment strategies into patient care; and

WHEREAS, QUERI is a comprehensive, data driven, outcome based quality improvement program that will ensure excellence in all areas that VHA provides medical care: in-patient, outpatient, and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Specific areas of investigative research under QUERI include:

- Internal Medicine
- Mental Health
- Neurological Diseases
- Rehabilitation
- HIV/AIDS
- Cancer
- Prostate Cancer; and

WHEREAS, QUERI will be a coordinated effort by researchers, clinicians and managers in Headquarters, Networks and VHA facilities to use research results to continuously improve the care provided to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support adequate funding for VA biomedical research activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress and the Administration encourage the development and initiation of needed research on conditions that significantly affect veterans - such as prostate cancer, addictive disorders, trauma and wound healing, post-traumatic stress disorder, rehabilitation, and others - jointly with the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health, other federal agencies, academic institutions and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Resolution No. 253: VA Develop a Geographically Adjusted Means Test**

Origin: NY

Submitted: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

As amended

WHEREAS, The current means test given by the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine the financial responsibility of veterans using VA medical centers is unfair; and

WHEREAS, The current means test does not take into consideration the widely varying cost-of-living across the country; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation provides no funding for group 7 veterans; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of New York State veterans who are at the local poverty level are being classified as priority group 7, resulting in a loss of funding for medical centers in New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion requests the Department of Veterans Affairs develop a geographically adjusted means test according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor cost-of-living index by state as of January 1 of the preceding year, but not to reduce the threshold below the currently established limit.

**Resolution No. 260: Permit VA to be an Authorized Health Care Provider under All Duly Licensed Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs), and Other Similar Plans**

Origin: NY

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

As amended

WHEREAS, Public Law 99-272 gave the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to seek reimbursement from third party health insurers for the cost of medical care provided for nonservice-connected conditions to veterans covered under a health plan contract; and

WHEREAS, Insurance carriers that administer HMOs and PPOs routinely reimburse VA for care provided to their enrollees who have a fee for service policy; and

WHEREAS, When the policy is a strict HMO or PPO contract, the carrier only provides reimbursement in emergency situations; and

WHEREAS, About 30 percent of the population, nationally, have their health insurance with an HMO or PPO plan contract where the VA is not recognized as a preferred provider; and

WHEREAS, This precludes the VA from seeking reimbursement for health care services that VA provides to actual or potential HMO or PPO enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, This situation can cause eligible veterans who would possibly utilize VA to seek medical care elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, The Congress enacted the 'Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996' (Public Law 104-262), that broadens primary care services to eligible veterans and establishes a priority based enrollment system; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) adopted the 30-20-10 plan as a mechanism to support the broad based reform of the VA medical care system; and

WHEREAS, For the purposes of this resolution, the 30-20-10 plan is defined as follows: By Fiscal Year 2002, VHA will improve its operational efficiency by 30 percent; increase its patient workload by 20 percent; and receive 10 percent of its annual funding from non-appropriated sources; and

WHEREAS, Current Medical Care Cost Fund (MCCF) recoveries are expected to fall short of projected reimbursement levels; one result of the inability of VA to collect third party recoveries from certain HMOs and PPOs; and

WHEREAS, The ability of VA to be an authorized health care provider under licensed HMO and PPO plans would provide improved, affordable access to health care services for veterans and their eligible dependents and would enhance VA's ability to achieve its 30-20-10 plan; and

WHEREAS, This ability would improve VHA's long-term financial stability and help achieve the goals of the GI Bill of Health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation to amend Public Law 99-272 to permit VA to be an authorized health care provider under all duly licensed Health Maintenance Organizations, Preferred Provider Organizations and similar plans to provide reimbursement to VA for services rendered to eligible veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to pilot test various HMO and PPO demonstration programs to allow veterans and their eligible dependents to receive health care services directly through Department facilities or through contract care providers.

**Resolution No. 273: Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits to Those Who Served in Israel and Turkey**

Origin: WA

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Priority health care has been approved for Gulf War Veterans assigned in the past to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Veterans assigned to Israel or Turkey during the Gulf War have not received such recognition for priority health care; and

WHEREAS, These veterans were exposed to most of the same chemical and biological weapons; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion support legislation to provide authority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to extend priority health care to veterans who served during the Persian Gulf War in Israel or Turkey.

**Resolution No. 287: Reduce Disability Requirements for Nonservice-connected Pension**

Origin: MI

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The concept of special consideration of age as it relates to a determination of total disability for nonservice-connected pension purposes was originally incorporated into the 1945 revision of the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities in Paragraph 17; and

WHEREAS, Specific percentage requirements for a total disability rating based on unemployability of the individual were set forth in Paragraph 16 of the 1945 Rating Schedule (if there is a single disability, it must be rated at 60 percent or more; or if there are two or more disabilities, one must be rated at 40 percent or more with a combined rating of 70 percent or more) were reduced for nonservice-connected pension purposes by 10 percent at age 60 and by an additional 10 percent at age 65; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, Congress enacted legislation liberalizing this concept of special consideration of age to provide that permanent and total disability would be presumed at age 65 in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension; and

WHEREAS, The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA), PL 101-508, repealed the presumption of permanent and total disability at age 65; and

WHEREAS, VA implemented regulations stipulating that the same percentage disability requirements which apply to total disability ratings for compensation based on individual unemployability (if there is a single disability, it must be rated 60 percent or more; or if there are two or more disabilities, one must be rated at 40 percent or more with a combined rating of 70 percent or more) would also apply to total disability ratings for nonservice-connected pension without regard to the veteran's age; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are now required to submit medical evidence of total disability in support of a claim for nonservice-connected pension and undergo a VA examination; and

WHEREAS, It is a well accepted scientific and medical principle in geriatric medicine that the complex effects of injuries and diseases become more disabling as a result of the general aging process; and

WHEREAS, From a practical standpoint, few employers will employ an elderly individual (one who is 65 years of age or older) even if they are in relatively good health; and

WHEREAS, The current requirement has eliminated the traditional "safety net" for those older veterans who may not have disabilities which meet the percentage requirement of Title 38, CFR 4.16, but who are unable to work and have little or no income, making them otherwise entitled to nonservice-connected pension; and

WHEREAS, These OBRA requirements have also added significantly to the adjudication workload of the regional offices as well as the medical centers at a time when the case backlog nationwide is of crisis proportions and VA is increasingly unable to process all types of claims in a timely manner; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, section 1501 to restore the special consideration of age in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension by providing that the disability requirement at age 55 shall be 60 percent; at age 60, the requirement shall be reduced to 50 percent; and at age 65, the requirement shall be reduced to 10 percent.

**Resolution No. 288: The American Legion Policy on Former POWs**

Origin: MI

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In its concern for the welfare of all those who have served in the nation's Armed Forces, one of the major concerns of The American Legion has been the welfare of those who have been prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported various legislative measures intended to alleviate the disabilities that afflict former POWs as a result of experience during internment; and

WHEREAS, In the past The American Legion supported enactment of Public Law 97-37, the Former Prisoners of War Benefits Act of 1981, approved August 14, 1981, and the presumptions included in Public law 100-322; and

WHEREAS, The number of surviving former POWs of the four American Wars of the Twentieth Century is rapidly declining; and

WHEREAS, Continued scientific observation of their condition during the years subsequent to their internment indicates additional health problems probably associated with the conditions of their internment; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a fundamental obligation to do all possible to alleviate any and all health problems of former POWs, and see to their physical, social and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes there is a need to further modify the current provisions of Title 38, United States Code, that provide for former POWs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion shall support legislation to amend section 1112 of Title 38, United States Code, so as to provide presumptive service connection for the following conditions in the absence of demonstrable intercurrent disease or injury:

1. Hepatitis or other infectious diseases of the liver;
2. Organic residuals of hypothermia, e.g. trench foot, immersion foot or hand, Raynaud's Disease;
3. Arthritis;
4. Chronic pulmonary disease (where there is a history of forced labor in mines during internment);

and, be it 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. 311: The American Legion Policy on VA Physicians and Medical Specialists Staffing Guidelines**

Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is mandated by the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996 (PL 104-262) to provide equitable access to care across the country for veterans based on priority groups; and

WHEREAS, VHA will begin a system of enrollment on October 1, 1998 which guarantees enrolled veterans access to a minimum benefits package; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is on record as supporting VHA's transformation to a primary care based health care system because it provides better coordination of care across a continuum, higher quality, and adds more efficiency to the system; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that access to basic health care services by a qualified primary care provider should be available locally as often as possible; and

WHEREAS, VHA is still struggling to achieve the appropriate balance of General Internal Physicians and Specialists in many areas of the country; and

WHEREAS, VHA has established now over 1000 treatment sites, many of which are only operating on a part-time basis resulting in continued reports of long distance referrals for services and extended waits for many heavy volume medical specialties; now, therefore, be it

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion monitor the progress of VHA in establishing patient centered primary care within each Veterans Integrated Service Network, including both rural and urban localities, and ensure that the model of care features both the quality and efficient combination of medical physicians and other medical specialists tailored to the needs of the local veterans population as measured by uniform outcome criteria.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 13 (ND) 1998 NC: Support Legislation to Provide Presumptive Service Connection to Atomic War Veterans**  
**Resolution No. 80 (ND) 1998 NC: Support Use of Any VA Funds Saved for Restoration of Benefits and Services**  
**Resolution No. 98 (TX) 1998 NC: Treatment for Non-Veterans at VA Facilities**  
**Resolution No. 261 (NY) 1998 NC: VA Re-Examine the Criteria Used for VERA Funding**  
**Resolution No. 274 (WA) 1998 NC: Support Legislation to Exempt Veterans' Benefits from Taxation**

**Referred to the Standing Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission**

**Resolution No. 20 (CO) 1998 NC: Locate Outpatient Clinic at Homelake, CO**  
**Resolution No. 37(SD) 1998 NC: Raise Priority Care of Former POWs at VAMC**  
**Resolution No. 91(VA) 1998 NC: Provide Presumptive Service Connection for Cold-Related Injury**  
**Resolution No. 92(VA) 1998 NC: Use of Excess VA Hospital Bed Capacity to Support Veterans' Long-Term Care Programs**  
**Resolution No. 111 (IL) 1998 NC: Exempt Former POWs from Co-Payment of VAMC-Issued Prescriptions**  
**Resolution No. 112 (IL) 1998 NC: Establish a Blue-Ribbon Panel to Study Accountability and Responsibility of VA Claim Person**  
**Resolution No. 116 (IL) 1998 NC: Rotate One of the Service Officers' School Sites**  
**Resolution No. 118 (IL) 1998 NC: Provide Nonservice-Connected Veterans Free Prosthetics**  
**Resolution No. 123 (IL) 1998 NC: VA Review Procedures for Handling Congressional Inquiries**  
**Resolution No. 128 (FL) 1998 NC: Ensure Provisions of the "GI Bill of Rights" Are Continued**  
**Resolution No. 278 (WA) 1998 NC: Support Legislation to Extend Eligibility for Health Care to Recipients of the Purple Heart**  
**Resolution No. 286 (MI) 1998 NC: To Restore Sufficient Funding to DoD So That Veterans Can Receive Military Funerals at All National Cemeteries**

**Rejected**

**Resolution No. 50 (MA) 1998 NC: Oppose Improper Use of VA Funds**  
**Resolution No. 86 (WI) 1998 NC: Eligibility for Interment in National Cemeteries**  
**Resolution No. 290 (PR) 1998 NC: Re-Name National Cemetery in Puerto Rico**  
**Resolution No. 291 (PR) 1998 NC: Grant 100 Percent Disability to All World War II Veterans**

CHAIRMAN STELLAR: Mr. Commander, as a delegate from the Department of Ohio, I move for the adoption of the report of the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I have a move and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report of the VA&R is adopted.

**Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy**  
**Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

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 which best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. For the 1997-98 program year the trophy is awarded to the Department of Minnesota.

...At this time, the delegates watched a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Each time I see another selection of Pat Boone's video, *American Glory*, I am struck by the beauty of America. The American flag embodies all that we visualize when we think of this great nation. I want you to take advantage of this opportunity that you have for a personal copy of *American Glory* for just \$24.95. To receive this special price, you must place your order at the Citizen's Flag Alliance Booth on the second floor of this hotel. When you stop by at the booth, you'll also be able to see more of this video. It's a great addition to your own collection and it would make a great gift for the upcoming holiday season. So, order several copies now at the \$24.95 cost and take care of some holiday shopping.

Sometimes it's difficult to keep in touch with members of your post. Newsletters are one ticket. Phone calls are another. The newest player is e-mail and the Internet. Dan Brannon, The American Legion webmaster will be happy to explain the opportunities and the services available through his office.

If you haven't stopped by the Resolutions Assignment Office here in the hotel to view the beautiful paintings by the artist, Mike Hagel, you're missing a treat. *Ever Vigilant* and *Desert Storm* are available in a limited edition prints for you to purchase.

The chair now recognizes Herm Harrington of New York, Chair of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs for the purposes of making his report.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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

Forty-two members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, considered thirty-five resolutions, thirty-one of which originated with Departments of The American Legion and four which were created by the committee. Of these, three were approved, one was approved as amended, two were consolidated and approved, four were referred, five were received and recorded, and twenty were rejected.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 330: Award Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery**

Origin: Credentials and Internal Affairs

Submitted By: Credentials and Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 commonly known as the "G.I. Bill" was written in long hand by Harry W. Colmery, the act had long been recognized as one of the most influential laws enacted in this century; and

WHEREAS, The veterans of this great nation owe a deep and lasting debt of gratitude to Harry W. Colmery for his ability to set down on paper a document which truly transformed their lives and gave them an opportunity to advance their status in life; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is fully aware of Harry W. Colmery's contribution as well as the fact that he has not had the recognition he so richly deserves for this meaningful service to all servicemen and women; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, and 10, 1998, That the President of the United States of America be asked to take such action as necessary that will ensure the posthumous award of the Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery, Past National Commander of The American Legion and author of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 commonly known as the "G. I. Bill"; in recognition of his role in one of the most significant single pieces of legislation in the history of the United States.

**Resolution No. 332: Legal Immunity for Volunteers**

Origin: Credentials and Internal Affairs

Submitted By: Credentials and Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion volunteer for innumerable activities in support of their communities, States, and the Nation; and

WHEREAS, These volunteers may be sued and forced to undergo a great deal of unnecessary legal expense for merely trying to help their fellow human beings; and

WHEREAS, In a large number of states the law currently does not afford volunteers sufficient protection from frivolous, improper and harassing lawsuits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, and 10, 1998, That all state legislatures be urged to introduce and pass legislation to provide volunteers who receive no monetary value for their efforts in helping their fellow citizens, immunity from all suits alleging negligence in their



volunteer capacity, except those who may demonstrate willful, gross or intentional negligence.

**Resolution No. 333: Appreciation to Host City**

Origin: Credentials and Internal Affairs

Submitted By: Credentials and Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The 80th National Convention has been held in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8-10, 1998; and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of New Orleans, Louisiana, the officers of the Convention Corporation and the Department, and by the officials and the people of New Orleans, Louisiana; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8-10, 1998, That we express our deep appreciation to the Department of Louisiana, Governor M. J. 'Mike' Foster, Jr.; Mayor Marc H. Morial; the city officials of New Orleans, including the Fire Department; Police/Sheriff's Department; Louisiana Highway Patrol; and other Public Safety Officials, and to the 1998 National Convention Corporation of Louisiana, to local citizens and Legionnaires and especially to the National Convention Corporation Officers, William M. Detweiler, President; Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Vice President; Thomas B. Killeen, Secretary/Treasurer; Owen 'Bobby' Watts, Department Commander; and General members of the Board, Ed Delagrang, Paul M. Severson, Robert W. Wilson, Earl Schmidt, and Earl J. Schmitt. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable Convention.

**Resolution No. 257: Audie Murphy Postal Stamp**

Origin: NY

Submitted By: Credentials and Internal Affairs

As amended

WHEREAS, Audie Murphy was the most decorated soldier of World War II; and

WHEREAS, He was the recipient of thirty-two (32) awards; and

WHEREAS, He was wounded three times for which he received three Purple Heart awards; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States presented him with the country's highest award, the Medal of Honor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urge the United States Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp honoring the late Audie Murphy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion petition the Stamp Advisory Committee and/or the United States Postal Service to issue this commemorative stamp as a forty (40) cent denomination; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That eight (8) cents derived from the sale of each stamp be contributed to the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) for the World War II Fund Campaign to help meet the costs necessary to construct the national World War II Memorial to be located in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C.

**Resolution No. 331: Tax Exempt Status of Posts**

Origin: Credentials and Internal Affairs

Submitted By: Credentials and Internal Affairs

Consolidated with No. 247 (CO)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a tax exempt veterans organization under Section 501 (c) (19) of the United States revenue code; and

WHEREAS, There is an increase in the American Legion Posts throughout the United States being audited by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and

WHEREAS, In many such audits, the IRS challenges the federal tax exempt status of a Post, because it permits members of other American Legion Posts, the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and the American Legion Auxiliary (Auxiliary) and members of their immediate families to participate in its activities and use its facilities; and

WHEREAS, As a part of such audits, the IRS agents determine that amounts generated by a Post from members of other Posts, SAL and Auxiliary and members of their immediate families is taxable unrelated business income; and

WHEREAS, In some of these audits, the IRS agents have determined that the operation by a Post of a bar and/or restaurant is inconsistent with the federal tax exempt purposes of a Post; and

WHEREAS, early in the 1930's the Congress passed a law that required those individuals in our society who sought to enrich themselves through illegal gambling activities to register with the IRS as a professional gambler and to pay a one-quarter of one percent (1/4 of 1%) of the "gross wagers" to the IRS as an "excise" tax; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion does not believe that the intent of Congress was to punish those non-profit organizations for conducting legal charitable gaming activities benefiting their communities; and

WHEREAS, recent efforts to impose these excise tax provisions on our American Legion Posts has placed a hardship on their fund raising activities conducted through bingo games and pull-tab operations; and

WHEREAS, the IRS has determined that 501 c (4) organizations are not liable for the tax and therefore The American Legion as a 501 c (19) meets all of the requirements contained in the 501 c (4) classification is liable for the tax; and

WHEREAS, Certain Internal Revenue Service agents have attempted in an unwarranted manner to unjustly limit the application of Section 501 (c) (19) and read the United States Code contrary to the perceived intent of Congress; and

WHEREAS, The long term solution to such attempts by Internal Revenue Agents and offices is an amendment to further clarify the congressional intent expressed in Section 501 (c) (19); and

WHEREAS, The position taken by the IRS in these audits is not consistent with the intent of Congress in enacting an exemption from federal income tax for Posts and organizations composed of past or present members of the Armed Forces under Internal Revenue Code §501(c) (19) wherein the regulation has the approval of the National Internal Affairs Commission and recommendation to the National Executive Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, and 10, 1998, That The American Legion continue to seek the introduction of and support legislation to amend Section 501 (c) (19) of Title 26 U. S. Code to clearly express that members of other American Legion Posts, the American

Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion and family members of members of The American Legion may use American Legion Posts' facilities without endangering the tax exempt status of host American Legion Posts and without creating unrelated business income for the host Post; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is on record in opposition to the interpretation of IRS Code §501 (c) (19) currently held by the Internal Revenue Service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be and is hereby directed to take any and all appropriate measures to petition Congress on behalf of The American Legion to pass legislation to amend the Internal Revenue Code §501 (c) (19) and other sections, which measures shall include but not be limited to the drafting, support and passage of legislation to clarify that:

1. Members of any American Legion Post and members of the American Legion Auxiliary (Auxiliary) and the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and members of their immediate families may utilize facilities and participate in activities of any other American Legion Post without jeopardizing that Post's exemption from federal tax on unrelated business income generated by transactions between that Post and members and immediate family members of the Auxiliary and SAL and members of other American Legion Posts; and
2. The provision by any American Legion Post of social and recreational activities for any member of The American Legion, Auxiliary or SAL, and their immediate families, is a legitimate tax exempt purpose of any Post; and
3. The American Legion is exempt from provisions of the IRS code (IRC chapter 35, Sections 4401 and 4411) that seek to assess the posts of The American Legion who are involved in fund raising activities provided by charitable gaming, namely bingo and pull-tabs;

and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be and is hereby directed to take whatever additional appropriate action is necessary to assure that

1. The tax exempt status of an American Legion Post will not be revoked because it permits members of other Posts, the Auxiliary or SAL or members of their immediate families to participate in its activities and use its facilities or because it primarily operated a bar and/or restaurant; and
2. The IRS will not treat income generated by a Post from members of other Posts, the SAL and Auxiliary or members of their immediate families as unrelated business income.

#### **Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 4 (AK) 1998 NC: Candidate for National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion**

**Resolution No. 18 (CO) 1998 NC: World War II Location**

**Resolution No. 120 (IL) 1998 NC: Empty Chair POW/MIA Ceremony**

**Resolution No. 130 (VT) 1998 NC: Candidate Robert A. Bergeron for National Vice Commander**

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**Resolution No. 142 (VT) 1998 NC: Candidate Joseph F. Murphy for Office of National Vice Commander**

**Referred to Standing Commission on Internal Affairs**

**Resolution No. 30 (WY) 1998 NC: Military and Historical Monuments and Memorials Needing Congressional Approval**

**Resolution No. 129 (FL) 1998 NC: Support Efforts of the Institute on World War II and the Human Experience**

**Resolution No. 169 (DC) 1998 NC: Proposed Location of the United States Air Force National Monument**

**Resolution No. 242 (NH) 1998 NC: Community Service Programs**

**Rejected**

**Resolution No. 7 (ND) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 15 (KY) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 34 (SD) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 39 (MA) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 52 (LA) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 71 (UT) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 82 (MT) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 87 (WI) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 94 (CT) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 108 (TX) 1998 NC: Oppose World War II Registry of Remembrances**

**Resolution No. 127 (FL) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 138 (NJ) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 140 (VT) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 147 (GA) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 151 (NE) 1998 NC: Sponsor Return of Enola Gay to Nebraska**

**Resolution No. 157 (AZ) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 243 (KS) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 250 (SC) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 263 (NM) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

**Resolution No. 282 (WA) 1998 NC: Relations with Forty and Eight**

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

CHAIRMAN HARRINGTON: The delegates to the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, rejected these eighteen resolutions entitled "Relations with Forty and Eight" after discussing the following facts:

The National leadership of the 40 & 8 has been informed in numerous meetings with our national leadership over the past ten years that until their organization is in compliance with the Civil Rights Act as far as acceptance of female veterans—who were entitled to full membership privileges in The American Legion since 1919, which was two years before they were entitled to vote for President [of the United States]—until this acceptance into their organization, there would be no need for further dialogue between the two organizations.

Two female veterans who have been long-standing members of The American Legion addressed the committee on their concern of the 40 & 8 policies on the admission of women.

Since The American Legion is a federally chartered organization and, if we accepted the 40 & 8 as their constitution and by-laws currently reads, we would also be in federal contempt of the Civil Rights laws and consequently subject to a law suit.

Additionally, the 40 & 8 is a state chartered organization in the State of Indiana and, by their own admission that they are a separate corporation to then National Commander M. B. McKneally dated January 6, 1960:

And I quote from a letter by the Avocat National—“I stated that The American Legion, as everyone knows and understands, is a creature of the Congress of the United States. It is equally well-known that the Forty and Eight society was originally organized as a voluntary association but was later incorporated under the State laws of the State of Indiana and is a separate corporation from that of the American Legion. I stated that after the Forty and Eight has been in existence for 17 years, the mere recognition by The American Legion of the Forty and Eight as a subsidiary did not give The American Legion corporation control over the corporate entity of the Forty and Eight, its Constitution, by-laws, funds or activities. That was the position of the Forty and Eight at that meeting; that is its position today. Signed by Geo. B. Boland, Avocat National - 1960”.

I will submit the entire letter to be published for the record of the Convention.

Further, by its admission, the Forty and Eight is in the same category as a separate organization just like DAV, VFW, etc.

This same resolution was rejected by the National Executive Committee in May 1998 for the above reasons.

This action as requested by the 40 & 8 has not been adopted at the 40 & 8 national level. There has been no action taken by the 40 & 8 on the issue of allowing females into their organization.

In summary, The American Legion has no intent to further dialogue with the 40 & 8 because:

- 40 & 8 is in violation of the Federal Civil Rights Act on their policy of female membership. Association with 40 & 8 with their current constitution and by-laws would be a major set back in history on the acceptance of females and would as well as lead to a federal lawsuit.
- By their own admission, they are a separate organization with no intent to associate with The American Legion.

It was then regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee. It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the Resolutions reported out of the Committee to insure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the Resolution.

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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**VOITURE NATIONALE  
LA SOCIÉTÉ DES  
40 HOMMES ET 8 CHEVAUX  
777 N. MERIDIAN ST. INDIANAPOLIS 4, INDIANA**

**BUREAU DU  
ADVOCAT NATIONAL**

January 6, 1960

Mr. M. B. McKneally  
National Commander  
The American Legion  
700 North Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Commander:

In The American Legion National Newsletter of December, 1959 appears a statement made by you, as follows:

"In addition, its legal counsel claimed that the Forty and Eight is in no way a subsidiary or subordinate organization of The American Legion, and need not be responsive to the policies of your organization. (Article 14 of the Constitution of The American Legion recognizes the Forty and Eight as a subsidiary of The American Legion.)"

In the January, 1960 issue of The American Legion Magazine appears the following statement:

"One of the surprising contentions of 40 & 8 legal counsel Boland was that the 40 & 8 is not a subsidiary of The American Legion, and that the Legion does not stand as a parent body in relation to the 40 & 8."

Both of the statements are inaccurate and do not recite what I said.

For the sake of accuracy and fairness, I repeat what I said on the subject at the conference held on November 30, 1959, in the office of Mr. Ralph Gregg, National Judge Advocate of The American Legion.

I stated that in 1937 the National Convention of The American Legion, without request or solicitation by the Forty and Eight, recognized the Forty and Eight as a subsidiary of The American Legion. I stated that The American Legion, as everyone knows and understands, is a creature of the Congress of the United States. It is equally well-known that the Forty and Eight society was originally organized as a voluntary association but was later incorporated under the State laws of the State of Indiana and is a separate corporation from that of the American Legion. I stated that after the Forty and Eight had been in existence for 17 years, the mere recognition by The American Legion of the Forty and Eight as a subsidiary did not

*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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give The American Legion corporation control over the corporate entity of the Forty and Eight, its Constitution, by laws, funds or activities. That was the position of the Forty and Eight at that meeting; that is its position today.

I think you owe me an apology. I know that I am entitled to a retraction of both of the foregoing statements, and I request it.

Yours truly,

\ss\ Geo. B. Boland  
Advocat National - 1960

GBB: cc

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

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Been moved and seconded. Do I have any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report on the Credentials and Internal Affairs Section II is adopted.

With the adoption of the Credential and Internal Affairs Section II report, this will be an appropriate time to receive donations for the National Emergency Fund. This fund has helped thousands of our fellow Legionnaires and it could very well someday help you. The first donation is from the Department of Washington, in the amount of \$5,000. If there's anybody else that wants to donate, I will take them at this time.

Department of Minnesota.

LYLE R. FOLTZ: The Department of Minnesota has been ravaged many times in the past 18 months. The Red River to the north, 20 miles wide, 50 miles long; a tornado this spring, one mile wide, 90 miles long. Your National Adjutant appeared in Minnesota and accompanied me and several Legionnaires on a tour. Adjutant Spanogle, we're very proud that you were with us. The letters that I received were very grateful that a national organization such as ours would respond so fast.

Last year, Minnesota was proud to make a major contribution to the National Emergency Fund. To make sure that the fund is strong and viable, so that others can be helped such as we've been helped in Minnesota, this year, the Department of Minnesota at our Department Convention, passed a motion that we would again make a presentation with gratitude and appreciation. At this time, I'm asking Our Department Commander, Buster Skallerud, to make a presentation to Commander Tony Jordan for a check of \$50,000.

JIM CLIFFORD: Good afternoon, I'm Jim Clifford, Past Department Commander of North Dakota. My project last year was raising \$10,000 for the NEF. The money was raised selling caps, fines for eating with caps on, personnel and post donations. In 1997, the Red River Valley was flooded and 60,000 people had to be evacuated. Through the efforts of The American Legion National Emergency Fund, American Legion family members were able to get started again. With the help of the late Reverend Jerry Salvesson, Past National Chaplain, Dave Schmidt our Department Adjutant, and our friend from Minnesota, Eugene Arneson, NEF coordinator from Barnesville, Minnesota, over \$275,000 was given to North Dakotans driven from their homes. On behalf of the 24,000 members of the North Dakota

American Legion, I want to present you with a check for \$10,000 and from last year's donation of \$1,000, this brings North Dakota to a grand total of \$11,000. Thank you for all the support and help.

BOB FITZGERALD: I'm Bob Fitzgerald, Commander of Post 364, Woodbridge, Virginia, home post of the next National Commander. In keeping with the rhino theme of hard-charging for memberships, we're here today to make a donation \$1.00 for every member, \$1500 to the National Emergency Fund. I'd like to challenge all the other posts to also make a donation to the NEF so that we can replenish the fund and build up or membership.

FRANKLIN R. SICKLE, JR.: Commander, from the delegation of the great state of New Jersey. We have been very fortunate that we have never needed this money as of yet. But we're always willing to contribute to help. New Jersey is very happy to contribute \$5,000 to the National Emergency Fund.

DONALD EPPERSON: The Department of Oregon delegation, its members and its auxiliary organization is very proud to present to Commander Jordan \$3500 in support of the National Emergency Fund.

BERNARD K.Y. LEE: On behalf of the 50th state, the Aloha State, I'd like to donate \$500 to your NEF fund.

MARLYS A. LEMNAH: Commander Jordan, Marlys Lemnah from the Department of Vermont. But I am here because of Green Mountain Post No. 1 which I hale from. Last Monday, before Convention, before my departure out here, on the 31st I asked my Post members if they would reach in and donate to the National Emergency Fund because our state and three posts within our Franklin County area where I live received funds from the Emergency Fund because of the flooding of the spring of '97. Commander when you visited us, I had asked that if there were any gifts for you that they be made in your honor of the National Emergency Fund. And they did. At this time, I'd like to present to you from the Legionnaires of Green Mountain Post No. 1, \$500 check.

MILTON W. LOBSTEIN: Mr. Commander, as the finance officer of the very small Police and Firefighters Post in the state of Michigan, we would like to present to you a check for \$1,000.

WILLIAM R. NEITZ: I'm Bill Neitz from the Department of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has been rather fortunate in that we haven't needed the assistance from the National Emergency Fund. But to help perpetuate this fund, I'd like to present you a check for the amount of \$5,000 from the Department of Pennsylvania.

GEORGE L. DERRICK: The southern block held their breakfast this morning under the direction of our chairman, E. Roy Stone, Jr. and under his direction which no one could ever duplicate, he managed to cajole the members out of some funds for the National Emergency Fund. And he asked me to present this report to you, listing each state so that they would get some recognition. Maryland, \$250; Georgia, \$1,211; Florida, \$1330; South Carolina, \$2500; Oklahoma, \$1,000; Louisiana, \$2,005; Puerto Rico, \$100; Alabama, \$100; Kentucky, \$300; West Virginia, \$200; Post 15 in Decatur, Alabama, \$1000; Texas, \$240; Arkansas, \$141; Tennessee, \$240; and a guest named George Sanopolli, \$50 and he's from Southern California, by the way. So, the actual cash total there was \$10,448. And then General Stone and his easy way managed to get some discretionary money out of some people who were there including National Commander Jordan to the tune of \$25, for the total of \$519 which came to \$10,967. We generously threw in another \$33 to make it \$11,000 from the members of the Southern Block.



*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The total \$92,725.

...At this time National Vice Commander Preston assumes the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER PRESTON: The chair now recognizes Elmer Fuhrhop from Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children & Youth for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Children & Youth  
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman**

The Convention Committee on Children and Youth met at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 6, 1998, in the Hilton Riverside, Oak Alley, 3rd level, New Orleans, Louisiana. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio as Chairman and delegate Herbert Petit Jr. of Louisiana as Secretary. There were 49 members of the committee present.

There were fourteen (14) resolutions considered by the committee. Eleven (11) were approved, two (2) were received and recorded, and one (1) was referred to the Standing Commission.

**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 301: Admission of Children of United States Citizens**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel; and

WHEREAS, Many children in foreign countries are the progeny 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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. 306: Children in Pornographic Literature**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The very future of our country is being threatened by individuals who would use children in pornographic magazines and films; and

WHEREAS, National crime reports reveal that there is a strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes such as rape, incest, molestation, child abuse and even murder; and

WHEREAS, The use of children as subjects in the production of pornographic materials has a devastating effect upon these innocent children, which is a disgrace to our society; and

WHEREAS, Existing laws dealing with those who produce, sell and distribute pornographic materials are often weak and/or inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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. 308: Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, Since 1960, The American Legion has maintained a position of complete opposition to the production, sale and distribution of pornographic or obscene materials to children 17 years and under; and

WHEREAS, Present laws forbid the importation of such materials from foreign countries, interstate trafficking, the use of the United States Mail, and the use over public radio and television; and

WHEREAS, Any attempt to eliminate such protective laws from state and/or federal criminal codes would have a negative impact on our youth and society in general; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly opposes any attempt to weaken our present laws governing the penalties for the production, sale and distribution of pornographic or obscene materials; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States Congress be made aware of our concern through proper legislative channels.

**Resolution No. 304: Reaffirming Immunization Program**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long recognized that there is no place in civilized society for communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There are today vaccines and other specific medical treatment to protect children against communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There exists today in our country areas with extremely low levels of immunization against certain childhood diseases that may break out in epidemic proportions; now, therefore, be it

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*Proceedings of Wednesday, September 9, 1998*

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RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion reaffirms its position of supporting the fullest use of any licensed vaccine to combat communicable diseases; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That local Posts of The American Legion provide leadership and support to stimulate local treatment and immunization programs so that children in every community may achieve the fullest protection against communicable diseases; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That sufficient federal and state funds be provided so that medically indigent children may be afforded an opportunity to receive the necessary treatment and immunization against all communicable diseases.

**Resolution No. 305: Violence and Vandalism in the Schools**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, Juveniles account for approximately 35 percent of our population and account for better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Uniform Crime Reports; and

WHEREAS, Numerous government-supported institutions nationwide, specifically schools and housing, are experiencing serious, violent acts of crime and criminal damage and spend in excess of \$500 million for acts of vandalism; and

WHEREAS, The impact of violence and vandalism affects the morale of students, teachers, administrators, and parents; impedes educational advancement; and fosters and perpetuates patterns of deviancy; and

WHEREAS, Violence and vandalism in the nation's institutions result in enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential, and contribute to the high rates of juvenile delinquency within the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion recommends school boards and state education agencies develop a balanced and effective program, and provide community support to reduce and prevent violence and vandalism in educational institutions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges local law enforcement to implement effective programs for the amelioration of juvenile delinquency in coordination with the Department of Education, community citizenry and other agencies with the criminal justice system; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That local Posts urge and assist those in the educational community and criminal justice system to join together in efforts to reduce the development and prevailing patterns of juvenile delinquency in schools and our communities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress of the United States enact legislation through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish a grant program to assist those public institutions and criminal justice agencies in bearing the financial burden of implementing pro-active delinquency prevention programs.

**Resolution No. 303: National Family Week**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, One of the principles guiding The American Legion's Children & Youth Program is to maintain the integrity of the family home; and

WHEREAS, The family is the center of our affections and the foundation of our American society; and

WHEREAS, No institution can take the family's place in giving meaning to human life and stability in our society; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that official recognition be given to the importance of strengthening family life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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. 302: School Nutrition Program**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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. 309: Catastrophic Illness Among Children**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, There is an ever-widening crisis in many states relating to the delivery and accessibility of health care and medical treatment to the children of this country; and

WHEREAS, Historically, it has always been The American Legion's position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, Several applications have been received by the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division from Departments requesting Temporary Financial Assistance for needy medical cases; and

WHEREAS, Many children are not receiving needed medical treatment because their families have been unable to afford the cost of the catastrophic illness to one of their children; and

WHEREAS, Many of these families have hospitalization insurance and even major medical insurance and yet they cannot meet the cost of a major illness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion reaffirms its position in urging the federal and state governments to enact the necessary legislation to assist financially those individual families faced by the catastrophic illness of one of their children in order to maintain the integrity of the family; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That in lieu of a better approach, the present federal Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant program be expanded to include catastrophic illness.

**Resolution No. 307: Drug Trafficking**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The illegal trafficking of drugs into the United States is one of the greatest threats to the welfare and safety of our citizens, particularly our youth; and

WHEREAS, The enemies of our Nation and way of life hope to destroy us from within by debilitating our most precious resource for the future, our youth; and

WHEREAS, The economic and social costs of drug abuse annually exceeds the \$100 billion mark; and

WHEREAS, The efforts to halt the entry of such illegal drugs may be seen as a war of will and resources—a war that at the present we are not winning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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. 310: Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention**

Origin: Children and Youth

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, The National Commission on Children & Youth is vitally concerned about the high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation each year; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is organized: to develop and encourage the implementation of national standards for the administration of juvenile justice; to assist State and local governments in removing juveniles from jails and lockups for adults; to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, including methods with a specific focus on maintaining and strengthening the family unit so that juveniles may be retained in their homes; to develop effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization; and to coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children; and

WHEREAS, The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention program now promoted by the Office of Juvenile Justice has proven effective in many states; and

WHEREAS, The proposed block grants for states will not specifically earmark funds for delinquency prevention programs and, therefore, such programs may be significantly limited or even eliminated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion opposes any and all efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs because of a lack of funding; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the need to bring the national economy under control cannot over shadow or ignore the need to further the Office of Juvenile Justice and its programs which may be our national defense against an impending escalation of juvenile crime in America.

**Resolution No. 26: Oppose the Legalization of Marijuana**

Origin: CO

Submitted By: Children and Youth

WHEREAS, the members of The American Legion are committed to protecting the health and safety of our citizens, especially our children; and

WHEREAS, the various states are now under attack by groups of persons who are part of a well-organized and well-financed national movement to legalize marijuana, which groups are targeting specific states by organizing initiative campaigns to place on the ballot for the next general election measures to legalize marijuana; and

WHEREAS, one initiative petition that is currently being circulated misleads the voters to believe that there are medicinal uses for marijuana, even though the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society and other medical associations have rejected smoking marijuana as the only way to achieve medicinal benefits; and

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that marijuana actually harms the brain, heart, lungs, and immune system and that it impairs learning, memory, perception, judgment and the ability to operate a motor vehicle; and

WHEREAS, marijuana is classified as a schedule 1 controlled substance under federal law, indicating that it has a high potential for abuse and that it is recognized as a gateway substance of abuse that frequently leads to abuse of other drugs including cocaine, "crack" cocaine, methamphetamine ("speed"), and heroin; and

WHEREAS, there are safe, effective, legal medical alternatives for those suffering with chronic pain and other medical problems; and

WHEREAS, the legalization of marijuana would decrease the perception of risk associated with the abuse of drugs, especially in the eyes of our youth; and

WHEREAS, the proportion of drug possession arrests attributable to juveniles has increased by four hundred twenty-six (426%), in Colorado alone, between the years 1991 and 1996; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion hereby opposes any effort to describe marijuana as medicine or that the possession and use of it be further decriminalized for medicinal or any other purpose; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That any information provided to the general public that attempts to mislead the public into believing that marijuana has medicinal uses for which less harmful, legal and medical substitutes could be utilized is hereby rejected.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 83 (MT) 1998 NC Week of Thanksgiving As National Family Week**  
**Resolution No. 265 (NM) 1998 NC Assist National Bone Marrow Donor Registry**

**Referred to the Standing Children and Youth Commission:**

**Resolution No. 279 (WA) 1998 NC War Against Illegal Drug Trade**

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.

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

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER PRESTON: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Approved? Opposed? The report of the Children & Youth is adopted.

I'd like to recognize Udie Grant at this time please.

**Presentation: Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award**  
**Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

MR. GRANT: It's a privilege for me as the President of the Child Welfare Foundation to present the Garland Murphy Award this year to the state of Florida. "The Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award, presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Florida for the program year 1997-1998. 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. Signed by Terry Woodburn, the Executive Secretary and myself, as President."

WILLIAM P. SEEMANN: Thank you, Commander and on behalf of Dennis Boland, the Chairman of our Children and Youth Committee in Florida, who could not be here today and on behalf of the 119,000 plus members of the great state of Florida, I thank you for this award.

MR. GRANT: Commander Jordan, join me at the podium, I have a plaque for you. It's the Gold Award in recognition as the top supporter for the 1997-1998 contribution year in service to the critical needs of America's children made possible through your caring and generosity. It's given by the board of directors of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation in recognition, The American Legion this year contributed over \$109,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

Also, we have a pin for the leader of the organization who surpasses the 100,000 plateau. We are privileged and proud to give this pin to the leader of that organization. And Commander Jordan, I am proud to present to you this pin and I know that you will wear it very proudly.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: This Commander has supported the youth all year long. I always talk about the Child Welfare program and about the children of this

nation. I feel they're so important. I've always said that The American Legion makes a difference. They make a difference with the youth of this great nation. I accept it with pride.

The chair recognizes Judge Vincent Gaughan of Illinois, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments for the purposes of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments  
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman**

To the Eightieth Annual National Convention of The American Legion, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9 and 10, 1998.

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 6, 1998 at the Hilton Riverside Hotel, Compass Room. Committee Liaison Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD) called the roll and announced that 44 members of the Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was agreed upon by the members and submitted to this Convention.

The meeting was opened by Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD), who acted as temporary chairman. He stated a quorum was present and proceeded to the first order of business which was the election of a permanent chairman and secretary.

Vincent M. Gaughan (IL) was elected Chairman and Cathy Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary, thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of all the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, and copies of the National Constitution and By-Laws were made available to all members of the Committee.

The Chair called upon Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., National Judge Advocate, to give a summary background report on the resolutions to the Committee, which was done.

A motion was made by William Weis (MO), and duly seconded by Paul Morin (MA) that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting be seated with voice but no vote. The motion 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, he would rule out of order those resolutions which did not meet those requirements.

The Chair announced that it was in agreement with the Report of the Standing Committee that Resolution Nos. 73 (PA), 121 (IL), 122 (IL), No. 158 (ME) and No. 159 (ME) were out of order and that these resolutions would not be considered by the Convention Committee.

A motion was made by Paul Morin (MA) to rule out of order Resolution No. 73 (PA), Resolution No. 121 (IL), Resolution No. 122 (IL), Resolution No. 158 (ME) and Resolution No. 159 (ME). The motion was seconded by T. Les Galloway (OR) and unanimously carried.

The meeting then proceeded to consider Resolution No. 153 (NE). Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., National Judge Advocate, advised the Committee on the probability of loss of the charitable tax status of The American Legion and also that dues probably would now become income to The American Legion. Individual American Legion Posts are having difficulty paying soaring real estate taxes on their Posts and this additional burden of paying income taxes on dues and other income may cause these Posts to cease to exist. There also was a discussion concerning the proposed amendment and the consequences of changing the status of The American Legion from an organization of war time veterans to an organization which would encompass veterans who served in peace time.



Charles G. Mills (NY) made a motion to reject Resolution No. 153 (NE). This motion was seconded by Dennis Cummins (NC). 41 members of the Committee voted yes to reject Resolution No. 153 (NE) and there were only 3 negative votes. The motion was carried.

The Chair then asked for a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be permitted to sign the Report to the Convention on behalf of the members of the Committee. Charles G. Mills (NY) made the motion, and it was seconded by Tommy Mills (MS). The motion carried.

Paul Morin (MA) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chairman. The motion was seconded by John O'Boyle (NJ). 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: Commander, as a duly elected delegate from the Department of Illinois, I move that this report be adopted by this Convention.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Been moved and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report of the Constitutional Amendments has been adopted.

Mr. Adjutant, you have some announcements before we adjourn.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Commander. For the record, on the Emergency Disaster Relief Fund, North Carolina donated \$250. And Virginia donated \$250, The Department of California donated \$75 to the Citizen's Flag Alliance of The American Legion. Stan Standard of California, the National Executive Committeeman, donated \$100 to the Citizen's Flag Alliance Fund of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Delegates please join me in respect to our colors. Right hand salute. One! Two! This Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

...At 4:20 p.m., the Convention recessed to convene the following day, Thursday, September 10, 1998, at 9:00 a.m.

**PROCEEDINGS  
THIRD DAY**

**Thursday, September 10, 1998**

...At 9:00 a.m., the Delegates assembled for the third day of the 80th Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Delegates, will you please stand and render the right hand salute to the flag of our country. One! Two! I call upon the Reverend, Chaplain, Henry Eisenhart of Pennsylvania.

**Invocation**

**Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania, National Chaplain**

Eternal God, we humbly lift our prayer heavenward at this third session of the 80th National Convention of The American Legion that we may dwell under the shadow of Your own mighty presence and see in the events of these days, Your handwriting in the sands of time. We pray for the National Commander, completing his term of office with marvelous success and splendid achievements through his leadership skills, true Americanism, and passionate concern for veterans. We pray for the National Adjutant. Endow him with continued wisdom to lift us even to higher levels of accomplishment by means of his sound devotion, sincere dedication and strong determination. We pray and mourn past National Vice Commander Harold Fann, Department of Kentucky. Bless his family and friends with your abiding comfort in this hour of profound grief and sorrow. We pray for all Legionnaires. Bless their minds to think, their hearts to love, their lips to speak, their souls to serve, their hands to work, their feet to follow, and their intellect to be ever only all for God and Country. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

...The delegates stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Convention is now in session.

Tim-Cor Financial, one of our corporate partners, offers a tax-deferred annuity through the Indianapolis Life Annuity Company. The current first-year interest is 11.18 percent, and Legionnaires have invested \$5 million in annuities to date. This is just another example of the benefit of your American Legion membership. With us today is Jim Luther, President of Tim-Cor Financial and a member of SAL Squadron 155 in Carmel, Indiana, who will conduct the drawing for a television set.

MR. JIM LUTHER: On behalf of Indianapolis Life Annuity Company, Tim-Cor Financial Corporation, and myself I would like to thank each of you for stopping by the booth. Each year we come here, we meet a lot of new friends. I really appreciate being part of The American Legion family. The Commander will draw for the color TV today.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Darla Hamilton is the winner.

Seabury & Smith and RxAmerica are among our corporate partners. They offer The American Legion a discount prescription program. Since 1995, Legionnaires, SAL members and their families have saved over 9 million dollars. Currently just 4 percent of our members are taking advantage of the savings offered by this program. I think each Legion leader should do more to promote this benefit of American Legion and SAL membership. I would

now introduce Bruce Henderson, a member of Post Number 34 in Broad Ripple, Indiana, from Seabury & Smith to tell you a little more about this program.

MR. BRUCE HENDERSON: I thank all of you who have helped to promote this program over the last three years. We have made great strides; however, our work is not completed yet and I look forward to continuing to work with you past the upcoming workshops and beyond. I'd also like to welcome the American Legion Auxiliary to the program who came in June of this year. We know that many of the Auxiliary members have been looking forward to coming into the program and we welcome them.

Last year at this time, I reported to you that we had added Walgreens to the network of pharmacies. This year, I'm pleased to report that we have added Eckerd Pharmacies and Long's Pharmacies. Eckerd's on the south and east coast and Long's on the West Coast. Those of you that are using the program, I'm sure will enjoy these new additions.

A few things to remember. You and your families are already enrolled simply by being a member of The American Legion, the SAL or the Auxiliary. Thousands of participating pharmacies are available to you. Simply call the 800 number to find out where a pharmacy is located near you. Your biggest savings will be with the use of generic drugs. Ask your physician or pharmacist if a generic is available. RxAmerica has a convenient mail-order facility in Fort Worth, Texas that can provide to you up to a 90 day supply, mailed directly to your home. Spouses of deceased members are still eligible. The number of requests have gone down dramatically since the Auxiliary has been included. However, if there is still a need, please contact your Department Headquarters.

The program has generated in excess of \$857,504 in revenue for The American Legion including revenue for the individual Departments. Our members have saved in excess of \$11,499,139 since the inception of this program three short years ago. The average savings is approximately 17%. If your pharmacist has any questions, please tell the pharmacist to call the toll free number. We need your help in continuing to spread the word to other Legionnaires, SAL members and Auxiliary members so all members and their families can take advantage of the savings offered by the Discount Prescription Program.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Kirke-Van Orsdel is another of our corporate partners and administrator of The American Legion Life and Health Insurance plans. In cooperation with Union Fidelity and Hartford Insurance Companies, over \$63,000,000 in claims have been paid to the survivors of Legionnaires. This is another benefit of your American Legion membership. The insurance plans have generated more than \$2.3 million annually in revenue to The American Legion for use in support of Legion youth programs. KVI currently administers health products in various departments under the national health program. With us today is KVI account executive Bill Plackett, a member of Post Number 176 in Springfield, Virginia and retired as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

MR. BILL PLACKETT: 1998 marks the seventh year of KVI, who by the way is now a division of Seabury & Smith, our administration of insurance plans of The American Legion. As in the past, this year has been very productive for us, for the carriers and for The American Legion and its members. In recognition of our partnership, and as we have done beginning last year, I'd like to present to the National Commander a check for \$5,000 as a donation to the Child Welfare Fund of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Still another Corporate partner is MBNA America Bank. Since 1987, MBNA has contributed over 17 million dollars to our Legion programs. This was accomplished by all Legionnaires who use the American Legion charge

card. MBNA has also donated \$40,000 to the National Emergency Fund and pledged \$50,000 in matching funds for Legion charge card donations to the Citizens Flag Alliance.

You might also be interested to know that Legionnaires have over 270 million dollars on deposit at MBNA in CDs and money market accounts because of the above-average interest rate paid on those deposits. Once again, your American Legion Membership does work for you. With us today is Executive Vice President of MBNA, Frank Andrews, a member of American Legion Post 10 in Newark, Delaware to determine the winners of three \$1,000 CDs.

MR. FRANK ANDREWS: I'm very honored to be here today representing MBNA America and even more proud to be here as an American Legion member. As you heard, there are over 200,000 Legionnaires who are participating in The American Legion credit card program with MBNA. There's over \$270 million in deposits with our money market and CDs. And to date, MBNA has donated over \$17 million to The American Legion to support efforts for veterans, for our communities and for patriotism. Today, MBNA would like to contribute its support of our community with a \$5,000 donation to the National Emergency Fund.

I also thank many of you who came up to our booth throughout the week and took the time to talk to us about the credit card program and also most importantly, to fill out a little sweepstakes form for a certificate of deposit. And I actually have to admit here that I told a lot people some bad information. I said we were going to give away one \$1,000 certificate of deposit. That's not correct and I'm very sorry about that. We're here today to give away three \$1,000 certificates of deposit. The first winner is from Phoenix, Arizona, Mary A. Murphy. The second winner is from Memphis, Tennessee, Ronald J. Smith. The third winner is from New Port, Vermont, Lori Graham.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: At this time, I'll call upon the National Adjutant for some announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: We have received additional donations to the National Emergency Disaster Relief Fund. From the Department of New Hampshire, we've received \$1,000. From the Department of Arizona, we've received \$2,000. From the Department of Wisconsin, \$620.

**Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award  
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine, National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Each year The American Legion invites members of the news media to enter the Fourth Estate Award contest. This is a contest that seeks out the best in journalistic efforts from all media. Judges always have a difficult time selecting just one winner from radio, television, newspapers, and other publications. This year the selection process was extremely difficult. In the end, the judges were unanimous. The award goes to the *Tribune* of Mesa, Arizona.

The newspaper and writer Kirk Mitchell devoted considerable space and time on the examination of the flawed Arizona child molestation laws. The newspaper uncovered many instances of misdeeds on the part of judges and prosecutors. *Crimes Against Children* brought a child molester to justice, had a judge transferred out of the criminal division after the judge had given a light sentence to a molester, and the Arizona Supreme Court scrapped a trial rule based on erroneous information received about such cases. Welcome reporter Kirk Mitchell of Mesa, Arizona.

"The American Legion, 1998. Fourth Estate Award for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism presented to the *Tribune*, Mesa, Arizona, for the newspaper series *Crimes Against Children*. Presented at the 80th National Convention, September 10, 1998, New Orleans, Louisiana."

MR. KIRK MITCHELL: This has been an enormous honor for me and the *Tribune*. Over the years, I've had numerous opportunities to speak with members of your organization and I've admired the gentlemen whom I've spoken with, the veterans that I've spoken with. Since winning this award, I've thought back about those interviews and about those men and about this organization. But one man in particular keeps coming to mind. His name is Nile Jones [?]. He was an Army cook during the Korean War. I don't think I have to tell this crowd that a cook during combat is a very prize member of the unit. He was the type of cook who poked holes in a coffee can so that he could make hash browns for the other soldiers. He and two of his close friends were among the few who survived the surprise Chinese attack near the Chosin Reservoir in bitter winter conditions. Nile was wounded and later captured. He endured relentless indignities and hardships in captivity as a prisoner of war but though he bore emotional and physical scars, he has since led a very productive life and found time to be a valuable service to his community. I see The American Legion through the Nile Jones of your organization and that is why this award is so meaningful to me. And just for a moment I'd like to mention the *Tribune's Crimes Against Children* project. The amount of resources the paper devoted to it was something you would normally only see out of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. More than a dozen people at the paper contributed to the project including editors Doug MacEachern, Phil Boas, and Jim Ripley. I thank them for believing in the project and for their enormous talent and I thank The American Legion for its wonderful recognition.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Chair recognizes John Brieden of Texas, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations for the purpose of making a report.

#### **Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations**

**John A. Brieden, III, Texas, Chairman**

At 8:30 a.m., Sunday, September 6, 1998, 39 Delegates and Alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in the Jasperwood, 3rd Level of The Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. John A. Brieden, III (Texas) was elected Chairman and Mr. Melvin M. Simon (Vermont) was appointed Secretary.

Following this initial meeting, five Ad Hoc Administrative Convention Subcommittees met in separate locations to consider the resolutions which had been assigned to them. The following were appointed Chairmen:

General Foreign Policy:	Chairman A.J. Forestiere, Arkansas
European Affairs:	Chairman Roger L. Tingler, Georgia
Far Eastern Affairs:	Chairman John Mullen, North Dakota
Inter-American Affairs:	Chairman George D. Triplett, Mexico
Middle Eastern & African Affairs:	Chairman Vinton R. Guy, Colorado

At 11:30 a.m. Sunday, September 6, 1998, 39 Delegates met in the Jasperwood Room for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations. At this meeting,

motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolutions and to sign and submit the report on behalf of the Convention Committee. Reports of all Convention Ad Hoc Administrative Subcommittees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 36 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

The following Ad Hoc Subcommittee reports contain resolutions which will, in conjunction with resolutions previously adopted, provide an effective and viable foreign relations program for The American Legion. That program will fully support a strong and dynamic U.S. foreign policy to promote democracy around the world and discharge America's responsibility as leader of the free world in the continuing struggle to defend and promote liberty.

**Ad Hoc Subcommittee on  
General Foreign Policy  
A.J. Forestiere, Arizona, Chairman**

**Recommended Action on Resolutions  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 10: Missing Service Personnel**

Origin: ND

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended and consolidated with No. 124 (IL)

WHEREAS, There are thousands of American Servicemen and women still unaccounted for in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and subsequent military engagements; and

WHEREAS, The members of The American Legion are deeply concerned for those servicemen and women still unaccounted for from these wars and military engagements and for those who may be classified as missing-in-action in future wars or military engagements; and

WHEREAS, The families of the missing Americans must live in uncertainty and anguish regarding the fate of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, There is a deterioration in the trust and credibility placed in some of the government officials involved in accounting for these missing Americans; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996 to provide guidelines for accounting for missing service personnel and for establishing procedures and safeguards to ensure that the next-of-kin of missing service personnel are kept informed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports legislation to restore the procedures for determining the whereabouts and status of missing persons, ensuring access to government information concerning the whereabouts and status of missing military personnel, and safeguarding the rights of these missing personnel and their family members as initially contained in the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996.

**Resolution No. 209: America's Future**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The major international goals long sought by The American Legion—democracy and deterrence of general war—are closer to realization than ever before; and

WHEREAS, Far-reaching worldwide changes now occurring are altering Americans' perception of the threats to their security and making it imperative for the United States to adjust its grand strategy in light of new realities and future challenges as we prepare for the new millennium; and

WHEREAS, Ideas of democracy and market economics are gaining increasing acceptance around the world, thereby creating new hopes of peace and prosperity for mankind; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear and regional military threats still confront the Free World and transnational issues such as terrorism and drugs still confront civilization; and

WHEREAS, The collapse of the Soviet bloc, demands for democracy in Eastern Europe, ethnic warfare, expansion of Japanese economic power, movement toward European unity, and growing international interdependence jointly create a new political and economic situation in the world; and

WHEREAS, The United States faces serious economic challenges through the relative decline of American economic influence in the world, trade and budget deficits which threaten to limit future prosperity, and worldwide economic competition; and

WHEREAS, As Americans search for a new definition of America's world role, they must forge a bipartisan consensus providing focus, continuity, and wise use of limited national resources for national security-foreign policy purposes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion, as a grassroots organization reaching throughout the land, recognizes the unprecedented changes throughout the world and urges the U.S. Government to adopt a bipartisan national security-foreign policy of "Democratic Activism" promoting democratic values, maintaining adequate military strength to deter or defeat aggression, cooperating with allies, encouraging free and fair trade, and assisting developing nations.

**Resolution No. 210: Principles of United States Foreign Policy**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, as veterans of wartime service in the defense of liberty, have a special concern for maintaining peace with freedom and recognize that a strong U.S. foreign policy is vital in that regard; and

WHEREAS, The official concern of The American Legion stems from that part of the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion which states: "We associate ourselves together...to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy..."; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion believes that the

objectives of U.S. foreign policy must be to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That U.S. foreign policy should embody the following principles:

1. Recognition of U.S. responsibilities as leader of the Free World and of our heritage and traditions.
2. Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture.
3. Active promotion of democracy.
4. Support for human rights in other countries when such is consistent with U.S. national interests and national power.
5. Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share.
6. Use of national resources in critical world regions to achieve U.S. national interests.
7. Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements which improve U.S. national security.
8. Opposition to the spread of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons or long-range ballistic missiles to terrorist, communist or aggressor nations.
9. Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking.
10. Vigorous and swift pursuit and prosecution of terrorists who attack U.S. installations or citizens.
11. Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with U.S. sovereignty and serve U.S. national interests.
12. Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices.
13. Recognition that the world basically operates on a national basis; consequently, U.S. sovereignty must not be abridged unless required by important U.S. national security interests.
14. Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of U.S. foreign policy as envisioned in the U.S. Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding.
15. Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests world-wide.

**Resolution No. 215: United Nations**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, The American Legion played a significant role in helping to establish the United Nations after World War II, believing it would help prevent the outbreak of future wars; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has remained generally supportive of the United Nations over the succeeding years, although it has been critical of particular ineffective, wasteful or undesirable activities of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, The Foreign Relations Commission conducted a year-long study to determine whether U.S. participation in the United Nations serves U.S. national interests and submitted its report in May 1995; and



WHEREAS, Although the United Nations in half a century of operation has not fulfilled the lofty purposes of international peace and human betterment envisioned by its founders, it continues to be in the national interest for the United States to function as a member of the United Nations. Continuing American membership in the United Nations will retain the U.S. veto power in the Security Council to quash unwise international operations and enable the United States to work from within the United Nations for long overdue reforms; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to seek the following reforms in the United Nations and to use American leverage to obtain the desired ends by such means as withdrawal from ineffective UN agencies and withholding of funds:

- Ratify expeditiously the "UN Convention on the Protection of Peacekeepers" and encourage all other nations to do the same.
- Encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner.
- Encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs.
- Adopt weighted voting procedures in the General Assembly, allotting voting power in relation to funds contributed by each member nation to the United Nations.
- Eliminate the Trusteeship Council and all other redundant or unneeded agencies.
- Professionalize the UN staff on the basis of merit and qualifications.
- Provide truly independent authority to the Inspector General and ensure that UN agencies become subject to periodic, unannounced auditing, the finding of such audits to be reported to member nations.
- Admit the Republic of China to full membership in the United Nations since that nation has fulfilled all that is expected of a developing country by adopting democracy, respect for human rights, free enterprise, and a peaceful foreign policy.
- Establish an equitable fiduciary relationship between the United States and the United Nations.
- Reduce the U.S. share of the regular budget to ultimately reach 20 percent.
- Reduce the U.S. share of peacekeeping funding to ultimately reach 20 percent.

**Resolution No. 216: Regulation of Lobbying**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion has had long-term concerns about foreign nations buying the services of influential Americans, specifically former Members of Congress and former senior officials of the Executive Branch, paying them enormous sums of money to gain information about the U.S. Government and its policies and programs; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has worked long and hard to support lobbying reform in the Congress; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States signed Public Law 104-65, "The Lobbying Disclosure Act" on December 19, 1995; and

WHEREAS, This new legislation, which took effect January 1, 1996, established broad requirements for individuals and entities who seek to influence the Federal Government to register with the Congress and to disclose their clients issues, fees, and the interests of foreign entities, as well as to file semiannual reports which are public records; and

WHEREAS, Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have also adopted new rules prohibiting members and staff from accepting most gifts, including free meals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly supports the lobbying reform legislation which has been enacted by the Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to pass further amendments to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 or separate legislation which: 1) establishes post-restriction requirements for former officials of the U.S. Government; 2) ensures that U.S. lobbyists in other countries receive equal access to government officials; and 3) provides favorable consideration to foreign governments that provide reciprocal privileges to American lobbyists.

#### **Resolution No. 218: Priority POW/MIA Actions**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, Many Americans are reported as missing in action or otherwise unaccounted for in the area of Korea, Southeast Asia and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, The families of these Prisoners of War and Missing in Action still suffer untold grief and uncertainty due to the lack of any accurate accounting in spite of the heroic efforts of U.S. search teams. Some reports indicate that some of these Americans could be alive in the former Soviet areas; and

WHEREAS, It appears that certain information from these areas has been deliberately and cruelly withheld from their families; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is convinced for example, based on available evidence, that American POWs were detained by Vietnam after Operation Homecoming in 1973, and there is sufficient evidence to lead us to believe there is a better than average probability of American POWs still being held in Indochina today; and

WHEREAS, Specific locations of alleged remains of U.S. servicemen have now been identified by the U.S. Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes U.S. Government POW/MIA operations are still inadequate, and the President's normalization of relations with Vietnam has not achieved substantially greater progress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still Prisoners of War or Missing in Action; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues to exert the maximum effort to account for MIAs from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia and the Cold War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes the following priority actions should be taken by the U.S. Government:

- Continue to provide sufficient personnel and resources so that investigative efforts of World War II, Cold War, and Korean War POW/MIA situations can be broadened and accelerated.
- Continue to provide necessary resources so field operations can be conducted at a maximum rate of activity with more timely follow-up of live sighting reports.
- Continue to declassify all POW/MIA information (except that revealing intelligence sources or methods) in a form readily available to public review.
- Initiate or strengthen joint commissions with Russia, the People's Republic of China, and North Korea to increase POW/MIA recovery efforts.
- Establish a joint standing congressional committee on POW/MIA affairs to ensure continued action by the executive branch in addressing the POW/MIA issue.
- Take further favorable actions toward Vietnam only after Hanoi provides the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia it controlled during the Vietnam War.
- Take favorable actions toward Laos or Cambodia only after those nations provide the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs.
- "Fullest possible accounting" is defined as turning over live prisoners, repatriating remains of those who were killed in action or died in captivity, or providing a valid, conclusive report when neither is possible.

**Resolution No. 219: World War II, Cold War, and Korean War POW/MIAs**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, Over 78,000 Americans from World War II and several hundred from the Cold War remain unaccounted for; and

WHEREAS, Over 8,000 Americans remain unaccounted for after the Korea War (389 were classified as POWs at one time) and very little progress has been made by the U.S. Government in getting the North Koreans to cooperate fully in resolving their fates; and

WHEREAS, It is a prime responsibility of the U.S. Government to exert every effort after each war to obtain the release of all American POWs held by foreign powers; and

WHEREAS, Revelations by President Yeltsin and other evidence reveals that American POWs may still be held in the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, The U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs was established to investigate the POW/MIA issue in Russia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urges the U.S. Government to make a maximum effort to resolve the fate of unaccounted Americans from World War II, the Cold War, and the Korean War by obtaining the return of any live prisoners, the repatriation of remains and the fullest possible accounting for the missing; and, be it finally

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the U.S. Government not to provide normalization of relations or any type of economic assistance to North Korea until it fully cooperates on POW/MIA matters.

**Resolution No. 220: Vietnam POW/MIA Policy**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The highest level of officials of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam made commitments to the March 1996 Presidential Delegation on POW/MIA and to the President's National Security Advisor in July 1996, to renew and increase their unilateral as well as joint efforts to account for America's POW/MIAs; and

WHEREAS, The Administration has repeatedly stated that accounting as fully as possible for all Americans still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War is the highest priority of U.S. bilateral relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The President has lifted the trade embargo and normalized relations with Vietnam, pledging that such actions would generate increased results in accounting for missing Americans, and such results have not yet been provided by Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Administration to follow-up at the policy level to insure that the pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are honestly fulfilled; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in the absence of fulfillment of these pledges, The American Legion opposes any further economic and political steps to improve bilateral relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on Congress to oppose further steps on this same basis.

**Received & Recorded**

**Resolution No. 217 (MD) 1998 NC: Nuclear Proliferation**

**Resolution No. 241 (NH) 1998 NC: Support POW/MIA "Empty Chair" Program**

**Rejected**

**Resolution No. 5 (AK) 1998 NC: Support for Investigation of the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty**

**Resolution No. 16 (KY) 1998 NC: Support for Investigation of the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty**

**Resolution No. 32 (SK) 1998 NC: Support for Investigation of the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty**

**Resolution No. 84 (MT) 1998 NC: Support for Investigation of the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty**

**Resolution No. 106 (TX) 1998 NC: Support for Investigation of the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty**

**Resolution No. 277 (WA) 1998 NC: Opposition of Honors for Admiral Yamamoto**

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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**European Affairs**  
**Roger Tingler, Georgia, Chairman**

No resolutions were considered by the subcommittee.

**Far Eastern Affairs**  
**John Mullen, North Dakota, Chairman**

**Recommended Action on Resolutions**  
**Approved**

**Resolution No. 2: Policy on Support to the Republic of Korea**

Origin: AK

Submitted by: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, There are numerous treaties in force with the Republic of Korea, concerning aviation, consular affairs, defense, economic and technical cooperation, education, finance, fisheries, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and especially the Mutual Defense Treaty which was entered into force on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, Both South and North Korea signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation on December 13, 1991, North Korea still maintains an extremely large, modern military force capable of launching offensive operation on short notice; and

WHEREAS, North Korea is currently facing serious food shortage and economic failure, nevertheless, they maintain military forces of approximately 1,050,000 personnel, the fifth largest standing military force in the world. North Korea has 2.5 times more tanks than ROK-US forces, a 2 to 1 advantage in armored personnel carriers, and a 1.8 to 1 advantage in artillery pieces. North Korea also has 2 times more aircraft and a 4 time larger naval fleet than the South and has devoted some 25 percent of its gross national product (GNP) for military purposes; and

WHEREAS, The Presidents of Korea and the United States proposed a Four-Party meeting, involving North and South Korea, to seek a permanent peace settlement of the Korean factions, with the meeting to be held at a Cheju Island location commencing April 16, 1996 which talks failed to materialize with the only meeting held in Geneva in March 1998 with no tangible results because of North Korea's "war of words" and implacable resistance; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately due to the sudden financial crisis in the Republic of Korea, South Korea is experiencing its most difficult time economically since the Korean War (1950-53); and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Korea, has been a battlefield comrade with the United States and is still vital to the defense and stability of the Pacific and Asian regions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urge the government of the United States to assist the Republic of Korea at the earliest possible time to enable it to tide over the financial difficulties; and to increase its military assistance to the

Republic of Korea to safeguard her freedom; and promote security in the Pacific Asian region; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States should maintain a strong policy to bear on North Korea to reduce its military forces and to participate in the Four-Party Talks with a true and frank sense of peace.

**Resolution No. 3: Relations with the Republic of China**

Origin: AK

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long-time friend, ally and the seventh largest trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Republic of China during World War II, closely cooperated with the United States against Japanese Imperialism; and

WHEREAS, During the period of communist insurrection, the government of the Republic of China was removed to Taiwan in 1949, where it exists today as a free and democratic country, while the Chinese Communists still occupy Mainland China; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Communists fought against the United States in Korea and supported the Communists in Vietnam, while the Republic of China supported U.S. and allied efforts to maintain freedom for the peoples of East Asia; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, The people of the United States are overwhelmingly opposed to Communism in all its forms; and

WHEREAS, Under the Provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96.8), the United States has no obligation 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports and encourages the continued sales of sophisticated American weapon systems, naval vessels, first-line fighter aircraft, tanks and armored personnel carriers, anti-submarine warfare systems, helicopters, military electronics and communications equipment, and air defense missile systems to the Armed Forces of the Republic of China.

**Resolution No. 212: Policy on the People's Republic of China**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended and consolidated with No. 19 (CO)

WHEREAS, The protection of the vital national interests of the United States depends on maintaining our security alliances and a balance of power in East Asia; and

WHEREAS, China is developing large and capable military forces with its long-term goal of becoming the leading power in East Asia; and

WHEREAS, China has applied for membership in the World Trade Organization which will greatly benefit its ambition to become a great power; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, The American Legion has become increasingly concerned about the U.S. trade deficit with China and the Chinese military build-up resulting from these trade profits; and

WHEREAS, The United States has important areas of common interest with China as well as several areas of concern, including nonproliferation of nuclear weapons technology, free and open trade, protection of human rights and treatment of Chinese citizens, preservation of civil liberties during the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese control, autonomy for Tibet, prevention of war on the Korean peninsula, and the security of Taiwan; and

WHEREAS, The communist government of the Peoples Republic of China has serious reasons to be concerned about reports of illegal political campaign contributions during the 1996 U.S. elections; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges both the President and the Congress to strongly urge the leaders of the People's Republic of China to define their interests in responsible ways which: 1) do not threaten the balance of power in Asia, 2) prevent the spread of technology for producing weapons of mass destruction, and 3) are compatible with our interests; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls upon the President and the U.S. Congress to cooperate fully with each other on the ongoing campaign finance investigations to determine if China attempted to illegally influence U.S. foreign policy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the President inform the Chinese leadership that China's continued suppression of their citizens' rights, particularly now with regard to the citizens of Hong Kong during the turnover of that city to Chinese control in the summer of 1997, will result in withdrawal of Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status with the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That U.S. policy reflect a prudent and realistic view of the communist Chinese government.

**Received & Recorded**

**Resolution No. 211 (MD) 1998 NC: Policy on North Korea**

**Inter-American Affairs**

**George D. Triplett, Mexico, Chairman**

**Recommended Action on Resolutions**

**Approved**

**Resolution No. 101: Panama Canal Treaties**

Origin: TX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

Consolidated with No.: 293 (MX) and 214 (MD)

WHEREAS, In 1977 the United States entered into two treaties with Panama transferring full control of the Panama Canal to Panama in the year 2000 and guaranteeing its neutrality; and

WHEREAS, A decade later, disagreement persists as to whether or not those treaties (as amended) were fully and constitutionally ratified by either Panama or the United States and, therefore, whether or not the U.S. and Panamanian additions are binding. Chief among them whether or not the United States has the unilateral right to defend the Canal from internal threats within Panama to its safety and operation, as well as from external threats; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion requests the President of the United States to call upon the U.S. Senate to promptly undertake intensive hearings, with full debate, for the purpose of reexamining the 1977 Treaties with Panama and our rights and commitments thereunder, with an eye to recommending renegotiating or renouncing them after having resolved once and for all the contradictions presently encumbering said treaties.

**Resolution No. 102: War on Drugs in Latin America**

Origin: TX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

Consolidated with No. 296 (MX)

WHEREAS, At the Cartagena Drug Summit in 1990 in Cartagena, Colombia called by then President Barco of Colombia, the United States and six Latin American nations (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) agreed to a comprehensive plan of action to reduce the supply of illegal narcotics and the demand for them within the Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, The Cartagena agreements, reaffirmed and expanded in the San Antonio Drug Summit in February, 1992, in San Antonio, Texas, called by then President Bush of the United States, encompass a vast array of weapons in the battle to stop the devastating traffic in illegal drugs including eradication, crop substitution, education, police training and economic assistance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government Executive Branch to cooperate fully with Latin American nations to destroy the international traffic of illegal drugs and to provide appropriate economic assistance to aid in this vital endeavor; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Congress to provide adequate funds to support this program.

**Resolution No. 213: Panama Canal**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended and Consolidated with No. 292 (MX)

WHEREAS, American ingenuity and funds coupled with hard work by thousands of Panamanians and citizens of the Caribbean Islands built the Panama Canal; and

WHEREAS, The Panama Canal is, and will remain, a vital seaway for U.S. commerce and naval operations; and

WHEREAS, The Panama Canal Treaties, signed on September 7, 1977 by the United States and Panama, provide for a gradual transition of the Panama Canal to Panamanian



control in 2000 and permanent neutrality of the canal with the United States retaining freedom of action to maintain the canal's neutrality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion believes:

1. The United States should take any necessary actions to ensure Panama will be able to operate the Panama Canal efficiently after Panama assumes control in the year 2000.
2. The United States should take any necessary actions to ensure that the Panama Canal is operated efficiently and in a manner consistent with U.S. national security interests.
3. Construction of a new canal or major improvements in the existing Panama Canal should be consistent with U.S. national security interests.
4. The United States should seek agreement with Panama to continue stationing U.S. forces in Panama after the year 2000 to protect the Panama Canal as well as evolving democratic nations in the region.
5. The United States should encourage democratic evolution in Panama to help provide stability and a better, freer life for Panamanians.
6. The U.S. Congress should conduct timely and comprehensive hearings on insuring U.S. interests in that vital area prior to the transition.

**Resolution No. 294: Policy on Cuba**

Origin: MX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

Consolidated with No. 100 (TX)

WHEREAS, The communist government of Cuba has ruined the Cuban economy, repressed the Cuban people, provided a base area for forces inimical to the United States, and committed aggression in many lands; and

WHEREAS, Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Cuba has lost the sources of foreign subsidies that alone sustained its inefficient communist economy; and

WHEREAS, If the Free World remains in its rejection of communism in Cuba, many economic, social, and political indicators point to the likely collapse of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That the American Legion urges the U.S. Government to continue to intensify economic sanctions against Cuba, maintain control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continue intelligence overflights over Cuba, remain firm in opposition to export of revolution by Cuba, continue broadcasting true news and information to the Cuban people, and encourage the development of democracy and a free market economy in Cuba.

**Resolution No. 295: Policy on Mexico**

Origin: MX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, The United States and Mexico are historic neighbors with a common heritage and thousands of miles of common boundary; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress and the Executive Branch have entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico; and

WHEREAS, College scholarships and educational exchanges go a long way in breaking international barriers and promoting good will and understanding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to increase its emphasis on Mexican-U.S. cooperative endeavors on all fronts to enhance the prosperity and security of both nations as well as that of the Western Hemisphere; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to provide a greatly expanded number of scholarships to Mexicans, particularly those lacking funds to attend undergraduate and appropriate vocational-technical programs, provided said students promise to return to Mexico after completing their education; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends that public and private student exchange programs between Mexico and the United States be promoted by the U.S. Government to acquaint the future leaders of both countries with their neighbors.

**Resolution No. 297: Policy on Central America**

Origin: MX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, 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 only 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. 298: Enterprise for the Americas Initiative**

Origin: MX

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, On June 27, 1990, the U.S. Government announced a proposed new approach to increase economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean called the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI); and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, The EAI was established with the intent to create a free trade zone in the Western Hemisphere, increase foreign investment throughout the area, and cancel \$12 billion in debts owed to the U.S. Government by Latin American nations that enact free market reforms; and

WHEREAS, The EAI represents a new approach toward stimulating regional prosperity by relying on economic reform and investment rather than monetary aid to accomplish its goals; and

WHEREAS, Some initial steps in the EAI have been accomplished, but much more remains to be done on this long-term program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports participation by the United States in the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, seeking to enhance growth and cooperation throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (except Cuba).

**Middle Eastern and African Affairs**  
**Vinton R. Guy, Colorado, Chairman**

**Referred to the Standing Commission on Foreign Relations:**

**Resolution No. 22 (CO) 1998 NC: Iran**

**Received & Recorded**

**Resolution No. 21 (CO) 1998 NC: Middle East**

CHAIRMAN BRIEDEN: Mr. Commander, that concludes my report as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Texas, I move the adoption of the report of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The report has been moved and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report is adopted.

At this time, I call upon Dan Wheeler for a short update on the press conference in Washington yesterday.

DAN WHEELER: I don't know how the press conference looked from your side, but from our side in Washington, it looked like things came off pretty well. Senator Hatch has been a great spokesperson for this issue. He understands the issue thoroughly, he believes in it, it's something he really wants to see passed and passed soon. Senator Cleland talked about it and he talked with many of our guests prior to our press conference. He told them how much he supported them and how he was going to work the issue.

I have to thank Bob Spanogle for getting Pat Boone for us. This came about through a serendipitous way but none the less, when Pat Boone was asked about this particular issue, he said, "By golly, yes, I do support it and I'll do anything I can to help." Television and radio stations all across the country yesterday were calling to ask Pat Boone to speak on this issue because the American people know him and the American people trust him and he really believes in this and he's 100% for you. How many of you may have seen *Show Your Colors, America!* special that's been on television across the country? Bishop Pearson was

the host of that. He's another strong believer in this issue. He went up on the hill, visited senators from both sides of the aisles and told them why this is an important moral and values issue. And I know they're listening to him and I know the American people are energized to keep pushing forward.

We had a number of CFA organizations there as we always do. A lot of them can't give money to this cause because of their IRS tax status but all of them lend their support, all of them walk the Hill and publish things in their publications. We've got 30 million people out there working hard to get this amendment passed.

We also had present representatives from the ACLU, People for the American Way, who weren't invited to the press conference. This was a CFA, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary press conference, but they came nonetheless. They were distributing anti-amendment materials. They accused you in your quest to protect the American flag of using heavyhanded methods, of being misguided, and fair-weather patriots. They would have America believe that they alone are imbued with sufficient wisdom to decide the disposition and treatment of the American flag. I think it's time that they understood that the ACLU and the People for the American Way did not give us freedom of speech. It was America's veterans that gave us freedom of speech. Anyway, unable to compete on the merits of the arguments in this issue, they have now resorted to calling you names and impugning your motives. They called those senators who support us the 'sunshine patriots' who are taking advantage of a political issue in order to garner votes. It seems inconceivable to these people that you could love America and love what this great country has given us enough not to want to destroy the flag that represents everything that we believed in.

Well, we do build our own crowd. We do tell the truth about this issue. And when we take polls, we look for honest results and we report those results honestly. You know, I'm reminded of a debate I had at American University Law School with a professor of law in front of his class about this particular issue. He said all kinds of things which he knew were not true. And after it was all over, I turned to him and I said, "Professor, I've been up against you several times but every time I get against you, you get more and more imaginative. How can you tell these lies that you're telling, knowing full well that you're distorting the truth?" He looked right at me and said, "I know. But this is the tact we have chosen to take." They don't have sufficient good reason to defeat this so they make up lies and keep saying them over and over and over again.

I remember when Paul Simon was standing out in front of the Capitol after we had that big, big press conference in 1995 announcing that the amendment was going to come up for a vote. He was asked by the media about what the possibility for passage of this amendment and he said, "This amendment has the overwhelming support of the American people. That's why we must stop it in the Senate." Now, that's the kind of people that we're dealing with on the other side of this issue. Like the small band of elitists they are, these people still fear the wisdom of the American people. They fear your judgement. They fear your outrage. And they fear that you are going to be successful in not only protecting our flag, but in returning the American constitution to the American people. Nine years ago, when the Supreme Court first ruled that desecrating the American flag was protected under the free speech provisions of the First Amendment, they never thought you'd last. They called it a flash in the pan. They said it was an outpouring of false patriotism. They said the American people will soon forget. We have got to go this law route. We have got to pass resolutions. We have got to do all of this because this is going to go away. You've shown them that they're wrong. You've stayed the course, you've worked the plan. As Bishop Morton says, you have

pressed toward the mark. And you've done your duty and victory will be yours. The right to protect our flag will be returned to you and our flag will be protected before many more weeks have passed.

Now, I know everyone is looking forward and focused on the end of September or the first week in October. But we have to bear in mind, after we've been going through this for nine long years, that this is not a single event. This is a process. And day by day, month by month, and year by year, we're making progress and accomplishing our goals. Well, now what we have to look at is a space of time which encompasses about six months that we're sitting at. And I want to explain why.

We look very, very good in September. We have 61 co-sponsors. We have 3 announced supporters giving us 64. We need 67. Senator Dorgan and Senator Conrad of North Dakota, thanks to the hard work that those grass roots people are doing in North Dakota, are sitting right on the verge of supporting this. In fact, if I had to bet my money, I would bet that Dorgan is going to support it. Dorgan is talking with Conrad and Conrad is getting all of this material and that looks very good. So too Boxer in California. Those people in California have done a marvelous job explaining this to her, getting her to think about it, showing her what it means. In fact, Leo Burke was asked by Barbara Boxer's staff to give them a list of 50 veterans who might work on a committee of Boxer for the Senate, Veterans for Boxer. He gave her a list of 50 veterans, just randomly picked. A few weeks later, he got a call back from her staff that said they called every one of these veterans and every one of these veterans said they'd be happy to work on a committee, Veterans for Boxer, but they can't do it unless she decides to vote for protecting the American flag.

Moseley-Braun in Illinois is in a real tight race. The people in Illinois have really been hammering her. They've been getting support from banks, and she's on the banking committee. The *Show Your Colors, America!* has been showing there and we know of at least 6,000 messages that have gone into her office. People in Chicago and the suburbs really support the flag, this is her core constituency, and she is paying attention to this. In fact, she's agreed to a meeting within the next week to seriously discuss the issue. Lieberman, Bennett, Mikulski, Murray of Washington, they are all looking at this issue.

If we should fall short a vote or maybe two votes in September, I want to tell you that it looks virtually certain in the opening days of the 106th Congress that this will pass because not only do we have 64 votes, we've got Arkansas in the November election which will deliver one more senator who's in support of this. Ohio will deliver another senator who's in support of this. Bennett has said he will not be the vote that kills this amendment. Plus there's the possibility of the cross-over votes like Dorgan and Conrad. Plus there's a possibility of victories for flag supporters in states like Boxer's, Murray's, and Moseley-Braun's. Even Feingold is going to have a tough race in Wisconsin. So, victory is assured. It's not a question of if the flag protection amendment is going to pass, it's just a question of whether it's going to pass in a couple weeks or a couple months. But it definitely is going to pass, this is an all American effort. We have to keep on doing what we're doing. We can't let up now. We've got the opposition on the run. They cannot compete against an energized American people who know what their values are. And they want to protect this flag.

In the lobby of this hotel, you see a big flag that's been put together of 50,000 little pieces of cloth. This is the kind of thing I'm talking about, an all American effort. Every one of those was sent in by one of you or members of the other CFA organizations along with a donation during one mailing. And then Jim Moore of Global Media got a volunteer group together out in Tulsa, Oklahoma and constructed that entire flag. They set it up in

Washington to fulfill a promise that The American Legion had made to its donors. That flag represents a patchwork, a tapestry of the American people and that's the same type of thing that we get in news releases and letters from all over the country. Also, I want to thank Jim Moore, who is the president of Global Media. His group put together that *Show Your Colors, America!* one hour special. The CFA put up a little bit of money for that but Jim Moore reached into his pocket and pulled out \$100,000 of his own money.

I want to thank all of the people who made transmitting the press conference from Washington to here possible. It's no small event to put together a press conference and arrange the schedules of senators and get the media to show up and get the CFA organizations to show up. I especially want to thank Lee Harris, on our own PR staff, who handled the technical things and Steve Thomas Phil Budahn and Joe March who put it together. And Markeys of Indianapolis who provided all of the equipment. They do a great job for you, I know you appreciate them and it wouldn't have been possible without their work.

Thank you, Legionnaires, for the great job that you've done in keeping this issue alive and moving it forward. People in Washington know it's real, they know it's not going to go away, because they know you're not going to go away. I want to thank the National Commander, who has led us so well this year on this issue. He's even kicked us in the butt once in a while when we were dropping back some, but we really appreciate you and we're going to deliver the victory to you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The Chair recognizes Allen Titus of Indiana, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security for the purposes of making his report.

**Report: Convention Committee on National Security  
Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman**

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 6, 1998, 259 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in Grand Salon 3,6,9 of the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and his 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. A motion was also approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and Secretary to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee. Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) was elected Chairman and Mr. Norman Schlemmer (Indiana) was appointed Secretary.

The six authorized Convention Committees (Aerospace, Defense Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, and Naval Affairs) met in separate meeting rooms. An additional Ad Hoc committee was appointed for General Security resolutions which required special attention. In compliance with NEC Resolution 18, a subcommittee on Conservation of Natural Resources was appointed. The following were elected Chairmen and Secretaries of the Convention Security Committees:

**Aerospace**

Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman

Ted G. Demicchi, Wisconsin, Secretary

**Defense Civil Preparedness**

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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Frank J. D'Amico, New York, Chairman  
 John Schurrer, Wisconsin, Secretary  
**Law and Order**  
 George W. Wehrli, North Carolina, Chairman  
 Daniel Darcey, Illinois, Secretary  
**Merchant Marine**  
 Charles Moreland, Florida, Chairman  
 Charles P. Powell, Jr., Virginia, Secretary  
**Military Affairs**  
 Norbert G. Harmeyer, Iowa, Chairman  
 Dale D. Chapman, Virginia, Secretary  
**Naval Affairs**  
 Robert L. Klipstine, Ohio, Chairman  
 Gerald W. Cheffer, Illinois, Secretary  
**General Security Ad Hoc**  
 Wilson Timmons, Florida, Chairman  
 Alexander MacInnes, New York, Secretary  
**Conservation of Natural Resources**  
 Donald T. Clarke, South Dakota, Chairman  
 Rexford S. Steeves, Virginia, Secretary

On Sunday at 11:30 a.m., September 6, 1998, the delegates again assembled in Grand Salon 3,6,9 of the Hilton Riverside Hotel for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Security. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 64 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Security or prepared by the Committee to meet problems which were held to be of concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives.

**General Security Ad Hoc Committee**  
**Wilson Timmons, Florida, Chairman**

**Recommended Action on Resolutions**  
**Approved**

**Resolution No. 38: Protection of American Citizens Abroad**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: National Security Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, It is a primary task of a nation to protect its citizens and especially its soldiers and sailors on duty abroad; and

WHEREAS, In recent years hundreds of Americans, including servicemembers have been attacked and killed by terrorists abroad; and

WHEREAS, Little success has been achieved in apprehending and punishing these terrorists; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Government to take the necessary actions to avenge our fellow citizens and especially our

fallen comrades, and that it should be one of the tasks of The American Legion to remind our fellow citizens and our Government of their obligation to protect our citizens and servicemembers abroad; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion go on record as urging additional Government funding for the construction and upgrading of U.S. embassies and other U.S. installations so as to enhance the security, well-being and protection of U.S. citizens serving abroad.

**Resolution No. 174: National Security Principles**

Origin: MA

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 270 (WA)

WHEREAS, Over two centuries ago, our distinguished forefathers wrote the Preamble to the Constitution which began with the words: "We the People" shall "provide for the common defense....," and by so doing, they established the principle that protecting our nation from hostile threats was the fundamental purpose of the Government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion since its founding in 1919 has always supported a strong national defense which is reflected in its own Preamble to the Constitution, namely, "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America," and "to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;" and

WHEREAS, Although the threat posed by the former Soviet Union is diminished, the United States is faced with a myriad of short and long term threats and challenges which are far more complex, perplexing and difficult to deal with than was the more predictable and unified threat posed by the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, The current National Security Strategy calls for the Armed Forces to be capable of fighting and winning two major regional conflicts on the order of the Persian Gulf War and Korean War nearly simultaneously, while also conducting peace operations with a reduced end strength of 1.4 million and active military force structures composed of 10 Army Divisions, 11 active Navy aircraft carriers and one Reserve carrier, and 13 Air Force fighter wing equivalents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion upholds the following national security principles as fundamental to the best interests of the United States:

1. The National Security Strategy needs to be reassessed so that missions and resources are more closely aligned. The Armed Forces have been too deeply cut to pursue a "win-win" policy; at best, our current strategy is a "win-hold" strategy with the current present military force structures.
2. The credibility of the United States in an unstable world needs to be maintained by retaining the requisite military capabilities. Such a strategy requires that the Armed Forces be more fully structured, equipped and budgeted to achieve this strategy. Active military end strengths should be maintained at an absolute minimum of 1.6 million for the foreseeable future. Active military force structures outlined in the FY 1994 National Defense Authorization Act, namely, 12 full-strength Army Divisions, 12 deployable Navy aircraft carrier battle groups, 3 Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces,



- and 15 or more active Air Force fighter wing equivalents should be retained as the minimum baseline foundation.
3. The National Guard and Reserves must be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels in order to accomplish their indispensable missions and roles in our national defense.
  4. The existing gap between these minimally essential military force structures and proposed defense budgets must be closed.
  5. Peacetime Selective Service registration should be retained so as to maintain our capability to rapidly reconstitute forces in the event of emergencies.
  6. Force modernization for the Services needs to be realistically funded, and not further delayed, or the United States is likely to unnecessarily risk American lives in the years ahead. Production of airlift and sealift assets needs to be expedited.
  7. The American people expect that whenever U.S. forces are committed, that they will be committed only when America's vital national interests are threatened and only as a last resort after all reasonable alternatives have been explored and tried. Once the decision to commit U.S. forces has been made, forces sent into harm's way should be deployed only to win.
  8. The United States should not allow its stated preference for multilateral action to become an excuse for continuous U.S. military action when clearly its national interests may not be at stake, nor should we delay American unilateral action when our national interests are at stake.
  9. Peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-making and humanitarian operations detract from our declining combat power and readiness. Such operations should be Congressionally approved and separately appropriated on a case-by-case basis.
  10. The honorable nature of military service should be upheld as it not only represents fulfillment of American patriotic obligation but is also a privilege and responsibility that embodies the highest form of service to the nation.
  11. The United States Government must honor its obligations to all service members, veterans, military retirees and their families, and lasting compensations and incentives should be equitable.
  12. Major incentives for military service to include an enhanced GI Bill for education and training, improved quality of life features and the reinstitutionalization of a more substantial 20-year plus retirement plan as the norm, need to be immediately implemented to recruit and retain a quality and fully-manned force which is professionally led.
  13. The United States Government must ensure that the defense industrial base can reasonably meet the technological needs of the Armed Forces, and that transfers of crucial defense technologies abroad should immediately be discontinued.

**Resolution No. 175: United States Military Forces in Peacekeeping Operations**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The stated purpose of the War Powers Act (P.L. 93-148) was to "...fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution to insure that the collective judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of the United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent hostilities were clearly indicated;" and

WHEREAS, Our Constitution reserves for Congress alone the right to declare war, which it has done only five times in our history and has not done since World War II; and

WHEREAS, During the Cold War, former Secretary of Defense Weinberger in 1985 set forth specified conditions that had to be met before American military forces were committed to combat, namely, that the United States Government had to determine that our vital national interests were at stake; that we were prepared to commit sufficient forces to win; that political and military objectives were clearly defined; that there was reasonable assurance of support from the American people; that U.S. forces should be committed as a last resort; and that the United States had a clear exit strategy; and

WHEREAS, The successes of United States military operations in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf demonstrated what our Armed Forces could achieve with well-defined goals and objectives and the unquestioned support of the American people; and the tragedies of Lebanon and Somalia have shown what can happen when they had neither; and

WHEREAS, When the United Nations, through Resolution 814, changed the mission in Somalia from a humanitarian operation to one of "nation-building" involving U.S. combat operations which resulted in American casualties and one detainee, it was done without the benefit of Congressional input or the acknowledgment of the American people; and

WHEREAS, According to current Department of Defense policy, United States military personnel captured during such peacekeeping, peacemaking, humanitarian, or nation-building operations are not designated as prisoners of war but as hostages or detainees with no defined legal rights under the Geneva Convention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to include the following principles as an integral part of its national security and foreign policy decision-making process when considering the commitment of United States military forces: America needs a clear definition of its vital national interests as they relate to all military operations to include peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that Congress should approve the commitment of United States troops to any further peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that United States military forces should not be placed under foreign or United Nations operational control except in exceptional circumstances where Congress grants specific approval; and that American service men and women captured during these types of operations should be granted full POW status and afforded all the protections of the Geneva Conventions; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is convinced that a stronger policy is required to be adopted by the United States Government to ensure that every service man or woman captured by hostile forces knows that his or her Government will take whatever measures are required to secure their release, including the use of force, and that those belligerents who violate such a policy should be held fully accountable.

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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**Resolution No. 176: Preserving America's Defense Industrial Base**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 114 (IL)

WHEREAS, America's winning technological edge in the Persian Gulf War had its genesis in research and development performed in the decade of the 1980's and earlier; and

WHEREAS, Past Defense Authorization and Appropriations Acts have eliminated production of over 100 major systems many of which have been proven in combat and for which replacement systems have not or will not be developed; and

WHEREAS, Military procurement has fallen more than 70 percent between FY 1985 and FY 1996; and

WHEREAS, Past Defense Budgets have included funding for technological research and development but limited production, and it is too late when a conflict develops to determine whether we have the capabilities to produce the requisite technologies for the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The United States is currently the world's leader in the development of new technology but must ensure that it does not become vulnerable to a disruption in material vital to our national security, and that its industrial base can surge when required; and

WHEREAS, Research being performed now will be essential to victory in systems fielded into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, This country owes it to the American fighting man that whenever he is put in harm's way that he be equipped and armed with state-of-the-art technology if we expect him to win on the modern battlefield, on and under the sea, and in the air; and

WHEREAS, Much of our defense industrial base, to include the ship-building industry, has rapidly eroded as evidenced by plant closures and large-scale layoffs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to preserve America's defense industrial base by continuing to fund research, development and acquisition budgets so as to retain our technological edge in the 21st century and to assure our military production can surge whenever U.S. military power is committed.

**Resolution No. 177: Foreign Investments in American Defense Industries**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, In this era of rapidly changing technology the United States must maintain ownership and control of critical defense industries so that U.S. technological secrets can be protected and adequate production facilities can be maintained to meet any national emergency; and

WHEREAS, The generally declining strength of the dollar in the mid-1980s and the downsizing of our defense industrial base in the 1990's have made it very lucrative for foreign entities to purchase U.S. firms, including those involved in national defense production; and

WHEREAS, As of 1986, 3 of the largest 36 foreign business investments in the United States were manufacturers of electronics and semiconductors, both of which are areas of vital importance to maintaining U.S. national security; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Treasury Department's Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States investigated the proposed sale of LTV Missile and Aircraft Divisions to the French-owned CSF, which was eventually thwarted; and

WHEREAS, The Administration's waiver of sales of space satellite technology to the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as proposed sales of supercomputers and aerospace technology to that potential adversary needs to be thoroughly investigated; and

WHEREAS, Such proposed sales threaten the security of classified U.S. military technologies and U.S. technological superiority; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to ensure that foreign entities are not permitted to own critical U.S. defense industries, especially those involved in the high technology, supersensitive electronics area; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion opposes the transfer and sales of sensitive American technologies which may endanger our national security and economic interests; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to thoroughly investigate the sales of aerospace and satellite technology to the People's Republic of China, or any actual or potential adversary of the United States, which could seriously jeopardize the national security interests of the United States and her allies.

#### **Resolution No. 178: National Missile Defense System**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 299 (MX)

WHEREAS, The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union placed a cap on deploying missile defense systems and limited more advanced research on such defensive systems; and

WHEREAS, Despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia appears to be continuing the modernization of strategic missile systems; and

WHEREAS, Since one of the signatories, the Soviet Union, no longer exists, there is doubt as to whether the treaty is still legally in effect; and

WHEREAS, For many years, The American Legion has been on record in support of a broad interpretation of the treaty to permit maximum research to develop essential missile defenses; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear testing was conducted by both India and Pakistan in May 1998 which purportedly surprised U.S. intelligence agencies; and

WHEREAS, As unreliable, hostile nations such as Iran and Iraq seem determined to acquire the capability to deliver a nuclear strike over long distances, including striking the continental United States, the need for a national missile defense for the continental United States has become more urgent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to renegotiate, modify or abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of

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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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1972 and to develop and deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people.

**Resolution No. 179: Theater Missile Defense Systems**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 300 (MX)

WHEREAS, The strategic defense of the United States against an intercontinental ballistic missile or conventional hostile attack is based upon a strategy of deterrence using the nuclear triad made up of submarine launched ballistic missiles, land-based intercontinental range ballistic missiles and strategic bomber carried and launched missiles and gravity bomb weapons; and

WHEREAS, The current threat to the continental U.S. from ballistic missiles appears low but growing, and foreign-based American service personnel, their dependents, U.S. security interests overseas and those of our allies are critically vulnerable to short and medium range ballistic missile delivery systems launched from third-world countries and equipped with weapons of mass destruction that include nuclear, chemical and biological warheads; and

WHEREAS, A number of rogue nations now have the capability to manufacture, assemble, use and sell ballistic missiles or their technology thus allowing Third World nations to hold neighboring countries or regions hostage and subject to political-military blackmail; and

WHEREAS, The means to acquire such ballistic missile technology and warhead weapons systems are becoming progressively easier since missile and weapon non-proliferation treaties are increasingly difficult to monitor and enforce, and since these nations are becoming less intimidated and deterred by conventional military power and mobility; and

WHEREAS, The most practical missile defensive system is a theater missile defense and interceptor system positioned on friendly or allied territory near or adjacent to known potentially hostile third world nations and equipped with the ability to neutralize a ballistic missile and its payload while in its boost or mid-course phase so that the aggressors missile can be destroyed while it is still over his territory; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to fund and deploy theater missile defense systems research, acquisition and development and approve a policy in concert with our allies, for the assembly of an appropriate Theater Missile Defense system in high threat theaters of operation to serve as a deterrent to those countries who now possess and are likely to use ballistic missiles on their regional neighbors; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that U.S. arms control negotiating strategy preserve the options for a ground or space-based theater missile defense command, control, communications and intelligence system that could be deployed and used in defense of the continental U.S. as its top priority, or in an overseas high threat theater of operations in which the U.S. has a crucial national security interest to, if necessary, neutralize ballistic missile threat launches equipped with weapons of mass destruction.

**Resolution No. 180: The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS)**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported legislation in the early 1970's to establish the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), thus creating the nation's only military medical school which combines careers of physicians with those of professional military officers; and

WHEREAS, USUHS was created by Congress under the Department of Defense in 1972 in order to provide the Uniformed Services of the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Public Health Service with a cadre of dedicated career medical officers who would ensure continuity, leadership and experience due to their extensive military training and retention rates; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the usual medical school curriculum, the USUHS educational programs, fully accredited by both the Commission on Higher Education, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, emphasize the special needs of military medicine and also provide special training in military medicine that is woven throughout the four years of medical school to include combat casualty care, trauma, tropical medicine and combat stress, courses not found in civilian medical school curriculum; and

WHEREAS, In return for their education, USUHS School of Medicine graduates must fulfill a service obligation of at least seven years while the service obligation of scholarship graduates is a year of obligated service per year of education, normally on the order of four years; and

WHEREAS, The USUHS Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) was established in 1993 to meet the special needs of the Federal Nursing Chiefs and was given official approval and recognized by the Office of Health Affairs in the Department of Defense on February 26, 1996; and, was fully accredited by both the National League for Nursing, in December 1996, and by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, in October 1997; and

WHEREAS, Since the first USUHS graduation in 1980, over 2,500 Uniformed USUHS physicians and advanced graduate nurses continue to serve their Nation as uniformed medical officers reflecting an overall retention rate of over 92 percent; and

WHEREAS, The congressionally mandated General Accounting Office (GAO) Report of September 1995 substantiated that the USUHS graduates are providing continuity to uniformed medicine with retention rates that are 1.9 times greater than the Scholarship (HPSP) graduates; and

WHEREAS, USUHS is an economical source of career medical leaders who serve our nation during peace, national emergencies, mobilization and war and provide military health care stability when compared to other sources of military physicians; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Defense determined that USUHS should remain open as part of the Fiscal Year 1998 Defense Reform Initiative; and

WHEREAS, The Defense Appropriations Bills and the Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Year 1994 through 1998 have prohibited the closure and any reduction in the USUHS budget and any phase down of the USUHS; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the

Congress to continue its determination to retain the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences as a continued source of career uniformed physicians and advanced practical nurses for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the United States Public Health Service.

**Resolution No. 182: Support for Collegiate and High School ROTC Programs**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, High school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs are cost-effective and build character, citizenship and leadership among the nation's youth while exposing them to discipline and instilling a sense of patriotism and pride in our Country; and

WHEREAS, Although collegiate ROTC programs are downsizing as the military downsizes, JROTC programs have expanded largely as a result of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell's calling for an increase of JROTC programs, from approximately 1,600 total programs to 2,700 units; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion ROTC Achievement Program, which attempts to associate Departments and Posts with specific ROTC units, brings prestige to the Post, Department and The American Legion and promotes the national security well-being of our country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to continue to fund collegiate and high school JROTC programs as being in our national interests; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to encourage all Departments and Posts to actively participate in The American Legion ROTC Achievement Program and to recognize outstanding ROTC students in both collegiate and high school programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supported the provision of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996 which stated that federal grants and contracts not be authorized for those universities and colleges which do not permit ROTC programs or recruiters on their campuses.

**Resolution No. 203: Separate Gender Basic Training**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

As amended and consolidated with No. 167 (DC)

WHEREAS, The role of women in the armed forces has long been recognized and promoted by The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The sexual scandals in the different branches of the services have led many to question and reevaluate the role of women in the armed forces and the best way to accommodate the integration of the sexes in the military; and

WHEREAS, Decades of experience with separate gender training worked for the veterans of both World Wars, the Korean War, Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War and helped produce the best fighting forces in the world; and

WHEREAS, Only male soldiers are granted combat MOS's and can serve in combat specialties; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, The demanding pressures of basic training can be exacerbated by the distractions and attractions of mixed gender training. Many veterans believe the services, with the exception of the United States Marine Corps, may be losing their "warrior spirit" and that male physical fitness standards may be lowered as a result of integrated basic training; and

WHEREAS, In separate gender basic training, female drill instructors and officers provide strong positive role models to female trainees without the distractions of sexual attractions; and

WHEREAS, Servicemembers will be afforded the opportunity for mixed gender training in advanced training and in their assigned units; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That each military service chief should honestly and fairly reevaluate the extent to which mixed gender training in basic training may be damaging traditional standards of command, discipline, fairness and cohesion and that policies are changed where damage is being done, and enhancing policies where gender mixing does work; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That if the service chiefs, for whatever reason, do not take such action, then the Congress should take the necessary steps to begin the process of change for the purpose of preserving national security as well as military traditions, values and readiness rather than subjecting them to external agendas.

#### **Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 6 (AK) 1998 NC: National Guard Representation on the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

**Resolution No. 27 (CO) 1998 NC: Support for the Investigation of Assertions Made by Cable Network News (CNN/Time, Inc.)**

#### **Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security**

**Resolution No. 105 (TX) 1998 NC: Protecting the United States Patent System**

**Resolution No. 136 (NJ) 1998 NC: Status of Forces Agreements**

**Resolution No. 181 (MD) 1998 NC: Military Burial Honors**

**Resolution No. 246 (ID) 1998 NC: Destruction of Chemical Munitions**

**Conservation of Natural Resources**  
**Donald T. Clarke, South Dakota, Chairman**

#### **Approved**

**Resolution No. 55: Domestic Energy Production and Conservation**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: National Security Committee

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 crises; and

WHEREAS, The United States continues to import approximately 50 to 60 percent or more of its oil while its domestic production continues to drop to its lowest levels in over



24 years, thus further compounding our foreign trade deficit at a time when our energy demands continue unabated; and

WHEREAS, War and the continuing threat of conflict in the volatile Persian Gulf region has brought into sharp focus the heavy reliance of the United States on imported foreign oil which necessitates a re-evaluation of our current and long-range energy policies; and

WHEREAS, Like our domestic oil and gas resources, nuclear energy is a safe resource where price and supply are not subject to manipulation by foreign countries; and nuclear energy is our second-largest source of electricity in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Despite the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, many of its provisions, to include further development of domestic energy resources, need to be more actively pursued in order to reduce our reliance on foreign sources of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Energy to implement those provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 which call for further development of domestic sources of energy to include:

1. Increasing U.S. petroleum production in an environmentally sensible manner.
2. Building new nuclear energy plants.
3. Implementing domestic oil and gas exploration subsidies.
4. Imposing sliding oil import fees to be used as an incentive to reduce our demand for foreign supplies while encouraging the development of domestic energy resources.
5. Development and implementation of sources to separate and recycle domestic recyclable materials thus preserving our natural resources for future generations.
6. That the provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 be fully implemented and carried out as mandated in the Act; and
7. That conservation of energy and natural resources be more actively pursued in the American private and public sectors.

**Resolution No. 56: Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste**

Origin: UT

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy has contributed greatly to U.S. energy independence, having displaced over 4.6 billion barrels of oil and saved over \$145 billion in oil payments since the 1973 Arab oil embargo; and

WHEREAS, Oil imports remain the single largest contributor to the U.S. trade deficit; and

WHEREAS, The United States must have a secure reliable supply of energy to fuel our economy and to protect our national security; and

WHEREAS, A growing supply of electricity is essential to U.S. economic growth, U.S. industry and the general well-being of the American people; and

WHEREAS, With a moderately growing economy, the U.S. will still need about 200,000 megawatts of new generating electrical capacity by 2010; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, The virtues of using a diversity of energy sources including nuclear energy, to produce our electricity are well-recognized; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy is our second-largest source of electricity providing 20 percent of our electricity supply - safely, reliably and without damage to the environment; and

WHEREAS, The nuclear power plants operating in the United States continue their record-breaking electricity production performance by generating billions of kilowatt-hours of electricity; and

WHEREAS, The National Energy Policy Act of 1992 calls for new, safer, plant design and standardization, as well as Nuclear Regulatory Commission certification, continued studies of proposed sites, and modernized licensing procedures; and

WHEREAS, Over \$14 billion has been committed to the Nuclear Waste Fund, and DOE has indicated it is unwilling to accept used fuel until at least 2010, and perhaps as late as 2015; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that the federal government has a legal responsibility to take used fuel in 1998 from the nation's commercial reactors. The federal government could incur up to a \$56 billion liability if it defaults on its legal obligation to accept used nuclear fuel beginning in 1998; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear power plants are running out of space to store used fuel. By the end of this year, 27 of the nation's 109 nuclear power plants will run out of on-site storage space. By 2010, 80 nuclear plants will have no space to store used fuel; and

WHEREAS, Relicensing of nuclear power plants is subject to a rigorous program of Nuclear Regulatory Commission oversight, inspection, preventive and corrective maintenance and extensive equipment testing ensuring required safety safeguards are met; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion calls on the President and Congress to compel the Department of Energy to comply with the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act by immediately establishing a process to develop an integrated used fuel management system and find sites for interim, centralized storage; making timely progress in the characterization of any proposed repository sites at various locations; and increasing funding to allow critical science and engineering studies to progress on schedule; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That local governments directly affected by interim storage and/or permanent disposal should be involved in planning and provided appropriate benefits from such facilities.

**Resolution No. 183: Oil Exploration on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, This Nation's national security and transportation system is dependent primarily upon petroleum as a fuel source; and

WHEREAS, Imports of foreign oil have been increasing and could reach the 60 percent level in this decade; and

WHEREAS, Heavy reliance on foreign oil sources weakens the U.S. economy, undermines national security, eliminates American jobs, and increases the deficit; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, Development of domestic energy resources is vital to a reliable and continuing fuel supply for national security and transportation; and

WHEREAS, Development of such resources to actual production involves a time frame of years, not weeks or months; and

WHEREAS, The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska is believed to contain as much as 9.2 billion barrels of oil; and

WHEREAS, The petroleum industry has amply demonstrated the ability to explore and develop environmentally sensitive areas without catastrophic damage, as witnessed in the Prudhoe Bay area along with the Alaska pipeline; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced that would allow exploration and development of the energy resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge area; and

WHEREAS, The administration has chosen to sell petroleum in our Federal Reserve rather than pursuing new domestic or off-shore oil exploration and production; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges Congress and other interested parties to support legislation that would open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain so as to permit oil exploration and development, in an environmentally sensitive manner, for our national security and economic well-being as a nation.

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security**

**Resolution No. 238 (MD) 1998 NC: Energy Awareness Measures**

**Aerospace Committee**

**Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman**

**Approved**

**Resolution No. 184: Support for the United States Air Force**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The United States Air Force, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1997, is implementing a balanced, time-phased modernization program to build the force necessary to meet the requirements of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) strategy and to enable the successful conduct of joint warfare in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, America's Air Force will remain a preeminent tool of United States military power with global-ranging forces empowered with stealth and precision weapons; and

WHEREAS, The Air Force corporate vision statement, referred to as "Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century," defines the Service's core competencies and outlines its three-fold commitment to maintain a ready, capable and quality force to conduct its contemporary military mission; secondly, to size, shape and streamline the Service to implement QDR guidance; and to continue the evolution of the aerospace force to provide the capabilities necessary to protect America's security interests into the next millennium; and

WHEREAS, Since 1986, the Air Force has downsized by nearly 40 percent, while military operations other than war have greatly increased; and while 91 percent of Air Force active and reserve components are maintaining readiness levels, a number of caution indicators including pilot and navigator retention levels and increased operational tempos have surfaced; and steps are being taken to address these readiness challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urge the Congress to appropriately support the three-fold commitment of the United States Air Force to maintain a ready, capable and quality force in order to conduct its contemporary missions; to size, shape and streamline the Service in accordance with the Quadrennial Defense Review strategy; and to continue the evolution of the aerospace force to protect America's security interests into the next millennium.

**Resolution No. 185: Support for the National Space Program**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The sound fiscal, economic, national security and technological welfare of the United States are of paramount importance to the people of America; 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 technological frontier, has created jobs, improved diagnosis and treatment of medical care for veterans and all Americans, fostered new scholastic interest in space science, provided insight into the evolution 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to adopt the following objectives with regard to the National Space Program:

1. A managerially efficient NASA as the steward of the nation's civil and commercial space programs dedicated to focusing on the low-cost use and exploitation of space and technology derived from our efforts there; and
2. A consolidated approach to the organizational and operational aspects of national security, civil and commercial space initiatives with emphasis on continuity and efficiency in maintenance of the interrelationships of programs such as launch, on-orbit and retrieval operations; and
3. Continued research and development on affordable lift into space using new launch systems, propulsion systems, metals and fuels; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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4. Establishment of special working liaisons and agreements with other spacefaring nations who share U.S. goals in space and who will also share costs, technologies and resources; and
5. Endorse and actively support those specific goals of the U.S. space program that have high probability to achieve cost effectiveness and nation-wide beneficial results in national security, scientific research and exploration goals based on a permanent national space policy which allows clear, definable progress for the nation at consistent, predictable funding levels.
6. That programs such as the nation's space activities are crucial to America's well-being and must co-exist with other national budgetary priorities.

**Resolution No. 186: Aerospace Production and Research**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The United States has been the world leader in aeronautics for 75 years, since the creation of the Nation's first aeronautical research laboratories; and

WHEREAS, The United States has become the global pacesetter in military and commercial aircraft and space technology through long-range research and development; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aviation and space research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic social and political institutions; and

WHEREAS, U.S. advancements in aeronautics and space technology have made all areas of our earth more accessible and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has committed itself to the advancement of aeronautics and space exploration and the necessary research, engineering and development to propagate these technologies by creating within the National Security Commission an Aerospace Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998; That The American Legion deems it imperative that the United States, in the face of increasing competition, maintain its hard won status as the world leader in aeronautics and aircraft production and in space exploration and research. To realize this goal, we urge the Congress to provide:

1. Adequate funding for the nation's civilian and military aerospace research and development programs.
2. Adequate funding to build, upgrade and enhance the nation's civilian and military aerospace research facilities.
3. A renewed national commitment to education involving aeronautical engineering.
4. Overwatch and investigating functions with respect to the transfer of American aerospace technology abroad; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that as we move into the 21st century, we must continue to venture beyond earth and into the promises of space.

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security**

**Resolution No. 29 (CO) 1998 NC: Transfer of Base Commissary and Exchange Facilities to Buckley Air National Guard Base**

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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**Defense Civil Preparedness Committee  
Frank J. D'Amico, New York, Chairman  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 187: Combating Potential Biological, Cyberspace and Other Threats in the 21st Century**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, In May 1998, both India and Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear explosive tests thereby threatening stability in South Asia and challenging the international consensus to stop all nuclear testing; and

WHEREAS, The security of the United States is also being challenged increasingly by non-traditional threats which may extend the fields of battle and terrorism to computer cyberspace and in which inexpensive nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, including disease as a weapon of war, may be employed; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States unveiled the formation of a comprehensive and integrated system of federal agencies, including the Armed Forces, law enforcement, intelligence and public health, to detect, deter and defend against potential biological, cyberspace and other threats to critical government and private infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, The President has appointed a National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism, and the Department of Defense announced the formation of National Guard biological response teams in ten states; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to appropriate the necessary funding and resources to combat the potential biological, cyberspace and other threats to the United States in the 21st Century.

**Resolution No. 188: Support for the Non-federal Roles of the National Guard**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard swear dual allegiance to support and defend the United States as well as the individual states in which Guardsmen reside and serve; and

WHEREAS, In the history of our country, activated National Guard units have served with distinction in all of our Nation's wars, and in combination with Reserve Units, composed 20 percent of the total United States' forces deployed in the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units also perform such invaluable non-federal roles as quelling domestic civil disturbances to include, for example, the employment of Guardsmen in the Los Angeles rioting; providing relief assistance in man-made or natural disasters as in Hurricane Hugo, the California earthquakes and the Mississippi River floods; as well as civil defense and drug interdiction functions, and other vital missions as determined by state authorities; and

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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WHEREAS, National Guard units are often the first relief or rescue forces to provide immediate on-scene response in the event of such emergencies; and

WHEREAS, Rioting and looting on the order of that in Los Angeles and the reoccurrence of large scale natural and man-made disasters could be repeated across the country requiring the immediate intervention of military units to supplement and assist state and local authorities and our citizenry; and

WHEREAS, With the ongoing reduction of National Guard units, their participation in these traditional non-federal roles may be severely limited or even eliminated in some cases and may be accomplished by more frequently tasking available active forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to retain National Guard units at reasonable levels so that in addition to their federal mobilization missions they may continue to provide civil disturbance and natural and man-made disaster assistance; perform civil defense and drug interdictions functions; as well as other essential state roles as required.

**Resolution No. 189: Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The increasing number and severity of natural disasters in the past decade demands that action be taken to reduce the threat that disasters impose upon the economic stability, economic future and safety of the citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, "Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities" is an initiative developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to change the way America deals with disasters by building public/private partnerships and identifying risks. It involves prioritizing needs and implementing long-term plans to protect communities; and

WHEREAS, In October 1997, FEMA selected seven pilot communities to demonstrate the economic benefits of taking measures to prevent or reduce human and property losses before disasters strike; and

WHEREAS, A critical part of Project Impact involves enlisting the active support of businesses across the Country in taking measures to protect their companies, their employees and their communities; and

WHEREAS, FEMA has developed community models as well as the funding mechanism for other communities to use in working to become disaster-resistant; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, That The American Legion supports the Project Impact program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and urges the Congress to adequately fund it, and for American Legion Departments and Posts to participate in focusing the energies of their communities on the importance of reducing their susceptibility to the impact of natural disasters.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 44 (MA) 1998 NC: Blood Donations for Emergencies**

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security****Resolution No. 239 (NH) 1998 NC: Civil Defense and Emergency Management**

**Law and Order Committee**  
**George W. Wehrli, Florida, Chairman**  
**Approved**

**Resolution No. 190: Combating Crime in America**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, One of the major principles contained in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion is "... to maintain law and order"; and

WHEREAS, Although the United States in its history has endured previous periods of high crime rates, Americans in recent years have been experiencing an unprecedented crime wave characterized by escalating and senseless violence and perversion which have permeated all communities and affected all age categories and walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that four out of every five Americans will become a victim of violent crime at least once in their lives, and a violent crime occurred once every 22 seconds in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Persons under the age of 21 committed one-third of all murders in 1990, and young people are also increasingly becoming victims of violent crime; and

WHEREAS, Violent offenders serve on the average only 37 percent of their sentences, so that at any given time approximately 75 percent of convicted criminals are either on probation or parole; and

WHEREAS, The link between federal funding and state performance is vital as 95 percent of all violent crime is covered by state, not federal statutes; and the "war on crime", with a hope of victory, will require a get-tough federal-state partnership to apprehend criminals, put them in prison, and keep them there; and

WHEREAS, The deterrent effect of the current judicial system of punishment and reprisal from society have become less intimidating to would-be criminals, and the elevation of the rights of criminals has surpassed the rights of their victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the time has come for the Federal and State Governments to implement stiffer and more consistent penalties that are as tough and distasteful as the crimes inflicted upon innocent victims; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion recommends that the following measures be considered by municipal, state and federal authorities for application to repeat youthful offenders:

1. More frequent charging of juveniles as adults.
2. Separate prison facilities for chronic, violent juvenile offenders.
3. Mandatory sentences for gang-related crimes and for violent crimes committed with firearms.
4. More jail time for certain first-time offenders.
5. Holding parents responsible for fines imposed on youthful offenders, as appropriate.
6. Establishing more boot camps for youthful offenders.



*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion further recommends that the current system of paroles and probations be drastically revised; that parole for first degree murder be abolished; that the system of endless appeals and delays for executions be more realistically curtailed; that "good time" and community service paroles be eliminated for violent felony convictions; that more drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs be established in adult and juvenile prison systems; and that the criminal justice system work faster and more effectively, and that convicted criminals be required to make monetary restitution to their victims or to surviving family members, as appropriate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion firmly believes that these types of penalties can impact on reducing repeated criminal activity; and in the final analysis, we are convinced that the most effective deterrent to crime is the strong influence of families and family-oriented programs that foster, strengthen and transmit family and societal values to young adults.

**Resolution No. 191: Support for the Second Amendment**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 149 (OH)

WHEREAS, The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms of his or her choice; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 60 million individuals, representing over half of the households in America, have chosen to exercise that right with one or more arms; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated there is over a 200-year supply of guns and that handguns are used over one-half million times and firearms over 1 million times each year by law abiding citizens; and

WHEREAS, The 1934 Act of Congress to require the registration of automatic weapons directed at the "Tommy Gun" has had little or no effect on the purchase and use of Uzi's, AK 47's and similar arms by criminals; and

WHEREAS, The registration of handguns and waiting requirements to purchase them has had no effect in large urban areas such as New York City, California and Washington D.C. and has not prevented criminals from obtaining weapons and committing crimes; and

WHEREAS, Although The American Legion deplores the use of arms in illegal activities, efforts to control arms is reminiscent of Amendment 18 to the Constitution of the United States of America, when governmental efforts to prevent citizens from the natural pursuit of their freedom required the passage of Amendment 21 repealing this misguided effort; and

WHEREAS, The restriction of law abiding citizens to purchase firearms will create an illegal supply of weapons and further governmental costs to enforce any restriction of registration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion reaffirms its recognition that the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends the rejection of further restrictive firearms laws that only serve to limit law abiding citizens in the exercise of their

Constitutionally guaranteed rights under both the Second and Ninth Amendments, while having no effect on the activities of the criminal element in our society, and we urge our duly elected members of the Congress of the United States of America to seek out the reason for this illegal activity and provide appropriate legislation to eliminate its cause; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the membership of The American Legion urges our nation's lawmakers to recognize, as part of their oaths of office, that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear the arms of their choice, as do the millions of American veterans who have fought, and continue to fight, to preserve those rights, hereby advise the Congress of the United States and the Executive Department to cease and desist any and all efforts to restrict these rights by any legislation or order.

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security**

**Resolution No. 125 (IL) 1998 NC: Opposition to United Nations Global Gun Control Measures**

**Resolution No. 152 (NE) 1998 NC: The Junior Law Cadet "Law and Order" Program as a National Program**

**Merchant Marine Committee**  
**Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman**  
**Approved**

**Resolution No. 192: Preserving the American Merchant Marine**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

As amended

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long recognized the importance of a strong privately-owned and operated U.S.-flag merchant marine, and sufficient maritime infrastructure, to the economic and national security of America; and

WHEREAS, There is an urgent need to continue building our American merchant fleet, and expand our base of trained seafarers to ensure the United States' premier position in world trade and national security and to ensure the future of domestic waterborne commerce; and

WHEREAS, Our American-flag, privately-owned merchant fleet now ranks 11th in the world on a deadweight tonnage basis and 15th in total number of ships, while Panama ranks 1st in both categories; and

WHEREAS, There are currently 356 U.S.-flag deep-draft merchant vessels with a carrying capacity of more than 15 million deadweight tons. Today, only 84 U.S.-flag vessels carry 3 percent of our total foreign trade, and without bold governmental action, the U.S.-flag oceanborne foreign trade fleet could be virtually extinct by the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, Our U.S.-flag domestic merchant fleet, a fleet unparalleled in the world in size and efficiency and vital to our national and economic security, continues to grow, more than doubling in size and tripling in productivity since 1965; and

WHEREAS, Military preparedness depends on the maintenance of a robust industrial base for American shipbuilding. Since 1978, more than 60 shipyards have ceased operation

and nearly 60,000 shipyard workers in the U.S. have lost their jobs, causing concern about the vitality of the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base; and

WHEREAS, American ship builders, who build the best and most sophisticated naval vessels in the world, are at a competitive disadvantage in the commercial market against foreign shipyards operating with government subsidies and inexpensive labor. Yet some shipyards have managed to construct vessels for the international market and order books for commercial construction in the U.S. continue to rise; and

WHEREAS, The Persian Gulf War demonstrated the lack of readily available U.S.-flag shipping to deploy our troops in a timely manner, requiring several months to build up our forces. We cannot always rely on the luxury of advanced lead times, or foreign-flag vessels, for us to establish American forces in overseas areas and supply them once deployed with what they need to fight and win; and

WHEREAS, Foreign interests including the People's Republic of China, appear to be expanding maritime operations in the United States to include nearly gaining a beachhead at Long Beach, California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Government in cooperation with maritime management and labor, to continue rebuilding the United States merchant marine in the foreign trades, vital to the economic, environmental, and national security of America, to its former position as second to none in the world under the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, as amended, and the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, as amended; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges action to enforce the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, as amended, to promote the U.S.-owned ships now under foreign registry to ensure a capable U.S.-flagged merchant fleet; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to continue to support, and the U.S. government to strictly enforce, the Maritime Cabotage Laws of the United States, as embodied in the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, as amended, and related laws, so as to preclude attempts by foreign interests to gain inroads into American domestic shipping routes in the inland waterways, rivers and the coasts of the United States and its possessions.

**Military Affairs Committee**  
**Norbert G. Harmeyer, Iowa, Chairman**  
**Approved**

**Resolution No. 193: Support for the United States Army**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The United States Army is America's strategic land combat force for power projection and sustained land combat operations; and

WHEREAS, Unlike the Cold War strategy of containment, the Quadrennial Defense Review strategy demands a smaller and more mobile Army capable of a wider range of operations and organized to generate tailored forces; and an Army capable of meeting the following demands: The capability to deploy rapidly and to fight two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts; a continuing robust Army forward presence is required in Europe and Asia; refining its capabilities to conduct peacekeeping, peace enforcement and

humanitarian interventions; pursuing and expanding a series of nation-building programs; and providing domestic support to local authorities in times of disaster; and

WHEREAS, The ability of the Army to maintain its combat readiness in the face of budgetary and manpower reductions is increasingly threatened by the pace of peacetime operations; and the mix of declining resources, increasing missions and an uncertain strategic environment necessitate constant review of the relationships between maintaining our national military capabilities, Army force structures and required resources; and

WHEREAS, On any given day, nearly 20,000 Army troops are committed worldwide to over 70 countries on average and the average soldier spends nearly 138 days a year away from home; and since 1989 nearly 700 Purple Hearts have been presented to soldiers wounded or killed in combat situations and the Army has participated in 28 of 32 military operations since 1989; and

WHEREAS, The Army's procurement and research and development budgets are becoming billpayers to ensure near-term readiness accounts are sustained, and the downward trend in procurement dollars could jeopardize the lives of servicemen and women in future conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Early access to the Army National Guard and Army Reserves, which provide strategic depth, is the critical linchpin to a smaller, U.S.-based power projection Army; and strategic mobility is the cornerstone of the National Military Strategy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to provide adequate and predictable funding to the United States Army in order for it to maintain the full spectrum of capabilities and to provide our nation with a full array of options in shaping the international environment and responding to threats in the 21st century.

**Resolution No. 194: Total Force Policy and Viable National Guard and Reserve Forces**  
Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

As amended and consolidated with No. 252 (SC)

WHEREAS, The National Guard of this Country has served as the bedrock for our defense and its service predates the Nation's founding; and

WHEREAS, Under the Total Force Policy, National Guard and Reserve units have been integrated into Active Force structures, and they continue to serve as the bridge between the Active Forces and the American people; and

WHEREAS, The inevitability of smaller Active Forces strengthens the imperative for fully manned and combat ready National Guard and Reserve Forces which are completely integrated into the Total Force; and

WHEREAS, During the Persian Gulf War, National Guard and Reserve personnel comprised 20 percent of deployed United States forces, thereby, representing both the first and second line of America's defense capabilities; and

WHEREAS, The National Guard, besides serving our national interests in Federal capacities, also performs invaluable State missions to include natural disaster assistance, civil disturbance and law and order missions, participating in drug interdiction, and numerous community service programs; and

WHEREAS, Our National Military Strategy is primarily oriented to deal with regional conflicts of short duration and not with extended conflicts or global warfare which could require the full employment of the National Guard and Reserves and, possibly, the reinstatement of conscription to meet manpower needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges that National Guard and Reserves be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels in order to accomplish their indispensable missions and roles in our national defense; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States Army and the Army National Guard and Reserves resolve their long-standing budgetary differences.

#### **Resolution No. 196: Military Commissaries**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has evaluated options to downsize or privatize the Military Commissary System by seeking reduced federal funding, reducing the number of operating military commissaries, and evaluating the privatizing of military commissaries; and

WHEREAS, The value of commissaries in the quality of life equation for junior enlisted families and military retirees and others is indisputable: Military commissary usage ranks second only to medical health care in the non-pay compensation package according to surveys conducted among active duty and retired beneficiaries as commissaries save patrons on the order of 26 percent in food costs; and

WHEREAS, The nearly \$1 billion in subsidized congressional appropriations permits commissaries to sell items virtually at cost, and the removal of this funding would drastically raise food costs which would effectively cause commissaries to close; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to popular belief, military commissaries are not competitive with civilian grocery chain stores as commissary sales represent only 1.7 percent of total U.S. grocery sales; and

WHEREAS, Without commissary savings, pay compensation for active duty and military retirees would have to rise, and the Administration has demonstrated its aversion to further active duty pay raises and military retiree COLA increases; and

WHEREAS, With the continued downsizing of the military to include reductions in force and the on-going congressional assault on military benefits, any effort to reduce or dismantle the integrity of the military commissary system would be seen as a serious breach of faith with a benefit system that currently serves as a mainstay for the active and reserve components, military retirees and military survivors, military personnel involuntarily discharged or released from active duty, and 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense and the Congress to continue full federal funding of the military commissary system and to retain this vital non-pay compensation benefit system which is essential to the morale and readiness of the dedicated men and women who have served, and continue to serve, the national security interests of the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes any efforts to privatize the military commissary system or to dismantle the Defense Commissary Agency; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the Congress to authorize the full use of commissaries by members of the National Guard and Reserves.

**Resolution No. 197: Support for the Selective Service System Registration Program**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 72 (UT)

WHEREAS, From its onset, 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 during these unstable times; and

WHEREAS, Some members of Congress are intent on eroding the nation's requirement for registration as it claims that the United States no longer faces a threat significant enough to justify registration; and

WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Cold War, American service men and women are deployed worldwide to include their participation in the peace-enforcement mission in Bosnia and enforcing no-fly zones in Iraq and Bosnia: the unpredictability and volatility of worldwide tensions urges us to think in terms of continued preparedness, not demobilization; and

WHEREAS, The inevitability of smaller active forces only reinforces the need for combat-ready National Guard and Reserve units and the need to reconstitute our forces in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, World Wars 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 at least 91 percent of our 18-25 year olds have registered, and there is virtually no resistance to the Registration program; and

WHEREAS, The cost to administer the Registration Program is approximately \$7.4 million per year, making the program extremely cost-effective and efficient; and

WHEREAS, 24 States support Selective Service registration having enacted State laws to remind young men to register; and

WHEREAS, Registration is one of the few remaining obligations our nation requires of its young men. 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly 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 more rapid means of reconstituting the required forces to protect our national security interests.

**Resolution No. 198: Department of Defense Health Care Reform for Military Beneficiaries**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 275 (WA)

WHEREAS, The promise of lifetime military health care for military retirees, their dependents, and military survivors is contained in law and tradition and dates back to the Army Appropriations Act of 1884; and

WHEREAS, A sense of the Congress resolution contained in the Fiscal Year 1993 National Defense Authorization Act states that "members and former members of the Uniformed Services and their dependents and survivors should have access to health care under the Health Care Delivery System of the Uniformed Services regardless of age and health care status;" and

WHEREAS, As a result of the downsizing of military medical centers, there are nine states with no military treatment facilities (MTF), 39 military hospitals closed, 17 more downsized to clinics, and a 30 percent reduction in military medical personnel; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has a number of concerns with the TRICARE package, namely, that military beneficiaries are required to pay annual enrollment fees whether they used their plan or not; questions remain concerning the amount of increased out-of-pocket expenses; the viability of MEDICARE reimbursement to the Department of Defense; and TRICARE Prime is often not available to those who live away from MTF's and TRICARE networks, as well as the low rate of reimbursement to providers for TRICARE standards; and

WHEREAS, Military retirees, dependents and military survivors constitute at least 43 percent of the total 8.5 million eligible military medical beneficiaries; and nearly 500,000 retirees have lost or will lose their access to military health care as a result of military treatment facilities' closures; and

WHEREAS, Even when TRICARE and MEDICARE subventions are fully implemented only an estimated 50-60 percent of eligible military medical beneficiaries will be provided with health care; clearly more alternatives such as the GI Bill of Health and access to the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP) are needed; and

WHEREAS, The collective voices of The American Legion and other organizations need to be heard by Congress, the Administration and the American people regarding military retiree entitlement to quality, timely and consistent health care which retirees were always promised; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion recommends the following guidelines be incorporated as an inherent part of the Department of Defense TRICARE health care package, or any military health care package, for military retirees, dependents and military survivors:

1. The U.S. Government must honor its obligation to provide free, lifetime health care to military retirees in exchange for their numerous sacrifices made over decades of service to the nation.
2. Timely access to a continuum of quality, comprehensive and equitable health care benefits covering the full array of services ranging from preventive health care and dental treatment plans to prescription services for all military beneficiaries, regardless of age or health care status.

3. Preservation of the space-available system for TRICARE and MEDICARE eligible military retirees and their dependents in military treatment facilities.
4. TRICARE coverage should continue for the lifetime of military retirees and not end at age 65. Additionally, military retirees who become 100 percent disabled before 65 should continue with TRICARE coverage for their lifetimes with MEDICARE as second payer; as an absolute minimum, the requirement for 100 percent disabled military retirees to pay Part B MEDICARE premiums should be discontinued.
5. DoD health care treatment facilities should be reimbursed by the Health Care Financing Administration for care provided to all MEDICARE eligible military beneficiaries (MEDICARE Subvention); and MEDICARE eligible retirees should be allowed to participate in the TRICARE program without paying enrollment fees.
6. MEDICARE subvention will save money for both the government and taxpayers. Equally important, it will preserve military medical readiness and keep faith with military beneficiaries who relied on repeated government promises of lifetime health care in return for their decades of career military service.
7. Adequate military medical personnel, to include graduates of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and members of the Commissioned Officer Corps of the Public Health Service, should be retained on active duty to provide health care for active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents; and no further military medical facilities should be closed or downsized. All military teaching hospitals should be retained.
8. Military retirees and their dependents should be authorized to voluntarily enroll in the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans.
9. TRICARE enrollment fees have been imposed in Uniformed Services Treatment Facilities, we support continued guaranteed enrollment of all military retirees, to include MEDICARE eligibles, in these facilities.
10. Pharmacy networks and mail-order pharmacy programs should be extended beyond the 40-mile radius of closing military bases and they should operate on a flat-rate basis rather than one based on percentage of costs; military retirees and their dependents should continue to receive free prescriptions at military medical facilities. The National Mail Order Pharmacies System should be made available to all MEDICARE eligible military retirees.
11. The imposition of penalty assessments should be waived for those military retirees who elected not to enroll in Part B of MEDICARE as they believed they would receive continuing military health care from DoD facilities which were subsequently identified for closure.
12. Authorizing the use of Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers as TRICARE and MEDICARE providers by military retirees and their dependents. VA Medical Centers should be authorized to bill the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services, respectively, for medical care provided.
13. The American Legion opposes any further efforts to privatize medical care delivered in military treatment facilities. Military teaching hospitals in the Defense Health System should be maintained and adequately funded.



14. The TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan should include coverage for more extensive dental procedures.

**Resolution No. 199: Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

Consolidated with No. 9 (ND) and 272 (WA)

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, Sections 5304 and 5305, prohibit the concurrent receipt of both military retirement pay for longevity from the Department of Defense and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Disabled military retirees are entitled to receive disability compensation only by "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 defies both logic and the facts: There are approximately 440,000 disabled military retirees who qualified for military retirement yet, during their careers, sustained non-career-ending injuries, combat wounds, and other ailments which subsequently impacted adversely on their post-retirement earning potential and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Military retirement pay and VA disability compensation were earned and awarded for entirely different purposes: Veterans disability compensation is not awarded for being "in-service" but for becoming disabled as a result of military service; and the fact that a veteran who served in the military for 20 or more years and successfully completed his or her career despite serving with service-connected ailments should be rewarded rather than penalized for not being medically retired; and

WHEREAS, Veterans rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs at 30 percent or more disabled are also entitled to receive a dependents' allowance (38 USC Section 1115) which is also denied unless a portion of military retirement pay is waived in order to receive veterans tax-free disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion realizes that cost is a major obstacle to changing the offset requirement but that the 100 percent offset requirement is an inordinate penalty, especially for those retirees who are most severely disabled and whose service-incurred disabilities have precluded them from pursuing the same kinds of post-service career opportunities as their nondisabled counterparts; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported and will continue to support Congressional action to amend Title 38, United States Code, so as to authorize the full

funding of concurrent receipt for all disabled military retirees, regardless of the degree of their disability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urges Congressional action to fully fund the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay for longevity and disability compensation with dependents' allowance, but that it also supports efforts that would make progress toward achieving partial concurrent receipt particularly for more severely disabled retirees.

**Resolution No. 200: Quality of Life Features**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

As amended and consolidated with No. 146 (CA)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported quality of life features for members of the Armed Forces and their dependents as well as military retirees, as people are the foundation of our Nation's fighting forces; and

WHEREAS, Without highly qualified, dedicated men and women, even the most sophisticated weaponry will not provide the deterrent force necessary for this Nation to remain at peace; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has the inherent and moral responsibility for providing for the well-being of members of the active and reserve components and their dependents and military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Military pay must be reasonably comparable to compensation in the private sector if the Armed Forces aspire to compete for quality volunteers and retain an experienced military force for the long term; and

WHEREAS, Military compensation is only one factor in the quality of life equation as to whether a good service member and his family remain in the service: Other major factors include fair treatment, career stability and regular promotions, adequate quarters, adequate health care and commissaries, and day care facilities, all of which ease the numerous sacrifices that are demanded of service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, Our military retirees and their dependents and military survivors are deserving and rightfully entitled to adequate health care treatment and regular cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund such quality of life features including but not limited to, the following:

1. Military pay comparability for the Armed Forces and regular increases in the Basic Allowances for Quarters; renovation and construction of military quarters and increased funding for child day care centers are direly needed. Pay raises must be competitive with the private sector.
2. Adequate medical and dental services; morale, welfare and recreational facilities; and non-privatized exchanges and commissary facilities. The Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) and its functions should be retained and not relegated to the military services.

3. Preserving an attractive retirement system for the active and reserve components and annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) paid at the same rate and concurrently with other Federal retiree COLAs; oppose any changes to the military retirement system, whether prospective or retroactive, that would violate contracts made with military retirees and would undermine morale and readiness. Recommend revamping the current redux military retirement pay system with a more substantial retirement plan.
4. Requiring that the Services perform mandatory physical examinations, without waivers, for all separating veterans.
5. Fully funding the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay, military separation pays, and VA disability compensation.
6. Amending Public Law 99-145 as to eliminate the automatic age 62 offset of Survivors' Benefits Plan benefits with Social Security benefits particularly for those survivors who have earned Social Security benefits in their own right. Also, terminating SBP premiums after paying a minimum number of annual premiums; and authorizing full SBP coverage for survivors of servicemembers who die on active duty.
7. Adequate health care treatment for military retirees, their dependents and military survivors, and regular cost-of-living adjustments to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans.
8. Non-taxation of military allowances to include moving allowances.
9. Congressional re-enactment of Impact Aid to fund the local public school education of military dependents.
10. Adequately safeguarding American troops from the actual or potentially harmful effects of friendly and hostile chemical, biological and nuclear agents or munitions.
11. Urging the Congress to extend additional quality of life benefits, allowances and privileges to the National Guard and Reserves so as to more closely approximate those of the active force to include full commissary privileges for the Reserve Components. Military retirement pay for members of the Reserve Components should be paid promptly at age 60 and not delayed.
12. Military health care should be provided to members of the Reserve Components and their dependents, who become injured while on active duty status regardless of the number of days served on active duty to the same degree as active duty members under the same circumstances.

**Resolution No. 201: Service of Women in the Armed Forces**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, That The American Legion has long recognized the invaluable service and contribution of women in the Armed Forces and has supported their service in non-combatant assignments; and

WHEREAS, American military women currently comprise about 12 percent of the 1.6 million servicemembers in the Armed Forces, and more than 40,000 female servicemembers served their Country in the Persian Gulf War with courage, honor and distinction; and

WHEREAS, Due to the fluid and mobile nature of modern warfare, combat support and combat service support units have often been as exposed to hostile fire as front-line combat

units: In the Persian Gulf War five female soldiers were killed in action and two were taken as prisoners of war while serving in non-combatant specialties in support units; and

WHEREAS, The key to military readiness is that all servicemembers, male and female, will deploy with their units: Pregnancy rates at the onset of the Persian Gulf War significantly affected the deployability of some units, and non-deployability rates for female soldiers were three times greater than men, largely due to pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to open more specialties and assignments to military women, then-Secretary of Defense Aspin in April 1993 directed the Services to permit women to compete for aviation assignments, including aircraft engaged in combat missions, and with Congressional approval, to repeal the combat exclusion law permitting the assignment of women to Navy warships, including aircraft carriers and excluding submarines and special operations units; and

WHEREAS, In early 1994, the Department of Defense announced it intended to rescind the 1988 "Risk Rule" which barred women from assignments to combat support and combat service support units and would continue to bar women from ground combat units that "...engaged the enemy on the ground with weapons, that are exposed to hostile fire, and have a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy;" and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has approved allowing military women to serve in the headquarters of air defense artillery, field artillery and combat engineer units as well as in air cavalry units and in special operations aviation; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, of 900 servicewomen surveyed, only 12 percent of enlisted women and 10 percent of the female non-commissioned officers said they would consider serving in combat units; and

WHEREAS, Roper polls have revealed that of the American people polled 58 percent said that women should not be assigned to Army infantry units, and 52 percent were against women in Marine Corps infantry. The Roper military poll of military members surveyed indicated that 74 percent did not think women should serve in the infantry, 59 percent opposed women in tank crews, and 54 percent did not want women in field artillery units; and

WHEREAS, Historically, those nations that have permitted women to serve in close combat situations (the Soviet Union, Germany and Israel) have done so only because of grave threats to their national survival; and

WHEREAS, Any proposal to lifting direct ground combat exclusion policies pertaining to military women may undermine the justification used by the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of the all-male draft registration and conscription system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports the approved expansion of women's roles in the Armed Forces when it is demonstratively proven with convincing evidence that their expanded roles will not impair the deployability, readiness and unit cohesiveness of the Armed Forces in effectively responding to worldwide emergencies or conflicts.

**Resolution No. 202: Support for Military Voting Rights Legislation**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Voting officials in Val Verde County, Texas, have attempted to disenfranchise the absentee voting rights of some 800 military voters by disallowing their absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, County voting officials had sent a 23-page questionnaire to each absent voter for completion in a thinly veiled attempt at voter intimidation; and

WHEREAS, 159 of the 800 prospective voters had overseas military addresses and some even owned property in other states, reasons which did not disqualify absentee military voters; and

WHEREAS, Such action represented a political ploy to deny a constitutionally derived right for military personnel who have fought for the preservation of American rights; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports legislation which amends the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 by guaranteeing the right of all active duty military personnel and their dependents to vote in Federal, State and local elections and, for purposes of voting for an office of the United States or of a State, a person who is absent from a State in compliance with competent military or naval orders shall not be considered to have lost a residence or domicile in that State solely by reason of their absence; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That such legislation should also amend Section 102 of the Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act to read: "Each state shall permit absent uniformed services voters in each State to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in general, special, primary and runoff elections for State and local offices."

**Resolution No. 204: Concurrent Receipt of Military Separation Pays and Veterans Disability Compensation**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The same unfair principle of dual compensation which serves to prohibit concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military retirement pay is also applied by the Department of Veterans Affairs to military service members who apply for Voluntary Separation Incentives (VSI), Special Separation Benefits (SSB), and 15-year early retirements; and

WHEREAS, Service members who apply for and receive both VSI and VA disability compensation are required to pay for their own disability compensation on a monthly basis like disabled military retirees, and service members who apply for and receive both SSB and VA disability compensation are required to have their entire lump-sum SSB payment recouped by service finance centers before they become eligible to receive VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, Although the Services require voluntarily separating service members to sign that they fully understand these unfair provisions of the Law before applying for VA disability compensation, such action serves as an effective deterrent to applying for rightfully compensable service-connected injuries or ailments; and

· WHEREAS, The purpose of separation pay is to compensate service members and their families for lost military career opportunities and to ease their adjustment to civilian life after years of faithful military service; and

WHEREAS, The continuation of this unfair practice can only serve to adversely impact on the recruitment and retention of quality service members who would otherwise consider entering or remaining in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, VA disability compensation is awarded not for being "in-service" but for becoming disabled as a direct result of honorable military service which may reduce the earning potential for its intended recipients; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion strongly urges the Congress to amend Title 38 USC 5305 to authorize the concurrent receipt of military separation pays and VA disability compensation as the current prohibition transcends logic, equity and fairness to the dedicated men and women who have unselfishly sacrificed life and limb to honorably serve the best interests of the United States in war and peace; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that recoupment of military separation pay, when VA disability compensation has been awarded, be based only on the net separation pay received after taxes, not on the gross military separation pay authorized.

**Resolution No. 205: Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA) was adopted by Congress in 1982 in order to protect divorced spouses of military members particularly in those states which had no provisions for alimony; and

WHEREAS, Prior to passage of this law, military spouses always had the full range of remedies in divorce courts as any other spouse in America; and

WHEREAS, Since the passage of the law (P.L. 97-252), divorce courts have been awarding up to 50 percent of disposable military retirement pay to former spouses based on the guidelines in the Federal Law; and among the many inequities in the law are the continuance of lifetime annuities to former spouses whether they remarry or not, and military retirees are the only federal retirees to whom this provision applies; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of the USFSPA were made retroactive so as to be effective one day before the Supreme Court ruling (*McCarthy vs McCarthy*) which reaffirmed that military pay could not be divided as property. As a result of this action, divorces settled over 25 years ago were reopened by former spouses; and

WHEREAS, Since the USFSPA was enacted, Congress has enacted 23 amendments to that law virtually all of which were adopted without hearings and 18 of which favored former spouses; and

WHEREAS, The USFSPA threatens grave harm to the goals of the Military Retirement System which serves as the major incentive to the long-term maintenance of a competent and professional military force; and

WHEREAS, As well-intentioned as it was meant to be, the law has created an even larger class of victims than the former spouses it was designed to assist, namely, the remarried active duty service member and military retiree and his or her new family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges Congressional hearings on the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act and supports the principle that spouses of military personnel have the right to adequate support, that military pay should only be included in judicial determinations of appropriate support on a case-by-case basis; and that the Federal Law (P.L. 97-252) to distribute military retired pay as property between service members or military retirees and former spouses should be changed as follows:

1. Currently, former military spouses receive payments for life even when they remarry. Military retired pay should be treated as income, rather than property, and state divorce courts should apportion retired pay as alimony and child support in accordance with state domestic laws and regulations.
2. The period of time following separation or divorce should be limited to two years within which an Executive Director-spouse can assert claims for a portion of military retired pay for alimony or child support.
3. Currently, military retired pay which is waived in order to receive disability compensation may be reapportioned in divorce cases. That section of the USFSPA which makes disability pay unavailable for apportionment should be reaffirmed in separation or divorce proceedings. This would require amending 42 United States Code Section 659 to eliminate the inconsistency between that Code and the USFSPA.

**Resolution No. 206: Homosexuals Serving in the Armed Forces**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion, in its adopted policy mandates, has supported the retention and codification of the former Department of Defense ban on homosexuals entering and serving in the Armed Forces which stated in part that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service;" and

WHEREAS, Based on the Administration's original intention to entirely lift the ban, the Congress conducted extensive hearings with input from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and many others, and the Congress restated and codified in the National Defense Authorization Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-160) elements of the former policy excluding acknowledged homosexuals from the military with the major exceptions that recruit screening was to be discontinued; more emphasis was to be placed on homosexual conduct rather than homosexual orientation; and criminal investigations conducted solely to determine sexual orientation were also to be discontinued; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court in past decisions has granted judicial deference to the Armed Forces in matters which impacted on military morale and readiness as the Court has recognized that the military institution is necessarily unique from civilian society, and these differences "...result from the fact that it is the primary business of Armies and Navies to fight or be ready to fight wars should the occasion arise" (*Parker vs Levy*, 1974); and

WHEREAS, Both the former Department of Defense ban and the current Public Law regarding service of homosexuals in the Armed Forces are currently being challenged in the judicial system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the

Congress to continue to review and revise, as necessary, the Department of Defense Directives on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces so that these Directives more accurately reflect the intent, spirit and language of the Public Law; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Secretary of Defense to reinstate recruit homosexual screening, as authorized in the law, if it is determined that current policies are undermining morale, good order, readiness and unit cohesion in the Armed Forces; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That if the current law regarding homosexual service in the Armed Forces should be struck down by the Supreme Court, that The American Legion would urge the Congress to enact and restore the former Department of Defense ban, existent prior to January 1993, to include the explicit language that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service."

**Resolution No. 312: Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery**

Origin: National Security Committee

Submitted By: National Security Committee

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 New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery and that such burial be restricted to servicemembers who die on Active duty; to our most decorated veterans to include recipients of the Purple Heart; to veterans who spent full careers in uniform, and to their spouses and eligible children; to former prisoners of war; and for the President or former Presidents as Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes there should be no waivers for unqualified persons except under unique and compelling circumstances which comport with codified non-partisan waiver procedures as established by the Congress; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That eligibility for interment of cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans in the Columbarium at Arlington should also be codified; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the formation of a representative Government Commission to review and resolve issues related to burials in Arlington National Cemetery.



*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 168 (DC) 1998 NC: Support Service Regulations for the Award of The Purple Heart**

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security**

**Resolution No. 115 (IL) 1998 NC: Maintaining Former Military Cemeteries in the United States**

**Resolution No. 135 (NJ) 1998 NC: Awards for Non-hostile Military Casualties**

**Rejected**

**Resolution No. 119 (IL) 1998 NC: Unauthorized Burial Waivers at Arlington National Cemetery**

**Naval Affairs Committee  
Robert Klipstine, Ohio, Chairman  
Approved**

**Resolution No. 207: Modernize the United States Navy and Marine Corps**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Water covers three quarters of the world, and the United States is an "island continent" washed by the shores of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; and

WHEREAS, To maintain their high state of readiness, the Navy and the Marine Corps recognize they need to balance force and personnel levels for proper manning in squadrons and battalions, aboard ships and at shore locations; provide reasonable career prospects which include on-time promotions and good advancement opportunities, while minimizing involuntary separations; compensate with adequate base pay and allowances to help offset inflation and provide full and stable funding for change-of-station moves and bonus programs; and enhance quality of life for service members and their families to include more enlisted oriented morale and welfare activities, better child-care, and improvement in government and leased housing; and

WHEREAS, Our national survival and the security of our allies depend on the ability of the United States to maintain sea superiority in order to foster the strategic sealift capability, power projection capability and the strategic combat capability of the United States Navy and Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps have superbly shown the United States' ability to project power, when and where needed to uphold U.S. foreign policy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion supports defense budgets which reflect a viable U.S. Navy and Marine Corps so as to project American seapower abroad; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports enhancing the manpower readiness of the Navy and Marine Corps while assuring quality of life measures and the continuing modernization and acquisition of Navy and Marine Corps platforms and weapon systems.

**Resolution No. 208: Support for the United States Coast Guard**

Origin: MD

Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, By public law the United States Coast Guard is at all times one of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Included in the numerous peacetime and wartime missions of the Coast Guard are law enforcement in its many facets to include drug interdiction and interception of illegal aliens; environment protection, maritime safety including search and rescue responsibilities and inspecting and licensing Merchant Marine ships; and National Security to include port security and serving as an essential wartime and peacetime partner of the U.S. Navy; and

WHEREAS, The combined benefits provided by the Coast Guard to the American people exceed their costs by a ratio of over four to one; in an average year, the Coast Guard conducts 70,000 search and rescue operations; saves 5,100 lives; assists 120,000 people; protects and saves over \$900,000 in property; seizes over 30 tons of cocaine and nearly 35 tons of marijuana; and interdicts over 10,000 illegal migrants; and

WHEREAS, These missions continue during times of inter-national conflict, when the Coast Guard carries out its wartime missions as it did during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War, and all other major conflicts since 1790; and

WHEREAS, To carry out these critical missions, it is essential that highly skilled and motivated men and women continue to be attracted and retained by the Coast Guard and its Reserves and that ships, 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8, 9, 10, 1998, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully fund the United States Coast Guard budget to include its "Deepwater" initiatives in order for the Coast Guard to carry out its numerous vital missions including national security, law enforcement, environmental protection, maritime safety and national security and other missions as assigned; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the annual Congressional passage of the Coast Guard Authorization Act; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Transportation to support pay 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.

**Received and Recorded**

**Resolution No. 284 (MN) 1998 NC: Captain McVay of the USS Indianapolis**

Mr. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am particularly pleased to announce the winners of the National Blood Donor Awards for this past year.

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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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**Category I - Departments with 100,000 or more members**

Post participation - Department of Florida

Individual Participation - Department of Minnesota

**Category II - 70,000 to 99,999 members**

Post and Individual participation -

Department of Maryland

**Category III - 40,000 to 69,999 members**

Post and Individual participation -

Department of Nebraska

**Category IV - 25,000 to 39,999 members**

Post and Individual participation -

Department of Maine

**Category V - 10,000 to 24,999 members**

Post and Individual participation -

Department of Rhode Island

**Category VI - less than 10,000 members**

Post and Individual participation -

Department of Hawaii

The results of the competition for the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are as follows:

Most of the fifty Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. A total of nearly 10,000 Medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 1997-1998 are the Departments of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Tennessee, which speaks well for these Departments and The American Legion in their recognition of the youth of America enrolled in ROTC programs.

Mr. Commander, as a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Indiana, I move the adoption of this report.

CHAIRMAN TITUS: Commander Jordan, this completes the report of the Subcommittees on National Security. As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Indiana, I move for the adoption of this report.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: This has been moved and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? The ayes have it. The report is adopted.

My fellow Legionnaires, particularly to the Department of Maine, and the Legionnaires throughout this country, what a treat this has been to serve each and every one of you. I would find it very fitting if I could introduce to you my family. I want to introduce some National Officers to you that have served you with dignity and respect all year. The great pride I've had has been given to me because of you. First I want to introduce my wife, the

First Lady of The American Legion, Claudette. Our daughter Stephanie and friend Nate. Then is our daughter Renee, Kevin, our oldest son, Mark, my sister-in-law, Eileen, and my brother Bob. I understand my son Mark would like to come to the mike.

MARK JORDAN: Tony, we have a little gift for you. But before we do this, I want to tell you a little story about Tony. A few years ago, I stopped by Tony and my mother's house. I walk around the corner in the living room and Tony's on the couch. He's got papers all over the place. The dog's at the foot of the bed. Of course, he's got the clicker in one hand, watching the Red Sox game. He's in his boxer shorts. Anybody seen the Commander in his boxer shorts? Untanned, white legs, not a very pretty sight. Anyway, he's shuffling papers and he's writing. I said, "Tony, what are you doing?" He said, "Well, I have to make a speech tomorrow night to an American Legion post." I asked him where it was and he named some town about 2 hours away. I said, "Why are you going all the way up there? It's January. It's 30 degrees out. There's barely a thousand people in that town, there's probably only about 50 people in the whole post." He kind of stood up and almost looked agitated at me and said, "Well, Mark, just because they're small doesn't mean they don't count." So, there was no doubt that he was going to be the National Commander someday with that mind set. Tony, this is a little gift from everybody in your family, including Bob and Eileen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: One free membership to any golf course of your choice, within reason. Thank you, Mark. We have the greatest kids you could ever ask for. I'd like to call upon Reverend Eisenhart to please come up so I can publicly say thank you to you here. Also thank you to Tommy Mills. I don't know how many people know this but my daughter was with me early on with my son-in-law and our young grandson who was born in Oxford, Mississippi. They had to go home. Tommy hails from Mississippi so I'll be able to keep in touch through the Legion. Ernie Paradis filled some big shoes. You'll notice somebody missing out of the voided part of my life. George Gagnon was unable to fill his duty as National Sergeant-at-Arms. But I called upon a good friend who was willing to carry on the duties. He did his job and did it well.

At this time, before I call the Vice Commanders, I want to thank the Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk. Ron Brooks makes money for The American Legion out there at MIS. Thanks also for going to Bosnia with me. Dan Wheeler and John Sommer. The next guy needs no introduction, the greatest Adjutant God will ever provide. He's made this Commander feel good. He's been there when I needed him, he's made some tough decisions and he's provided me with tough decisions to make also. He made me and my wife feel at home, with his wife, Ruth. If I left anybody out, I'm sorry.

Before I turn it over to Gus Williams, the National Vice Commander, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank another couple. Eileen and Jake Comer have been by our side for many years. Eileen's a sweetheart, a beautiful lady. She has been so helpful to my wife. Jake Comer is a leader, a lot of fun, we played a lot of cribbage, but he's also given me a lot of guidance for the word 'change'. At this time I'd like to call upon National Vice Commander Gus Williams from Connecticut.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER GUS WILLIAMS: Commander, it's been a great honor to serve with you this year as a National Vice Commander. We Vice Commanders have a little gift that we'd like to present to you. I'd like to call forward the National Vice Commander from Idaho, Conrad Chisholm, the Vice Commander from Missouri, Dr. Preston, the Sergeant-at-Arms, Ernie Paradis from Maine and the Chaplain Eisenhart from the Department of Pennsylvania, Tommy Mills, our Historian from the Department of Mississippi for a presentation.

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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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Commander, we didn't know what to do for you. But we've put our heads together, along with our Department Adjutants, National Adjutant, and the Treasurer's Office. We thought we'd find something that would give you a little distance.

...Golfing equipment was presented.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I ended up with four Vice Commanders who carried the load of five because of the great loss of Jerry Moore from Ohio. He was a tremendous Legionnaire but the Vice Commanders pulled together, Conrad Chisholm, Dr. Preston, Gus Williams, and Bob Vass. These Vice Commanders really did an excellent job and I thank them.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILLIAMS: Commander, we also wanted this gift to be in memory of our two deceased National Officers.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I announced the other day that Webber LaGrange was retiring. For twenty years Webber LaGrange served this National Organization with dignity and respect. Webber, thank you for your work.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Commander, I appreciate your remarks, for everything that we do is in the Preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion. The World War I veterans had a phrase that we use all too infrequently, and it's called 'Comrade'. You have been my comrade, you have been my friend, for years, you were my friend this year, you will be my friend in the future. Now, I notice the Vice Commanders only gave you irons and you have a bag, but you're sure not going to look very good on a tee with a 1 iron. My understanding from Lee Trevino is if you're standing there with a one iron, you're bound to get hit by lightening. I'm going to ask the Executive Directors to join me. Your Executive Directors and your appointed National Officers chipped in for a little gift for you. There's three more clubs.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I want to thank the Directors for their help all year long. Jim Valvano was a great basketball coach and a better American. In accepting the Arthur S. Ashe trophy for courage several years ago, before he died himself of cancer, he said, "You must laugh, think, and cry each day in spite of all your problems, it's a heck of a day. But don't ever give up, don't ever give up."

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILLIAMS: Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to preside over the next order of business during the 80th National Convention. This is the time when we present to our National Commander—Tony Jordan of Maine—a plaque and the Colors of his year in office. I now call on E. Roy Stone of South Carolina to present the plaque.

**Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander  
E. Roy Stone, Jr., South Carolina, Past National Commander**

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STONE: It's indeed a high honor that I have in presenting the National Commander his plaque so that he can prove to people that he has served as National Commander of The American Legion. One year ago, at the 1997 Convention, the delegates elected him National Commander. He went forth with vim, vigor and vitality carrying the mandates of this organization to the Congress, to the White House and throughout all the nation. You and I are proud of the record he has made.

Every life makes a history. Some are recorded, some are not. But the record of our Commander has been recorded in the history of this organization. English speaking people have always honored their heroes with some type of plaque or monument. In this instance,

let me quote a memorial that is in the St. Paul Cathedral in London, England to Charles Gordon better known to the English speaking people as Chinese Gordon. Chinese Gordon, if you recall was a great commander. And his tablet reads thusly: "Everywhere and anytime, he gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, and his heart to God." We could say that this Commander has some of these prerequisites because he has gone forth in the field with enthusiasm which has been contagious to all of the Legionnaires. He has gone forth, not only with enthusiasm, but he has gone through with that change we have to make to carry on the Legion programs. And so it is on behalf of the delegates of this convention, that I present to you this plaque. I do it in great honor and sincere good wishes that you carry it home. Ever remember that we love you and we wish you success and a long life to live, for God and Country.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILLIAMS: At this time, I call on Jake Comer of Massachusetts to present the colors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Will the delegates to this National Convention please rise? The Speedway Post 500 of the Department of Indiana, prepare to retrieve the colors of the National Commander. Right hand, Salute! Two!

There have been many honors afforded me over these past number of years. I've traveled to many Departments as has the Commander. Ours is a special relationship. I have the number one honor today in presenting the colors to a great friend, Commander Jordan. I do this on behalf of all of the states within our great New England states. This Commander, has been dynamic. Yes, he will go down in history as one of the greatest National Commanders that we have ever elected. Eileen and I certainly welcome him home. We traveled to New Hampshire quite regularly, the four of us. New Year's Eve was spent with Tony and Claudette in New Hampshire, playing bingo and shopping. Last New Year's before, we went out to California together. That's the relationship we have.

Commander, you have traveled throughout this nation and you have traveled abroad. The colors of the National Commander of The American Legion has been there with you because they represent your dedication and desire to represent this organization to the very best of your ability and with change you certainly have done that. These colors have traveled into Germany, Bangkok, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, Bosnia, Taiwan, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Australia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary and to all of your Departments many times over this past year. What an awesome responsibility. He certainly, came out on top as number one. This year, he brought to us the words 'Show Your Colors' at a time when the past Commanders have been working so hard to amend the Constitution to protect Old Glory. And, yes, by protecting Old Glory, you'll protect the very symbol that we represent. Because of you, The American Legion has certainly been the catalyst, the number one organization. They said it's only burning of the flag, in 1989. You said 'No'. You will never let it go until the flag of the United States is placed where it should be, in the very highest pinnacle of excellence in this nation.

Our National Colors are no different. Tony has carried the banner, he has carried the mantle. We are really not retiring these colors, Commander, because you will carry your colors again, over and over again. You are not going home to retire to Maine, you are going to be continually representing us all across this world because that's the individual you are. When in 1990 I was given the privilege of carrying my colors in the Soviet Union, marching in a Veterans Day parade in Moscow, what a tribute to see the National Colors in the Color Guard that day. And, Tony, you will be no different. You have done a great job, Tony. You have given us change, I know how hard it is for you to leave because you feel you haven't

accomplished everything yet. You certainly wish by this day that we had the amendment, but as other Commanders, they wished the same. But I feel confident with what we've been hearing these last few days, that you'll be there during your watch, Commander. You have gone to the Hill and you have spoken to every Senator and Representative and yes, you've gone there over and over again, left Departments when you had to rush back to Washington to make that representation. And we will be successful because Dan Wheeler and yourself have certainly been out there for us and I know full well that the delegates and alternates and members of this American Legion will represent their colors and your colors. Thank you, Commander. Because when we hear, we forget and when we see, we remember. It's when we do, we understand.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Color Guard, retire my colors. Right hand salute.

**Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers  
National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: We have come now to a very special order of business, the election of National Officers. At this time, I want to call upon the National Judge Advocate, Philip Onderdonk, of Maryland, who will read the rules of convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PHILIP ONDERDONK: The rules for election of National Officers:

Rule 15: Final sentence: Election of National Officers shall be by roll call.

Rule 17: Prior to the election of National Officers, the National Commander shall appoint, subject to the approval of the convention, a judge of election and such number of tellers as he deems necessary, provided that the total tellers so appointed shall be an odd number. In a contested election each candidate going to the ballot shall be entitled to one teller of his choice.

Rule 18: Nominations for National Officers shall be from the floor on roll call of the departments alphabetically arranged. Each department may present as many candidates as it chooses.

Rule 19: Nominating speeches for National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate, and said speeches shall be limited to three minutes.

Rule 20: When more than two candidates are nominated for any office, balloting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes of the convention, except in the election of National Vice Commanders.

Rule 21: In a contested election for National Vice Commanders, balloting shall continue until (a) majorities and (b) pluralities are established for one or more candidates under the following provisions: If, on any ballot taken, less than five candidates receive the necessary majority to elect, the candidate or candidates receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified; except should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

Rule 22: The convention will nominate and elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, in this sequence.

Rule 23: At the conclusion of balloting on National Vice Commanders, each Department Delegation Chairman shall deliver a written ballot to the tellers. Such ballots shall be in the hands of the tellers before communication is made to the National Commander for announcement of the results.

Mr. Commander, this completes the reading of the rules pertaining to nomination and election of National Officers.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: As Chairman of this Convention, I now appoint as Judge of the Election, William 'Chick' Ciciotte of Maine and as Tellers of the election, Cornelius 'Connie' O'Neill of Virginia, H. Melvin Napier of Idaho and Charles R. Knox of Georgia.

National Adjutant Spanogle will now call the roll of the departments. The purpose of the roll call is to receive nominations for National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Delegation Chairman of Alabama.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GORDON SEALE, Alabama: As Chairman and delegate from the great state of Alabama, from the Redstone Arsenal to the Gulf of Mobile and all in between, Alabama yields to the state of Virginia.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JIM LASHURE, Virginia: Mr. Chairman, as Chairman for the Department of Virginia, I respectfully request the Chair to recognize Craig Allen Miller, delegate from the state of Virginia, Woodbridge Post No. 364 for the purpose of a nomination.

DELEGATE CRAIG MILLER: Commander Jordan, the National Officers and the delegates of the 80th National Convention, it is my honor as a member of Post 364, the Department of Virginia, to place before you the name of a dedicated and loyal Legionnaire, a nomination for the high office of National Commander, for the year 1998-1999. That name is Harold Miller.

As a fellow Legionnaire, I have seen this man year after year give his efforts to the cause of the veteran. His membership began in 1972 and he has since served at the Department and National levels. He recently finished 31 years of government service, majority of this being for the Department of Veterans Affairs, another organization established to represent the cause of the veteran.

It is on a more personal level, as I have known the candidate for 30 years. For those of you who haven't guessed, it is in this case that the observations of the son can best impart to you the characteristics of the father.

As you know, 80 years ago a group of Americans gathered to further the cause of National Security, Americanism, family welfare and veterans rehabilitation. But one author of the time wrote that they set out on this goal with a visible strength and energy, that they had gained a viewpoint through their service, and that they would return home somehow changed. And from this they had seen the concrete manifestations of their service which was sacrifice in the time of war.

I think the source of my father's strength is that he carries the memory of personal experiences of those that have sacrificed for our nation. He calls upon this strength daily in service. Growing up and in my short years as a member of The American Legion and as a member of the military, I cannot remember anyone so often and so humbly remarking "See there, that is what that America paid for. See there, that was kept safe by another American." It is from this strength that I think he draws his visible energy. As I have seen several times, a fierce determination behind one idea, that no one should forget, that the nation should not forget what the veteran has done for it. I do not think you will let these memories disappear,



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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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not from Capitol Hill, not from Congress, and not in the flames of a burning flag. In closing, I think it is with his strength, energy and years of Legion experience that there is no one more ready to lead this great organization. It is as a proud member of the Department of Virginia that we place before you this nomination for the high office of National Commander, Butch Miller, for the year 1998-1999.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DOUGLAS VIG, Alaska: Commander, land of the midnight sun, land of the dreams, we yield to the state of Idaho.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CASH ARRASMITH, Idaho: Gem state of Idaho. I ask permission that Al Lance approach the podium for the purpose of seconding this nomination.

DELEGATE ALLAN LANCE: Mr. Commander, Harold L. 'Butch' Miller entered the United States Army in April of 1966 and was assigned to the Army Security Agency at Fort Devons, Massachusetts. Following his training, he spent the next four years in the Pacific Theater including Vietnam before returning to Fort Devons as an instructor. He was discharged honorably in 1974. Joining The American Legion in 1972, Post 364 in Woodbridge, Virginia, Butch served his post in a variety of offices, serving on committees and commissions and was Post Commander in 1988-1989 and selected by his Department as Post Commander of the Year in 1989. Butch was selected as Legionnaire of the Year from the Department of Virginia in 1988. Butch has served his District as Adjutant for two terms, as Vice Commander, District, and Commander. He also served his Department as the Director of the Leadership Program for four years, as Judge Advocate for three years, as Department Commander in 1994-1995 and President of The American Legion Boys State Program 1995-1996. Butch has already served the national organization of The American Legion by serving as Chairman of the National Constitution and By-Laws Committee, consultant to the National Legislative Commission, consultant to The American Legion 21st Century Ad Hoc Committee in 1997. As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Idaho, Idaho and I are both proud to second the nomination of Harold L. 'Butch' Miller for the high office of National Commander of The American Legion.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIAM BINGHAM, Arizona: As NEC and acting Chairman of the great state of Arizona, the beautiful Grand Canyon state and home of our Legionnaire of the Year, Past National Vice Commander Ron Murphy, yields to the state of Texas.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RONALD G. CHERRY, Texas: As Delegation Chairman from the great state of Texas, request permission for Past Department Commander John Brieden approach the podium for the purpose of a second.

DELEGATE JOHN A. BRIEDEN: It's a very special privilege for me to second the nomination of Butch Miller. Yesterday, at breakfast with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Butch and I were discussing and reminiscing on our first meeting. It was at an Internal Affairs meeting and we were non-members there to address a controversial issue and, as it turns out, we were on opposite sides of the issue. Today, we can't really remember what that issue was but what I carried away from that meeting was not the memory of an adversary. Instead I carried away the memory and respect for Butch, who proved to be very insightful and an articulate presenter of his point of view. We have found that we occasionally disagree but there is an agreement on the major issues. I'm impressed with the dedication of Butch to The American Legion and to our programs. Butch Miller is the correct man for this time. This next year will see our victory in a decade long Congressional battle for the flag amendment. And the shift of this fight will go back to our states. It will

see the GI Bill of Health move to the most visible legislative priority of The American Legion. Butch Miller has spent most of his adult life in the employment of the Department of Veterans Affairs and even though currently retired, he has and maintains a lifetime of knowledge and context to effectively lead us on this important issue.

Another privilege at this convention was the opportunity to meet Butch's family, particularly Craig, his son, who gave a rousing and moving nomination speech and his parents Loretta and Kenneth Wiemann. Ken specifically wanted it mentioned that Butch grew up in Wabasha, Minnesota and his first American Legion membership was Post 50 in Wabasha. Ken signed him up. Of course, I recognize Wabasha as where two of my favorite recent movies were filmed, *Grumpy Old Men* and *Grumpier Old Men*. I asked Ken if it were true that the characters were inspired by real life Wabasha residents. And he winked and he grinned and then he said, "Judge Foley lives around the corner." Mr. Commander, it's my honor to second the nomination of Harold L. 'Butch' Miller for National Commander of The American Legion, 1998-1999.

...At this time a demonstration ensued in support of the nomination of Harold L. 'Butch' Miller as National Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Mr. Adjutant continue with the roll call.

...National Adjutant Spanogle calls upon each Department in turn.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CLAUDE B. CARPENTER, Arkansas: Arkansas, the home of those ferocious but very, very hungry Arkansas Razorbacks, who's after those Rolling Tides from Alabama, proudly and with honor and while playing with the Butch Miller Band, seconds the nomination of Butch Miller for National Commander of The American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DAVID L. EBY, California: California is proud to say we have 150 votes, and we are proudly ready and willing and able to cast them all for the next National Commander for the great American Legion, Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DOUGLAS W. WOODDELL, Colorado: Department of Colorado proudly seconds the nomination of Harold 'Butch' Miller for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RICHARD W. ANDERSON, Connecticut: Connecticut presents all 39 delegates to second the nomination for Butch Miller for National Commander.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN EDWARD S. PHILLIPS, JR., Delaware: Delaware is proud to cast all our ballots for Butch Miller and second the nomination.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RAYMOND J. POTOCKI, District of Columbia: The District of Columbia proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GEORGE L. DERRICK, Florida: The Sunshine State of Florida, proud hosts of the 79th National Convention, proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller for National Commander.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN STEVEN PRATSCHLER, France: The Department of France, the birthplace of The American Legion, seconds the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT F. 'BUTCH' WOODRUFF, Georgia: The great State of Georgia proudly casts its 52 ballots for Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIAM W. DAVES, Hawaii: The Department of Hawaii wishes and hopes that Butch Miller has a great year and seconds the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARTIN F. CONATSER, Illinois: The Department of Illinois proudly seconds the nomination.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOHN RAFUS, Indiana: The Department of Indiana proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN IVAN E. TORKELOSON, Iowa: The Delegation from Iowa seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN F.W. (BILL) DIRREEN, Kansas: Kansas, the great Sunflower State, proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller for the next National Commander.

ALTERNATE NECMAN RANDALL COFFMAN, Kentucky: The proud home of the National President of the ladies auxiliary, Miss Virginia Hobbs, proudly seconds the nomination of our neighbor from Virginia, 'Butch' Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOHN E. 'AL' GIBSON, Louisiana: The Department of Louisiana proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER LAWRENCE DEARBORN, Maine: Maine is the home of two still very active Past National Commanders, Bill Rogers and Tony Jordan, and is proud to cast 34 votes for National Commander Butch Miller of Virginia.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN VICTOR M. RISTON, Maryland: The Department of Maryland casts 87 votes for Butch Miller for our next National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JAMES L. FLATTES, SR., Massachusetts: Department of Massachusetts American Legion, home of Past National Commander Daniel J. Doherty, Past National Commander John P. 'Jake' Comer here assembled at the 80th National Convention, proudly second the nomination of Butch Miller for the high office of the National Commander.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JAMES S. MARTIN, Mexico: The Department of Mexico proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller for National Commander 1998-1999.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOHN M. MELLA, Michigan: The great state of Michigan seconds the nomination for Butch Miller for the high office National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROGER K. OLSON, Minnesota: Minnesota, the birthplace of Butch Miller, proudly seconds the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN E. H. MERRIMAN, Mississippi: The State of Mississippi proudly cast 26 votes to the election of Butch Miller for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RAYMOND J. BRODZINSKI, Missouri: The great State of Missouri, home of Past National Commander Joseph J. Frank, proudly seconds the nomination of Harold 'Butch' Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RUDDY R. REILLY, Montana: Montana proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GARY G. ALBERS, Nebraska: The great State of Nebraska, home of the Eagle Scout of the Year for The American Legion, proudly nominates Butch Miller for the high office of National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HAROLD B. WILLIAMS, Nevada: The great State of Nevada votes for Butch Miller for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ANTONIO RABBIA, New Hampshire: New Hampshire would like to cast all 31 delegates for Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOSEPH F. WARD, New Jersey: New Jersey is very proud to endorse Butch Miller for National Commander.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT L. CROTZER, New Mexico: New Mexico is proud to second the nomination for Butch Miller.

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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT L. MORRILL, New York: New York, with our focus firmly on the future, is proud to second the nomination of Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROY L. PRESSLEY, North Carolina: North Carolina proudly seconds the nomination of Butch Miller for the high office of National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JIM CLIFFORD, North Dakota: North Dakota, home of three Past National Commanders; the only living Past National Adjutant, proudly endorses Butch Miller for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JAMES C. MORRIS, Ohio: Ohio proudly seconds the nomination for Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIAM E. FINCH, Oklahoma: Oklahoma proudly casts 37 votes for Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DONALD M. EPPERSON, Oregon: Oregon, the home of The American Legion Baseball Player of the Year, Nathan Philo, would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the delegates and the membership of our great state to thank Anthony G. 'jet boat' Jordan for his service to this great organization this past year. And with a great deal of pride we cast our votes for the next National Commander of The American Legion, Harold 'Butch' Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RONALD F. CONLEY, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania seconds the nomination for Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ANTONIO A. TY, Philippines: The Department of the Philippines seconds the nomination of Butch Miller as next National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN EDWIN VEGA, Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico seconds the nomination for Mr. Butch Miller for National Commander. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN EUGENE (GENE) PYTKA, Rhode Island: The State of Rhode Island casts its votes unanimously for the candidate from the great State of Virginia, Harold 'Butch' Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIS J. DENT, South Carolina: South Carolina proudly casts all votes for Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DONAVON R. MASON, South Dakota: South Dakota, first place of American Legion Baseball, seconds the nomination of Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PERRY D. ROBERTS, Tennessee: Tennessee proudly cast our 40 votes for Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIAM E. CHRISTOFFERSEN, Utah: The great state of Utah proudly seconds the nomination for Butch Miller.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARLYS A. LEMNAH, Vermont: As Chairman from my delegation from the great State of Vermont, I cast twenty-three for the great support and second of Butch Miller from Virginia.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROY L. TAYLOR, Washington: The Evergreen State casts its 45 votes for the next Commander of The American Legion, Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOE ANTEL, West Virginia: The great Department of West "By God" Virginia, and home of Past Department Commander Miles S. Epling, wishes to second the nomination for Butch Miller.

ACTING DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROGER MATHISON, Wisconsin: The Department of Wisconsin will be glad to welcome you to Milwaukee to the 2000 National Convention and proudly endorses the candidacy of Butch Miller for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOSEPH G. SESTAK, Wyoming: The great State of Wyoming, proudly endorses and seconds the nomination for Butch Miller for the next National Commander.

DELEGATE HERBERT PETTIT, JR., Louisiana: From the Department of Louisiana, the proud host of this 80th National Convention, the home of two Past National Commanders, Robert Charles Smith and Bill Detweiler, and may I say a very wet and windy Department the last couple of days. 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 Harold 'Butch' Miller from the Department of Virginia be elected National Commander by acclamation.

I will now make the first motion. Mr. Commander, I move we suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander and the nomination and election of the National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be reinstated at the conclusion of the election for National Vice Commanders.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: There is a motion before us to suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander and the nomination and election of National Vice Commanders, which rules shall 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 the usual sign of Aye. Opposed? The Ayes have it.

DELEGATE JULIE RUST, Wyoming: Mr. Commander, Julie Rust from the great state of Wyoming. As a duly elected delegate, I move the nominations for the office of National Commander be closed.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: The motion to close nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. This has been moved and seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor, show the usual sign. Opposed? The Ayes have it.

DELEGATE RAYMOND WATERS, Minnesota: Mr. Commander, Raymond Waters the delegate from the Department of Minnesota. Mr. Commander, I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of the Convention and that Harold 'Butch' Miller be elected National Commander by acclamation.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Hearing a second, there is a motion before us that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegation strength of this Convention, and that Harold 'Butch' Miller be elected National Commander by acclamation. Any discussion? All those in favor of the motion signify by saying Aye. Opposed? The Ayes have it.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegation strength of this Convention for the election of Harold 'Butch' Miller of the Department of Virginia as the National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I declare Harold 'Butch' Miller elected National Commander of The American Legion. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms assist the newly elected National Commander of The American Legion? Escort him to the platform by Past

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*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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National Executive Committeeman of Virginia, Roger Messier and the current NECman Bill Bryant.

The Chair recognizes John Geiger for the purpose of administering the Oath of Office to the New National Commander of The American Legion, Butch Miller.

**Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander**

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GEIGER: Commander Jordan, National officers, Delegates to this 1998 National Convention, our families and special guests, congratulations to you, Legionnaire Harold 'Butch' Miller. Upon your nomination and election as the National Commander of The American Legion for 1998-1999, our pride and satisfaction in your achievements are shared by your proud family and the loyal Legionnaires of the Department of Virginia. The delegates to this Convention are well aware of your record of service to The American Legion and to American veterans that has brought you to this day. Your dedication, leadership skills and enthusiasm must now be directed to strengthening and enhancing our organization throughout the United States. The vital objectives of your year of leadership will be defined by the mandates of the National Convention and developing events throughout the world. Every officer of The American Legion, the national staff and each member of the Legion and Auxiliary must be alert for your calls to action. Each of us must now pledge to actively help you in this exciting opportunity to serve our God and country.

Butch Miller, if you agree to assume this high office, please step forward to pledge your oath of office.

...National Commander-elect Harold 'Butch' Miller repeated the oath of office following the lead of Past National Commander Geiger.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT HAROLD 'BUTCH' MILLER: I, Butch Miller, do solemnly pledge myself, to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of National Commander of The American Legion. I further pledge that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, the National Constitution and By-laws of The American Legion. And I do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government. So help me God.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GEIGER: Congratulations, Commander Miller. Just a moment now, we're not done. I now call upon Past National Commander, National Executive Committeeman from South Carolina E. Roy Stone, Jr. to doff that blue cap and place the red cap on this new National Commander. And he's accompanied by the distinguished former Adjutant of The American Legion in Virginia Wilbur Walker, distinguished Legionnaire and sponsor of this particular candidate and I'm so proud to be here on the platform with these gentlemen as they put the red cap on this Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Ladies and Gentlemen, the 1998-99 National Commander of The American Legion, Butch Miller.

**Acceptance Speech by Newly Elected National Commander 'Butch' L. Miller**

Thank you for this moment! Thank you for this dream! Thank you for this honor! Commander Jordan, National Officers, Delegates to this 80th National Convention, Auxiliary members, Sons of the American Legion, ladies and gentlemen. The single greatest

responsibility that anybody can undertake in The American Legion, is now symbolized by the hat that was just placed on my head.

This red cap has been placed on the heads of every National Commander for the 80-year life of this organization. Just like those before me, I am humbled by the honor that you have bestowed on me, but also like those before me, I am excited about the possibilities of the future that are within our grasp. On behalf of myself, the Department of Virginia, and all those that worked so hard on my campaign, I want to thank Commander Jordan and his lovely wife Claudette, and their wonderful Department of Maine, for their assistance, counsel and guidance during our campaign effort.

Tony and Claudette, you have been a truly most gracious and compassionate Legion "First Couple". Thank you for representing The American Legion so wonderfully. Your service and your friendship will always be remembered. Please take with you our very best wishes for your continued happiness and success together. I would also like to thank Past National Commander Geiger for administering the oath of office, Past National Commander Foley, who will be presenting me with my Colors, and National Executive Committeeman Roy Stone for presenting my National Commander's cap. Thank you gentlemen, not only for what you have done for me today, but for what you have done for me and for this American Legion through the many years of your outstanding service. I also would like to thank Allan Lance from Idaho and John Briedan from Texas for those wonderful seconding speeches that you gave to my nomination. I am very grateful to the Department of Virginia for the support it gave my campaign, and I would like everybody from Virginia to stand and be recognized because you certainly deserve it.

There is a special group of dedicated Legionnaires and Ladies from Virginia, that worked so very hard on my Committee, to whom I owe so much, and to whom I would like to say a special thanks. My Campaign Manager Roger Messier, his wife Betty, Virginia's NEC-man Bill Bryant and his wife Bert, to Eddie and Evey Dentz; Chic and Loretta Ferguson, Jerry and Freida Wenditz, and the list goes on and on and on. If I tried to name them all, obviously I would forget some but I will remember you always. To my Department Commander Roger Clevinger; our Department President Loretta Smith, and her husband, my good friend, Leon Smith. Thank you all! Thank you all so very much. I pray that you will be as proud of my service as your National Commander, as I am of your support and friendship.

To the members of my Post and Unit 364 back in Woodbridge, VA; especially my Campaign Finance Officer Lloyd Stacy, Ray and Marty Rhyne, who put together the parade, Jerry Howard, Mike Mitrone, Paul Leidy; John Howard, Jim Fullem, Marcia Wheatly, Olga Hatchel, Bob Bowen, my Unit President Sara Callahan, and my Post Commander Bob Fitzgerald; and to the gentleman sitting down here that's going to be my aide this year, Mr. Bill Moriarity. Thank you so very much for providing the launching pad from which this candidate began that long, long trail to where I am today.

There are two very special Virginians however, here that I would like to give a special recognition. They have been my very close friends and mentors for all so many years, their tireless efforts, counsel and guidance during my Legion career, and this campaign, has been invaluable. If there is such a thing as a "Legion Mom", then that is what this lady is to me. In 1983-84, she was National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. She has been a valued source of advice and encouragement. Her advice to rest when I could, and to "just be myself", was always constant. Her encouragement was that "I WAS going to be the National Commander, and that I WOULD do a good job", that encouragement was always

given firmly, but with that unmistakable Gear smile. Ladies and Gentlemen, Virginia's Past National President and my very good friend, Mrs. Anna Gear.

Virginia has been honored to have three National Commanders. Dan Daniels in 1956-57, L. Eldon James in 1965-66, and now myself. There is a gentleman with me today, and you've already met him, who has played a leading role in all three of those campaigns. He has served The American Legion at the national level for more than 30 years, and he has served Virginia even longer. He was a National Vice Commander in 1976-77. In Virginia, his name is synonymous with leadership, loyalty, dedication and determination. His mentoring of many Legionnaires, one of whom you see standing before you, has allowed the Department of Virginia to be recognized as a moving force in this organization. I thank God that he can be here with me today. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Virginia's "Mr. American Legion", Wilbur Walker.

As you know, the Mississippi River runs right outside this hall. If you were to travel up that river to its source in Minnesota, you would pass a small town by the name of Wabasha. That is my hometown. That is where I was born. In that small town, there's a small post by the name of Wabasha Post 50, that was my first American Legion Home. Except for my brother Randy who lives in California, my brothers and sisters, Cindy, Gary, Terry and Cheryl are back in MN and across the river in Alma, WI, tending to their farm, their jobs and their families. Because of these responsibilities, they could not be here today, but I know they are thinking of their brother, Butch. And I can assure you their brother Butch is thinking of them. They have always supported me in life, and in The American Legion. I wanted them to know that. I am however, blessed to have other family members and a special friend with me here today. My special friend Cathy Carruthers. Cathy has been my associate, my travel agent, my accountant, my sounding board, and my companion. She has listened to my speeches, my jokes and my frustrations. She has been a "fountain" of enthusiasm, and an "ocean" of encouragement, understanding and support. Through her eyes, I have seen The American Legion as never before. She is my fellow NASCAR enthusiast, she is my best friend. Thank you Cathy!

There is only one person who is in this hall today, who can claim to have known me since my birth. She, beyond a doubt, is the one that is most responsible for my being here today. She is the most loving and wonderful person that I know. I'd like you all to meet my mother, Mrs. Loretta Wiemann. In 1953, my father was killed in a car accident in Peoria, IL, returning home from Caterpillar one evening. Being a single parent with three small children, my mother decided to take us back to Wabasha, MN, her hometown. That is where my mother met the man who is at her side today. He married my mother and took on the responsibility of providing for her and her three children. He and Mom then added three kids of their own to our family. He is a veteran of the Korean era, but I think if you ask him, he'll tell you that wasn't much compared to raising six kids. He taught us the meaning of respect, honesty, compassion, hard work and to love, honor and serve our country. I'd like you to meet the man who really started my campaign, when he signed me up in The American Legion so many years ago, my Dad, Kenny Wiemann of Wabasha Post 50.

A little more than 30 years ago, I experienced the greatest joy of my life. That was the birth of my son, Craig. A little over eight years ago, he began a series of phone calls that would add even more thrills to my life. His first was his call to say that he had joined the United States Marine Corps, and I had the thrill and experience of being with him when he graduated from boot camp in San Diego. His next thrilling call was to tell me that he was getting married, and I had the thrill of being his best man. Since then I have received



thrilling phone calls at all hours of the day and night, informing me that I was a grandfather, and then again, and again, and again. My daughter-in-law Jessie and my grandchildren Jasmine, April, Sean and Allison are back in North Carolina, Camp LeJeune today, thinking of Poppie, and waiting for their husband and their father to come home tomorrow. Someday I hope to show them the video of these proceedings. I want them to know that they were not here physically but they were in spirit and that I was thinking about them, so if you will just bear with me for one moment, "Hi Jessie! Hi kids! Poppie loves you! I'll see you soon." I want to thank Craig for being here today, and adding to the thrill, of being elected as your National Commander. To me, Craig represents my greatest accomplishment, my greatest joy, and my greatest pride. To me, he symbolizes our nation's strength and its military. To me, he symbolizes our nation's future, in his youth. To me, he symbolizes our nation's values, in his love of family, God and country. To all of us, I think he's a pretty darn good living symbol of the future of The American Legion. In a few months, he will be going to Bosnia, and other places that may put him in harm's way. He won't have the pleasure of being with his family this Thanksgiving, or this Christmas. And I know many of you know what that's like. My prayers are always with him and his family, and I ask if you could just once in awhile remember them in yours. My fellow veterans and all here, I am very proud to introduce to you my son, a real man, Lt. Craig Miller, USMC.

To all these people I again say thank you. Thank you so very much for sharing my life and thank you for letting me be part of yours.

At the beginning of my address, I told you that I am the 80th Commander to wear this red cap. But unlike those before me, I will be the last National Commander to have this red cap placed on my head, and removed from my head, in this, the 20th Century. Do you realize that you and I have begun the last full year of The American Legion, in this Century? Do you realize that what WE, you and I, do this year, will be recorded as the last accomplishments of The American Legion, in this century. Think about it! WE, you and I, have the opportunity to write the last chapter of The American Legion's history in this century. The century in which The American Legion was born.

President Harry Truman once said, "Men make history, not the other way around." My fellow Legionnaires, both men and women, WE will make history! You have honored me by electing me to lead you this year, and representing The American Legion through out this nation and the world. I will do that to the best of my ability! I vow that I will not fail you! And more yet, I will not allow you to fail me, yourself, or the organization of The American Legion. During the Washington Conference last March, news commentator Tom Brokaw defined the Legion Post in his hometown as the "temple of can do!" What The American Legion is, and what your Post represents to your community, state and Nation can't be defined any better than that. The motto I have chosen for this year is based on that truth. The motto is, "America Learns, America Loves, and America Lives, Through The American Legion." I have chosen this motto for a number of reasons. First, it's simple to remember. Second and more importantly, in its simplicity, it encompasses each and every program of The American Legion. Let me explain!

AMERICA LEARNS! America Learns through such programs as High School oratorical contests; American Legion Baseball; American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation; our school award programs; Scouting Sponsorships; Need a Lift program; Option 4 Education Loan Program; Junior Shooting Sports Program; Flag Education programs; and the Junior Law Cadet Program.

AMERICA LOVES! America Loves through such programs as our Child Safety and Child Health Programs; Teenage Suicide Prevention; Child Welfare Foundation; Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; the Veteran of the Month Program; our Blood Donor program; and the National Emergency Fund.

AMERICA LIVES! America Lives through our fight to amend the Constitution to protect our Flag from physical desecration and our efforts to have the GI Bill of Health fully implemented by the VA, through our Employment and Economics programs such as the Hire Quality effort, and our recognition of National Education Week. It also lives through our patriotic holiday observances, and all of the community services that The American Legion and the rest of The American Legion family provided.

The motto "America Learns, America Loves and America Lives, Through The American Legion", will serve as a reminder to all of us of the importance that we continue to conduct these programs. It would also be a declaration of our determination to see that they are continued. It will also serve as our battle cry as we make history this year, and carry The American Legion to the edge of the 21st Century. If America is to learn, however, through The American Legion, then we must learn. We must learn to conduct training programs in your Departments, Districts and Posts. You must educate your members, both new and old members, about the purpose and programs of The American Legion. Program chairmen should not only be responsible for conducting programs, they should also be responsible for training those individuals who will conduct those programs in the future. All members should be informed of the availability of training opportunities in The American Legion such as The American Legion Extension Institute and the National Information Conferences. Every Department should establish and conduct annual education programs such as American Legion Leadership Colleges. Every Post and every District should establish "scholarships" to those training opportunities, so that they can send those upcoming new members and those new leaders to those programs. Information and education can make you, your Department, and your District more productive and successful. However, when only one person has that knowledge, then the truth and worth and power of that knowledge is not realized. But, when it is shared, then the worth and power of knowledge is multiplied over and over. If the influence and power of The American Legion is to continue into the next century, then every one of us must become mentors. Each and every one of us must take on the responsibility of sharing our Legion experience and knowledge to our fellow members, so that they can become more informed and more powerful members of The American Legion.

I also encourage every Department to take advantage of the visionary technology of the Internet. In today's world, it is important that The American Legion, both at the Department and National level, are accessible via the Internet. At the present time, our National Headquarters and 28 other Departments are using this valuable technology, for the collection and distribution of information and for e-mail. I strongly suggest that every Department, especially those that have not adopted the use of this technology, do so and do so rapidly. If we want our membership, and this nation, to consider The American Legion a viable, modern veteran's organization, then we must take advantage of the modern technology available. If we don't, then this organization will end up stalled on the side of the information superhighway. The Internet represents a racetrack to the future. My fellow veterans, my fellow Legionnaires, we MUST be in that race, and we MUST be the lead organization. Through the use of the Internet, you can contact the National Headquarters and get almost instantaneous responses. As your National Commander, you can also access me.

If you have a question, concern, idea or complaint, or anything that you want to tell me, you can e-mail your National Commander, directly. All you have to do is send it to "natcmdr@aol.com". And you'll see that again and again, so don't bother writing it down.

As you already know, I grew up in a small town in Minnesota. I have seen through my own experience what natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes can do. I have seen the devastation, and I have felt the pain of seeing friends and family who have suffered losses from these occurrences. Some of you in this hall, I'm sure, have felt those same experiences. Our motto states that "America Loves, through The American Legion." For that reason I am asking every Department, every District, and every Post to conduct at least one special event this year in order to replenish our National Emergency Fund. It's estimated that if we could build that fund to \$10 million, it would be self-sustaining. Now, I'm expecting you to come up with \$10 million this year, but if somebody wants to make a donation, come right up. I do, however, challenge each and every one of you, your Department, your District and your Post to make a \$1 contribution this year for each one of its members. By doing this, we will be well on our way to a fund that will be self-sustaining, and we will be well on our way to being able to answer the call, when our fellow Legionnaires are in need. Now, and into the future.

Our record as a crusader for veteran's causes in this nation is second to none! The American Legion is the only veteran's organization that has developed a plan to restructure the VA Medical System. Our GI Bill of Health will allow veterans and their families to have access to VA medical health care. Many of the proposals that we have proposed have already been adopted by the VA. But it has not been fully implemented as of yet. The American Legion is the only organization that has even attempted this. It's happening, it's happening slowly, but it's happening. Our motto is "America loves, through The American Legion" and so, we will continue to fight this year, to make sure that the GI Bill of Health plan is fully implemented.

Finally, our motto states that "America lives, through The American Legion. You know that our right to protect our flag was taken away from us in 1989 by a Supreme Court decision. Since that time, we have been embattled in a bitter war to get that constitutional amendment passed, that would again return the protection to our most treasured symbol, the protection that it deserves. I wish I could stand before you, just as I'm sure Tony wishes he could have said that we had this problem solved and we had those votes, but I can't! SJR-40 as well as 80% , the desires of 80% of the nation's public are still being held hostage by 3 votes. During the next few weeks, I will be making phone calls, and sending e-mail messages to see that we can get those votes. Again, I know you've done it in the past, and I'm asking you to one more time, make those phone calls and write those letters. We are so close, we must get this amendment passed.

"America lives, through The American Legion", and that is why I am asking you to join me in declaring war on declining membership. The reason for this is simple. We would not be locked in a battle to get our flag protected if we had an increasing membership, or better yet, if it was doubled. Congress wouldn't be taking away the funding for tobacco-related illnesses, or whatever else comes up that they don't think we're worth it after we fought for those rights, if our membership was increasing, or better yet, tripled. We would not be anticipating the battle to have our GI Bill of Health plan implemented, if our membership was increasing, or better yet, why not quadrupled. We would not have to fight for the benefits that we have already fought for before and won, if our membership was increasing, or better yet, if every eligible veteran in this country was a member of the

American Legion. This year, we must, and we will, increase our membership. The National Vice Commanders and I will be paying special attention to membership this year, and we will be making extra trips around the country to help you in your membership efforts. The national staff, as always, is there to help reinforce, support and assist you in any way possible. But you are on the "front lines". The success that we have this year, begins with you and we will help you.

My grandfather Walter Balow, and my Father, Harold Boyd Miller II, were both veterans and Legionnaires. They are now both good members of the Post Everlasting. I know that every one of you knows of a veteran, and a Legionnaire who has passed on. Those veterans left us a legacy, a legacy of democracy, the land of the free, and the home of the brave, the United States of America. Well, those Legionnaires also left us a legacy. Their legacy to us was that organization that Tom Brokaw called the "temple of can do!", your post. Their legacy to us was The American Legion. When I became of age, I accepted the responsibility of the legacy of democracy and freedom that was passed down from my grandfather and father, and I served my country. Just like you, I am darn proud of it. I did my term and when I came home I picked up my legacy to join The American Legion. And when my service to The American Legion is through, just like my legacy of democracy which I have passed on to my son, I will pass on the legacy of The American Legion to him. You, all of you, each and every one of you here and at home, must do the same! You must pass on your legacy of The American Legion to your sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends and neighbors. The American Legion legacy that we are given to carry to the 21st Century, will write the last chapter of the history for The American Legion in this Century. I have given that chapter its title, "America Learns, America Loves, and America Lives, Through The American Legion." What will be written from this moment on, is up to us, you and I. Let's make it a chapter full of accomplishment. Let's make it a chapter steeped in progress. Let's make it a chapter that we will look back on with pride. And above all, let's make it a chapter that is void of regret.

Vince Lombardi once said, "We know how rough the road will be, and how heavy the load will be; we know about the barricades that wait along the track, but we have set our soul upon a certain goal ahead and nothing from hell to sky, shall turn us back." I will not fail you, and I will not allow you to fail those with whom we serve!

Thank you for electing me your National Commander. Now let's get to work! We've got a "war" to win! God Bless you, God Bless our Flag, God bless this country and God Bless The American Legion.

#### **Election of National Officers**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I recognize microphone 4.

DELEGATE PAUL A. MOORE, Massachusetts: 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, and I so move.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: We will now entertain nominations. Do I get a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: All those in favor? Opposed? Ayes have it.

I will now entertain a nomination for the office of National Vice Commander from the floor.

*Proceedings of Thursday, September 10, 1998*

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DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DAVID EBIE, California: I rise for the purpose to introduce National Executive Committeeman Stan Standard for the purpose of nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Chair recognizes Stan Standard.

COMMITTEEMAN STAN STANDARD: I am permitted a special honor and privilege to bring to you the name of a most outstanding Legionnaire who has been a friend, a mentor, and has served as a symbol of everything that is good about The American Legion.

He held the post of Department Commander, NECman, has served many years on the Foreign Relations Commission, more recently, as the Vice Chairman on the Legislative Commission.

What is unique about this individual is what he has done in the Department of California. And this has convinced the Department of California that we want to loan this individual to the national organization so that he can share wherever the National Commander sees fit to dispatch him, to aid those in our organization in other departments.

We have had, up until recently, the unique honor of having what came to be known as Mr. American Legion of California. He was a veteran of World War I and lived about six months beyond his 100th birthday. He was indeed a person to cherish for his accomplishments and his amazing activities as he approached the century mark. Our candidate for National Vice Commander is nowhere near the century mark, but he, and he alone, has earned the transfer of that title, Mr. American Legion of the Department of California. It is with great pride that I now present to you our candidate for National Vice Commander, Mr. Leo P. Burke. California.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT F. WOODRUFF, Georgia: Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Past NECman, Mr. W.D. 'Cuz' Harold, for purpose of nomination.

DELEGATE W.D. HAROLD, Georgia: I rise to present the name of Roger L. Tingler of Georgia, a Vietnam veteran, for the high office of National Vice Commander. Legionnaire Tingler returned to his hometown of Covington and immediately joined the civic, religious, and fraternal organizations. He was elected Commander of his local post where he worked throughout his post, throughout his district. The Department of Georgia recognized the leadership in Legionnaire Tingler, and having gone through the various chairs of the Department of Georgia, he was elected Commander.

On the national scene, he has served eight years in the Internal Affairs Commission; two years of those was Chairman of the M&PA Committee. In addition to that, he is currently serving as Chairman of the National Foreign Relation Council.

He is very active in his home community of Covington, Georgia, a thriving city of some 25,000, where he and his wife are the proud parents of two young people, a boy and girl; and they are the role model to the home community of Covington, Georgia. In addition to that, he has had the time to promote the affairs of his city where he is a 10-year member of the Covington City Council. I present the name of Roger L. Tingler for one of the Vice Commanders.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BILL DUREEN, Kansas: I introduce our National Executive Committeeman, Udie Grant, for the purpose of a nomination.

DELEGATE UDIE GRANT: Commander, it is a pleasure for us in Kansas to produce a candidate for the high office of National Vice Commander. That man is Jim Gravenstein.

Jim Gravenstein earned his eligibility into The American Legion by his service in the submarine service for four years during the Korean War. He has served Kansas in many ways. He has been a District Commander and our State Commander.

He has served as Chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance. And in Kansas we have 100 percent of our Congressmen and Senators who are supporting the Flag Amendment. Much of that is due to his work and his efforts, along with his committee.

Jim has the support of his wife, Dolly, his five children, and the Department of Kansas. Jim also has served as our Oratorical Chairman in the State of Kansas. In the past two years he has served and helped to conduct the national finals of the Oratorical Contest.

Jim is a person who served in the submarine service, so he is a can-doer; he is an achiever. Whenever there's something in Kansas that needs to be done, we call on Jim and he gets it done. He has also served on the National Security Council for the past four years. I might tell any of you who are fishermen, Jim is an avid and excellent fisherman. And he is one who likes to fillet and then cook those fillets. So I might just drop a hint to some of you where he would be visiting, that you have an excellent fisherman among you.

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to place in nomination the name of Jim Gravenstein for the high office of National Vice Commander.

DELEGATE CHARLES ZAWACKI, Rhode Island: At this time, I recognize a Past Department Commander, Gene Pytko, who is on stage for the purpose of nomination.

PAST COMMANDER PYTKO: Comrades, at the 80th Convention of the Department of Rhode Island, it was unanimously voted to endorse Fernando M. Goulart to the high office of National Vice Commander.

Fred immigrated to Rhode Island with his parents as a young boy from Portugal. After being raised and educated in his new country, Fred served it well as a member of the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era. Afterwards, Fred settled in Kentucky, Rhode Island, where he now resides with his lovely wife, Betty, and three children, Paul, Lisa and Shaney. Fred's loyalty to his country never wavered. And later on he became involved with The American Legion, joining Cumberland Post 14 in Rhode Island. He quickly rose through the Chairs to become Post Commander. He stayed active. He was elected as the Department's first District Commander of Rhode Island, and his hard work was finally realized when he became Department Commander in 1991.

Fred has served his state and organization successfully as chairman on several committees, and he became the Department Adjutant of Rhode Island with the passing of the Department Adjutant P.O. Stizza. Because of his ability to organize and his loyalty to the state, he has remained at that position to this day.

We, the delegates of Rhode Island, know that Fred will represent us, the northeastern region of the national organization, with loyalty, pride, and energy which words cannot describe.

There are many who are well-suited to stand here, as I stand now; but fate has seen fit to allow me this great privilege. When this hat was placed on my head some time over a year ago, there were three people at the podium: myself, my wife, and Fred. I feel it a great privilege to now return the favor. National Vice Commanders in Rhode Island are as scarce as hen's teeth. It is with great admiration, brotherly love, and deepest respect, that I and the Rhode Island delegates, with the support of the New England delegation, place in nomination Fernando M. Goulart to the high office of National Vice Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RONALD CHERRY, Texas: I request you recognize Past National Commander Joe L. Matthews for the purpose of a nomination.

PAST COMMANDER MATTHEWS: When a person has spent a lifetime of dedication and service to a magnificent organization such as The American Legion, it is natural that they would be concerned about the future of such an organization. Therefore, they are

continually looking for potential leaders who have the capability not only to continue, but to expand on the efforts of those who have gone before over the past 80 years.

Over 20 years ago, I became aware of and encouraged such a person to move on and up in The American Legion. Shortly thereafter, he became a District Commander, then a Department Vice Commander, then Department Commander, and then National Executive Committeeman for several years. And now he has been active at the national level in many different assignments. Currently, he is serving as a valued member of the Internal Affairs Committee. This man is a member of a Legion family. His wife, Catherine, has been Department President of the American Legion Auxiliary of Texas and National Executive Committeewoman from the Department of Texas. This gentleman has the time and the ability to be a fine National Vice Commander.

As a delegate to this convention from the great Department of Texas, it is my pleasure to present for your approval the name of John D. Morris for National Vice Commander of the American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MARTIN CONATSER, Illinois: I move the nominations of the office of National Vice Commander be closed.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: It's been moved and seconded. It's a non-debatable motion. All in favor? Opposed? The Ayes have it.

DELEGATE RICHARD KAISER, New York: Mr. Commander, I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention and that Leo P. Burke, Roger L. Tingler, James W. Gravenstein, Fernando M. Goulard, and John D. Morris be elected National Vice Commanders by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Do I hear it seconded? All those in favor? Opposed? The Ayes have it. Mr. Adjutant.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander, as National Adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of the convention for Leo P. Burke of California, Roger L. Tingler of Georgia, James W. Gravenstein of Kansas, Fernando M. Goulard of Rhode Island, and John D. Morris of Texas for the office of National Vice Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I now declare that the following Legionnaires have been elected National Vice Commanders of The American Legion:

**Five (5) National Vice Commanders**

Leo P. Burke, California

Roger L. Tingler, Georgia

James W. Gravenstein, Kansas

Fernando M. Goulard, Rhode Island

John D. Morris, Texas

**Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: I now call on Past National Commander Dan Foley to present the Colors to our incoming National Commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DAN FOLEY: Speedway Post 500 Color Guard please present the colors of the National Commander. One! Two!

Mr. Commander, you have accorded me a high honor, and honored a long time friendship by inviting me to present your colors this afternoon. It's a moment and an honor that I'll always remember. Our good friend General Patrick Brady has challenged all of us when he said that patriotism is a serious business. I would add to that that the task of perpetuating the tradition of patriotism is not for the faint of heart. You may have heard me say on an earlier occasion that one should not pick up the sword if you're not ready and have the heart for the battle. And that battle includes the passage of the flag protection amendment.

You can take some inspiration from a Justice of the Supreme Court who recently died, from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Justice Louis Powell. He served in World War II, though not required to do so. He distinguished himself and received the Bronze Star for his work in intelligence. When interviewed shortly after his retirement, and then replayed following his recent death, among other things he said that it was always a thrill to him when he saw the flag pass by. And you must have received inspiration too when we witnessed this awesome display of courage the other day with six recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor assembled here at our Convention. We listened to the recitation of the individual exploits of each and the extraordinary courage demonstrated which brought about to each of them the Congressional Medal. We were encouraged in our resolve by the presentation by Commander Jordan to Steven Spielberg of the Normandy Award. All of these things together strengthen our resolve to continue the good fight for the passage of the amendment.

Commander Miller, you bring to your task as Commander integrity, a caring heart, an understanding of the traditions of The American Legion, and a sense of history. You begin your task with the full trust and confidence of The American Legion to carry out the mandates of our organization. By your faithful fulfillment of your responsibilities during this coming year, you will be able to accept these colors when you retire from office and feel a great sense of pride in your achievements. And that pride will be shared also by the members of The American Legion, by your family, by your mentor, Wilbur Walker of Virginia, and by the revered memory of your father and your grandfather. So, I say to you, Commander, as you begin your task, and taking a little personal license, may God go with you, serve us well.

Color Guard, please return the colors of the National Commander of The American Legion to its post. One! Two!

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: This is a very special time in the business of this convention—the time when we meet the distinguished lady who will lead nearly one million patriotic women over the next year. I'm going to ask you to please rise. Ladies and gentlemen please welcome to our stage the newly elected National President of The American Legion Auxiliary—Mrs. Virginia Hobbs of Kentucky.

#### **Presentation of Newly Elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary**

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve as the National President of the world's greatest women's patriotic service organization and to have the opportunity to serve with the fine leader which has been elected within the last hour of The American Legion, Mr. Butch Miller.

Your National Commander and I share some things this year. First, we share an enthusiasm for what we're doing. Energy, which we'll need to carry us through the year, and a dedication to the ideals of The American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary and



the Sons of the Legion. We believe in the American Legion family and I promise to do all I can to help promote that throughout this year. In your installation address, you mentioned stemming the tide of the declining membership of The American Legion. Mr. Commander, let me tell you that that is the first and foremost objective of The American Legion Auxiliary this year, to stop our decline in membership and it is my hope that we will work with you to unilaterally stem our declining membership in The American Legion and the Auxiliary and to see what the Sons are doing right that their membership is growing by leaps and bounds.

A second objective that we have this year is to promote a stronger working relationship for the entire American Legion family. Many of our programs would be so wonderful if we would work them together, encompassing more people, less labor and a better projection of the American Legion family. Of particular note is the interest that has been expressed in the last years for the Auxiliary's participation in the Junior Shooting Sports Program.

The third and final that I mentioned this morning to our convention was the beginning of the American Legion Auxiliary's participation in the World War II Memorial. As the daughter of a World War II veteran who's been deceased for twenty years, I know how many of my father's comrades I see pass year by year and realized that if we don't get started and get behind this memorial, so many of our veterans will never see it come to pass. We've already lost over half of the World War II veterans and it must have the \$100 million capital funding requirement raised by May of 2000 in order to secure the construction permits within the allotted time. The American Legion Auxiliary pledges its full support this year to helping make the World War II Memorial become a reality.

I have with me three people today which I would appreciate the privilege of presenting to this body. The first is our National Vice President of the American Legion Auxiliary from the Department of North Carolina, Elizabeth Stewart. Our National Secretary of the American Legion Auxiliary, by no means a stranger to The American Legion, Peggy Sappenfield. And last but by no means least, the number one Legionnaire in my home and in my heart, my husband Billy Hobbs, the past Department Commander of the Department of Kentucky. The American Legion Auxiliary looks enjoyably to the year ahead and to the opportunities to work with The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion to strengthen our family of organizations and to reach new heights of achievement as we look to the close of the 20th century.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Bob Spanogle, the National Adjutant has an announcement.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The National Constitution By-Laws of The American Legion requires that the National Executive Committee meet within 24 hours in the host city of our Annual National Convention. Therefore, the Post National Executive Committee Meeting will meet immediately following the adjournment of the convention in the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, Suite B of the Grand Salon.

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Is there any further business to come before this convention? If not, please uncover as outgoing National Chaplain Reverend Henry Eisenhart of Pennsylvania offers the Benediction.

**Benediction****Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania, National Chaplain**

God of miracles and wonder, look down from Heaven and see us from Your holy, glorious throne at the close of this 80th National Convention of The American Legion. Bless National Commander Miller, the newly elected National Vice Commanders and the departure from one another. Be with us as a silent guardian of our homeward way. Protect every mile on the journey to our destination. Make our homecomings joyful. Bring us at last to our Heavenly mansion where You dwell in glory and majesty to inspire us here on earth to learn, love and live not just to get ready but always to be ready in a lifetime of service for God and country. Amen.

**Retirement of Colors**

NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: Thank you very much. Color Guard, will you retire the flag of the United States? Delegates will you stand with a right hand salute on my command. Right hand salute. Two!

I now declare the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned *sine die*.

...At 1:50 p.m., the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned.



## ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL AWARDS

**National American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award:** Awarded annually for outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion.

**RECIPIENT:**           **None Awarded**

**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:**           **Mark McGwire, St. Louis Cardinals**

**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:**           **Ralph Roberts, Post 100, Cherryville, NC**

**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:**           **Edwardsville Post 199, Edwardsville, IL**

**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:**           **Chris Wright, State College, PA**

**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:**           **North Carolina (Post 100, Cherryville, NC)**

**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:**           **Florida**

**George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year:** Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.

**RECIPIENT:**           **Chad Opel, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL**

**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:**           **Illinois (Post 199, Edwardsville, IL)**

**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):** Ken Schaaake, Manager, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL  
 Steve Haug, Coach, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL  
 Keith Opel Coach, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL  
 Mike Schaaake, Coach, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL

**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:** Ralph Roberts, Post 100, Cherryville, NC

**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:** Chad Opel, Post 199, Edwardsville, IL

**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:** Wisconsin

**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:** Ralph Roberts, Post 100, Cherryville, NC

**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:** Maryland

**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:** Virginia

**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.

**RECIPIENT(s):** Robert Adamson (Ontario)  
 Glen Belsher (Saskatchewan)  
 Wayne Bourget (Saskatchewan)  
 Duncan Cameron (British Columbia)  
 Leonard Carpenter, Sr. (Ontario)  
 Kenneth Guy Clark (British Columbia)  
 Cedric Cormier (Quebec)  
 Arthur K. Erskine (Manitoba)

**Martin Forrest (Nova Scotia)**  
**Louis Gallant (Ontario)**  
**John Goertzen (British Columbia)**  
**Sharon Goshko (British Columbia)**  
**Scott T. Hadley (Nova Scotia)**  
**William Hamlin (Manitoba)**  
**H. Warren Hennigar (Alberta)**  
**Lyndon Hove (Saskatchewan)**  
**Fiona Jasper (Alberta)**  
**Albert Johnson (New Brunswick)**  
**Palu Lamoureux (Manitoba)**  
**Charles Quon Lee (British Columbia)**  
**James Mackey (Ontario)**  
**Roger Mallette (Ontario)**  
**Donald Mann (British Columbia)**  
**Reverend Canon Tom McKnight (Alberta)**  
**Dean Potter (British Columbia)**  
**William (Bill) Smith (Quebec)**  
**Michael Terry (Manitoba)**  
**Kay Thibault (British Columbia)**  
**Irwin Toews (British Columbia)**  
**Douglas Van Wieren (British Columbia)**

**Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting:** Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post reports.

**RECIPIENT(s):** Delaware, France, North Dakota, Vermont, and Virginia

**Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans:** Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.

**RECIPIENT(s):** Category I—Jak's Stripping and Refinishing, Garden City, ID  
 Category II—Atlas Roofing Corporation, Ardmore, OK  
 Category III—Lear Seigler Services, Inc, Milton, FL

**Employment Service Awards:** Awarded in three categories: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) of the Year; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) of the Year; Employment Service (ES) Office of the Year.

**RECIPIENT(s):**

**LVER of the Year:** Joseph LeClair, St. Albans, Vermont  
**DVOP of the Year:** Ron Coleman, Minot, North Dakota  
**ES Office of the Year:** St. Marys Job Center, St. Marys, PA

**Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons:** The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the JC Penney Co., to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.

**RECIPIENT(s):** Because of other pressing matters, the judging for the 1998 awards has not been completed.

**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 Georgia (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):** Port Charlotte Post 110, Port Charlotte, FL (One-Year Narrative History)  
Windcrest Post 612, San Antonio, TX (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.

**RECIPIENT(s):** Kap-Jin Choi (Korea)  
Bonifacio H. Gillego (Philippines)

**The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy:** Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of three membership size categories (I - 1-999 members; II- 1,000-2,000 members; III - 3,000 members 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.

**1997 RECIPIENT(s):** (I)—North Carolina; 131.7%  
(II)—Georgia; 119%  
(III)—Texas; 115.4%

**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  
Category II—None  
Category III—Georgia (6/21/98)  
Category IV—Maine (5/26/98)  
Category V—Rhode Island (5/6/98)  
Category VI—Nevada (6/22/98)

**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:** Vermont—57.14%

**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:** Maine—97.45%

**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:** Puerto Rico—89.41%

**The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy:** Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.

**RECIPIENT:** South Carolina—101.10%

**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 Nikolas W. Stengle

**The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award:** Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.

**RECIPIENT:** Cadet Joshua Fant

**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 Matthew S. Ingerson

**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 John A. Foerter

**The American Legion Naval Academy Award:** Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the United States Naval Academy who stands highest in those English, History and Government courses taken to complete a Foreign Affairs major.

**RECIPIENT:** Midshipman Jason T. Berg



**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** - Depts. with 100,000 or more members  
                                   Post Participation: **Florida**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Minnesota**  
                                   **Category II** - Depts. with 70,000 to 99,999 members.  
                                   Post Participation: **Maryland**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Maryland**  
                                   **Category III** - Depts. with 40,000 to 69,999 members  
                                   Post Participation: **Nebraska**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Nebraska**  
                                   **Category IV** - Depts. with 25,000 to 39,999 members.  
                                   Post Participation: **Maine**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Maine**  
                                   **Category V** - Depts. with 10,000 to 24,999 members.  
                                   Post Participation: **Rhode Island**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Rhode Island**  
                                   **Category VI** - Depts. with less than 10,000 members  
                                   Post Participation: **Hawaii**  
                                   Individual Participation: **Hawaii**

**National Law Enforcement Officer Of The Year Award:** To recognize an outstanding law enforcement officer as selected from Department law enforcement officer winners for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.

**RECIPIENT:**            **Deputy Sheriff Earl P. "Pete" McDonald, Jr.; Point A LaHache, LA**

**Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy:** Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.

**RECIPIENT(s):**       **Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Tennessee**

**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:**           **Kirk Mitchell, Reporter, The Tribune, Mesa, Arizona**

**National Commander's Public Relations Award:** Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.

**RECIPIENT:** Tom Brokaw

**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:** American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Post 264, Tonawanda, 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:** No Contest in 1998

**The Four Chaplains Trophy:** Awarded annually to the winner of The American Legion Firing Squad competition at the National Convention.

**RECIPIENT:** No Contest in 1998

**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:** Speedway Post 500 Honor Guard; Speedway, Indiana

**The Lemuel Bolles Trophy:** Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.

**RECIPIENT:** American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Post 264, Tonawanda, NY

**National Adjutant's Trophy:** Awarded annually to that American Legion Firing Squad winning first prize in competition with all other Firing Squads during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

**RECIPIENT:** No Contest in 1998

**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:** Minnesota

**FOREWORD**

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Anthony G. Jordan, Augusta, Maine. Membership was strong with more than 2.9 million veterans in more than 14,000 posts throughout the nation and overseas. We recorded another year of rewarding service to America, her veterans, and their families.

The American Legion National Headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to the Indianapolis facilities, offices are maintained in Washington, DC, to house those organizational functions requiring a close working relationship with the Congress and the appropriate agencies of the federal government. The editorial and advertising staffs of *The American Legion Magazine* are located at The American Legion's Indianapolis Headquarters.

The National Commander's report is published herein as a part of the National Convention proceedings. Reports of the other national officers, the national commissions, financial statement with accompanying data, and a report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary are included.

Throughout the year, the two organizations continued to provide vital leadership to the nation and, through our activities and programs, contributed significantly to the preservation of the American way of life. We are proud of our accomplishments and look forward to the challenges ahead in the coming year.

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
*National Adjutant*

## **EXCERPTS FROM CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **Nature**

Section 1. The American Legion is a civilian organization; membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service. Rank does not exist in the Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any convention or meeting of the Legion.

Section 2. The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

### **ARTICLE III**

Section 1. The American Legion shall be organized in Departments and these in turn in Posts. There shall be one Department in each state, in the District of Columbia, and there may be one Department in each territory and insular possession of the United States. The National Executive Committee may establish Posts in the territorial and insular possessions of the United States and foreign countries, and shall designate the Department under whose jurisdiction they shall function, but this shall in no way affect the status of Departments already established.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **Eligibility**

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990 until a date established by Congress for ending the Desert Storm period; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any said periods; provided however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life.

Section 3. No person may be a member at any time of more than one Post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled by a Post shall be admitted to membership in another Post, without the consent of the expelling Post except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, he may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to be admitted to membership in another Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

## ARTICLE V

Section 1. The legislative body of The American Legion shall be the National Convention, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. The time and place of the National Conventions shall be determined by the National Executive Committee, which shall have authority to change such time and place for sufficient reasons to it appearing.

Section 3. In the National Convention each Department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each one thousand members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said Convention and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid, and to one alternate for each delegate. The delegates shall be chosen not less than 2 weeks before the National Convention at Department Conventions or in any other manner specified by the Department Constitution.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials after his registration fee has been paid.

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at a National Convention when 60 percent of the Departments are represented as provided above.

## ARTICLE VI

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No two Vice Commanders shall be chosen from the same Department. No person shall be eligible for re-election to the Office of National Commander or National Vice Commander.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices occurring between National Conventions shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee, and any member of The American Legion, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy. Provided, however, that no Past National Commander or Past National Vice Commander shall be elected to fill any vacancy in these respective offices.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee at its first meeting following the National Convention shall appoint the National Adjutant, National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, National Chaplain and National Historian, such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing power. All persons having the custody of funds shall give adequate bonds, which shall be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. All Past National Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Posts, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without vote, and shall also be life delegates to all National Conventions of The American Legion, with vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Departments.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **National Executive Committee**

Section 1. Between National Conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the National Commander, the National Vice-Commanders, and one National Executive Committeeman and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to vote only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman.

#### **Past National Commanders**

E. Roy Stone, Jr., South Carolina	Michael J. Kogutck, New York
Erle Cocke, Jr., Maryland	Jack W. Flynt, Texas
J. Addington Wagner, Michigan	Al Keller, Jr., Illinois
Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma	Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
William R. Burke, California	Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
Hon. Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota	James P. Dean, Mississippi
Donald E. Johnson, Virginia	John P. Comer, Massachusetts
L. Eldon James, Virginia	Hon. H.F. Gierke, North Dakota
William E. Galbraith, Arizona	Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
John H. Geiger, Illinois	Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Joe L. Matthews, Texas	Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
James M. Wagonseller, Ohio	Roger A. Munson, Ohio
Harry G. Wiles, Kansas	Bruce Thiesen, California
William J. Rogers, Maine	William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
John M. Cary, Florida	Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana	Joseph J. Frank, Missouri

**National Executive Committeemen**

James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama	John C. Pellegrini, Montana
William M. Bishop, Alaska	Michael D. Helm, Nebraska
William C. Bingham, Arizona	Archie Pozzi, Jr., Nevada
Claude B. Carpenter, Arkansas	George V. West, New Hampshire
Stan Standard, California	Joseph F. Ward, New Jersey
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado	Robert L. Crotzer, New Mexico
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut	Franklin C. Ward, New York
Donald E. Neil, Delaware	Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
Arnold L. Flottman, Jr., District of Columbia	Aaron 'Moody' Dalke, North Dakota
George L. Derrick, Florida	Richard J. Cherry, Ohio
Merwyn M. Beavers, France	Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma
Horace Borders, Georgia	T. Les Galloway, Oregon
LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii	Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Donald G. Gunderson., Idaho	Ernesto P. Golez, Philippines
Arthur Rawers, Illinois	Andres Rosario Bordonada, Puerto Rico
John W. Pipher, Indiana	Charles J. Zawacki, Rhode Island
William Rusk, Iowa	E. Roy Stone, South Carolina
U. S. Grant, Kansas	Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Joe E. Woods, Kentucky	John W. Emerson, Tennessee
Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana	John W.J. Richter, Texas
Gard W. Enman, Maine	William E. Christoffersen, Utah
Russell L. Fisher, Maryland	Ronald P. Aldrich, Vermont
Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts	William R. Bryant, Virginia
H. Dean Geddes, Mexico	Robert W. Wesphal, Washington
Alton R. Ford, Michigan	Jack T. Gribben, West Virginia
Raymond L. Galazen, Minnesota	Robert K. Zukowski, Wisconsin
Hershel O. Ladner, Mississippi	Carl J. Sundstrom, Wyoming
James F. Mareschal, Missouri	

**Alternate National Executive Committeemen**

Ulas Ray White, Alabama	Charles Vangorden, Montana
Thomas W. Streeper, Alaska	Robert H. Zersen, Nebraska
Marco A. Valenzuela, Arizona	Ernest E. McAvan, Nevada
Hoy M. Haught, Arkansas	Benjamin F. Talford, New Hampshire
Werner E. Wolf., California	Franklin R. Sickie, Jr., New Jersey
Joseph E. Ross, Colorado	Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico
Joseph F. Mardu, Connecticut	William H. Purcell, New York
Edward S. Phillips, Jr., Delaware	E. C. Toppin, North Carolina
Raymond J. Potocki, District of Columbia	Harry W. Moore, North Dakota
Robert J. Proctor, Florida	Samuel Barney, Ohio
Frank L. Hoyle, France	Charles R. John, Oklahoma
Jimmy C. Hartwick, Georgia	Robert D. Scott, Oregon
Eugene K. B. Won, Hawaii	Alfred Pirolli, Pennsylvania
LeRoy Lebsack, Idaho	Ignacio F. Palad, Philippines
Ralph D. Adler, Illinois	Arturo Diaz Neval, Puerto Rico
Bill Hicks, Indiana	Richard E. Verrier, Rhode Island
Dave Rehbein, Iowa	Rennie M. Singletary, Jr., South Carolina
David O. Warnken, Kansas	Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota
Randall Coffman, Kentucky	James E. Markham, Tennessee
John A. Bennett, Louisiana	Ronald P. McCluskey, Texas (died 6/30/98)
Donald Cole, Jr., Maine	Duane S. Willis, Utah
Ashby L. Jenkins, Jr., Maryland	Alan B. Grazini, Vermont
Alfred G. Canale, Massachusetts	Dale D. Chapman, Virginia
John E. Hayes, Mexico	Lilburn H. Easley, Washington
Henry J. Sacha, Michigan	William W. Kile, West Virginia
Ambrose J. Koll, Minnesota	Ted G. Demicchi, Wisconsin
Charles E. Langley, Mississippi	Todd E. White, Wyoming
Sam Yancey, Missouri	

## **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 Conrad A. Chisholm, Idaho**

At the 79th National Convention of The American Legion in Orlando, Florida, I was elected as a National Vice Commander. Assuming this high office, I became responsible for the Western Area, consisting of thirteen states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, plus the Departments of Mexico and the Philippines, making a total of fifteen departments as my area of responsibility.

The primary goal of all Departments in the Western Area was to achieve 100% membership. As of this report, two departments have reached 100%, two more are at 99% and the rest are above 94%. There is high hope that these departments can reach 100% by the time we go to our convention in New Orleans.

We have one Department, Arizona, that reached an all-time high in membership. I would like to commend each Department, Post and Legionnaire in my area of responsibility for the work they've done in achieving membership.

I would like to commend our National Membership Liaison, David Elmore, for his work in achieving membership goals and for encouraging the starting of new posts and reviving posts that have been having trouble surviving. David and the National Headquarters staff, in both Indianapolis and Washington, D. C., do a tremendous job.

I want to make mention of, and extend my thanks to, the Past National Commanders and Department National Executive Committeemen and Alternates for their efforts in meeting and transporting me around their respective departments. A special thanks to the Department of New York who took care of me while I was in their state to present an award to the Merchant Marine Academy.



A special group of people that I certainly want to thank, and also congratulate on their efforts, are Department Commanders, their officers and office staff. It has been a pleasure visiting and talking with each and every one of them. Promoting membership and encouraging participation in The American Legion programs and activities are some of the ways that all Legionnaires can help this great organization.

It has been a privilege, as well as a memorable experience, to work with the other four Vice Commanders as a part of Commander Jordan's team while we served The American Legion family.

My list of visits and activities for the year 1997-1998 after being elected on September 4, 1997, follows:

**September 1997**

8-9 Visited Indianapolis National Headquarters for a brainstorming session on Legion activities  
12-14 National Information Conference, Las Vegas, NV  
22-24 Legislative meeting, Washington, DC, along with the National Commander's testimony before the Legislative Committee on Veterans Affairs

**October 1997**

3-5 National Information Conference, Post Falls, ID  
10-11 National Commander's Homecoming, Augusta, ME  
13-16 Fall meeting of the NEC. Hosted the Department Commander's Breakfast for the Western Area.  
17-19 Membership promotion, Department of Washington  
23-27 Membership promotion and Post No. 25's "Fifty Year Anniversary", Department of Mexico

**November 1997**

1 Fall Executive Meeting, Department of Montana

**January**

16-18 Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Colorado

**January-February 1998**

1/30-2/1 Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Colorado

**February 1998**

6-8 Mid-Winter Executive Meeting, Department of Washington

**March 1998**

14-15 Department Executive Meeting, Department of California  
22-25 Washington Conference, Washington, DC

**April 1998**

16-18 Membership Promotion, Department of Idaho

**May 1998**

4-7 Spring Meeting of the NEC, Indianapolis, IN  
7-9 Department Convention, Department of Alaska

**June 1998**

12-14 Merchant Marine Academy, Kingsport, NY  
18-21 Department Convention, Department of Arizona  
25-29 Department Convention, Department of New Mexico

**July 1998**

10-11 Department Convention, Department of Idaho  
17-19 Department Convention, Department of Nevada

**September 1998**

4-10

National Convention, New Orleans, LA

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER  
Gerald L. (Jerry) Moore, Ohio  
WHO JOINED POST EVERLASTING MARCH 24, 1998**

Gerald L. (Jerry) Moore was elected one of five National Vice Commanders of The American Legion for the 1997-1998 Legion year during the 79th National Convention in Orlando, Florida, on September 4, 1998. He honorably served under the leadership of National Commander Anthony G. Jordan of Maine, until he was taken to Post Everlasting on March 24, 1998.

Jerry's area of responsibility included the Departments of France, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. He made the following visitations on behalf of The American Legion during his brief term as National Vice Commander for 1997-1998:

**September 1997**

4 Orlando, FL, Election, National Vice Commander and Initial Orientation  
8-10 Brainstorming with Internal Affairs & Membership, and Children & Youth Divisions  
22-24 Washington, DC, Legislative Meetings and Orientation Briefings by Legislative, National Security & Foreign Relations, Economics and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Divisions

**October 1997**

10-12 Bangor, ME, National Commander's Homecoming  
13-16 Indianapolis, IN, Fall Meetings  
14 1997 Hosted Department Commander's Breakfast at Indianapolis Athletic Club

**November 1997**

14-16 Marion IL, Guest Speaker at the Egyptian Past Commander's Club Annual Meeting and Participated in Tour of the Marion Veterans Home and The Haven

**December 1997**

6 Charlotte, MI, Attended and Participated in Membership Rally Hosted by Post No. 42

**January 1998**

16-18 Germantown, WI, Attended Dept. of Wisconsin Mid-Winter Conference  
23-24 Louisville, KY, Attended Dept. of Kentucky Winter Conference

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER  
Dr. Norris W. Preston, Missouri**

It has been an honor to have had the privilege to serve as National Vice Commander since my election at the 79th National Convention in Orlando, Florida. The Preamble to The American Legion Constitution sets the mission for the organization and this was observed as I visited the many posts across my assigned mid-west area.

My responsibilities serving with National Commander Anthony Jordan included, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Each Department was "Still Serving America" through the many programs aimed at benefiting the veterans, children and youth and by service to their community, state and nation.

My schedule the past year included the following:

**September 1997**

4 Elected as National Vice Commander, Orlando, FL  
 8-11 Brainstorming Sessions with National Headquarters Staff, Indianapolis, IN  
 12-14 National Information Conference, Springfield, MO  
 19-21 National Information Conference, Biloxi, MS  
 22-24 Legislative Meetings and Testimony, Washington, DC  
 26-27 Patriots Banquet, Congressional Medal of Honor Society, Little Rock, AR

**October 1997**

3-5 National Information Conference, Council Bluffs, IA  
 10-11 National Commander's Homecoming, Bangor, ME  
 13-16 Fall NEC Meetings, Indianapolis, IN  
 14 Host Department Commander's Breakfast at Indianapolis Athletic Club, Indianapolis, IN  
 17-19 Represent Commander Jordan at National President's Homecoming, Stevens Point, WI  
 22-25 Membership Tour promotion, Department of South Dakota

**December 1997**

4-6 Pearl Harbor Car Caravan Membership Tour and guest speaker at Waite Parke Rally, Department of Minnesota

**January**

9-10 Mid-Winter Conference at Oklahoma City, Department of Oklahoma

12-15 Membership Tour, Department of Kansas

**January-February 1998**

1/29-2/1 Mid-Winter Conference, Workshops at Austin, Department of Texas

**February 1998**

3-7 Membership Tour of District 6 and guest speaker at District 8 Rally in Omaha, Department of Nebraska  
 12-15 Membership Tour, Department of Minnesota

**February-March 1998**

2/17-3/1 Spring Conference at Jefferson City, Department of Missouri

**March 1998**

22-25 Washington Conference, Washington, DC

**March-April 1998**

3/29-4/4 Membership Tour and Spring DEC Meeting, Department of Illinois

**April 1998**

23-26 Visit American Legion Children's Home in Ponca City, Membership Tour and 89er Parade in Guthrie, Department of Oklahoma

**May 1998**

4-7 Spring NEC Meetings, Indianapolis, IN  
 7-8 Truman Pilgrimage at Harry Truman Library, Independence, MO  
 21 Present award at U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD  
 25 Present award to U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

**June 1998**

11-14 Department Convention at Pierre, Department of South Dakota  
 26-28 Department Convention at Grand Island, Department of Nebraska

**July 1998**

10-12 Department Convention at Davenport, Department of Iowa  
 17-18 125th Annual Old Soldiers & Sailors Reunion at Erie, KS  
 23-26 35th Annual National Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, IN

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER**

**Robert E. Vass, Sr., West Virginia**

It has been a distinct honor to serve as National Vice Commander for the 1997-1998 year. I am very proud of the outstanding accomplishments achieved by the Departments in my Region. Their endeavors resulted in finishing the membership year as the number one Region. My area of responsibility included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. My schedule this year included the following:

**September 1997**

8-11 Brainstorming Session, IA, A/C&Y, and PR, Indianapolis, IN  
 22-24 Legislative Meetings and Commander's Testimony, Washington, DC  
 26-28 National Information Conference, Raleigh, NC

**October 1997**

10-11 National Commander's Homecoming, Augusta, ME  
 13-16 Fall Meetings and Host Department Commander's Breakfast at Indianapolis Athletic Club, Indianapolis, IN

**October/November 1997**

10/31-11/2 Fall Conference, Department of South Carolina

**November 1997**

11 West Virginia's Veterans' Day, Charleston, WV

**January 1998**

9-11 Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Mississippi  
 23-25 Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Louisiana  
 29-31 Change of Command, *USS West Virginia Trident* Submarine, Kingsbay, GA

**February 1998**

6-8 Mid-Winter Conference, Department of North Carolina  
 13 Veterans Visibility Day, WV Legislature, Charleston, WV  
 22 Ceredo-Kenova Post No. 93, Four Chaplains Service, Kenova, WV  
 28 Department of West Virginia, DEC Meeting, Bridgeport, WV

**March 1998**

22-25 1998 Washington Conference, Washington, DC  
 29 Fifth District Convention, Milton, WV

**April 1998**

30-31 Department Membership Caravan, West Virginia

**May 1998**

2 Annual Veteran Affairs Service Officer Conference, Beckley, WV  
 23 All Veterans Memorial Day Service, Huntington, WV  
 25 Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony and Vietnam Memorial Service, Washington, DC  
 27 VA Medical Center, Dedication of VA Research Building, Huntington, WV  
 29-31 U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY

**June 1998**

11-14 Department Convention, Department of North Carolina  
 14 Legion/Elks Flag Day, Huntington, WV

**July 1998**

8-11 Keynote Speaker at Department Convention, Department of Florida

**REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER**

Erwin 'Gus' Williams, Connecticut

I was honored on being elected to the high office of National Vice Commander for the year 1997-1998 by the delegates to the 79th Annual American Legion Convention in Orlando, Florida on September 4, 1997.

I have had the honor of serving the greatest veterans organization, The American Legion. I have had the privilege to assist a true leader and a great grassroots Commander, National Commander Anthony G. 'Tony' Jordan of Maine on his Eight Challenges for Change in '98 Campaign.

My area of responsibility covered the following twelve departments: New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, DC, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Maine, with a membership of eight hundred thousand plus members.

The following visitations were made by me during the year 1997-1998:

**September 1997**

8-11 Brainstorming Sessions: IA, A/C&Y, and PR, Indianapolis, IN  
 13 Third District Installation, Danbury, CT  
 19-21 National Information Conference, Manchester, NH  
 22-24 Legislative Meetings and Commander's Testimony, Washington, DC  
 26-28 National Information Conference, Cherry Hill, NJ

**October 1997**

10-11	National Commander's Homecoming, Augusta, ME
13-16	Fall NEC Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
14	Host Department Commander's Breakfast at IAC, Indianapolis, IN
24-26	Annual American Legion College as Membership Promotion, combined with a Testimonial for Department Commander, Westborough, MA
<b>November 1997</b>	
1	Department Commander and Department President's Testimonial, Department of Connecticut
2	St. Patrick's Cathedral, Red, White & Blue Services, Norwich, CT
8	Veterans Day Remembrance, Putnam, CT
11	Veterans Day Ceremony, Derby, CT
14-16	Membership Roundup, Department of New Jersey
28-30	Membership Roundup, Department of Maine
<b>December 1997</b>	
18	CFA Committee Meeting, Middletown, CT
<b>January 1998</b>	
16-18	Department of Connecticut's DEC meeting and Mid-Winter Conference, Trumbull, CT
23-25	Mid-Winter DEC meeting and membership activity, Pittsburgh, PA
31	Mid-Winter Conference, Laconia, NH
<b>February 1998</b>	
6-7	Mid-Winter Conference, Burlington, VT
11	Second District Meeting, East Haven, CT
15	Night at the Races, West Haven VA Hospital, West Haven, CT
22	Department Commander and Department President's Testimonial, Coventry, RI
28	Second District Oratorical Contest, Branford, CT
<b>March 1998</b>	
7	Department Oratorical Contest, Southington, CT
11	Membership dinner, Central Falls, RI
14	Testimonial dinner in my honor, Glastonbury, CT
22-25	Washington Conference, Washington, DC
28	First District Commander and President's Testimonial, Plainfield, CT
<b>April 1998</b>	
4	Fourth District Commander and President's Testimonial, Grovernsdale, CT
8	Second District Meeting, Ansonia, CT
14	CFA Valley Chapter Meeting, Derby, CT
17	Boys State, Newport, RI
18-19	National Commander's visit, Department of Connecticut
24-26	Department Commander's Testimonial, Brooklawn, NJ
<b>May 1998</b>	
4-7	Spring NEC Meeting, Indianapolis, IN
9	CFA, Wal-Mart : <i>Show Your Colors, America!</i> , Shelton, CT
19	USCG Military Award Presentation to Cadet Joshua Fant, New London, CT
23	CFA Rally, Derby, CT
23	Department Commander's Testimonial, Hillsborough, NH

24-25	Memorial Services and Derby-Shelton Memorial Day Parade, Derby, CT
30	CFA, <i>Show Your Colors, America!</i> , Hartford, CT
31	Channel 8, Children's Miracle Network Telethon, New Haven, CT
<b>June 1998</b>	
10-13	Department Convention, Springfield, MA
14	Elks Flag Day Ceremony, Derby, CT
19-21	Department Convention, Bangor, ME
<b>July 1998</b>	
9-11	Department Convention, Cromwell, CT
15-18	80th Department Convention, Buffalo, NY
24-26	35th Annual National Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, IN
<b>August 1998</b>	
2	Testimonial Dinner for Eastern Division National Vice President, Theresa Zifcak, Coventry, RI
14-16	Department Convention, Claymont, DE
22	Annual Drum & Bugle Corps Competition Sponsored by 11th District, Scranton, PA
<b>September 1998</b>	
4-10	80th Annual National Convention, New Orleans, LA

My visitation, phone calls, letters, 100% Membership Certificates and personal notes promoting membership were not in vain, for Team Achievements were many.

Membership Accomplishments: Congratulations to Department Commander Gene Pytak of Rhode Island and Department Commander William Powers of Maine, and their membership team for achieving their 100% membership goal. The Departments of Vermont, Connecticut and New Jersey did an excellent job in turning their membership programs around. The Departments of Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania all finished above 97% of their year end goal. Presently the area team remains in third place at 97.904%. Many awards were presented in recognition of Department, District, County, Post and Individual achievements.

My sincere thanks to all the Department Commanders and their membership teams. We had a great year, and we also have turned the corner on membership in '98.

CFA, *Show Your Colors America!*, has been a very successful program. I see more people flying the flag now, than ever before. We must continue the fight for the Flag Protection Amendment.

My personal thanks to Peggy Judd, secretary to the National Adjutant, National Adjutant Robert Spanogle, Executive Director, Dan Wheeler, Membership Director Billy Johnson, Jackie Cloud, secretary to Assistant Directors, John Kerestan and David Elmore, and Finance Director Paul M. Allen, for your year of guidance and support. To the members of the National Staff, thank you for being there when I needed help; you were outstanding.

I visited all the Departments within my area of responsibility with the exception of Maryland. My many thanks to the dedicated members of The American Legion Family for their friendship. I shall always remember the hospitality and courtesies extended to me as your National Vice Commander.

**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN**  
**Reverend Henry E. Eisenhart, Pennsylvania**

The founding fathers of The American Legion were fully aware that God and Country must go together, if our Nation was to remain great and permanent. To advance this spiritual concept, the Office of Chaplain was constitutionalized and imposed with accountable responsibilities to keep this great veterans' organization steadfast for God and Country, perform such divine and non-sectarian services as may be necessary, and carry out ceremonial rituals recommended by the National Headquarters from time to time.

At the Post-National Executive Meeting, held at the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, on September 4, 1997, I was appointed National Chaplain for the Legion year 1997-1998, by National Commander Anthony G. Jordan.

My theme was: "We Are in This Together." We must all work together as we did in the military forces. By joining together in a common cause and direction, we will succeed to fulfill the purposes stated in The American Legion Constitution.

During my term of office, invocations and benedictions were given at the following occasions: The Initial, Fall, Spring and Pre-Convention Sessions of the National Executive Committee, Orlando, Indianapolis and New Orleans; The National Commander's Homecoming, Bangor; The National Commander's Banquets, Bangor, Indianapolis, Washington, D.C. and New Orleans; The Fall Department Commanders and Adjutants Meetings, Indianapolis; The Past Department Commanders' Club Luncheons, Indianapolis, New Orleans; Fall Ye Steivos Dinner and Spring Ye Steivos Breakfast, Indianapolis; Veterans' Day Program, Kintnersville; Pennsylvania's Department National Commander's Testimonial Dinner, Ephrata; Veterans Administration and Rehabilitation Conference, and The Legislative Rally, Washington, D.C.; Pennsylvania's Department Commander's Testimonial Dinner, Philadelphia; Pennsylvania's Religious Emphasis Committee Meeting, Harrisburg; Pennridge Memorial Day Ceremony, Sellersville; Memorial Day Ceremony, Quakertown; The Unveiling of Paintings by Michael Hagel of *Desert Storm*, depicting the heroism of America's service personnel in the Persian Gulf, and *Ever Vigilant*, saluting the Americans who served in Lebanon, Panama and Granada, placed in the National Executive Committee Chamber, National Headquarters, Indianapolis; PA Eastern Vice Commander's Testimonial Dinner, Northampton; PA Department Flag Day Ceremony, Membership Round-Up and Unveiling of PA Headquarters Sign, Harrisburg; PA Department Convention Memorial Service, Lancaster; National Chaplains' Conference, Indianapolis; the sessions of the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion; the ANAVICUS Breakfast, the National Chaplains' Breakfast, the PA Department Caucus; the Post-Convention session of the National Executive Committee, New Orleans.

In addition, I presided at the National Chaplains' Conference, Indianapolis, and gave the address, "A Noble Tribute," at the Annual Patriotic Memorial Service, New Orleans.

On March 25, 1998, I was Guest Chaplain in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, where a testimonial was paid for my military and spiritual services and a certificate of recognition was presented by the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

I officiated at funeral services for comrades Leonard Lokay, Sr., Charles Stever and Vincent Cressman, and attended funeral services for comrades C. Richard Strunk, George Buehrle and Carl Texter.

Furthermore, I authored three articles published in *The Dispatch*, "December is the Best Month of the Year," "Four Chaplains Joined in Faith and Sacrifice," and "Blessings from Memorial Day," an article in *The American Legion Magazine*, "This Side of Heaven," and another editorial, "Veterans' Day is America's Day," printed in the *Philadelphia Daily News* and the *Sunday Daily News*, New York City.



My thankfulness is expressed to National Commander, Anthony G. Jordan; National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle; Legislative Assistant Director, John Jefferson; Americanism Assistant, Robert Caudell; Research Clerk, Dodie Crouch; and the staff at National Headquarters, Indianapolis and Washington, D.C.

It has been an honorable privilege, a sincere pleasure, and a truly rewarding experience to have had the opportunity to discharge the duties of the National Chaplain for The American Legion in services for God and Country.

In facing a new millennium, with its awesome challenges and opportunities, we are mindful of those who stood to defend this nation in time of war, who continue to stand for a strong national defense in a changing world, and who steadfastly work to preserve the fabric of this nation—that is today's American Legion, Still Serving America!

#### **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN** **Tommy Mills, Mississippi**

It has been a distinct honor for me this year in serving as a "team" member of Commander Jordan's year. My sincere thanks go to the members of the selection committee and to NECman Hershel O. Ladner for his recommendation of me to this high and honored office in The American Legion. For this honor being bestowed on me, I shall always be grateful.

In assuming the office of National Historian, I was completely in the dark as to what was expected of me during the ensuing year. On my first visit to National Headquarters for the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee, Librarian and Museum Curator, Joe Hovish, along with his staff, related to me the inner workings of the National Historian's Office and gave a brief description of what my duties would entail.

My first task was that of coordinating and overseeing the judging of the Department and Post National History Contests during the Fall Meeting. While my function was one of overseeing the judging, it was a most interesting experience and I have agreed to lend a helping hand in future operations of the history contests. As required by the rules, Past National Historians and NADHAL members were the judges of these contests during the Fall Meetings.

There were a total of forty-nine (49) entries this year in the history contest. Past National Historians, Delfo Barabani of Massachusetts and Roy Mahoney of Florida, along with Librarian Joe Hovish, coordinated the overall effort of the contests. NADHAL President Dan Watrous of Ohio, and the members supplied the necessary judges for the contests. These individuals and the members of NADHAL are to be commended for their splendid effort in judging the contests.

First Place winners for the One-Year Department and Post Narrative History Contest respectively were: the Department of Maine and Clinton Post No. 259 in Clinton, Maryland. First Place winners for the One-Year Department and Post Yearbook History Contest respectively were: the Department of West Virginia and Jim Leonard Post No. 8 of Lexington, North Carolina.

While attending the Fall Meeting of the NEC and working with Past National Historian Roy Mahoney and Librarian Joe Hovish, a complete review was made of the rules and requirements for the Department and Post History contests contained in the Officer's Guide. The review concluded that present rules and requirements were outdated, and, in many cases, very hard to understand.

As a result of this review, the Historian's Office was able to update and clarify the rules and requirements of the One-Year Department and Post History Contests. *The Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* was revised, updated and published in the 1998 Edition.

Additionally, the office, for the first time, developed and published a pamphlet entitled, *Histories Are Important*.

While attending the Washington Conference in the spring of the year, I visited with many of the Committees associated with the Legislative matters being presented to Congress. While there were no official functions to be performed, I visited the congressional offices of the Mississippi Congressional delegation and presented each of them the legislative agenda of The American Legion. I reminded each office that I appreciated their support of the Flag Amendment and that I felt I could depend on their support when the matter comes before each body. I am very proud of the fact that the entire Mississippi Congressional delegation is and will continue to support the Flag Amendment.

I visited many Post, District and Department meetings during the year and at each of these meetings I stressed the importance of maintaining historical information in a fashion that would be helpful to future Historians at the Post, District and Department level. During my tenure of office and in receiving letters seeking information on Department and Post histories, I have noted that there isn't a uniform method of collecting and filing historical Legion information for future generations. Possibly the next National Historian might be able to introduce some ideas for Department Historians to pass onto the Posts and Districts within the Departments.

I attended the Spring Meeting of the National Executive Committee in Indianapolis during May of 1998. While I had no official duties to perform while there, I attended as many of the National Commissions that were possible and spent many hours in the library reviewing historical articles on file there. My visits to our library have been most interesting and I shall always be grateful to the guidance and assistance given to me by the staff.

My year as National Historian has been a most interesting and an educational experience that I shall always cherish. Commander Jordan has provided the necessary leadership to make this one of the most successful years in regards to American Legion history. I trust that I have added a small contribution to his success.

With the year rapidly approaching the end, I have been busy making the necessary arrangements for the NADHAL luncheon at the National Convention in New Orleans. We feel that we will have a nice luncheon for all Past Department Historians and that a little Cajun Cuisine will have been enjoyed by all. Dr. William D. Reeves, a native of New Orleans will present some historical facts about New Orleans as well as Louisiana.

Again, I am honored by being able to serve in the high office of National Historian.

**REPORT  
NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE  
P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland**

**Contracts**

The following thirty-five (35) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

1. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and California Anaheim in 99 Convention Corporation covering the convocation of the 1999 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Anaheim, State of California has been executed.
2. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and 2000 Wisconsin American Legion National Convention Corporation, Inc. covering the convocation of the 2000 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin, has been executed.

3. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and Texas National Convention Corporation of The American Legion covering the convocation of the 2001 Convention of The American Legion in the City of San Antonio, State of Texas, has been executed.
4. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Analysts International Corporation, whereby Analysts International Corporation will assign personnel to provide software-related services.
5. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Southwest Airlines, whereby Southwest Airlines will provide attendees a discount for flights to the National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana.
6. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Hire Quality, whereby Hire Quality will provide career opportunities for individuals departing from the American Armed Forces and will provide The American Legion with veterans' name and address database information. Hire Quality will provide the transitioning service member with The American Legion's benefit and service counseling information.
7. Agreement by and between The American Legion and R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, whereby R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company will produce and distribute *The American Legion Magazine*.
8. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Quality Concepts, whereby Quality Concepts will provide computer room subfloor cleaning and structural services.
9. License Agreement by and between The American Legion and J. M. Stewart, whereby J. M. Stewart will manufacture and sell signs using the name, emblem, seals and logos of The American Legion to or for the use of Legion affiliates.
10. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Diamond Data Systems, whereby Diamond Data Systems will provide modifications to The American Legion software in order to accommodate large databases.
11. Eight (8) Baseball Regional Tournament Contracts and the Contract for The American Legion World Series.
12. Three (3) List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass-mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:
  - Brick Mills Studios, Inc.
  - Barton-Cotton-Famous Hospitality, Inc. (Famous Artists Studios, Inc.)
  - Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.
13. Fourteen (14) 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:
  - Mail Services LC
  - Allianz Life Insurance Company
  - TotalSource Services, LLC
  - United American Insurance Company
  - Globe Life and Accident Insurance Company
  - Accident Insurance Company

First United American Life Insurance Company  
 Norwest Bank Iowa  
 CAS Database Marketing Solutions  
 Mail Services of Pittsburgh, Inc.  
 United Mailing, Inc.  
 Custom Printing & Mailing, Inc.  
 Mailroom, Inc.  
 Jeanne Stellman, PhD

### Litigation

Litigation styled:

TINA V. CASE, Administratrix of the Estate of Clive Case, Jr.,	)
	) COMMONWEALTH OF
	) KENTUCKY
LARRY SPEARS and CONNIE SPEARS	) FLOYD CIRCUIT COURT
Plaintiffs	) CIVIL ACTION NO.
	) 92-CI-00622
vs.	)
	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION; THE WAR VETERANS	)
CLUB; ROBERT CONLEY acting on behalf of The War	)
Veterans Club; JOHN B. REYNOLDS POST #283,	)
AMERICAN LEGION DENSIL HALBERT, DELBERT	)
ISON, WARREN WOLFORD, DEMRA TAYLOR AND	)
ROGER TURNER all acting	)
on behalf of John B. Reynolds	)
Post # 283, American Legion and	)
The War Veterans Club;	)
FRANK DeROSSETT; LOUISE "LULA" SPRADLIN and	)
BILL SPRADLIN	)

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. Tina Case's husband allegedly was killed by defendant, Frank DeRossett. It is alleged that Frank DeRossett entered American Legion Post 283 in Martin, Kentucky and started shooting a gun in the direction of the band in which Clive Case was a member. Case was shot several times and subsequently died. Larry Spears was also shot and claims permanent injury and disablement. At this point, the matter has been referred to our insurance company, an appearance has been filed and a motion to dismiss has been filed. The Floyd County Circuit Judge overruled our Motion for Summary Judgment and will entertain a Motion to Reserve Entry of his Judgment for Six Months until the plaintiff proves a legal theory against The American Legion. The Court indicated that it will rule on a Motion for a Directed Verdict if the case goes to trial. A hearing has not been set. The case remains on hold.

Litigation Styled:

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

THE AMERICAN LEGION	)	
Plaintiff	)	
	)	
v.	)	Civil Action No. 95-C-1253
	)	
RICHARD G. MATTHEW	)	
Defendant	)	

This is an action for service mark infringement of The American Legion's common law mark and for unfair competition. The American Legion learned that the Defendant was planning to conduct business and to sell products, namely caps, under the name "THE LEGIONAIRE" or Legionaire. A written demand was made to the defendant to discontinue his plans to use the service mark in connection with the sale of merchandise. A case and a motion for preliminary injunction may need to be filed to force discontinuance of marketing or distributing of promotional materials or goods bearing the words The Legionnaire or Legionnaire and to deliver all materials bearing such words to The American Legion may become necessary. Motions have been filed for productions of testimony and exhibits. A hearing was set by the Patent Office in this matter. The result was a decision of lack of jurisdiction because of an amendment to the petition at the behest of the Patent Office. The entire case started over again and the applicant was granted his mark. The American Legion filed suit in District Court. Discovery is proceeding. The Court ruled against The American Legion. The case is over until actual confusion can be demonstrated.

Litigation styled:

WILLIAM PAUL BARRON, JR.	)	
Plaintiff	)	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT
	)	COURT, SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
V.	)	OHIO, WESTERN DIVISION
	)	
THE AMERICAN LEGION	)	Case No. C-1-93-247
Defendant	)	Magistrate Judge Steinberg

IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
OF SALT LAKE COUNTY STATE OF UTAH

WILLIAM PAUL BARRON, JR.	)	
Plaintiff	)	
	)	
v.	)	CIVIL No. 940901735
	)	
DUANE S. WILLIS, CARROLL	)	
WILLIAMS, and THE	)	
AMERICAN LEGION, Defendants	)	

Plaintiff sued The American Legion for slander claiming a letter purportedly bearing his signature was not from him. The letter contained threats against VA staffers. Based on the letter the Department of Utah Service Officer withdrew from representation as did the National Organization.

Since there is no legal duty to represent the plaintiff and since The American Legion did not publish the threat, the case cannot be about slander. A motion to dismiss was filed and granted. Mr. Barron then refiled in Utah (the second case shown). A motion for summary judgment was filed and granted. Mr. Barron filed an appeal in the Utah Court of Appeals which was the wrong court. The Utah Court of Appeals notified him that he must file with the trial court first who would then transmit his Notice of Appeal to the Utah Supreme Court which is the proper court. The Utah Supreme Court transferred the appeal to the Utah Court of Appeals which then dismissed plaintiff's appeal for lack of jurisdiction because he failed to timely file his notice of appeal. The case is closed. However, Mr. Barron has written to our counsel in what may be another attempt to reopen the case. He is demanding removal of letters from his case file before the Court of Veterans Appeals. What he is really demanding is to tamper with court records. He is not represented by The American Legion.

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION COUNTY OF WAKE

HARRY H. HURLEY and NANCY C. HURLEY	)	
CO-ADMINISTRATORS OF THE ESTATE OF	)	
DOUGLAS C. HURLEY,	)	
Plaintiffs	)	
	)	
V.	)	97 CV 07386
	)	
EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR.	)	
THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS	)	
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH	)	
CAROLINA, INC.; and CARY AMERICAN LEGION	)	
POST 67,	)	
Defendants	)	

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION COUNTY OF WAKE

GRAHAM TRENT ELLIS and	)	
HOWARD ELLIS, JR.,	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
V.	)	96 CV 06139
	)	
EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR.	)	
THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS	)	

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH )  
 CAROLINA, INC.; AND CARY AMERICAN LEGION )  
 POST 67, )  
 Defendants )

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
 SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION COUNTY OF WAKE

DOUGLAS E. DANIELS, by and through )  
 his Guardian ad Litem, )  
 William D. Webb; DONALD E. DANIELS )  
 and ANTELA M. DANIELS, )  
 Plaintiffs, )  
 )  
 V. ) 96 CV 07442  
 )  
 EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR. )  
 THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS; )  
 THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH )  
 CAROLINA, INC.; and CARY AMERICAN LEGION )  
 POST 67, )  
 Defendants )

These are cases growing out of an auto accident involving a carload of six (6) baseball players going between games. The plaintiffs claim the 16 year old driver used an interstate exit and, at the last minute, attempted to exit. They further claim he turned too sharply for the rate of speed and rolled the car. The injuries were severe. All plaintiffs claim the driver, who was the coach's son, and the coach were agents of The American Legion.

The case has been referred to the insurance company who retained counsel. After the discovery phase, The American Legion filed a Motion for Summary Judgment. It was granted for The American Legion, the Department of North Carolina and the Post. Plaintiffs appealed. Briefs have been submitted to the Appellate Court.

Litigation Styled:

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHARLES LUCARELLI, )  
 Plaintiff ) No. 3: CV-96-1289  
 )  
 V. ) (JUDGE VANASKIE)  
 )  
 JESSIE BROWN, VETERANS AFFAIRS, )  
 POSTMASTER, WILLIAM BRADY, )  
 WILKES-BARRE, PA, POST OFFICE, )  
 ERIC LAMBERT, STATE FARM )

REPRESENTATIVE, and	)
LEONCE WILSON, AMERICAN LEGION	)
REPRESENTATIVE, WASHINGTON, D.C.	)
Defendants	)

This pro se plaintiff alleged that the defendants were guilty of mail fraud because his VA check was sent to the wrong address and that State Farm Insurance Company was responsible for an accident.

The American Legion represented him before the Bureau of Veteran Affairs in an unsuccessful attempt to restore his 70% disability for schizophrenia. The records indicate the representative of The American Legion, Barbara Stedman, did a good job even though she lost.

Plaintiff went to the Post Office to change his address. Later, his benefit checks were allegedly misdirected. He, therefore, sued Leonce Wilson the supervisor whose name appeared in the VA file as a contact person. The American Legion provided counsel to Leonce Wilson and filed a Motion to Dismiss or in the alternative, for Summary Judgment, which was granted. Mr. Lucarelli has appealed to the Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit. We prepared appeal briefs opposing his claims. His appeal was denied.

Mr. Lucarelli also filed a case in Washington, D.C. on the same issues. It was dismissed on motion by the government before The American Legion was ever served. We are informed he has filed a third case but it has not been served yet.

Litigation Styled:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,  
IN AND FOR DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

SHIRLEY CLOW and VERNON HANSON,  
Plaintiffs,

V.

THE AMERICAN LEGION, HARVEY W.  
SEEDS POST NO. 29 AMERICAN  
LEGION, INC., NICHOLAS  
WILLIAMS, and THE AMERICAN LEGION,  
DEPT. OF FLORIDA, INC.,  
Defendants

The plaintiffs filed the complaint for sexual harassment, discrimination, negligence, assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and defamation due to alleged incidents at Post No. 29. A complaint was originally filed by the plaintiffs with the EEOC, Florida Human Services and Metropolitan Dade County Equal Opportunity Board which found cause for discrimination and provided plaintiffs with a notice of right to sue and thereafter plaintiffs filed suit. A Motion for Summary Judgment will be filed. The case is pending.



Litigation Styled:

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

ALEXANDER HAMILTON POST NO. 448	)
a San Francisco Post of the	) Case No. 982097
American Legion, its members	)
and all others similarly situated,	) CLASS ACTION
Plaintiffs	) COMPLAINT
	) FOR MONEY DAMAGES,
V.	) DECLARATORY RELIEF,
	) AND PRELIMINARY AND
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF THE	) PERMANENT INJUNCTION
AMERICAN LEGION, a corporation; SAN	)
FRANCISCO COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE	)
AMERICAN LEGION, a corporation;	)
AMERICAN LEGION WAR MEMORIAL	)
COMMISSION OF SAN FRANCISCO, an	)
unincorporated association; CHARLES	)
OSWALD, an individual, DANIEL	)
LUNGREN, Attorney General of the	)
State of California	)
Defendants	)

This case was filed on behalf of members or potential members of Alexander Hamilton Post No. 448 for discrimination in alleged attempted interference with the activities, use of the building and participation as members of The American Legion. The case also alleges discouragement of potential members from joining the Hamilton Post and alleged failure to publicize the existence of the Hamilton Post and its activities in the Department's statewide publication for members. The plaintiffs allege The American Legion discriminated against gays because of its position against gays in the military and is an attempt to force The American Legion to change its position by Court Order. During the discovery process, the Court scheduled a settlement conference. At the conference, The American Legion was dismissed with prejudice.

Litigation styled:

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY PULASKI CIRCUIT COURT  
DIVISION NO. II CIVIL ACTION NO. 98-CI-00158

HOWARD O. EDWARDS;  
GLENN EDWARDS AND  
H.V.A.C. PARTS & SUPPLY, INC.  
Defendants

V.

SHARON STAFFORD;  
THE AMERICAN LEGION;

AMERICAN LEGION OF KY;  
 GOLDEN RULE PUBLISHERS;  
 WEST AMERICAN INSURANCE COMPANY and  
 HAMILTON MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY  
 and ALYEA-DOOM, INC.  
 Defendants

This is a personal injury case. The allegations of the complaint are that co-defendant, Sharon Stafford, negligently operated her vehicle in a manner causing it to collide with the vehicle of the Plaintiff, Howard O. Edwards, causing him physical injuries. The action against The American Legion, itself, is based solely on the theory that Sharon Stafford was an agent of The American Legion and acted within the scope of her authority in operating her vehicle in a negligent manner. A Motion for Summary Judgment was filed with the Court for dismissal of the Defendant, The American Legion. The Court has taken the matter under advisement. The case is still pending.

Litigation styled:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

PATRICIA MOSS;	)	
Plaintiff	)	
	)	
V.	)	CIVIL ACTION NO.:
	)	CV-98-1666
AMERICAN LEGION; AMERICAN	)	
LEGION-DEPARTMENT OF	)	
ALABAMA HEADQUARTERS;	)	
EASTERN SHORE AMERICAN	)	
LEGION POST NO. 199; A,B	)	
and/or C, the person, firm or	)	
corporation who owned, operated	)	
or maintained the wharf/pier made	)	
the basis of this suit; D,E and/or	)	
F, person, firm or corporation	)	
responsible for the maintaining of	)	
the premises at the location known	)	
as the "Legion Pier" made the basis	)	
of this suit; G,H, and/or I, person,	)	
firm or corporation responsible	)	
for the posting of warning signs	)	
at the wharf/pier made the basis	)	
of this suit; all of whose names	)	
and true legal identities are	)	
otherwise unknown at this time but	)	
who will be substituted by	)	

amendment when ascertained, )  
 individually and jointly, )  
 Defendants )

The plaintiff, Patricia Moss, allegedly a guest of a member of American Legion Post No. 199, was participating in recreational activities at the "Legion Pier" located in Fairhope, Alabama, where she was swimming. She claims she dove from the Legion Pier into the shallow water and suffered permanent injuries to her neck and spinal cord thereby rendering her quadriplegic. She is claiming negligence against the Defendants for failure to warn members, guests and invitees of the shallow water because there was no placement of signs or fencing around the property surrounding the Legion Pier. A Motion for Summary Judgment will be filed. The case is pending.

Litigation styled:

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
 FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

EMMANUEL RIOFRIR and JULIETA O.	) Case No. 024402
RIOFRIR,	)
Plaintiffs,	) AMENDED CROSS COMPLAINT
	) INDEMNITY AND DECLATORY
V.	) RELIEF BY CITY OF GLENDALE
	)
CITY OF GLENDALE, a municipal	)
entity; GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	)
DISTRICT, a public entity; and DOES 1 through	)
50, inclusive,	)
Defendants.	)
	)
CITY OF GLENDALE, a municipal	)
corporation,	)
Cross-complainant,	)
	)
V.	)
	)
NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION	)
BASEBALL; AMERICAN LEGION	)
BASEBALL; CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT	)
OF AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL;	)
AMERICAN LEGION LTD., VERDUGO	)
HILLS POST 288; FRED LINGAD;	)
ANDREW HAWKINS; GLENDALE	)
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, a	)
public entity; DOES 51 through	)
100, inclusive,	)
Cross-defendants	)

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. Decedent Julius Riofrir was pitching at batting practice at Stengel Field located in the City of Glendale, State of California. While

pitching, the Decedent Julius Riofrir was struck by a ricocheting batted ball which caused his death. It is alleged that defendants negligently, carelessly and recklessly designed, built and maintained the batting cage. At this point, the matter has been referred to our insurance company.

#### **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.

#### **Opinions Rendered**

The National Judge Advocate has rendered 1279 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 12 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 386 manuscripts have been reviewed and appropriate comments in connection therewith were transmitted, when necessary, to the Publisher or Editor of *The American Legion Magazine*.

#### ***Firing Line***

At the 1955 National Convention of The American Legion it was concluded that all statements made in each issue of the *Firing Line* should be documented and that the National Judge Advocate should approve each issue prior to publication in order to protect The

American Legion from actions in libel. In accordance therewith all issues have been reviewed and either approved by the National Judge Advocate prior to publication, or rejected in whole or in part, with appropriate comments.

**The American Legion Retirement Plan for Employees of the National Headquarters and Subordinate Groups Thereof**

In accordance with the requirements of law, the National Judge Advocate has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1997 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Retirement Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also prepared the Summary Annual Report for The American Legion Retirement Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law. A new Summary Plan Description has been distributed.

**Employees' Salary Savings (401(k)) Plan**

In accordance with the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) the office of the National Judge Advocate has filed all of the necessary Annual Return Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1997 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Employees' Salary Savings 401(k) Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also prepared the Summary Annual Report for the Employees' Salary Savings Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law. Amendments to comply with the Tax Reform Act of 1986 have been completed, filed and accepted. A Summary Plan Description has been distributed.

**Parliamentary Duties**

The National Judge Advocate attended the past National Convention of The American Legion and all meetings of the National Executive Committee and has served both bodies in the capacity of National Parliamentarian.

**Other Duties**

The National Judge Advocate functions as Secretary for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc., a subsidiary corporation and attended all but one of the board meetings of said corporation and caused the minutes of each meeting to be prepared and distributed. The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel on matters involving to date, contracts, labor issues, real estate law, postal regulations, corporate organizations and insurance.

The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel for and a director of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. In that capacity, the National Judge Advocate reviews contracts such as the trust for the flag essay scholarship fund and attends all 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. Some counties even attempt to require registrations and reports.

**Meetings of the National Retirement Committee  
And Salary Savings Committee**

The National Judge Advocate, as a member of The National Retirement Committee of National Headquarters, The American Legion, and Chairman of the Employee's Salary Savings Committee, has attended and participated in meetings held by these committees during the past year.

I have also, in response to requests, drafted legal and other documents for the use of National Officers of The American Legion and Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the past year I have met with and attended numerous conferences with officials of outside corporations and the government for the purpose of representation or for the rendering of advice and guidance for and on behalf of The American Legion on matters legal and administrative.

In conclusion, the National Judge Advocate wishes to thank all National Officers, Department Officials, and members of the National Executive Committee for the valuable assistance and cooperation extended to him during the past year.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, Executive Director**

Three major responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Director, whose office is located in the National Headquarters, Indianapolis:

- During temporary absences of the National Adjutant from The American Legion National Headquarters, he acts for him. He additionally performs such duties as may be assigned to him by the National Adjutant to assist in meeting the responsibilities of that office.
- He is in charge of the Administrative Services Division, which has the following divisions under that responsibility: Administrative Communications, Human Resources, Maintenance, Cafeteria, Library, and the E. A. Blackmore Museum.
- He serves on the Personnel Committee, Publications Board, HPC/PM Board of Directors, and the MIS Committee.

The Administrative Services Division also provides all secretarial assistance to the executive officers of The American Legion, and all Division Directors resident at the Indianapolis National Headquarters report to the Executive Director.

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS  
June 1, 1997 - May 31, 1998**

Labels extracted from main frame .....	127,356
AS/400/Gateway 2000 .....	1,309
A/M Varityper/Processor .....	58,572
Binding .....	1,200
Xerox 5390 .....	9,870,110
Print Shop .....	1,157,115

**MAIL  
June 1, 1997 through May 31, 1998**

Incoming Letters (Distributed to various Divisions for processing) .....	6,814,001
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Incoming Parcels .....	5,079
Outgoing Letters .....	938,023
Outgoing Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales) .....	8,633

#### FREIGHT AND EXPRESS

June 1, 1997 through May 31, 1998

Out (cartons) .....	11,689
Out (pounds) .....	123,044
UPS (in) .....	3,472
UPS (out) .....	16,491

#### LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

##### Library

Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Librarian

The mission of The American Legion Library is to provide an information storage and retrieval system for The American Legion.

The microfilming program has been curtailed somewhat due to the removal of our two A.B. Dick microfiche machines that have been discontinued as a result of lack of support from the manufacturer. More work will be channeled to the 16mm rotary microfilm camera while other work will be outsourced.

Indexing of documents continues. Resolutions have been indexed back to 1950. *The American Legion Magazine* index on cards is now located in the Library. Converting that to machine readable information will be a considerable task.

Requests for information have put a considerable workload on the Library staff. Many individuals who might not have picked up paper and pen have no hesitation to ask questions via e-mail. The next annual report will reflect the numbers of messages received and sent from the Library. E-mail comes from many countries, with inquiries about replacing lost military records, researching history of the 1944 GI Bill, and learning details about our nation's 20th Century wars. Many requests have brought about a need to create form letters. Requests for genealogical research and pre-20th Century are often referred to other libraries and associations.

The Web site of the Legion displays our background and this, too, generates visitors and researchers to the Library. Our collection of military unit histories is excellent and draws many historians. Some of the other major projects for publication or higher education requirements included:

- GI Bill, Public Law 16, 1943 (two different researchers)
- Memorial Day
- Popular Influences Upon the Public School Curriculum
- War Memorial Plaza History
- American Values to Children during the Cold War

Without our donations, our collection could not be as valuable as it is. One donor in particular stands out with his generous contributions. Robert H. Barnes has donated this past year such items as *Dark Side of Camelot*; *Forgotten Summers*; and *France Under the Germans*.

Among other new books added to The American Legion Library, along with the names of the donors, are the following:

- Missing Man Post 667*, donated by Post No. 667.
- So Proudly We Serve*, donated by Post No. 50.

*History and Roster of the World War I 322nd Field Signal Battalion*, donated by J. A. Emmerton.

*History of Merle Reed Post No. 124, Delano, California*, donated by Lon Chaney, Past Post Commander.

The Marshall Papers, donated by Harold E. Logsdon, Lt. Col. USAF, Ret.

The Infantry Drill Regulations Manual: U.S. Army Publication From Before The First World War donated by Ms. Maxine LaRoux.

*Tennessee Department History—1919-1933* donated by Bill Monroe.

*Combat Medic* donated by Bill Meyer.

*Finding Guide* donated by J. William Keithan, Rainbow Division Veterans Association.

*Silent Running: My Years on a World War II Attack Submarine*, donated by Nancy and Ed Hayworth in Memory of William Miller, Jr.

*James Whitcomb Riley Biography: Hoosier Poet*, donated by Alma Drysdale.

*Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, donated by David Elmore.

*Marching Into Tyranny; Black Brass; America's Pursuit of Precision Bombing, 1910-1945; Technology and the Air Force; Abortion and Family Planning; A Concise History of the Air Force; The Cold War and Beyond; Security in Cyberspace*, Hearings Before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations; *Parameters—U.S. Army War College Quarterly; Airborne Lawer; Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1994 Volume II*; Department of the Army Publications: *You and the APFT; Light Infantry Company; Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad; Light Infantry Platoon/Squad; Leadership Counseling; Fire Support Operations in Brigade-size Units; Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia; Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks—Skill Levels 2-4; Military Leadership; Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad; Physical Fitness Training; Combined Arms Breaching Operations; Soldier Team Development; The Army; Low Intensity Conflict; Civil Disturbances; Infantry, Airborne, and Air Assault Brigade Operations; Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain; Map Reading and Land Navigation; An Infantryman's Guide to Urban Combat; and Training the Force; Battlefield Technical Intelligence*, donated by Trent McNeely.

1924 Issue of *The American Legion Magazine*; *Tiger Post No. 23 Bulletin* donated by Richard M. Pedro, Department Adjutant, The American Legion of New York

1932 *Tennessee Department History* donated by Bill Monroe.

*United States Veterans' Associations Listing* donated by Benjamin Myers.

*The Portal—Company 28 United States Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland; Unit History—Amphibious Construction Battalion One and United History—125th Naval Construction Battalion* donated by Sonia L. Gordon Renner.

*Farrady Post 24, American Legion—Coordinated and donated by Matthew W. Skidmore, Sr.*

*Narrative History of Missing Man Post No. 667—July 1997-1998* donated by Noble C. Wyninegar.

General Correspondence Received and Filed .....	2,487
Subject Correspondence Received and Filed .....	1,392
Bulletins, Reports, etc. Received and Filed .....	296
Periodicals Received .....	9,905
Books, Pamphlets and <i>The American Legion Magazine</i> Catalogued .....	337
Correspondence Written by National Historian .....	430
Correspondence Written by Librarian .....	3,687
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Mailed .....	460
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Returned .....	79



Prominent Legionnaire Entries to Membership File .....	28,580
Photos Indexed .....	1,299
Requests Answered via Telephone .....	8,642
Requests Answered via Visits to Library .....	506
Follow-ups of Correspondence .....	248
Items Microfilmed .....	34,594
Requests of Membership Listing .....	102
Rolls of Microfilm Added to Stock .....	6
E-mail .....	301

### **Museum**

#### **Joseph J. Hovish, Curator**

The Emil A. Blackmore Museum continues to be visited by individuals and groups. Our visitor book also show most states represented. Countries represented include the Philippines, Mexico, Wales, England, and Russia.

As with a library's book catalog, so too the museum has begun a better organization of its material. The database should eventually lead to better displays at a reduced cost in time.

Once again, we thank our donors for their contributions to the collection. Significant objects added in the past year, with the donor's name, include the following:

Collection of Photographs, Booklets and a Post Uniform, donated by Wayne J. Page.  
War Ration Book No. 3 (48555 CM) and Book Four (618443 BP), donated by Lee A.

Hardy.

Collection of Photographs of Commander Jordan, donated by Marian Landis, Historian, The American Legion of California.

1879 Silver Dollar, donated by John Jacks.

1973 Vietnam Era USAF Uniform and 1970's Fatigue Shirt, donated by Steve Robertson, Legislative Director, The American Legion Washington Office.

National Guard Heritage Poster by Keith Rocco, donated by W. Marshal Chaney, Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans.

American League Game Ball with Phil 'Scooter' Rizzuto's Autograph, donated by Keith Pickett, Post No. 8, Washington, DC.

1921 Kansas City Journal Newspaper Covering the National Convention, donated by Mrs. Shirley Bright.

2 Home run Baseballs from the 1926 American Legion World Series hit by John McCormick, donated by Jim Doris.

U.S. Army Badges and Insignia, donated by Pam Maroska.

Naval Insignia, donated by Sonia Gordon Renner.

"In Their Own Words" Video, donated by Jim Terr.

U.S. Flag flown atop Mt. Suribachi, donated by James Bradley.

Mr. Robert H. Barnes donated the following First Day Covers—Stamps: First Supersonic Flight 1947 (2); U.S. Department of the Air Force (2); 50th Anniversary of Declaration—WORLD WAR II (2); Charles Lindbergh; Royal Honeymoon—Gibraltar, August 1, 1981/Prince Philip and Princess Diane; Women in the Military (silk); Ft. McHenry Commemoration (silk); Humphrey Bogart; The Stars & Stripes Forever!; 5 stamps from Universal Studios/Hollywood; 5 mini prints of the Classic American Aircraft First Day Covers. Mr. Barnes also donated World War I, World War II, Korea and Southeast Asia KIA and MIA Microfiche; and RAF 80th Anniversary and The Battle of Britain Tea Towels.

### INTERNET OPERATIONS

**Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Director**

The Internet Operations Center of The American Legion continues to be proven as a valuable source of information to the organization and its members. Through the use of the Internet, The American Legion website (<http://www.legion.org>) provides the organization with an efficient and effective means in which to communicate with not only fellow Legionnaires, but also to the general public.

The American Legion's website provides over 900 webpages of information relating to the organization and is divided into easy to navigate areas. Some of the more popular areas include: American Legion Baseball, Gulf War health issues, Flag education, Boys State and Boys Nation, News Releases, *The Dispatch*, and *The American Legion Magazine*, to name a few.

The Internet Operations staff is also responsible for the management and maintenance of the Citizens Flag Alliance website. The Citizens Flag Alliance website provides over 175 pages of the most current Flag protection amendment information to the 130 member organizations of the CFA representing over 20 million Americans.

Membership is the life blood of the organization and membership acquisition is vital. Through the tracking of forms, 722 new members have been signed up this year via information provided from The American Legion's website.

With the addition of the webserver, The American Legion can offer the low cost virtual hosting and design for Departments websites, List-serves to provide an efficient communications vehicle, comprehensive search engine, and forms available in Adobe Acrobat for cross platform viewing and printing.

Future enhancements include expansion of the Legislative and Economics areas, online membership sign-ups, and interactive chat areas.

Staff assigned to this area include one full time manager, one temporary part-time assistant and one summer intern.

### MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES (MIS) DIVISION

**Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director**

MIS Staff plays a key role in the selection of all software to be used by National Headquarters staff. Training on the selected software as well as support and modifications are performed by our Staff. MIS also determines and procures the hardware to be used by employees of National Headquarters and is responsible for troubleshooting and maintaining the equipment.

MIS 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 MIS Division administers. This software ensures that all mailings are done at the lowest cost by complying with US Postal Services guidelines.

The MIS Division also has the capability to perform high-speed personalized laser printing. Annual membership cards, membership solicitation letters, renewal notices, return

address labels for the Departments' revenue programs, mailing labels for various publications and a variety of letters and fund-raising pieces are all printed by MIS.

#### **AMERICANISM COMMISSION**

**Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., New Hampshire, Chairman**

**Marty Justis, Maryland, Director**

The Americanism Commission of The American Legion was created by a recommendation adopted by the National Convention of The American Legion held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1919. It read: "We recommend the establishment of a National Americanism Commission of The American Legion whose duty it shall be to endeavor to realize in the United States the basic ideal of this Legion of 100 percent Americanism through the planning, establishment and conduct of a continuous, constructive educational system."

It is the objective of the Americanism Commission to translate Americanism precepts, principles and ideals in an understanding and practical manner to Legion Posts and other groups and individuals, including young America.

While the Americanism program consists of a broad, objective, general plan that features wide-range community service, better citizenship, youth development and counter-subversive activities, the efforts of the Americanism Commission are educational in nature and embrace these specific objectives:

- Promote understanding of the principles of democratic governmental problems, and bringing more citizens to think seriously of the duties of citizenship;
- Give sound, practical service in our communities, working to make these communities better and safer places in which to live;
- Emphasize religion, encouraging its continuation in the life of every citizen;
- Encourage education in every possible manner, presenting school awards, sponsoring and conducting oratorical contests, cooperating with education and citizenship groups, promoting proper flag etiquette and display, and sponsoring objective youth development programs;
- Do important work for the youth of America, sponsoring American Legion Baseball, the National High School Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Boy Scout activities and many other citizenship and objective training activities;
- Work for the assimilation of aliens through schools of citizenship and other agencies and stand for the restriction of immigration so that this assimilation may approach perfection; and
- Combat subversion and all un-American groups and activities which have for their aim the downfall of democracy in America.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued to be actively involved in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among our legislative priorities are opposition to illegal entry of aliens into this country, voluntary prayer in public buildings, bilingual education alternatives and English as the official language of the United States. The most recent legislative initiative of The American Legion is the continuing efforts to obtain a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws.

This Commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of two standing committees: The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education.

The Americanism Commission participates each year in The American Legion's series of National Information Conferences. These conferences are held at eight locations in different regions of the country during the months of September and October. The Commission uses these workshops as an opportunity to train and provide information to Americanism program volunteers.

Following is a summary of various programs which are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 1997-98 American Legion year.

#### **Boys State/Boys Nation**

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its present form of government, it must have a citizenry which has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what the Boys State program does for the young men of our Nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government through the state level.

It was 63 years ago that Legionnaires in the state of Illinois recognized the need for a program that would help high school boys understand and appreciate the government they were learning about in the classroom. It was a time in the history of this Nation when un-American ideas seriously threatened the future of the Nation. The whole idea of Boys State, then and now, is to show young people that beyond a doubt, our form of government is good; but its preservation depends on intelligent, informed and loyal citizens in combination with an honest and impartial administration of government activities.

Ten years after the inception of Boys State as a program of the Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a program similar to Boys State at the National level and in 1946, began sponsorship of American Legion Boys Nation. This year, The American Legion celebrated its 52nd anniversary session of Boys Nation.

Both Boys State and Boys Nation are unique programs that emphasize participation and personal experience in a respective model "state" and "nation" that is complete with its governing bodies and elected officials.

Each year, more than 28,000 young Americans take part in Boys State, and through 63 years, the program has graduated well over one and a half million young men.

Every year, each Boys State selects two outstanding graduates to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation. In 1998, the program was again held in Washington, DC, July 17-25, and it introduced delegates first-hand to the structure and function of the federal government.

The week of government training in the Nation's Capital combines lectures and forums with visitations to federal agencies and institutions, shrines and historical points in and about Washington, DC. Actual participation in the political process is highlighted through the week to include the organization of party conventions and the nomination and election of a Boys Nation president and vice president. In addition to federal legislators and representatives of federal agencies, American Legion officials and other leaders of national distinction participate in Boys Nation. Kevin Sladek (TX) was elected President of the 53rd anniversary session of Boys Nation. He will join the youth champion delegation as a guest of the National Commander at the National Convention of The American Legion in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 29-September 3, 1998.

#### **National High School Oratorical Contest**

The American Legion has awarded over two million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual National High School

**Oratorical Contest.** This program, in its 62nd year, was recognized by the Federal Commission for the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution as a program of "exceptional merit." Additionally, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed the program on the NASSP National Advisory List of Contests and Activities for 1998-99.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to his government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant, taking not less than eight nor more than ten minutes for delivery. Each contestant must also give an assigned topic presentation on a constitutional topic (not known until the time of the contest) taking not less than three nor more than five minutes for delivery.

Funds totaling \$138,000 in college scholarships are available to the fifty-four National level contestants, with the winner receiving an \$18,000 scholarship. Funds for these awards are provided by The American Legion Life Insurance Fund. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National Organization, there are several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of the intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 61st annual National Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana. The three finalists were: First place—Erin Plettenberg, Parkton, Maryland; second place—Loren Rozakos, Pacifica, California; third place—Amanda Bryant, Anderson, South Carolina.

#### **Boys Scouts of America**

The American Legion charts approximately 2,500 Scout Units in communities across the country involving more than 75,000 youth. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion selected Mark Sukraw of Bennington, Nebraska, as its 1998 Eagle Scout of the Year. His selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive an \$8,000 scholarship.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. They were Jason Donald of Merritt Island, Florida; Curtis Mullins, Jr., Grundy, Virginia; and David Ellison, Springfield, Virginia (representing the Department of Maryland).

In addition, an estimated 1,300 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

#### **Junior Shooting Sports Program**

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national Americanism program administered through Post-sponsored Junior Shooting Clubs. The purpose of the program is to provide gun safety and marksmanship training for young people 14 through 20 years of age and to offer a wholesome recreational activity through organized competition. The Junior Shooting Sports Programs has 474 active clubs with 1,391 young people participating.

The sixth annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 5-8, 1998, at the Olympic Training Center range in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The tournament climaxed two rounds of postal matches which began shortly after the first of the year and involved nearly 1,400 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in each category, as well as in each of the three positions of prone, kneeling and standing.

The 1998 winners were Melody Cook of Kentucky (Sporter) and Kelly Dove of Georgia (Precision). Both received \$750 scholarships.

#### **Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund**

The American Legion develops, publicizes and administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund. This Fund, established in 1957, was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in either supervision, administration or teaching. These prospective positions must have a direct relationship in the areas of care and prevention as it relates to lung and respiratory diseases. The Eight and Forty, for the year 1998-99, awarded twenty-two \$2,500 scholarships to recipients in thirteen states for one year's study to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 42 years to 697 scholarships, totaling \$1,314,500 to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 1999-2000 school year.

#### **Flag Education**

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, hundreds of letters, phone calls, and electronic mail messages are routinely answered giving factual information on the display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

Additionally, over 65,000 copies of our publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* and more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, *Flag of the United States How to Display It, How to Respect It* are distributed annually to schools, organizations and individuals. This information is sent at little or no cost to all who request it.

In 1988, The American Legion published *Our Country's Flag* for use in elementary schools. Well over a million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced. In May, 1995, the newest education booklet *I Pledge Allegiance* was published, also for use in elementary schools.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the U.S. Flag from physical desecration. A total of 49 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions as of August 1, 1995, in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact and enforce flag protection laws.

#### **Service to God and Country**

A program of basic Americanism, "Service to God and Country," seeks to prevent the spiritual decay of America by charging the citizenry with a spirit of positive Americanism, respect for law, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

"Service to God" emphasizes regular public worship, daily family prayer and the religious education of children, while "Service to Country" attempts to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and Nation. These objectives are aimed at preparing young Americans to take up tomorrow's responsibilities by teaching them moral and spiritual values, renewed interest in our Country's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, ideals of loyalty, honesty and physical fitness.

Each year, a Conference for the Department Chaplains is held under the direction of the National Chaplain. Training and program information is provided for further dissemination to District and Post Chaplains who coordinate the program at the local level.

#### **American Legion Baseball**

American Legion Baseball marks its 73rd season in 1998. Over 90,000 players on 5,000 teams participated in this American Legion Americanism youth activity during the past year.

More than 17 million dollars in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. Almost 1.2 million dollars is appropriated by the Legion's National Organization to conduct eight Regional Tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Forty former Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. They include Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Pee Wee Reese, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Willie Stargel, Stan Musial, Carl Yastrzemski, Warren Spahn, Brooks Robinson, Frank Robinson, Phil Niekro, Tommy Lasorda and Nellie Fox.

Over 64 percent of the Major League ballplayers and almost 72 percent of college players competed in American Legion Baseball as teenagers. The lessons learned on the baseball diamond, such as leadership, teamwork, respect for the rules, are lessons that are learned for a lifetime.

#### **COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

**F. Rodney Loper, Pennsylvania, Chairman**

The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee, since its establishment by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 17, 1950, has scrutinized and continues to monitor what is transpiring in the realm of subversion and terrorism. This is a program of the Americanism Commission and detailed reports of its activities are given to the National Executive Committee at its Spring and Fall Meetings and at National Convention.

The Committee is responsible for furnishing background information on assigned resolutions that are considered by the National Americanism Commission for recommended action to the National Executive Committee or the National Convention.

The National Americanism Commission has long been concerned about anti-American activities and, in 1952, developed a publication known as *Firing Line*, which began regular dissemination of information on certain groups and organizations participating in activities of a subversive nature.

Every effort is made to maintain a publication which is current and up-to-date. During the past year, *Firing Line* has reported on matters concerning desecration of the U.S. Flag, illegal immigration, espionage and terrorism.

#### **NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Dr. Charles L. Vawter, Jr., Arizona, Chairman**

The Committee on Education, established in 1976, is the only joint committee comprised of members of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee on Education are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to

recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American Legion, educators, students and other organizations concerned with the well-being of education throughout the Nation.

Education was one of the first major concerns of The American Legion. In 1921, the organization committed itself to a constructive support of education. During the years which followed, The American Legion developed a formal Policy on Education.

The American Legion has always supported the principle that education is a necessary prerequisite to the successful functioning of a democracy. While recognizing the right of private and religious groups to maintain schools, The American Legion vigorously subscribes to the necessity for a publicly supported education system to ensure that every American child has the opportunity for an adequate education. The American Legion believes that popular self-government as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, cannot continue to exist unless there is the bulwark of a continuing system of free public education. Not only does proper national defense require trained personnel, but every phase of life today demands that we have competent citizens who are qualified, willing and able to discharge their responsibilities.

The availability of educational opportunity for every individual to pursue his own development is a prerequisite to the achievement of all other social goals. Our education system must be designed to provide every person with the means to reach his potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers which it requires. In turn, we will have greater assurance of economic growth, of sound decision-making, and the knowledge necessary to promote our national security.

The American education system should produce citizens who understand and are dedicated to principles of free enterprise; to democratic principles and processes; and whose devotion to freedom and human dignity goes beyond mere lip service.

The Education Program consists of four basic elements: (1) recognition of local systems through observance of American Education Week; (2) dissemination of scholarship and financial aid information through the publication of *Need A Lift?*; (3) promotion of involvement by American Legion Posts and American Legion Auxiliary Units in a community-wide effort to enhance the programs and policies of the local schools through the guidelines provided in the handbook PACT (Post, Auxiliary, Community Together); and (4) scholarship programs.

American Education Week is an annual event co-sponsored nationally by The American Legion. The observance was originally established by The American Legion with the help of the National Education Association in 1921. The major objective of this program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is "Teaching Children to Think and Dream." The observance will be November 15-21, 1998.

The publication *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains more than 152 pages of scholarships, grants and loan information, work-study cooperative programs and sources of career information for all students. There is a section directed toward opportunities for veterans and their dependents. Another section lists scholarships and financial aid available from Departments of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary totaling more than \$600,000. *Need A Lift?* also contains an electronic scholarship search application which the student can request at a reduced cost. Each fall, complimentary copies of *Need A Lift?* are sent to over 25,000 high schools across the nation. In all, last year over 100,000 copies of *Need A Lift?* were distributed from the Legion's National Headquarters.

A companion to *Need A Lift?* is the pamphlet *A Guide for Parents and Students* which contains planning and financial aid information for high school students and their parents.



Each year, distribution of more than 100,000 copies of each of these publications is handled through American Legion Posts, schools, counselors and librarians, by mail and through distribution at national education conventions. Copies of these publications can also be obtained by writing The American Legion National Emblem Sales Division, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Individual copies of *Need A Lift?* are \$3.00 each, prepaid. *A Guide for Parents and Students* is available at a cost of \$12.50 per 500 or \$18.75 per 1,000 copies, prepaid.

Scholarship programs include the National High School Oratorical Contest, Eagle Scout of the Year, Buick American Legion Baseball Leadership Scholarships, the Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship and Samsung American Legion Scholarships. Through these scholarship programs, worthy students are able to further their education.

The PACT Handbook is the guide for The American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the program, ideas and suggestions for activities, coordinating concepts and a typical calendar for a successful program. Programs covered in the handbook include: Citizenship Education, Career Education activities such as career nights, community resource files, Adopt-A-School, how to promote American Education Week, and financial aid nights.

Over 34,000 students are recipients of The American Legion School Award Medal each year. This award is designed to recognize the student for the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. The award is presented to a boy and girl upon graduation from elementary school, junior high/middle school or high school.

The American Legion believes that the citizens of this Country should be dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the entire realm of intellectual endeavor; that our people should recognize those persons who have developed their intellectual abilities to the fullest extent; that teachers should enrich their knowledge, particularly in the field in which they teach and that scholarship assistance to deserving students should be expanded.

Such an educational program will fulfill the dreams of the past, the aspirations of the present and the needs of the future. The American Legion supports such a system of education and believes that the vitality of our democratic way of life is dependent upon such schools.

#### **Americanism Commission Executive Section**

Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., Rollingsford, New Hampshire - Chairman  
Daniel J. O'Connor, New Fairfield, Connecticut - Chairman Emeritus  
Paul B. Phifer, Jr., Richmond, Virginia - Vice-Chairman  
Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska - Commander's Representative  
Kermit Holtgrewe, Belleville, Illinois - Consultant  
Earl B. Wright, Severna Park, Maryland - Consultant

#### **COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman Marty Justis, Maryland, Director**

Since our beginning, The American Legion has actively voiced concerns related to the care, welfare, and education of our Nation's children and youth. As early as November 1919, we were asking local Posts to aid the widows and children of our deceased comrades.

Throughout the decades that followed, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. Our early

years were devoted to progressive child care and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations, many states and communities were urged to improve their own child welfare provisions.

This development of new and improved public programs designed to provide economic security for children, made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other problem areas affecting young people. To date there exists no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency - private or governmental - in its ability to expand into every arena of concern for child welfare and child health.

The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'." This remains our ultimate goal and the definite challenge for the years ahead.

To attain this goal, The American Legion, in 1925, adopted the "Whole Child" plan which states: "every child should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity." Its foundation is based on three guiding principles:

- i. To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society, recognizing that the most normal environment for children is a home with their own parents.
- ii. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth. Always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
- iii. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines For Action, working together:

- i. PREVENTION - Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
- ii. EDUCATION - Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
- iii. LEGISLATION - Maintaining a knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws which affect young people at the national, state and local levels.
- iv. MATERIAL AID - Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past seventy-nine years, The American Legion's Children & Youth Program has contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. While our list of achievements is extensive, it is by no means complete nor completed. The American Legion has, and will continue, its deep community-centered interest in children to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. At present, there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. But all of us know that our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training which we, as parents and citizens, provide for all children today.

The American Legion is proud of the Legionnaires, and the members of its affiliated organizations, and their achievements on behalf of our nation's youth. Their efforts in the

area of child welfare are a living testament to the ability of an organization of free men and women to adapt itself to evolving needs, while maintaining high principles and taking on increased responsibilities under those principles.

#### **1997-98 Program**

Each year, during the month of May, The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth meets to discuss what programs it wants to emphasize for the coming program year. The National staff is then directed to research these areas of concern and publish materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 1997-98, our Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following problem areas which directly impact our young people on the National level:

- i. Family Emphasis
- ii. Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
- iii. Missing Children

**Family emphasis:** The family is the cornerstone of American society. But today, modern society places demands on the family that did not exist in years past—demands that can chip away at family strength and unity. Two-income families are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Divorced families, step-families, and single-parent families have reached all-time highs. More teenagers than ever hold down part-time jobs. Children are placed in day care centers at earlier ages. Instead of safety in their neighborhoods, adolescents face physical danger; instead of economic security, they face uncertainty; instead of intellectual stimulation, they face boredom; in place of respect, they are neglected; lacking clear and consistent adult expectations for them, they feel alienated from mainstream American society.

For many years, the Commission on Children & Youth has, by mandate, advocated the passage of federal legislation designating the week of Thanksgiving as National Family Week. Many organizations have joined us in this quest. It is now our position to continue to push for legislation, but in the mean time, to conduct our own observance of this important event.

Many activities have been outlined to help us bring the basic unit in America, the family, into proper perspective. As an example: SUNDAY—Religion Day—Whatever your faith, share its importance with our young. MONDAY—Home Day—Focus attention on the responsibility a parent and children have to each other. TUESDAY—Education Day—Self-discipline, the key to excellence, is essential at all levels of education. WEDNESDAY—Community Day—Your family's role in the community. THURSDAY—Nature Day—Discipline serves to nature's laws and beauty. SATURDAY—Recreation Day or Religious Observance Day.

**Juvenile delinquency prevention:** Over the last three decades, violent crime has increased by more than 500 percent. America leads the industrialized world in rates of murder, rape and violent crime. Nearly three out of four convicted criminals are not incarcerated. Fewer than one in ten serious crimes results in imprisonment.

The American Legion is seriously concerned about the recent high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation. While juveniles account for approximately 35 percent of our population, they account for better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Uniform Crime Reports.

During one typical day in the lives of American children, the FBI reports indicate 2 children younger than age 5 are murdered, 248 children are arrested for drug abuse, and 427

children are arrested for alcohol abuse or drunk driving. In 1991, one out of every four Americans arrested was a teenager. In that year, approximately 2.7 million American youth, age 10 to 19, were arrested and a growing number are spending time in jail. The juvenile arrest rate for murder has doubled between 1978 and 1990. For that same period, we have seen juvenile arrests for aggravated assault increase by two-thirds, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increase by 60 percent, and the juvenile arrest rate for rape increase by almost 40 percent.

Through the urging of The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth during the 1996 Spring meetings, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention was unanimously approved as one of our major areas of concern. We have developed support materials to be disseminated to communities through our volunteer network of Legion members. In addition, we are in the process of developing a plan for community action in combating the problem of Juvenile Delinquency.

**Missing children:** According to national estimates, the number of children who disappear each year ranges from one million to as many as two million. Many of these children are considered runaways, but of the approximately 150,000 children who are abducted each year, 50,000 are taken by strangers and 100,000 are taken by non-custodial parents of divorces or separations. This is a problem that not only threatens the family way of life, but the very existence of children that most often are too young to help themselves.

To combat this growing problem, The American Legion, in a nationwide program, is emphasizing a program of public information and precautionary steps for parents to take to avoid the tragedy of missing children. By utilizing resources and volunteers at the local, state and national levels, we have been getting the word out.

In addition, The American Legion, in conjunction with the National Crime Prevention Council, continues The American Legion/McGRUFF Safe Kids Communities Program. A key part of the program involves the distribution of the McGRUFF Safe Kids Identification Kits to children ages 4 through 12. These booklets contain safety tips and include a child identification record complete with fingerprint ink. The kit offers families an opportunity to review, in positive and non-threatening ways, personal safety guidelines and procedures. We plan to organize community distribution of these kits, working in conjunction with local law enforcement, schools and other organizations concerned with protecting children and increasing community safety.

### **New Programs**

The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth adopted two new programs during 1997-98. They are the Children's Miracle Network and the Disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

The Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals which treat 12 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.

The Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to ensuring that 100 percent of local donations made through CMN Champions (the continuing theme of CMN's fund-raising campaign) stay in the community in which they were made to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

The Commission voted to encourage its Departments and Posts to work with and support their local CMN-affiliated children's hospitals to benefit the health and well being

of our nation's children. A program guidebook was developed and is available to our membership outlining the current program.

The Disabled Youth Leadership Forums are designed to educate our next generation of disabled leaders. The forums are an outgrowth of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD). Their goal is to continue expanding roles in the disabled work force by providing leadership skills to disabled youth of today to better fill our society's needs of tomorrow.

A pilot program has been held in California for the last five years. The PCEPD hopes to incorporate this program into all states with the help of organizations like The American Legion.

The Commission voted to urge the Departments to provide leadership, support and to work closely with their respective State Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to assist in the establishment of disabled Youth Leadership Forums. In addition, the Commission urged local Posts to encourage and sponsor disabled young people from their communities to actively participate in these disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

### **Continuing Programs**

**Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA):** This is the landmark program of the Commission on Children & Youth. Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. The past few years have seen a steady increase in the amounts of assistance required for needy veteran families. In 1997, the program aided 1,077 children with over \$373,691.00 in grants. From its beginning to present, this fund has assisted veterans' families with millions of dollars in non-repayable grants.

The fund is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and health expense items when the parents are unable to do so; thereby helping to keep the child, or children, in a more stable home environment.

Through TFA, a Post may call upon the Americanism and Children & Youth Division of The American Legion for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children. Funds can be granted over a temporary period to eligible children when it has been determined by investigation that the child is in need and that no other sources are available, or those that are available are inadequate. It is important to note, while the veteran must have served honorably on active duty during a designated war period, the veteran does not have to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

As sure as The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in the world, there are veterans' families who require help. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because the father is sick or disabled, deceased, or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion; and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program is the vital tool which is used to help meet the maintenance and health needs of veterans' children, thereby allowing the child to develop in the home.

**Halloween:** The "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night" program is now entering its 24th year of National emphasis. In 1972, the Commission on Children & Youth realized Halloween was no longer the carefree, happy occasion it had once been for our nation's young people. Nationwide attention was focused on our children being maimed and drugged by "treats" they had gathered from neighbors on Halloween. In response, the Commission established a community-oriented program on Halloween Safety.

There are many activities that can be planned at the community level to reduce the risks of children being harmed during this time of the year. A haunted house maze, carnival

activities, costume parades with prizes awarded for the most imaginative and safest costume, or a party for older youngsters with a Halloween theme.

The Commission on Children & Youth of The American Legion publishes a brochure that provides safety tips to aid children and parents in keeping this a fun and festive occasion. These brochures are available through our state organizations and all are encouraged to use them to help protect the well-being of our children.

In 1992, the Commission added a project guide. This guide, produced again in 1997, provides suggestions to local Posts on how to prepare for a safe Halloween. In addition, there are sample press releases, mayoral proclamations, and radio and TV spot announcements. All are designed to be used in conjunction with the brochure to help ensure that all children "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night."

Regional children & youth award program (VISION): This is a recognition program for our Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units. Each year, we encourage our Posts and Units to submit a project they have conducted during the past year that has benefited the youth of their community. As an incentive, beautiful plaques and lapel pins dated for the program year are presented to the winners and awarded in the presence of their peers at their National Leadership Workshop held each fall.

Whether it is a Certificate of Participation, a Certificate of Excellence, or a plaque and lapel pin, all Posts are winners. But the true winners in a program such as this are the children and youth of the various communities throughout the country. They are the ones that ultimately benefit from these efforts.

Child safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920's. Until recently, child safety had been one of our major areas of concern, continuing on a yearly basis. In 1992, the Commission on Children & Youth, in a unanimous decision, voted to designate the Child Safety program as one of our Annual, or Continuing Programs. In the Spring of 1996, the Commission placed Immunization under Child Safety as a Continuing Program.

Child safety is defined as any external event which may present a significant danger to a child or young person. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child Abuse and Neglect
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Indoor/Outdoor Safety
4. School Safety
5. Playground Safety
6. Childhood Communicable Diseases
7. Accidents (automobile, drownings, firearms)
8. Fire Safety
9. Substance Abuse
10. Teenage Suicide

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 25,000 children under the age of 19 will die in automobile crashes, drownings, fires, and through the improper use of firearms. Even in somewhat environmentally controlled homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Our Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to assure our children have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

Alcohol, marijuana and cocaine are considered "gateway drugs" for thousands of young people throughout the United States. The great tragedy of substance abuse, which continues to infest all levels of our society, is its prevalence among elementary school age children. Most come in contact with drugs by age seven.

Prevention education is part of the answer, but it must begin early. Children, of all ages, need to be taught drug awareness, and the physical and mental dangers involved with the use of all substances, to include the legal drugs of alcohol and tobacco. The American Legion considers a child's future to be very important. Our brochure "Gateway Drugs" is designed to let young people stop and think about what they may be doing to themselves, and how what they do can affect others. The key to their future is responsible decision making. As concerned citizens, we must never give up in our battle against drugs. We must strive to increase awareness, and show our children that we care about both them and their future.

According to statistics, the suicide rate for persons under the age of 21 has tripled since 1960. Every hour, at least one American teenager or young adult has committed suicide and as many as 40 others have made the attempt. Research findings from around the country indicate that eight out of ten people who kill themselves give some warning of their intentions. Because of this, it is imperative for any adult who has daily contact with young people to acquaint themselves with the warning signs of suicide if we are to decrease the numbers in this tragic area. The American Legion volunteers continue their work to educate parents, schools and communities on this epidemic killer of our nation's young people. We, as parents and concerned citizens, cannot afford to let one of our greatest national resources go to waste.

Immunization levels of preschool children have been steadily declining during the past few years. According to a national study released in 1992, the United States ranks behind 16 other nations in the proportion of infants immunized against polio. When the proportion of U.S. nonwhite infants adequately immunized is compared to other nations, the United States ranks 70th in the world.

The Commission on Children & Youth of The American Legion adopted Immunization as one of their continuing programs. With the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Commission developed and produced the brochure, "Don't Hesitate...Vaccinate!"

The American Legion continues to play a major role in assisting public health departments in effectively getting the message out. In addition, through their leadership the Legion family is helping to build local support for the resources needed to enhance the immunization services in their respective communities. The American Legion recognizes that children are our greatest natural resource and as such, should therefore be afforded every opportunity to receive the necessary treatment and immunization to protect themselves against all vaccine-preventable diseases.

Through the combined effort of our volunteers, and the education of our fellow citizens, we are helping to provide for the security, health and welfare vital for all our children to grow up safely.

#### **National Information Conferences**

Our Commission on Children & Youth has been very encouraged by the attendance of our volunteers. At the 1997 set of conferences, we again saw an increase of attendees for both Legion and Auxiliary members. At these workshops, we share our programs and methods of implementation with the Posts and Units. In 1997, our NIC's were:

Region 1 - Manchester, New Hampshire—September 19-21  
 Region 2 - Cherry Hill, New Jersey—September 26-28  
 Region 3 - Raleigh, North Carolina—September 26-28  
 Region 4 - Biloxi, Mississippi—September 19-21  
 Region 5 - Springfield, Missouri—September 12-14  
 Region 6 - Council Bluffs, Iowa—October 3-5  
 Region 7 - Las Vegas, Nevada—September 12-14  
 Region 8 - Post Falls, Idaho—October 3-5

We move our National Information Conferences each year, from city to city within each Region. This gives Posts in each area the opportunity to send representatives at a very minimal cost. Our major goal is to help children, and our presence at these outreach workshops is really having a positive impact on our annual program.

### **Legislative Efforts**

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one of the means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goal during the 1997-1998 program year. At our National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3 - 5, 1996, the following mandates were introduced for our attention during this Congress:

**Children in Pornographic Literature:** Res. 276-1996. Studies indicate that there is a direct and strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes. Additional data reveals that child pornography, "kiddy porn," is often found in the personal effects of child molesters after their arrest. The American Legion is firm in its position that the interstate transportation of obscene material must be stopped and that the United States Postal Service be provided sufficient investigators to enforce existing federal laws against pornography and the transportation of pornographic material.

**Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature:** Res. 280-1996 As there have been attempts to eliminate protective laws from the criminal code regarding the production, distribution and sale of pornographic and obscene literature, The American Legion is strongly opposed to any attempt to weaken existing laws.

**Reaffirming Immunization Program:** Res. 279-1996 The American Legion realizes that in today's society there is no place for communicable disease for which there is a vaccine. Though true, we also realize that several childhood communicable diseases breakout annually because children are not properly vaccinated. It is our belief that full protection is available and that the state and federal governments should provide sufficient funding so that indigent families with children can receive the necessary immunizations against all communicable diseases.

**Violence and Vandalism in the Schools:** Res. 282-1996 Juveniles account for nearly 35 percent of our population and better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Crime Reports. Much of that crime is directed to the over \$500 million damage done to Government-supported institutions, specifically schools and housing. With this violence and vandalism in our Nation's institutions is an enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential. The American Legion urges that local school boards, law enforcement agencies and their state organizations develop a balanced and effective program to reduce and prevent violence and vandalism in educational institutions. Further, Congress is urged to enact legislation through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish a grant program to assist in these efforts.



**National Family Week: Res. 274-1996** One of the basic principles of our program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country...the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and stability to our society. Every year we urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

**School Nutrition Program: Res. 281-1996** 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 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. 283-1996** It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Through our Temporary Financial Assistance program, we have seen an increase in the case load of needy medical problems. Unfortunately, many of our children are not receiving the necessary medical care due to the extreme requirements placed on the financial abilities of the average family. Consequently, children with severe catastrophic illnesses are not receiving the needed medical care. The rising cost of medical care in such cases is not covered by even the best medical policies. The American Legion believes that the state and federal governments should enact legislation to assist financially, those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

**Drug Trafficking: Res. 277 -1996** We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution is to urge funding to all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of these substances that are being made available in this Country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users.

**Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 278-1996** 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 created by a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country, we urge legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

**Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Res. 275-1996** The American Legion is vitally concerned about the high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation each year. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is organized: to develop and encourage the implementation of national standards for the administration of juvenile justice; to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, including methods with a specific focus on maintaining and strengthening the family unit so that juveniles may be retained in their homes; to develop effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization; and to coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children. The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention program now promoted by the OJJDP has proven effective in many states. The American Legion opposes any and all efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs because of a lack of funding. The need to bring the national economy under control cannot over-shadow or ignore the need to further the Office of Juvenile Justice and its programs which may be our national defense against an impending escalation of juvenile crime in America.

These are the highlights of our 1997-98 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged its Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances as they deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. Our Children & Youth legislation program is a never-ending process, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children—everywhere.

#### **Children & Youth Expenditures**

Annually, as it has for the past 74 years, the National Commission on Children & Youth records activities from nearly 16,000 Posts of The American Legion; 12,000 Units of the American Legion Auxiliary; and hundreds of Salons of the Eight and Forty. In addition, the expenditures of Departments and of the National Organization are obtained for the 12-month period of June 1 through May 31, and combined with these reports.

This year, Posts and Departments of the Legion reported expenditures of \$16,968,448. To this amount, we proudly add \$5,784,131 by the Auxiliary. An additional \$328,534 was given to 528 families in need through our Temporary Financial Assistance program. To this we add other contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation in the amount of \$209,300. This amounts to a grand total of expenditures and contributions to the total Children & Youth program in 1997-98 of \$23,290,413.

#### **Children & Youth Literature**

During the 1997-98 program year, tens of thousands of pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division as it attempted to further the objectives of our total program.

As shown in Table 5, our most popular brochures are related to our major points of emphasis—Missing Children, Child Safety, Substance Abuse Prevention and Teenage Suicide Prevention. It is of further interest to note that some 7,775 citations were distributed to Departments in order to recognize Posts for their contributions to the overall Children & Youth Program.

#### **Appreciation Acknowledged**

The Commission on Children & Youth and its Chairman must take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of the Legion and the Auxiliary. Many hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice cannot be repaid. We are indeed thankful that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in The American Legion. Special mention must also go to our National Commander Anthony Jordan; not because of his rank, but because of his sincere dedication and verbal support for our program during this past year. Likewise special thanks to National Adjutant Robert Spanogle for his support and cooperation. The American Legion does an excellent job with this program, but the record must be clear. Without the assistance of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion, our National Children & Youth Program would have little chance for success.

Table No. 1

Region and Department	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
REGION 1												
Connecticut	99%	100%	0	16,632	423,775	104,850	444,829	444,829	425,730	4911	7740	4188,088
Delaware	99%	99%	1,000	133	87,573	187,185	187,185	187,185	187,185	490	214	4341,171
Florida	99%	100%	0	2,883	179,782	274,480	128,779	1,389	1,890	41831	1,890	4884,335
Georgia	72%	0%	1,000	2,874	88,789	84,298	72,052	0	389	4470	1194	483,732
Illinois	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Indiana	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Michigan	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Minnesota	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Mississippi	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Montana	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Nebraska	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Nevada	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
New Hampshire	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
New Jersey	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
New Mexico	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
New York	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
North Carolina	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
North Dakota	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Ohio	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Oklahoma	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Oregon	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Rhode Island	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
South Carolina	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
South Dakota	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Tennessee	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Texas	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Utah	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Vermont	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Virginia	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Washington	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
West Virginia	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Wisconsin	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
Wyoming	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
TOTAL	99%	100%	0	418	121,527	182,904	136,909	280	476	18079	4617,082	4117,082
REGION 2												
Alabama	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Arkansas	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
California	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Colorado	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Connecticut	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Delaware	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
D.C.	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Florida	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Georgia	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Idaho	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Illinois	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Indiana	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Iowa	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Kansas	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Kentucky	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Louisiana	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Maine	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Manitoba	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Massachusetts	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Michigan	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Minnesota	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Mississippi	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Missouri	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Montana	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Nebraska	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Nevada	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
New Hampshire	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
New Jersey	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
New Mexico	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
New York	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
North Carolina	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
North Dakota	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Ohio	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Oklahoma	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Oregon	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Rhode Island	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
South Carolina	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
South Dakota	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Tennessee	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Texas	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Utah	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Vermont	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Virginia	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Washington	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
West Virginia	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Wisconsin	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Wyoming	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
TOTAL	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
REGION 3												
Alabama	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Arkansas	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
California	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Colorado	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Connecticut	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Delaware	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
D.C.	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Florida	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Georgia	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Idaho	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Illinois	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Indiana	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
Iowa	99%	100%	0	78	18,718	21,218	26,801	1,300	12	17126	467,100	467,100
K												

TABLE 10.1  
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY PROGRAMS FOR FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1956-57	1956-58	1956-59	1956-75	1976-99	1999-97	Last 7 years	First 5 years	Grand Total
Alabama	15,331.65	13,899.48	27,665.36	16,972.79	76,526.49	116,197.61	511,209.09	5,279.09	397,555.38
Alaska	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,777.78
Arizona	17,397.48	6,754.38	8,998.48	3,658.48	76,685.25	112,254.43	521,754.51	9,126.52	238,261.21
Arkansas	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
California	25,556.18	4,557.97	12,316.48	2,794.48	11,731.38	26,776.33	51,684.36	0.00	199,686.77
Colorado	26,556.13	16,664.68	17,566.79	5,272.33	2,975.25	11,764.98	52,612.99	1,688.09	84,573.37
Connecticut	186.00	1,664.08	288.00	94.00	0.00	1,852.00	30.00	0.00	2,776.08
Delaware	1,852.00	1,852.00	623.00	175.00	6,722.00	16,853.57	30.00	0.00	24,618.57
D.C.	1,756.00	1,756.00	623.00	175.00	6,722.00	16,853.57	30.00	0.00	24,618.57
D.C. C.	16,497.25	16,374.00	34,209.25	1,275.00	0.00	34,209.25	56,497.25	2,618.75	100,179.50
Florida	14,376.58	56,656.57	81,686.42	24,296.00	4,815.00	3,764.13	606.00	0.00	1,007,076.00
Georgia	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,776.00
Hawaii	3,651.00	3,652.20	3,721.00	3,658.25	4,671.97	6,765.71	16,671.30	5,819.11	52,113.09
Idaho	11,943.25	18,777.54	3,311.25	1,124.00	1,672.75	16,672.75	52,206.17	9,258.00	231,645.94
Illinois	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Indiana	15,833.58	1,669.58	487.00	984.00	3,658.48	16,672.75	52,206.17	9,258.00	183,276.52
Iowa	9,552.56	11,214.28	37,666.77	16,695.45	7,724.00	5,371.00	56,497.25	208.00	88,994.62
Kansas	13,932.00	9,931.50	37,666.77	16,695.45	7,724.00	5,371.00	56,497.25	208.00	88,994.62
Kentucky	13,932.00	9,931.50	37,666.77	16,695.45	7,724.00	5,371.00	56,497.25	208.00	88,994.62
Louisiana	13,932.00	9,931.50	37,666.77	16,695.45	7,724.00	5,371.00	56,497.25	208.00	88,994.62
Maine	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	26,520.00
Maryland	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	26,520.00
Massachusetts	12,796.48	11,188.00	26,632.35	12,827.29	9,715.44	7,616.68	15,635.93	0.00	86,182.34
Michigan	6,516.00	2,694.77	14,906.19	8,644.00	2,327.23	14,638.08	18,433.64	15,146.00	266,542.38
Minnesota	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Mississippi	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Missouri	5,999.25	315.00	7,616.68	924.35	5,658.00	4,638.00	52,206.17	1,271.00	121,999.78
Montana	14,091.20	4,775.00	7,672.35	16,216.43	14,111.00	5,196.00	56,497.25	0.00	96,566.24
Nebraska	386.00	195.00	566.00	208.00	1,076.00	5,964.00	8,000.00	0.00	16,723.00
Nevada	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	26,520.00
New Hampshire	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	26,520.00
New Jersey	11,943.25	18,777.54	3,311.25	1,124.00	1,672.75	16,672.75	52,206.17	9,258.00	231,645.94
New Mexico	11,943.25	18,777.54	3,311.25	1,124.00	1,672.75	16,672.75	52,206.17	9,258.00	231,645.94
New York	4,571.97	2,379.57	3,611.00	1,952.00	960.00	5,658.00	52,206.17	3,197.00	107,764.17
North Carolina	12,236.50	24,367.00	82,788.00	38,311.00	11,691.00	14,568.00	56,497.25	0.00	51,631.38
North Dakota	13,284.37	12,113.00	8,126.31	3,608.00	2,892.00	12,652.54	7,616.68	0.00	51,631.38
Ohio	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Oklahoma	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Oregon	655.00	395.58	619.65	7,899.00	3,736.00	34,209.25	1,672.75	0.00	1,007,076.00
Pennsylvania	19,239.41	3,668.00	434.00	217.00	434.00	26,112.38	13,779.56	0.00	79,688.63
Rhode Island	8,671.00	11,368.00	27,126.00	26,264.00	17,668.00	26,608.00	51,306.00	1,688.00	181,764.52
South Carolina	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
South Dakota	19,555.26	24,367.00	16,755.15	9,912.00	4,638.00	13,779.56	52,206.17	0.00	123,299.28
Tennessee	12,311.52	16,032.35	29,682.39	23,164.00	5,664.50	26,672.23	52,206.17	2,000.00	186,376.93
Texas	11,236.50	31,346.00	31,379.35	15,313.00	12,886.00	3,716.74	2,000.00	0.00	162,181.41
Utah	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	2,652.00	26,520.00
Vermont	19,239.41	3,668.00	434.00	217.00	434.00	26,112.38	13,779.56	0.00	79,688.63
Virginia	3,933.00	3,668.00	434.00	217.00	434.00	26,112.38	13,779.56	0.00	79,688.63
Washington	26,276.96	7,353.00	5,891.00	5,891.00	75,077.00	17,668.00	51,306.00	960.00	214,682.31
West Virginia	9,961.00	6,338.28	3,668.00	5,891.00	75,077.00	17,668.00	51,306.00	960.00	214,682.31
Wisconsin	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Wyoming	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	16,755.15	167,551.50
Other Dept.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	14,186.54
Unallocated	19,999.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19,999.31
TOTAL	\$986,077.24	\$841,092.41	\$665,964.67	\$437,688.33	\$382,481.27	\$604,864.38	\$1,761,661.75	\$386,714.44	\$5,364,344.28

\* Includes \$15,699.11 for the year 1956—Department funds not available.  
\* Includes first 5 months of 1977.

TABLE NO. 3  
COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF WW II KOREAN,  
VIETNAM AND GRENADA/LEBANON AND PANAMA VETERANS RECEIVING AID  
FROM NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH DIVISION

	No. WW II Children	No. Korea Children	No. Vietnam Children	No. Grenada/ Lebanon Children	No. Panama Children	No. Persian Gulf Children
6-1-97 to 5-31-98	14 (94%)	38 (2.54%)	847 (56.66%)	216 (14.45%)	36 (2.41%)	344 (23.01%)
6-1-96 to 5-31-97	14 (94%)	38 (2.54%)	849 (56.71%)	216 (14.43%)	36 (2.40%)	344 (22.98%)
6-1-95 to 5-31-96	13 (1.09%)	48 (4.01%)	904 (75.40%)	210 (17.53%)	23 (1.92%)	
6-1-94 to 5-31-95	27 (1.93%)	27 (2.67%)	1086 (79.19%)	189 (13.66%)	35 (2.53%)	
6-1-93 to 5-31-94	17 (.81%)	80 (3.83%)	1814 (86.84%)	142 (6.80%)	36 (1.72%)	
6-1-92 to 5-31-93	8 (.45%)	29 (1.63%)	1565 (87.97%)	121 (6.80%)	36 (3.15%)	
6-1-91 to 5-31-92	36 (2.27%)	68 (4.28%)	1371 (86.33%)	73 (4.72%)	38 (2.40%)	
6-1-90 to 5-31-91	17 (1.32%)	74 (5.73%)	1074 (83.43%)	47 (3.65%)	75 (5.83%)	
6-1-89 to 5-31-90	7 (1.03%)	49 (7.62%)	587 (91.29%)			
6-1-88 to 5-31-89	16 (2.33%)	61 (8.94%)	605 (88.71%)			
6-1-87 to 5-31-88	41 (6.63%)	68 (10.97%)	510 (82.38%)			
6-1-86 to 5-31-87	28 (4.60%)	60 (9.85%)	521 (85.55%)			
6-1-85 to 5-31-86	29 (4.54%)	114 (17.84%)	496 (77.62%)			
6-1-84 to 5-31-85	57 (9.77%)	114 (18.53%)	444 (72.16%)			
6-1-83 to 5-31-84	56 (8.8%)	125 (19.60%)	457 (71.60%)			
6-1-82 to 5-31-83	40 (5.9%)	158 (23.30%)	480 (70.80%)			
6-1-81 to 5-31-82	51 (14.36%)	80 (22.54%)	226 (63.10%)			
6-1-80 to 5-31-81	65 (14.74%)	125 (28.34%)	251 (56.92%)			
6-1-79 to 5-31-80	94 (21.81%)	38 (13.46%)	279 (64.73%)			
6-1-78 to 5-31-79	111 (27.54%)	101 (25.06%)	191 (47.40%)			
6-1-77 to 5-31-78	198 (30.33%)	215 (32.92%)	240 (36.75%)			
6-1-76 to 5-31-77	216 (38.30%)	140 (24.82%)	208 (36.88%)			
6-1-75 to 5-31-76	177 (29.70%)	233 (39.09%)	186 (31.21%)			
6-1-74 to 5-31-75	189 (36.00%)	208 (38.62%)	218 (41.32%)			
6-1-73 to 5-31-74	248 (36.69%)	334 (49.41%)	94 (13.98%)			
6-1-72 to 5-31-73	204 (43.99%)	150 (32.09%)	114 (24.36%)			
6-1-71 to 5-31-72	360 (46.15%)	309 (39.62%)	110 (14.10%)			
6-1-69 to 5-31-70	749 (53.32%)	417 (30.06%)	82 (7.68%)			
6-1-68 to 5-31-69	706 (61.49%)	414 (33.99%)	51 (4.18%)			
6-1-67 to 5-31-68	875 (61.66%)	390 (34.06%)	46 (4.01%)			
6-1-66 to 5-31-67	1,024 (64.02%)	463 (33.86%)	25 (1.83%)			
6-1-65 to 5-31-66	1,147 (72.86%)	384 (27.06%)	11 (.08%)			
6-1-64 to 5-31-65	1,091 (82.11%)	249 (17.82%)				
6-1-63 to 5-31-64	1,099 (79.86%)	273 (19.96%)				
6-1-62 to 5-31-63	1,077 (78.73%)	296 (21.26%)				
6-1-61 to 5-31-62	1,329 (82.47%)	221 (16.92%)				
6-1-60 to 5-31-61	1,716 (83.99%)	221 (15.79%)				
6-1-59 to 5-31-60	2,336 (84.99%)	288 (14.27%)				
6-1-58 to 5-31-59	1,380 (85.16%)	389 (13.06%)				
5-1-57 to 5-31-58	2,050 (86.78%)	195 (10.65%)				
6-1-56 to 5-31-57	1,713 (89.32%)	206 (8.98%)				
6-1-55 to 5-31-56	1,579 (90.06%)	142 (7.47%)				
6-1-54 to 5-31-55	2,098 (85.68%)	146 (7.92%)				
5-1-53 to 5-31-54	2,519 (84.32%)	140 (5.63%)				
5-1-52 to 5-31-53	2,050 (87.12%)	135 (4.66%)				
5-1-51 to 4-30-52	1,481 (84.36%)	39 (1.61%)				
5-1-50 to 4-30-51	1,506 (83.99%)	5 (.28%)				
7-1-49 to 4-30-50	1,534 (85.04%)					
7-1-48 to 6-30-49	1,796 (78.45%)					
7-1-47 to 6-30-48	1,218 (72.98%)					
7-1-46 to 6-30-47	785 (52.77%)					
Prior to 7-1-46	590 (43.83%)					

TABLE NO. 5

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request During  
Period June 1, 1997 through May 31, 1998

Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	27,178
Children Beware	159,943
April Is Children & Youth Month	28,348
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	46,268
Department Children & Youth Chairman's Guide	119
Don't Hesitate --Vaccinate	46,258
Gateway Drugs	112,480
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night	113,887
National Resource Directory	42
Regional Children & Youth Award (VISION)	28,061
TFA Applications	717
TFA Brochures	22,587
Warning Signs -- Suicide Prevention	42,865
Safety Tips --Indoor	82,673
Safety Tips --Outdoor	30,683
Americanism/Children & Youth Catalog Brochure	19,851
National Family Week	24,820
Parents: For Your Information	20,445
Juvenile Delinquency Prevention	30,292
<b>Citations:</b>	
Annual Children and Youth Citations	6,000
Certificate of Meritorious Service	250
National Achievement Award	200
Special Children & Youth Citation	1,000
Vision Certificate of Excellence	200
Vision Certificate of Participation	125
<b>Reporting:</b>	
Tally Sheet	500
Unit Report Form	11,000
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>866,792</b>

**COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH**  
**Executive Section**

Elmer Fuhrhop, Hamler, Ohio—Chairman  
 Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Kenner, Louisiana—Vice-Chairman  
 Margaret M. Malone, Hamilton Square, New Jersey—National Commander's Representative  
 W. Darrell Hansel, Vevay, Indiana—Consultant  
 Walter F. Baker, Seneca Falls, New York—Consultant  
 Talmage C. Carawan, Rockville, Maryland  
 James P. Holley, Center, Texas  
 Cletus A. Lehne, North Aurora, Illinois  
 Eugene V. Lindquist, Clarissa, Minnesota

**AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.**  
**U.S. "Udie" Grant, Kansas, President**  
**Terry L. Woodburn, Illinois, Executive Secretary**

In 1954 The American Legion allowed the separate incorporation of what is now called the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted just under five million dollars to other non-profit youth oriented organizations.

In October of 1997 the Board of Directors approved grants to 14 non-profit organizations in the amount of \$249,350.00 for projects to be completed in calendar year 1998. The Organizations and amounts are as follows:

**Table 4**

<b>Child Welfare Grants</b>		
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Big Brothers - Big Sisters	Philadelphia, PA	\$16,800.00
Bingham Child Guidance Center Inc.	Louisville, KY	\$7,500.00
Brain Injury Association, Inc.	Washington, D.C.	\$24,850.00
Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Tustin, CA	\$16,000.00
Child Help U.S.A.	Scottsdale, AZ	\$25,000.00
The Craniofacial Association	Chattanooga, TN	\$8,500.00
The Foundation Fighting Blindness	Hunt Valley, MD	\$25,000.00
Friends Network	Santa Barbara, CA	\$15,000.00
Mercy Medical Airlift	Virginia Beach, VA	\$15,000.00
National Jewish Medical Center	Denver, CO	\$32,500.00
The Orton Dyslexia Society	Baltimore, MD	\$3,000.00

Shwachman Syndrome Support Center	St. Louis, MO	\$16,500.00
WCBH Educational Foundation	Boston, MA	\$35,000.00
WVU Center for Rural Emergency Medicine	Morgantown, WV	\$8,700.00

During the 1997 contribution year, donations exceeded \$450,000 with just over \$169,000 of that amount coming to us from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion. Their Posts, Units, Salons, and Squadrons are the primary contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation. We encourage each member and each local organization to make an annual contribution in support of your 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 our upcoming grant meeting in October, we will hit the five million dollar mark in grants awarded since 1955. There is also a very real possibility the Foundation Trust Fund will attain the five million dollar mark in assets during the 1999 year. As we become better known, the demand for our resources becomes heavier. This is positive because it indicates our recognition in the philanthropic community, but it also demonstrates the continued need of support required to keep funding worthwhile activities.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation held in Indianapolis on May 3, 1998, the Following officers were elected: U.S. "Udie" Grant of Kansas, (President); James P. Holley of Texas, (Vice President); Kenneth D. Danilson of Iowa, (Secretary); and Robert Turner of Georgia, (Treasurer). Administrative personnel that were re-appointed by the Board of Directors were Webber LaGrange (Assistant Treasurer) and Terry L. Woodburn (Executive Secretary).

Under the 1969 Tax Reform Act, the Foundation retains its tax exempt status. Gifts, therefore, are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law, and bequests to the Foundation are deductible for federal inheritance tax purposes to the extent permitted by the Federal Tax Act.

#### **NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION**

**Jeffrey L. Olson, Minnesota, Chairman**

**Richard D. Holmes, Indiana, Director**

The 79th annual National Convention of The American Legion took place in Orlando, Florida August 29 - September 4, 1997. National Commander Joseph J. Frank (Missouri) called the opening session to order at 9:00AM on Tuesday, September 2, 1997. Commander Frank welcomed the Legionnaires to Orlando, Florida and thanked them for their past, present and future service to America. Legionnaires were welcomed to the National Convention by Department Commander Ray M. Weaver, The American Legion of Florida, and Robert J. Proctor, president of The American Legion Convention Corporation of Florida. The convention was also addressed by the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the US House of Representatives; the Honorable Hershel W. Gober, Acting Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; the Honorable Chuck Hagel, US Senate; the Honorable Charles T. Canady, US House of Representatives; and the Honorable Michael Bilirakis, US House of Representatives.



Commander Frank later presented The American Legion's Distinguished Service Award to the Honorable Robert J. Dole (Kansas) former United States Senator. Commander Frank praised Mr. Dole for his many years of service to state and nation, as well as his leadership on veterans and military issues.

One of the many highlights for the 1997 National Convention was The National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests which took place in the Grand Ballroom of the Orange County Convention Center. Entertainment was provided by Jennifer Wilson to a record crowd of Legionnaires and guests. Our very own National Commander, Joe Frank, also performed one song "For The Good Times" which was enthusiastically received by everyone in attendance.

### CONVENTION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The National Convention Commission held three regular meetings during the year. Discussions continue regarding the revisions of our requests for proposals (RFP) that are sent to cities interested in housing a National Convention. This process is extremely important as it provides an equal opportunity for all cities to be judged the same way during the initial review and site visit process. It is the commission's desire to continue to attract new cities desirous of hosting our National Convention. This provides our "blue cap" Legionnaire and their family with a varied and enjoyable convention that can be shared by all on an annual basis.

The commission also implemented the change of hosting the band and color guard contests at different times on Saturday during the convention. Due to the distance of the venues in the Orange County Convention Center, this first year trial met with moderate success as to increased attendance. However, the commission believes we should begin to see increased attendance at both venues in the future.

The commission continues to review and improve the surveying of our attendees during the National Convention. The survey has been improved and will be available to all attendees at future conventions. The commission is also studying the possibilities of providing computerized survey options to our attendees beginning at the 1999 National Convention. These surveys will be reviewed and will allow the commission to continue to develop ways of improving the National Convention for all attendees.

During the Spring Meeting, commission members recommended to the National Executive Committee that the city of St. Louis, Missouri, be tentatively awarded the National Convention in the year 2003 for the dates of August 22 - 28, 2003. The recommendation was later approved by the National Executive Committee. Dates and future conventions are:

Anaheim, California	September 3 - 9, 1999
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	September 1 - 7, 2000
San Antonio, Texas	August 24 - 30, 2001
Charlotte, North Carolina	August 30 - September 5, 2002

### DISTINGUISHED GUESTS COMMITTEE

**John P. Clarke, Louisiana, Chairman**

The Distinguished Guests Committee exists under the umbrella of the National Convention Commission. Responsibilities include the coordination of activities of all persons invited to attend our convention as distinguished guests. The committee arranges

each guest's arrival and departure at the convention. Each distinguished guest is also assisted with credentials, agendas and other details of the convention.

#### **ECONOMIC COMMISSION**

**Ray G. Smith, North Carolina, Chairman**

**James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director**

This report covers the programs, activities and accomplishments of the National Economic Commission, its two standing committees (Employment and Veterans' Preference), and the staff from July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998. Since the commission and the committees always meet concurrently, all future reference to the commission in this report will automatically indicate the inclusion of the committees.

#### **1997-1998 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 30, 1997, in the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, in conjunction with the Seventy-ninth Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, Sept. 1, 1997. The complete text of that report appears in the Proceedings of the National Executive Committee's Pre- and Post-Convention Meetings.

(2) An executive session of the National Economic Commission was held in the headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 13-14, 1997. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 15-16, 1997.

(3) The National Economic Commission met in conjunction with the Thirty-eighth Annual Washington Conference on Monday and Wednesday, March 23 and 25, 1998. Those sessions were held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. A report on the topics covered during those two sessions is contained in the commission's Advance Report to the NEC.

(4) Members of the commission met on May 4-5, 1998, 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 6-7, 1998.

#### **Legislative Appearances**

A very important part of the work of the National Economic Commission is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony on issues affecting the economic well-being of America's veterans. During the period covered by this report, the commission testified or participated in the preparation of testimony on several occasions. A list of those hearings follows:

February 4, 1998; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Benefits Subcommittee; VA Veterans' Rehabilitation and Counseling Service

February 24, 1998; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Benefits Subcommittee; Veterans' Transitional Housing Opportunities Act of 1997

March 24, 1998; Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act

May 20, 1998; House Committee on Small Business; SBA's assistance to veterans

May 21, 1998; House Committee on the Census; Year 2000 Census

The economics staff prepared the commission's portion of the testimony that was presented in September 1997 by the National Commander at a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs regarding The American Legion's goals and concerns, as well as the Legion's February and March 1998 appearances before the same committees concerning the administration's proposed FY 1999 budget for the VA and veterans' programs.

#### **Administrative Activities**

The commission's staff of three manage all of its activities and programs on a daily basis.

The staff's major responsibility is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans at the national level. This is accomplished through the commission's ongoing work with Congress and a number of federal agencies, including the Department of Labor, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The director and assistant director also represent The American Legion on the following boards and committees: Executive Committee of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and its Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans; the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training; the Veterans' Committee of the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies; and the veterans' advisory committees of the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management. They also act as advisors to the Legion's Veterans Planning and Coordinating Committee.

Another staff responsibility is answering the large volume of mail that is received annually from veterans seeking information or assistance on issues which come under the commission's jurisdiction. While the staff can neither place individual veterans in jobs nor represent them in labor disputes, the staff does provide information, guidance and, when appropriate, referral. Besides correspondence from individuals, the staff also receives and answers frequent requests and inquiries from government agencies, members of Congress, congressional committees, private organizations, and other groups regarding veterans' economic issues.

One of the commission's major programs is its employer awards program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who have established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers.

#### **Publications**

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the commission does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on a network of employment chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding employment.

In order to assist the employment chairmen to be as effective as possible, the staff provides them with pertinent information and guidance through the Legion's biweekly newspaper, *The Dispatch*. They also provide articles on a routine basis to *The American Legion Magazine*.

The commission's various publications are kept in stock and distributed upon request, free of charge.

### Employer of the Year Awards

Each year since 1969, the Legion's National Economic Commission has sponsored an Employer of the Year Awards Program. This program seeks to honor those employers across the country that have established an outstanding record in the employment and retention of veterans. Nominations for these award are submitted by Posts to their Departments for review. Each Department must then select what it feels is the most worthy nominee in the large employer category (those companies with more than 200 employees), one in the medium-size employer category (51-200 employees), and one in the small employer category (50 or fewer employees). These three nominations are then forwarded to the National Economic Commission prior to December 15 for final approval and the issuance of plaques. After the plaques are prepared, they are sent to the Departments for presentation.

Prior to this year's Washington Conference, the chairman of the National Economic Commission, Ray G. Smith (NC), appointed a six-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 1996 in the Employer of the Year Awards Program. The purpose of this subcommittee was to select a national winner and a runner-up in each of the employer categories. Those serving on the subcommittee were James A. McMahon (ME), Chairman; William E. Christoffersen (UT); Henry J. Field (SC); Tom Norris (NH), Leonard E. Shaw (IA), and Wayne Slade (SD).

The members of the Employer of the Year Subcommittee met on March 23, 1998, to consider 49 employer nominations from 26 Departments. Of these nominations, 15 were for small, 16 were for medium, and 18 were for large employers. Only two of these nominations (both medium size) were ineligible for the national awards.

Prior to the meeting, the staff liaison to the subcommittee mailed copies of all nominations and supporting data to each subcommittee member. After a thorough review of this material, the Employer of the Year Subcommittee selected the following winners:

**Large Employer:** Lear Siegler Services Inc., Milton, Florida

**Medium Size Employer:** Sweeney's Micro Systems, Inc., Tyler, Texas

**Small Employer:** Jak's Stripping and Refinishing, Garden City, Idaho

The subcommittee also selected three runners-up in the event that one of the winners is unable to accept the award, or is disqualified because of any labor relations or OSHA violations that might be pending against them. The three runners-up are as follows:

**Large Employer:** Northrop Grumman Technical Services, Inc., Vance AFB, Oklahoma

**Medium Size Employer:** Atlas Roofing Corp., Ardmore, Oklahoma

**Small Employer:** Gaylord Brothers of North Carolina, Sanford, North Carolina

Officials of the large and small winning companies have agreed to come to the 80th Annual National Convention in New Orleans to accept the national awards. Upon their arrival in the convention city, each company will receive a small stipend to help defray the travel costs of their representatives. It was discovered after the winners were chosen that the medium size winner had gone out of business recently, so the runner-up was declared the winner. Officials of that company will travel to New Orleans to receive that award.

### LVER and DVOP Awards

Beginning in 1993, three awards have been presented to the Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year, and the Employment Service Office of the Year. These awards are given in cooperation with local Job Service offices across the country, to recognize truly outstanding veteran-dedicated staff members.

Department winners were selected and submitted to the national commission in the same manner as employer award winners. Entries were considered by the employer awards subcommittee on March 23, 1998. Winners are to receive their plaques at their respective Department Conventions. National winners are the following:

**LVER of the Year:** Joseph LeClair, St. Albans, Vermont

**DVOP of the Year:** Ron Coleman, Minot, North Dakota

**ES Office of the Year:** St. Marys Job Center, St. Marys, Pennsylvania

#### **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**James A. McMahon, Maine, Chairman**

**James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director**

The mission of the committee is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans. To accomplish this, the committee works at the national level with Congress and various federal agencies. The committee does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on its network of employment chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding employment. These employment chairmen are appointed by their Posts and Departments. Occasionally, Departments also appoint them at the county and District levels.

Under the direction of the Employment Committee, during 1997, the national staff contracted with DynCorp Information and Engineering Technology of Virginia to study the problem of non-acceptance of military training by civilian credentialing bodies in the fields of health care and aircraft maintenance. It is believed that this problem is widespread, and that many separating service members are prevented from practicing the valuable skills learned in the military without attending redundant schooling in the civilian sector. The DynCorp study presented specific details of this problem so that solutions can be sought. Various government officials in the Departments of Labor and Defense have shown interest.

#### **VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE**

**Henry J. Field, South Carolina, Chairman**

**James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director**

This committee is charged with the responsibility of promoting veterans' employment opportunities in federal government and for ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

#### **Federal Veterans' Economic Programs**

The following is a brief overview of the activities of those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

**Department of Labor:** Unemployment and underemployment among veterans and non-veterans has continued to decrease over the past year. However, there are still some major problems.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans constitute about 14% of the nation's labor force. The percentage of displaced workers has not been formally tabulated since 1988; at that time, however, about 23% of all dislocated workers were veterans. Many of these veterans lost their jobs because of plant closings, shift abolishment, slack work demand, or because the employer went out of business for one reason or another.

Unfortunately, it is generally very difficult for the dislocated worker to find new employment that is suitable. This is because most of these individuals do not have the financial resources necessary either to obtain job training or to relocate to an area where

employment might be available. The problems of these men and women are further exacerbated by many employers' view of them as older workers. About half of dislocated workers find new jobs paying less than they were making before dislocation.

The commission is also concerned about the employment of severely disabled veterans. According to data supplied by the Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, about 85-90 percent of all veterans who are 60% or more compensable disabled have completely dropped out of the labor market. This has occurred partly because many employers in both the public and private sectors have refused to make the necessary accommodations for their employment, and partly because many of the workers have reached retirement age.

Another major concern of the commission and the Department of Labor is homeless veterans. While there seems to be a vast disparity in the estimates of the number of homeless persons in this country, one thing the experts do agree on is that a large percentage are veterans. They also believe that many of the homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. In response to this need, the commission has prepared and widely distributed a pamphlet entitled *A Resource Guide for the Homeless Veteran*, intended to help homeless veterans locate resources and benefits that may be available to them because of their military service.

The American Legion continues to work with the Department of Labor and other federal agencies that have the resources necessary to help homeless veterans to get off the streets and onto payrolls. In the weeks and months ahead, the commission will continue to work with the Labor Department to find solutions to these and other problems that affect veterans economically.

**Department of the Treasury:** The Economic Commission continues its active support of U.S. Savings Bonds, which have recently gained a new popularity because of an added education benefit. Savings bonds can be completely tax free when used for higher education tuition.

Because of federal budget cuts, the U.S. Treasury Department can no longer afford to send each Legion post promotional material on savings bonds. The Economic Commission, however, continues to provide Legionnaires with information on the value of these bonds through articles and public service advertisements in Legion publications.

**Department of Veterans Affairs:** The loan guaranty program operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs has guaranteed over 15.3 million loans to veterans since its inception in 1944. In FY 1997, VA guaranteed 258 thousand loans totaling \$27.6 billion. The average home loan amount was \$104,504. Over 90 percent of the veterans purchasing a home were able to obtain no-down payment loans. Approximately 58 percent of veterans purchasing a home were first time home buyers. VA expects to guarantee about 312 thousand loans in FY 1998.

Defaults and foreclosures continue to be relatively low. There were 118 thousand loans in serious default at the end of FY 1997. This represents 3.6 percent of all loans outstanding and an increase from 3.3 percent at the end of FY 1996. The inventory of acquired properties was 9,484 in September 1997, an increase of 10 percent from 12 months earlier.

**Office of Personnel Management:** The federal government is the largest employer in the country as well as the largest employer of veterans. The responsibility for ensuring that veterans receive the preference they have been granted by law is vested in the Office of Personnel Management.

The following statistical summary appeared in OPM's annual report to Congress on veterans' employment in federal government. This summary covers veteran hiring and promotion activities for FY 1997.

Veterans hired totaled 32,533 (16.1 percent of new hires);

13,094 of those were Vietnam era veterans;

6,609 were disabled; and

2,956 of those were 30% or more disabled.

Veterans promoted totaled 54,439 (22.4%);

disabled veterans promoted numbered 9,734; and

3,615 of those were 30% or more disabled.

11,059 Veterans Readjustment Appointments were made;

This included 8,033 new hires.

Trends in veterans' employment in the federal service indicate a gradual decline in veterans from 1986 to 1997. This decline is due primarily to the retirements of older veterans (over 48 percent of all retirements over the last five years were veterans), and fewer new veterans entering the civilian labor force (a shrinking applicant pool). In spite of the overall decline in veterans in the federal work force, the 26.9 percent veterans' representation in the non-Postal federal service is more than double the 11.3 percent in the civilian labor force. Representation of disabled veterans declined from 4.5% in 1986 through the late 1980s and early 1990s until returning to 4.5% in FY 1996 and 1997. Representation of 30% disabled veterans increased from 1.2% in 1986 to 1.7% in 1997.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to monitor veterans' employment trends in the future. It will also continue to work with OPM to promote employment opportunities for veterans.

**Postal Service:** The Postal Service is one of the largest employers of veterans in the nation. In FY 1996, the latest for which figures are available to us, out of a career workforce of 760,523 persons, 256,884 (33.78 percent) were veterans, 81,238 (10.68 percent of workforce) were veterans with disabilities, and 18,873 (2.48 percent) were veterans who are 30-percent or more disabled.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Postal Service.

**Small Business Administration:** During fiscal year 1997, about 14% of the loans guaranteed by SBA were made to veterans, who received 6,271 loans totaling nearly \$1.3 billion. Individual figures for Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans, women veterans, and minority veterans were not available.

Through SBA's 8(a) program, under which contracts are awarded to businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, 818 contracts were awarded to 670 veteran-owned firms for a total of \$912 million, which represents 13% of the dollars and 9% of the contracts awarded in that program for 1997.

Many small business contractors are unable to obtain work because of the unavailability of bonding. During FY 1997, utilizing SBA's surety bond program, 283 veteran-owned firms obtained contracts totalling nearly \$51 million, or 9.98% of the total dollar amount awarded.

### Conclusion

The National Economic Commission is fully aware that it would be impossible to carry out its mandates without the active involvement of Posts, Districts, Counties, Departments and individual Legionnaires. We deeply appreciate their continued support and involvement. Chairman Smith also thanks the National Commander, the National Adjutant, the National Executive Committee, and the staff of both the Washington and Indianapolis offices for the outstanding support and cooperation they have provided during the past year.

**FINANCE COMMISSION**

**George W. Boucek, Illinois, Chairman**  
**Webber LaGrange, Indiana, National Treasurer**  
**Paul M. Allen, Minnesota, Director**

The primary obligation of the Finance Commission is to prepare a yearly budget for the National Executive Committee, handle funds under that budget, and exercise reasonable oversight to see that the various divisions and departments of the National Organization operate within appropriations. The Finance Commission includes seven members, with the National Adjutant as ex-officio secretary, and the National Commander and National Treasurer as ex-officio members. Also attending these meetings are the Executive Directors of the Washington and Indianapolis offices and the Finance Director, as well as liaison observers from the National Executive Committee.

The National Organization had an operating surplus of \$2,204,188 for 1997. In that year, we received \$9 dues per member, allocating \$6 to the General Fund and \$3 to The American Legion Magazine.

Income of the National organization derives from annual membership dues, interest on investments, magazine advertisements, Emblem Sales, contributions, and other approved activities.

A full financial statement is incorporated in the auditor's report. Your attention is directed also to the Reports of Committees and Trusts, which can be found in this publication.

These entities include the:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.  
 American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation  
 American Legion Life Insurance and Trust Committee  
 American Legion Emblem Committee  
 American Legion Overseas Graves Decoration Trust

**Emblem Committee**

**Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah, Chairman**  
**Jeffrey O. Brown, Indiana, Director**

The American Legion emblem is the exclusive property of the National Headquarters. The sale of the emblem, emblem pins, merchandise carrying the emblem and other items of organizational equipment is the responsibility of the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The following tables show gross sales, net earnings, etc., for the entire calendar year 1997 and for the first three months of 1998.

**January 1 to December 31, 1997**  
**(Twelve months)**

Gross Sales	\$7,158,879
Cost of Goods Sold	4,152,738
Overhead	2,214,250
Operating Profit	791,890

Total number of 1997 orders processed was 69,441.



**January 1 to March 31, 1998  
(Three months)**

Gross Sales	\$1,845,790
Cost of Goods Sold	1,020,947
Overhead	555,233
Operating Profit	269,610

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 1998 was 25,029.

**THE AMERICAN LEGION INSURANCE COMMITTEE**

**Steve A. George, Minnesota, Chairman**

**G. Paul Dunn, Oklahoma, Member Benefits Administrator**

The American Legion Insurance Committee provides oversight for the several insurance plans currently offered by The American Legion and is assigned to the National Finance Commission.

The American Legion Insurance Program supports several National programs which are among the most prominent and visible activities of The American Legion. The programs are listed below with the corresponding funding for 1998.

American Legion Baseball \$637,961; National Oratorical Contest \$269,254; Junior Uniformed Musical Groups \$25,000 for participation at the National Convention; Boy's Nation \$153,785; Boy Scout of The Year Scholarship Award \$14,000. An award of \$2,000 per year up to four years, not to exceed \$8,000, for pursuit of a course of study beyond high school. Three second-place awards in the amount of \$2,000 each are also granted.

These requests for grants are approved by The American Legion Insurance Committee, the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee.

The American Legion offers a variety of insurance plans which are described as follows:

**LEVEL TERM LIFE PLAN**—The American Legion currently offers a Level Term Plan to members, their spouses and dependents. This includes Sons of The American Legions members and spouses. Members can apply up to age 70 and coverage ends at age 75. The Legion-approved Level Term Life Plan is underwritten by Hartford Life Insurance Company. The Administrator for the plan is Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc. located in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**SIMPLIFIED ISSUE**—Another plan offered by Hartford Insurance Company costs less than typical guaranteed issue plans and provides an option for those unable to pass medical underwriting on standard plans. The plan is issued through age 59. The benefit amount is up to \$50,000 for under age 50 and up to \$20,000 for those between 50-59 years old.

Under the plan, benefits are reduced by half at age 65 and the plan terminates automatically at age 75. The plan is currently not available in some states. Call the Administrator at 1-800-542-5547 for details.

**MODERN VETS**—The American Legion has recently approved a new life insurance plan which is also underwritten by Hartford Life Insurance Company. This plan is designed specifically for members separating or retiring from the military. If you are a member of The American Legion, under age 40, live in the U.S., and have separated from the military in the

last 12 months, you are eligible. The LegionLife Modern Vets Plan is a life insurance plan that picks up where your military coverage ends for about HALF the cost of Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

**LEGIONPLUS TRICARE/CHAMPUS SUPPLEMENT**—The American Legion has approved a National Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement Program for active duty and retired military members and dependents. This program is designed to meet the needs of active duty and retired military members who may be referred to civilian facilities for care. It includes an active duty and retired version.

Requests for information on the Level Term Life Plan, Simplified Issue Plan, Modern Vets Plan or the Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement Plan, should be directed to the Administrator, Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc., 1776 West Lakes Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50398; 1-800-542-5547.

**BIRTHDAY LIFE**—Another plan available to members and spouses, ages 40-80, is Birthday Life, underwritten and administered by Union Fidelity Life Insurance Company located in Trevose, Pennsylvania. This plan is a guaranteed-issue, whole life plan combined with accidental death insurance, with premiums at entry age which do not increase as the insured grows older. No medical exam is required.

The plan provides a limited death benefit, for the first two years, for death from natural causes and provides full benefits during that period for accidental deaths. Full benefits in any event are payable after two years.

Requests for information on the Birthday Life Plan should be directed to the Administrator, Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., 4850 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19049; 1-800-523-5758.

**EXTRA LIFE**—A level premium/level benefit product, essentially a whole life plan with no cash values. The carrier is Globe Life and Accident, a subsidiary of United American Insurance Company. The initial benefit is \$10,000. The premiums do not increase with age, in most states, and the benefits never reduce. In some states, a \$1 per month increase will be incurred for each \$10,000 of coverage during each new 20 year renewal period.

Requests for information on the Extra Life Plan should be directed to the Administrator, Globe Life & Accident, Globe Life Center, Oklahoma City, OK 73184; 1-800-811-3927.

### CLAIMS

The primary feature of The American Legion Insurance Plan is the benefits paid to beneficiaries of deceased insured Legionnaires. In 39 years, claims have been paid amounting to more than \$142 million in benefits. These benefits were paid at no cost to the National Organization of The American Legion and no expenses to the general membership, other than certificate-policyholders. The insurance plan has proven to be a self-sustaining program. By the end of 1998, the total benefits paid will be nearly \$150 million.

### HEALTH CARE

The National Organization has several HEALTH CARE products which are offered to Departments on an individual basis, as requested. Departments must approve the products by a vote of their Department Executive Committee and certify the approval to the National

Adjutant. Departments may or may not approve all plans offered. Upon approval by a Department, appropriate announcements will be made to the membership. The National Health Insurance Program now has six Departments who have approved participation: Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Marketing of plans is under way in those Departments.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Requests for information concerning the status of applications, non-receipt of insurance renewal, filing of death claims, status of death claims, amount of premium, inquiries as to whether or not a member is insured, or specific questions pertaining to the terms of coverage should be directed to:

**Hartford and CNA Plans**  
Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc.  
1776 West Lakes Pkwy.  
West Des Moines, IA 50398  
1-800-542-5547  
*Decreasing Term*  
*Level Term*  
*Simplified Issue Level Term*  
*Modern Vets*

*CHAMPUS Supplement Insurance*  
For Active Duty and Retired Military  
Offered by Allianz Life  
1-800-542-5547

**Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co.**  
4850 Street Rd.  
Trevose, PA 19049  
1-800-523-5758  
*Birthday Life*

**Globe Life and Accident**  
Globe Life Center  
Oklahoma City, OK 73184  
1-800-811-3927  
*Level Premium/Level Benefit*

#### **FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

**John A. Brieden, III, Chairman**  
**G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director**

The following annual report covers the activities of the American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission and Foreign Relations Council for the 1997-98 program year ending June 30, 1998.

#### **Overview**

There are two principal goals of the Commission's continuing work. First, the Commission is dedicated to keeping the membership and leadership of The American Legion informed on relevant foreign policy issues and to carrying The Legion's important voice on these matters to our government. Second, the Commission and its staff work to urge bipartisan cooperation by the Congress and the Administration in developing consistent, viable foreign policies for the United States.

To keep the membership fully informed, the Foreign Relations Commission conducts meetings and programs throughout the year featuring prominent speakers which focus on important relevant foreign policy issues. The Commission is also dedicated to providing and exchanging information on foreign relations topics and ideas through its speaker program, while also regularly consulting with its grassroots membership on these key issues.

To influence the Administration and Congress toward development of bipartisan foreign policies which are consistent with our adoption principles of foreign policy and "Democratic Activism", The American Legion participates in numerous meetings, hearings and programs throughout the year, providing both input and recommendations to the State Department, to Congressional offices and committees, and to the White House. This is done either directly or through liaison offices at these Agencies or in some cases through the Veterans liaison office at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. John A. Brieden, III, of Texas, was appointed in the Fall of 1997 and serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

**Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions  
Adopted at National Convention in Orlando, Florida 1997**

The extensive portfolio of thirty-two Resolutions, adopted at the 78th National Convention remained in effect throughout this reporting year. Of these, two overarching general foreign policy resolutions outline the major principles which have characterized The American Legion's approach to foreign affairs over many years. These Resolutions are:

**Resolution Number 183, *America's Future***, which outlines the major international goals sought by The American Legion and recognizes the unprecedented and far reaching changes in the international security environment in the post-Cold War period. This Resolution calls upon the U.S. Government to adopt policies of "Democratic Activism" by promoting democratic values, maintaining a strong national defense to deter or defeat aggression, cooperate with allies, encourage free and fair trade and assist developing nations.

**Resolution Number 184, *Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy***, which outlines The American Legion's objectives for U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy. Resolution 184 suggests that U.S. foreign policy embody key principles which include:

- recognition of U.S. responsibilities as a world leader
- dedication to world peace and a peace through strength posture
- active promotion of democracy
- support for human rights consistent with U.S. national interests
- participation in collective security alliances
- use of U.S. national resources in critical world regions to achieve interests
- equitable and verifiable arms control agreements
- opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery
- opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking
- support for responsible international organizations consistent with our interests
- participation in the increasingly interdependent free world trade system
- recognition of the importance of national sovereignty in foreign relations issues
- recognition of the important roles played by the President and Congress in foreign policy.

Six additional resolutions were adopted at the 79th National Convention in Orlando, Florida on September 3, 1997. They were as follows:

## **GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY**

**Resolution Number 201:** Flying the POW/MIA Flag

## **EUROPEAN AFFAIRS**

**Resolution Number 102:** Policy on NATO Expansion

## **FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS**

**Resolution Number 97:** Policy on North Korea

**Resolution Number 103:** Policy on the People's Republic of China

## **INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

**Resolution Number 178:** Panama Canal

## **MIDDLE EASTERN & AFRICAN AFFAIRS**

**Resolution Number 27:** Policy on Africa

## **National Executive Committee Meeting, Fall 1997**

On October 13 and 14, 1997 the Foreign Relations Commission met at the Radisson City Center to consider Resolutions and conduct other business. A broad range of topics were discussed with special emphasis on NATO Enlargement. Also, the issue of land mines and national policy was reviewed in depth. Two resolutions were recommended for and received NEC approval:

**Resolution No. 9:** POW/MIA Memorial Highways

**Resolution No. 10:** Policy on Anti-Personnel Land mines (APL)

## **Washington Conference, March 1998**

The Foreign Relations Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill on Monday, March 23 and on Wednesday, March 25, 1998. Topics covered during each session follow.

### ***Morning Session, March 23, 1998***

Mr. Frank Gaffney, Director of the Center for Security Policy, addressed the emerging threat posed by the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Inherent in these actual and potential threats are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, information warfare, as well as Red Chinese commercial initiatives in the United States and Panama. Additionally, McDonnell Douglas Aerospace has been involved in the technology transfer of machine tool equipment used in the production of the B-2 bomber. Unquestionably, many American firms are attempting to exploit the huge potential market in the PRC. Finally, it is in the national security interests of the United States that the Government of the Peoples Republic of China be urged to pursue a less repressive course in its own human rights activities and to allow its citizenry greater participation in governmental processes. Mr. Gaffney proposed a series of specific recommendations that the United States Government should be urged to consider in its foreign affairs and national security policies toward Red

China: (1) The United States cannot ignore Red China, nor should we appease them. (2) A dialogue with the people of the PRC should be restarted. (3) The United States needs to actively pursue the installation of a national missile defense system and expand its theater missile defense systems. (4) The denuclearization of United States nuclear deterrence is underway; We must put an end to our posture of "assured vulnerability." (5) The United States Government must guard against the further transfers of commercial and military aerospace technologies to Red China which could be harmful to United States national security. (6) The United States and its allies must take a pro-active stance against further large scale proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Edmund J. Hull**, from the United States Department of State, spoke on the topics of peacekeeping and United Nations reform. Peacekeeping operations have become an inherent part of United States national strategy and, for the most part, they have served our national security and foreign policy interests. There are currently some 15 United States peacekeeping operations employing about 13,000 personnel abroad. Only about five percent of the total peacekeeping operations are American. Their missions vary from the military and police stabilization mission in Haiti to humanitarian missions in Africa. With regard to United Nations reform, it was noted that efforts were underway to more equally spread the cost-sharing burden to include more Asian countries. It was mentioned that the United States share was being reduced from 25 to about 22 percent.

**Mr. Charles Barry Smith**, Supervisory Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, explained the immediate need for legislation to address the law enforcement and national security concerns regarding commercial encryption products. The potential use of such encrypted products by terrorists or criminals to conceal criminal communications and information poses a serious threat to public safety and national security. Robust encryption, combined with a recoverable feature which allows lawful and immediate access to plaintext, is clearly the best method to achieve the goals of both industry and law enforcement. The American Legion has been legislatively supportive of this endeavor.

***Afternoon Session, March 23, 1998***

The Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee and presided over by Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

**Brigadier General Terry L. Tucker**, USA, Commanding General of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in Hawaii, began his presentation by reviewing the mission statement of the Joint Task Force, namely, to conduct recovery operations and analyses in pursuit of the fullest possible accounting of American personnel missing in action in Southeast Asia. The total number of Americans missing in Southeast Asia as a result of the Vietnam War stood at 2,096 but, due to recent identifications, that number was being reduced by three to 2,093. This total number included the following categories by branch of service: United States Air Force: 707; United States Army: 656; United States Navy: 423; United States Marine Corps: 268; United States Coast Guard: One; and 41 American civilians. Within the total figure, 602 cases were considered non-recoverable; 352 sets of remains were pending identification in the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii; 364 cases were being further investigated; 278 cases were the objects of joint recovery team efforts in Southeast Asia, and 500 cases had been unilaterally deferred. Recovery operations are expensive but, as a matter of policy, the United States pays for the costs of the operations themselves but not for information leading to the recovery or identification of American remains.

**Mr. Grover Joseph Rees**, Staff Director and Chief Counsel of the International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee, addressed current human rights and refugee issues pertaining to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. He emphasized the President's waiving the provisions of the Jackson-

Vanik Amendment which would have called for trade restrictions for communist countries, like Vietnam, that limit free emigration. Vietnam's record on human rights remains abysmal. Unfortunately, despite the lifting of the trade embargo and the normalization of diplomatic relations, there has been no appreciable improvement. The access of Vietnamese citizens to exit permits was being constrained by factors outside the law. Additionally, there are concerns that non-ethnic Vietnamese such as the Montagnards might not have ready access to emigration programs.

**Colonel Charles S. Ciccolella** (USA, Ret.), formerly an Assistant Director for Foreign Relations in The American Legion's Washington Office, presented an oral report of his trip to North Korea in mid-October 1997 to visit the site of ongoing joint recovery operations. Colonel Ciccolella was a member of small group of American veterans and Korean War family organization officials who were invited to witness the third joint recovery operation being held this year. The whereabouts or remains of some 8,100 soldiers from the Korean War were never determined nor accounted for. Visit highlights included meetings with Ambassador Kim and other North Korean officials; a visit to the Military Museum in Pyongyang; the visit to the joint recovery site at Unsan where elements of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division had been overrun on November 1-2, 1950 by overwhelming Communist Chinese forces; and the visit to Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Colonel Ciccolella expressed the hope that this trip would represent an "opening" into this reclusive and repressive nation and that, eventually, these efforts would lead to greater accounting for American soldiers missing in North Korea.

#### **Foreign Relations Commission Business Session, March 25, 1998**

The Commission conducted a business session on Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m.. While no resolutions were properly before the group, a variety of issues were discussed. Updates were provided on NATO Enlargement; foreign policy strategy for the New Century and POW/MIA issues. In the latter area, extensive information was provided on the Jackson-Vanik waiver by the President, Missing Persons legislation and future actions. The United Nations, including U.S. arrears and State Department resourcing were also discussed. The Commission addressed the upcoming 80th National Convention and it was emphasized that it was a renewal year for legislative resolutions. Also discussed was the speakers program and the business sessions to be held in New Orleans.

#### **National Executive Committee Meetings, Spring, 1998**

The Commission met in Executive Session on May 4-5, 1998, in conjunction with the National Executive Committee Spring meeting. A broad range of subjects were discussed to include the NATO Enlargement vote on April 30, POW/MIA issues including Hmong refugees, the Puerto Rican referendum on status, United Nation's arrears and the 80th National Convention. No resolutions were recommended for approval.

#### **The National Security- Foreign Relations Division**

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security-Foreign Relations Division located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; Angela M. Venson, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Cheryl L. Henson, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and

means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The duties have consisted of answering correspondence, E-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. These contacts related to a variety of matters, some of which involved members of the armed forces.

Liaison also is maintained with a host of military and quasi-military organizations with whom common goals are shared. Among these are: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; The Retired Officers Association, Association of the U.S. Army; and the National Guard Association of the United States. Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense and foreign policy matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, is also a duty of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field.

Particularly vigorous activities were conducted during this reporting period to support enlargement of NATO to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The staff presented testimony to the Full Senate Foreign Relations Committee in November 1997. Also, there were many activities in support of fullest POW/MIA accounting including a staff trip to North Korea and numerous congressional actions including two significant appearances before House Committees in June 1998.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as *The Dispatch* and *The American Legion Magazine* which is the principal means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign relations.

#### **INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

**Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman**

**John W. Querfeld, Illinois, Director**

The National Internal Affairs Commission was established by resolution of the National Executive Committee in 1947. The original charge for this constitutional commission still remains: to formulate and recommend policies and to oversee the implementation of adopted policies relating to activities conducted for organizational purposes.

Among those purposes are all those not properly the responsibility of any other national commission, as well as membership strategies, post formation, clerical and records administration for posts and individual members, and special projects. The commission also is required from time to time to provide guidance and assistance to the National Adjutant on necessary administrative operations of the National Headquarters.

Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline, and commemorative activities. The commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities which potentially affect posts and departments, and recommends appropriate courses of action.

The commission has four standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination. They are Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials, Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws, and Membership Post Activities. The latter has separate reporting responsibilities to the National Convention and the National Executive Committee.



Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the activities of the Sons of The American Legion, which is not a separate organization, but rather, a major program of the organization.

The commission also oversees long-term programs and activities such as the National Paid-Up-For-Life program and the National Emergency Fund.

#### **Direct Renewal**

The Direct Renewal Program is a uniform, organized, and simple way to invite members to renew their membership in The American Legion using a direct mail system. This program has been very successful and effective and has been funded at no cost to either the participating Departments or Posts.

The first two renewal notices are optional for Posts but the final three notices go to all delinquent members. Each Department chooses the dates that its members receive the first three notices - (1) July 1 or August 1, (2) October 1 or November 1, (3) December 15 or January 11. The March 13 and May 1 notices go to all delinquent members.

#### **Direct Membership Solicitation**

Since 1982, the Direct Membership solicitation (DMS) Program has been responsible for acquiring over 1,970,000 new members into the 52 participating Departments. Obviously, the DMS Program has proven to be very successful in the acquisition of new members, but, again this year, the emphasis will be on the transfer, renewal, and retention of those members.

The DMS Program will continue to support The American Legion's on-going membership efforts with special emphasis on the retention of all members.

#### **National Information Conferences**

These conferences are held in eight regional locations to provide updated information and train current and future leaders.

In 1997, we had 3,305 attendees in the following locations:

Region 1	Manchester, NH	426
Region 2	Cherry Hill, NJ	543
Region 3	Raleigh, NC	352
Region 4	Biloxi, MS	423
Region 5	Springfield, MO	242
Region 6	Council Bluffs, IA	435
Region 7	Las Vegas, NV	569
Region 8	Post Falls, ID	315

Attendance is one of the best ways to build and maintain a strong, proactive organization by having a membership that is well-informed about issues, objectives, programs and initiatives. It's important to have a mix of first-time attendees, plus a like number of members who've already attended one, two, or many past conferences. The combination of the new and the old is the bridge from the past to the future.

The following is the full schedule for the 1998 National Information Conferences. Make your reservations now; the future of your American Legion family is depending on it:

September 18-20, 1998	Region 3—Louisville, Kentucky Region 7—Las Vegas, Nevada
September 25-27, 1998	Region 2—Saratoga Springs, New York Region 6—Rochester, Minnesota
October 2-4, 1998	Region 5—Champaign, Illinois Region 8—Yakima, Washington
October 23-25, 1998	Region 1—Waterbury, Connecticut Region 4—Little Rock, Arkansas

#### **Paid-Up-For-Life Program**

Each summer, when The American Legion prints and distributes membership cards for the coming year, there is an increasing number of Legionnaires who will receive a special card. These are the members whose dues are already paid for the coming year and for every year thereafter as long as they live. They are Legionnaires who have voluntarily chosen to become Paid-Up-For-Life members under the National plan. The number of Legionnaires that have applied for a lifetime membership since the beginning of the program twenty years ago is over 200,000.

#### *Must Be In Good Standing*

A Legionnaire must be in good standing to become a Paid-Up-For-Life member. To be in good standing, the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year.

#### *Must Buy At Dues-Paying Time*

The average Legionnaire is most apt to decide to become a Paid-Up-For-Life member at the time when dues are paid for the coming year.

Post Commanders, Adjutants, and membership workers are asked to make sure their members know that with one payment they can take care of dues for all future years.

#### *Not A Discount Membership*

The National Constitution & By-Laws of The American Legion is very clear that "there shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life."

Everyone must pay their "fair share" to support the organization. The National Paid-Up-For-Life plan was established for convenience only, giving members an alternative to paying dues on an annual basis.

#### *Post Receives Dues Portion Annually*

That part of the total dues now being retained by the Post will be returned every year for all Paid-Up-For-Life members.

Many Posts are purchasing Paid-Up-For-Life membership for their long-time members, and in calculating the cost to remit, they may leave out their share of the dues. This will reduce the amount to submit with the application.

### *Membership Card*

Each Paid-Up-For-Life member receives a permanent plastic card, as well as an annual paper membership card, directly from National, to verify continuing membership in The American Legion. The annual card will be mailed in July of each year.

Upon request, a replacement plastic or paper card can be provided at no additional charge to the Paid-Up-For-Life member.

### *Cost*

The cost of a Paid-Up-For-Life membership is based on the member's age at the time of application and the current annual dues of the Post; an applicant may pay by check, MasterCard or VISA.

### *Time Payment Plan*

Members of The American Legion may use the Time Payment Plan to purchase a National Paid-Up-For-Life membership. No interest and no service charge will be added to the fee. The time payment plan instructions/established rules for application include:

- 1) The member must be in good standing. This means the member must have a paid membership card for the current Legion year.
- 2) The total Paid-Up-For-Life membership fee has to be paid within twelve (12) months from the date of application.
- 3) Non-receipt of payments for six (6) consecutive months will cause the account to be closed.
- 4) On the application, the Time Payment Plan box should be checked.
- 5) When the application is submitted to the Post for certification, an initial remittance must accompany the application. The payment should be at least ten percent (10%) of the total fee.
- 6) The applicant will receive a monthly statement from National Headquarters. The payment due each month should be at least ten percent (10%) of the total fee.
- 7) The permanent Paid-Up-For-Life membership card will only be issued after the total fee is paid in full.

Note: Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska do not participate in the National plan. They operate their own plan for their respective members.

### **National Emergency Fund**

The National Emergency Fund program is one of the most vivid examples we have of veterans helping veterans and their families. Last year, close to \$1.5 million dollars in National Emergency Fund grants were awarded to over 13,000 individual members and 17 Posts. Most of these grants came from those areas that were ravaged by the floods in Ohio, Minnesota and North Dakota. This year, 1998, we have approved \$80,000 in grants to 60 members and five posts.

Each and every dollar contributed to this fund is used for the express purpose of rendering financial assistance to our members who have incurred devastation from wind, rain, fire and earthquakes. Monies to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and conducting fund-raising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

All monies granted (not loaned) from this fund are a direct result of the generosity of those more fortunate Legion family members, Posts, Auxiliary Units and Sons of The American Legion Squadrons who have demonstrated their compassion by contributing to this fund for those overcome by disaster. Without their kindness, The American Legion's National Emergency Fund would not exist.

The beauty of this unique program is that our members know they can turn to The American Legion for immediate financial assistance without the red tape or repayment requirements normally associated with other federal and state agencies.

With the help of all Legion members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the most urgent needs of our Legion family after a local, state, or national disaster.

#### **Consolidated Post Reports**

The Consolidated Post Report—one of The American Legion's most valuable documents—is our report card to Congress. It provides a summary of the collective assistance provided to the nation from our Legion Posts. Nearly 54 percent of American Legion Posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 1996-1997 year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit color guards, firing squads and other uniformed groups was \$3,091,009; Legion baseball team support cost \$8,843,722; other athletic teams were provided \$3,068,283; cash contributions to VA Voluntary Service was \$1,976,145 and over 1,417,616 hours of volunteer service were provided; 63,498 Boy Scouts were sponsored at a cost of \$1,879,226; scholarships valued at \$3,819,425 were awarded to 7,569 students.

In addition, 2,708,702 hours were spent performing community service work, valued at \$6,607,2552; nearly 98,660 pints of blood were donated, and additional millions of dollars in goods and cash were contributed to programs helping veterans and their families. Remember, these facts and figures represent just over half of all American Legion Posts; if all Posts submitted a report, totals would be substantially higher.

#### **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS** **Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman**

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a National Convention.

However, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the Constitution and By-laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the Revocation, Cancellation, or Suspension of Department and Post Charters of The American Legion.

#### **RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT** **Whit S. LaFon, Tennessee, Chairman**

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the annual National Convention. This committee has the responsibility to receive, consider and transmit all resolutions—with or without recommendation—to the appropriate convention committee for a report to the convention. During an average year, 300-400 resolutions will be assigned.

**TROPHIES, AWARDS AND CEREMONIALS**  
**Vernon K. Grosenick, Wisconsin, Chairman**

This committee supervises all of the official national awards and recommends to the National Executive Committee recipients for the Distinguished Service Medal; over the years, some of those awarded The American Legion's highest honor were: General John J. Pershing, Ignace Jan Paderewski of Poland, Henry Ford, Ernie Pyle, Bob Hope, Babe Ruth, Dr. Jonas E. Salk, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the dead & missing of the Vietnam War, 10 men who have served as President of The United States in the 20th Century, plus many other citizens of renown who have made lasting and significant contributions.

Other awards that this committee makes recommendations on include the International Amity Award, and the Canadian Friendship Award. A report is also prepared for the NEC on miscellaneous awards that have been presented during each year.

The committee also supervises the contents of the Manual of Ceremonies of The American Legion.

**MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**  
**Kenneth Sercherchi, Maine, Chairman**  
**Billy R. Johnson, Arizona, Membership Director**

Membership and programs go hand-in-hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide the people and resources to serve the need of the veteran and his/her family. Your Membership and Post Activities is pleased to report a continuing membership of nearly 2.9 million members world-wide.

**Membership Statistics**

Final 1996 membership:	2,879,545
Final 1997 membership:	2,831,819
1998 membership as of Aug. 1, 1998:	2,830,000*

\*Estimate. The year-end membership should equal the 1997 final membership.

**35th Annual National Membership Workshop**

The 35th annual membership meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Friday, July 24, 1997, with over 400 department and district officers in attendance from nearly all of the 55 departments.

Many of those attending arrive in Indianapolis with a very good understanding of the membership program, especially as it pertains to their areas. But, by the time the workshop concludes they are prepared to face the day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of The American Legion as it relates to potential members.

The goal of this workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to grow the membership in The American Legion. The continuing theme of "Still Serving America" remains the battle cry for not only the membership program, but permeates throughout the programs of organization. Whether it is membership recruitment or program implementation—it is all about veterans helping veterans and providing communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

### **New Post Development/Revitalization Program**

The Membership and Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996 designed to assist Posts, Districts and Departments in developing and revitalizing posts.

The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers along with practical field application. A total of twenty-two Departments have received assistance from this effort as compared to only ten last year when this report was provided.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization of sixteen (58) American Legion Posts and development of seven (19) new Posts in the past two years. This adds up to a total of 3,700 new, renewed and transferred members. Many of the Departments have been successful in this program without any actual assistance from National Staff. Whether a Department requests field assistance or just the training workshop, if the guidelines are followed, there will be success.

All the Departments are encouraged to participate in this program. The program, however, requires a commitment from every level of leadership, if it is to be successful.

### **Membership Campaign Promotion**

The National Membership Awards Program distributes over 65,000 various awards annually to recognize membership accomplishments at all levels of the organization. The promotion plan for the National Membership Campaign is formulated during the annual planning session of the M&PA Committee held in Indianapolis in January.

### **Unofficial Membership Awards - 1998**

Contained within this extensive program are a wide variety of prizes ranging from simple certificates and ribbons to valuable gifts and travel. The awards are designed to reward the membership success of dedicated Legionnaires at all levels of the organization and encourage continued growth. Get active in membership recruiting, ask a veteran to join our ranks today, you'll be glad you did—and you can earn one of the many prizes and awards listed below. Contact your Department Membership Chairman for more information.

#### *Early Bird Contest - August 13, 1997:*

Forty-Two Departments qualified for the 30% awards.

#### *Autumn Festival - September 17, 1997:*

Forty-Seven Departments qualified for the 45% awards with 24 of them qualifying for the 50% bonus awards.

#### *Oktoberfest - October 15, 1997:*

Forty Departments qualified for the 55% awards with 15 of them qualifying for the 60% bonus awards.

#### *Pearl Harbor - December 10, 1997:*

Thirty-One Departments qualified for the 75% awards with five of them qualifying for the 80% bonus awards.

*Big Twelve Competition - February 19, 1998:*

Twenty-one Departments qualified for the 90% awards with none qualifying for the 95% bonus awards.

*"Big Twelve" Competition Winners:*

Category I—Minnesota  
Category II—Iowa  
Category III—Kansas  
Category IV—North Dakota  
Category V—Rhode Island  
Category VI—No Winner

*The American Legion Birthday - April 8, 1998:*

Seventeen Departments qualified for the 95% award.

*May Day - May 6, 1998:*

By achieving 100% of the Department's 1998 membership goal, winning Department Commanders and Membership Chairmen have a choice of several gifts available, based on the number of targets/bonuses made during the year.

*Department Commander of the Year:*

Any Department Commander who meets or exceeds his/her 100% goal for 1998 by May 6, 1998, will receive a plaque recognizing his/her achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in New Orleans.

*Gold Brigade Recruiter Award:*

A Legionnaire who recruits 50 or more NEW members by District Competition target date, May 6, 1998, will qualify for enrollment in the elite GOLD BRIGADE of The American Legion.

*Gold Brigade Drawing:*

All certified members of the Gold Brigade will automatically be entered in a drawing with the five winners to be announced at the 1998 National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. The five winners of the drawing will receive a \$1,000.00 Award Certificate.

*Flag Day - June 24, 1998:*

By meeting 110% of the Department's 1998 membership goal, the Department Commander and Membership Chairman will receive a \$1,500.00 gift certificate. Each Department that qualifies for this award will also receive the 110% National Commander's Plaque, to be presented at the National Convention in New Orleans.

*Delegate Strength - August 10, 1998:*

Delegate Strength is determined by the membership in the hands of the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the National Convention. Total number of delegates for each Department is based on five delegates at large, one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, and the members of the National Executive Committee.

*Post Honor Ribbons:*

Post Honor Ribbons were shipped to 2,028 Posts whose 1998 membership as of December 31, 1997 exceeded their final 1997 membership.

*Certificate of Meritorious Service:*

These certificates were awarded for 263 Posts for attaining a new All-Time-High membership for 1998 by December 31, 1997.

*Five Consecutive Years All-Time-High:*

These citations are awarded to Posts with five or more consecutive years of All-Time High membership in 1998.

*District Commanders' Race-To-The-Top*

District Commanders are the lynch pin of The American Legion's Chain of Command, serving as the vital link between the National and Department organizations and all Posts. As we are all aware, the local Post is where the "rubber meets the road." If it doesn't happen at the Post level—it doesn't happen at all. District Commanders are the people charged with insuring that all Posts in their District maintain their vitality. Consequently, this unique award was created to provide a meaningful incentive for the District Commanders and reward their successful membership efforts. The winning District Commander and guest receive:

- Reserved tickets to the Indianapolis 500, "the greatest spectacle in racing."
- First class hotel accommodations for four nights at the Indianapolis Radisson Hotel.
- Reserved seating for the Indianapolis 500 parade.
- Dinner reservations Friday and Saturday evening at two of Indianapolis' finest restaurants.
- Tour of the National Headquarters of The American Legion.

Previous winners have reported how much they enjoyed their opportunity to participate in this world renowned racing event and that they have fond memories that will last a lifetime.

The following provides more specific information on how you can win.

*District Commanders' Race-To-The-Top:*

Competition will be divided into five categories based on the membership of the District without regard to geographic locations. District Commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on the final 1997 totals, and a top District Commander for the National award will be selected from each of the five categories. Second and Third place awards will also be presented in each category.

Category I - Districts of 15 to 1,499 members

Category II - Districts of 1,500 to 2,999 members

Category III - Districts of 3,000 to 4,999 members

Category IV - Districts of 5,000 to 7,499 members

Category V - Districts of 7,500 and above members

*The 500 Trip*

The 500 Trip will be presented to the Top District Commander and spouse in each category whose District membership for 1998 on March 31, 1998 represents the greatest percentage over the final 1997 membership of the District. Cannot be less than 100% to



qualify. First Place Award entitles you and your guest to attend the 1998 Indianapolis 500 Race, and first-class hotel accommodations.

*Second Place awards*

Second Place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 1998 on March 31, 1998 represents the second highest percentage over the final 1997 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a \$500 gift certificate.

*Third Place awards*

Third place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 1998 on March 31, 1998 represents the third highest percentage over the final 1997 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a \$375 gift certificate.

*First Place Winners: Trip to the Indianapolis 500 Race*

Category I	Danny G. Smith	Virginia	116.03%	Dist. 9
Category II	Joe Kocsis	South Carolina	106.67%	Dist. 8
Category III	Leonard McClure	Georgia	103.33%	Dist. 3
Category IV	No Winner			
Category V	Ronald D. Ingram	Nebraska	101.43%	Dist. 12

*Second Place Winners:*

Category I	Max Foster	North Carolina	106.74%	Dist. 13
Category II	Ralph Gold	North Carolina	102.88%	Dist. 9
Category III	Jerry Childers	Georgia	102.87%	Dist. 10
Category IV	no one qualified			
Category V	no one qualified			

*Third Place Winners:*

Category I	Harley J. Nolden	Georgia	106.63%	Dist. 8
Category II	Howard Hausmann	New Jersey	102.36%	Dist. 8
Category III	Wayne Sharp	Washington	102.79%	Dist. 5
Category IV	no one qualified			
Category V	no one qualified			

*District Commander New Post Achievement Award Recipients*

District Commanders who achieve the goal of creating new American Legion Posts in their respective District and have the new Post's Temporary Charter Application on file in National Headquarters by the 7th Target Date "May Day" May 6, 1998, qualify for a special recognition plaque.

*Department Recruiter of the Year:*

Each American Legion Post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the "Top Recruiter" for that Post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the 1998 membership year by May 6, 1998. Department Adjutants will determine the Top New

Member Recruiter for their respective Department and certify their "Department Recruiter" to National Headquarters on or before May 20, 1998.

The "Department Recruiter" properly certified from each Department, will be awarded a Plaque with his/her accomplishment inscribed thereon.

*National Recruiter of the Year:*

The individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all the Departments will be declared "National Recruiter of the Year". The winner of this award will receive an all expense paid trip to the 1998 National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

*Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Award*

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion award is presented annually to the Detachment of the Sons of The American Legion which on December 31 of each year has attained the greatest percentage of increase over the previous year's total membership. There are three (3) categories and three (3) awards. The winners are:

Category I—North Carolina—131.761%

Category II—Georgia—119.060%

Category III—Texas—115.540%

**The Sons Of The American Legion**

The Sons of The American Legion will conduct its 27th National Convention at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

For the 24th consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion is at an "All Time High" in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 1997 with a record 201,302 members. This number represents a 6 percent increase over the previous year.

Membership figures for the 1998 year are exceeding the figures for this same period last year. By the National Convention in New Orleans, the SAL will have surpassed the 1997 final figures, giving them another "All Time High" in membership.

The SAL continues its support of American Legion programs and is heavily involved with the Citizens Flag Alliance in support of a constitutional amendment to protect our flag. The SAL continues its support for our nation's veterans in the VAVS program. In 1997, the SAL provided over 126,109 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded \$346,000 nationwide. The SAL also raised over \$148,000 this year for the Child Welfare Foundation, surpassing all previous years. They also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. At present, the Sons already have surpassed the 1997 goal in donations to the Child Welfare Foundation.

An integral part of the Legion family, the Sons continues to serve and provide assistance to Posts and their communities.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION**

**Charles Pessa, New York, Chairman**

**Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director**

This report covers activities of the Legislative Commission from August 12, 1997 through August 10, 1998. During this period, the Commission met four 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 Legislative Commission represents The American Legion before the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters in which the Legion is officially interested. It also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of thirty-three members and five National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee in 1975 created the National Legislative Council, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their elected representatives. There is one council member for each member of Congress. The Council is headed by a National Chairman, who is assisted by a Vice Chairman in 50 state Departments. The Chairman, Vice Chairmen and general membership of the Council are appointed by the National Commander upon recommendation by the Departments.

The professional staff of the Commission (the Legislative Division) concentrates on implementing the legislative mandates of The American Legion which are expressed in resolutions adopted at its annual National Convention and by the National Executive Committee at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. The Legislative Division is located in Washington, DC and consists of the director, a deputy director, an assistant director, a grassroots coordinator, two secretaries, and a research analyst. The director, deputy director, assistant director and grassroots coordinator are registered lobbyists and submit bi-annual lobbying reports to Congress. Because The American Legion is a federally chartered organization, an annual report is also prepared and submitted to Congress.

### **105th Congress, First Session**

On July 29, 1997, the White House and Congress agreed on a final balanced budget blueprint. This outline is contained in two new laws destined to eliminate the federal deficit and balance the enormous federal budget by the year 2002. Public Law 105-33 sets spending levels for the next five fiscal years, and Public Law 105-34 sets down various tax provisions for balancing the budget. The agreement requires VA health care funding to remain essentially constant for the next five fiscal years. The American Legion has informed both Congress and the White House that this requirement is unacceptable to the nation's veterans and their dependents.

Because of protracted negotiations between the President and congressional leaders, the usual appropriations process was well behind schedule. By September 30, only four of the 13 funding measures needed to operate the federal government were ready for the President's signature. The 1998 fiscal year began on October 1, 1997.

As a result of this lack of action, a series of continuing resolutions (CR) were passed by the House and Senate, which allowed the federal government to continue operating for specific periods at FY 1997 spending levels and avoided another government-wide shutdown. When the remaining funding bills were enacted in early November, the First Session of the 105th Congress adjourned on November 13, 1997.

### **Americanism**

On November 26 the President signed PL 105-119, the FY 1998 funding measure for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State and the Judiciary. The measure would provide \$3.8 billion for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), about \$151 million more than was requested by the administration and allows INS to hire up to 1000 new agents and 136 support personnel.

In 1968, enactment of PL 90-363 changed the official date of observance for Memorial Day to the final Monday in May. On October 21, 1997 Representative Jim Gibbons, R-Nev., introduced HR 2679, a bill to return the traditional observance date of Memorial Day to May 30 each year. A companion measure, S 116, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, on January 21. The American Legion supports the intent of HR 2679 and S 116.

### **Children & Youth**

As noted above, President Clinton on November 26 enacted PL 105-119, the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State funding bill for FY 1998, which contains funds for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a Justice Department program supported by the Legion since its creation in 1974. Funding for regular OJJDP programs was set at \$230.9 million (compared to FY 1997 amounts of \$174.5 million), with new funding of \$145 million for a yet-to-be-authorized Juvenile Block Grant program also included in the bill. These block grants would be used by states for such programs as boot camps, treatment for abused and neglected children and gang-prevention programs in schools. This program is contained in HR 1818, a measure aimed at curbing juvenile crime, which passed the House on July 15 by a vote of 413-14. A similar Senate bill, S 10, was marked up by the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 24, with further action on the measure expected in the Second Session.

### **Constitutional Amendments**

President Clinton on November 20, 1997 signed PL 105-110, a measure which amends The American Legion's charter to broaden eligibility for Legion membership. The Senate cleared the measure by unanimous consent on November 5, followed by House passage on Saturday, November 8 by a voice vote. This law, introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee, moves back the beginning date of the Vietnam War from December 22, 1961 to February 28, 1961.

### **Economics**

On April 9, 1997 by a voice vote the House passed HR 240, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1997. The bill, introduced by Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., would strengthen veterans preference rules and redress procedures, as well as provide enhanced protection for veterans during federal government reductions-in-force. In addition, the measure mandates veterans preference for most non-political positions in the federal government, including judicial and legislative branch positions. The measure now awaits Senate consideration. A Senate companion measure was introduced on July 16; S 1021 is sponsored by Sens. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., and Max Cleland, D-Ga and currently has 13 cosponsors. The American Legion fully supports both bills.

The President on November 13 signed into law PL 105-78, the FY 1998 Departments of Labor, Health & Human Services and Education spending measure. The new law contains Labor Department funding for the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS). Below is the FY 1997 final budget totals compared to the FY 1998 final totals.

	<b>FY 1997</b>	<b>FY 1998</b>
	<b>Final Totals</b>	<b>Final Totals</b>
Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program	\$82.0 million	\$80.0 million
Local Veterans' Employment Rep.	75.1 million	77.1 million
Federal administration, VETS	22.7 million	22.8 million
Job Training Partnership Act (Veterans' programs)	7.3 million	7.3 million
National Veterans' Training Institute	2.0 million	2.0 million
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project	0	3.0 million
<b>Total funding, DoL veterans programs</b>	<b>\$189.1 million</b>	<b>\$192.2 million</b>

Funds listed for "Federal administration, VETS" help support the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). This program conducts workshops for servicemembers leaving the armed forces and their families and helps them find employment after separation. In FY 1996, over 145,000 separating servicemembers and their spouses participated in TAP workshops, with about 164,000 servicemembers and spouses projected to participate in the current year and 160,000 projected for FY 1998.

#### **Foreign Relations**

On March 20 Rep. Jane Harman, D-Calif., introduced legislation to expand the number of dates and sites at which the distinctive black and white flag of the National League of Families of POW/MIAs can be flown. The measure, HR 1161, would require the flag be flown at certain federal facilities on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, and National POW/MIA Recognition Day, as well as the last business day preceding the particular holiday. The bill would greatly expand the number of sites required to display the flag and would include all major military installations; federal national cemeteries; the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC; the White House; the official offices of the Secretaries of Defense, State, Veterans Affairs and the Director of the Selective Service System; and U.S. Postal Service post offices. Provisions of HR 1161 were included in PL 105-85, the FY 1998 DoD authorization measure.

The President on November 26 signed PL 105-118, the FY 1998 foreign operations spending measure, which passed the Senate by a voice vote the following day. The legislation provides \$13.2 billion in foreign aid funding for FY 1998, \$3.8 billion less than the President's request. It did not include a White House request for a one-time appropriation of \$3.5 billion in budget authority for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) account to deal with global financial crises.

The bill contains several routine earmarks of \$3 billion for Israel and \$2.1 billion for Egypt. In addition, the measure contains a new earmark for Jordan, which has become another dominant player in the Middle East peace process. Other earmarks include \$800 million for Russia and other former Soviet republics. The final version of PL 105-118 did not include provisions which sought to reorganize the State Department, nor a provision which would allow the U.S. to pay nearly \$1 billion in debt owed by this country to the United Nations.

President Clinton on November 18 signed into law PL 105-85, the FY 1998 DoD authorization measure, which outlines U.S. defense spending for FYs 1998 and 1999, and

contains non-binding language expressing the "sense of Congress" that would prohibit funding for U.S. troops in Bosnia after June 30, 1998. The amendment, authored by Rep. Steve Buyer, D-Ind., was designed to send a signal to this country's European allies that they should prepare to assume greater responsibility for keeping the peace in the former Yugoslavia.

#### **Internal Affairs**

On May 1, Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, introduced S. 676, which would increase the standard mileage rate deduction for charitable use of private passenger vehicles from 12 cents a mile to 18 cents a mile. Under the provisions of S. 676, the volunteer mileage deduction would be raised for the first time in thirteen years, when it was set at 12 cents a mile. The business mileage deduction, set at 20.5 cents a mile in 1984, has since been raised to 30.5 cents per mile. In addition, the Secretary of the Treasury will be authorized to make an annual review of whether the volunteer mileage deduction will need to be raised. During consideration of PL 105-34, the tax relief package, provisions of S. 676 were included. However, the final version of the tax package would only raise the volunteer mileage deduction to 14 cents a mile, and the annual Treasury Department review was dropped altogether.

#### **National Security**

President Clinton on October 8 enacted PL 105-56, the FY 1998 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill, which provides \$247.7 billion for national defense, an increase of \$3.8 billion over the President's request. The President's original DoD budget proposal sought to continue a three-year trend of funding quality of life and manpower requirements at the expense of weapons modernization. Congress, however, added several million dollars to various procurement and operations and maintenance programs, which account for the majority of the increased funding.

The measure funds the personnel account at \$69.4 billion, which will provide a 2.8 percent military pay raise and support an active-duty force of 1.43 million and a Reserve and National Guard component of 892,500.

\$82.9 billion was included to cover the cost of operations, training and maintenance. About \$724 million will be used to build housing or refurbish existing housing under the "real property maintenance" account.

For weapons and weapons systems, procurement spending was set at \$45.6 billion, \$4.7 billion more than Congress appropriated in FY 1997 and nearly \$4.1 billion more than the President requested. One of the controversial provisions in the bill, which became part of the final law, was the inclusion in the House version of \$687 million to provide for additional B-2 "Stealth" bombers above the current inventory of 21 planes. Some of the major proposed purchases include: \$2.4 billion for 20 Navy "E" and "F" modules for the F/A-18; \$3 billion for a new class of nuclear-powered submarine; \$3.7 billion for 4 Aegis-class destroyers; \$1.6 billion to overhaul the aircraft carrier Nimitz; \$2.3 billion for 9 C-17 wide-body cargo jets designed for heavy, strategic airlift services, \$1.06 billion to upgrade M-1 tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles; and \$1.2 billion for 7 more V-22 Osprey troop carrying planes for the Marine Corps.

A total of \$37.6 billion was appropriated for research, development & testing, which includes \$978 million for research and development of anti-missile defense programs. The Air Force will receive \$2.1 billion for further development of the F-22 stealth fighter, \$946 million for continued development of the Joint Strike Fighter with the Navy.

On October 27 the President enacted PL 105-66, the Department of Transportation spending bill for FY 1998 which contains \$3.9 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, a \$439

million increase over FY 1997 appropriations. Coast Guard accounts funding include: \$2.71 billion for operating expenses; \$389 million for acquisitions, construction and improvements; \$21 million for environmental compliance and restoration; \$17 million for alteration of bridges; \$720 million for retired pay and Reserve training; \$35 million for boating safety; and, \$19 million for research, development, testing and evaluation.

In a related matter, on October 21 the House by a voice vote passed HR 2204, the Coast Guard authorization bill for FYs 1998 and 1999, which added \$100 million over two years for drug-interdiction efforts. In addition, HR 2204 would: extend the Coast Guard's enforcement zone for safety and environmental violations from the current three miles to 12 miles offshore; provide funds for a new ice-breaking ship to be used to facilitate shipping on the Great Lakes during winter; and, prohibit foreign vessels which have been cited for violations of international safety standards by the Coast Guard from carrying U.S. government cargoes (such as food aid) for one year.

Funding for the Selective Service System is contained in PL 105-65, the FY 1998 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending measure. The bill funds the agency at \$23.4 million. The American Legion continues to support the Selective Service System as a quick, inexpensive backup for the current all-volunteer military in case of war.

Legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate which would guarantee the absentee voting rights of servicemembers when they are out-of-state on military business. These bills, S 278 introduced by Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, and HR 699 introduced by Rep. Henry Bonilla, R-Texas, are in response to a lawsuit filed in Texas seeking to deny 800 military absentee ballots from being tabulated in local elections. Provisions of S 278 were included in the Senate's version of PL 105-85, the FY 1998 DoD authorization measure. However, prior to final passage the Military Voting Rights provisions were stripped out of the bill. The provisions were replaced by a nonbinding "sense of Congress" resolution which states that servicemembers do not give up their right to vote if military duties take them away from home.

#### **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

On October 27 President Clinton signed PL 105-65, a bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for FY 1998. Following is the FY 1997 final budget totals, compared to the FY 1998 amounts enacted, with changes indicated in individual accounts:

	<b>FY 1997 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 1998 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 1998 vs. FY 1997</b>
Compensation and Pension	\$18.67 billion	\$19.93 billion	+\$1.26 billion
Other Veterans Benefits Administration	\$2.66 billion	\$1.77 billion	-\$885 million
Medical Care	\$17.01 billion	\$17.06 billion	+\$44 million
Medical and Prosthetic Research	\$262 million	\$272 million	+\$10 million
General operating expenses	\$828 million	\$786 million	-\$41 million
National Cemetery System	\$77 million	\$84 million	+\$7 million
Major Construction Projects	\$251 million	\$178 million	-\$73 million
Minor Construction Projects	\$175 million	\$175 million	0
State Extended Care Facilities Grants	\$47 million	\$80 million	+\$33 million
State Veterans Cemeteries Construction Grants	\$1 million	\$10 million	+\$9 million
Other Accounts	\$105 million	\$108 million	+\$3 million
<b>VA Account Totals</b>	<b>\$40.09 billion</b>	<b>\$40.45 billion</b>	<b>+\$367 million</b>

The final public law included language authorizing VA to retain third-party collections which CBO estimated to total \$604 million. In the past, most of the money collected went to the U.S. General Treasury. Although The American Legion supports third-party reimbursements, the Legion also believes it should not be used in lieu of appropriated funds, but rather to supplement VA funding. The Legion also questions whether VA will be able to collect the full \$604 million as forecasted by the CBO under current VA rules, regulations and procedures.

In an attempt to improve this situation, an amendment to the VA funding bill, introduced by Rep. Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., was included in the final legislation. This provision would initiate supplemental funding for VA health care should VA's efforts to collect and retain third-party reimbursements fall more than \$25 million short of the \$604 million projected by CBO. The amendment would greatly assist VA in meeting its obligation to provide veterans with necessary medical services. Otherwise, VA may be forced to further scale back health care services and reduce staffing levels, ultimately forcing VA to ration health care to service-connected and other eligible veterans.

On November 21 the President enacted PL 105-111, a law to make it easier for veterans to appeal compensation benefits rulings. Under the provisions of this measure, introduced by Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., veterans benefits claims decisions can be reviewed by the Court of Veterans Appeals (CVA) for cases of "clear and unmistakable error" (CUE) by VA regional offices and the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). The measure would also entitle veterans to retroactive benefits if an original ruling is overturned or modified.

A recent CVA decision, *Russell/Collins v. Principi*, involved the question of whether or not the Department of Veterans Affairs had the legal authority to reverse prior VA decisions on the grounds of CUE and whether the Court had jurisdiction to review VA's determination on the issue of CUE. The American Legion filed an extensive "friend of the court" brief and presented oral arguments before the Court in favor of the concept. When CVA ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in this case, the VA opposed the Court's conclusions, arguing that VA regional offices had sufficient authority to reverse prior BVA decisions.

The American Legion is opposed to efforts by VA to limit or restrict the circumstances under which the issue of CUE can be reviewed by either VA regional offices or BVA.

In related action, when the Senate approved its version of the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1997 (PL 105-33), the measure contained a provision authorizing a three-year demonstration project to allow VA to collect and retain Medicare payments for services rendered to certain Medicare-eligible veterans. Many of these veterans desire to use their Medicare benefits to pay for VA health care services, but are turned away under existing law because they are considered high-income veterans. The American Legion believes VA could provide these services at a significantly reduced rate compared to the private health care sector and ultimately save Congress money.

However, when the measure emerged from conference and prior to final enactment, the VA-Medicare collection provision was removed and replaced with one authorizing DoD to take the same action. Further, the VA demonstration project was replaced by language to authorize only a study of a VA-Medicare demonstration project. The American Legion will continue to seek help for veterans seeking medical care in VA.

On April 16, 1997 the House by a voice vote passed HR 1092, a bill to make several changes relevant to VA. The measure would extend and expand VA's authority to enter into so-called "enhanced-use" leases. Under the measure, VA will have authority through December 31, 2002 to enter into long-term leases with private and other public entities to improve unused or under used VA property to contribute to VA's overall mission. These include child-care centers, parking facilities and VA office space. These leases can last as long as 35 years.



The funds realized by the leases are retained by VA, with 75 percent of the funds going to its Nursing Home Revolving Fund and the remainder being retained by the VA medical center for medical care. This legislation also would repeal a section of current law which limits the number of enhanced-use leases which VA can execute.

Another section of HR 1092 would rename the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals as the "U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims" to clear up confusion with regard to the court's current acronym "CVA" with the Board of Veterans Appeals "BVA." Also, adoption of the name "U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims" would establish that it is an independent judicial entity and not an administrative tribunal within VA, like BVA.

Finally, HR 1092 would rename VA's National Cemetery System (NCS) as the National Cemetery Administration. It would also redesignate the Director of the National Cemetery System as the VA Assistant Secretary for Memorial Affairs. These changes would more accurately reflect NCS' status as a benefit-delivery administration of VA, and assure that the director's status would be commensurate with other VA Assistant Secretaries.

The measure is currently pending action in the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

President Clinton on November 19 enacted PL 105-98, legislation which authorizes the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation and other benefits for service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents for FY 1998. The COLA, effective on December 1, 1997, uses an inflation adjustment of 2.1 percent, the same increase received by Social Security recipients. The measure also directs that monthly benefits be rounded down to the next whole dollar, designed to save more than \$287 million in the next five years.

On November 19 President Clinton signed PL 105-101, which establishes criminal penalties for theft or vandalism at national cemeteries run by VA, DoD or the Interior Department. The Senate passed the measure, which had been introduced by Senator Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., on November 4 by unanimous consent, with the House passing the bill by a voice vote on November 8. Enactment of PL 105-101 is in response to vandalism which occurred recently at a military cemetery in Hawaii.

The President on November 21 signed PL 105-114, an omnibus veterans' benefits act passed in the final days of the First Session. The measure extends the Native American Home Loan Program through 2003, authorizes outreach for the program, extends for two years VA's authority relating to services to homeless veterans, and extends for two years VA authority to provide noninstitutional alternatives to nursing home care.

Additional language in PL 105-114 authorizes a set-aside of \$5 million for pilot programs at 10 VA medical centers to serve Gulf War veterans who suffer from undiagnosed illnesses. The law further declares all Gulf War veterans eligible for VA health care for problems that may be related to their service during the 1991 war with Iraq, rather than restricting such care to veterans who are thought to have been exposed to toxic substances or environmental hazards.

Also included in PL 105-114 was language which authorizes \$89.6 million in VA medical center construction and \$15.7 million in various major medical facility leases. The bill includes: \$34.6 million to complete building improvements at the Memphis, TN VA medical center to protect it from earthquake damage; \$48 million for building, clinical and other improvements to McClellan Hospital at Mather Field, Sacramento, CA; and, \$7 million for outpatient improvements at Mare Island, Vallejo, CA and Martinez, CA.

Also included in PL 105-114 were provisions from a separate bill which seeks to deal with sexual harassment and discrimination within the Department of Veterans Affairs by establishing an Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication at VA's central office. The director would be required to report any suspected retaliatory action against employees to the VA secretary or deputy secretary.

The original legislation, HR 1703, included a provision that called for the use of an administrative law judge in harassment or discrimination cases, but was dropped from the final law. An amendment added by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee would authorize funds to create a six-member independent panel to review equal opportunity and sexual harassment complaint procedures within VA. A VA spokesman termed the bill unnecessary because VA is creating a resolution management office to deal with employee complaints.

These provisions were introduced in the wake of recent congressional hearings which revealed 73 cases of sexual harassment or discrimination pending at VA headquarters alone. In addition, there was a case of a VA hospital director accused of sexual harassment who also served as the equal employment opportunity officer for that facility, which meant that his office was in charge of the investigation.

On November 21, the President enacted PL 105-116, a measure to deny burial in veterans' cemeteries or full military burial honors to anyone convicted of a federal or state capital offense. Current law allows for withholding military burial for crimes such as sedition, treason or sabotage, but not all capital offenses, such as murder. The bill was drafted after Timothy McVeigh, a Persian Gulf War veteran, was convicted of blowing up the Oklahoma City federal building. The original version of the measure would have denied all benefits to veterans convicted of federal capital crimes.

#### **105th Congress, Second Session**

The Second Session of the 105th Congress convened on January 27, 1998. Major issues on the agendas of both chambers included campaign finance reform and the Fiscal Year 1999 federal budget. Because 1998 is an election year, the Second Session had fewer working days for Congress to conduct its business.

President Clinton's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 1999, unveiled on February 2, 1998, claimed to be the first federal budget since 1969 to boast a modest surplus (approximately \$10 billion), after nearly a decade of continued budget cuts. At the same time, the President proposed heavy increases in education and other social spending, which would break the spending caps outlined in the balanced budget agreement. At the same time, the President's recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflected another flatlined budget. For FY 1999, the administration proposed a VA budget total of \$42.3 billion, an increase of \$142 million and a mere two tenths of one percent over FY 1998's approved totals contained in PL 105-65.

In other areas of major concern, the administration proposed medical construction funding totaling \$240 million for FY 1999, \$115 million below FY 1998 amounts. None of these funds, however, would go toward the construction, expansion or renovation of any ambulatory care centers, which VA is touting as the future focus of medical care; the proposed construction funds are slated for existing structures. Two areas which the President's budget slated for increases are (A) a 20 percent rate increase for Montgomery GI Bill education benefits, and (B) \$100 million in increased total funding for the Labor Department's Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Part IV-C. This program trains, retrain and assists older veterans to find employment. However, the President proposed to increase spending in these areas by using projected savings from his plan to deny service connection to veterans who sustained tobacco-related illnesses while in the military, a proposal also contained in his budget proposal.

On March 18 the House Veterans' Affairs Committee recommended a \$632 million increase over the administration's FY 1999 budget request for VA, for a total of \$18.1 billion for medical care and \$44 billion overall. Part of the medical care increase came as a result of the committee's unwillingness to believe the amounts which VA projected it

could collect from third-party reimbursers for treatment of nonservice-connected veterans. The Office of Management and Budget had projected that \$770 million would be collected by VA from third party insurers during FY 1999. Unfortunately, the committee supported the President's legislative proposal to repeal compensation for tobacco-related illnesses.

The tobacco proposal in the budget seeks to repeal a VA General Counsel's decision to award service-connected disability for tobacco-related illnesses, if the veteran's addiction to nicotine occurred during active-duty military service. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated, if enacted, this proposal would save VA \$17 billion over the next five years. Recently, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has recalculated the savings at \$10.5 billion. Using VA's own data and statistics, the Legion believes the proposal would save a mere \$28 million over the next 5 years.

On April 2 the Senate passed the budget resolution using the \$10.5 billion savings from the President's legislative proposal on tobacco-related illnesses compensation to help pay for highway and mass transit programs. During debate, Senators Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., offered an amendment to stop the use of VA disability compensation to pay for these nonveteran programs. Although the amendment was adopted 98-0, within minutes Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M., offered a substitute amendment to reverse the Rockefeller amendment, effectively prohibiting VA claims for tobacco-related illnesses but calling for a study to reevaluate the savings. The Domenici amendment narrowly passed 52-46.

In the debates on campaign reform, efforts are underway to make lobbying Congress and the administration more difficult for nonprofit organizations, except labor organizations. The Campaign Reform and Election Integrity Act of 1998 (HR 3485), introduced by Representative Bill Thomas, R-Calif., would try to seriously restrict lobbying activities, especially by nonprofit groups. This bill would require nonprofits to obtain prior, written, voluntary authorization from members of Congress or the administration before lobbying. The bill was amended, removing all mention of nonprofits, made into a clean bill (HR 3581), which was decisively defeated by a recorded vote of 337-74 on March 30, 1998.

The November mid-term elections are fast approaching. All the members of the House and one-third of the Senate face reelection. As of August 2, 34 House members and 5 senators are seeking other offices, have announced their intention to retire at the end of the 105th Congress, or have lost primary elections. The Republicans hold a ten-seat advantage in the Senate, with guarded optimism that edge will increase after November. However, the real battleground will be the House, where a razor-thin 22-seat Republican edge could be swept away with the change of just eleven seats.

One of the more prominent retirees is ten-term veteran legislator Representative Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., chairman of the House Rules Committee and former member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. He has been a staunch ally of The American Legion on a variety of issues, but perhaps none more important than the fight to protect Old Glory from physical acts of desecration. Solomon said at a news conference in April that his proudest achievement was passage of legislation to elevate VA to Cabinet-level status in 1988.

### **Americanism**

On June 24, the Senate Judiciary Committee (by a 10-7 vote) approved Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res) 40, a constitutional amendment to give Congress the power to ban physical desecration of the American flag. Two weeks later, on July 8, the committee held a hearing at which witnesses testified in favor of the measure. SJ Res 40 has a total of 61 cosponsors. In addition, the Citizens Flag Alliance has received verbal commitments from

three other senators that they will vote favorably on SJ Res 40. Sixty-seven (67) senators will be needed to pass the proposed constitutional amendment on to the states for ratification. The Senate is planning a vote on this measure sometime prior to adjournment.

### **Children & Youth**

On July 23, the Senate passed S 2260, the Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary spending measure for FY 1999 (by a 99-0 vote). As passed, this bill contains \$17.8 billion for Department of Justice (DoJ) programs. Several areas of interest to The American Legion include \$3.9 billion for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and \$285 million for a variety of juvenile justice programs under the jurisdiction of the Office of Juvenile Crime Control and Delinquency Prevention (OJCCDP). In a related area, \$1.1 billion would go to the Bureau of the Census, in order for that office to gear up for the 2000 census.

By comparison the House measure, HR 4276 (passed on August 5) contains \$18.3 billion for all DoJ programs, including \$4.1 billion for the INS and \$283 million for OJCCDP programs. During House floor debate on Census funding, an amendment was defeated which would have allowed portions of the Census to be conducted using statistical sampling rather than actual enumeration of each American. As a result of this vote, \$956 million slated for the Census Bureau will be withheld. President Clinton has threatened to veto HR 4276 if this funding is not forthcoming.

### **Economics**

On March 24, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held hearings on HR 240 and S 1021, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act. In order for veterans' preference to apply, the preference eligible veteran must first be qualified for the position. These bills would:

- require each federal agency to periodically publish a list of positions for which preference eligible veterans are qualified to apply;
- expand the number of federal, non-political, jobs in the White House, the legislative branch and the General Accounting Office, for which certain veterans get hiring preference;
- add extra protections for veterans during a reduction-in-force (RIF), which is used to eliminate jobs as the federal work force shrinks; and,
- provide a redress mechanism for veterans who claim they were denied preference and allow them to make their case in court.

The American Legion testified and highlighted the differences between veterans' preference and affirmative action programs, as well as the need to protect this individually earned right that has repeatedly been ruled as constitutional by the Supreme Court and numerous lower courts.

The Association of Federal Government Employees (AFGE) opposes these bills because of the "bumping rights" afforded to preference eligible veterans during a RIF, as well as the provision prohibiting designer RIF's exclusively for preference eligible veterans would be detrimental for other federal employees because they would be subjected to designer RIF's. AFGE has asked the veterans community to expand the designer RIF provision to include all federal employees.

The American Legion disagrees with AFGE on these points because the original Veterans' Preference Act of 1944 governs "bumping rights" and would prevent this from occurring. The Legion is further concerned that widening the bill's language with AFGE's "designer RIF ban" proposal could hinder passage of the bill because of possible

jurisdictional conflict between the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

The National Association of Postmasters of the United States (NAPUS) and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) also strongly oppose the measure. They argued the bill would provide many veterans with false hope when applying for positions, as well as create additional administrative burdens for the hiring agencies. These two organizations also provided proposals to be included in the bill that contain language regarding "collective bargaining."

These organizations have yet to substantiate their arguments with factual information. The American Legion believes the ultimate motive of NAPUS and NTEU may be to have their "collective bargaining rights" codified into law, which could allow these organizations to violate veterans' preference laws and claim the "collective bargaining" process took into account veterans' preference status, thus exempting them from the redress provisions outlined in the bill and escaping punitive action. The American Legion believes their arguments are not pertinent to protecting veterans' earned individual rights and the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act is not the appropriate vehicle to codify an organization's "collective bargaining" rights.

On July 28, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved S 1021, sending it to the full Senate for further action. The Senate measure which emerged from the committee markup session, however, was not the same bill which went in. Gone from S 1021 were the two provisions supported by The American Legion:

- Section 2, which required publication of a list of federal positions for which preference eligible veterans can apply.
- Section 3, which gave special protection to preference eligible veterans during designer RIFs.

The committee then added two sections to S 1021 to amend title 38, USC, section 4212, which deals with veterans employment by federal contractors, that:

- adds Persians Gulf War veterans to the list of persons which federal contractors are encouraged to hire, and
- requires federal contractors to report to the Department of Labor on the maximum and minimum number of employees they hire.

The American Legion is very concerned that the two sections of S 1021 which are most important were excised from the measure. The Legion will do everything possible to reinstate these missing sections into the legislation and to get the bill onto the Senate floor for consideration and a vote.

On July 14, the House Appropriations Committee approved HR 4274, the FY 1999 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Service and Education spending bill. Included in the Department of Labor (DoL) portion is money for several veterans programs. For veterans' employment, the bill provides the Job Training Partnership Act (Title IV-C) with \$7.3 million, which mirrors the President's budget request and the current year's funding level. These funds provide special employment and training programs designed to meet the unique needs of disabled, Vietnam-era, and recently separated veterans.

Under the office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), HR 4274 includes \$183 million. This is the same as the budget request and is \$740,000 above the current fiscal year. The bill provides \$80 million for the Disabled Veterans Outreach program (DVOP), which is sufficient to finance about 1,440 State staff. The bill also provides \$77 million for the Local Veterans Employment Representative program (LVER), which can finance about 1,300 State staff. For federal administration, the bill provides \$26 million, an increase of \$740,000. This includes \$2 million to operate the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), the same amount requested by the

Administration as a separate line item. Attendees at the Institute are primarily State employees who provide employment services to veterans. The committee stated all federal agencies should pay the full cost of training for their employees that is provided by the NVTI.

### **Foreign Relations**

Earlier this year, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee heard testimony by The American Legion on the difficulties experienced by the Montagnards and other Vietnamese refugees trying to leave the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The Montagnards inhabit the mountainous areas of Vietnam and have long opposed Communism. During the Vietnam War, U.S. military advisors organized the Montagnards into military units to oppose the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces.

However, since the end of the Vietnam War, the Montagnards have been the subject of renewed attention by the Vietnamese government, but not to their benefit. Millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours of humanitarian assistance have been expended in Vietnam by American organizations each year. Few Montagnards have been allowed to emigrate abroad, while those still in Vietnam have been subject to harassment, surveillance, "reeducation" and other forms of reprisal.

Further, the Vietnamese government has not been forthcoming in dealing with U.S. efforts to account for missing American servicemen from the Vietnam War. Despite President Clinton's recent certification that Vietnam is "fully cooperating in good faith" to find the remains of American personnel, The American Legion disagrees with the President's determination. Finally, despite the lifting of trade sanctions and the normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam, its human rights record still lags badly.

On April 30, the Senate resoundingly passed a resolution which endorsed an expansion of NATO by adding Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, the fourth such expansion in the alliance's 50-year history. The vote was 80-19, fourteen votes more than the two-thirds majority needed. The strong Senate majority—on one of the most pivotal foreign policy questions of the 105th Congress, if not the decade—is expected to speed similar agreement by the other members of the NATO alliance.

With that vote, the U.S. joins Canada, Norway, Denmark and Germany in endorsing the new NATO. Eleven other NATO countries need to vote on ratification before the alliance would be expanded. The Czech legislature voted on the same day to join NATO; Poland and Hungary have not voted but are expected to do so in the coming months. If the other NATO countries agree, the three republics would be admitted next April at a ceremony in Washington. This action directly addresses The American Legion's Foreign Relations Resolution Number 102 from the 79th National Convention.

In March, President Clinton issued a waiver to a portion of the Trade Act of 1974, known as the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which prohibited the U.S. from trading with Communist countries unless they permitted free emigration. The President's decision allowed U.S. exporters and investors to obtain loans, loan guarantees and political risk insurance from various organizations to do business with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Eventually, these economic benefits would lead to normalized diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

On July 30, the House debated U.S. trade and diplomatic relations with Vietnam. After extensive debate and lobbying by administration officials, the House voted 260-163 to defeat House Joint Resolution (HJ Res) 120, which would have overturned the President's waiver. Supporters of HJ Res 120, besides opposing U.S. business dealings with Communist Vietnam and citing Vietnam's record of poor economic management, also mentioned

Vietnam's less-than-total cooperation with the U.S. in the search for American POW/MIAs or their remains.

The American Legion continues to oppose all diplomatic and economic contacts with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam until there has been a full and complete accounting of American POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War.

#### Internal Affairs

The Smithsonian Institution announced, on July 2, that a 50-year lease had been signed with Dulles Airport to build a new Air and Space Museum annex. The annex will house historic planes and spacecraft which are too large for the museum's main headquarters on the Mall. Construction of the annex will begin in the spring of 1999 and will be financed almost entirely with private donations.

Among the historic craft to be on display are the space shuttle *Enterprise* and the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan in August, 1945. The annex is scheduled to open by 2003, the centenary of powered flight. Once this annex is completed, it will satisfy one of The American Legion's resolutions, Internal Affairs Resolution No. 259 from the 78th National Convention of 1996.

#### National Security

The House and Senate versions of the Department of Defense (DoD) appropriation measures have been acted upon. The House approved HR 4103 by a 358-61 vote on June 24. The Senate substituted the text of its own version of the measure (S 2132) for the House-passed language, added some amendments and passed HR 4103 on July 30 by a vote of 97-2.

The Senate bill would provide \$252 billion, while the House version would provide \$250.5 billion. Listed below are some of the major accounts in each measure and their appropriated amounts

	<b>S 2132</b>	<b>HR 4103</b>
	<b>Senate bill</b>	<b>House bill</b>
Operations, maintenance, health-care	\$94.5 billion	\$94.5 billion
Personnel	\$70.5 billion	\$70.6 billion
Weapons procurement	\$48.6 billion	\$48.4 billion
Drug interdiction	\$743 million	\$764 million
Medical research	\$250 million	\$375 million

Some of the specific major programs and weapons programs include:

- \$3.7 billion for Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) programs from the House and Senate;
- \$2.3 billion from both chambers for further development and procurement of the F-22 fighter;
- \$2.9 billion from the House to develop and procure 27 F/A-18E/F tactical fighters, while the Senate would provide \$3.1 billion to obtain 30 of the aircraft;
- \$3 billion from each chamber to procure 13 C-17 cargo aircraft;
- \$1.1 billion from the House for 8 V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor craft, while the Senate would provide \$1 billion for 7;

- \$213 million for final development of CVN-77, the last of the *Nimitz*-class aircraft carriers;
- \$100 million from the House and \$74 million from the Senate for continued research and development into CV(X), a new class of aircraft carriers;
- \$2.8 billion from both chambers for 3 more *Arleigh Burke*-class guided-missile destroyers;
- \$2.3 billion from each chamber for development and procurement of the first of a new generation of attack submarines;
- \$297 million from the House and \$293 million from the Senate for procurement of 30 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, approximately one third intended for Army National Guard units;
- \$760 million from the House and \$753 million from the Senate for upgrades to the M1 Abrams battle tank; and
- \$417 million from the House and \$440 million from the Senate to the states of the former Soviet Union to destroy nuclear and chemical weapons and to help prevent the smuggling of such weapons.

The Senate supported a 3.6 percent pay increase for military personnel, while the House backed a 3.1 percent military pay raise. The American Legion supports the Senate recommendation.

As part of the Senate version of HR 4103, the FY 1999 DoD spending bill, Senator Phil Gramm, R-Tex., offered an amendment (which was adopted by voice vote) which would bar states from dropping military personnel from their voting rolls because of their absence due to military orders. This would reaffirm and solidify a "Sense of the Congress" clause, stating that service members do not give up their right to vote if military duties take them away from home, which was included in PL 105-85, the FY 1998 DoD authorization measure. A House-Senate conference committee will decide whether the Gramm language will be included in the final funding law.

On May 21, the House passed HR 3616, that chamber's version of the FY 1999 DoD authorization measure (by a 357-60 tally). On June 25, the Senate passed S 2057 (by an 88-4 vote). The Senate substituted the text of S 2057 in lieu of the House language in HR 3616, and then by a voice vote passed HR 3616. The \$274 billion authorization bill must now go to a joint House-Senate conference committee to resolve differences.

Several policy provisions will be the main focus of HR 3616 when House and Senate conferees meet on this bill. During floor consideration, the Senate added some provisions to the bill, and defeated several others. They include:

- adopted an amendment by Senator James Inhofe, R-Okla., to tighten existing limits on the Pentagon's ability to close or scale down bases without congressional approval;
- approved a non-binding amendment by Armed Services Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., expressing the sense of Congress that U.S. combat troops should be withdrawn from Bosnia "within a reasonable period of time;"
- killed an amendment by Senator Bob Smith, R-N.H., to conduct a non-binding vote by March 31, 1999 on whether to continue the Bosnia mission;
- defeated an amendment by Senator Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., to require separate barracks and separate training units for male and female recruits;
- killed an amendment by Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, that would have transferred \$329 million from DoD to VA, by a vote of 55-38; and,



- defeated an amendment by Senator Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., that would have reduced all DoD accounts by one tenth of one percent and add that amount to the Pentagon's child-care system.

Another provision of HR 3616, the FY 1999 DoD authorization, would help address the continuing problem of recruitment and retention of personnel for our nation's armed forces. This provision would increase the maximum additional monthly "kicker" for hard-to-fill military specialties from \$700 to \$950. Current law authorizes the military services to provide an additional education benefit to servicemembers enlisting for certain hard-to-fill military specialties.

In addition, Senator Byrd D-WV, was instrumental in adding language that will require executive approval for any future waivers to use non-approved vaccines or Investigational drugs designed to protect service personnel against nuclear, biological and chemical warfare (NBC) agents. The language also mandates that the Secretary of Defense conduct a thorough review of all NBC related doctrine, specifically with regards to low level or subacute protective and defense measures.

On July 24, the Senate approved S 2307, the FY 1999 Department of Transportation spending measure (by a 90-1 vote), while the House passed its version, HR 4328 (by a 391-25 vote) on July 30. Although both measures would fund the U.S. Coast Guard at \$3.9 billion, this funding total is roughly equal to the amount which was approved for the current fiscal year. Despite this appropriation flat-lining, the Coast Guard will be asked to take a larger hand in drug interdiction operations, patrolling this country's territorial waters and stopping the influx of illegal immigrants. Funding differences in the two versions must now be settled in a conference committee.

As part of the FY 1999 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending measure, the Selective Service System will continue to receive funding under the provisions of both HR 4194 and S 2168, the respective House and Senate versions of the spending bill. The Senate bill would fund the agency at \$24.9 million, while the House bill would give the agency \$24.2 million. A conference committee must now reconcile the differing amounts before the measure can become law.

#### **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

On May 6, the House voted 414-4 to pass HR 6, the Higher Education Authorization Act of 1998. One of the provisions of this measure affects student-veterans using the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). The bill exempts veterans benefits from being counted as resources when veterans apply for other types of federal financial aid. In addition, the bill ensures that reservists who are called to active duty will not be forced to begin repaying their student loans while serving their country.

During Senate consideration of this legislation, the Senate substituted the language of their companion legislation, S 1882, for the text of HR 6 and passed the measure by a 96-1 vote. Included in the Senate measure was an amendment offered by Senator Bob Graham D-Fla., that also exempts veterans benefits from being counted as resources when veterans apply for other types of federal financial aid. A conference committee must now formulate a version of the bill agreeable to both chambers before it can be signed by the President.

On May 19, the House passed HR 3039 (by a 405-1 vote), a veterans' housing authority measure. It now goes to the Senate for further action. As passed by the House, HR 3039 would allow VA to guarantee 15 loans totaling up to \$100 million for development of transitional housing for homeless veterans. It will also require residents of such housing to stay sober, find jobs and pay modest housing fees. The bill now goes to the Senate for further action.

Also on May 19, the House passed by a voice vote, HR 3603, a measure to authorize \$205 million in FY 1999 for medical facility construction projects for veterans and to further authorize \$8.5 million for medical facility leases. Among the major projects proposed for funding are a number of outpatient projects that reflect the shifting emphasis from inpatient to ambulatory care. The Senate now must act on the bill before it can become law.

The American Legion continues to support VA's Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) system with some reservations. The system was implemented with the intent to allocate VA funding based on the veterans population served within the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN). However, The American Legion is concerned that this new funding system may create financial hardships for VA, and severely decrease the agency's ability to provide quality health care to veterans. The American Legion's VISN Resource and Management Task Force, formerly known as the VERA Task Force, has visited eight VISNs since February 1997, to evaluate the VERA concept and its possible impact on VA's ability to continue providing veterans with quality health care and other services.

On June 17, The American Legion presented testimony before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. The hearing addressed the future of VA's Veterans Health Administration and the GI Bill of Health. The testimony presented reemphasized the need for a health care system that would be accessible to all veterans and their dependents. During the testimony, the four major goals of the GI Bill of Health were stressed:

- to open VA and its network of hospitals, outpatient clinics and other facilities to all veterans, service-connected and non-service-connected;
- to allow VA to collect and retain all third-party reimbursements, co-payments, deductibles and premiums;
- to increase the access points of VA medical care; and,
- to strengthen, improve and preserve all of VA's specialized services by offering them to veterans.

On July 22, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee heard testimony on HR 836, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act. This measure would amend the definition of active military service to include those who are veterans of service in the Philippine Commonwealth Army and the New Philippine Scouts for U.S. veterans' benefits purposes. Nearly 72,000 Filipino veterans would be affected by this legislation. On the day prior to the hearing a contingent of Filipino veterans demonstrated at VA headquarters and the White House in support of HR 836. The American Legion testified in support of HR 836 at the hearing. While critics of the measure cited possible cost and budget impact of this initiative, The American Legion said that funds for this program could be taken from the projected FY 1999 budget surplus.

On July 28, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved a slate of bills which affect veterans, sending them on to the full Senate for further action. The measures included:

- S 730, a bill to increase the special pension paid to Medal of Honor recipients from \$400 per month to \$600 per month and to index the pension; to authorize VA to furnish memorial headstones to spouses of veterans whose remains were unavailable for burial; and to authorize the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) to exercise flexibility in the order in which docketed appeals are considered;
- S 1385, legislation to add 10 forms of cancer to the VA list that recognizes certain illnesses as service-connected for radiation-exposed veterans. These include lung, bone, skin, colon, rectal and ovarian cancers, as well as tumors of the brain and central nervous system, non-malignant thyroid nodular disease, parathyroid adenoma and posterior subcapsular cataracts;

- S 1822, a measure to provide priority health care to veterans who have been exposed to ionizing radiation through a certain medical treatment used during the 1940s and 1950s. These veterans would receive the same priority treatment as veterans who may have been exposed to ionizing radiation during nuclear weapons tests between 1946-1962 or during the occupation of Japan following World War II. An amendment was added to S 1822 to extend authority for eligibility of former members of the Selected Reserve for veterans housing loans;
- S 2273, a bill to provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disability compensation rates for service-connected disabled veterans and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans. The COLA increases would be the same as those scheduled for Social Security recipients; and
- S 2358, the "Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998," will provide a scientific basis for VA to assess the association between illness and exposure to toxic agents and environmental or other wartime hazards during the Persian Gulf War; to extend VA authority to provide medical care services to Persian Gulf War veterans; to extend and modify VA authority to evaluate the health status of spouses and children of Gulf War veterans; and, to require an assessment of the feasibility of establishing an independent entity to evaluate veterans' post-conflict illnesses.

On July 29, the House passed, by a 259-164 vote, HR 4194, the FY 1999 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. The Senate passed its version, S 2168, on July 17 by a voice vote. Under the House measure, VA would receive \$42.6 billion in funding for FY 1999, compared to the \$42.5 billion contained in S 2168. During House debate on HR 4194, three amendments were passed which increased funding for the VA by \$373 million. One amendment, authored by Representative Van Hillary, R-Tenn., was passed by a vote of 231-200. It would transfer \$21 million from a HUD housing program to the States Veterans Homes Grants Program. The second amendment, introduced by Representative Tom Coburn, R-Okla., transfers \$304 million from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to VA medical care. A third amendment, offered by Representative Obey, D-Wis., transferred \$69 million from the VA Future Acquisition Account to medical care.

Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., also introduced an amendment to HR 4194, to cut off funding for VERA. The American Legion opposed his action, and sent a letter of support for VERA to Representative Bob Stump, R-Ariz., Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The Hinchey amendment was subsequently defeated. The chart below compares the funding amounts passed by the House and Senate, contrasting them with the funding totals for the current year.

	<b>FY 1998</b>	<b>S. 2168</b>	<b>H.R. 4194</b>
Veterans Benefits Administration	\$22.2 billion	\$23.5 billion	\$23.5 billion
Medical Care	\$17.6 billion	*\$17.8 billion	*\$18.0 billion
Medical/prosthetic research	\$272 million	\$310 million	\$310 million
General operating expenses	\$786 million	\$855 million	\$856 million
Major Construction	\$178 million	\$142 million	\$143 million
Minor Construction	\$175 million	\$175 million	\$175 million
National Cemetery System	\$ 84 million	\$ 92 million	\$ 92 million
State extended care facility construction grants	\$ 80 million	\$ 90 million	\$101 million
State veteran cemetery construction grants	\$ 10 million	\$ 10 million	\$ 10 million
<b>VA totals</b>	<b>\$41.0 billion</b>	<b>*\$42.5 billion</b>	<b>*\$42.6 billion</b>
<i>* Includes \$558 million in Medical Care Collections Funds (MCCF) projected for FY 1999</i>			

On August 3, the House passed by unanimous consent HR 3980, a bill to extend through the year 2001 VA's authority to treat veterans who suffer from ailments stemming from the Persian Gulf War service. It would require treatment be provided for five years after a veteran's discharge for ailments related to any future conflicts, even if there is insufficient evidence to link a veteran's illnesses to military service. The measure would also require VA to set up a National Center for the Study of War-Related Illnesses. It would also require creation of an advisory committee to consult with the administration's Persian Gulf War Veterans Coordinating Board and obligate the board to disclose new research priorities it has established, and require publication of research findings on the Internet.

Also on August 3, the House passed HR 4110 by unanimous consent. This measure will:

- authorize a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disability benefits for service-connected veterans and for their surviving spouses and children. The benefits increase would be equal to the COLA being given to Social Security recipients;
- make changes in the Montgomery GI Bill educational aid program by increasing the number of eligible veterans, expanding the range of payment options, and providing educational outreach to service members as soon as they become eligible for the aid;
- increase the Federal share of grants to states for establishment of veterans cemeteries to 100 percent;
- allow members of the Reserve components to have a permanent entitlement to VA home loans;
- require VA to allow bidders to compete openly for contracts to manage and maintain VA-foreclosed homes, as is the practice for other federal lenders; and,
- make several changes to improve the internal operations of the Court of Veterans Appeals.

On June 9, the President signed Public Law 105-178, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21). A portion of this legislation amends sections of title 38, USC, to prohibit payment of compensation to veterans for disabilities which are a result of the use of tobacco products. Despite this action, several provisions in PL 105-178 affect veterans. These veterans-related provisions:

- increased the basic GI Bill education benefit by 20 percent from \$440/month to \$528/month;

- increased adaptive housing grants for severely disabled veterans from \$38,000 to \$43,000, so that veterans may purchase a home specially adapted to their needs or make modifications to their current residence;
- increased the adaptive automobile allowance for severely disabled veterans from \$5500 to \$8000 to help with the rising cost of automobiles;
- increased the monthly pension benefit for disabled veterans in need of the full time aid and attendance of another person by \$50/month to assist the increasing number of low-income veterans who will need alternatives to nursing home care in the future;
- allowed all surviving spouses of veterans who die from a service-connected disability to resume receiving assistance under the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program if their subsequent remarriage ends, thus repealing a 1990 change in law; and
- reduced the amount which VA must recoup before paying disability benefits to veterans who also qualify for separation bonuses when separating from the military between 1991 and 1996.

Even prior to enactment of PL 105-178, a technical corrections bill (HR 3978) was introduced. After House passage of the measure, Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., sought to offer an amendment to HR 3978 to repeal the law's provision denying benefits to veterans with tobacco-related illnesses. However, in order to avoid floor debate and amendment, the Senate leadership announced that the technical corrections bill would be added to the conference report to HR 2676, a bill to reform and restructure the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). According to parliamentary rules, a conference report, once it comes out of a conference committee, cannot be amended, only voted up or down. This maneuver by the leadership effectively blocked any and all amendments to HR 3978. The American Legion appealed to individual senators to separate HR 3978 from the IRS reform conference report and to pass the technical corrections legislation as a stand-alone bill.

On July 8, Senator Patty Murray, D-Wash., offered a motion with instructions to send the bill back to committee and take out the technical corrections language. Senator Murray argued the veterans smoking provisions did not belong in the conference report. However, Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici R-N.M., argued that recommitting the report to conference would effectively kill the entire IRS package. After her motion was overruled by the presiding officer, Senator Murray appealed the ruling and the full Senate voted 50-48 to uphold the ruling of the chair. The Senate then passed the IRS conference report the next day (by a 96-2 vote). It was signed by the President on July 22, becoming PL 105-206.

On July 17, a handful of Senators made an attempt to repeal the language in PL 105-178 (TEA21) which denied compensation for veterans with a tobacco-related illness. During floor debate on S 2168 (the FY 1999 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending measure), Senators Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.; Patty Murray, D-Wash.; and John McCain, R-Ariz.; offered an amendment to repeal section 1103 of title 38, USC, which codifies the denial of benefits to veterans who acquired tobacco-related illnesses while serving in the armed forces. Several other senators speaking in favor of the amendment, again Senate Budget Chairman Domenici, R-N.M., raised a point of order against the amendment, saying it would violate the Congressional Budget Act.

Under the Budget Act, any new discretionary program must have offset funding from an existing program or programs, also called *Pay Go*. Since this program was repealed by Congress, the only way it could be restored without *Pay Go* is to receive a "budget waiver" from Congress, which requires a supermajority, or three-fifths vote. Consequently, Senator Wellstone requested a budget waiver, and the subsequent vote was 54 yeas, 40 nays with six

senators not voting. As 60 votes were needed to pass the budget waiver, the *Point of Order* was sustained and the amendment defeated.

On the House side, Representative Linda Smith, R-Wash., introduced HR 4220, the "Veterans Benefits Restoration Act" on July 15. The bill now has 16 original cosponsors. This measure would repeal *section 1103 of title 38, USC*, which bars service-connected disability benefits for America's veterans who are suffering from smoking-related illnesses. Members of the Legion family are urged to contact their elected officials and ask them to become cosponsors of HR 4220. It is unconscionable that Congress and the administration are denying an earned benefit to this nation's veterans, especially considering that the federal government promoted tobacco use by members of the armed forces since the Civil War. Similar legislation, HR 4070, was introduced by Representative Barney Frank, D-Mass.

#### **NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION**

**Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman**

**G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director**

As has been its custom since its inception, the National Security Commission has attempted to remain informed, and to keep the membership of The American Legion informed on the range of issues related to the National Defense of the United States in order to recommend responsible national security policies to the governing bodies of The American Legion. To accomplish this task, the Commission conducts regular meetings designed to provide members with current information from responsible government officials on timely issues concerning national security. One of these meetings takes place in conjunction with the National Convention, two in conjunction with meetings of the National Executive Committee, and the fourth is held during the Washington Conference of The American Legion.

Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) is Chairman of the National Security Commission. Mr. Titus was selected as Commission Chairman at the Fall 1995 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

#### **Pre-Convention Meetings, 1997**

During the 79th National Convention of The American Legion in Orlando, Florida, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions convened a joint session at the Peabody Orlando Hotel. Colonel John Priddy, USMC, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategic Requirements, spoke on the newly promulgated national military strategy referred to as the Quadrennial Defense Review. He was followed by Mr. Jeremy Rosner, the Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for NATO Enlargement Ratification, who made the Administration's case for ratification of its top foreign policy initiative. The final speaker was Rear Admiral J. Timothy Riker, United States Coast Guard Reserve, who discussed the multifaceted roles of that service.

The National Security Commission and its Standing Committees conducted a comprehensive review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on Security. Several of the resolutions reviewed were updated versions of previously adopted positions.

#### **National Security Resolutions, 79th National Convention**

The following resolutions, listed in Committee order, were unanimously adopted by the delegates to the 79th annual National Convention:

### **General Security**

**Resolution No. 106, *Red Chinese Initiatives in the United States*.** Urges the United States Congress to investigate Red Chinese initiatives to include those at the former Naval Station at Long Beach, California.

**Resolution No. 113, *Quadrennial Defense Review*.** Urges the Congress to more adequately recognize the national defense requirements by significantly increasing budgets, force structures and military endstrengths over those recommended by the Quadrennial Defense Review.

### **Merchant Marine**

**Resolution No. 108, *Preserving American Mercantile Interests*.** Urges the United States Government to rebuild the United States merchant marine to its former position as second to none in the world.

### **Military Affairs**

**Resolution No. 69, *Salute to General John M. Shalikashvili, The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff*.** The American Legion extends its profound appreciation to General Shalikashvili.

**Resolution No. 86, *Purple Hearts for DoD Civilians*.** Urges action to rescind previous Executive Orders which allowed the Purple Heart to be awarded to civilians.

**Resolution No. 109, *Quality of Life Features*.** Urges the Congress and the DoD to support and fund numerous quality of life features for the active and reserve components and for military retirees and their dependents.

**Resolution No. 110, *Transitional Assistance Programs*.** Urges the Congress and the DoD to continue to fund transitional assistance programs for separating military service members.

**Resolution No. 111, *Uniform Services Former Spouses Protection Act*.** Advocates Congressional hearings on the Uniform Services Former Spouses Protection Act.

**Resolution No. 167, *Mixed Gender Policies in the Military*.** Asserts the principle that military basic training should be separated by gender as it has been throughout our military history until the past few years.

**Resolution No. 211, *Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation*.** Advocates Congressional actions to fully compensate these pays and to achieve at least a partial concurrent receipt for severely disabled retirees.

**Resolution No. 212, *Cohesion Within the Army's Active and Reserve Components*.** Urges all United States Army components to bond together in the spirit of the Total Army.

### **National Executive Committee Meetings, Fall 1997**

A total of seven resolutions were considered by the National Security Commission, and two were recommended for adoption. The Commission Chairman discussed some of the highlights of the Fiscal Year 1998 Defense Budget. It was noted that the White House has clearly influenced the final outcome of the defense budget process this year by threatening to veto several items to include the proposed Congressional cutoff of funding for operations in Bosnia after June 30, 1998, and the Congressional proposal to fund additional B-2 bombers which the Pentagon did not ask for.

#### **Chairman Titus' comments follow:**

"Congressional conferees completed work on the Fiscal Year 1998 Defense Appropriations bill including language that could likely avert potential Presidential vetoes. The President continues to score clear wins on most disputed points in the \$248 billion budget. This defense budget is \$3.6 billion more than the Administration requested and it represents 15.5 percent of the entire Federal budget. The administration's top defense

priority is modernization of the Armed Forces, particularly airframes, and more acquisition money is being dedicated to purchasing F-22 fighters, Navy F/A-18E/F fighter-bombers and Joint Strike Fighters.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen has emphasized that two more rounds of base closures were needed to pay for long-range modernization. The United States Senate voted, instead, to study the long and short-term effects of additional base closures. Congressional negotiators have agreed, however, to allow continued active duty personnel cuts of 36,000 beginning on October 1, 1998. These additional personnel reductions continue to serve as a convenient bill-paying mechanism for funding modernization projects and additional benefits for the military.

Reducing endstrengths for the services to afford modernization efforts, particularly in the face of high operational tempos, may be a recipe for disaster in the future. Clearly, optempos are affecting both quality of life and readiness and are contributing to the early aging of equipment and systems. According to Chairman Floyd Spence of the House National Security Committee, both military quality of life and readiness are reaching "crisis proportions" in the Armed Forces.

We are mindful that the true measure of whether a defense policy adequately protects our national security interests is not necessarily how much is spent on defense, but, rather, whether the Armed Forces have the means to fight and win when conflict arises. Our national security well-being cannot be separated from our overall well-being as a nation. The American people cannot view themselves from a position of relative weakness nor from a position of overconfidence. To lead at home, we must continue to lead in the world arena. If we shun this role, our own future could very well be shaped by others."

#### **Washington Conference**

The National Security Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference on Monday, March 23 and Wednesday, March 25, 1998. Topics covered during each session follow.

##### **Morning Session, March 23, 1998**

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session. Mr. Frank Gaffney, Director of the Center for Security Policy, addressed the emerging threat posed by the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Inherent in these actual and potential threats are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, information warfare, as well as Red Chinese commercial initiatives in the United States and Panama. Additionally, McDonnell Douglas Aerospace has been involved in the technology transfer of machine tool equipment used in the production of the B-2 bomber. Unquestionably, many American firms are attempting to exploit the huge potential market in the PRC. Finally, it is in the national security interests of the United States that the Government of the Peoples Republic of China be urged to pursue a less repressive course in its own human rights activities and to allow its citizenry greater participation in governmental processes. Mr. Gaffney proposed a series of specific recommendations that the United States Government should be urged to consider in its foreign affairs and national security policies toward Red China: (1) The United States cannot ignore Red China, nor should we appease them. (2) A dialogue with the people of the PRC should be restarted. (3) The United States needs to actively pursue the installation of a national missile defense system and expand its theater missile defense systems. (4) The denuclearization of United States nuclear deterrence is underway; We must put an end to our posture of "assured vulnerability." (5) The United States Government must guard against the further transfers of commercial and military aerospace technologies to Red China which



could be harmful to United States national security. (6) The United States and its allies must take a pro-active stance against further large scale proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Edmund J. Hull, from the United States Department of State, spoke on the topics of peacekeeping and United Nations reform. Peacekeeping operations have become an inherent part of United States national strategy and, for the most part, they have served our national security and foreign policy interests. There are currently some 15 United States peacekeeping operations employing about 13,000 personnel abroad. Only about five percent of the total peacekeeping operations are American. Their missions vary from the military and police stabilization mission in Haiti to humanitarian missions in Africa. With regard to United Nations reform, it was noted that efforts were underway to more equally spread the cost-sharing burden to include more Asian countries. It was mentioned that the United States share was being reduced from 25 to about 22 percent.

Mr. Charles Barry Smith, Supervisory Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, explained the immediate need for legislation to address the law enforcement and national security concerns regarding commercial encryption products. The potential use of such encrypted products by terrorists or criminals to conceal criminal communications and information poses a serious threat to public safety and national security. Robust encryption, combined with a recoverable feature which allows lawful and immediate access to plaintext, is clearly the best method to achieve the goals of both industry and law enforcement. The American Legion has been legislatively supportive of this endeavor.

#### **Afternoon session, March 23, 1998**

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee and presided over by Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

Brigadier General Terry L. Tucker, USA, Commanding General of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in Hawaii, began his presentation by reviewing the mission statement of the Joint Task Force, namely, to conduct recovery operations and analyses in pursuit of the fullest possible accounting of American personnel missing in action in Southeast Asia. The total number of Americans missing in Southeast Asia as a result of the Vietnam War stood at 2,096 but, due to recent identifications, that number was being reduced by three to 2,093. This total number included the following categories by branch of service: United States Air Force: 707; United States Army: 656; United States Navy: 423; United States Marine Corps: 268; United States Coast Guard: One; and 41 American civilians. Within the total figure, 602 cases were considered non-recoverable; 352 sets of remains were pending identification in the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii; 364 cases were being further investigated; 278 cases were the objects of joint recovery team efforts in Southeast Asia, and 500 cases had been unilaterally deferred. Recovery operations are expensive but, as a matter of policy, the United States pays for the costs of the operations themselves but not for information leading to the recovery or identification of American remains.

Mr. Grover Joseph Rees, Staff Director and Chief Counsel of the International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee, addressed current human rights and refugee issues pertaining to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. He emphasized the President's waiving the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment which would have called for trade restrictions for communist countries, like Vietnam, that limit free emigration. Vietnam's record on human rights remains abysmal. Unfortunately, despite the lifting of the trade embargo and the normalization of diplomatic relations, there has been no appreciable improvement. The access of Vietnamese citizens to exit permits was being constrained by factors outside the law. Additionally, there are

concerns that nonethnic Vietnamese such as the Montagnards might not have ready access to emigration programs.

Colonel Charles S. Ciccolella (USA, Ret.), formerly an Assistant Director for Foreign Relations in The American Legion's Washington Office, presented an oral report of his trip to North Korea in mid-October 1997 to visit the site of ongoing joint recovery operations. Colonel Ciccolella was a member of a small group of American veterans and Korean War family organization officials who were invited to witness the third joint recovery operation being held this year. The whereabouts or remains of some 8,100 soldiers from the Korean War were never determined nor accounted for. Visit highlights included meetings with Ambassador Kim and other North Korean officials; a visit to the Military Museum in Pyongyang; the visit to the joint recovery site at Unsan where elements of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division had been overrun on November 1-2, 1950 by overwhelming Communist Chinese forces; and the visit to Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Colonel Ciccolella expressed the hope that this trip would represent an "opening" into this reclusive and repressive nation and that, eventually, these efforts would lead to greater accounting for American soldiers missing in North Korea.

#### **National Security Commission Business Session, March 25, 1998**

The Commission Chairman reminded Commission members that this year was a renewable year for resolutions at The American Legion's 80th Annual National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. Pre-Convention Trip planning included a request for a United States Navy warship, on the order of a guided missile cruiser or fast frigate, to visit Convention City. The staff of the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic Command reported that a decision on a ship visit would be finalized in May. The Commission also heard Mrs. Sherry McLaughlin, the National Security Chairman for the Auxiliary, who delivered greetings and outlined her goals of working with the USO, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other objectives. The new Chairman of the Law and Order Committee, Mr. George Wehrli (FL), was also introduced, and he presented a brief status report on the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award for 1998. Regional winners were selected at the Washington Conference, and the National winner will be selected at the Spring meetings of the National Executive Committee.

#### **National Executive Committee Meetings, Spring 1998**

The National Security Commission considered a total of four resolutions, and three were recommended for adoption. The Commission Chairman discussed some of the highlights of the Fiscal Year 1999 Defense Budget. It was noted that prior to the Spring recess, the Senate had passed a budget resolution reaffirming its commitment to the proposed \$271 billion defense budget which was adopted in last year's Balanced Budget Act. The Fiscal Year 1999 defense budget will be a zero-growth budget. Both the Chairmen of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House National Security Committee had expressed their frustration over the apparent public apathy in national defense matters.

#### **Chairman Titus' comments follow:**

"Congressional action on the Fiscal Year 1999 defense appropriations and authorization bills continues. Procurement for modern weapons systems is at \$49 billion, short of the \$60 billion urged by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense William Cohen is again advocating two more rounds of Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) reductions. Last year, the Senate defeated the BRAC proposals as it was generally believed that Presidential politics had influenced the retention of United States Air Force depots in

Texas and California. The Department of Defense asserted that more base closures are required to help pay for long-term modernization.

The Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, Senator Strom Thurmond, recently noted that with the Federal Government expecting a budget surplus next year, none of it was programmed for defense. He also noted that domestic priorities were rising as was the apparent public complacency over our defense posture.

It is a fact that the nation is enjoying the fruits of a so-called peace dividend. The proposed Fiscal Year 1999 defense budget is roughly \$150 billion less than what it was during the Reagan presidency. Defense spending levels during 1998 are about three percent of the gross domestic product which equates to pre-Pearl Harbor spending levels. A decade ago it was six percent. Without these savings on defense budgets, massive deficits would have occurred.

On the one hand, we are told that we cannot afford to spend more on defense and, on the other hand, we are told we can expect surpluses. We suspect that this judgment is more political than economic. The reason defense spending has continued to decline is not solely because the Cold War ended but also because defense has been squeezed by the persistent rise in federal spending for entitlement and domestic programs. We would maintain that if spending for veterans health care and military health care and other benefits can be increased they should be increased, as it was veterans who delivered the peace dividend we enjoy today.

As veterans and as Legionnaires, we have believed that military service was a responsibility and a privilege that embodied the highest form of service to the Nation. Members of the Armed Forces are the only members of the Government who may be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. We believe that the United States Government must honor its obligations to servicemembers and to all veterans. Simply put: Promises made must be promises kept."

#### **National Security - Foreign Relations Division**

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security-Foreign Relations Division located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; Angela L. Venson, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Cheryl L. Henson, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The duties have consisted of answering correspondence and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. These contacts related to a variety of matters, some of which involved members of the armed forces.

Liaison also is maintained with a host of military and quasi-military organizations with whom common goals are shared. Among these are: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; The Retired Officers Association; Association of the U.S. Army; and the National Guard Association of the United States. Most importantly, the National Security-Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, is also a duty of the staff.

Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as *The Dispatch*, *The American Legion Magazine* and *The American Legion News Service*, the principal means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign affairs.

### **Committee Reports**

The following reports, received with grateful appreciation, were prepared under the leadership and guidance of the following Committee and Council Chairmen: Robert C. Gabrielson—Aerospace; Frank J. D'Amico—Defense Civil Preparedness; George Wehrli—Law and Order; Charles F. Moreland—Merchant Marine; Norbert E. Harmeyer—Military Affairs; Franklin R. Sickie, Jr.—National Security Council; and Robert L. Klipstine—Naval Affairs.

#### **AEROSPACE COMMITTEE**

**Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman**

During the past year, the Aerospace Committee continued its efforts to ensure that the United States does not become a second-rate power in modern air power or advanced aerospace technology. The authority for the Committee's efforts are the resolutions adopted at the 79th National Convention. The effort to implement these positions required both administrative and legislative activities.

**Legislative Activities.** Implementation of these policies necessitates correspondence and testimony to the Armed Services/National Security and Appropriations Committees of both the Senate and House in coordination with our Legislative Division. In addition to correspondence, principal presentations were before the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees. Testimony and resolutions on aerospace and other issues were presented to the Subcommittee in their consideration of Fiscal Year 1999 defense appropriations bills. Of particular emphasis was continued support of the National Space program and adequate provision for Operations and Maintenance funding, the military health care system, research and development, strategic airlift, and aircraft production and development to include the C-17, F-22 fighter, and the Joint Strike Fighter.

#### **DEFENSE CIVIL PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE**

**Frank J. D'Amico, New York, Chairman**

The American Legion continues to advocate adequate staffing, adequate budgeting and adequate technical and research support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In an era when Russian civil defense efforts are far greater than those of the United States, it becomes imperative that planning for emergencies to include, for example, a possible chemical or biological attacks be enhanced.

**Disaster Relief Assistance:** The Defense Civil Preparedness Committee, under direction of the National Security Commission, will continue to review and monitor the progress and after-action reports of FEMA as well as legislation affecting disaster relief assistance. In 1996-1997, 1,449 Posts were involved in disaster relief and other emergency assistance programs.

**Energy:** War in the Persian Gulf had refocused the attention of The American Legion on America's continued reliance on foreign sources of energy. Unquestionably, Iraq's

seizure of Kuwait and the threat to Saudi Arabia could again endanger our national security interests and economic well-being.

The energy crisis in 1973 prompted a series of energy-oriented resolutions in the mid-1980s which addressed, primarily, energy recovery and conservation. At its Fall meetings in 1989, the National Executive Committee mandated that the Chairman of the National Security Commission annually appoint a Subcommittee on the Conservation of Natural Resources, which included energy issues. Over 731 American Legion posts have appointed Energy Chairmen.

The American Legion at its 73rd National Convention adopted a comprehensive National Energy Strategy resolution which collectively addressed energy conservation and efficiency, energy recovery and development, and alternative sources of energy such as nuclear electricity. Many of these recommendations were incorporated in the National Energy Act. More recently, The American Legion has been supportive of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge area for oil exploration as well as urging the Federal government to adequately dispose of nuclear waste.

**Blood Donor Activities:** The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary continue to be principal sources of blood donors in the United States. Through our vast network of Posts and Units organized into Department programs, Legionnaires and Auxiliary members continue to supply the blood needs of their own members, hospitalized veterans and through cooperative agreements, to patients in civilian hospitals. During 1995-96, a total of 98,977 pints of blood were donated by 47,844 American Legion donors.

**National Commander Awards:** To stimulate activities on the part of Departments and Posts, annual awards are made by the National Commander. During the period from July 1, 1996 through June 15, 1997, many Departments of The American Legion actively participated in the Blood Donor program. The winning Departments included Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

Each winning Department received a Certificate of Recognition signed by the National Commander and National Adjutant.

#### **LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE**

**George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman**

The Law and Order Committee continued this year to emphasize crime prevention by promoting the distribution of the Crime Prevention booklet across the nation. Liaison was maintained with the National Crime Prevention Coalition in order to keep the committee up-to-date on the latest developments in the field of crime prevention.

American Legion Departments, Posts and individual citizens have been overwhelmingly responsive to the Legion's Crime Prevention program. Requests for this booklet have come from state and local law enforcement officials; from senior citizen groups; from libraries; and from school children. This program is viable, ongoing and important to our National interest. The Law and Order Committee has continued to promote its goals in this area. Over 1,481 Posts had crime resistance programs in 1996-97.

**Fire Protection/Prevention:** The National Executive Committee authorized the American Legion Fire Protection and Prevention programs. An information booklet on this subject was published in the Spring of 1986, and was the basis of a slide show production. Over 1,375 Posts had Fire Prevention programs in 1996-97.

**Junior Law Cadet Program:** The American Legion, in its efforts to better educate our young people in regard to laws which govern our society, and the agencies which enforce those laws, has developed several programs which feature law enforcement training. Fifteen

Departments, in cooperation with state law enforcement agencies, sponsored youth programs designed to acquaint the participants with methods of basic law enforcement.

**National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Program:** Based on its published criteria, the Law and Order Committee selected five Regional winners who contended for the prestigious honor of being selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Deputy Sheriff Earl McDonald from Louisiana was selected and presented with the second award of the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at the 80th National Convention at New Orleans, Louisiana.

**MERCHANT MARINE COMMITTEE**  
**Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman**

Since its founding, The American Legion has realized the importance of a strong American merchant marine and the indispensable role of this "fourth arm of defense." Today, the ever increasing dependence of the U.S. economy on raw materials from Third World countries and overseas areas demand renewed efforts to build up our merchant fleet.

Retaining American merchant marine independence in supplying our economy and the added demands of military sealift, spurred this Committee's support for expanding the Merchant Marine during the past year. The effort to inform its membership, the general public and the Congress of our views were guided by resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the 78th National Convention.

**Maritime Power:** Throughout our history, maritime power has been a key element in the growth and strength of America. Moreover, the new sealift demands of the United States make the Merchant Marine even more imperative in our strategic planning. We must rebuild the merchant marine if we are to maintain free use of the seas in the face of potential challenges presented by regional conflicts.

The Merchant Marine Committee was supportive of the Maritime Security Act which was passed and enacted. This act should significantly enhance America's merchant fleet during national emergencies.

For the fourth consecutive year, the National Organization of The American Legion presented its award to an outstanding midshipman at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The American Legion presents awards at all the Service Academies.

**MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Norbert Harmeyer, Iowa, Chairman**

During the year, the Military Affairs Committee has directed its major efforts toward maintaining a strong and modern United States armed forces, second to none in the world. We believe the times deserve no less. Our activities have been guided by the resolutions adopted by the 78th and 79th National Conventions and subsequent National Executive Committee actions. Wide dissemination was given those resolutions to Congressional, government, military and industry leaders to inform them of our mandates for supporting a strong and modern military forces to include the Reserve Components. Bound volumes of the resolutions were presented to the President, Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Maintaining a strong national defense was designated as a legislative priority by the National Commander.

**Press Conference/Legislative Activities:** The staff has kept up-to-date by attending press conferences on various subjects of interest, including the press conferences sponsored by the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation (Coast Guard) and several Congressional press conferences.

The Department of Defense presented a special briefing on the Quadrennial Defense Review to which The American Legion and other veterans service organizations were invited.

Through the Legislative Division, correspondence with Members of Congress and Congressional staff was initiated and followed through in other areas as follows: military procurement; military health care; military commissaries and impact aid for military school children; military pay and allowances; and military quality of life incentives, including career stability and retention initiatives. Additionally, testimony was presented before the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense in support of military readiness, quality of life features and continued modernization of the Armed Forces. Emphasis was placed on maintaining current manpower levels for the Armed Forces in the face of continued overseas deployments which are beginning to impact on the morale and well-being of the Armed Forces.

**NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Robert L. Klipstine, Ohio, Chairman**

Guided by resolutions adopted at the 79th National Convention, the Naval Affairs Committee has worked to strengthen the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard during the past year. It begins with the premise that sea lanes are the life lines of America, both in peacetime and war. The United States is no longer hesitant about sending powerful signals to aggressors that it will not stand idly by and watch while they conduct violent takeovers of legitimate governments, particularly when those takeovers are contrary to the national interests of the United States. This new diplomacy requires a mobile, flexible and capable and deployable United States Navy and Marine Corps.

**NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**Franklin R. Sickle, Jr., New Jersey, Chairman**

**Selective Service System:** The American Legion, over the past year, has continued to support the Selective Service System by strongly advocating the maintenance of the Selective Service Registration Program as a viable preparedness measure.

**Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy:** Criterion for judging the winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy is based on Departments giving the greatest degree of support to ROTC programs to include the number of medals presented and Legion participation in award day ceremonies this year. The winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are the Departments of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
**Robert L. Morrill, New York, Chairman**  
**Joseph H. March, Maryland, Director**

The National Public Relations Commission is actively engaged in representing The American Legion before the media and the general public. During the 1997-1998 program year, Commission efforts were substantially increased and resulted in effective communications strategies which played a key role in advancing corporate goals.

Using emerging technologies of the Internet, cynet and digital audio and video, key news releases were provided to national and local media regarding support to veterans on

issues including VA health care, interment at Arlington National Cemetery, tobacco related illnesses and treatment of veterans as well as the continuing news regarding American Legion efforts to find answers regarding Gulf War Illnesses. Additionally, Commission staff provided over a thousand media interviews to newspapers, magazines, specialty publications, television, radio and cable stations across the country.

Recognition for the contributions of our nation's veterans was enhanced by the distribution and publication of opinion editorials and public service ad slicks on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, July 4 and Flag Day to over six thousand daily and weekly newspapers. Additionally, the PR Commission worked closely with both the Economic and Membership Commissions in promoting and publicizing The American Legion's alliance with Hire Quality, Inc. Support included press conferences, news releases and proactive ads in active duty military publications including the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force Times as well as hundreds of military base newspapers. The "service to veterans" theme was successfully marketed to newspapers in 32 states.

For the second year, PR volunteers successfully supported American Legion Boys Nation. Departments were provided materials for PR volunteers to use in promoting delegates to their hometown media when they are selected. The information which Department PR volunteers obtained was subsequently provided to the National Public Relations staff for ongoing media relations efforts while the delegates were in Washington, DC. This joint volunteer-national staff effort garnered unprecedented coverage of this superb Legion program in the home towns of participating youths as well as national coverage by *AP* and *ABC's Nightline*.

#### **Achieving Corporate Goals**

The Public Relations Commission and staff services to advance corporate goals involved a variety of tactics and efforts in support of the campaign for a Constitutional Amendment to protect the U.S. Flag from acts of intentional physical desecration. Among them special guest editorials by the National Commander and CFA leadership were provided to thousands of media. Hundreds of letters to the editor were written and published by the PR staff in response to opposing editorials. Additionally, the PR Commission staff produced and marketed radio and television spot announcements with personalities Wayne Newton, Tommy Lasorda and John Schneider to broadcast stations nationally; conducted two national press conferences; and placed print ads in publications with a combined circulation of over 25 million readers.

The Commission staff continued to provide volunteer support materials including Suggested Addresses for key patriotic holidays, maintained a Veterans Media Data Bank which was used to support *CNN*, *PBS*, *ABC*, *NBC*, *CBS* as well as members of local media outlets searching for a veteran with specific duty assignments to interview for news stories.

#### **Awards**

The National Commander's Public Relations Award was presented to Tom Brokaw, Anchor and Managing Editor of *NBC Nightly News* for his accomplishments in more than 30 years of reporting and his fervent support of the Boys Nation program.

A special award, The American Legion *Spirit of Normandy* award was presented to producer Steven Spielberg for his movie *Saving Private Ryan*. The motion picture significantly raised the national consciousness of the sacrifices made by World War II veterans.



The American Legion Fourth Estate Award was presented during the 80th National Convention to the Mesa, Arizona *Tribune* for a hard-hitting series "Crimes Against Children." The investigative effort resulted in substantive changes to the justice system in the community to the benefit of protection of children.

### Looking Ahead

In the coming year, the National Public Relations Commission and staff, will continue to advance the American Legion story by employing the latest communication strategies and emerging technologies.

***The American Legion Magazine***  
**Milford A. Forrester, South Carolina, Chairman**  
**Dick McNally, Wisconsin, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief**

"For God and Country." That long-time motto has guided the direction of *The American Legion Magazine* for eight decades. In 1998, the magazine continues to aspire to publish articles that are of value and interest not only to members of The American Legion, but to the general reading public.

Industry observers have taken note of our editorial and graphic content in recent months. Earlier in the year, the magazine won a Silver Award (second place) in the prestigious 1998 Society of National Association Publications contest for the article "Death Strikes The Liberty" (July 1997), a harrowing account of the unprovoked Israeli attack on the *USS Liberty* during the 1967 Six Day War.

More recently, the magazine won five awards in the 1998 Mature Media contest. Three of the awards were for editorial excellence; two were for graphic design and use of color photography.

We could not reach such plateaus in editorial quality and publish the number of articles we do without strong support from advertising. In the first two quarters of 1998, advertising sales reached \$3.7 million, slightly ahead of the amount budgeted for this period. Market trends and other indications make it uncertain the magazine will achieve the year-end goal of \$9.25 million; however, our advertising staff and national advertising representatives are working overtime to meet the budgeted amount.

Paper prices have remained relatively stable in 1998. Earlier, it was predicted the paper mills would hike prices substantially in July, but that failed to occur. Industry observers warn, however, that prices might increase later this year or early in 1999. Our staff continues to monitor this situation closely.

The United States Postal Service has scheduled at least an 11 percent increase in rates for non-profit mailers, effective Jan. 10, 1999. This will come after an increase of 1-2 percent on Oct. 4 of this year, part of an ongoing increase to be spread out over six years. These increases will hike *The American Legion Magazine* postal costs some \$30,000 a month.

With sharp-eyed vigilance, the commission and staff continually evaluates its product and the means to control costs. In 1998, *The American Legion Magazine* seeks new and innovative ways to meet the needs and interests of its 2.7 million subscribers and live up to its pledge, "For God and Country".

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission**  
**Chester F. Stellar, Ohio, Chairman**  
**Carroll Williams, Maryland, Director**

**1997 National Convention Approved Resolutions**

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs was informed by the Director on September 23, 1997, of The American Legion official policy on the following resolutions.

**Resolution No. 6 (ME):** Support Establishment of a VA Outpatient Clinic in Western Region of Maine

**Resolution No. 31 (CO):** Expand VA Services at the Former Fitzsimmons Army Hospital

**Resolution No. 77 (PA):** The American Legion Policy on Long-Term Care

**Resolution No. 83 (IL):** VA Allow Filipino Claims Folders to Reside in Veterans State of Residence

**Resolution No. 104 (MD):** Gulf War Veterans Illnesses

**Resolution No. 127 (TX):** Amend Title 38 USC to Provide Care for World War II Veterans

**Resolution No. 168 (VA):** Provide Presumptive Service Connection for Cold-Related Injury

**Resolution No. 193 (CA):** Support Additional VA Inpatient Care Capacity for Northern California

**Resolution No. 216 (VA&R):** American Legion Policy on the State Veterans Home Program

**Resolution No. 217 (VA&R):** American Legion Policy on VA Tobacco-Related Disability Claims

**Resolution No. 218 (VA&R):** Support the Repeal of Section 1555 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (FASA)

**National Executive Committee Meeting**  
**October 15-16, 1997**

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:

**Resolution No. 7 (Origin: VA&R):** "The American Legion Service Program"

**Resolution No. 8 (Origin: VA&R):** "Urge Congress and the Administration to Establish Alternative Funding Strategies to Strengthen the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) Process"

**National Executive Committee Meeting**  
**May 6-7, 1998**

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:

**Resolution No. 12 (VA&R):** "The American Legion Policy on a Federal Settlement with the Tobacco Industries"

**Resolution No. 13 (VA&R):** "Reaffirmation of American Legion Policy on Service Connection for Tobacco Related Disabilities"

**Resolution No. 14 (Res. 136 (FL) 1997 National Convention):** "Support a Policy That Would Allow Qualified VA Police Officers to Carry Firearms"

**Resolution No. 15 (VA&R): "Urge VA to Establish a User-Friendly Patient Enrollment System"**

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Meetings**

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held three meetings during the period August 31, 1997 through May 5, 1998, as follows:

The VA&R Commission met on August 30, 1997 in the Peabody Orlando, Orlando, Florida. A report was subsequently made to the National Executive Committee relative to the Commission's meeting.

A 10-member Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the VA&R Commission met at National Headquarters, October 15-16, 1997, for the purpose of considering those matters which had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a broad range of other matters of a current nature. A report of that meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on October 17, 1997.

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 75th consecutive year in Washington, DC, on March 25, 1998, in conjunction with the 38th Annual Washington Conference. The actions taken by the Commission's Advance Report to the National Executive Committee on May 4-5 1998, also appeared in the proceedings of that meeting.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met on May 4-5, 1998, at National Headquarters. Chairman Chester F. Stellar (OH), chaired the Subcommittee meeting and encouraged those present to continue their efforts on behalf of the nation's veterans. A report of this meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on May 6, 1998.

**National Information Conferences  
The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary**

For the nineteenth consecutive year, eight National Information Conferences were conducted throughout the months of September and October 1997. The meetings were held in the following cities:

- Region 1—Manchester, NH, September 19-21
- Region 2—Cherry Hill, NJ, September 26-28
- Region 3—Raleigh, NC, September 26-28
- Region 4—Biloxi, MS, September 19-21
- Region 5—Springfield, MO, September 12-14
- Region 6—Council Bluffs, IA, October 3-5
- Region 7—Las Vegas, NV, September 12-14
- Region 8—Post Falls, ID, October 3-5

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary met jointly at each Saturday session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Commission attended the Conference in their respective regions. The Regional Chairmen were in attendance at all Conferences.

Staff members of the VA&R Commission were present at each Conference providing those present with overviews of various topics relative to the VA&R program including "The GI Bill of Health."

Representatives of VA medical centers attended the Conferences for the purpose of discussing the impact of funding shortfalls regarding veterans' access to medical care. A

significant number of questions were posed concerning veterans' access to VA medical care and eligibility reform.

Noteworthy at all Conferences was the high percentage of first-time attendees, and a large number of Post Service Officers.

For the fifth year, a full day Post Service Officers School was held and well received. Claims, ratings, and benefits were discussed. This school will continue on an annual basis.

### **Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference**

The 76th National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference was held March 22-25, 1998, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Participants included members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, Department Service Officers and Rehabilitation Directors, County and Post Service Officers, American Legion Auxiliary members, and various National, Department, and Post officials.

Chester F. Stellar (OH), Chairman of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and Tom Cadmus (MI), Vice Chairman, presided at the sessions of the Conference. Addressing the Conference were National Commander Anthony G. Jordan; Barbara Kranig, President, American Legion Auxiliary; and the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, presentations were made by officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs: Dr. Thomas L. Garthwaite, Deputy Under Secretary for Health; Jerry Bowen, Director, National Cemetery System; Richard B. Standefer, Acting Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Jim Delgado, Director, Voluntary Service; Joseph Thompson, Under Secretary for Benefits; and Brian Robertson, Director, Veterans Pro Bono Consortium.

National Commander Anthony Jordan made a presentation to Mr. Lawrence A. Dearborn, National VAVS Volunteer of the Year.

During the Conference, panel discussions covered topics of vital concern such as the operation of veterans benefits programs, medical care, memorial affairs, and other pertinent subjects.

Prior to the Conference, for the seventeenth year, the Chairman and members of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Staff met with Department Service Officers for the Annual Department Service Officers Seminar. Topics discussed included current VA programs and staff operations.

### **Conference Recommendations**

The members of the Recommendations Committee met on March 24, 1998 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, DC. There was one recommendation submitted from the 1998 Washington Conference.

#### **Recommendation No. 1**

That a resolution be created by VA&R that reiterates the policy and procedures concerning the awarding of pins, bars and certificates for members who provide volunteer hours at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

### **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Legislative Activities**

Over the past year, the staff of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission was actively involved with legislative issues affecting veterans' benefits programs and services administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Activities included the preparation and presentation of testimony at hearings scheduled before Congressional Committees, and drafting legislation pursuant to the mandates adopted by the National Convention and the National Executive Committee. Active liaison is maintained with the staff of the Legislative Commission, officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congressional committee staffs, and various members of Congress.

The following is a brief summary of the Congressional hearings held from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998, relative to the deliberation of Congress on matters pertaining to the Legion's National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission programs.

(1) On July 24, 1997, the Assistant Director for Resource Development provided testimony to a joint hearing of the Subcommittees on Health and Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on VA's Integration Process for Medical Facility Management and Clinical and Support Services.

(2) On July 25, 1997, the Deputy Director for Health testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, on various veterans legislation.

(3) On September 19, 1997, the Director testified before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on the Department of Veterans Affairs' Strategic Planning Under the Government Performance and Results Act.

(4) On September 26, 1997, the National Commander presented testimony on The American Legion's legislative priorities to a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

(5) On December 18, 1997, the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission presented testimony to a field hearing of the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on The Veterans' Transitional Housing Opportunities Act of 1997.

(6) On February 12, 1998, the Director testified on the Administration's Fiscal Year 1999 budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs, before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives.

(7) On March 31, 1998, the Deputy Director for Operations testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, on a proposal to Prohibit Claims for Tobacco-Related Illnesses.

(8) On April 21, 1998, the Director presented testimony on Ionizing Radiation, Veterans Health Care and Related issues before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate.

(9) On April 22, 1998, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified before the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on the Administration's Proposed Fiscal Year 1999 Budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(10) On April 23, 1998, the Deputy Director for Health testified on veterans sexual trauma issues before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives.

(11) On April 23, 1998, the Assistant Director for the Gulf War Task Force, testified on Gulf War veterans issues before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives.

(12) On May 11, 1998, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on VA's National Cemetery System.

(13) On June 10, 1998, the Deputy Director for Operations presented testimony before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on the operations at the Board of Veterans Appeals and the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals.

(14) On June 17, 1998, the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission prepared testimony, delivered before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on the Future of VA's Health Care System.

(15) On June 18, 1998, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, on various veterans benefits programs.

#### **Informational Services**

Each year, through its informational services, the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation staff endeavors to keep Legion officials and other parties informed of our program's activities and functions. Preparation and distribution of various publications consumes considerable research, time and effort. These publications, based on various topics, are disseminated routinely to Department Service Officers, members of the VA&R Commission, and others interested in The American Legion's rehabilitation program. For the Calendar Year 1997 a total of 37 Bulletins were issued. During the same time-frame a total of 53 Memorandums were distributed. In the first six months of 1998, 22 Bulletins and 21 Memorandums have been mailed out.

To further strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs' health care delivery system, The American Legion developed and revised several pamphlets and brochures: 1) "The American Legion Guide To: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, What Is It? Who Gets It? What Can Be Done?" To date, this brochure has been widely distributed and is available upon request. 2) "The Gulf War Veterans' Guide to Benefits" was revised to include employment information as well as data about women Gulf War veterans. 3) A brochure recently created, entitled "The American Legion, Things To Do Before a Veteran Dies," is now available for distribution upon request.

"The American Legion Handbook of Veterans Benefits—Get What You Deserve," is always in great demand and is used as a hand-out at seminars, conferences, and Department Conventions. Supplies of these and other VA&R pamphlets are maintained for distribution upon request.

On an annual basis the staff revises *The American Legion Post Service Officers Guide* (PSO) to reflect legislative and program changes. This publication has a wide distribution. Sufficient copies are mailed to all Department Headquarters equal to one half the number of Posts. The PSO Guide is an indispensable research tool for Post Service Officers in providing services to veterans and their dependents. An additional responsibility is the updating of "The American Legion Voluntary Service Handbook" which is furnished to new VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives in VA medical centers.

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff strive to provide as much information as possible concerning our program to the various Divisions of the National Organization, Departments, individual Legionnaires and the general public.

### **Report on the National Cemetery System**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently proposed to increase matching construction grant funding and initial equipment funding for the development of new state veterans' cemeteries. Due to concerns raised about the impact of the proposal on the future plans of VA's National Cemetery System (NCS), VA is required to provide a detailed report on its future national cemetery construction plans to Congress. The planning period will extend through the year 2010.

VA's current long-term strategy to meet the growing demand for veterans burials is to:

- establish new cemeteries
- extend the service life of existing cemeteries
- encourage states to build new veterans cemeteries

Funding needs of the NCS will continue to grow with the increased burial demand. Today, World War II veterans are dying at the average rate of 1,200 per day. The peak death period for World War II veterans is expected to be reached around the years 2008-2010. Soon thereafter, Korean and Vietnam Era veterans will become the "aging veterans population."

In addition to new national cemeteries opened in 1992 in the San Joaquin Valley in central California, and the Tahoma National Cemetery near Seattle, Washington, opened in November 1997, VA will open four new national cemeteries by the end of 1999. These are: Albany, NY; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; and Cleveland, OH. The American Legion is highly disappointed that Fiscal Year 1998 funding for a new national cemetery near Oklahoma City, Oklahoma was vetoed. Veterans deserve this new cemetery and The American Legion hopes Congress restores these funds.

Potential sites for other new national cemeteries include: Atlanta, GA; South Florida; Sacramento, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; and Detroit, MI.

A joint VA/Department of Defense task force is exploring how military honors can be provided to more veterans. In Fiscal Year 1997, there were approximately 537,000 veteran and retiree deaths. This total is projected to peak at 620,000 deaths in 2008. However, by 2015, the number of veteran and retiree deaths will only decline to 578,000.

Military services provided honors for 30,600 funerals in Fiscal Year 1997 (35% were single representatives). Considering the number of veterans headstones provided in a given year, it is estimated that 45% of all veterans want military honors.

### **Annual Report of the Medical Consultant**

There were no significant changes in the duties and activities of Dr. Nikita Tregubov, the Senior Medical Consultant in the past year.

The primary duty assigned to Dr. Tregubov is to act as a source of medical/technical knowledge to the appeals and claims representatives of The American Legion at the Board of Veterans Appeals. The case workers refer the claims folders to the medical consultant for evaluation and advice as to the appropriate course to pursue in presenting the case. They may take place in the form of guidance, but more frequently it will involve a written memorandum to the appeals representative who refers the case. Certain cases are medically and technically difficult for a non-physician to present and such cases are presented directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals by the medical consultant.

In some cases the medical consultant is directly contacted by American Legion service officers in the field asking specific questions. Department Service Officers are encouraged to refer difficult cases to the Washington office and to call or discuss them with the medical consultant. This year, again, there was an increase in requests for consultations from the

field. It is strongly felt that having more contact with the representatives in the field, will benefit the veterans as well as the representatives. The requests are answered within days, usually requesting additional information and records. In some cases a formal request for a disability rating is subsequently initiated.

The Director of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission uses the medical consultant in an advisory capacity for the work conducted by his office. This can be in the form of policy with regard to the operations of the Department of Veterans Affairs' medical care system, or it might be in an advisory capacity on legislative proposals and testimony before Congressional Committees. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and is discussed among several key members of the VA&R division. Occasionally, perceived administrative problems within VA have been drawn to the attention of the director who calls upon the medical consultant for a solution to these problems. This year more requests from various sections of VA&R have been received. Some dealt with the issue of individual veterans and some were of a general nature. Several of those requests required additional information not available at the time of the request. Fortunately, the availability of multiple medical libraries in the area helped to gather the required information and present it to the requester. These requests are welcome and gives the medical consultant an opportunity to have input in the decision-making process of the various departments of The American Legion.

The medical consultant represents the Director at the monthly meetings with the Chief Medical Director, along with other veterans service organization representatives, to gain information concerning the recent operation and direction of the Veterans Health Administration. These meetings are to express concern over the changes in the course of treatment being offered by the Veterans Health Administration.

During the past year the medical consultant has screened/evaluated 105 cases referred by staff.

#### **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, and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) for totally disabled veterans who are approved grants for specially adapted housing purposes by the VA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 2.5 million policies in force as of May 31, 1998, with a combined life insurance coverage of some \$15.4 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately \$800-900 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 110,000-120,000 claims annually in addition to a very high number of other policy transactions as the program's policies are individual in nature and are composed of diverse plans of insurance. The VMLI program insures some 3,800 veterans with over \$231 million dollars of coverage in force. Currently, these programs are operated out of VA Insurance Centers in Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN. These Centers are now in the process of being consolidated at the Philadelphia site with consolidation estimated to be completed in February 1999. All applications for new insurance, all disability insurance claims and all settlement (death claims) are now under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia center.



In addition to the life insurance programs directly operated by VA, they also have supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs. These programs have provided insurance protection since 1965 and 1970 respectively, to active duty and reserve military personnel (SGLI), and to separated veterans and (recently) to retired and separated Reservists (VGLI). The SGLI and VGLI programs are administered by the Prudential Insurance Company at a center in Newark, NJ, with all administration and other program expenses being paid by the policyholders from a portion of their insurance premiums, save for the extra hazard mortality experience of wartime periods when general tax revenues take over. These insurance issues are solely group Term insurance without dividends, disability benefits, or diverse types of permanent plans with equity values such as the individual policy contracts contained in VA's NSLI program. On March 31, 1998, SGLI provided some 2.44 million active duty and Reserve personnel with more than \$490 billion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 371,000 veterans with insurance in excess of \$31.5 billion dollars. Of these policy accounts the OSGLI center in Newark, NJ maintains only VGLI, with the various military service departments maintaining the rest. The OSGLI center processes between 3,500-4,000 death claims annually with minimal other transactions due to the very limited nature of the coverage. In 1992 the face amount of SGLI coverage was increased to \$100,000 with an additional \$100,000 permitted as an option, and VGLI became renewable instead of the single five year term previously in effect. In 1997, Retired Reservists instead of being insured under the SGLI program until age 60 or the receipt of their first retired paycheck, were merged into the VGLI program to allow them the option of retaining their coverage as long as desired. Reservists leaving Reserve service without the amount of time needed for full retirement may now also be covered under VGLI if desired. In addition, veterans are now permitted to convert their SGLI/VGLI insurance, in partial amounts at different times or in whole, to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial insurance carrier as they leave service, or at any time they are in the VGLI program, without having to wait a stipulated period as was previously the case. Those entering active duty are now automatically covered for a full \$200,000 under SGLI. The American Legion insurance unit presented supporting testimony on these legislative changes as they improved greatly the range of financial options available to veterans in these programs, not only at the time of their separation from service, but in later years as their life situation changed as well.

The American Legion's VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA center has been working with the VA insurance management staff to provide added protection to those veterans leaving service in a totally disabled and life threatening status, to attempt to ensure these veterans do not lose coverage 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 include such items as automatic coverage and premium deduction start-ups from military retired pay or VA disability compensation, policy liens for past due premiums, and closer contacts between the SGLI/VGLI administering office and veterans in this category. To date, VA insurance management has completed a staff study through the military service departments, the Defense Manpower Data Center, DPC Austin and OSGLI on the methods such individuals can be identified, but has not instituted any specific system whereby these cases can be separated out from the main body of those leaving service and targeted for appropriate further actions, evidently due to cost considerations arising both from the added expense of such identification procedures and from increased claims. However, an on-line SGLI/VGLI manual is being prepared for availability to all military out-processing centers

to ensure these have immediate access to correct information concerning the requirements for veterans being separated to convert their in-service SGLI coverage to VGLI coverage. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers and/or supervises some 5.26 million life insurance policies for military personnel and veterans, with a total in-force coverage of over \$537 billion dollars.

In the NSLI program thousands of disabled veterans annually continue to take advantage of the new supplemental Service-Disabled insurance provided in the legislative changes of 1992, whereby an additional \$20,000 of coverage may be purchased by those veterans having a basic Service-Disabled policy and who become totally disabled before age 65. The American Legion's VA&R office continues to maintain a notification system for those veterans who choose The American Legion as their representative and who are applying for Service-Disabled NSLI coverage to ensure they are informed as early as possible of these additional benefits. This is particularly needful as the current VA system may, in certain areas such as during the time period while a disability compensation claim is awaiting adjudication in a VA regional office, be faulty in communicating information on benefits such as disability premium waivers and supplemental coverage to veterans who may qualify for it and who may very well be in life threatening (and, therefore, time constrained) conditions.

The VA Insurance Center continues their on-going effort to provide better service and program enhancements to their veteran policyholders by periodically updating their computer and communication systems, both as part of the overall VA area networks and through the Internet, and placing ever more records and transactions, previously done on paper, into their on-line computer systems. In this vein the VA Insurance Center is now preparing to embark on an initiative to achieve a "paperless office" in the near future. Final steps are being taken to begin a test project to create electronic folders in lieu of paper ones through document scanning techniques, with the goal of retiring all paper case folders in upcoming years. This will necessitate veterans' service organizations having inquiry status into the NSLI insurance system for the first time. It is hoped this initiative will assist in both cost reduction by elimination of file maintenance and movement costs, and increase efficiency in processing insurance actions by allowing insurance specialists immediate access to records and the direct processing of them in a real time mode, without waiting for paper records or batch processing of transactions. Insurance services are augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit will be underway shortly to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries received at the VA insurance Internet address ([vainsurance@vba.va.gov](mailto:vainsurance@vba.va.gov)), and by providing insurance information through links to VA's Home Page and VA's Insurance Home Page. Additionally, in accordance with the federal initiative to have all or most government disbursements done by Direct Deposit (Electronic Transfer of Funds), the VA Insurance Center will soon begin a test project or the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. When preparations by the Treasury Department are completed, all monthly insurance award/annuity payments will be by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees. It is envisioned this will be in effect within the upcoming year.

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Service Units:  
VA Insurance Centers Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN**

The American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff at Philadelphia consists of a Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative and one Secretary/Transcriber. An associated office at the St. Paul Center has one Supervisor/Insurance Representative and one Secretary/Transcriber.

The Chief of Insurance Activities and the Insurance Representative must have a thorough knowledge of government life insurance laws, regulations, and transaction and adjudication procedures, and be able to analyze them correctly in order to properly represent insured veterans and their beneficiaries. The Director of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and other interested personnel are kept informed on policy matters, changes in VA administrative procedures and all related areas to include new legislative initiatives. NSLI re-open periods for service-disabled and nonservice-disabled veterans with increased face value coverages continues to be an American Legion legislative effort.

Daily operations involve a full range of insurance services to include the representation of insured veterans and their beneficiaries, the review of insurance case files and supporting evidence and claims files as required, the furnishing of status reports and account assistance to insureds, beneficiaries, accredited field representatives and VA adjudicative and accounts personnel, close liaison with Department Service Officers and other field personnel to ensure prompt and complete service, and the input to, review of, and where necessary the correction of VA actions and records both on cases involving disability and death claims, and on those involving any of a wide variety of insurance accounting and financial transactions that occur on active and matured accounts. General insurance information and guidance is provided to field service officers across the United States, along with assistance in the preparation of insurance appeals and claims submittals. Coordination with VA executive and program management personnel is conducted on both individual cases and broad policy/administrative matters. A telephone fax capability added to the Philadelphia office has greatly expedited claims processing by enabling rapid receipt of documents needed to complete transactions and claims that would otherwise be significantly delayed due to mailing times.

The Philadelphia office has been provided with two new computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the VA networks and the Internet. These are operational and have Internet (E-Mail at [amglave@vba.va.gov](mailto:amglave@vba.va.gov)), and VA Benefits Delivery Network access. It is expected that inquiry access to the insurance system will be provided in the future. The St. Paul office continues to handle both its remaining insurance work (only in-force policy transactions), and its re-orientation towards VA Debt Management operations, which will comprise its mission when the transfer of all insurance accounts to Philadelphia has been completed as the VA's Debt Management Center is located at the VA St. Paul Center.

For the period July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998 the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported.

Insurance	
Letters Received	4,347
Letters Written	6,804
Disability Insurance Claims	723
Death Insurance Claims	2,726
Insurance Folders Reviewed	3,525
In-Force Policy Accounts Reviewed	4,484

Telephone Contacts	3,459
Personal Contacts	3,270
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	3,198
VA Case Responses Mailed: Insurance and Debt Management Cases	3,781
*Live Claims, Evidence and other Submittals Presented	9,149

\* Excludes death claims and includes policy transactions such as dividend, loan and premium actions, plan conversions, cash surrenders, refunds, beneficiary changes, disability claims with related medical and legal evidence, Wills, estate documents, check tracers, master record data changes, disability questionnaires processing and general inquiries.

Debt Management (St. Paul only): (DMC=Debt Management Center)	
DMC Claims	484
DMC Case Audits	893
DMC Debt Waiver Cases	681

#### Claims Service

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission provides assistance and representation to all veterans and their survivors in claims and appeals before the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as appeals for upgrade of military and naval discharges and the correction of military and naval records through a staff of sixteen Appeals Representatives. During this period, one Appeals Representative was temporarily assigned to the Veterans Pro Bono Consortium as a case screener.

Within the Table of Organization, the Deputy Director for Operations is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Board Unit, and the Insurance Activities Unit.

Cases at the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted on the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a member of the Board of Veterans Appeals with the appellant. There is an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, two secretaries, and nine Appeals Representatives assigned. During the period, the staff has been augmented by service officers from across the country participating in The American Legion/National Veterans Legal Services Program "Veterans Law Internship Program."

Two Appeals Representatives and one secretary are assigned to provide claims service to individuals residing under the jurisdiction of the Washington, DC VA Regional Office which includes the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's, and the Virginia counties of Arlington and Fairfax, as well as those residing overseas.

The Military Review Boards Unit reviews records and files written briefs or appears at personal hearings with an applicant before the Discharge Review Board and the Board for the Correction of Military or Naval Records of the various armed services. One Supervisor and two Appeals Representatives are assigned.

### Board of Veterans Appeals

This report reflects the activities of The American Legion's Board of Appeals and Special Claims Unit for the period July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998. During the period, the Appeals Unit staff handled a total of 7,981 cases. This included 599 scheduled personal hearings and 72 remands from the Court of Veterans Appeals.

Assisting the staff in the review and presentation of complex medical cases is Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Senior Medical Consultant. A total of 105 cases were referred to him for an advisory opinion.

During this period, the Board rendered decisions in 40,337 cases. The American Legion had provided representation in 8,433. Disposition by the Board is as follows: 1,295 were allowed (15.4%), 3,620 were remanded (42.9%), 3,337 were denied (39.5%), and other dispositions 181 (2.1%). The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases and dismissals.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed three cases at the request of Department Service Officers. They also provided informal advice and assistance to a number of service officers and claimants by letter and telephone.

### Military and Naval Review Boards

Title 10, United States Code, sections 1552-1554, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for the Correction of Military and Naval Records.

During the reporting period July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998, the staff of the Military Review Boards unit provided advice, assistance, representation and other services to applicants seeking consideration by the Department of Defense review boards in 3,100 cases. These involved such issues as changes of narrative reasons for discharge, upgrade of discharge, entitlement or changes to military disability retirement, reserve retirement payment, issuance or reissuance of military awards or decorations, and other corrections to military and naval records. Of these actions, 77 personal hearings were held and documentary review briefs were submitted in 423 cases.

The following is a breakdown of actions by the respective service boards:

#### Military and Naval Discharge Review Boards

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of Air Force	140	15	10
Department of Army	288	50	17
Department of Navy	187	28	15
DOT Coast Guard	0	0	0

#### Boards for Correction of Military and Naval Records

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of Air Force	39	6	15
Department of Army	124	21	16
Department of Navy	36	1	3
DOT Coast Guard	1	1	100

The various Boards have been successful in their efforts to substantially reduce the processing time for an individual's application. This action has been in response to increased Congressional oversight and concern regarding the Board's problems with timeliness of

review, questions independent from active components, and a lack of satisfaction by many applicants. The following are current projected time-frames:

- Air Force Discharge Review Board
  - 6 to 12 months with a personal hearing
  - 6 to 12 months for a record review
- Air Force Correction Board
  - 18 to 24 months for a record review
- Army Discharge Review
  - 12 to 18 months for a Travel Board personal hearing
  - 6 to 8 months for a personal hearing, Washington, DC
  - 6 to 12 months for a record review
- Army Correction Board
  - 18 to 24 months for a record review
- Navy/Marine Corps Discharge Review
  - 11 to 15 months for a record review
- Navy/Marine Corps Correction Board
  - 25 to 36 months for a record review
- DOT Coast Guard Discharge Review Board
  - 12 to 16 months for a record review
- DOT Coast Guard Correction Board
  - 10 to 12 months for a record review

The Military Review Board Unit staff also traveled to sites in Maryland, Indiana, and Michigan at the Department's request to provide training to service officers for preparation, development of supporting evidence, and presentation of Discharge Review and Correction Board cases.

#### **Staff Workload**

Part of the overall activity of the various offices of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is reflected in the annual volume of incoming and outgoing correspondence. During this period, approximately 11,200 letters, E-mails, and FAXES were received from claimants, service officers, and VA officials. Correspondence received by the VA Insurance Activities Units in Philadelphia and St. Paul, Minnesota was in excess of 4,300 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 6,800.

The following combined workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 22,200.

#### **Department Service Officers School**

The National Commander continued to authorize the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission to conduct two separate three and one-half day training programs for Department Service Officers and other accredited representatives of The American Legion.

The purpose of the Department Service Officers School is to provide current technical information on a variety of issues relating to the development and presentation of claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The program of instruction includes basic information and updates on subjects such as veterans benefits, claims processing, disability evaluations, rating procedures, the conduct of personal hearings, the development of appeals, interpretation of decisions of the Court of Veterans Appeals and advocacy skills. Instruction

is provided by Mr. Ron Abrams, Director of Training, National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and members of their legal staff, as well as staff to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

The goal of this formal training is to improve proficiency of American Legion Service Officers in their effort to represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors. A sub-goal is to enable participants to share the knowledge, information, and material with the other service officers in their respective departments.

This School represents a major commitment by The American Legion to develop a network of highly trained and experienced service officers to carry out the VA&R program. The cooperation and participation of the Departments continues at a very high level.

The Twenty-fourth session of the Department Service Officers School was held July 23-26, 1997 at the Radisson Hotel City Centre in Indianapolis, IN. There were 120 service officers attending. The Twenty-fifth session was held March 18-21, 1998 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. There were 140 service officer participants. This was followed immediately by the Annual Department Service Officers Seminar and National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference.

#### **Field Service**

The Deputy Director for Health Care is responsible for the activities of the staff of the National Field Service with day-to-day supervision provided by the Senior Field Representative. There are four assigned positions. Field Service Representatives make scheduled site visits to VA medical centers, satellite outpatient clinics, and Vet Centers in their assigned areas to review the adequacy of each station's resources including budget, staffing, construction, and equipment needs. The Field Service has developed a new Consumer Reporting Index that it will implement in the new fiscal year. The *Veterans Health Administration Locale User Evaluation (VALUE)* is a workbook that will generate a scorecard and reports on VA care. This methodology will allow Field Service to conduct site visits in a scientifically reliable and valid manner. Reports are submitted to the Under Secretary for Health for action or comment, and copies of the reports are also provided to the respective American Legion Departments, Congressional representatives and Committees on Veterans Affairs.

The Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) reorganization of field operations is rapidly progressing. Field Service Representatives have been assigned areas of responsibility to cover the 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) established by VHA in 1996. During the period July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998, site visits were conducted at the facilities of VISNs 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 15, 20, and 21. In addition, Centers of Excellence in Richmond, VA; Cleveland, OH; Philadelphia, PA; Washington, DC; and Baltimore, MD were reviewed. Nine Focus Groups were conducted to support the implementation of the *VALUE* Book.

Field Service attention will continue to focus on the impact of the changes engendered by the evolving development of the VISNs. In addition, Field Service Representatives have been appointed to act as liaisons to The American Legion representatives who attend the VISN Management Advisory Councils (MAC) meetings. Over 80 MAC representatives were contacted this year.

#### **Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services**

The 52nd National Advisory Committee meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service was held in San Francisco, California, May 1-2, 1998.

This year the meeting was scaled down due to changes in the date of the meeting from the Fall to the Spring. This move was made to accommodate more members of the National Executive Committee of the VA Voluntary Service who indicated that the Spring afforded more opportunities to attend the meeting.

The American Legion representative on the National Advisory Committee is the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission who serves as the National VAVS representative. He was represented by Harry Kelly, Assistant Director for Program Management, who is the National Advisory Committee treasurer.

The 1997 winner of the Parke Scholarship Award was Cari Lynn Bohm who was a volunteer at the Salt Lake City Veterans Affairs Medical Center. However, no Parke Scholarship Award was made at the 52nd Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California because of the change in meeting dates.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Chairman, Chester F. Stellar, continues to view The American Legion Volunteer Program as a priority issue.

The American Legion's goal is an increase in both the number of volunteers and hours contributed for the year ahead.

#### **Accredited Representatives**

In completing VA Form 21-22, Power of Attorney, the claimant appoints The American Legion as their accredited representative in a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It is the duty of the organization to provide assistance, advice, and counsel to veterans, survivors and dependents so as to ensure their rights are protected and they receive all benefits to which they may be entitled under the law. The American Legion, as a Congressionally chartered organization, conducts this service program through the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals is provided by Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. These representatives have been recommended for accreditation by their respective Departments because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of federal benefit programs, especially those provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To become an Accredited Representative of The American Legion, a formal application (VA Form 2-21) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, 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 Assistant Director for Information Management, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of the VA for action. This form is never sent directly to the General Counsel, as accreditation will not be granted unless the request has been certified by the organization. Upon approval of the application, the individual is recognized by VA as an Accredited Representative of The American Legion and will receive official notification of this action from the VA. The accreditation will remain in effect until such time as the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission receives a written request from the Department Commander or Department Adjutant to cancel the individual's accreditation due to death, retirement, or resignation. The Director will then notify the General Counsel that the accreditation should be canceled.

New accreditations and cancellations are reported monthly on VA's General List of Accredited Representatives - VA Information Bulletin IB 2-51. During the reporting period 110 requests for accreditation and 61 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 1998, there were



1,251 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. Any questions concerning the proper procedure or regulations pertaining to accreditation of individuals or their activities should be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission in the Washington office.

#### **Distribution of VA Releases**

To ensure that the staff of the National Veterans Affairs Commission, service officers in the field, members of the VA&R Commission, and other interested parties are kept advised and informed about American Legion policy, recent legislative action, changes in VA regulations, policies, and procedures, the Administrative section of the Director's office receives and distributes VA news releases, printed changes in VA regulations and manuals, and other information material to all VA&R staff. This information is then disseminated through VA&R Bulletins and Memoranda. In this reporting period 43 were drafted and distributed.

Special requests from the field for VA publications can be submitted to the Director's office and an effort will be made to provide the requested material. However, an attempt should first be made to obtain the material through the Publications Officer at the nearest VA regional office.

#### **Personnel and Organization**

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division in the period from July 31, 1997 through June 30, 1998.

Ms. Sylvia Salaz was promoted from Secretary to Administrative Assistant upon the death of Miss Sharon Mather. Mrs. Gloria Knight was reassigned to the VA&R Division from the Legislative Division to fill the position vacated by the promotion of Ms. Salaz. Ms. Sharon Southern was reassigned to the VA&R Division from the Administrative Division replacing Mrs. Diane Price who was reassigned to the Human Resources Division.

Four new Appeals Representatives were hired and assigned to the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit: James Fischl, Chyrdonna White, Daryl Puryear and Jim Rogers who recently resigned to become an ROTC Instructor. The VA&R Division also accepted the resignations of Appeals Representatives Ed Castille who returned to Texas, Amber Peebles and Ricardo Nelson who accepted another position. Tom Holland was reassigned from the Board of Veterans Appeals to Supervisor, Review and Correction Boards. Ms. Cristle Maddox was reassigned to the VA&R Division from the Administrative Division to replace Mrs. Theresa Dixon who resigned.

The table of organization of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 1998 is as follows:

Director	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Deputy Director for Health Care Issues	1
Field Representatives	4
Secretary	1
Deputy Director for Operations	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Program Management	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Information Management	1

Assistant Director for Resource Development	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Persian Gulf Task Force	1
Appeals Representative	1
Secretary	1
Supervisor, Review and Correction Board	1
Review Board Representative	1
Office Manager, Board of Vets Appeals Unit	1
Appeals Representatives	12
Case Screener, Court of Veterans Appeals	1
Secretary	2
Medical Consultant	1
Secretary	1
Veterans and Dependents Claims Unit	1
Total Personnel—Washington office	39
Insurance Field offices:	
Philadelphia, PA:	
Chief of Insurance Activities	1
Secretary	1
St. Paul, MN:	
Supervisor of Insurance Activities	1
Secretary	1
TOTAL PERSONNEL	
Field Offices	4
Washington office	39
VA&R TOTAL	43

#### Staff Field Assignments

The staff of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, including the director, deputy directors and assistant directors attended various Legion functions around the nation such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, Conferences and fact-finding trips. Departments visited included: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nebraska, South Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. The staff also participated in the eight National Information Workshops.

The Field Service Unit performed visitations to selected VA medical centers in all 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). The entire Division staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

In addition, the Director received official visits from representatives of the Governments of Russia, Republic of China, and South Korea. The purpose of these visits was to discuss the benefit program provided for U.S. veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the service program of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

#### Certificates of Appreciation

Under authority of May 1958 NEC Resolution, we have continued the program of awarding a Certificate of Appreciation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs,

upon their retirement or resignation, "for services rendered and cooperation extended in connection with The American Legion's rehabilitation program." Under criteria established in line with the enabling resolution, nominations for the award are submitted by Department or National officials of The American Legion twice a year. The nominations are considered by a committee of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission at meetings preceding the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, and the National Convention. The Committee recommends to the Commission the names of those considered deserving of the Certificate.

Twenty-two Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998, for an overall total of 1,123 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 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director at any time; the Director, acting for the Chairman and members of the Commission, issues the award.

One hundred-four Citations "For Meritorious Service and Loyal Cooperation in The American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program" have been presented during the period July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998. Since this type of recognition and appreciation began, 4,202 Citations for Meritorious Service have been presented.

#### **Persian Gulf War Task Force**

The American Legion's Persian Gulf Task Force was created in October 1995. The mission of the Task Force is to enhance The American Legion's service to America's newest generation of war veterans, their families, and their advocates. The Task Force has approached its mission with vigor, and has undertaken many efforts to accomplish it, to include: Town Hall Meetings; critical reviews of scientific and clinical studies; a comprehensive review of VA's compensation system; Freedom of Information Act requests; site visits to VA medical centers and regional offices; the creation of an Internet site for Gulf War veterans; and the creation of a toll free number for veterans in need to call for assistance.

The Task Force has developed a Town Hall Meeting program that accomplishes a number of objectives; training of Legion service officers and leaders; outreach to Gulf War veterans; and solicitation of feedback from Gulf War veterans regarding their health status. Town Hall meetings were held in South Dakota and Nebraska in 1998, and training has occurred in Virginia, Oklahoma and Missouri. The events have improved our service to Gulf War veterans, and increased membership as well.

The Task Force, through its medical consultant, Dr. Michael Hodgson, of the University of Connecticut, has reviewed several key scientific and clinical studies. The intent of these reviews was to prevent the Federal Government from doing what it did to Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange, and that is, undermine their claims with shoddy science. Dr. Hodgson has reviewed numerous study protocols (the "blueprints" for the studies), and interviewed many of the Principal Investigators (the lead scientists). The Task Force has made its concerns about the studies known early in this research process, so that the studies bear helpful scientific findings, rather than cloud the issue of what is making Gulf War veterans ill.

The Task Force, based on reports from American Legion service officers, and statistics obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), continues to examine VA's performance in compensating sick Gulf War veterans. Specifically, veterans suffering from "Gulf War Illnesses," or "Gulf War Syndrome." The Task Force has testified and reported to Congress on problems VA has had in providing disability compensation to many Gulf War veterans, and this has led to positive changes in how VA delivers this service. More needs to be done, however, and this aspect of the Task Force's mission will receive a great deal of attention in the coming year.

The Task Force has participated in the teaching and designing of classes at the Legion's Department Service Officers Schools in order to prepare our service officers to become successful advocates for Gulf War veterans.

The Task Force has also been actively pushing the Department of Defense (DoD) to continue to investigate troops' exposures to environmental hazards in the Persian Gulf, to include chemical weapons. The Task Force's oversight is meant to keep DoD's investigation on track and credible.

The American Legion has established several new means in which to reach out to Gulf War veterans, and for them to get in contact with The American Legion for assistance. The American Legion Homepage, located on the World Wide Web at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), provides Gulf War veterans with information about The American Legion's Gulf War Task Force, and the means to contact The American Legion electronically.

The American Legion has also established a toll free telephone number, 1-800-433-3318, which has been advertised with radio public service announcements, radio talk shows, and American Legion publications. Any veteran can call for assistance, and the operators alert the nearest American Legion service officer to call the veteran within 48 hours.

The Task Force has distributed over 20,000 Gulf War Veterans Guides to VA Benefits. The Guide was recognized by the Presidential Advisory Committee as an excellent outreach tool for Gulf War veterans, and VA's Vet Centers have been issuing the Guides to every Gulf War veteran who visited them since May of 1998.

The Task Force was involved in overseeing a study that examined how the Gulf War mobilization affected the earnings and family life of Reservists and members of the National Guard. The study found that these veterans lost earnings and had their family lives greatly disrupted, and the Task Force has taken the study results to Congress and federal agencies in order to enhance the benefits for these veterans.

The Task Force will continue to focus on helping sick Gulf War veterans and their families with their immediate problems until a diagnosis and cure can be found for the illnesses affecting many Gulf War veterans.

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Ms. Elizabeth Stewart, North Carolina, Chairman**

"Service is the rent we pay for a living, it is not something to do in your spare time, it is the very purpose of life," states Department of Iowa VA&R Chairman Linda Sue Mullen.

A total of 6,948 Units in 50 Departments reported serving 1.5 million veterans and giving a total of 2.5 million hours and \$5.7 million in service not only to hospitalized veterans and those in outpatient clinics but to those in field and home service programs throughout the country. Monies included Department donations of \$573,000.

Volunteer recruitment efforts increased with the reporting of 22,064 Home Service volunteers, awarding 1,585 new 50 hour pins, a total of 793,678 hours of Home Service and total donations at \$893,000. The number of certificates awarded to non-affiliated volunteers

for home service rose to 677. These statistics reveal that more volunteers are serving in their homes and in the field. Volunteers jumped on the volunteer bandwagon and the activities underway in Departments and Units in 1997-98 revealed creative and varied projects.

Service in 1997-98 by the American Legion Auxiliary was reported at 190 facilities in 174 communities for a total of 5,024 regularly scheduled volunteers giving 557,696 hours plus 97,139 occasional hours for a grand total of 654,835.

Thirty-four Departments reported participation in projects or in giving to Fisher Houses. As of June 1, a total of \$19,000 had been transmitted via National Headquarters for Fisher House. In addition, New York reported \$5,160 to Albany VA Fisher House, Vet Care, from memorials for Ed Klimek, husband of National VA&R Vice Chairman Helen Klimek. A total of 1,522 units supported Fisher House, reporting spending thousands of dollars on parties and events and additional contributions from Departments, including a patio and other physical needs topping \$167,000.

Arizona reported 105 new Home Service volunteers, Minnesota reported 2,264 hours of service by home service volunteers and 67,040 hours of service by senior volunteers while other high volunteer hours were reported by: Illinois, 52,730; Delaware, 48,575; Arkansas, 42,006; Virginia, 48,226; Washington, 45,982; and Arizona, 42,843. Seventy Units in Ohio recruited 307 new Auxiliary Junior members, 59 Units recruited 285 new Auxiliary Senior members and 60 Units recognized 129 volunteers at banquets. In Ohio a regularly scheduled volunteer gave 67 hours of service at the Chillicothe VA Medical Center. West Virginia reported 25 new volunteers, Texas recruited 90 new field service volunteers, and Hawaii recruited 51 new volunteers. Six Virginia volunteers earned 500 hour Home Service bars, five earned 1,000 bars and one volunteer earned a 3,000 hour bar.

Five Departments 100 percent in reporting were Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington.

Awareness of The American Legion's GI Bill of Health was emphasized at Unit, District and Department conferences by videos and Legion speakers. Members wrote letters to their elected officials encouraging support of the bill.

Volunteers in all Departments continued their ongoing programs of entertaining veterans in the medical facilities, nursing homes, outpatient facilities and everywhere in any community where there was a need. From hosting parties to helping at funeral services the Auxiliary volunteer was there.

The eight National Information Conferences provided an excellent forum for VA&R concerns. Field Service orientations were a part of the focus.

In keeping with National President Barbara Kranig's theme, "The Family Circle" was emphasized in every Department. As more satellite clinics were opened in many areas of the country, the need for volunteers shifted from the hospitals to community and the American Legion Family was there.

Arizona's Hospitality Houses, Nebraska's Bristol Barracks and Nevada's Spouse House are examples of care for veterans and spouses. Alabama recruited 44 new volunteers including six VolunTeens and a special project was a fund raiser to send veterans to the Golden Age Games.

Huntsville Madison County Unit 237 signed up 20 female veterans for the Women's Memorial and Alabama's Unit 133 Millbrook sponsored Operation Reach Out for the homeless. Indiana presented a wheelchair lift-equipped van to the Indiana Veterans Home, a project of the Auxiliary and Legion and 702 Home Service Doo Bees made lap robes, ditty bags, slippers, and other comfort items. A total of 1,100 Valentines went out to veterans on February 14 from Units in Valentine, Nebraska.

The list of innovative programs ranged from rodeos, BBQs, American Legion baseball playoffs, football, fishing games, festivals, dinners, Stand Downs in Missouri, Illinois,

California and New Jersey, quilting, crocheting snowflakes for Christmas trees, welcome kits, and spectacular Christmas shops at the hospitals plus other holiday events. In the two Carolinas, Units donated bricks to adorn the VA Administration Buildings engraved with the Unit Auxiliary name. Veterans in Wisconsin went to camp compliments of the Auxiliary. North Dakota has a unique telephone chain in which members regularly call veterans and conduct funeral escorts, North Carolina District 1 chose Help Hospitalized Veterans craft kits for hospitalized veterans, providing mental as well as physical rehabilitation.

The Junior Auxiliary in Colorado kept the cupboards full for Fisher House guests. A sleep-out program for homeless veterans in Delaware found volunteers sleeping outside in tents, cooking over an open fire and donating proceeds to the Home of the Brave.

A fish tank for butterflies? Yes, there is one and an additional tank is requested for Hospice Stations at Florida VA medical facilities where patients are enjoying the cycle of life watching the hatching of the caterpillar into a beautiful living thing. New gardens are also springing up at the medical centers because of caring Auxiliary Units.

The bottom line is that "We Care."

**VA Hospital/Facility Volunteer Service  
Mrs. Pat Renaud, Iowa, Director**

Dedicated volunteers, both regularly scheduled and occasional, have served our veterans with pride and loyalty, putting their hearts and souls into many hours of dedicated service.

With the increase of outpatient surgery and treatments, the HOPTELS at VA medical centers, guest houses and hospitality houses have been established and supported by Units throughout our country. These facilities provide accommodations for the veteran who has to travel a long distance to the VA. When necessary, the spouse or caregiver can also be accommodated. Monetary donations as well as household furnishings, pantry items and comfort items have generously been donated as well as many volunteer hours by our members.

In Colorado, Junior Auxiliary VolunTeens spearheaded a "Keep The Cupboards Full" program for the Fisher House so guests would not have to shop for staple items.

At the Minnesota Fisher House, monetary donations as well as books, puzzles, magazines and personal and household items are donated by Units. At the New York Fisher House, in addition to direct donations, Units have prepared dinners and lunches for patients and guests as well as weekly baking of goodies.

VolunTeens were recruited from junior members, Eagle Scouts, school classes and youth groups in area schools.

VA Voluntary Service staff were invited to attend Auxiliary meetings and conferences to inform, orient and recruit volunteers for the various assignments needed at VA facilities and outpatient clinics. Volunteers served in new clinics established for women veteran patients. Veterans from VA medical centers and nursing homes were hosted at Post Homes with dinner parties and entertainment.

In New Hampshire, picnic tables and pavilion equipment was donated as well as two TV sets. In Ohio, 6,000 diaries and pens were presented to each inpatient and outpatient at all VA facilities.

Volunteers are scheduled throughout the year with recreational activities for the patients with birthday parties, bingo on the wards, ice cream socials, outdoor and indoor carnivals, casino nights, Fall festivals, fishing trips, boat rides, BBQs, coffee programs, trips to ball games, bowling, races and local zoos. At holiday times, special events are held with the Christmas Gift Shop, parties for Easter, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Halloween, the 4th

of July, Thanksgiving and Mardi Gras. In February, the National "Salute to Hospitalized Veterans" and Valentine's Day brings great joy to all.

One Unit has a new program where they provide homemade cakes as needed, to celebrate the patients successful completion of various rehabilitation programs.

Increased volunteer hours are spent at outpatient clinics with the coffee cart program, serving in the pharmacy, in office assistance and in the greeter program.

Units sponsored disabled veteran patients to attend and compete in the Winter Sports Clinics and volunteers participated in the National Veterans Golden Age Games.

Due to the decrease in patient load at some VA facilities, the Gift Shop program was changed from the usual department store style shop to having the veteran select a family gift from a limited choice of gifts, and this change was received favorably.

Reports from 42 Departments reflect that 711,563 veterans were served at 9,503 activities/events with a value amount of \$1,993,440. 604,115 hours were served by regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers and these figures include 10,562 hours served by 1,494 VolunTeens.

#### **VAVS**

**Mrs. Helen Klimek, New York, Director**

The VAVS, Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service, is the largest program in the Federal Government with over 300 national and community organization supporters. The VAVS program is assisted by the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC), reporting to the Under Secretary for Health and is composed of 63 major organizations of which we, the American Legion Auxiliary are one of the largest groups.

Quarterly minutes were received from all but ten of the 174 facilities. At 129 facilities our organization was represented with 100% attendance by our representatives and deputies.

Annual Joint Reviews scheduled for the month of November were received from all but 27 of the 174 representatives. The Joint Reviews show many complimentary comments made by the Voluntary Service Chiefs about the outstanding work performed by our representatives and deputies and many serve actively in leadership roles at their respective facilities. All reviews are personally acknowledged by this National Representative.

100% Attendance Awards will be presented to approximately 190 facility representatives and deputies for their perfect attendance at all four of the quarterly meetings. These figures will increase after the last quarterly minutes are received from facilities with June and July meetings.

A total of 5,024 regularly scheduled volunteers served 557,696 hours and 97,139 occasional hours were posted for a grand total of 654,835 hours served at VA facilities and clinics for the 1997 VA Fiscal Year. Although we are recruiting new volunteers our losses are greater than our gains.

There were two VAVS National Advisory Committee meetings this year. This was due to the fact that meetings will now be held each Spring rather than in the Fall. In October 1997 many Auxiliary volunteers attended the annual meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Eight National Information Conferences were conducted providing attendees with much useful information. The James H. Parke Scholarship winner, Cari Lynn Bohm, a VolunTeen at the Salt Lake City VAMC was our guest at the luncheon and she was presented with her award - a \$10,000 scholarship. The American Legion Auxiliary contributed \$1,000.00 towards the Parke Scholarship Fund. The scholarship fund contest is open to all VolunTeens who serve at a VA facility and hopefully one of our Auxiliary VolunTeens will one day win this scholarship.

In May 1998, a transitional business meeting was held in San Francisco. Emphasis was on the recruitment of youth volunteers. We should not only think of what they can do for us and the veteran, but think of what we can do for them. As a volunteer they would have the opportunity for first-hand interaction with the veteran and they can learn to appreciate what our veterans have done for us and our Country.

The guest speaker at the luncheon, James H. Holley, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs concluded his remarks with a tribute paid to two volunteers at the San Francisco VAMC, one who was our Auxiliary representative, Veronica Spence. Her record of service and dedication to our veterans is outstanding and we congratulate her.

It is impossible to calculate the true amount of caring and sharing that our volunteers give to veteran patients. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to these veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Let us continue to serve!

**Field Service**  
**Mrs. Jeri Greenwell, Maine, Director**

As budgetary cuts continue to be made in VA funding, the need for dedicated Field Service volunteers continues to grow. Everyone in our "Family Circle" was encouraged to "Jump on the VA&R Bandwagon" and emphasis focused on increased volunteerism and heightening the awareness of the plight facing our homeless veterans.

Initiatives were concentrated toward retention as well as recruiting methods resulting in 2,380 new volunteers for our organization. Whether a member, VolunTeen or non-affiliate, each is important in helping to address the varied needs of our veterans.

The lives of 293,157 veterans were touched this year by the unselfish dedication of 28,338 Senior volunteers and 2,537 VolunTeens with 1,002,028 hours reported. These volunteers and their Units sponsored 18,541 programs with expenditures totaling \$939,431.14. These figures indicate a decrease in hours served but an overall increase in programs, expenditures and number of volunteers from the past year, however, only 45 Departments submitted reports. As this information is reported each year to Congress, we should encourage greater accountability.

Deserving recipients received the following award recognition: 792 - 50 hour certificates; 198 - 500 hour awards; and 161 - 1,000 hour awards. Thirty-two VolunTeens were nominated for the Cash Award. Congratulations!

All Departments reported participation in programs involving homeless veterans. These included offering services at soup kitchens and emergency or transitional housing facilities, donating clothing, toiletries, household items or other goods to organized Stand Downs or agencies serving the homeless, acting as tutors or simply extending a hand in friendship and understanding.

When tornadoes devastated Central Florida and the floods afflicted those in North Dakota, Field Service volunteers truly excelled in care for the homeless providing shelter, necessities and monetary aid to those in need.

Elsewhere Field Service volunteers serve in a myriad of ways meeting the needs of veterans in the communities whether it is bingo or card games, special holiday parties, picnics, karaoke sing-a-longs, sporting games, fishing trips or adopting veterans. The list is endless but none the less rewarding.

Individuals were enlisted to assist in honor guard services at veterans' burials, assist in serving refreshments, placing flags or markers on graves or providing general maintenance to the veterans' final resting place. The Department of Massachusetts purchased an automated flagpole for its first State Veterans Cemetery and Wyoming donated



a park bench and headstone for the cremation section in addition to a monetary donation toward an automated veteran directory.

Religious services are conducted each week at a State Veterans Home in Maine and Maryland delivers host communion to its Catholic veterans.

The volunteers in Idaho host a "Forever Yours" program in celebration of wedding anniversaries, produce a USO show as a salute to veterans and is in its 10th year sponsorship of a Veterans Olympic event, complete with award presentation and BBQ.

These are but a few examples of the many and varied ways that our Field Service volunteers gave back to the veterans that which they so richly deserve.

#### **AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY National President Barbara Kranig**

National President Barbara Kranig of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, was sworn into office at the organization's National Convention in September, 1997. Her theme was "The American Legion Family Circle" as she emphasized programs designed to enrich family life. Members were asked to consider combinations of services to resolve problems of the entire family.

These endeavors were emphasized throughout the year with such projects as Taste of the NFL, the Children's Miracle Network, Spinoza Bears, America Reads and various other programs implemented in local Units.

#### **Americanism**

*Show Your Colors, America!* was definitely what American Legion Auxiliary members did this year. They joined the rest of the American Legion Family and provided patriotic services, flag etiquette programs and other services to their communities.

Units reported providing more than 126,048 flags to individuals, businesses, parks, schools and other civic organizations in their communities. Flags were presented at naturalization ceremonies to welcome new citizens. Members also worked with Legionnaires in setting up flag retirement ceremonies.

Energetic and enthusiastic high school students attended the Americanism Youth Conference at Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. These students spent a weekend sharpening their leadership skills, getting a first-hand history lesson and making some lasting friendships.

More than 18,000 students wrote essays using 'The American Family and Freedom' or 'America...My Love, My Life, My Country' as the title. More than 60 Girl Scouts entered their applications for the Girl Scout Achievement Award. Thirty-three applications were received from Departments to be judged for this prestigious award. The Spirit of Youth Fund received contributions from more than 1,000 Units.

Other Americanism activities included submitting patriotic articles to hometown newspapers, supporting the Citizens Flag Alliance and participating in Flag Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities.

#### **Auxiliary Emergency Fund**

The 1997-1998 Auxiliary Emergency Fund is proud of the response received from its pleas for donations to replenish a depleted fund. As a result of the efforts of our compassionate members in 50 Departments, contributions of \$190,536 were made to National Headquarters. Grants were awarded to 66 Auxiliary members in 28 states.

"Women Helping Women" became a priority within every Department. The Units became the force behind fund raising ideas to promote this important program. The Family Circle was enhanced by working closely with The American Legion National Emergency Fund and by involving Junior members in fund raising efforts.

### **Children and Youth**

What a champion year this has been for the children across America. This year, a total of 1,097,567 hours were volunteered by Unit members, raising \$5,295,083 and assisting 1,379,907 children.

The Children's Miracle Network was new to the Auxiliary but it was still warmly embraced. Auxiliary members contributed more than \$401,133 to Children's hospitals (not just CMN-affiliated hospitals). Many Units also participated in fund raising and local telethons.

The Spinoza Bear became life friends to 2,027 children through Auxiliary donations. Regional Action Team (RAT) members also kept busy raising funds for the Child Welfare Foundation. In assisting The American Legion with this program, our Auxiliaries contributed \$104,036.

### **Community Service**

The 1997-1998 Community Service program emphasized four major concerns: family enhancement, volunteerism in the community, youth programs and environmental issues. Statistics reflected that these major issues, as well as all community service programs, were fully supported by 76,424 dedicated members from 5,610 Units. These volunteers raised and expended almost \$4 million on a wide range of community service projects.

In the family enhancement segment of the program, 1,645 Units spent \$522,092 to improve the quality of life by building stronger families. Food banks, soup kitchens, hospice and infant care programs, children and adult day care centers, food and clothing rescue missions and shelters for the abused were eagerly supported.

Members volunteered in community support groups and in local organizations such as the Elks, Lions Club, Rotary, Meals on Wheels, cancer and kidney foundations, Special Olympics and churches. Assistance was provided with voter registration as well as in libraries, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, drug clinics, neighborhood watches, blood banks, Habitat for Humanity and community patrols.

For youth programs, members from 2,897 Units disbursed \$1,006,323. Easter egg hunts, holiday parties, teddy bear projects, Toys for Tots, and a wide variety of projects to reassure love and friendship for children were conducted. National recognition of Teen Court grew as more and more Units investigated the feasibility of the program. State legislatures have begun to allocate state funds to absorb expenses involved with conducting a Teen Court.

Members spent \$187,000 improving and protecting our environment. They recycled, repaired, beautified, purified and adopted highways, parks, rivers and beaches. The 8th Annual Make a Difference Day and Earth Day were days in which members really made a contribution in these special community projects.

National President Barbara Kranig's special project, the Taste of the NFL, was supported by 45 Departments donating \$30,698.

### Education

Generous Units and Departments recognize that our challenge is to continue to provide opportunities for higher education for our young men and women, particularly needed as the cost of education continues to escalate. To this end, 4,138 scholarships were given with a dollar value of \$595,258.

The 5,579 *Need a Lift* booklets distributed throughout the nation provide an additional resource for students as they search for funding sources. This booklet, provided by The American Legion at a minimum cost, details significant information for college bound students.

The Auxiliary was challenged by President Barbara Kranig to become a volunteer army to help children learn to read independently and well by the end of third grade. Volunteers numbering 2,630 helped 2,515 youngsters, volunteering 46,314 hours. Some of the activities included: tutoring at pre-schools and day cares, Head Start, students in kindergarten through third grade, story hours at local libraries and story time at Posts and Units; donating books; helping with writing stories; playing reading games; developing mentoring programs; funding for reading challenge prizes; playing word bingo and using phonics and sight words.

Activities were sponsored and supported by 2,210 Units for American Education Week. The Units also participated in Career Days. Some Units sponsored "Take Your Child to Work Day".

Adult literacy is still a major concern and an ever growing need. Five hundred ninety Units were involved in activities such as tutoring adults for their GEDs, teaching English, donating money to local projects, teaching prisoners, assisting with job applications, volunteering at literacy councils and public libraries and reading to the blind.

One thousand seven hundred thirty-two schools and classrooms were adopted by 3,914 volunteers. Six hundred Juniors participated in the outstanding teacher appreciation programs. Educational pamphlets numbering 57,804 were distributed on topics such as adult literacy, flag etiquette, child abuse awareness, child safety and world geography.

The possibilities and opportunities to help educate the nation's young people are endless and are limited only by our creative minds.

### Girls State

Every Girls State program is different in the manner in which it reflects the local, county and state government of its area. Yet, each program is alike in its purpose of teaching Americanism, democracy and love of God and Country.

More than 21,000 girls attended Girls State programs. This year, 4,944 sponsoring Units encouraged 6,327 schools to participate in the programs. Of these schools, 224 were new to the program. To run these programs, 1,123 counselors dedicated their time and efforts to teach active government.

Girls State programs received publicity in local newspapers by running articles on delegates, presenting certificates at school assemblies and receiving coverage of events during the sessions. Educational television channels covered the Girls State events as well.

In mid-July, 1994 excited and enthusiastic young women arrived at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, to continue their study of government; this time at the federal level. Alana Aldag of Arizona was elected President and was sworn into office by Sen. Herb Kohl of Wisconsin. National President Barbara Kranig was also present for the inauguration.

Senators were inspired by many speakers including a "Woman in Government" panel, NASA Astronaut Lisa Nowak and Lt. General Claudia J. Kennedy, Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence and the highest ranking woman in any of the armed forces. Senators visited the Women in Military Service for America (WISMA) memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, national monuments and their Representatives and Senators. The week culminated with a visit with President Bill Clinton. Each girl was able to personally meet the President.

Girls State programs throughout the nation and the Girls Nation program have touched thousands of young women this year. It is our hope that they will take the lessons learned and apply them to our future.

### **Junior Activities**

As an active part of The American Legion Family Circle, the Junior members of our organization proved once again that they provide a valuable service to our organization, America's veterans and our nation as a whole. A major part of our program this year was our commitment to the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. Junior members were asked to respond to our organization's commitment by establishing voluntary service projects in 4,000 communities across America.

Examples of the caring commitment of our younger members included active participation in "Make a Difference Day" events, walk-a-thons, adopt a grandparent programs, collecting labels for various local fund raising campaigns, our poppy program and special attention for our nation's veterans through volunteering.

The success of our Junior program rests in a large measure in the thousands of Senior members who volunteer to serve as chairmen. The impact that they have on our members and the value to our organization is immeasurable.

### **Legislative**

The American Legion Auxiliary can be proud knowing that our organization has played an important role in support of The American Legion's legislative endeavors. The Auxiliary launched a "Woman to Woman" letter-writing campaign where we targeted the four female Senators who voted 'no' when the Flag Protection Amendment was last before them. Auxiliary members joined in and wrote to each of them encouraging their support of the passage of the constitutional amendment to protect our flag.

Two thousand three hundred and four Units had special programs to promote passage of the amendment. *Show Your Colors, America!* campaign kits were sent to American Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units and SAL Squadrons. Legislative meetings were held in 822 Units where many invited Congressional members to attend as speakers.

Subscriptions to the *National Legislative Bulletin* was a constant plea. The Auxiliary continues to purchase subscriptions to be placed in schools, VA Medical Centers, libraries, nursing homes and doctor's offices.

Auxiliary members wrote 25,375 letters to U.S. Senators, 23,185 letters to U.S. Representatives, 10,283 letters to state and local officials, 366 letters to the President of the United States and 34 to the Vice President. Auxiliary members also expressed their concerns by contacting their Congressmen through a total of 25,228 visits, telephone calls, telegrams, faxes, and e-mails. A record number of 15,808 replies were received from Senators and Representatives.

Many members attended the joint Legislative Rally with The American Legion during the Awareness Assembly in Washington, DC. During the rally, legislative priorities were discussed. Legion and Auxiliary members united for Congressional visits on Capitol Hill.

### **Membership**

"Jump on the Bandwagon" was the membership theme for 1997-1998 and was repeated often throughout the year as we aimed to retain and recruit members. Our goals for the year were: 100% membership goal, 100% renewal rate, establish a family atmosphere in the Unit and work with The Legion and Sons of The American Legion, have a Junior membership in every Unit, and work to organize at least one new Unit in every District.

The greatest lessons learned or relearned in the membership program this year is that "membership is everyone's responsibility" and that "personal contact and involvement" is key.

### **Poppy**

Families across America were reminded of our veterans' valor through the symbol of the little red poppy. During 1998, more than 6,660 Units participated in the distribution of poppies. This reflected a 15% increase in the number of Units using the poppy during their year of service.

Special reproducible poppy activity sheets were used in more than 2,000 schools. The impact of this program was substantial when multiplied by the enrollment of each school.

More than 10 million poppies were used during the 1998 year. Contributions to the poppy program totaled more than \$2,871,000.

### **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

A total of 6,948 Units in 50 Departments reported serving 1.5 million veterans and giving a total of 2.5 million hours and \$5.7 million in service, not only to hospitalized veterans and those in out-patient clinics, but to those in field and home service programs throughout the country. Monies included Department donations of \$573,000.

Volunteer recruitment efforts increased with the reporting of 22,064 Home Service volunteers serving 793,678 hours of Home Service and total donations at \$893,000. Service in 1997-1998 by the American Legion Auxiliary was reported at 190 facilities in 174 communities for a total of 5,024 regularly scheduled volunteers giving 557,696 hours plus 97,139 occasional hours for a grand total of 654,835.

Thirty-four Departments reported either participation in projects or donations to Fisher Houses. As of June 1, 1998, \$19,000 in donations had been transmitted via National Headquarters for Fisher Houses. A total of 1,522 Units supported Fisher Houses, reporting spending thousands of dollars on parties and events and additional contributions.

Awareness of The American Legion GI Bill of Health was emphasized at Unit, District and Department conferences by video and Legion speakers. Members wrote letters to their elected officials encouraging support of the bill.

Volunteers in all Departments continued their ongoing programs of entertaining veterans in the medical facilities, nursing homes, out-patient facilities and everywhere in any community where there was a need. From hosting parties to helping at funeral service, the Auxiliary volunteer was there. The list of innovative programs ranged from rodeos, barbecues, American Legion baseball playoffs, football, fishing games, festivals, dinners, quilt making, crocheting and many other activities.

The bottom line is that "We Care".

#### **VA & R—Hospital Volunteers**

Dedicated volunteers, both regular scheduled and occasional, have served our veterans with pride and loyalty, putting their hearts and souls into many hours of dedicated service.

With the increase of out-patient surgery and treatments, the HOPTELS at the VA Medical Centers, guest houses and hospitality houses have been established and supported by our Units throughout the country. These facilities provided accommodations for the veteran who has to travel a long distance to the VA. Monetary donations as well as household furnishings, pantry items and comfort items have generously been donated as well as many volunteer hours by our members.

Volunteers are scheduled throughout the year with recreational activities for the patients with birthday parties, bingos in the wards, ice cream socials, outdoor and indoor carnivals, casino nights, fall festival, fishing trips, boat rides, barbecues, coffee programs and trips to ball games, bowling alleys, races and local zoos.

Increased volunteer hours are spent at out-patient clinics with the coffee cart program, serving in the pharmacy, in office assistance and in the greeter program. Units sponsored disabled veteran patients to attend and compete in the Winter Sports Clinics, and volunteers participated in the National Veterans Golden Age Games.

Reports from 42 Departments reflect that 711,563 veterans were served at 9,503 activities/events with a value amount of \$1,993,440. A total of 604,115 hours were served by regular scheduled and occasional volunteers, and these figures include 10,562 hours served by 1,494 VolunTeens.

#### **VA & R—Field Service**

As budgetary cuts continue to be made in VA funding, the need for dedicated Field Service volunteers continues to grow. Emphasis focused this year on increased volunteerism and heightening the awareness of the plight facing our homeless veterans.

Initiatives were concentrated towards retention, as well as recruiting methods, resulting in 2,380 new volunteers for our organization.

The lives of 293,157 veterans were touched this year by the unselfish dedication of 28,388 Senior volunteers and 2,537 VolunTeens with 1,002,028 hours reported. These volunteers and their Units sponsored 18,541 programs with expenditures totaling \$939,431. These figures indicated a decrease in hours served but an overall increase in programs, expenditures and number of volunteers from the past year.

All Departments reported participation in programs involving homeless veterans. These included offering services as soup kitchens and emergency or transitional housing facilities; donating clothing, toiletries, household items or other goods to organized Stand Downs or agencies serving the homeless; acting as tutors or simply extending a hand in friendship and understanding.

Field Service volunteers served in a myriad of ways; meeting the needs of veterans in the communities whether it was bingo or card games, special holiday parties, picnics, karaoke sing-a-longs, sporting games, fishing trips or adoptive veterans. Individuals were enlisted to assist in honor guard services at veterans' burials, assist in serving refreshments, placing flags or markers on graves or providing general maintenance to the veterans' final resting place.

These are but a few examples of the many and varied ways that our Field Service volunteers gave back to the veterans who so richly deserve it.

**VA & R—Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service**

The VAVS, Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services, is the largest program in the federal government with more than 300 national and community organization supporters. The VAVS program is assisted by the VAVS National Advisory Committee, reporting to the Under Secretary for Health and is composed of 63 major organizations of which we, the American Legion Auxiliary, are one of the largest groups.

The Joint Reviews show many complimentary comments made by the Voluntary Service Chiefs about the outstanding work performed by our representatives and deputies, and many served actively in leadership roles at their respective facilities.

One hundred percent attendance awards will be presented to approximately 190 facility representatives and deputies for their perfect attendance at all four of the quarterly meetings.

A total of 5,024 regularly scheduled volunteers served 557,696 hours and 97,139 occasional hours were posted for a grand total of 654,835 hours served at VA facilities and clinics for the 1997 VA fiscal year.

It is impossible to calculate the true amount of caring and sharing that our volunteers give to veteran patients. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to these veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Let us continue to serve!

## Financial Reports

## Independent Auditor's Report



GEO. S. OLIVE & CO., LLC  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

## Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. Anthony G. Jordan, National Commander  
and Members of the National Finance Commission  
The American Legion National Headquarters  
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statement of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly owned subsidiary (the Legion) as of December 31, 1997 and 1996, and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of the Legion's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and subsidiary as of December 31, 1997 and 1996, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As further discussed in the notes to the financial statements, during the year ended December 31, 1996, the Legion changed its method of accounting to comply with Statement of Financial Accounting Standard (SFAS) No. 124.

Our audits were performed for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The reconciliation of audited financial statements to internal financial statements is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

*Geo. S. Olive & Co., LLC*

Indianapolis, Indiana  
March 25, 1998



## The American Legion 1998 National Convention

		DECEMBER 31	
		1997	1998
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents		\$ 1,899,824	\$ 873,271
Restricted cash		56,472	29,552
Due from The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (Special Account)		2,000,000	2,000,000
Accounts receivable		184,294	115,283
Endowment Division		1,255,086	1,375,724
Other		1,255,086	1,375,724
Unbilled production costs		21,775	67,435
Prepaid expenses and supplies		470,181	1,100,919
Deferred membership expense		3,877,081	4,837,712
Postal deposits		86,808	108,107
Inventories		1,628,913	1,562,214
Investments		22,514,563	22,142,432
Investment in affiliate (CFA)		22,514,563	22,142,432
Prepaid pension expense		8,896,864	8,142,183
Investments		14,716,881	13,794,906
Segregated for Designated Funds		1,118,811	958,852
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund		941,847	835,261
Post-World War II Membership Fund		34,963,185	28,835,782
Other		22,285,181	18,842,284
Property, equipment, and intangible asset		73,258,355	63,154,073
Land—Indianapolis parking lot		238,359	238,359
Land—Washington, D. C. real estate		86,808	86,808
Land—Indianapolis parking lot		4,116,918	4,116,940
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment		9,283,188	9,420,187
National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana		1,587,235	1,525,981
Washington, D. C.		788,972	788,624
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.		303,372	303,372
Goodwill		16,883,872	16,478,473
Accumulated depreciation and amortization		(18,778,788)	(9,885,370)
		5,278,884	6,483,103
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>\$181,848,842</b>	<b>\$91,799,608</b>
See notes to consolidated financial statements.			
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts payable		\$ 2,917,143	\$ 2,463,542
Deferred dues income		14,825	15,875
Deferred advertising income		47,456	37,375
Deferred dues income—direct membership solicitation		28,683,298	20,102,866
Accrued vacation benefits		684,473	815,543
Line of credit		598,843	572,829
Long-term debt		78,394	94,815
Other		1,255,086	1,375,724
Deferred dues income—Paid-Up-For-Life memberships		28,683,298	20,102,866
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>62,884,118</b>	<b>49,564,063</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			
Unrestricted—General		8,872,187	8,017,150
Unrestricted—Designated		227,582	181,362
Citizens Flag Alliance		508,000	500,000
Convention reserve		100,000	100,000
Convention stabilization		222,488	165,689
Employee insurance stabilization		100,000	100,000
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund		7,888,286	4,238,152
Post-World War II Membership Fund		1,118,811	958,852
Real estate reserve		2,298,638	2,260,321
Reserve Fund		12,488,778	11,505,497
Restricted Fund		823,788	4,138,834
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)		4,848,882	2,760,000
Volunteer programs (Special Account)		55,152	55,000
Others		48,728,328	34,873,870
Temporarily Restricted		435,286	465,432
Buck scholarship		978,584	980,235
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund		897,249	525,285
Relief Fund		425,111	515,767
Scholarship		108,841	48,236
WWI Veterans		2,838,488	2,264,555
Others		5,888,888	5,000,000
Permanently restricted		48,888,728	42,144,625
Samsung scholarship			
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>\$181,848,842</b>	<b>\$91,799,608</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>		<b>\$181,848,842</b>	<b>\$91,799,608</b>

## Financial Reports

# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31	1997			1998		
	UNRESTRICTED GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED RESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED RESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED
Revenue, Grants and Other Support						
National member dues	\$24,091,487	\$1,383,984	\$25,365,471	\$24,091,487	\$1,383,984	\$25,365,471
State and local member dues	1,851,517	1,041,941	2,893,458	1,851,517	1,041,941	2,893,458
Salaries-APCO	1,941,941	1,941,941	3,883,882	1,941,941	1,941,941	3,883,882
Advertising	7,214,613	7,214,613	14,429,226	7,214,613	7,214,613	14,429,226
Direct membership solicitation	1,550,085	1,550,085	3,100,170	1,550,085	1,550,085	3,100,170
Professional fees	810,825	810,825	1,621,650	810,825	810,825	1,621,650
American Legion Endowment	524,338	524,338	1,048,676	524,338	524,338	1,048,676
Fund Corporation support	359,027	359,027	718,054	359,027	359,027	718,054
Contributions	985,940	985,940	1,971,880	985,940	985,940	1,971,880
Investment income	845,882	845,882	1,691,764	845,882	845,882	1,691,764
Net of trustee fees	946,701	946,701	1,893,402	946,701	946,701	1,893,402
Net realized gains (losses)	5,435,733	1,326,760	6,762,493	5,435,733	1,326,760	6,762,493
Other	48,297,005	3,613,879	51,910,884	48,297,005	3,613,879	51,910,884
Net assets released from restriction	1,470,869	1,470,869	2,941,738	1,470,869	1,470,869	2,941,738
Net assets released from designation	7,253,730	7,253,730	14,507,460	7,253,730	7,253,730	14,507,460
Total revenues, gifts and other support	\$6,022,304	(3,636,751)	\$2,385,553	\$6,022,304	(3,636,751)	\$2,385,553
Expenses						
Salaries	9,258,841	9,258,841	18,517,682	9,258,841	9,258,841	18,517,682
Employee benefits	1,851,517	1,851,517	3,703,034	1,851,517	1,851,517	3,703,034
Cost of sales	3,688,477	3,688,477	7,376,954	3,688,477	3,688,477	7,376,954
Selling, general, and administrative	401,050	401,050	802,100	401,050	401,050	802,100
Direct membership	12,430,010	12,430,010	24,860,020	12,430,010	12,430,010	24,860,020
Executive and staff travel	949,538	949,538	1,899,076	949,538	949,538	1,899,076
Commission and committee	1,238,721	1,238,721	2,477,442	1,238,721	1,238,721	2,477,442
Occupancy	2,770,833	2,770,833	5,541,666	2,770,833	2,770,833	5,541,666
Office and postage	3,978,815	3,978,815	7,957,630	3,978,815	3,978,815	7,957,630
Special projects and programs	8,225,192	8,225,192	16,450,384	8,225,192	8,225,192	16,450,384
Total expenses	\$3,253,281	\$3,253,281	\$6,506,562	\$3,253,281	\$3,253,281	\$6,506,562
Change in Net Assets Before	4,869,023	(3,636,751)	1,232,272	4,869,023	(3,636,751)	1,232,272
Net Unrestricted Balance	(192,798)	550,137	357,339	(192,798)	550,137	357,339
Change in Net Assets	4,676,225	(3,086,614)	1,415,611	4,676,225	(3,086,614)	1,415,611
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	7,716,745	19,321,244	27,037,989	7,716,745	19,321,244	27,037,989
Net Assets, End of Year	\$12,392,970	\$16,234,630	\$28,453,600	\$12,392,970	\$16,234,630	\$28,453,600
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	290	290	580	290	290	580
Net Assets, End of Year	\$12,393,260	\$16,234,920	\$28,454,180	\$12,393,260	\$16,234,920	\$28,454,180
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	7,717,035	25,782,114	32,468,168	7,717,035	25,782,114	32,468,168
Net Assets, End of Year	\$12,393,550	\$16,235,210	\$28,454,470	\$12,393,550	\$16,235,210	\$28,454,470

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

## The American Legion 1998 National Convention

CONSOLIDATED  
STATEMENT  
OF CASH FLOWS

Year Ended December 31	1997	1996
<b>Operating Activities</b>		
Change in net assets	\$6,891,191	\$6,875,267
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities		
Depreciation and amortization	1,482,487	1,673,446
(Gain) loss on sale of investments	178,286	(358,475)
Loss on sale of real estate	18,502	18,502
Unrealized gains on investments	(3,874,315)	(386,890)
Contributions restricted for long-term investment		(5,000,000)
Changes in:		
Restricted cash	(26,853)	(1,548)
Accounts receivable	(361,430)	719,861
Unaffiliated production costs	48,986	(29,519)
Prepaid expenses and supplies	6,746	(3,575)
Deferred expenses	988,711	(1,203,687)
Postal deposits	23,187	(23,107)
Inventories	181,482	(272,724)
Prepaid pension expense	(1,957,681)	(1,076,216)
Accounts payable	482,991	(183,882)
Deferred income	(12,965)	(130,061)
Deferred advertising	(4,829)	(4,829)
Deferred income	2,288,448	1,907,961
Accrued vacation	26,714	18,137
Other liabilities	583,478	457,453
Net cash provided by operating activities	7,616,878	2,109,831
<b>Investing Activities</b>		
Purchase of property and equipment	(489,332)	(329,278)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	24,212	
Purchase of investments	(64,229,671)	(71,416,727)
Sales and maturities of investments	47,588,226	65,399,387
Net cash used by investing activities	(7,971,565)	(6,340,588)
<b>Financing Activities</b>		
Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment in endowment	(669,969)	5,000,000
Reduction of long-term debt	(669,969)	(58,987)
Net cash provided (used) by financing activities		4,941,013
Net increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents	186,953	710,276
Cash and Cash Equivalents, Beginning of Year	873,271	162,995
Cash and Cash Equivalents, End of Year	\$1,060,224	\$ 873,271
<b>Supplemental Cash Flow Information</b>		
Cash paid for interest	\$48,297	\$57,773

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

# NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

adverse restriction covenants, but is, when a liquidated 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 Expenses**  
Dues are recognized as income over the applicable membership period, which is on a calendar-year basis. The expenses of obtaining new members, the Legion uses direct mail and other direct marketing approaches. The income generated from the direct membership solicitation is also recognized over the applicable membership period (calendar year). The expenses incurred in obtaining new members are deferred and written off over the period in which the income is recognized.

**Income Taxes**  
The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(19) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The Legion is not considered to be a private foundation for federal and state income tax purposes as it is not organized for the inurement of any individual. Federal and state income tax expenses are recorded for HPC as incurred.

**Accounting Changes**  
During 1996, the Legion adopted the provisions of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124, *Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations*. SFAS No. 124 requires that investments in equity securities with readily determinable fair values and all investments in debt securities be carried at fair value. The Legion's investments in equity securities were reclassified to fair value at the beginning of 1996 totaling \$4,242,813. The cumulative effect of this accounting change was an increase to net assets at the beginning of 1996 totaling \$4,242,813.

**Fair Value of Financial Instruments**  
The carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents, investments, line of credit and long-term debt approximates fair value.

**Reclassifications**  
Certain information for 1996 has been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

**Prior Period Adjustment**  
An adjustment of \$2,000,000 was made to net assets at the beginning of 1996. The adjustment was needed to record a receivable from The American Legion, which is held by the Legion on behalf of the Legion. The original principal was withdrawn by the Legion, if needed, for rehabilitation of veterans or assistance to veterans.

**INVESTMENT IN AFFILIATE**

During 1994, the Legion, in conjunction with approximately 90 other organizations, established a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. (CFA) for the purpose of lobbying on behalf of the Legion and other organizations for the purpose of enacting legislation to protect the flag of the United States of America from physical desecration. To support these efforts, the Legion invested \$1,235,000 and \$4,200,000 in CFA for 1994 and 1995, respectively. The Legion's investment in CFA for 1997 and \$4,216,555 for 1998. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been reduced by this amount and a corresponding charge has been reflected in unrestricted designated net assets.

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, pledges, and other contributions that are restricted for a specific purpose or period of time, or to later periods of time or after specified dates. Unrestricted net assets are classified as temporarily restricted net assets.

**Permanently Restricted Net Assets**  
The Legion's permanently restricted net assets include 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 relating to the passage of time or can be removed by satisfying a specific purpose.

**Cash and Cash Equivalents**  
The Legion considers all liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. As of December 31, 1997 and 1996, the Legion's cash accounts exceeded federally insured limits by approximately \$1,477,000 and \$1,317,000. However, all of these amounts were collateralized by overnight repurchase agreements.

**Accounts Receivable**  
The direct charge-off method is used to account for losses in collection of accounts receivable. Accounts receivable are recorded at the net realizable value and are considered to be uncollectible have been written off.

**Unfilled Production Costs**  
HPC records time incurred on approved projects each day at standard billing rates (based on the employees' years of experience, job type, market conditions, etc.). Production time is accumulated daily and is recorded as either another production cost or as a liability. Production costs also include the cost, plus a standard mark-up, for purchases from outside vendors.

**Inventory**  
Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale and magazine paper and publication rights and are stated at the lower of cost or market. Supplies which are not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

**Investments**  
Investments are carried at fair value. Realized and unrealized gains and losses on investments are reported in the statement of activities. Investments are generally recognized at the time of disposal or maturity.

**Property and Equipment**  
Expenditures for property and equipment and terms which substantially increase the useful lives of existing assets are capitalized at cost. The Legion provides for depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designed to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives. The Legion's U.S. buildings is depreciated on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from 5 to 7 years.

**Support and Revenue**  
The Legion reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When

## SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

**General**  
The American Legion National Headquarters (the Legion) is a national veterans organization which was declared to be a corporate body by an Act of the United States Congress on September 16, 1919.

According to the Original Act and Subsequent Amendments, the purpose of the Legion is to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and provide peace and comfort 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 battles fought to uphold democracy, to cement the ties and contrasting bond of service, and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual help and good will.

Approximately 50% of the Legion's income is derived from membership dues. An additional 15% is generated through subscriptions and advertising for the American Legion Magazine. Another significant source of income is Emblem sales, which consist of a variety of items including pins, buttons, and other merchandise. The Legion also receives income from the sale of real estate, including the American Legion Magazine, Emblem sales, veterans assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs, and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion baseball, cricket, and others. The Legion's youth programs also include American Legion youth programs, and Boys' Nation.

The Legion's financial statements are prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses, gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

**Principles of Consolidation**  
The Legion's financial statements include the accounts of The American Legion National Headquarters, and its wholly owned subsidiary, Hayes and Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC). All material interorganizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation. Hayes and Partners Communications, Inc., an Indiana corporation, is a full-service, direct marketing and advertising agency. HPC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hayes and Partners Communications, Inc. HPC's wholly owned subsidiary, Promotion Management, Inc., provides targeted communications, financial institutions, governmental offices, retailers and other organizations. The remaining sales are made primarily within the State of Indiana. Since January 1, 1998, Promotion Management, Inc. has been merged into HPC.

**Net Asset Classifications**  
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, *Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations*. SFAS No. 117 requires, among other things, that the financial statements report the changes in value of each of the net asset classes, based on donor restrictions, and that the net assets be classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted.

The following classes of net assets are maintained:  
**Unrestricted Net Assets**  
The unrestricted net asset class includes general assets and liabilities of the Legion, as well as assets and liabilities designated by the National Executive Committee, the governing body of the Legion. The unrestricted net assets of the

# NOTES TO COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## INVESTMENTS

The Legion's cost and market value of investments are as follows:

	Investment Assets	Investment Liabilities	Net Assets	Investment Assets	Investment Liabilities	Net Assets
	Cost	Market	Cost	Market	Cost	
December 31, 1997						
U.S. Government obligations	\$14,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$13,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$12,396,378	
State and municipal bonds						
Corporate bonds						
Common and preferred stocks						
Mutual funds						
Money market accounts						
Certificates of deposit						
Accrued interest						
December 31, 1998						
U.S. Government obligations	\$14,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$13,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$12,396,378	
State and municipal bonds						
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Mutual funds						
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Certificates of deposit						
Accrued interest						
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Certificates of deposit						
Accrued interest						
December 31, 1998						
U.S. Government obligations	\$14,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$13,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$12,396,378	
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Certificates of deposit						
Accrued interest						
December 31, 1997						
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December 31, 1998						
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State and municipal bonds						
Corporate bonds						
Common and preferred stocks						
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Money market accounts						
Certificates of deposit						
Accrued interest						
December 31, 1997						
U.S. Government obligations	\$14,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$13,396,378	\$1,000,000	\$12,396,378	
State and municipal bonds						
Corporate bonds						
Common and preferred stocks						
Mutual funds						
Money market accounts						



## The American Legion 1998 National Convention

NOTES TO  
CONSOLIDATED  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

The following represents a functional breakdown of the American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

December 31	1997	1998
Program Services		
Veterans affairs	\$38,000,878	\$27,824,299
Veterans and youth activities	1,515,447	1,525,071
Flag administration and fund-raising	2,822,243	2,715,558
Total program services	38,079,118	34,868,828
Supporting Services		
Administrative and general	9,113,506	12,100,748
Membership	6,349,871	4,244,646
Fundraising	1,898,878	1,267,243
Direct response advertising and marketing	297,898	817,830
Total expenses	\$55,447,866	\$53,329,391

**NOTATION**  
The Legion is currently involved in and/or has been reimbursed as a defendant or co-defendant in several legal actions. It is the opinion of the American Legion Associate Auditors that the outcome of these legal actions will not materially affect the financial position of the Legion.

## NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DESIGNATIONS

December 31	1997	1998
Payable designations accumulated	\$1,178,888	\$4,218,556
Flag dedications	1,515,447	1,525,071
Flag dedications - Life Insurance (FIS)	1,100,000	1,201,591
Other	497,728	15,729
Total net assets released from designations	\$4,391,863	\$7,253,720

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Legion has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees. The plan is a non-qualified plan. The plan is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The plan was established in 1944 by one of the Legion's National Convention Committees to the plan are made by the Legion and other participating groups on the basis of annual actuarial valuations. The following table sets forth the Legion's portion of the plan's liabilities and assets as of December 31, 1997 and 1998.

December 31	1997	1998
Accumulated benefit obligations	\$17,892,899	\$15,247,029
Plan assets at fair value	(806,869)	(603,259)
Accumulated benefit obligation	\$17,086,030	\$14,643,770
Projected benefit obligation for service rendered to date	\$17,086,030	\$14,643,770
Plan assets at fair value, primarily based on assets, bonds, and U.S. securities	(806,869)	(603,259)
Plan assets in excess of projected benefit obligation	\$16,279,161	\$14,040,511
Unrecognized net gain	(9,416,639)	(7,996,830)
Plan assets in excess of projected benefit obligation, net of unrecognized net gain	\$6,862,522	\$6,043,681
Unrecognized transition asset at end of year	(1,904,430)	(1,386,349)
Projected pension expense	\$ 8,008,864	\$ 8,142,183

Net pension benefit included the following components:

December 31	1997	1998
Service cost-benefit earned during the year	\$ 811,818	\$651,038
Interest cost on projected benefit obligation	288,297	1,502,524
Actuarial gain on assets	(6,889,133)	(1,298,229)
Net amortization and deferral	3,871,228	(1,478,888)
Net pension benefit	\$ 51,402,250	\$485,455

Assumptions used in accounting for the pension plan were:

December 31	1997	1998
Discount rate	7.8%	7%
Rate of compensation increase	6.0%	7%
Expected long-term rate of return on assets	8.0%	7%

## The American Legion 1998 National Convention

## American Legion Endowment Fund

## American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation

Foreseeing the necessity of a recurring income source for funding its war veterans rehabilitation and child welfare programs, The American Legion conducted a national campaign in 1925 which raised approximately \$5 million for this purpose. The funds contributed were entrusted to the custody of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation.

The Corporation was incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware in 1925 and a trust agreement between The American Legion and the Corporation was signed in accordance with which the funds are administered by the Corporation with the annual net investment income being paid to The American Legion for use in the two programs involved.

The operations and financial condition of The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation for each of the last five years are summarized below (taken from the annual audit report prepared by Olive LLP, Indianapolis, Indiana).

December 31	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993
Total assets (1)	\$7,927,268	\$8,694,667	\$8,162,289	\$7,846,801	\$7,867,425
Investments (1)	\$7,823,846	\$7,830,853	\$7,991,301	\$7,644,325	\$7,665,491
Interest income	\$519,819	\$539,900	\$575,688	\$550,155	\$568,759
Contributions (4)	(744,754)	765,598	7,552		
Net realized gains	9,739	48,948	60,891		
Net unrealized gains (losses)	39,724	(258,531)	424,307		
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children and Youth Programs of The American Legion National Headquarters (2)	(487,152)	(500,367)	(496,538)		
Other expenses	(32,667)	(39,533)	(48,226)	(46,472)	(26,594)
Change in net assets	(\$695,291)	\$556,015	\$523,674	\$503,683	\$542,165
Funds transferred to The American Legion (3)	\$502,072	\$524,339	\$550,057	\$537,035	\$544,071
Average yield on value of investments at market	6.77%	7.44%	8.14%	6.99%	7.00%

(1) Beginning in 1995, investments are included at fair value in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124, contributions are recorded in accordance SFAS 116, and the financial statements are prepared in accordance with SFAS 117.

(2) Accrual basis

(3) Cash basis

(4) Includes adjustment to write off contribution receivable of \$759,000.



## Financial Reports

Year ended December 31	1987	1986
<b>Change in Net Assets—Internal Financial Statements</b>		
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses)	\$2,264,188	\$4,692,913
not included in internal financials		
Unrealized gains (losses)	328,889	(3,639,751)
Temporarily restricted	312,660	425,215
Permanently restricted	5,000,000	5,000,000
	2,846,798	6,478,377
<b>Net unrealized gains (losses)</b>		
General	248,383	(192,796)
Unrestricted designated	3,876,116	590,137
Temporarily restricted	360,898	39,551
<b>Change in Net Assets—Audited Financial Statements</b>	\$6,821,191	\$6,875,207