117th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 117–86

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 101ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIVISION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 101ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA FROM AUGUST 27–29, 2019

FEBRUARY 4, 2022.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

41–430 WASHINGTON : 2022

AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, January 26, 2022.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: In compliance with current public law, we herewith transmit for printing as House documents The American Legion's 101st Annual Report, The American Legion's Proceedings of the 101st Annual National Convention, and The American Legion's Proceedings of the 102nd Annual National Convention.

LAWRENCE MONTREUIL,
Legislative Director, National Legislative Division.

Foreword vii
National Convention and Officers of The American Legion 1919-2019 ix

Proceedings of the 101st Annual National Convention

Tuesday, August 27, 2019

Call to Order: National Commander Reistad 1
Invocation 1
Pledge of Allegiance 2
POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony 2
Preamble to The American Legion Constitution 2
Centennial Time Capsule 2
The American Legion Youth Champions 6
2018 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain 6
2019 Boys Nation President 6
2019 Eagle Scout of the Year 7
2019 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Champion 8
2019 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion 8
2019 National Oratorical Contest First Place Winner 9
Presentation: Spirit of Service Awards 9
Special Remembrance 12
Address:
Charles W. Ray, Vice Commandant of the United States Coast Guard 13
Jim McCloughan, Medal of Honor Recipient 17
Greetings:
Kathy Dungan, National President, American Legion Auxiliary 20
Greg K. Gibbs, Past National Commander, Sons of the American Legion 21
Address: Honorable Donald M. Benton, Director, U.S. Selective Service System 22
Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal 24
Address:
Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State 25
David K. Rehbein, Chairman, 100th Anniversary Observance Committee 29
Welcome:
Honorable Todd Young, United States Senate 32
Honorable Mike Braun, United States Senate 32
Honorable Andre Carson, United States House of Representatives 33
Honorable Eric Holcomb, Governor of the State of Indiana 34
Honorable Joseph Hogsett, Mayor of the City of Indianapolis 35
Rodney E. Strong, 2018-2019 Indiana Department Commander 35
James E. Koutz, President, National Convention Corporation of Indiana 36
Presentation: Jane McKnight, Past Department President of Kentucky, American Legion Auxiliary 37
Address: David Ryder, Director, United States Mint 37
Presentation: The American Legion Riders 39
Greetings:
Dana Simmons, Executive Vice President, USAA 42
Vincent 'BJ' Lawrence, Past National Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars 44
Mrs. Una Cleminson, National Chairman, The Royal British Legion 45
Bruce Julian, Dominion 1st Vice President, The Royal Canadian Legion 46
Ronald Smith, Dominion President Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada 48
Lee, Weng-Chung, Deputy Minister Veterans Affairs Council, Republic of China 49
Tsai Ing-wen, President, Republic of China 49

John T. 'Jack' Manning, President General, National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution,... 51
Jared S. Lyon, President, Student Veterans of America, ... 52
John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America ... 54
National Commander's Report to Convention... 57
Call for Convention ... 59
Reports:
Convention Committee on Credentials & Rules... 61
Convention Committee on Finance ... 62

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Call to Order: National Commander Reistad... 65
Invocation... 65
Pledge of Allegiance... 65
Presentations: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion... 66
Address: Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary, United States Department of Veterans Affairs... 67
Presentation: The American Legion Patriot Award, Mitchell E. Daniels, President, Purdue University ... 72
Report: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs... 73
Presentations:
2019 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year... 77
2019 National Firefighter of the Year... 79
Report: Convention Committee on Legislation ... 79
Presentation: Plaque to the City of Minneapolis... 80
Address: Theodore Roosevelt IV, Chairman, 100th Anniversary Observance Honorary Committee ... 80
Presentations:
Department Membership Awards... 83
Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy... 86
Report: Convention Committee on Americanism... 86
Presentations:
Frank N. Belgrano, Jr., Trophy... 88
Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy ... 88
Garland Murphy, Jr. Award... 88
U.S. 'Udie' Grant Legacy Award ... 88
Child Welfare Foundation Meritorious Achievement Award... 89
Child Welfare Foundation Excellence Award ... 89
Child Welfare Foundation Presentation to the National Commander... 89
Certificate of Appreciation ... 89
Donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation ... 90
Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education... 90
Presentations:
Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans... 93
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year Award... 94
Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments... 95
Presentation: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Religious Liberty Award ... 111
Address:
David J. McIntyre, Jr., President and CEO, TriWest Healthcare Alliance ... 116
Eddie Holbrook, Chairman, American Legion World Series Committee... 118
Honorable Michael R. Pence, U.S. Vice President... 119

Thursday, August 30, 2019

Call to Order 127
Invocation 127
Pledge of Allegiance 127
Presentations:
The American Legion Fourth Estate Awards 127
Address: Kelly K. McKeague, Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency 130
Report: Convention Committee on National Security 132
Donations to Operation Comfort Warriors 137
Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation 138
Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy 146
Special Presentations 146
Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander 148
Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers 149
Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander: 156
Acceptance Speech: Newly Elected National Commander 157
Election of National Vice Commanders 160
Presentations:
Colors to Incoming National Commander 165
National President, American Legion Auxiliary 166
National Commander, Sons of The American Legion 167
Benediction 168
Announcement of Annual Recipients 169

The American Legion 100th Annual Report

Foreword, National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler 177
Past National Commanders 179
National Executive Committeemen 180
Reports of the National Vice Commanders:
James E. Pisa 181
John F. 'Jack' Milburn 184
Paul I. Spedaliere 186
Steve Sweet 189
James E. 'Jim' Wallace 190
Reports:
National Chaplain 196
National Historian 197
National Judge Advocate 198
Administrative Services 200
Library and Museum 200
Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Library and Museum 200
Americanism Commission 201
Baseball Committee 206
Committee on Children & Youth 206
Committee on Youth Education 210
Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee 211
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. 212
American Legion Endowment Fund 214
Convention Commission 217
Finance Commission 218
Internal Affairs Commission 219
Legislative Commission 222
Marketing Commission 226
Emblem Committee 227

Media & Communications Commission 227
National Security Commission 230
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission 259
Veterans Employment & Education Commission 271
Report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary 285
Consolidated Financial Statements with Supplementary Information 305

FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive résumé of what took place at the One Hundred and First Annual National Convention in Indianapolis, Indianapolis, August 27, 28, 29, 2019.

The final report of the national organization for the period ending December 31, 2018, and balance sheet as of December 31, 2018, and surplus analysis, January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018, are included in the Summary.

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

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

Daniel S. Wheeler
National Adjutant

Note: At various times, the national vice commanders, as follows, presided over the Convention sessions, when called upon by the presiding officer, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure as shown in the verbatim proceedings: James E. Pisa, Alaska; Paul I. Spedaliere, Connecticut; John F. Milburn, Maryland; James E. Wallace, Michigan; Steve Sweet, Mississippi.

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

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

**indicates deceased*

HONORARY COMMANDERS

General of the Armies of the United States John J. Pershing*
Marshall of France Ferdinand Foch*

PARIS CAUCUS
Paris, France, March 15 - 17, 1919
Temporary Chairman: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 and 1958 National Convention)
Permanent Chairman: Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1926 National Convention)
Chairman Pro Tempore: Thomas W. Miller*, Delaware (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1968 National Convention)
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)
At the Paris Caucus an Executive Committee was elected to complete arrangements, the chairman and secretary of which were:
Chairman: Milton J. Foreman*, Illinois (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)
Secretary: George A. White*, Oregon

ST. LOUIS CAUCUS
St. Louis, Mo., May 8 - 10, 1919
Temporary Chairman: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. *, New York (Voted title of Past National Commander at 1949 National Convention)
Permanent Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention)
Vice Chairmen: John J. Sullivan*, Washington; Fred Humphrey*, New Mexico; P.C. Calhoun*, Connecticut (Voted titles of Past National Vice Commanders at 1933 National Convention)
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1955 National Convention)
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado

1st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. 10 - 12, 1919
Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas, Past National Commander
Vice Chairman: Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania
Treasurer: Gasper G. Bacon*, Massachusetts
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado

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

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

4th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, La., Oct. 16 - 20, 1922
Commander: Hanford MacNider*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: H. Nelson Jackson*, Vermont; George L. Berry*, Tennessee; Raymond O. Brackett*, Massachusetts; Charles H. Kendrick*, California; John A. McCormack*, Colorado

Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Earl A. Blackman*, Kansas
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

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

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

7th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Omaha, Neb., Oct. 5 - 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, Pa., Oct. 11 - 15, 1926
Commander: John R. McQuigg*, Ohio
Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri, Past National Commander
Vice Commanders: Joseph Y. Cheney*, Florida; Hughes B. Davis*, Oklahoma; Vincent A. Carroll*, Pennsylvania; Raymond B. Littlefield*, Rhode Island; Judge James A. Howell*, Utah
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. William E. Patrick*, California
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

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

10th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 8 - 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, Ky., Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 1929
Commander: Paul V. McNutt*, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Lawrence E. McGann, Jr. *, Illinois; George W. Malone*, Nevada; Edward L. White*, Connecticut; Miller C. Foster*, South Carolina; Walton D. Hood*, Texas
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rabbi Lee J. Levinger*, Delaware
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

12th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Mass., Oct. 6 - 9, 1930
Commander: O.L. Bodenhamer*, Arkansas

Vice Commanders: Milt D. Campbell*, Ohio; John J. Dugan*, Delaware; Morton M. David*, Colorado; Frank Schoble, Jr. *, Pennsylvania; Willis M. Brewer*, Michigan
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. George F.Kettell, D.D. *, New York
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

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

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

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

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Fla., Oct. 22 - 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, Mo., Sept. 23 - 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; Quemoy Melton*, Georgia
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Park W. Huntington*, Delaware
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: James A. Drain*, Washington
Judge Advocate: James A. Drain*, Washington

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

19th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, N.Y., Sept. 20 - 23, 1937
Commander: Harry W. Colmery*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: Salvatore A.Capodice*, California; Leo A. Temmey*, South Dakota; Leonard Sisk*, Tennessee; J. Fred Johnson, Jr. *, Alabama; Jack Crowley*, Vermont
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Bryan H. Keathley, D.D.*, Texas

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Ill., Nov. 18 - 21, 1945
Commander: Edward N. Scheiberling*, New York

Vice Commanders: Bascom F. Jones*, Tennessee; Frank E. McCaffrey*, Rhode Island; Dan M. McDade*, Oregon; Ray S. Pierson*, Kansas; William P. Shadoan*, Kentucky
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. DeWitt C. Mallory*, Florida
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

31st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pa., Aug. 29 – Sept. 1, 1949
Commander: S. Perry Brown*, Texas
Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.*, (NY), Past National Commander
Vice Commanders: James Lane*, (AL); Leonard W. Moody*, (AR); James Annin*, (MT); Walter E. Alessandroni*, (PA); Edward J. Kelly*, (CT)
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, (NE).
Chaplain: Rev. Thomas Grice*, (CA)
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, (AL)
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, (IN)
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, (IN)

32nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Los Angeles, Calif., Oct. 9 – 12, 1950
Commander: George N. Craig*, (IN)
Vice Commanders: Milton G. Boock*, (MN); David H. Fleisher*, (MO); Frank E. Lowe*, Maine; J. E. Martie*, (NV); Dr. D. R. Perry*, (NC)
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward J. Carney*, O.S.A., Massachusetts
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

36th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Washington, D.C., Aug. 30 – Sept. 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, Fla., Oct. 10 – 13, 1955
Commander: Seaborn P. Collins*, New Mexico
Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania, Past National Commander
Vice Commanders: Leonard L. Jackson*, Louisiana; Patrick H. Mangan*, Jr., Vermont; Howard C. Kingdom*, Ohio; Dr. Carl J. Rees*, Delaware; Robert L. Shelby*, Utah
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Albert J. Hoffman*, Iowa
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

41st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 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: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Fla., Oct. 15 – 20, 1960
Commander: Martin B. McKneally*, New York
Vice Commanders: William A. Brennan, Jr.*, Indiana; A. Layman Harman*, South Carolina; Nate V. Keller*, Minnesota; (died

7-25-60); Succeeded by Irven Frank Gianotti*, Minnesota (appointed 9-14-60); Willard W. Brandt*, North Dakota; Charles McGonegal*, California; (died 1-27-60); Succeeded by Corydon T. Hill*, California (appointed 5-4-60)
Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rabbi Robert I. Kahn* D.H.L., Texas
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

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

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

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

49th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Mass., Aug. 25 – 31, 1967
Commander: John E. Davis*, North Dakota
Vice Commanders: Robert M. Fritz*, Indiana; Lewis W. Emerich*, Texas;

Harry V. Klein*, Pennsylvania; Frank L. Orfanello*, Massachusetts;
James A. Tadlock*, New Mexico
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Anthony J. O'Driscoll*, New York
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

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

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

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

56th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Fla., Aug. 16 – 22, 1974
Commander: Robert E. L. Eaton*, Maryland
Vice Commanders: John N. Roberto*, Connecticut; Frank C. Brooks*, Washington; Gilbert E. Sheeks*, Indiana; Merrick W. Swords, Jr.*, Louisiana;
N. E. Brown*, South Carolina
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana

Chaplain: Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry*, Missouri
Historian: R. Robert Filter*, Wisconsin
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

58th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Seattle, Wash., Aug. 20 – 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 Crimes*, Colorado
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

62nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Mass., Aug. 15 – 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, Aug. 28 – Sept. 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, Ill., Aug. 20 – 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, Wash., Aug. 19 – 25, 1983
Commander: Al Keller, Jr.*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Robert C. Gabrielson*, South Dakota; Margaret M. Malone*, New Jersey; H. Melvin Napier, Indiana; Jack C. Plato*, Oregon; Leo O. Walker*, Oklahoma
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John D. Kempf*, Ohio
Historian: James W. Conway*, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

67th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, La., Aug. 23 – 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, Aug. 29 – Sept. 4, 1986
Commander: Dale L. Renaud*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: Bernard Black*, South Carolina; Norman Conn*, California; Vito M. DeFilipp*, Maine; Miles S. Epling, West Virginia, H. F. 'Sparky' Gierke*, North Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Dr. Gordon L. Patterson*, Nebraska
Historian: Ethel M. Matuschka*, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

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

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

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

73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Phoenix, Ariz., Sept. 3 – 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, Ill., Aug. 25 – 27, 1992
Commander: Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: James 'Jim' G. Brouillette*, Vermont; Thomas P. Cadmus*, Michigan; Ronald C. Murphy*, Arizona; Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma; Lee R. Stolfus*, Kansas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Donal M. 'Jack' Squires*, West Virginia
Historian: Bettie M. Canon*, Montana
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr, Maryland

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

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

77th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, Ind., Sept. 4 – 6, 1995
Commander: William M. Detweiler*, Louisiana
Vice Commanders: Joseph T. Craig*, Alaska; Silas M. Noel, Kentucky; Calvin E. Patton*, Maryland; H. Gordon Burleigh*, New York; Vernon K. Grosenick*, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor*, South Carolina
Historian: M. LaReine Maxey*, Nevada, (died 10-7-94); Succeeded by Carl S. Wipperman*, Washington (appointed 10-19-94)
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

78th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Salt Lake City, Utah, Aug. 30 –Sept. 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, Jr., Maryland

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

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

81st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Anaheim, Calif., Sept. 3 – 9, 1999
Commander: Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Leo P. Burke*, California; Roger L. Tingler, Georgia; James W. Gravenstein, Kansas; Fernando M. Goulart, Rhode Island; John D. Morris*, Texas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. Sweeney*, New York
Historian: Robert L. Klipstine*, Ohio
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*,Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

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

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

85th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 26 – 28, 2003
Commander: Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: Jefferson 'Jeff' Luginbuel*, Colorado; Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana;
Robert M. Johnson*, Maryland; Robert G. Bournival, New Hampshire;
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

Chaplain: Rev. Norris A. Keirn, Indiana
Historian: Donald F. Simons, Texas
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

86th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 31, Sept. 1, 2, 2004
Commander: John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Vice Commanders: Richard G. Denbow, Iowa; Michael Dennis Helm, Nebraska; Fang A. Wong, New York; Clinton E. Thompson, North Carolina; Todd E. White, Wyoming
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Dr. William J. P. Doubek, III, Missouri
Historian: Fae Casper, Georgia
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

87th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Honolulu, Hawaii, Aug. 23 – 25, 2005
Commander: Thomas P. Cadmus*, Michigan
Vice Commanders: Marco A. Valenzuela*, Arizona; Charles W. Barrett, Georgia; Samuel Barney*, Ohio; Wayne B. Richey, South Carolina; Linda M. Thayer, Vermont
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. James T. Akers*, Kansas
Historian: W. Frazier Brinley, Connecticut
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

88th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Salt Lake City, Utah, Aug. 29 – 31, 2006
Commander: Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Vice Commanders: Willard F. Coffey, Michigan; James H. Hall*, New Jersey; Taurino J. Trevino*, New Mexico; Sebastian T. Roll*, North Dakota; Michael E. Harris, Virginia
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Steven E. Wright, Utah
Historian: Johnny B. Keel, Louisiana
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

89th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Reno, Nev., Aug. 28 – 30, 2007
Commander: Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts
Vice Commanders: Bryon W. White*, Alabama; Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas; Lloyd H. Woods, Maine; Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee; Allan C. Setterberg, Utah
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Stanley Gruneich, South Dakota
Historian: Michael J. Miskell, Pennsylvania
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

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

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

93rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 30 – Sept. 1, 2011
Commander: Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska

Vice Commanders: Russell J. Henry, Louisiana; John M. Mella, Michigan; Carlos Orria-Medina, Puerto Rico; Eugene R. Pytka, Rhode Island; William F. Schrier, Washington
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin
Historian: James Fratolillo, Massachusetts
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

94th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 28 - 30, 2012
Commander: Fang A. Wong, New York
Richard M. Pedro*, New York, Past National Commander
Vice Commanders: Mervin G. Gunderson*, Montana; James H. Hales, Jr., Pennsylvania; Milton G. Heifner, Iowa; Larry D. Sheets*, Florida; David N. Voyles, Missouri
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Gerald Theriot, Louisiana
Historian: Robert B. Craig, Nebraska
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr*., Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Maryland

95th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Houston, Texas, Aug. 27 – 29, 2013
Commander: James E. Koutz, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Jeanette Rae, Nevada; John E. Neylon, New Hampshire; Glenn A. Hickman, Ohio; James H. Holland, South Carolina; David R. Hall, West Virginia
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Ronald Derrick, Idaho
Historian: N. Larry Rozier, North Carolina
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Maryland

96th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Charlotte, N. C. Aug. 26 – 28, 2014
Commander: Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Douglas W. Wooddell, Colorado; Robert E. Newman, Indiana; William A. Rakestraw, Jr.*, New Jersey; Wayne D. Satrom, North Dakota; Paul E. Dillard, Texas
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Daniel A. McClure, Iowa
Historian: Charemon Dunham, South Dakota
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr.,

97th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Baltimore, Md. Sept. 1 – 3, 2015
Commander: Michael D. Helm, Nebraska
Vice Commanders: Paul O. Sanford, Kansas; Douglas C. Haggan, France; Richard W. Neville, North Carolina; William R. Bryant, Virginia; Gerald L. Jacobs, Wyoming
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Tierian 'Randy' Cash, North Carolina
Historian: Susan B. Mason, Florida
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

98th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cincinnati, Ohio, Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1, 2016
Commander: Harold D. Barnett, Georgia
Vice Commanders: George E. Cushing, Arizona; Jimmy F. Lane, Arkansas; John W. Hargreaves, Maine; Alan A. Davis, Sr., Minnesota; David L. Gough, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: H. C. Ted Kelley*, Pennsylvania
Historian: James E. Copher, Minnesota
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

99th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Reno, Nev., Aug. 22 – 24, 2017
Commander: Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon
Vice Commanders: Paul Martel, Florida; Fae Casper, Georgia; Douglas L. Boldt, Nebraska; Paul L. Espinoza, New Mexico; Vincent James Troiola, New York
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Harvey H. Klee*, Texas
Historian: Paul D. Bennett, Missouri
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

100th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, MN, Aug 28 – 30, 2018
Commander: Denise H. Rohan, Wisconsin
Vice Commanders: Larry J. Marcouillier, Denver; William J. Flanagan, Illinois; Bobby D. Bryant, Oklahoma; Byron I. Callies, South Dakota; Paula R. Stephenson, Utah
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Robert A. Vick, Florida
Historian: Richard T. Dubay, Michigan
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Kevin J. Bartlett, Michigan

101st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 27-29, 2019
Commander: Brett P. Reistad, Virginia
Vice Commanders: James E. Pisa, Alaska; Paul I. Spedaliere, Connecticut; John F. Milburn, Maryland; James E. Wallace, Michigan; Steve Sweet, Mississippi
Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia
Chaplain: Phillip G. Salois, Rhode Island
Historian: Frederick S. Doten, Nevada
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Kevin J. Bartlett, Michigan

PROCEEDINGS

of the

101st Annual Convention

of

The American Legion

Tuesday, August 27, 2019

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the 101st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, as we begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for Rick Pedro on the keyboard. *(Applause)*

Call to Order
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The 101st National Convention will come to order. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise as the Doughboys Color Guard of American Legion Post 396 in Geneva, New York, presents the Colors, and then remain standing while rendering a salute for the singing of the National Anthem by the 38th Division Band Ensemble of the Indiana National Guard. Present Arms!

... At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a salute to the Colors, followed by which the National Anthem was performed. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Order arms! For the invocation I call on National Chaplain Philip G. Salois of the Department of Massachusetts. Ladies and gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation
Father Philip G. Salois, Massachusetts, National Chaplain

Let us pray. Almighty God and grandfather spirits, we beseech you this day to grace us with Your divine presence as we gather here to celebrate another milestone in the life of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion. We celebrate 101 years of faithful service to our brave men and women who answered the call to serve this great nation of ours during times of war and times of peace.

We have reached another milestone in the life of the Legion. The biggest achievement we have made this year was the signing of the LEGION Act by our president, Donald Trump, opening the doors wide open to allow all men and women who served in the military whether in times of war or in times of peace, to be eligible for membership into the largest veterans service organization in America.

We are eternally grateful, dear Lord, for the abundant blessings You have bestowed upon us over the last century. As we begin a new century in the life of the Legion, our doors are now wide open to receive any and all former servicemembers into our organization. However, the greatest challenge for us is to go out into the trenches and meet and greet all those brave men and women, and teach them about all the good works the Legion can and will do for them. But it is a partnership. We need them to work with us to continue the fight to improve the benefits they are entitled to.

Heavenly Father, give us strength and energy never to give up the fight for these precious benefits of education, health care and disability benefits, so well earned by all those who simply said, "Yes," when America came calling. We ask for Your blessing,

grace, and infinite wisdom that we may make the right decision that will give birth and new life to our younger brother and sister veterans.

Bless us as we look forward ahead at what legacy we will leave our younger veterans. The number of our members are dying each and every day and continues to grow. Help us to leave a powerful message to our younger brother and sister warriors as they join our ranks to fight their own demons and war-related diseases.

Keep The American Legion strong in the face of political struggles that may want to reduce or remove so much of what we have fought so hard for. Remind America that the freedoms they enjoy is the result of the contribution of all those who have given the last ounce of blood its veterans have shared for this great nation of ours.

Remember also all of our men and women wearing the uniform of our country who find themselves in areas of great danger. Bring them home safely to their families and their friends. Remember all of our deceased members who have served during times of war and in peacetime. Give consolation to all of our hospitalized veterans, those who find themselves homeless or are incarcerated. And finally, dear Lord, let us pause in a moment of silence to remember all of our prisoners of war and those still missing in action and unaccounted for. And we have a moment of silence. In your holy name, O Lord, we pray. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance
Willie D. Ransom, Virginia, National Sergeant-at-Arms

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you, Father Salois. Please remain uncovered as National Sergeant-at-Arms Willie D. Ransom of Virginia leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance. ...*The convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony
E.C. Toppin, North Carolina, Chairman, National Security Commission
Kenneth J. Trumbull, Illinois, Vice Chairman, National Security Commission

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: At this time we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from wars in which we have been engaged. We in The American Legion will never forget those who served and those who are no longer with us. We will not ease the pressure on our government to do the right thing and continue to work for an accounting of all those missing. I now call on the chairman of the National Security Commission, E.C. Toppin of North Carolina, and Vice Chairman Kenneth J. Trumbull of Illinois, to place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

Preamble to Constitution
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

Legionnaires, please cover and join me as we reaffirm our commitment to the principles and ideals on which our American Legion was founded by reciting the Preamble to the Constitution. ...*The convention recited the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution followed by a centennial musical celebration.*

Centennial Time Capsule

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the chairman of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Past National Commander David K. Rehbein of Iowa. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: Good morning, Legionnaires, American Legion Family members and friends. If that opening didn't touch your heart, you

need to go see your doctor and get a new one because that one is used up. I think we owe them another round of applause. *(Applause)*

There are so many great moments in American Legion history. We couldn't possibly touch on them all. But fortunately, we keep great records and sometimes voices from our past are still able to speak with us. In May, we were in St. Louis, where we marked the 100th anniversary of that monumental caucus. During our celebration, we were able to read some of the contents of an American Legion time capsule from 50 years ago. But now, let's listen to Past National Commander William C. Doyle of New Jersey.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DOYLE (VIA VIDEO): May 10, 1969, To the national commander of The American Legion on our 100th Anniversary. My dear commander: The fact that this letter has been delivered to you gives evidence that The American Legion always has been correct in having faith in the future of America.

On May 10, 1919, the founders of this great American Legion met here in St. Louis and demonstrated their faith in the future by dedicating our organization to continued service in peacetime to the country they had served in war. Here and now, as we observe the 50th Anniversary of our founding, we have remained true to the principles set out by the founders. Through our national security program, we have championed the cause of peace and the preservation of freedom through preparedness. Through our rehabilitation program, we have made the American veteran the best cared-for in the world. We have helped America's children over many of the pitfalls of childhood, pitfalls of both physical and social disorder, through our multi-faceted Americanism and child welfare programs.

We expect that these four basic programs are continuing in your day in some form and perhaps under some name more in keeping with the times, providing The American Legion still is functional. It would, of course, be our hope that as you read this message, our organization might no longer be functional, for this would mean that wars would have ceased long enough ago, and the numbers and vitality of membership would be on the decline. Even if this has happened, there should still be an American Legion of sorts, for vibrant young men are joining our ranks today as they become eligible upon honorable separation from service in the Vietnam era.

We don't know what your world will be like, but we know it will be different from ours. Just last December, and over the period including Christmas Day of 1968, man first left the earth's atmosphere and orbited the moon. These men were Americans. This summer, if all goes well, the first men will land on the moon. Those men, it is expected, will also be Americans. As we place this capsule, we are just beginning to probe the mystery of space. As you open it, we expect you will have gone far beyond.

We wish you well, and we are confident that if in your era there is an American Legion of substance, and if there is a need for the type of service The American Legion was founded to provide, you will be providing it then, just as we are now. Sincerely, William C. Doyle, national commander, 1968-1969. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: August 27, 2019, To The national commander, The American Legion, on our 150th Anniversary. Dear national commander: In 1969, our predecessor, National Commander William C. Doyle, wrote a letter to me which I read 50 years later during our American Legion centennial celebration.

He wrote of our nation's excitement in anticipation of America's first manned mission to the moon. More recently, our country's commander-in-chief, President Donald J. Trump, has announced plans to create a military branch dedicated to operations in space. As of this writing, it has not achieved the national mandate or generated the excitement of the Apollo 11 mission, but I have no doubt that if the Space Force becomes a reality, your American Legion is leading the way as fierce advocates for the needs of the space veteran, just as we have been doing since the doughboys returned from World War I.

Like the rest of the society, times have changed a great deal regarding the day-to-day lives of America's veterans. The military generation of 2019 has grown up using the Internet and "smart" technology. The jury is still out as to whether these unprecedented advances have truly benefited the human race or whether the reliance on artificial

intelligence has atrophied the human mind. Although today's veterans have skills and life experiences that differ greatly from previous generations, I can only imagine the talent and resourcefulness that the United States military of 2069 must offer. Speaking only with the knowledge of what occurred over the first 100 years of American Legion history, it has become obvious to us that the patriotism and willingness to sacrifice life and limb for country bonds all veterans regardless of what period they served. I have a firm belief that this devotion to a greater cause has continued during the 50-year period from 2019 to 2069. At its heart, The American Legion has always been a community-based organization despite our enormous influence in Washington.

For our first 100 years, The American Legion has dedicated itself to our four founding pillars of care for veterans, a strong national defense, the well-being of children and Americanism. We still recite the original Preamble to our American Legion Constitution changing only the word "war" to "wars." It saddens us that the change needed to be made. In fact, it's our sincere hope that The American Legion of your day will be largely a legacy organization due to the rarity, or better yet, nonexistence of war.

The United States of 2019 faces many concerning challenges. Economic insecurity, cyber warfare, illegal drug use, rampant violence and rogue regimes are just some of the major issues that we are grappling with. But The American Legion is an effective organization because we're an optimistic and informed organization. It certainly would have been easy for Legionnaires to despair during our 25th anniversary about the horrific acts committed by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. When The American Legion turned 50, we were in the middle of an unpopular war and our streets were filled with civil unrest. In 2001, as our national Commander was in the United States Capitol preparing to testify before Congress, terrorists struck the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. These, too, were challenging times. Yet America always seems to persevere.

As this letter is placed in a capsule for another half century, I am optimistic that it will be delivered to you, the national commander of The American Legion. I am optimistic that The American Legion will still be our nation's greatest voice for veterans and will continue to sponsor the finest youth programs in the country. You will still be promoting the honorable nature of military service and professing the greatness of the United States. God bless you as you continue that special legacy. Sincerely, Brett P. Reistad, national commander. *(Applause)*

Now let's hear from Past National Adjutant William F. Hauck of Indiana.

PAST NATIONAL ADJUTANT HAUCK (VIA VIDEO): May 10, 1969, The national adjutant, The American Legion, during our centennial observance. To my successor of a half-century hence: As The American Legion observes a half century of service to God and country as we do today, May 10, 1969, we note with pride a number of substantial accomplishments by which we can honestly say we have fulfilled the reasons for being of The American Legion, as set out by our founders here in the city of St. Louis in 1919.

Time and space will not permit elaboration, but we would point to a shining example known as the GI Bill of Rights, a piece of legislation, which altered social and educational concepts particularly and the role of government in the responsibility of care for the veteran generally. Hailed as "monumental" in its day and, we would hope, with continuing lasting good results to this day for some of its beneficiaries still are with you, we are proud of that achievement and of many other actions which have helped keep our beloved America strong and free up to this point in history.

We are disturbed over some of the things that are happening on our college campuses. Our young people are upset over the war in Vietnam. Most of them are fine young people, but those who seemingly provide leadership seem to have lost their way as far as the principles of patriotism and love of country are concerned. Yet, as we look at history, we find this has been characteristic of many ages of man and hope that this too shall pass away. We hope the America you inherit from us will still be strong and free and a vibrant force in the affairs of men. If it is, we can truly say our job here was well done.

We can only say that any accomplishment of the Legion was the result of all of us living with the final point in the Preamble to the Constitution given to us by our founders of a half century ago when each of us coming into this organization pledged ourselves to a life of mutual helpfulness. We know that if this letter is opened and read by the proper people that men still are living by that code in 2019. Sincerely, William F. Hauck, national adjutant, 1969. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: August 27, 2019, To the national adjutant of The American Legion on our 150th anniversary. Dear national adjutant: Greetings from Post Everlasting! I say this not out of melancholy or poor health. In fact, I write this with as much energy and optimism about the prospects and future successes of our organization as I ever have. In many ways, your American Legion of 2069 must be very different from the organization which I joined 90 years ago after I first walked through the doors as a brand new staff member of the national headquarters at 700 North Pennsylvania Street in Indianapolis. During those early years, I was an editor of The American Legion Magazine, a position which fed my appetite for the remarkable history and accomplishments of the men and women who earned the title "Legionnaire." And the hunger continued as I later served as publisher, executive director and ultimately national adjutant of our great organization.

A prominent Legionnaire and personal mentor to me would often speak of the ghosts that he could hear in the endowment room. The Endowment Room was, and perhaps is still, located on the third floor of our headquarters and was where we proudly displayed a handwritten copy of the original draft of the GI Bill of 1944. Authored by our very own Past National Commander Harry Colmery and a number of other influential Legionnaires, the room's display also included the signing pen used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the legislative gavel by Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. I like to think that the Endowment Room and GI Bill display are still intact at your American Legion headquarters. But if not, I am confident that it has been tastefully replaced with your own piece of American Legion history, safeguarded with the same reverence and respect that previous generations of Legionnaires have given to American artifacts dating back to the Great War. Another distinguished visitor to our Endowment Room was American Legion founder and longtime congressman Hamilton Fish. He was responsible for legislation authorizing the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. His voice, last heard in the 20th century, continues to impact our nation in the 21st.

Serving The American Legion through its 150 anniversary is a distinct honor. With advances in life expectancies and extensions of professional careers, there is a possibility that our paths may have crossed. If so, it would have been late in my Legion career and you would have been either a very young Legionnaire or perhaps a participant in one of our many youth programs. During recent years, there has been much controversy about whether America is truly great and the role of patriotism during our current decade. Yet a 2018 Gallup survey revealed that 21 percent of potential migrants would choose the United States as their preferred home. This exceeded the combined total of the next five nations on the list.

The American Legion has never believed that America is perfect. Just that America is worth fighting for. Despite its flaws, the United States is still the envy of the world and a place where Lincoln promised that a "government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." Even so, the living should not be governed by the dead. You have access to information and technology that we can only dream about. Customs change, and events dictate that we must adapt and change with them. The alternative is for our organization to die or lose relevance and I refuse to believe that America's veterans would allow that to happen. If the organization dies, let it be because there are no more wars.

Use Post Everlasting as an inspiration, as the organization has been doing since the first Legionnaire arrived at heaven's gate. Altogether, there are millions of us who have gone to be with the supreme commander forever. Hear our voices. We all have confidence

that you are not only continuing our legacy but you're also creating an even greater legacy of your own. And may your legacy have given birth to a world of peace and freedom for all mankind, everywhere, as was the prayer of our founders 150 years ago. For God and Country, Daniel S. Wheeler, national adjutant, The American Legion.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: I have copies of those four letters. Commander Reistad, Adjutant Wheeler, Commander Doyle, Adjutant Hauck. Those four letters are placed into this capsule, along with Commander Reistad's challenge coin to await the 150th national commander and national adjutant of The American Legion when they open this time capsule. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A meeting of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. this morning in room 212 of this convention center. I repeat: If you're a delegate to the Conventional Committee on Constitutional Amendments, you're to reconvene your meeting at 10:00 a.m. this morning Room 212 of this convention center.

Also, Vice President Pence will be with us tomorrow. Magnetometers will be in place at all of our entrances the entire day until he leaves. Get here early and treat it like the airport. Don't bring any excess metal objects that you don't need so we can expedite the lines. Again, expect that there will be security lines tomorrow, so please get here early.

Purchase your 100th Anniversary coin today. The U.S. Mint booth is located in the back of the hall. The director of the United States Mint will be on site to personally sign your certificate of authenticity. ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: One of the most important missions we have in The American Legion is the mentoring and teaching of young people. By emphasizing the rights and responsibilities of citizenship through our many youth programs, we not only fulfill one of our pillars but we continue a legacy. We want to introduce you to a group of young people who epitomize the future of this great country. Your American Legion youth champions! *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The 2018 American Legion Baseball all-academic team captain hails from North Platte, Nebraska. Braiden Ruffin graduated first in his class at North Platte High School with a 4.0 GPA all four years. Braiden now attends Cochise College where he plays both football and baseball while working toward a degree in exercise science with an eye toward opening his own sports training facility in the future. Braiden is sponsored by P.R. Halligan Post 163, North Platte, Nebraska. Due to his collegiate obligations, Braiden is unable to attend today. Please give him a warm round of applause. (Applause)

The American Legion Youth Champions
2018 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain
Braiden Ruffin, North Platte, Nebraska

ANNOUNCER: Our next youth champion was elected American Legion Boys Nation president last month in Washington. He hails from Gardner, Massachusetts, and attends Monty Tech Regional High School. In Washington, he exhibited the important leadership behaviors of integrity and humility, with a goal to restore the youth's belief in democracy. He plans to attend Massachusetts Maritime Academy to become an engineer officer in the Merchant Marines. Sponsored by Post 129 in Gardner, Massachusetts, please welcome your 2019 American Legion Boys Nation president, Lucas Acevedo. (Applause)

2019 Boys Nation President
Lucas Acevedo, Gardner, Massachusetts

Thank you. I've spent this weekend repeating a lot of thank yous to a lot of very important people, Legionnaires, guidance counselors, teachers and even my own mother.

But today I want to tell you all something else about my experiences. And I want to tell you not only as fellow members of the Legion Family, not only as Americans, not only as Bay Staters or as a Boricua, like myself, but as people, ordinary, working, average people. Because America was not built on the empty words of talking heads and of classist viewpoints. America was built by the calluses on our fathers' and grandfathers' hands and the bags under our mothers' eyes. It was built by coal miners and by engineers and by doctors and accountants and teachers and nurses and carpenters. At Boys Nation, I ran on a platform of wanting to end the elitism in the anti-working class sentiment that strangles and infects this country's politics. *(Applause)*

I ran on the idea that at the end of the day we live in this country as ordinary people for better or for worse, and that Americans do not talk and act like elitists; they act like the real brothers and sisters that they are. I had a lot of people at Boys Nation who disagreed with my politics. But a lot of those same people also said that they had voted for me. That is when I realized that the young men who voted for me did not vote for me because I shared their political views. Rather, they voted for me because we shared values. Maybe that was one of the most important lessons that I had learned there; that the division in Washington is not caused so much by political disagreements as it is the dehumanization of our fellow Americans. I now realize the meaning of the term "Americanism" is that exact concept. I see that the importance is not only in bipartisanship but also in cooperation. I have the Legion to thank for that. So thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The 2019 Eagle Scout of the Year is a member of Boy Scout Troop 748 and Venturing Crew 712 from Provo, Utah. He was awarded this honor for his tireless work with the United States Forest Service where he worked to improve trail networks throughout the Payson Lakes area. Additionally, Jaden participated in the Utah Boys State program, is the recipient of The American Legion School Award Medal and is currently the first vice commander of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 31. Please give a round of applause for the 2019 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year, Jaden R. Anderson. (Applause)

2019 Eagle Scout of the Year
Jaden R. Anderson, Provo, Utah

During the Civil War, the 24-note composition that we know as "Taps" was nothing more than a simple bugle call telling Union soldiers to turn out the lights. "Taps" did not garner any significant meaning until a commanding officer made the decision to play "Taps" in place of the three rifle volleys at a funeral to make sure the enemy would not confuse the firing of rifles as an attack.

Today, that 24-note composition we call "Taps" is respected and loved by all Americans. The mournful notes of the "Taps" or final bugle call is a sign of respect for all those who have honorably served our country. "Taps" is a great example of how something simple can become significant. Like "Taps," in the beginning of my scouting and involvement in The American Legion, these organizations did not have much significance. It was part of my life that I enjoyed but my commitment to them was more like the lights-out version of the "Taps." It wasn't until I learned more about these organizations and how they serve others that they began to significantly impact my life.

While earning my Eagle Scout, I recognized and appreciated the importance of living and sharing the core principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Honoring my duty to God and country are now an integral part of me. I want to thank all of you for the opportunity that I've had to apply for this scholarship because it will help me pursue my goals and provide opportunities for me to serve my community in the future. I would like to also thank all my past leaders who have helped me grow and continue to be examples to

me today. May the 24 simple notes that comprise "Taps" remind us all that small things can result in monumental changes in the lives of others. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: In competition in Colorado Springs a few weeks ago, two youth champions took top prize in the 29th Junior Air Rifle Championships. Makenzie Sheffield from Granbury, Texas, claimed the Precision Champion title with an overall score of 2,476 out of a possible 2509. She shoots for Granbury High School and is currently enrolled at North Carolina State. Due to her collegiate obligations Makenzie is not able to attend today. Please give her a warm round of applause. (Applause)

2019 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Champion
Makenzie Sheffield, Granbury, Texas

ANNOUNCER: In the Sporter category, the championship was captured by a young shooter representing Volunteer High School NJRTOC in Church Hill, Tennessee. She won the title with a final score of 86.9 and a final aggregated score of 2,366.9 out of a possible 2400. Please welcome our American Legion 2019 Sporter Shooting Champion, Jaden-Ann Fraser. (Applause)

2019 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion
Jaden-Ann Fraser, Church Hill, Tennessee

Hello. How are you all doing today? Good. I'm so excited to be here in beautiful Indianapolis, Indiana, amongst all of you, The American Legion Family. Let me start off by acknowledging each and every one of you. Those in office, The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Post 3 from Kingsport, Tennessee and your wonderful staff. I'm honored to be in your company.

Although I was not raised in a military home, I do have military family members both past and present. I never really held high regard for the core values they believed in and fought for. I never sat down with my grandfather or my aunt and uncle and talked about their military experiences. It wasn't until I joined the NJROTC program at Volunteer High School that I became cognizant of the noble acts of valor our military members represent. My chief, Norman Greer, and my major, Steven Bickford, helped show me the way when it came to the military. It changed my entire outlook as a whole on the military as well. As the NJROTC cadet executive officer and rifle team captain, I have pledged to be a role model in school, on the range and in my community. To those I met personally in Colorado Springs, I hope I represented well.

Competitive marksmanship has been a source of countless introductions to upstanding people for me, both youth and adult, military and civilian. You, The American Legion organization, first chartered in 1919, has left a lasting impression on this 17-year-old girl from Surgoinsville, Tennessee. The American Legion national match was by far the most intense, prestigious and successful event of my entire shooting career. Before competing in the match, I held six national titles. And thanks to all of you for organizing and sponsoring, I now hold seven. *(Applause)*

I love my sport and I want to share with you why. It's a sport that exemplifies self-control, dedication, passion, camaraderie, skill and respect. Isn't that what all sports should represent? But sadly that's not the case. Instead, we have violence both on the field and off. We witness intentional abrupt acts of disrespect towards our nation, our Stars and Stripes, and our youth. *(Applause)*

It happens at all levels right down to parents and coaches battling it out over a bad call at a Little League baseball game. I can't control them, but I can control myself. And I aim to emulate the same virtues and values that each and every one of you sitting before me represent. And I will do so with dignity and pride.

I'd like to end by saying that although I don't know what university I may attend or what career path I may choose, The American Legion can rest assured that the scholarship you provided is greatly appreciated, and I will always do my best to exemplify Americanism. Thank you all so much. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our last youth champion hails from Waukee, Iowa. He gained inspiration for his winning speech via his peers' apathy towards the Constitution and its purpose. As a Junior at Van Meter High School, he is still weighing his collegiate options, but he will like to attend the United States Military Academy. Sponsored by Post 403 in Van Meter, Iowa, please welcome your American Legion 2019 National Oratorical Contest winner, Patrick Junker. (Applause)

2019 National Oratorical Contest First Place Winner
Patrick Junker, Waukee, Iowa

I can honestly say that The American Legion Oratorical Contest was one of the most formative experiences I've ever had in my life. When I started the oratorical contest more than two years ago, I had horrible stage fright. I'd get the shakes. I'd have a hard time breathing. And one wrong look from a judge would have probably caused a panic attack.

The first time that I went to nationals for the oratorical contest, I had high hopes. And I felt prepared. Coming out of the quarterfinals I thought I had done a great job. The judges did not feel the same way. I lost in the first round of the competition that year. This loss inspired me to reevaluate my speeches and myself. It made me better. I truly believe that if I would not have lost in the first year, I would not have won in the second. This competition has taught me so much more than how to get over my stage fright. Not only did it teach me so much about the Constitution, it also taught me perseverance. It taught me how to lose and how to get back up and try again. *(Applause)*

Thank you. The lessons I learned from the oratorical contests are far more valuable than the $18,000 prize will ever be. These lessons are truly invaluable. This contest achieved something that many classrooms and schools across America simply cannot achieve. It has taught thousands, myself included, how to become stronger as a person and how to use that strength to protect the ideals of the Constitution. I want to thank The American Legion for the opportunity to learn these lessons and values. I want to thank my American Legion Post 403 of Van Meter, Iowa, for their never-ending support. And lastly, I want to thank National Commander Brett Reistad and every member of the Americanism Commission for supporting and maintaining the oratorical program, which has changed so many lives, including mine. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Presentation of Spirit of Service Awards
Admiral Charles W. Ray, Vice Commandant, United States Coast Guard
Jim McCloughan, Medal of Honor Recipient

ANNOUNCER: Our next awards exemplify the best of military volunteerism. The American Legion Spirit of Service Awards are given to men and women on active duty for their contributions to their communities and fellow citizens above and beyond the call of duty. Assisting National Commander Reistad in presenting the awards is vice commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Charlie Ray, and Medal of Honor Recipient Jim McCloughan. Please rise as the commander leads us in rendering appropriate honors to Mr. McCloughan.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Hand Salute! Two! Please be seated.

ANNOUNCER: Our first Spirit of Service Award recipient's impact to the local community is unmatched. He volunteered over 40 hours to Solomon Elementary, ensuring that students and teachers had enough supplies and assisting with math labs and new

student registration. Twice a month he selflessly volunteers at the Oahu Society for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty. He provided the shelter up-to-date photos and free web design services. Representing the United States Army, please welcome Spirit of Service Award recipient, Sergeant Joshua R. Evans.

SERGEANT JOSHUA R. EVANS: Good morning, distinguished guests, Legionnaires. It's an honor to be here today and be recognized for my volunteer services. I'd like to thank my home state of Missouri for my foundations and morals in being raised. And then I would also like to thank the 25th I.D. Commander General Clark and the State of Hawaii for recognizing me for my volunteer services to the community. As I look at the values of the Army, I look at selfless service as a big importance to me, not only serving the country but serving the community as well. We serve the community, not to be recognized, but to help support and give out thanks for everyone. When you get called to service, they're there to support your family and you as you're serving the country selflessly. So thank you again. It's an honor to be here today. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next American Legion 2019 Spirit of Service Award recipient displays an outstanding devotion to the people of his local community. Always generating a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie, he participated in over 90 team training and team building exercises. He dedicates his free time safeguarding his community with the Odenton Volunteer Fire Company, providing 658 hours of service and responding to 99 emergency calls. Please welcome United States Navy Petty Officer Joseph B. McPhail.

PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS JOSEPH B. MCPHAIL: Good morning, fellow Legionnaires. It's a great honor to be here. When I first found out about this, my chief called me three weeks ago and said, hey, remember that picture I had you take. I was like, of course, why do you ask. About what you did, all those random calls you ran. Well, I want to tell you you've won the Spirit of Service Award for The American Legion. Following up a pretty terrible day, that was awesome news. I'm originally from Arizona, so you all got a special place in my heart. Being stationed in Maryland, I don't know how you deal with the humidity. I'm a member of Post 40 myself. One of my fellow buddies actually introduced me to The American Legion two years ago and said, hey, this is kind of who helps us do the things that we do. So without you all's help, we can't be out there doing what we do. So thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: This year's American Legion Marine Corps Spirit of Service recipient demonstrated exceptional professionalism and unselfish devotion by participating in numerous volunteer activities. He spent countless hours volunteering as the Food Angel Coordinator at local food banks, participating in community cleanups, and providing security services at local music festivals. An exceptional role model, he exemplifies the core values of honor, courage, and commitment. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Sergeant Anthony K. Marinelli, United States Marine Corps. (Applause)

SERGEANT ANTHONY K. MARINELLI: Well, I thought I had a speech until I saw those young men and women earlier. How about them? *(Applause)*

We might have a future president in the room. I'm truly humbled to receive this award, and I'd like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to be here today, but first I'd like to thank God, who reminds me every day how blessed I am to be alive. *(Applause)*

Next, my Uncle Rob, who served 22 years in the Army and spent three years in the Middle East saving lives. Thank you for your sacrifices and for being my biggest role model.

My fellow servicemembers, veterans, and your families, your service helps keep America the great country that it is, and I am grateful for all that you do. The American Legion and its members, all you Legionnaires, your commitment to the military and veteran

communities is the embodiment of American patriotism. The Marine Corps, you've taught me many things, but most importantly, you taught me how to live with honor, courage, and commitment. To the great state of Connecticut, my home state, thank you for giving me a great place to grow up. *(Applause)*

There you are. My family, you've shown me that in life, you reap what you sow. My beautiful wife, you inspire me every day to be the best I can possibly be. Our love and friendship is my life's greatest treasure. I wouldn't be where I am today without you by my side. Thank you all. God bless you and God bless America. Semper Fidelis. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next recipient has demonstrated service before self by dedicating his time and efforts to many charitable organizations within his community. He devoted over 640 hours of off-duty time to prepare and serve weekly meals to the homeless at a local place of worship. Additionally, he served as a youth coach for elementary school children, coaching development, helping to improve and increase their self-esteem. In his personal time, his hobbies include hiking, working out, spending time with his children, and helping others. Representing the U.S. Coast Guard, please welcome Petty Officer Second Class Justin McMullen.

PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS JUSTIN MCMULLEN: Good morning, Legionnaires and distinguished guests. Thank you for such an amazing opportunity to be here at the American Legion's 101st National Convention. I'm extremely grateful to have been nominated to be this year's Coast Guard recipient of Spirit of Service Award.

I would like to thank everyone who supported me through my volunteering journey and become more connected with the communities around me. Thank you, Lord, for your guidance and direction. Thank you for allowing me to serve you with my whole heart and to help those around me, just as you would do. Thank you to my Coast Guard for allowing me to serve in Kodiak, Alaska, and for my leaders, such as my commanding officer, Captain Jeffrey Goode, and my administration officer, Chief Warrant Officer Malaina Mahi.

Thank you, Mom, for being here to take part in this celebration. Thank you to my wife, children, family, and friends who were not able to attend today. Your love and support is what fuels my drive to support those around me. Thank you to Abba Father's Christian Fellowship Church for welcoming me into your family and giving me the opportunity to prepare and serve meals within your ministry. It has taught me how to truly put other's needs before my own.

Thank you to all of the children I have had the pleasure of mentoring. You have shown me what it's like to be a kid again, how to thrive in and enjoy this life no matter the obstacle at hand. To my fellow recipients, congratulations. Your hard work and volunteerism is appreciated and are a direct reflection of our American way of life. *(Applause)*

I leave you all with this. Go out of your way to help others in need, even if it's a simple gesture. It may not make a difference for you but could be the difference for them. Thank you all. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next recipient is a leader exemplifying the Whole Airmen Concept. Since joining the Kansas Air National Guard in 2014, he has volunteered for three separate garrison deployments. He has completed over 3,100 mission hours and authored over 3,500 intelligence reports. He is married to Emily Forsberg and resides in Derby, Kansas. While a family man first, he enjoys spending time coaching wrestling for youth and high school age athletes. Representing the Air National Guard, please welcome Staff Sergeant Benjamin P. Forsberg. (Applause)

STAFF SERGEANT BENJAMIN P. FORSBERG: Good morning, Legionnaires. Good morning to the Legionnaires from the great state of Kansas. I would like to start off by thanking all of you guys for your continued service to this country. I can't tell you how

many times I've gotten a look in the eye and a handshake thanking me for my service, and I'd like to take the opportunity at the podium to thank all of you for your continued service to this great country. *(Applause)*

I'd like to thank my leadership back home, Captain Ferris, Senior Master Sergeant Jackson, Master Sergeant Smith. They put me in for this award, and I can't thank them enough. I'd also like to thank the Kansas Air National Guard for saving me and my life. I'd like to thank Lieutenant Colonel James Bilby, who six years ago through wrestling recruited me to join the Kansas Air National Guard. It was one of the greatest decisions I've ever made, and I wouldn't be here without him. To my mom and dad, I'd like to thank you for teaching me to be a tough, hard-nosed guy, and I'd like to thank you for always being in my corner. It's always appreciated. *(Applause)*

The tough one. To my wife Emily back home with my kids, I love you. I love that you've allowed me to go to all these wrestling practices over the years, and I understand that, when I'm volunteering my time, you're volunteering your time. I love you. *(Applause)*

I'd like to share with you why I coach wrestling, and, yes, I do love the sport of wrestling, but I love the people that wrestling makes. Through wrestling, I'm able to teach somebody how to win with humility and lose with grace. I'm able to teach somebody how to improve upon their weaknesses and utilize their strengths. I'm able to teach them that success is not made in front of spectators, but it's made behind closed doors when you're working hard. Lastly, I am able to teach them that greatness can never be achieved but it is always pursued. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our final American Legion Spirit of Service Award recipient made an impressive habit of giving back to the local community in Maryland. She volunteered 35 hours and helped raise $35,000 in gifts for families in need. Her efforts were key to Air Force District of Washington's Angel Tree Program and led to her receiving a letter of appreciation from the director of the Salvation Army. Please give a warm round of applause to Staff Sergeant Heather M. Carden, United States Air Force. (Applause)

STAFF SERGEANT HEATHER M. CARDEN: Good morning all. Hope all is well. I first want to start by thanking my family. Without them, their support, motivation, I couldn't do what I do. I want to thank my unit, Security Forces, Andrews Air Force Base. They give me opportunities to do what I do, what I love to do. I love giving back. I want to thank The American Legion. We don't get to do what we do without what you do. You went before us. We follow in your footsteps, but you continue to help us, provide for us, support us from the home front. We appreciate that. I want to congratulate my fellow recipients. I want to say that the spirit of service, we don't do it for the awards. We don't do it for the recognition. We do it because we love giving back. We love giving to people. The spirit of service is not only in us. The spirit of service lives in every person in this room. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Special Remembrance
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I ask that we all pause for a moment of reflection. And please uncover. On March 27, The American Legion lost a great national commander, and I lost a good friend. We all lost the epitome of a veterans advocate, William M. Detweiler of Louisiana. There are some things that happen during a national commander's year that we anticipate. For instance, we have long known that 2019 is the centennial celebration of The American Legion. But then there are other big events that come from the news, unexpected challenges that can define a national commander and our organization.

Such was the case of the Enola Gay exhibit that was originally planned for the Smithsonian Institute during Commander Detweiler's year, 1994 to 1995. Heavy on anti-

American propaganda, historical revisionists intended to portray the United States as the aggressors, who mercilessly dropped the atomic bombs on Japan. Commander Bill would have none of it. His strong advocacy for our World War II veterans and his steadfast leadership made headlines worldwide and caused officials at the exhibit to jettison their original plans. The final result was a much more balanced and accurate portrayal of the Enola Gay and the role that the United States played in ending a war that we did not start.

Even after his year in office ended, Commander Detweiler provided strong leadership as chairman of our TBI/PTSD Committee. He is widely credited for getting the VA medical center in New Orleans re-built and in bringing the National World War II Museum to that great city. Commander Bill, I shall forever be grateful to the advice and mentorship that you have provided me in the past. You will be missed by your friends and your wonderful family. Please join me in a moment of silence, for this dedicated and accomplished Legionnaire, Past National Commander William M. Detweiler.

...The Convention observed a moment of silence.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you. Please re-cover.

Our next speaker has had a truly distinguished Coast Guard career. He assumed the duties as the 31st vice commandant of the United States Coast Guard on May 24, 2018. As the vice service chief and chief operating officer, he executes the commandant's strategic intent, manages internal organizational governance and serves as the component acquisition executive. A native of Newport, Arkansas, he graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 1981. His flag officer assignments include deputy commandant for operations; Pacific Area commander; the 14th Coast Guard district commander, service with United States forces Iraq training and advisory mission for the Ministry of Interior, and the military advisor to the secretary of Homeland Security. He earned a master's degree in industrial administration from Purdue University and a master's in national resource strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Ladies and gentlemen, the vice commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Charles Ray. *(Applause)*

Address: Admiral Charles W. Ray
Vice Commandant of the United States Coast Guard

Well, good morning, everybody. Good morning, Legionnaires. It is great to be here in Indianapolis, and it is great for me to have this opportunity to honor an organization that has done so much for the men and women of the armed services, and I want to start off by saying happy 100th anniversary for The American Legion. *(Applause)*

I offer a hearty welcome for all of our distinguished guests, active duty reserves, civilian members of the armed services, and certainly past and present. I thank you for gathering to honor The American Legion to celebrate your 100 years and also for recognizing the service of our armed forces, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. I want to thank those of The American Legion for all that you do for the servicemembers as you demonstrated today. Speaking of that, I just would like once more to give another round of applause for these young folks that represented our services. *(Applause)*

Finally, I want to thank the great people of Indianapolis. I've been here several times, but it never ceases to amaze me, just when you walk around and meet folks from around here, the patriotism and how they support our armed services and certainly the hospitality they've shown us and you. I spoke to our chief petty officer of the Coast Guard a couple days ago, who was here with you earlier in your convention, and he told me what a thrill it was to be a marshal in the parade and going downtown here in Indianapolis, so thank the city for that.

Since your creation 100 years ago, The American Legion has become known worldwide as the premier veterans service organization. As we've seen on the videos today, whether it's mentoring youth or whether it's a scholarship programs or working with our

wounded warriors, you exemplify the volunteer spirit of the greatest part of the American public has and what it does, not just for servicemembers, but for our nation as a whole.

I think my first job was an American Legion job. I was the bat boy on our American Legion team, a little town in northeast Arkansas. I was 10 years old, and I was a big baseball guy, and I was just thrilled to have that uniform with that American Legion patch on my shoulder. So thank you for getting me started on the right foot a few years ago. *(Applause)*

I'll tell you, if you remember nothing else in my short comments today, I want you to remember one thing. I am here to thank The American Legion specifically on behalf of the 42,000 active duty women and men of the United States Coast Guard for what you did for us personally in the last year. It was mentioned during that wonderful program we had in the kickoff about what The American Legion does now, and I'll tell you, you made a difference in the lives of over 3,100 Coast Guard families. We had that government shutdown for the first time in the history of our nation that an armed service has not been paid for being on duty, and that was a tough time, I'll tell you, to be a leader in the Coast Guard. Our folks continued to stay on watch. They served around the planet going in harm's way, whether going against drug dealers down in Central America or whether over in the Middle East or here around, in search and rescue around our country, but they could not have been better served than they were by our American Legion. *(Applause)*

Because of your generosity and I'm talking about quick action. This is not we'll debate this for weeks. This was government had the partial shutdown, our people not getting paid, and The American Legion were the first ones to step up. You donated $1 million of grants to 3,100 Coast Guard families, and I can't thank you enough. *(Applause)*

And I'll tell you this, these are important things. It lets them pay their childcare, helped them not get behind in their rent, helped them put food in the refrigerator. I've traveled all around this country since then, and this is forefront on our young people's minds. It's not just the national effort. I'll tell you, at the post level, The American Legion has distinguished themselves. I'll just name a few examples. In Vallejo, California, American Legion Post 550 presented $2,000 in gift cards. It's a small station we've got there in Vallejo. Post 184 in Savannah, Georgia, collected food and funds and diapers and other things to support their Coasties. At a breakfast fund-raiser, Post 36 in Booth Bay Harbor, Maine, the Legion raised $2,000. In Wyandotte, Michigan, they gave $100 Visa cards, Post 217 did. And in Tannersville, Pennsylvania, they gave nearly $1,000 on toiletries and baby diapers.

And I'll tell you, as you all know, a lot of our people that recruit that come into the service, they're the children of service people, and I will tell you what you did was you kept them with the knowledge that their nation stood behind them even when we had these kind of challenges over in Washington, D.C., but that the people of America stood behind them, and I'll tell you, it will make a difference moving forward as we go to look for those people to be the next generation. So I want to thank you on behalf of every single active duty Coast Guard, man and woman and their spouses and their children for your tremendous generosity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The other thing is our master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard was so enthused by the support of The American Legion, he said, we've got to establish an American Legion post, Coast Guard American Legion post in Washington, D.C. So I've got the draft charter right here. I'll take it back to him special delivery. *(Applause)*

So The American Legion, as we all know, represents those who have served and is comprised of those who have served, and all of those who served today, these wonderful young people that we recognize today, our incredible Medal of Honor recipient that you'll hear from after me, that I'm really not worthy to stand on the same stage as this man. All of us stand on the shoulders of you who have served before. So it is through your contributions and the example that you set, and you continue to set, that people are inspired to military service today.

I'll just talk a little bit about the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard, as you know, is one of the five armed services. We happen to be in the Department of Homeland Security, and

we have unique missions that are in peace time and in wartime. As the only armed service, we kind of bridge the gap between homeland defense and homeland security, and our unique authorities allow us to do things for the nation that a lot of people just don't ever run across. Certainly, it's hurricane season, and for those of you in Indiana, it may not be as apparent, but for our representatives from Florida and Puerto Rico and South Carolina and all those places along the Gulf Coast, you know this is on the forefront. My hearts and prayers goes out to our folks from Puerto Rico as Tropical Storm Dorian is forming up down there. But in the last two years, your Coast Guard saved over 15,000 lives in hurricane seasons across our country. *(Applause)*

In the last three years, your Coast Guard working with international partners and with law enforcement officers, state and local, we removed 1.4 million pounds of drugs from the oceans that were destined for the United States. *(Applause)*

We ensure in the waterways of America over $5 trillion of economic activity. We are present on every continent. We've got folks serving over with Central Command in the northern Arabian Gulf as it heats up with Iran right now. We've got folks on patrol boats over there. We send our cutters to the South China Sea. Your Coast Guard is serving across the globe, and I will tell you these people are supported largely by the efforts of great veteran organizations like The American Legion.

So in kind of wrapping this up, the other thing I'd like for you to remember is in the course of my duties as vice commandant and the other jobs I've had, I've had the chance to travel around the entire, literally around the entire world and around the country, and when I go around the world, other people, they want to emulate the armed services of the United States. They want their militaries to be like our military. We provide training, and we provide armament and other things. But the one thing that I don't think that's possible to replicate, and that is these young people representing that we saw up here this evening and the people that you are and that you were as you served because that is the heart of our service. That's the heart of our armed services. The center of gravity, the strength of our nation is the young people who raise their right hand and swear to protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, and they take this oath for people they've never met, and they willingly go in harm's way, and they've been doing it for the entire life of our nation. So that is the strength of our services, and that's the strength of our nation. *(Applause)*

And it hasn't gotten any easier. I know we all like to think it was tougher when we got started. It was tougher than other things. The other day I was on a C-130 leaving Kodiak, Alaska. This is only about four days ago, and we were flying out to Dutch Harbor, Alaska. In the back of a C-130 were two young E-3s fresh out of boot camp. I mean, they were green as the grass. They were going out to join their ship, the Douglas Munro, which is doing an Alaska patrol in the Bering Sea. These young folks were ready. They had been trained and were ready for the next part of their service, but you could almost feel the butterflies yourself as I sat down. You've been in the back of C-130s, and it's loud, and you're hollering in each other's ear. I talked to them, and they were excited, but you can tell that kind of butterflies in your stomach that we've all had as you step off and go into the first duty station or to that first mission or many other firsts that you've experienced in the services.

I will tell you that's still there and that young people are still stepping forward to do that. And one of the reasons I think they continue to do it is because of things like this, because this convention and because of the award ceremonies that we have, where we raise these young people and we identify them and we shine a light on them and tell them how important their service is. These are the ties that bind the citizens of our nation to the people that serve today. And I can't think of anyone that does that better than The American Legion. *(Applause)*

What you do in so many ways, what you did today, what you do with these youth, what you do in your posts around the country is you reaffirm the value of those young people raising that right hand. You reaffirm the value of service to the nation. You reaffirm

that it is more important to serve our nation than it is to be self-centered and to move forward on it, thinking of yourself. And because of that, we're the greatest armed forces on the planet and we'll remain that way. *(Applause)*

I want to close by thanking The American Legion, once again, for all that you do to honor and support our five armed services. On behalf of the soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and Coast Guardsmen on active duty today, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you do day in and day out. You're the reason we serve. You represent the finest thing about America, and it's an honor to be here with you today. May God bless The American Legion and may God bless America. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Admiral, it's my great honor to present to you a medallion, my challenge coin, and a membership lapel pen. But most of all, I just want to let you know how appreciative I am that you have chosen the Department of Virginia for the home of your post. *(Applause)*

...The Convention watches a video as follows:

JIM MCCLOUGHAN (VIA VIDEO): Well, I didn't join the Army. I was drafted right after I got my degree in 1968. I had gotten my degree from Olivet College and was married. I had signed a contract a month prior to my graduation to teach and coach at South Haven. Got a little letter from my uncle, Sam's his name, Uncle Sam, and he said I should report for a physical on July. I think it was the 10th. And I reported for the physical, figured it was just a routine thing, that they were checking to see how fit people were in my area, but that wasn't the case. They were going to draft me and did.

The front squad, I don't know how far out we were, but I was in a little trench line, and they had gone down the trench line and turned 90 degrees to the right when they hit it. In the process, two guys had fallen back and gotten up on a berm up over the top of the trench line where I was standing. They called for a medic, and I looked up there, and sure enough, hiding in a couple of bushes there without their weapons. I jumped up on the berm, and just before I got to them, I heard the explosion behind me and the pain of metal going into my body from head to foot. That was an RPG, a rocket propelled grenade.

And although it stunned me for a second, I continued on to do what I needed to do. Discovered these two guys were not wounded, but they were very, very scared, frozen in place. So I dragged the two of them across and into that trench line. So I told the other two men, follow me, and I started running down that trench line, and then I figured, oh, this is slowing me up. So I got out into the open and probably ran the best 40-yard dash I have ever ran in my life. Then that evening, after I got everybody in and patched up, then Lieutenant Carrier said, Doc, get on. That's when I remembered that I had gotten hit. And I looked down, and I had blood on me. And I said, no, I'm not going.

When I was out there in that trench line, I'd looked up towards the hill, and they looked like lava coming down off that hill. That's how many people there were on that hill. And he said, why not? And I said, you're going to need me. I'd rather be dead than have heard the next day that one of my men got hit and I wasn't there to save him. You know the big thing on that too is not only saving those guys and getting them out of the danger area where they could be killed or captured, we can get them back into the fight. We were getting low on men. So after we dusted everybody off the next morning, I think there was 32 of us left. It was two of the worst days of my life, 48 hours, and I can't believe I got an award for the two worst days of my life, but I did.

The word intrepidity is used in the citation, and that means that if you chose not to do the action that you did, it would not be held against you, that it's that dangerous. So I think that's an important word to bring out, intrepidity. Above and beyond the call of duty. Well, you've heard me say it before, and you'll hear those who wear this medal, I was only doing my job. And that's the truth. That's why I didn't leave the day before when the job wasn't over. I was to fight till the end and do my job till the end. My father had ingrained that in me. You'll see a lot of those characteristics in the individuals that wear this medal, I think. But remember, I'm wearing this for an incredible group of guys that showed the same thing.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A life member of American Legion Post 49 in South Haven, Michigan, our next speaker earned the Medal of Honor for his amazing bravery and valor during a lengthy battle near Tam Ky, Vietnam, from May 13 to 15, 1969. A medic with the 21st Infantry Division, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, our distinguished guest ran 100 meters through an open field, through heavy enemy fire to rescue an injured comrade. Despite his own serious wounds and being heavily outnumbered by the enemy, our guest rescued four other men in similar fashion. When supplies ran low and with complete disregard for his own safety, he volunteered to hold a blinking strobe light in an open area for a night supply drop. During morning darkness, he knocked out a rocket propelled grenade position with a grenade, fighting and eliminating enemy soldiers. In 2017, he told The American Legion, "I would rather be dead than hear that one of those men died in combat because they didn't have a medic." He has spent a lifetime coaching youth sports, including 35 years as a leader in American Legion Baseball. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a true American hero, Jim McCloughan. *(Applause)*

Address: Jim McCloughan
Medal of Honor Recipient

Please be seated. I'd like to thank Dale Punch. He's right down in front here. He reminded me yesterday, make sure you bring some coins, Jim, because he wanted me to give one to all the recipients here. And I brought an extra one to give to the commandant. He makes those coins for me. I think he wanted me to hand out as many as I could so I'd have to buy some more. But I'd also like to thank all of you in The American Legion for allowing me to be here this special day. Chérie and I, my wife. She's right here in the front row. Stand up. *(Applause)*

I couldn't do this without her. I call her my calendar girl, and she makes sure everything's straightened out on certain dates that we have to agree to or decline. But we're just both honored to be here as part of the 101st Convention as this American Legion begins its second century. I have to tell you ahead of time I have to be excused from your 150th. I won't be able to be there.

American Legion has been there for me many, many times. And I'd like to list eight things just eight things and they're just a few things that The American Legion has done for me. I played baseball for Post 49 in Michigan as a 15-year-old in 1961, of course, played a few more years after that. You filled the gaps for me, the summer of 1970, assisting me with some money as I was released from the Army and I had two months' time before I would start my teaching and coaching job and before I would get my first paycheck. The GI Bill, written by veterans for veterans, allowed me to get my master's degree in psychology from Western Michigan University. It allowed me to purchase a home and start a family. We have four grown children and seven grandchildren. *(Applause)*

Ten years after playing for South Haven Post 49, I revitalized their program and I managed and coached it for 35 years, from 1973 to 2007. Last year, I was the keynote speaker at Michigan's 100th convention and was honored by being the Legionnaire of the Year. Last August, at The American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, North Carolina, I sang the National Anthem and I threw out the first pitch. Plus Midland, Michigan, was there, and Dale got me an honorary coaching position on the team when they played that first day and they won, so I'm 1-0 at the national level. *(Applause)*

Dale said you couldn't make it on your own, so I got you an honorary coaching job. The last week of July of this year, I was a guest speaker at Summit, West Virginia, as the World's Scouting Jamboree took place there. It happens every three years, and the last time it was in the United States was in 1967, in Idaho. And now here I am at the National Convention just humbled to be here amongst the greatest people on this great earth. *(Applause)*

As you go home to your Legion posts and to represent your state, I urge you to follow the advice that my father gave me when I was quite young. He said, you never do anything halfway, Jim. You do it to the best of your ability, and make sure you do it until the job is finished. And, you know, my dad was speaking in my ear when that commander told me to get on the helicopter that first night. He knew that my job was not finished. There's some things that I'd like to share with you. Number one, three things right here, right off the bat. We did not lose the war in Vietnam. *(Cheers and applause)*

I've said that for 50 years since I returned home from that war. The fall of Saigon came on April 30, my birthday, 1975, two years after the Americans had left Vietnam. General Westmoreland has quoted one of the historians of the Vietnam War, Professor Douglas Pike, as saying, "We did not lose a battle of any significance. It was almost an unprecedented performance by our fighting men. The war was a major defeat for the NVA and the VC ." *(Applause)*

To those here who fought in Vietnam, I'd like to say thank you for your service and welcome home. *(Applause)*

I'd also like to thank those who support every serviceman who fights in every war. We could not do that without those back home, our friends and our family. So thank you so much. You are also part of that particular fighting unit that supports us and inspires us to do what we have to do. And third, the Vietnam veterans stopped communism from spreading to all of the countries from Singapore down to the Philippines. I'm sorry that it took 50 years to recognize you all. We stopped that spread of communism because they didn't want to mess with the American fighting man. They knew that if they tried to make those countries communist, too, we would be right there fighting against any dictator in the world. *(Applause)*

During the Vietnam War, 9.7 million were actually in the military; 2.5 million were deployed to South Vietnam. And now there are 14 million wannabes across the nation who say they fought in Vietnam and they never, ever were in the service. Now, this might make you angry, but I want to calm you down and tell you why they want to be you. If the media, the protesters and those who make documentaries portraying you as the bad guy, why do 14 million people want to be like you? It's a great answer and a simple answer. Because you are not the bad guy. You're an ABA, an American Bad Ass. *(Applause)*

I will refer to that as the ABA from now on out. Here's some of the reasons that you're an ABA. When it was your turn to serve, you didn't run and hide. You joined and took the place alongside of others to fight. You raised your hand and you repeated the military oath, and you confirmed your commitment to America and its ideals. You signed your family's name on a line along with 9.7 million other military personnel, and you agreed to die for your country, its people, and our way of life if it came down to that. You worked your butt off in basic training and advanced training so that you could do your duty to the best of your ability. As you got closer and closer to being an ABA, you became a member of the biggest team you will ever be a part of, no matter what your job or branch of service is.

You stepped into a plane or onto a ship and you headed to a land way away from where you grew up. A land that you probably never heard of and you certainly had never been there before. You fought for a group of human beings who could not defend themselves. You were a part of the toughest military force in the world, and might I say the most intelligent and compassionate. You were one of the big brothers or big sisters of the United States of America. You were thousands of miles from those that you love, yet you kept your focus on your mission. Between fights you tried to write a little home, but you made sure you didn't tell them what was really happening in that hell on earth because you didn't want those back at home, friends and family, worrying about you.

At night, on your watch, in your foxhole, you dreamed about the time that you would get on that freedom bird and join your family and be safe on American soil again. You saw those you grew to love deeper than family get wounded or lose their lives. And often you felt helpless because you couldn't save them. You gave and you gave and then you just kept right on giving to bring as many of your brothers and sisters home as possible.

You looked on with that 10,000-yard stare as some of your men were put on choppers and planes in flag-draped coffins, or were wheeled on without some of the body parts that they came there with. You had medals pinned on your chest and ribbons placed on your uniform. But all you really wanted to do was go home. You saw and experienced things that you had never ever seen before and you will never see again. Things you cannot talk about, because no one would believe you if you told them anyway.

Yes, you didn't know at the moment what you had accomplished, but as a teacher and a coach for 40 years, I'm here to tell you that you took the biggest test of your life and you aced it. You played in the toughest game of your life and you won. *(Applause)*

You had officially become an ABA. You didn't care about the medals and the awards that accumulated over the passing of that test and the winning of that game, even though you earned them. You just were thankful to be home and alive. You came home. You started a career, raised a family, built a home, and tried to ignore what some were saying. Though many around you talked about what they thought that you had done, they had no idea what you really had experienced. So you just chewed it up and spit it out.

Those who have falsely labeled you and your war will be forever ignorant of what you have endured. Don't expect those who haven't walked a mile in your boots to know and understand what you've done. Just know in your heart and in your soul that you are a savior of many, even those yet to be born. Each and every one of you who are a member of a group called the Vietnam veterans, you did something that no one else has ever done. It's unprecedented. No one in any other war has done this: 98% of you were honorably discharged. *(Applause)*

And you've continued that remarkable character as you serve your family, your church, your community, your state and this great nation. Those on memorial walls in Washington D.C., though, they're the real heroes. Any of us here who have fought alongside them will tell you that that is the truth. These men gave up two lives. The life that they were living when it was cut short and the life that they never got to lead. They never got to meet their soulmate or watch the birth of a child, their child, or maybe coach that child on a Little League team, or go to that high school graduation. Never got to walk their little girl down the aisle and celebrate that special father/daughter dance at the end of the ceremony. They never ever were able to be at the holidays, the anniversaries and the special family gatherings that each of us have enjoyed throughout the year.

They gave two lives so that we may enjoy the one that we're living here now. It's sad that there are very few but there are a few people that disrespect our national symbol during the National Anthem. The only reason they can do that is because you fought for them to be able to make a choice to do it. But I pray that they will find some other way to express their protest. I would like to point out that there are thousands of people standing and saluting our national symbol, the same flag that draped your brother and sister's caskets and accompanied them home. Know this, my fellow Legionnaires, you are in every wave every wrinkle of that flag. As the wind whips it across the sky, it is you that has given it wings to fly. You are the epitome of an ABA hero, and I am proud to be called one of your brothers in arms.

God bless you all. God bless The American Legion. And on a final note, *(singing)* I'll gladly stand up next to you, and defend her still today because there ain't no doubt I love this land, God bless the U.S.A.! *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Jim, don't leave yet. I know that you are already a life member of The American Legion Department of Michigan. But I have an American Legion diamond lapel pin that I would like to give you. I know that I speak for the entire delegation in saying we are proud to serve with you in The American Legion. God bless you. *(Applause)*

The woman elected in Minneapolis to lead the nation's largest patriotic women's organization is eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary through the service of her father, World War II veteran Wittie Card, and her husband, William. She has

served the American Legion Auxiliary at every level. She is a proud member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 79 in Wesson, Mississippi. She is a passionate advocate for veterans and has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for 41 years. Please give a warm welcome to the national president of The American Legion Auxiliary and my friend, Kathy Dungan. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Kathy Dungan, Mississippi
National President, American Legion Auxiliary

Thank you. Wow, good morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come, and thank you personally for all the support you've given the American Legion Auxiliary this year. During my travels, I've witnessed firsthand the amazing work that The American Legion does for our heroes, children and youth in our communities. I want to thank you for giving me the most amazing American Legion national commander, Brett Reistad, this year to work side by side with promoting our mission of service. I could not have chosen a finer gentleman to serve with. His dedication to his country is commendable. He is a true gentleman. Commander Reistad and I have worked together along with the Sons of the American Legion national commander, Doc Gibbs, promoting the Legion Family in membership and the mission in service. I have been truly blessed.

This year our goal was to stress Legion Family and to mend the Legion and Auxiliary relationship. I truly feel that we did make great strides this year working together. Our paths crossed many times while traveling this great country. I was honored to represent the Auxiliary and Legion Family events, serving alongside both commanders. Quickly, I would like to share some of the events I participated in with the national commanders and/or some of the five national vice commanders, who I also have nothing but great praises for. They treated me like family. Thank you, gentlemen. *(Applause)*

I participated in Indiana's Legion Family membership drive, escorted many times by Legion Riders, police and fire trucks. We even had the red carpet rolled out for us. That was awesome. We laid wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery in D.C. and attended the Veterans Day events. The national commanders and I attended the 77th anniversary of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day commemoration in Hawaii. I rode in the Rose Bowl Parade float in Pasadena with the national commanders and four Medal of Honor recipients. That was fantastic. I shared an Idaho Spud with National Vice Commander Jim Pisa from Alaska. An Idaho Spud is a chocolate bar. I attended Nebraska's Oratorical Contest with National Vice Commander Steve "Sugar" Sweet. I was honored to participate in the first striking of The American Legion's commemorative coins with Commander Reistad at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. I actually got to strike my own coin. That was awesome. Both national commanders and I attended the 85th Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois. I was on Capitol Hill with National Vice Commander Steve Sweet and, believe it or not, with National Vice Commander Paul Spedaliere from Connecticut, who joined the Mississippi delegation. We enjoyed his company and I thought that was awesome. That was a lot of fun. I was honored to be escorted by Past National Commander Charlie Schmidt and his wife Linda on my visit to Oregon.

The European trip with the two national commanders included laying the wreaths at several American national cemeteries and attending the 75th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy. The trip was awesome, but very moving at times. What an amazing opportunity. Words cannot describe the emotions that went through my mind as we honored those heroes that made the ultimate sacrifice on foreign soil. I participated in Bunker Hill Parade Day in Massachusetts with National Commander Reistad, and walked side by side in the parade with Past National Commander Jake Comer. I was with Commander Reistad at the New York Stock Exchange for the ringing of the closing bell. I also attended the American Legion World Series in North Carolina with Commander

Reistad and many other national Legion dignitaries, including Past National Commanders Jake Comer, Bruce Thiesen, Dan Ludwig and Dan Dellinger.

So I feel that we have made strides as a Legion Family working together this year, and I enjoyed every moment of it. We did so much more. Now, if you followed me on Facebook, you saw pictures of these events. And those that followed me I'd like to tell you something. I was very impressed that one single post reached 10,504 people. Now, that is what you call media in action.

As you can see, this was an awesome year for me, one that I will never forget. Thank you all for being a part of this amazing journey. God has truly blessed me this year. Brett, I want to thank you for giving a year of your service to this great organization. I want to especially thank the Legion's National Executive Committeemen for their support. I appreciate you so much. Also, William and I want to wish you and Jessica the very best as you begin a new year of service for God and country. Once again, thank you all, and God bless you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The man who this last year has led the Sons of The American Legion is the son of a World War II combat Marine. His father fought in Iwo Jima, Bougainville and Tinian. He is also the brother of a Vietnam War veteran. He has served in the Sons of The American Legion for more than 20 years and was awarded a life membership in Squadron 527, near Buffalo, New York. He is a tenured university professor and holds a Ph.D. in administration from the University of Buffalo. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the national commander of the Sons of the American Legion and my friend, Greg "Doc" Gibbs. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Greg K. Gibbs, New York
Past National Commander, Sons of the American Legion

Good morning, commander, national adjutant, honored guests on the stage, Legion Family, all. It goes unsaid many times but just because I sit with you does not mean I ever forget. I want to take a moment and say thank you all for your service to our country. It's been a pleasure to serve with Commander Reistad this year as your national Sons of the American Legion commander. Our paths have crossed often, and the Legion Family was strengthened by our own unity of purpose and united presence.

As we come to a close on this 100th year commemoration of The American Legion, we surely can look back and see how our patriotism has been reflected throughout this past year. Events and actions that took place honoring our past truly do help to continue our legacy as the Son's motto for this year suggests. The Sons have moved forward, creating yet another year of membership and donation milestones. The Sons raised over $10 million this year for Legion charities. *(Applause)*

And I've heard informally that we did meet our 100% membership goal by this date, which means we're about 5,000 members ahead of last year. *(Applause)*

We have supported and passed new veteran-friendly legislation this year, and we pushed the VA to continue to make progress in caring for all of our veterans as well. And as my own national commandership fades into history, it is my wish that each succeeding Sons of the American Legion national commander add to our impressive movement forward as we aid The American Legion in establishing their next 100 years' impact.

The actions of our local posts and squadrons that have taken place this year honoring our 100th anniversary have been exemplary. Parades, fundraisers, dinners, honor ceremonies, et cetera, have all helped to keep our legacy alive and aid in helping our younger generation realize the sacrifice that American men and women soldiers, sailors, airmen and Coasties have made to keep freedom across this globe all these years. Educating our children and youth to understand these sacrifices helps to ensure support and care for our veterans for years to come and remains a major part of the Legion Family's overall mission.

May the depth and breadth of our Sons organization expand to build a stronger tomorrow in America. The lamp of liberty depends upon the fuel of patriotism, a fuel that we may help to create and embrace through all we do. May God continue to bless our veterans and our American Legion Family organization. Thank you all for all you have done this year to make that happen. I thank you for the opportunity to add my voice of leadership in our great organization this past year. I humbly close: Honoring the Past, Continuing the Legacy. And I'd just like to give a small shout out to the Department of New York. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A United States Army veteran and the son of a World War II naval officer, our next guest was appointed by President Trump to be the 13th director of the U.S. Selective Service System in 2017. He served as a member of the state House of Representatives and of the state senate for Washington. He also served as the senior White House advisor to lead the transition team at the Environmental Protection Agency. Please welcome Selective Service System Director Donald M. Benton. *(Applause)*

Address: Honorable Donald M. Benton
Director, U.S. Selective Service System

Good morning. It is great to be here. Thank you for that wonderful introduction. In April of 2017, President Donald Trump appointed me to serve as the 13th director of the United States Selective Service. It is an incredible honor to serve this president and this great nation. I appreciate being here with you at The American Legion National Convention. To be in the same room with all of these patriots lifts me up, and to hear Jim talk earlier about his experience brought tears to my eyes in the green room, as I'm sure it did most of you in the audience.

The American Legion is comprised of patriots who have served this nation honorably in uniform, and you all continue to serve your country to this day. Thank you for what you have done and for what you are doing. You and the Legion have done great things for this nation, whether it was the push to pass the original GI bill in 1944, or providing assistance to veterans in need in your own communities while promoting patriotism, something that is vitally necessary to pass down to younger generations. In other words, The American Legion is a force to be reckoned with, and I'm so glad to be on your side. *(Applause)*

As you are aware, the Selective Service's mission is pretty simple. We provide manpower to the United States military in times of national crisis. And not many people know, we are charged with maintaining an alternative service program to provide meaningful work to conscientious objectors so that they can serve their nation as well for two years. Although we haven't had to use the Selective Service in recent years, we remain prepared and vigilant. Nobody ever knows, and nobody can predict when the next emergency will occur.

To that end, we have focused heavily on registration efforts, and part of the reason why I'm here to talk to you today is to ask for your help in spreading the word about Selective Service registration. All men, including documented and undocumented immigrants, must register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. For now it's just men, but that could possibly change depending on what the courts and Congress decide over the next year and a half or so. But the law as it is today simply states that a man must register with the Selective Service when they turn 18.

They have about a seven-year grace period. They can register while they're 25, but once you turn 26 years old, that door closes permanently. You can never register for the Selective Service if you've turned 26 and haven't done so. It is irreparable, which is why it is so important that we pass the word to our youth. Because, once a man turns 26 and it's too late, they face a lifetime of denied benefits.

You will never work for the federal government without a Selective Service number. You will never work for 31 state governments without a Selective Service number. And countless hundreds of counties, cities, and municipalities have passed the same laws. A young man severely inhibits his future employment opportunities if he is not registered for the Selective Service before he turns 26. In addition to that, they will never receive student aid, Pell grants, or any federal aid whatsoever for college or school. They are not eligible for work force innovation and job training under the Opportunity Act. And if they're not citizens, their citizenship application will be delayed automatically for five years if they have not registered for the Selective Service. Many private employers, such as FedEx, UPS, and others that have contracts with the federal government, and many contractors after 9/11 who have contracts for building things on our bases across the world require Selective Service registration to be employed by them.

So a growing number of private employers are adopting the same guidelines and rules. These penalties are in place for a reason, ladies and gentlemen. They're in place because they create an incentive for men to register. If registration numbers drop below 90 percent, any future military draft will lack fairness and equity. And as we all know, if a draft is perceived as unfair or unjust, public approval will disintegrate, and when that happens, without public approval, politicians start to back pedal, and it makes it very difficult for our brave troops to get the job done.

So I ask that you spread the word of message and the message of registration today to everyone you know, to your nieces and your nephews and your grandchildren and at work and your co-workers. It's vitally important that young men register for the Selective Service, and in some states, our registration levels are dipping as low as 70 percent. We can't have that. We need your help. If you'll spread the word, you will make America stronger.

Heck, join our speakers bureau. Go give a speech at the local Rotary Club about Selective Service. You know we have a booth here. Many of you have been by the booth. By show of hands, how many local board members do I have in the audience? I have several local board members. I know I've met you. There's a couple over there. In fact, your past national commander has agreed to become the state director now, with the help of the Governor of Wisconsin, Denise Rohan, and we're very excited about that. *(Applause)*

So as you see, Legionnaires continue to serve, and then they continue to serve. That's what you do, and that's why I'm so humbled to be here before you here today. So come by our booth. Stop by and chat with the incredible team that we have here. Ask questions, learn about being a board member on the Selective Service board. It's a presidential appointment, and we have many openings. We would be honored to have you serve on one of our boards. Not a lot of work unless we're activated. And we all knock on wood and pray that never happens. But if it does, rest assured the Selective Service is vigilant and standing by to fulfill our mission.

I never dreamed, when my brother would send home that little envelope from Vietnam with "free" written up there where they usually put a stamp, and I was 15 years old, and I'd read those letters from him, I never dreamed that I would be in a position to serve this nation the way I am today. I take my job extremely seriously. You can ask those who work for me, because I inherited an agency that needed a little work, obviously. Well, we've tuned it up, and it's ready to go, and we're making it better every day. With your help, it will make our nation even stronger.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention today. Thank you for what I know you will do for us in passing the word. Stop by the booth. Find out about the speakers bureau. Find out about board member service in your state and about those presidential appointments. I would be honored to appoint any Legionnaire to one of those boards. So please ask about it, find out about it, and step forward. We continue to need your service. Again, thank you for having me here today. God bless all of you for what you have done and what you continue to do. God bless our great president and commander-in-chief, and God bless our great country. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Sadly, our Distinguished Service Medal recipient this year is no longer with us. But he is here spiritually and the impact of his great career will be felt by this country for generations to come.

A United States Naval Academy graduate and an A4 Skyhawk pilot, he was shot down over North Vietnam on October 26, 1967. The son of a Navy admiral, he was offered early release by his Vietnamese captors. Keeping faith with the Code of Conduct, he turned down the offer and endured torture and periods of solitary confinement during 5 1/2 years as a prisoner of war. After the war, he completed his Navy career and served the state of Arizona as a U.S. representative and later an influential senator. He was the 2008 Republican nominee for president of the United States. During his political career, he championed a strong national defense, quality health care for veterans and the constitutional protection of the United States Flag from desecration. A 38-year member of American Legion Post 2 in Tempe, Arizona, Senator John Sydney McCain, III, joined Post Everlasting on August 25, 2018. He is this year's Distinguished Service Medal recipient.

Ladies and gentlemen, the McCain family really wanted to be here today, but due to prior scheduling conflicts, they just could not make it work. However, we are honored to have a close friend of the senator's who will accept on behalf of the family. He served with Mr. McCain in the United States Senate and is now the governor of the State of Ohio. Please welcome Governor Mike DeWine. *(Applause)*

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal
Senator John S. McCain, III (posthumously)
Accepting: Governor Mike DeWine

Commander, thank you. I see Ohio's out there well represented. Commander Reistad, thank you very, very much. To all the members of The American Legion, thank you so very much for honoring my friend, the late John McCain. I am really honored to accept this on behalf of Cindy McCain and the McCain family.

Now, some of you may wonder why is the Governor of Ohio over here accepting an award for John McCain. As the commander said, we were friends. We first met in 1982. We both were elected that year to the United States House of Representatives. I was elected, of course, from Ohio and John from the state of Arizona. It was very clear to me after I met him that he was someone special. He was different. He was a true leader. And because of that, our entering group of members of Congress selected him to be the president of our incoming class.

We've all heard the story, the five years that John spent in Hanoi. The commander talked about that, about how John refused, when he had the opportunity to leave, refused to leave until all the other POWs went with him. My friend and John's friend, another fellow POW, Colonel Tom Moe, has told me this story. He said, when John was beaten, when John was tortured, they would take him out, and a while later they would bring him back in. John knew that the other POWs were looking at him when the North Vietnamese drug him back. He said, in spite of the injuries, in spite of the torture, every time John would somehow manage to give them the sign, the thumbs up, to give his fellow POW members hope and encouragement.

In John's book, "Faith of My Fathers," he wrote about his family's military history and his experience as a POW. He traced his patriotism to this point in his life, the five years that he was in Hanoi, and this is what he wrote. "In prison I fell in love with my country. I loved her before then, but like most young people, my affection was little more than simple appreciation for the comforts and privileges most Americans enjoyed and took for granted. It wasn't until I had lost America for a time that I realized how much I loved her."

I had the privilege for 20 years in Congress to see John McCain's political courage. I would see him go to the Senate floor and take on issues that were unpopular, take positions that he knew could be unpopular, were unpopular. I remember some of his fellow senators shaking their heads and wondering how he could do it, but he did. John McCain had a clear

vision about a lot of things, but there was nothing more clear than his vision of America's role in the world and what it should be and the importance that we played in that world.

In his two campaigns for the presidency, I spent a lot of time with John traveling when he would come to Ohio. Ohio, a bellwether state. The candidate is always there. And I remember one thing about John's campaign that kind of stood out, and that was what he did in town hall meetings. Many a time I was with him, and he would be in a town hall meeting, and he would look out at the audience, and there would be protesters out there. There would be a number of people that were not happy with him or for the other side, and he'd look around the room as he started, and he would find the most obnoxious poster, placard that was out there, and then he would call upon that person. A gutsy guy. That was John McCain.

In that last race for president in 2008, it also coincided with my father's last illness. My father was dying of pancreatic cancer and had a stroke on top of that. My dad was a World War II veteran, saw combat in Europe, came back home, rejoined the family, our family's seed business, and joined The American Legion. He was commander of The American Legion when I was very, very young, and one of the pictures that I have in the governor's residence today in Columbus is a picture of my dad in the early 1950s as commander of our local American Legion post, something I'm very, very proud of. *(Applause)*

The last time that I think John McCain that year was campaigning, in our home county at least, my dad was able to get there. And my dad could not get out of the car, so I took John over to meet my dad, and I remember what my dad said to John. Dad had a stroke, but he still could talk, and he looked at John, my dad, this World War II veteran, and he looked at John, and he said, "You're my hero. You're my hero."

John McCain remains my hero. His courage, his belief in, as he would say, country above self, his firm conviction that we all have an obligation to be part of something bigger than ourselves continues to sustain me and continues to inspire me.

Thank you to The American Legion for honoring this American hero, and to each and every one of you and to all who you represent across this great country, thank you. Thank you for your service to our country. I am very, very grateful, as the American people are, for that service. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, our next guest was previously elected to four terms as the representative of Kansas' 4th Congressional District. He graduated first in his class at West Point and patrolled the Iron Curtain as a cavalry officer before the fall of the Berlin Wall. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he was editor of the Harvard Law Review. He was sworn in as United States secretary of state on April 26, 2018. He is also a member of American Legion Post 4 in Wichita, Kansas. Please give a warm welcome to the Honorable Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo. *(Applause)*

Address: Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
U.S. Secretary of State

Good morning! Thank you for that warm welcome. Thank you, Commander Reistad, for that kind introduction. I also want to recognize Adjutant Dan Wheeler as well. Thank you all very much for having me here today. This is pretty special for me. As a former soldier myself, it's great to be meeting with you all here in the heartland, in this very special place, at your National Convention. And as a Kansan, I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my state's rich history contributing to the Legion. No less than 15 Kansas troops attended the founding of the Legion in France. The American Legion Department of Kansas can

claim a president, Dwight Eisenhower, three national commanders, and a singular American hero, Senator Bob Dole. *(Applause)*

And your future is as bright as your past is glorious. The nearly 25,000 Legionnaires who comprise the nearly 300 posts scattered throughout all corners of the Sunflower State are shaping America for years to come. And it's a peerless passion for service. I want to thank you. I think I figured out where Kansas is, as a proud member of Post 4, I'm still paying my dues, and I miss steak night. *(Cheers)*

I'm proud of that service. I'm proud of the fact that I'm a member for a lot of reasons. It's because this is an enormously great organization. What it's done over the last 100 years to stand up for America's freedom and some of the core pillars of American life, the things that I work on every day as an American diplomat.

You helped the Boy Scouts get going in 1919 and have supported them ever since. You lobbied for the creation of what would become the Department of Veterans Affairs. You pushed for the GI Bill during World War II. I know younger vets are grateful to you for pushing for an even better GI Bill after 9/11. And not too long ago, you were a force behind President Trump's signing to make sure that veterans are cared for, and when they're cared for, those that are doing that work are held accountable. You should be proud of that accomplishment. *(Applause)*

It's very simple: You have contributed mightily to proud American achievements, and by doing so, you, your organization, each of you as individuals, is a proud American achievement unto itself. In fact, America itself, the idea of America and her promise is at the core of everything you do. I want to talk about that today because it's the preamble to your organization's Constitution that says, "To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism."

As the Chicago Tribune reported back in 1919, Legionnaires adopted that very language unanimously and spontaneously as the watchword of this organization, and America is pretty darn important to you, as it is to me, and I want to tell you why. I want to talk about Americanism today. I want to talk about what it means. Americanism means recognizing that America is an exceptional nation. We were the first nation founded on an idea that government's proper purpose is to protect unalienable rights for each and every human being, and Americanism means our love of individual liberty and human dignity sets us apart. It's not that these principles are unique to us, but we've shown a singular determination and courage in realizing them. Americanism, in your founding and our founding, means pride in our recipe to create human flourishing, the rule of law, representative government, property right. Things that we sometimes take for granted. As I travel around the world, I know that we should not. And of course too here in America we cherish our right to bear arms. *(Applause)*

Whenever I talk about the 2nd Amendment, my wife reminds me of two things. One, she has a concealed permit carry; and, two, that she's better at it than I am. Americanism too means confidence in America's unique role in the world. I see that as America's most senior diplomat. It's guided by our founder's vision. So I'm honored to come before an audience that isn't going to get squeamish when I tell you that Americanism is something we must be proud of each and every day. *(Applause)*

You all know this. You all know this when you served. You felt it, you heard it, you saw it, you felt it, and so did I. Picture this. It's about 3:45 a.m. it's winter in a place called Bad Berneck, West Germany. It's wintertime. It's cold. The phone rings. Second Lieutenant Pompeo grabs his gear, runs to his car in what had to be below zero weather and drives like a bat out of hell towards headquarters. I mustered with B Troop, 1st Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Of course, as I'm driving to post, the questions race. Are we ready? Has the Soviet Union decided to move west? Or more likely, is this just a drill? It's got to be a drill, right? It's a tense moment making sure my team was ready, but whether it was a drill or the real deal, my platoon was going to do well. We knew exactly our team's mission. I knew when

I arrived, I knew Staff Sergeant Nabarowski would be there, ensuring that every tank headed straight to the quick reaction site to pick up its full basic load.

I knew that my driver, an 18-year-old from Mississippi, would have made sure we had a full load of fuel and every bullet we could find. A thousand tasks, all fully choreographed and endlessly drilled, American lethality ready to move to battle positions along the East German border than frankly we could have found in our sleep we had practiced so much.

And you know, here's what's remarkable that you all know this. What's remarkable is that none of us in that platoon were constitutional scholars. None of us were professors. None of us were politicians, at least not then. We were 18. We were 22. We were 25. Staff Sergeant Nabarowski might have been in his 30s. But we all, you all, in some piece of our warrior souls knew that we were serving because Americanism is great, because Americanism is something worth defending, and that because we knew that Americanism is something we must be proud of. *(Applause)*

To some of you, you may ask why are we talking so much about this? But sadly this assertion, once common at American levels of society, has become too rare. Some of our leaders would say the idea of America or of Americanism means inherent racism or sexism. Others say that Americanism is a code word for a narrow minded nationalism. Some even want us to reject the founding principles, which have blessed us since 1776. They want to substitute our founders' words for something else.

They'd like us to shun those founding principles, principles that were bestowed on us by God and codified in our Constitution and properly taught in our schools' civics courses. They want us to reject the very ideas that are central to understanding our nation's exceptionalism and, indeed, its greatness. That can't happen, and I'm counting on you all to help me make sure that that never happens. *(Applause)*

And when it comes to Americanism in our foreign policy, for decades, frankly, we just plain ignored it. We didn't lead. We let the bureaucrats and the international organizations lead us. We let our allies shun their responsibilities. We pretended our enemies were our friends, and sometimes, sadly, we even appeased them. But those days are over. No more. The Trump Administration, and you'll hear it from the vice president tomorrow, we've gotten back to the basics. As I said when I was in Cairo, now a few months back, we're not going to apologize for America anymore. *(Applause)*

No, Americanism is something that we must be proud of. We're putting it at the center of our foreign policy. Every one of my diplomats all across the world knows it and is delivering it. It's simple. Look, at its core, at its core it means honoring principles and returning to a foreign policy that had the vision of our founders at its very center. I talked about this idea in a speech I gave out in California. George Washington had it right. He counseled us against inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments to others. He wanted us to look at the world dispassionately, for us to see it as it is, for what it really is. Americanism, it means telling the truth about the challenges we face. Look, this administration didn't pretend that the Islamic Republic of Iran was a responsible actor in the Middle East. We called out China's bad behavior on trade and on national security. We recognized that North Korea's rogue behavior could not be ignored.

Those are at the center. These are at the core of America's founding principles because Americanism means standing up for our principles, for the American people, and supporting our unalienable rights wherever we go. It's the same principles that we found too in our Declaration of Independence. I've watched us wander from these principles, and so I've taken a number of actions with President Trump's support. I've launched a commission on unalienable rights to ensure that human rights policy around the world is grounded in basic American founding principles. *(Applause)*

Americanism too means believing the right of people to choose their own leaders. We've now mobilized 54 other countries to support the Venezuelan people as they seek to start democracy and prosperity in their country. We too support the aspirations of the people of Iran as they struggle under their brutal revolutionary regime.

Americanism means getting leadership right around the world. We work with 79 partners to defeat the caliphate of ISIS in Syria. We've convened more than 60 countries in Warsaw earlier this year to brainstorm, to try and reduce risk to America that emanates from the Middle East. We galvanized global support to denuclearize North Korea. Just last week, Australia, Bahrain, and there will be many more to follow, have joined us in ensuring the waterways, which carry transit commercial products from all across the world, are free from Iranian aggression. *(Applause)*

You know, Americanism means taking care of our own. We've stopped international courts from prosecuting our servicemembers. It was an outrage. We brought home dozens of Americans held hostage overseas, more than any other administration in modern history, and without paying any ransom. We've used diplomacy to guard our borders from illegal immigration. *(Applause)*

And speaking of taking care of our own, that includes those who gave all in combat as well. President Trump's Singapore Summit with Chairman Kim produced the single largest return of servicemembers' remains from North Korea in decades, 55 boxes of great Americans. Their families and their souls are now home together. I know the significance of this to you, and the Trump administration is committed to making sure that every last American soldier buried on Korean soil comes home and comes home soon. *(Applause)*

You know, Americanism and foreign policy means more than that too It means actions are shaped by pride in our civilization, but as I said earlier, it also means that awareness and frank assessment of our strategic goals, things we can do and things we ought not to do. I want to talk about Afghanistan today for just a moment. The truth is there are young adults entering college this week who weren't even born when the United States started fighting in Afghanistan It's our longest war now, 18 years plus. Our 18 years of military, diplomatic, and economic engagement that helped transform Afghan society, and we crushed Al Qaeda. *(Applause)*

And that was our mission. Our mission there was to defeat Al Qaeda, and that we shall do, and that we shall continue to do. We're proud of that record. But the truth is America has never sought permanent military presence in Afghanistan, and all sides recognize that times move on. So for a year and continuing today, we continue to work to conduct clear eyed engagement with all Afghans.

We don't know how these efforts towards peace and reconciliation will end, but President Trump is committed to make sure that we get it right. His clear guidance to me and to my military colleagues is this. We want to get our folks home as fast and in as large numbers as we can, and we want to make sure that never again is terror struck on the United States from that soil. I believe we can and will accomplish both of these, and we will honor your labors and your sacrifices in this fight. *(Applause)*

My wife Susan and I live not too far from Arlington Cemetery. We will, from time to time, just kind of drop everything, and we'll walk over there. We find ourselves drawn to section 60, where our heroes from Iraq and Afghanistan are laid to rest. Those brave souls gave all for you, and for me, and for my family, and for this country. They were the young ones who knew that Americanism is good. So as I walk amongst those, those white rows at Arlington, it's always a reminder to me to put Americanism at the center of my mission at the United States Department of State. If I can do that, I will honor their service in the same way that you all honor their service by being here today. *(Applause)*

As I wrap up, I want to emphasize one more thing. We need to keep telling people this story, this great story about Americanism. It's something the whole world and every American must be proud of. It's special for so many reasons. One of them is the civic associations we form. One of them is the organization I'm here today with. They're vital organs of our institutional body politic. And as I said at the beginning of my speech, you all have spent a century volunteering your time, your effort, your money for people all across this great country. Things like that don't happen on a wide scale in all of the countries that I visit. But you know too, as you see it, as you're out riding as members of the American Legion Riders or working at a charity event, there's still a lot left to do.

There are too many households out there who have no veterans in their family. They need to hear about this story too. Tell it. Keep doing this. Keep doing what you're doing. Keep helping each other through hard times. Keep supporting our veterans who come home, helping them with their career, their family, their education or health needs and so much more in the ways that you always have, and I know you will. There is, as we say in Kansas, no place like home. Help them make sure they return properly.*(Applause)*

I would encourage you too to continue supporting all kinds of organizations, whether it's the baseball leagues, motorcycle rides, advocating for the proper care of the American Flag, and everything else you do. And finally, and I suggested this earlier, every society, especially ours, one filled with so much greatness, it needs heroes. Tell young people your stories and the stories of others who served alongside of you because the only way, the only way that the next generation will be proud of Americanism is if we proudly teach it to them and we pass it along. Thank you for what you do. May God bless The American Legion. May God bless all of our veterans, and may God bless these great United States of America. Thank you all. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: History has always been important to The American Legion, but never more so than during a milestone year like our centennial. We are fortunate to have the right person chairing our 100th Anniversary Observance Committee. With a degree in physics and a master's in metallurgy, his intellect is without question. He also gained a lot of attention for The American Legion during his year as national commander when he took on the Department of Homeland Security over a poorly-worded report that compared veterans to terrorists. He also persuaded the White House to quickly withdraw a 2009 proposal to charge veterans' personal insurance companies for treatment of service connected disabilities. Once again, please welcome Past National Commander David K. Rehbein of the Department of Iowa. *(Applause)*

Address: Past National Commander David K. Rehbein, Iowa
Chairman, 100th Anniversary Observance Committee

Thank you, commander. Two words: legacy and vision. Those were the terms the American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee adopted in the first of our meetings six years ago. Very much like the organization during its formative months in 1919, the centennial committee began its work with a clean slate: no dedicated funds, no promotional materials, no clear staff assignments or idea where any of this would go. But like the founders of The American Legion, our committee shared a passion. Ours was to amplify the American Legion Centennial message from the most rural local post to the halls of Congress, in major cities and small towns, throughout our nation and around the world, and we made a priority of starting the process through local post and department engagement.

This committee was guided by a mission statement that read this way. "The American Legion's 100th anniversary program and committees strive to raise awareness and stimulate activity nationwide and beyond. In honor of the organization's first century with a vision of continued relevance for veterans and their families as the nation's largest veterans service organization moves into its second century."

From that statement, we established five key objectives: To enthusiastically express to the nation through commemorations, exhibits, ceremonies, and media initiatives the impact The American Legion has had over the last century and how it continues to serve; to promote The American Legion's ongoing legacy and founding values of transition assistance, especially to the post-9/11 generation of veterans coming home from service; deliver to the nation specific messages of American Legion services and advocacy for veterans returning home with unique economic and medical needs, including psychological and physical issues; synergize with other entities, including selected post-9/11 veterans groups, educational institutions, businesses, and government offices to share the centennial

story; and finally, to strengthen The American Legion's identity, its public perception, by lifting up our legacy and showing how what we have done says as much about who we are and why we are needed for another century.

Specific tactics to fulfill this strategic plan have been many. From the Legion's Centennial Monument installed in Missouri City, Texas, to throwing out the first pitch at a New York Mets game, to the Centennial Festival this month in Montgomery, Minnesota, and thousands of other events like those, the 100th anniversary message has been delivered at every level of our organization's impact. I would like to share with you all of the ways the centennial has been celebrated, but that would take another convention of its own, so let me highlight just a few.

First, The American Legion's traveling exhibits have crisscrossed the country. The Greatest Legislation exhibits that tell the story of the Legion's central role in the creation and ongoing work to improve the GI Bill. That exhibit began the tour at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans in June of 2017 and has been booked solid since. Along the way, the display has been installed in two presidential libraries, many museums, two Student Veterans of America national conferences, a VA medical center, a county library in Douglas, Georgia, Camp Dodge in Iowa, a department convention in New Jersey, and in June was inside the U.S. Capitol building for a congressional reception on the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act.

During its travels to date, we estimate that exhibit has been viewed by more than 1 million people. The success of this exhibit spawned others, including a smaller, lighter version of the GI Bill story; a 160-foot, four panel chronology of the American Legion's first century that you saw in the exhibit hall; and a 20-by-8-foot double-sided tribute to American Legion Baseball. These exhibits and others will continue to travel throughout the remainder of the centennial celebration and beyond. Into cities and towns where they have been displayed, these exhibits have been magnets for community interactions and special events. Essential to the success of these centennial commemorations have been local posts of every size and dimension that have shared their stories locally and nationally.

More than 3,000 posts have now uploaded their histories on the national centennial website, a website which will continue to grow in the future. Nearly 2,600 memorials and monuments have been uploaded by local American Legion family members to our national database, a database which did not exist anywhere until this one was created.

Local communities across the country and around the world have conducted celebrations with fireworks, with parades, with music, and with ceremonies. Every American Legion department has given great effort and attention to the centennial from the Department of Missouri's outstanding event on the 100th anniversary of the St. Louis caucus to the Department of Arizona's centennial documentary film series and the Department of New York's 100th Anniversary Celebration Weekend at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, and many, many others, too many to detail them all. No matter where you go, no matter the size of the post or the budget of the department, the American Legion centennial has been celebrated in ways that would make our founders proud.

For many of us, the centennial hit a crescendo about a month ago during the first week of August. The American Legion Centennial Ride of 2019 hit on all cylinders and touched on nearly every aspect of the committee's strategic plan. Six American Legion departments organized and sponsored this two-wheeled ride along U.S. Highway 281, The American Legion Memorial Highway, which was designated as that in 1960. That year Legionnaires and automobiles caravanned, one coming south from the U.S.-Canada border, the other coming north from the U.S.-Mexico border, along this 1,870 mile highway.

This year Legion Riders made a very similar journey, except on motorcycles. Team Legacy, led by National Vice Commander Jim Wallace, began its leg at the International Peace Park in Dunseith, North Dakota. Team Vision, led by National Vice Commander Steve Sweet, rode north through Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Team Legacy passed through North Dakota, a very rainy South Dakota, and Nebraska before meeting up with

Team Vision in Great Bend. Legion Riders from each of these departments served as great ambassadors of The American Legion, visiting more than 60 local posts along the way, receiving resolutions and proclamations of gratitude from local officials, doing media interviews, and laying a wreath to the fallen at the Fort Sill National Cemetery.

Ann and I were able to join Team Legacy for two days of that ride, outside the post in O'Neill, Nebraska. We gathered with local Legionnaires and city leaders just a few feet from the church where we were married. Later that same day, we rolled into the community of Red Cloud, Nebraska, and that is when the impact of our Legacy and Vision mantra, the purpose of this ride and the entire program, really hit home. The leadership of the Red Cloud Post is also the leadership of the local fire department and are primarily post-9/11 veterans. The post and the fire department hosted a dinner for us. They invited local officials to share in the celebration. The following morning, the Lion's Club there invited us to a pancake breakfast before we got back on the road.

I left Red Cloud, Nebraska, feeling like The American Legion's second century is in good hands there, and the message of our organization's legacy has incubated a vision that young Legionnaires understand and is timeless. While we know that this vision exists in Red Cloud, we expect that the same vision exists in many other posts and communities similar to Red Cloud all across the nation. At every stop on the Centennial Ride, Team Legacy and Team Vision delivered certificates and had post commanders sign one half of a banner.

Those two halves were fastened together in a ceremony August 4 in Great Bend, Kansas. As promised, we are here to deliver that banner to American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad on stage at this convention. You see the two national vice commanders. You see a representative from the riders of each of those six departments with that banner towards the rear of this stage. They have that banner with them. While it was created from one event, it represents all those Legion Family members across this nation who celebrated the centennial of the American Legion and who have drawn inspiration from the legacy created during those 100 years. Those Legion Family members have the vision implanted from that legacy to ensure that The American Legion will remain as vital and necessary to this country during the next 100 years.

Commander Reistad, please accept this banner on behalf of our great organization as a symbol of the centennial of the American Legion that has been and still is being celebrated in thousands of towns and cities across our country. We hope that banner can be displayed in national headquarters as a reminder of everything the centennial stands for today and will continue to stand for. *(Applause)*

I want to personally thank those two national vice commanders because they rode many miles from their homes to the start of the ride, down the ride, half of that 1,875 miles, and then back home. Before, they each went to the Legacy Run. Mr. Commander, please accept that banner with our thanks for allowing us for the sponsorship of this centennial.

I want to take a moment of personal privilege here. There is a presentation, you heard me speak about the event at the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame at the Department of New York that they sponsored. They are here to make a presentation to you and I, Commander Reistad. Commander, if you would join me at the microphone. We have outgoing department commander, Delegation Chairman Gary Schacher.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHACHER (NY): In April, we partnered with the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown to honor the 100 years of The American Legion and American Legion Baseball and the now 81 Hall of Famers that got their start in American Legion Baseball. I'd like to present to Past Commander Rehbein and to Commander Reistad a baseball bat from the Cooperstown Bat Company with the Department of New York 100th anniversary coin and the 100th anniversary logo.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: Every one of you in this hall, every member of our American Legion Family made a contribution to celebrating the centennial of The American Legion. Some were large contributions. Some were not quite as large, but

they were all important, and you can all take home the memory that you were here when we celebrated the centennial of The American Legion.

Pass that memory along to the Legionnaires that follow us because they will be here when we celebrate the 150th anniversary and that time capsule is opened. Mr. Commander, I appreciate the time. Thank you.*(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The senior senator from Indiana has been a valued champion of American Legion issues. He was an original sponsor of the American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act. A Naval Academy graduate and Marine Corps veteran, he is a member of the Department of Indiana. He is unable to be with us today, so please turn your attention to the video monitors.

Video Welcome: Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate

Hello. I'm Senator Todd Young. As a fellow American Legion member, it's an honor to help celebrate this milestone. Welcome to Indianapolis and to the great Hoosier State. I want to start by saying thanks to you and your families for your service and your sacrifice Throughout my time in office, I've been dedicated to improving the lives of veterans. I was proud to support the VA Mission Act, the VA Appeals Modernization Act, and the Protect Our Disabled Heroes Act. I also recently introduced legislation to provide wounded veterans with free TSA Precheck, and I introduced a bill to help curb veteran homelessness. As a Marine, I will never stop fighting for those who have served. I'm standing with you, and I'll continue to do so. Thank you and God bless. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: As the founder and chief executive officer of Meyer Distributing in Jasper, Indiana, our next speaker has employed hundreds of Americans across this country. He has been a state representative and a school board member. He holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and currently serves on the United States Senate Aging Committee; Agriculture Committee; Budget Committee; Environment and Public Works Committee; and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Please welcome Senator Mike Braun of Indiana.*(Applause)*

Welcome: Honorable Mike Braun
United States Senate

As a lead senate sponsor on the resolution I'm going to present here in a little bit, when I found out that I was going to be able to do this several weeks ago, it was a distinct pleasure. You know, my wife and I, when you heard what we did, we grew up a couple hours south of here, DuBois County, Indiana, Jasper, Indiana, highest concentration of vets per capita in our state.

But the main reason it was a special interest to me was I had a dad that told me stories late in his life about what it really meant to serve your country. He wanted to be a pilot someday, so he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Everybody that did that wanted to be a pilot. Ended up being a tail gunner in a B-17, which was the most fatal job in World War II. When he told me this story that, before there were fighter escorts, within six months 80 percent of anybody in a B-17 was dead. And until fighter escorts came along, which he was lucky enough to be in that position, that's when he served 32 missions straddling D-Day, taking a B-17 at his captain's orders to prepare to bail out after descending 12,000 feet to try to put a fire out in two engines. That's a story that is seared into your memory and one that I hope, among many others, due to organizations like yours, that we never let future generations forget.

I had the pleasure of spending a week with Governor Rick Scott, now Senator Rick Scott, in Israel. Got back just last Friday. If you really want to see what liberty and freedom

is about and how it's lived in a way much unlike we live ours, because of that constant threat that's on borders of freedom every day. You just need to have stories like this seared into your memory.

We were outside the Gaza Strip in a kibbutz, one of the small villages that are around harm's way. When the lady that was giving us a tour said, that's my home, everything looked normal. Kids were playing out there. Until she told me her bedroom is a bunker, that in their village of 850 people, there's a bomb shelter every 100 yards. Standing up on the Golan Heights peering across the fence and knowing that you can't spend more than a brief look because you see the flags of your enemies flying. Could be a sniper over there. You're up on the Lebanese border, and you see where Hezbollah has spent so much time and effort to tunnel across in high tech ways to be undetected. To me, that is a vivid example of what still is out there.

I know that the mantra for your 100th anniversary, Legacy and Vision. Legacy is what I always talk about in terms of people that have served. Vision is what we need to have as a senator, and being in D.C. when we've got a system that struggles to enable the most important thing that we should do as senators in our country, and that's defend our freedom and our liberties. *(Applause)*

We should not be struggling to do that, and I'm hoping that that doesn't falter down the road. I moved back to my hometown because I had the benefit of freedom and liberty. Organizations like yours, along with the VFW and others, need to make sure that the legacy is not forgotten because, in this day and age, where sacrifice is in the distance, future generations need to understand the true measure of what it takes to be an American. Thank you so much for everything you do, and it was an honor and a pleasure to be here. Thank you. *(Applause)*

This is Senate Resolution 263, and I was proud to be the lead author on it, along with Senator Todd Young, several other senators, so that we commemorate this anniversary and make sure that legacy has a strong vision into the future. It's my honor to present this to you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Let me just give you an idea what's in this. In the Senate of the United States, a resolution, "Therefore, be it resolved that the Senate recognizes that The American Legion has been a cornerstone of life in the United States from the local to the federal level for 100 years and serves as a constant reminder of the inestimable contributions the members of the armed forces have made to enrich life in the United States during and after their service, honors the vital role The American Legion has played in the United States throughout 100 years of service, remembers the deep and lasting mark Legionnaires have made throughout 100 years of history of the United States, and lastly celebrates the continued position of The American Legion as an inextinguishable beacon of community, responsibility, honor, and service." Thank you, senator. *(Applause)*

Our next speaker works in the office of Indiana 7th Congressional District, Congressman Andre Carson. Some of the bills that Representative Carson authored that are now law include the Service Members Mental Health Screening Act, the Military Families Financial Preparedness Act, the Military Suicide Reduction Act, and the Military Mental Health Empowerment Act. Please welcome veterans caseworker, Heather Harvey, who is here representing Congressman Carson. *(Applause)*

Video Welcome: Honorable Andre Carson
United States House of Representatives

MS. HEATHER HARVEY: Hi, good afternoon. On behalf of the 7th Congressional District in Indiana, it is my privilege to welcome each and every one of you to the 101st National Convention of the American Legion. Here in beautiful Indianapolis, which is also home to the wonderful American Legion National Headquarters.

The life of every American has been directly affected by the valiant actions of our veterans. These men and women deserve our highest respect, and I commend the work of The American Legion, which is devoted to serve those who risk their lives to protect the United States. With nearly 2 million members nationwide, this organization has become a part of the fabric of the American veteran community by providing benefits and support for veterans and their families.

I extend my thanks to National Commander Brett Reistad and the organization's executive and appointed officers whose leadership and governance ensures The American Legion's services continue to reach those who need them most. I also want to take a timeout to thank our local county veterans service officers. If you're a service officer, would you please stand. *(Applause)*

Our office and the congressman, we could not do and serve veterans the way we do without the support of our county service officers and veteran services officers. So from the congressman and I, thank you. I also wanted to thank General Buskirk. He's the national treasurer. He also serves on our West Point Nomination Service Academy Board. He has always been a great help, and so I wanted to extend a special thank you to him as well.

The congressman regretfully was unable to attend today, but he wanted to send a video with his remarks. Thank you again for having us. God bless The American Legion, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

...The Convention viewed a video as follows:

REPRESENTATIVE CARSON: Hello, I'm Congressman Andre Carson, the representative for Indiana's 7th Congressional District. I want to welcome all of you to The American Legion's 101st Annual Convention in Indianapolis. As the home of American Legion's headquarters, our city, this iconic organization has a special bond with Hoosiers and Americans. I'm committed to strengthening that partnership. This year's convention is particularly special as we celebrate The American Legion centennial.

In 100 years this organization has grown into one of the most influential and impactful nonprofits with around 2.4 million members. It has helped to improve the lives of countless veterans, servicemembers, and many others in communities across the country. That's something to cheer this year and every year. To commemorate this important milestone, I introduced House Resolution 539, which supports the goals and ideals of this organization.

I'm honored to have members of our delegation, the Indiana delegation, join us as original co-sponsors, and we're working hard to get it passed. Supporting our veterans and improving our communities isn't a partisan issue. It's an American value that The American Legion expertly demonstrates around the globe. Once again, congratulations. Here's to the next century of service. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next speaker was elected as the 51st governor of Indiana in 2016. He is a Navy veteran and a member of American Legion Post 510 in Indianapolis. Due to a prior scheduling commitment, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb will be addressing us by a video.

Video Welcome: Honorable Eric Holcomb
Governor of the State of Indiana

Welcome to Indianapolis for The American Legion National Convention. I'm so glad you're here meeting and connecting with other veterans. Indiana is proud of our veteran population, and we're working hard to make sure Hoosier vets are honored for their heroic service.

We're currently restructuring the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs to make it more focused on customer service. We've launched a pilot to make HBO therapy treatments available for veterans suffering from brain injuries. Our next level recovery programs are helping connect those Hoosiers fighting addiction with the services they need to get on and

stay on the road to recovery. And by 2022, all military retirement income will be exempt from Indiana state income tax.

Once again, I'm proud and excited that you are all here in our state. Please visit IN.gov/veterans to learn more about the programs and services available to you. We're happy to have you here, and thank you for your continued service to our nation. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next guest was elected as the 49th mayor of Indianapolis in 2015. He previously served as Indiana's secretary of state and the United States attorney for the Southern District of Indiana. Mayor Joe Hogsett is unable to be here with us this morning, so please turn your attention to the video monitor.

Video Welcome: Honorable Joseph Hogsett
Mayor of the City of Indianapolis

Hi. I'm Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett. On behalf of our city, I want to welcome everyone to the American Legion National Convention. But even more, I want to wish The American Legion a happy 100th birthday. As the headquarters city for The American Legion, we are honored you have chosen Indianapolis to celebrate this impressive milestone.

While you're in town, I hope you are able to set aside some time to experience some of what our city has to offer. During the parade, that won't be hard. Before and after, you can explore the American Legion Mall, the Indiana War Memorial, and, of course, Monument Circle. Indianapolis is second only to our nation's capital in monuments celebrating our military heroes. Every day these statutes and sculptures serve to remind our city of the heroism and sacrifice of our military.

Indianapolis has so much to offer visitors before and after convention hours, a nationally recognized culinary scene, pro sports teams like the WNBA's Indiana Fever, who will host American Legion Family Night on August 27, and one of the most walkable downtowns in all of America.

So, please, make yourself at home during your stay with us. And to all servicemembers and veterans, on behalf of a grateful city, I thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next guest is the only person to have served terms as an Indiana department commander and as a Sons of the American Legion detachment commander of Indiana. While in the United States Navy, he completed two tours off the coast of Beirut and a tour off the coast of Grenada. He is a member of American Legion Post 72 in Crawfordsville, Indiana. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour of the Department of Indiana in his company. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the 2018-2019 past department commander of Indiana, Rodney Strong. *(Applause)*

Welcome: Rodney E. Strong
2018-19 Indiana Department Commander

Good afternoon! On behalf of the Hoosier Legionnaires across this great state, it is my honor to welcome all of you to our capital city of Indianapolis for the 101st American Legion National Convention. Indianapolis proudly serves as both home to the American Legion National Headquarters and past National Commander Jim Koutz.

We hope you have the opportunity to explore our wonderful city and experience what we have to offer because there is plenty of sights to see. Indianapolis is home to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, which annually hosts the greatest spectacle in racing, the Indianapolis 500-mile race. Our city also devotes more acreage than any other U.S. city to honoring our nation's fallen and is second only to Washington, D.C., in the number of war memorials. There are plenty of things to see and plenty of things to do. You can visit the

Indy zoo, shop at City Market, take a stroll to White River State Park, or challenge other departments to go head-to-head at Speedway Indoor Karting.

There is something for everyone. We also hope you take the opportunity to venture outside Indy to see more of our beautiful state. One of our personal favorite spots is the located in the west central Indiana town of Dana. The site features Ernie Pyle's birthplace and a museum highlighting the famous journalist's life and writings as a correspondent during World War II. We are extremely proud to have you all here, and we hope you enjoy our Hoosier hospitality. A century of service and still going strong. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: If anybody has done more to raise money and awareness for Operation Comfort Warriors than our next guest, I don't know who that would be. A United States Army veteran, he served in Vietnam and was a national commander of the American Legion from 2012 to 2013. He is a life member of Boonville, Indiana, Post 200. Please welcome the president of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Indiana, Past National Commander James E. Koutz. *(Applause)*

Welcome: James E. Koutz, President
National Convention Corporation of Indiana

Thank you very much, commander. I love that punch line he put in for Operation Comfort Warriors. I always remember that.

Welcome to Indianapolis and welcome to Indiana. I know many of you traveled here, and I've heard a lot of comments about our highways. You know, we just changed our motto of the state bird to the orange barrel. *(Laughter)*

And you can tell once you get around Indianapolis area or anywhere in Indiana, there's orange barrels everywhere, starting at 70, 74, it doesn't make any difference, 465. But that's part of progress. I hope you all enjoyed your time into the games, either watching the NFL football game with the Colts and the Bears or the Indians game, where the national commander pitched out the first pitch. You couldn't have asked for any better weather than that night. The next day was probably one of the best parades I've ever witnessed, and we probably had the best weather that we've ever had, thanks to the man above. What a great day it was for a parade, and I can't say no more than thank you so much for coming and attending that parade. The after parade party was probably one of the biggest I've seen.

Again, I want to say, as you heard our department commander talk about some of the sights around Indianapolis. There's two more just within walking distance from here that you might want to go see that you probably don't know about. You go out here and go on these canals, you can either walk them, you can take a paddle boat, or you can take a canoe, whichever you would like. You go to the north end, and you can see the USS Indianapolis memorial. Or you can come to this end down by the NCAA Hall of Champions building and go to the Medal of Honor Wall, the only one there is, is right here in Indianapolis, Indiana, and you can go there and listen. They'll talk all the names. They'll tell stories about everyone on that wall. Very important.

So, again I want to say welcome to Indianapolis, Indiana. I hope you have a great time while you're here. If you need anything, be sure you come and see somebody else if you've got a complaint. If you've got something good to say, come to me. In all seriousness, welcome to Indiana. We're glad to have you. Thank you very much and God bless. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We now have a presentation from Past Department of Kentucky American Legion Auxiliary President Jane McKnight and her husband, Fort Campbell Post 23 Legionnaire James McKnight.

Presentation: Jane McKnight, Kentucky
Past Department President, American Legion Auxiliary

Good afternoon. Greetings from the Honorable Order of the Kentucky Colonels. The highest honor by the Commonwealth of Kentucky is that of a Kentucky Colonel. Our Colonels of Kentucky are ambassadors of goodwill and fellowship around the world.

It all began when Kentucky's first governor, Isaac Shelby, named his son-in-law, Charles S. Todd, the colonel of his staff. Shelby later issued commissions to all his enlisted in his regimen in the War of 1812. Subsequent Kentucky governors commissioned colonels to act as their protective guards. The colonels were uniformed and were present at all official functions. The official Honorable Order of the Kentucky Colonels was founded in 1932 by then-Governor Ruby Laffoon, who has since been incorporated as a charitable organization. Through the years, the Kentucky Colonels have contributed thousands of dollars to worthy causes. Kentucky's governor and lieutenant governor serve as the commander-in-chief and deputy commander-in-chief respectively. All officers serve without pay or compensation. Kentucky colonelship are commissioned for an individual's contribution to his or her community, state or nation, and for special achievements.

With your commission, Commander Reistad, as a Kentucky Colonel, the governor recognizes your service and accomplishments on behalf of others. A list of Kentucky Colonels is a who's who of outstanding men and women around the world. This certificate is signed by our governor and the secretary of state and bearing the great seal of Kentucky, has hung on walls of some distinguished leaders as President Lyndon B. Johnson; the English prime minister, Winston Churchill; and John Glenn, America's first person in space, was commissioned during his historic mission while orbiting the Earth.

Kentucky Colonels tend to be service-oriented and devoted to our community, their commonwealth and their country. So now we will present Commander Reistad with his honorable certificate to be a Kentucky Colonel. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A former deputy treasurer of the United States, our next speaker also served as deputy chief of staff to Vice President Dan Quayle and special assistant to Vice President George H.W. Bush. He now leads an organization with six facilities across the United States and almost 1,700 employees who are entrusted with designing, manufacturing, distribution and circulating precious metal and collectible coins. Ladies and gentlemen, the director of the United States Mint, David Ryder. *(Applause)*

Address: David Ryder
Director, United States Mint

Thank you very much. And thank you, Commander Reistad. I also want to say thank you to Secretary Pompeo for his kind remarks today and taking the time to come here and address you. Having traveled to some 50-plus countries around the world, I know what it's like and I know what his schedule is like to travel like that. But I can always say, having traveled that much, that the United States of America is the greatest country in the world to live in. *(Applause)*

It is my honor to address The American Legion as it observes a century of carrying out the mission that is especially near and dear to my heart. The primary mission involves improving the lives of those who answered the nation's call, our veterans. These American heroes are also everyday citizens. As a son of military parents, I know for a fact that my mom and dad, were they here in the audience today, would be exceedingly proud. Even more so, I'm also pretty sure that they would be extremely proud that one of their premier service organizations in the nation invited one of their kids to speak at its National Convention. I'm very glad to be here.

Mom served as a Navy nurse taking care of sick personnel around the world, while my dad logged thousands of hours in the air as a naval aviator. I guess you could say my parents were the equivalent of dual cool. They were my first teachers, and if they were here this afternoon, I would be the one bursting with pride for their service. Although I have never served in the military, I fully understand the depth of sacrifice that goes along with defending and protecting the freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

Having served for President Reagan, President George Herbert Walker Bush, President Donald Trump, Vice President Dan Quayle and Vice President Richard Cheney, who I had the privilege of going to Afghanistan on five different occasions, causes me to really enjoy the things of this country that I love so much, which are a sense of duty, a desire to serve the nation and stand with you. I honor them all by the things that they do and the things and their commitment and the respect of my public service. And I say that from the bottom of my heart.

Members of The American Legion, at nearly 2 million strong with 13,000 posts around the world, your organization is truly a catalyst for driving positive change in the lives of veterans, active duty servicemembers and the families of both. You also invest time and other resources in youth sports, education programs, crime prevention and community development. This organization truly is an American treasure that has gone on well above to serve its founding members. I'm sure those founding members could not be more proud of the work that Commander Reistad and his staff and everybody in this room does day in and day out. You guys are a shining example of the nation's better angels. I know that if there were such a thing as dual citizenships, dues paid, The American Legion can consider theirs fully paid.

I'm proud to say that veterans account for more than 35% of the U.S. Mint workforce, serving in various jobs throughout the mint. In fact, my senior leadership team, including my chief of police, who retired as a senior master sergeant with 25 years in the Army. My deputy chief of police retired as a master sergeant with 20 years of service in the Army. My associate director of sales and marketing spent two years in the Army prior to parachuting out of an aircraft, hitting the ground, breaking his back, ending a strong military career in the Army. My superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint graduated from the West Point Military Academy and spent 10 years in active service. My chief information officer also spent 10 years in service in the Army as a staff sergeant. My associate director of corporate communications, a retired colonel in the Marine Corps, with a distinguished 20-year military career. And my deputy director of the United States Mint, Pat Hernandez, also a colonel in the Marine Corps, retired with 20 years of service while doing three tours of Iraq and Afghanistan. They are all key players on a highly motivated, energetic and engaged team that spans the nation and is admired all over the world.

As The American Legion closes on the hundredth anniversary of its congressional charter, the Mint is proud to have been a partner with the Legion and the commemorative coin program that celebrates such an important milestone. You can be sure that veterans were involved at every step of the way with the development of this important program. Please stop by the Mint sales counter in the back of the room if you're interested in purchasing a coin. Commander, already today, we've done more than $35,000 in sales. Hopefully by the end of this year we will have contributed over $1.5 million to The American Legion in surcharge for the sale of these important products. *(Applause)*

It strikes me that The American Legion and the Mint share the same sense of dedication to their missions. While the Mint works to enable daily commerce, a key line of operations for The American Legion is its tireless efforts to enable the development of solid citizens. And speaking of a solid citizen, I get to do a lot of cool things all over the world. I'm telling you it was a privilege to be introduced and meet in my office Gen. John R. Allen, a four-star Marine Corps general who came to the United States Mint to tell us, as we get ready to develop a Marine Corps medal, he told us in my office for one hour what it was like to be a Marine. And I can tell you right now that man deserves all the credit in

the world. He's an outstanding citizen and he knows for a fact what it's like to be a Marine. Semper Fi for all you Marines.

I salute you and I salute your honor. I select the great work you do for the United States of America. Your contributions in peace and war, in uniform, in and out have undoubtedly touched the lives of countless people around the globe. Thank you, and may God bless America, and may God bless The American Legion. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, what you've all been waiting for. Next, I would like to call the chairman of The American Legion Riders Committee, Bob Sussan, to the podium so he can help lead the presentation of Legacy Scholarship fund donations. Those presenting checks will please proceed to the microphone, announce the amount and donor, and go to the front, on the floor, for a photograph. ...*National Vice Commander Milburn assumed the Chair.*

Presentation: The American Legion Riders
Bob Sussan, Chairman, American Legion Riders Advisory Committee

Thank you. National Commander, national officers and delegates, my name is Bob Sussan, and I have the distinct honor and privilege of being the national chairman for the American Legion Riders, and I also had the honor and privilege of leading this year's Legacy Ride.

Many of you might not know what the American Legion Riders are. This is the only program in The American Legion that embraces and has its members made up of the American Legion Family. The Riders on this 14th annual 2019 Legacy Ride are passionate about what they do. The Riders adopted this Legacy Ride 14 years ago to raise money for the children. We ride for the kids. Many of these Riders take two weeks out of their vacation time to come and do this.

It reminded me, annually I got a call from Friendship, Wisconsin, and the wife of one of our Riders who rode seven Legacy runs, this year an 80-year-old fellow. They had no Internet and she called me to help register him, Everett Johnson. Everett had a mishap on the way to the start of the Legacy Ride. We rode from Lady Lake, Florida, Post 347. He was 80 years old And unfortunately he did go from critical to critical-stable, but he passed as we arrived at Post 64. Everett was a very dedicated Rider. He rode all of his in-state Legacy rides, and he rode seven of the national rides. So everyone that was on the Legacy Ride knew Everett, and we'll dearly miss him.

This year's ride, we had a wonderful ride. We did eight states, stopped at many posts, many centennial posts. We had no accidents. We gauge this through our usual social media and media impressions. It was very interesting in our initial social media impressions, we don't have media impressions yet. We had 16,000-plus video views over 2018. We had 128,000 video views on Facebook. We have only 16,000 followers on the Rider's Facebook page, but we had 423 new followers. We actually reached 324,000 Facebook users. We had 26,055 post engagements. So all in all, our Facebook social media impressions were tremendous for a ride that was five days long. So it was a wonderful ride with wonderful outreach into the community. I'm going to play you a short video about this year's ride.

...*The Convention viewed a video.*

We started the ride at the largest post in the world, Post 347 in Lady Lake, Florida. The night before we left, the national commander started accepting donations, and we accepted those through our arrival at Post 64 in Indianapolis. On the Legacy Ride itself, we raised almost $293,000. *(Applause)*

We had some monies collected before that. And today the national commander will also accept donations, and we're going to start it off with Minnesota.

Additional Donations to Legacy Fund

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MN): Commander, the great state of Minnesota has been a part of raising donation for the Legacy Fund since 2008. It is truly a Legion Family passion. This year I'm proud to present to you a check for $175,000. This brings Minnesota's total donation to $1,116,385. Our ALR director would also like to present you with a $1 million coin that we have made to commemorate this occasion. I challenge all the other departments to do the same as we did. If you can.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MS): Department of Mississippi, they kept me on the road all year so we didn't get to do as much as we wanted to. But we did bring $2,750 for the Legacy Run.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MI): Commander, from Michigan, the home of the founding chapter of The American Legion Riders, Past Department Commanders Cadmus and Spanogle and Medal of Honor recipient Jim McCloughan, from our two-day Legacy Ride trip, we'd like to donate $29,023.19.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CO): The West is the Best, that's what they say. From the Centennial State, the Department of Colorado, home of Past National Commander Tom Bock and the originator of the Legacy Run, we donate $11,008.27 to the Legacy Scholarship.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FR): Commander, the Department of France donates $169 to the Legacy Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FR): On behalf of the widow of Verlin Abbott, she donated $100. On behalf of China Post 1, formed in 1919 in Shanghai, China, we are still alive and well, still in exile, from our 1,255 members in 56 countries on six continents, we are proud to donate $7,000. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHACHER (NY): Gary Schacher, Department of New York, the home state of Past National Commander Fang Wong and Commander Michael McDermott and Adjutant James Casey, we're proud to give you $7,350.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WV): Commander, from the Department of West Virginia, home of former Past National Commander Miles Epling, from Post 1, 310, 121, the upper Ohio Valley, the Tri-State Legion Riders, we'd like to present you a check for $4,000 today.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER PISA (AK): The Department of Alaska, where daylight is long and the rides short and wet, Susitna Valley Chapter 35, $14,000. Chapter 16 out of Homer, Alaska, $5,250, for a grand total of $19,750.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (VT): Commander, the Department of Vermont, with the VFW, $1,000, and Post 7, Hardwick, $500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NH): Commander, from the Department of New Hampshire, "Live Free Or Die" Department, $500; and from the charter chapter, Woodsville, New Hampshire, $600.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): All right, from the Department of Florida, we have Unit 141, $100; Chapter 103, $750; and Chapter 110, $1,500. And there's more.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): From the Department of Florida, $24,050.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (SC): From the Department of South Carolina, the great state of South Carolina, our Riders raised $66,107.92.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IL): Naperville Post 43, Department of Illinois, we have a check for $600. Our Legion Riders have already raised and donated $6,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IL): Department of Illinois had a run early in the year. They did $17,800. Second run, $15,025 for a total of $32,825. And it's working.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WY): From the great state of Wyoming, just today we donated $500 from Post 24 and $125 from Post 10.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PA): The Department of Pennsylvania, home of Past National Commanders Dominic DiFrancesco and Ronald F. Conley, donate $1,167.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PA): Department of Pennsylvania, World War Memorial Post 109 in Mechanicsburg, $2,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PA): The Department of New Jersey, home of Past National Commander Brigadier General William C. Doyle, $2,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PR): Post 82 from Puerto Rico, $175.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OK): From the great state of Oklahoma, $2,300.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CT): From the great state of Connecticut, the Constitution State, a donation for $800.

DELEGATE BRAULT (MA): Department of Massachusetts, home of Past National Commander Jake Comer, Paul Morin, and National Chaplain Father Philip Salois, $901.

DELEGATE DANIELS (IN): Tony Daniels, Post 200 in Boonville, Indiana, I've collected from Bud's Harley-Davidson, $100; also collected $100 from Mount Vernon, Indiana, Bruce Hall Body Shop; and I also collected $110 with people wearing their cover on the Legacy. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KY): American Legion Riders, from Harden Post 113, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, $1,000.

DELEGATE SOBCZAK (CA): Mick Sobczak, Junior Past Department President of The American Legion Riders, Department of California, and Martin Borg, also a member of Chapter 149, who rode 2,580 miles to get to the Legacy Run. $23,706 from the Department of California; a $150 check that we went to Pony Express in New York from my mom; and $50 from a random guy at a truck stop who just gave it to us because he believed in what we were doing. For a total of $23,906.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CA): From the Department of California, San Mateo, Post 82, $8,000. And our Riders Chapter 82, $500. Total of $8,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MO): On behalf of the Department of Missouri, from the great state of Missouri, $86,109.41.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (TN): From the Department of Tennessee, from the mighty Mississippi in the west, to the Jack Daniels distillery to the middle, and to the shadows of Dolly Parton in the east, we present $1,000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN STEWART (DE): James Stewart, delegate chairman, Department of Delaware. With me is Charles Pearson, director, American Legion Riders Delaware.

DELEGATE PEARSON (DE): Today's donation total is $10,200.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AL): From Alabama, Post 255, Foltendale, $500, bringing Alabama's grand total to $20,800. on behalf of Buchanan, Virginia, Post and Chapter 93, they won the Royal British Legion Riders vest that you saw the national commander wearing, $3,300.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WI): Mr. Commander, I'm from the Department of Wisconsin, and some other Legion Riders here. With the check I have today, we have a total of $12,300. But as you found out earlier, the Johnson family, the Department of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin American Legion Riders made a donation to the Legacy Scholarship Fund that could never be measured in monetary value. I hope that you would keep Everett "Wisconsin" Johnson in your prayers. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): From the Grand Canyon State, the Department of Arizona, we'd like to make a presentation for $4,000 in addition to the monies already received at national.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): Post 86 in Overgaard did the Legacy Run again and donated to the national commander an additional $3,500 for their post.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KS): Mr. Commander, on behalf of the great state of Kansas and our fifth annual Legacy Run, we present to you $20,250.19.

DELEGATE OTT (NE): Commander, the great state of Nebraska, Rollie Ott. I'm joined with Bill Crosier, our NEC, and Mark. We're proud to represent Nebraska and donate a total donation of $21,175. And I will make mention, Mark rode down here from Beemer, Nebraska, $4,000 he brought. And, by golly, we're proud of that new rider.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (TX): From the Lone Star State of Texas, home of Past National Commander John Brieden, Post 120, $250.

DELEGATE GALLEGO (ID): Lucky Gallego, from the Three Rivers Chapter, 152, White Bird, on behalf of Woody Woodman, the ALR director for the great state of Idaho, 550.

DELEGATE CANIDATE (IA): Robert Canidate, Post 29, Washington, Iowa, $1,000.

DELEGATE ATKINS (OH): Andy Atkins of Hopedale, Post 682 in Ohio, on behalf of our Riders, we have $1,000 check in memory of Rick Brown.

DELEGATE WILSON (OH): Mr. Commander, Jerry Wilson from Ohio, in addition to the tens of thousands of dollars already donated from our Legion posts, Auxiliary units, SAL squadrons and our American Legion Riders, Ohio charities would like to donate an additional $10,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): Despite our beloved post in Stevens-Christian Memorial Post 557 in Wintersville having a devastating fire this year, I'm really, really proud to present from our American Legion Riders and our American Legion Family a donation of $10,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (TX): Last but not least, the great state of Texas, the second annual Legacy Run, provided $23,250.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): The great first district from the state of Ohio, American Legion Riders, donated $1,000.

CHAIRMAN BOB SUSSAN: That's what they do is ride for the kids. And the expression which started in Florida was: It's for the cause, not for the applause. But could everybody give a round of applause to the American Legion Riders, please. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MILBURN: The American Legion has a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the organization represented by our next guest. USAA, like The American Legion, cares about financial security for families of current military members of veterans and from previous generations. The executive vice president and chief of staff for the CEO of USAA is a retired brigadier general who served as the commander of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Please give a warm welcome to USAA Executive Vice President Dana Simmons. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Dana Simmons
Executive Vice President, USAA

Well, hello, fellow Legionnaires. I am Dana Simmons. I'm the chief of staff of USAA, and I also served 33 years in the United States Air Force. Are there airmen out there? Fly, fight and win, right? How about USAA members? *(Applause)*

All right. Thank you for your membership. In preparing to come speak to you today, because I was told I only had an hour and a half. I felt like I needed to trim down the subjects a little bit, but I wanted to tell you what being a member of The American Legion means to me. It revolves around three things: My family legacy; the connectivity to the military; and, of course, service, which you understand intimately well.

My family has a long history with The American Legion. My dad, in fact, bought my first membership to The American Legion about 30 years ago. My grandfather served in World War I and my father served in World War II. All my children, all my uncles and all my nephews have served. The American Legion was a part of our daily life growing up as a kid. A lot of it revolved around my grandfather and my father. I can't tell you how many parades I went to watch them march, how many memorial dedications. But the highlight of our week was always the fish fry at The American Legion on Friday nights. I can tell you as a kid I knew every nook and cranny of that American Legion. I knew where I was supposed to go and I knew where I wasn't supposed to go, and I went there frequently. It was just expected. My brothers and I were always looking forward to The American

Legion. I bought my sons and my son-in-law a membership, too, because I want them to have an opportunity to see what I saw growing up as a kid.

Which kind of brings me to my second point: Connectivity. When I first left the military in 2010, I really immersed myself into USAA and tried to learn my job and trying to learn this new skill called being a civilian. It was new to me. The big reason I joined USAA was because I wanted to be part of a mission-driven company, one that was here to serve the men and women of the armed forces and our veterans and wasn't here to serve the bottom line or looking for a profit margin. I wanted to be part of something that gives back to those who have served and those who I have served with. I've been able to see this in my almost 10 years at USAA.

The American Legion has done the same thing for me. It allows me to be part of something that connects to my own military service. It helps me stay connected to an important part of my family heritage. I have to tell you, after taking a short break and re-establishing my connection through The American Legion, it has been a life-changing event for myself and my family.

As I put my cover on today, I'm reminded about how special it is to wear it. The last time I wore it was in Normandy, at the 75th anniversary of D-Day. As I wore the cover and walked those beaches where so much sacrifice was made by so many valiant men and women, people would come up to us, while we were wearing our Legion hats, they would come up to us and they would thank us for our service and our sacrifice. People from other countries, and it gave you a warm, self-satisfied feeling to know that you were part of something special.

It reminded me, however, of the first time I returned from Iraq. I was on an airplane, one of those great contract flights that was crammed full of GIs. We flew out of the Middle East and we landed in Baltimore, Maryland. When we left the aircraft and were walking on the jet way, I heard this horrible noise in the terminal. It sounded like a riot. There was screaming and yelling. We were all in battle-dress uniforms. We were all bracing ourselves for what is going on in the terminal. When we entered the terminal, what I realized was everybody was standing up and cheering for us. It was a moment I'll never forget. It was a moment that made me understand that veterans stand for the best part of this country and our country remembered. *(Applause)*

After we recovered from the stunned feeling, it did remind me while I was on Normandy that in fact our country does care about the sacrifices, does care about what the veteran represents in our society. But we here know that whenever we send forces into the field there is a potential for losses. There are those that don't come back. So every handshake I ever got, every time somebody said thank you for the service, I tried to remember that their thank yous are really for the men and women that didn't come home. And that drove a very fine point with me, which brings me to my last reason: Service, which I think you understand.

The American Legion has been a very important part of helping this country remember our veterans. They have served well. It keeps veterans' issues alive, and it keeps us in front of the American public. Additionally, organizations like the Legion play key roles in helping to ensure that we'll hopefully never ever go back and experience what our veterans from Vietnam experienced when they returned home. Any Vietnam vets here? Welcome home. Welcome home. When a country decides to go to war, the men and women in uniform, they do their duties. They're not the ones that make the decision to go to war. We must, as a group, keep advocating for those men and women who have served and sacrificed. The Legion does that with its legislative efforts and its efforts in helping to reform health care.

I'm proud to stand in front of you today as a member of the Legion and as a member of USAA, because I believe they're both very close and have many, many similarities. They're both centered on doing what's right for the veteran, helping take care of the veterans. That, ladies and gentlemen, is what the membership in the Legion means to me. It's an honor, truly an honor, for me to be here today.

Thank you for what you do to advocate for the men and women who serve. I am truly humbled to be surrounded by so many great Americans who continue to this day to fight for our veterans that are currently serving and that have served in the past. Thank you, my fellow Legionnaires, and I salute you. *(Applause)*

...National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: My counterpart at the Veterans of Foreign Wars this past year, served in Korea from 1983 to 1986 with the United States Army. He was elected national commander of the VFW at the organization's 119th National Convention on July 25, 2018. He also had a career in law enforcement, and I'm proud to say that we have forged a close working relationship this past year as we met to discuss ways in which our organizations can improve the lives of veterans and their families. Please give a warm welcome to the 2018-2019 national commander of the VFW, and a great friend of mine, BJ Lawrence. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Vincent 'BJ' Lawrence
Past National Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Thank you, Brett. Good afternoon, my fellow Legionnaires. As the commander alluded to, you know, over the last few years, The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars have had the opportunity to share in some accomplishments. I say "share" because we've seen accomplishments that have been able to benefit both our organizations in fulfilling the vital mission of serving our nation's veterans, our military and their families. For the Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of those critical changes that we've seen in, quite frankly, advocated for in the last few years was the ability for the Veterans of Foreign Wars to own joint property with other veteran service organizations. What that means for the VFW and The American Legion, at the local level, now we have greater opportunities to share facilities in holding our meetings or holding our community events. The rules and regulations we had prior to that kind of stifled our ability to partner together, to network together and to share properties, share posts and meeting space. I'm proud that over the last few years we've been able to advocate and see that change come to fruition for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. *(Applause)*

Another accomplishment I'm quite proud of is over the last few years, I've seen our leadership at the national levels of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion advocate and stress the importance of our veteran service organizations being one team, working together at the grassroots level, working together to accomplish the service of our nation's veterans. You see, Legionnaires, we all belong to several organizations or we may belong to dual organizations, such as myself. I'm proud to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and I'm proud to be a member of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

As I've had an opportunity to travel around the last few years, representing our organization, some of those travels have led me to various American Legion events, several VFW events, and each and every time I've had the opportunity to speak to our membership, I've explained to them that, yes, we may belong to different organizations, and, yes, we may wear different hats, have different names for our programs, accomplish our goals by taking different paths, but it's not a competition. It's not to see who's better than each other. It's about getting to the end of that road, which we all have a common destination, and that's to give the highest quality service, advocacy, community service and a voice for our nation's veterans, our military and their families. Without us changing the lives each and every day of our nation's veterans, imagine where we would be today.

As The American Legion enjoys 100 years of proud, dedicated and humble service to our nation, I not only congratulate each and every one of you, but I salute you in your service to our great country. American Legion, I love each and every one of you. I will always advocate for teamwork. I will always advocate for our partnership. And I will

always stand at the ready to help you accomplish your vital missions throughout your communities at the ground level. Thank you all for what you do. *(Applause)*

At this time, it gives me great pleasure to be joined on stage for a special presentation. I'd also like to take the opportunity and the privilege to introduce to you my successor as commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, this year's commander-in-chief for the 2019-2020 year, William "Doc" Schmitz from the great state of New York.

VFW NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMITZ: Thank you very much, BJ. We've got a little presentation to make here.

VFW PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LAWRENCE: As a token of his appreciation and his sincere promise to The American Legion, Commander-in-Chief Doc Schmitz would like to present your commander with a commemorative and collectible KA-BAR knife. *(Applause)*

The next presentation reads: "The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States presented to The American Legion. On behalf of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the staff at VFW National Headquarters, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes and sincere congratulations in the celebration of your 100th anniversary. The unwavering support to veterans, servicemembers and their families your organization has shown is why you are able to celebrate your 100th this year. In joining with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other veterans organizations to assist in bringing legislation to the forefront, you have proven that teamwork works. Honor, commitment and sacrifice are the paramount ideals for success in life. These endearing traditions have helped your organization to reach this significant point. Please accept the deep gratitude and honorable recognition from the nearly 1.6 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliary." *(Applause)*

And last but not least, "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit, awarded to Brett Reistad, national commander of The American Legion, in grateful appreciation to a true champion for his years of unwavering support to veterans, servicemembers and their families. He has served The American Legion in many levels and has shown his commitment for teamwork in joining with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and many other veterans service organizations to assist with the crafting and advocating of veteran-friendly legislation. His unyielding commitment to the VFW and the entire military community has earned him the utmost respect and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. In witness whereof, we have here unto set our hands on the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the United States." Signed, BJ Lawrence, Past Commander-in-Chief; Kevin Jones, Adjutant General. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Royal British Legion provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces Committee of Great Britain. They proudly serve veterans and their families. With us today is the organization's national chairman. She is a registered nurse and recipient of the British Empire Medal, awarded for her work with veterans. Please welcome Una Cleminson. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Mrs. Una Cleminson
National Chairman, The Royal British Legion

Commander, honored guests, delegates, it is an honor to be here with you once more after my election as national chairman of the Royal British Legion in May. It is a position I'll hold for three years. You have a special place in my and Peter's hearts. Our president met your commander in Normandy at the 75th anniversary of D-Day. And he confirmed we must remain shoulder to shoulder in our commitment to the welfare of those brave men and women who ensure we live in a free world. Your invitation today confirms that commitment. And long may it reign.

I also met with many of your members during the week and they demonstrated their comradeship, most particularly. It was very significant that our queen and your president were on all television channels when they were together in Portsmouth. We were together in 1944, as we are today. And it is just as important now as we are threatened by the forces of darkness.

I look forward to reading your magazine each month, but must admit the first page I turn to is Parting Shots. I'm learning to appreciate the American sense of humor. And remember Bob Hope who was with us in 1994 at the 50th anniversary of D-Day. Also in the magazine, the article on Buddy Checks was read with interest. It's vital to keep in touch with those in need. We do some things similar, but it's called branch community support. It's also very successful.

Your participation in the Veterans Games is another demonstration of our togetherness. I will be at the next one in the Hague and look forward to seeing you there. I must admit, I will be cheering on our wheelchair basketball team. As you probably know you are our greatest rivals.

Another of our successful initiatives is Bravo 22, acting art, including sculpture, by disabled veterans including many with PTSD. This work helps them to come to terms with their problems, which are, in most cases, complex. They put on plays in theaters and on TV. Very good for them and wonderful PR.

Last year I mentioned one of Winston Churchill's comments. I have two that I believe are relevant regarding American football and the Yalta Conference. In 1930, Churchill was taken to a football game and was asked what he thought of it. He replied, "It's somewhat like rugby but why do they have all those committee meetings." *(Laughter)*

Early in 1945, there was an exchange of letters between President Roosevelt about the agenda for the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt felt that it should only take six days to complete the plans for establishing the United Nations. Churchill wrote back, "I don't see any way of realizing our hopes for a world organization in six days. Even the Almighty took seven." *(Laughter)*

May I mention before I finish what I believe is the most momentous success you have had since I was last with you. The LEGION Act will provide you with over 4.2 million new veterans eligible to join your wonderful organization. A great opportunity to ensure your future and to give people like Julie Muhle an opportunity to recruit and train your leaders for tomorrow. The 30th of July 2019 will go down as a very significant day in your long and illustrious history. God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Royal Canadian Legion is committed to making a difference in the lives of veterans and their families, providing essential services in their communities and remembering the men and women of Canada who sacrificed for their country. The Dominion 1st vice president was a member of the Third and Fourth Battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment. He retired from the Beachville Volunteer Fire Department in London, Ontario after 32 years of service. Please welcome, 1st Vice President Bruce Julian. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Bruce Julian
Dominion 1st Vice President, The Royal Canadian Legion

Thank you for that kind introduction. National Commander, distinguished Legionnaires from across your great country, special guests, friends, my comrades, all. It is a great privilege for me as 1st vice president of the Royal Canadian Legion to speak to you here in Indianapolis, the site of your national headquarters. I wish you a happy 100th anniversary on behalf of our dominion president, Thomas D. Irvine, and on behalf of our 260,000 members. And I bring warm greetings from your fellow Legionnaires in Canada.

Since you became a patriotic veterans organization 100 years ago, you have accomplished so much for those you represent and for your country. Congratulations. The

Royal Canadian Legion will celebrate our own centenary in a few short years. It's amazing the number of parallels between our two organizations.

We have a strong bond forged by our shared mission, goals and values. We too are a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization with an active membership who contribute an astounding number of volunteer hours annually. And most importantly, we're friends. And we can talk to each other when we have challenges or ideas.

Almost 40 years ago President Ronald Reagan said "As two proud independent peoples, there's much that distinguishes us from one another. But there's also much that we share: a vast continent, with its common hardships and uncommon duties, generations of mutual respect and support, and an abiding friendship that grows ever stronger." Those words still ring true today.

Like you, we advocate on behalf of veterans. In this role, we are vocal when we need to be. For example, we recently, through our strong support, behind a parliamentary motion to come up with a strategy to end veterans homelessness in Canada by 2025, and sooner if we can. Our Leave the Streets Behind program is already helping many homeless veterans. And our British Columbia Provincial Command is collaborating with others to create a new veterans village housing model in that province. And I know from firsthand experience, being from Ontario Command, that we used your influence and talked very much with your posts in Buffalo, New York, when we were developing our own program.

But more needs to be done nationally. We can't do it alone, but we can lead the charge by galvanizing public opinion. We regularly cooperate with other veterans and community organizations. We regularly meet with key government departments and sit on various parliamentary committees. We push our government to address the unique mental health care needs of veterans. We are insistent about the need to provide the best possible care for those injured in the line of duty. And we never relent in our fight for lifelong financial security for ill and injured veterans and their families.

Like you, we have an ongoing obligation to our veterans, and we back up our words with action, distributing close to $17 million every year to help our veterans and our communities. These funds are donated during our annual Poppy Campaign, and all donations go into local and national trust funds. We recently gave the first of three $100,000 donations in support of a new national initiative to help military veterans and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers cope with post-traumatic stress injuries called Project Trauma Support. This program is showing incredible, promising results to date. Also each year we fund a $30,000 master level scholarship for a university student working on a unique project to improve the health and safety of our active and retired military.

We honor our veterans for their service. On November 11 each year we organize the National Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa, Canada's capital. This year we will pay tribute to the 75th anniversary of D-Day. That's also a piece of history that we share as well. Your soldiers on Omaha and Utah beaches and ours on Juno Beach. We will remember them. *(Applause)*

There are, of course, things that distinguish us and affect how we attack common issues. One major difference is our much smaller population. Thirty-seven million compared to your 327 million. We simply have fewer boots on the ground. Your military is among the largest on the planet while we are about 50th in the number of active personnel. It makes our potential membership pool much smaller. So while you continue to be a veterans-only organization, we made a decision a long time ago to extend our membership to all Canadians, serving and non-serving, RCMP personnel and veterans family members. And finally, any Canadian who is willing to take up our cause is invited to be a member of our organization.

Like you, we pride ourselves on being nonpartisan. So as I close, I must include a thought from the other side of the political aisle. Speaking on that relationship between our two countries, president John F. Kennedy said, "Geography has made us neighbors; history has made us friends; economics has made us partner; and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together let no man put asunder."

I thank you for inviting the Royal Canadian Legion to your conference. May the friendship between our two Legions and among our branches and posts grow even stronger in the years to come. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Today, we are most fortunate to have a gentleman with us who has dedicated his life to Canada's veterans and their families. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy and is a native of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He has earned an American Legion Canadian Friendship Award in 2008, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Order of Service in 2012. Please welcome the dominion president of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, Ronald G. Smith. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Ronald Smith
Dominion President, Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada

National Commander Reistad, National Adjutant Wheeler, special guests, comrades, all. It gives me great pleasure to join you to celebrate 100 years of service, and I bring warm greetings on behalf of the executive and members of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada.

The American Legion's history is filled with some of the most important veteran citizenship and family initiatives of the last century. From the development of the GI Bill and all its iterations; to Boys and Girls States and Nations, guiding youth to learn about your democratic institutions; support and pressure to build the Vietnam Memorial; the creation of the Veterans Administration and Veterans Crisis Command Centers are all examples of American Legionnaires hard at work.

Just this past year alone you have lobbied Congress to pass the LEGION Act, ensuring that all veterans who served in defense of your great nation will have the opportunity to join and benefit from your support programs and the camaraderie of fellow ex-servicemen and women. Your advocacy has also led to the recent passing of the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act that will finally allow Vietnam naval veterans who served off the coastlines of Vietnam and are suffering from health effects relating to Agent Orange, with VA benefits and medical services that they have been long denied. This act will also help surviving spouses access pension benefits they were not previously entitled to have.

The most important programs, however, are the ones in your local posts, helping veterans and their families in your communities through the Family Support Network and all the post initiatives helping local veterans right where you live. Aiding your brothers and sisters in arms is the heart of what you have built over the last 100 years. And God willing, it will continue to be at the heart of what you do in the next hundred. So celebrate your legacy while remembering that you still have a future destiny to fulfill.

Back in Canada, we continue to work with our comrades in the Royal Canadian Legion and other veterans services organizations to ensure that our veterans, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their families receive the benefits and services required to have a healthy and smooth transition from their service to the country in uniform to their life as a civilian.

We have struggled with several changes and iterations of our benefit structure over the past 13 years, trying to balance rehabilitation and reintegration with financial security, the need for better and more accessible mental health supports and treatments. Research on military and veteran health has been radically expanding within our institutions, and we continue to share and garner similar knowledge and research from our allies.

Ensuring that our veterans and their families are quickly able to access health benefits, treatments and supports they require to successfully transition are top of the mind of our association, as it's requiring that we have the safety nets in place to assist and safeguard them should they falter. We along with our like-minded comrades will continue to press our governments to ensure that the best mix of services and benefits are in place when and where they are needed.

As much as it has been accomplished by both our associations and governments, there is so much more for us to do and learn from each other. May we continue to be allies and friends and continue the legacies that our forefathers passed down to us so that we may also pass the torch to the generations of the future. Thank you for having me here with you this week and for all the wonderful hospitality. Shoulder to shoulder. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Taiwan is a nation that's always vigilant. Because of its proximity to communist China, the Taiwanese military is prepared for an attack that could come at any time. The Taiwanese people also know that taking care of veterans is an important priority when fielding a strong defense. We are fortunate to have with us a deputy minister of the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China. He was a member of Taiwan's legislature and a director of the Democratic Progress Party Central Committee. Please welcome Deputy Minister Lee Weng-Chung. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Lee Weng-Chung
Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Council, Republic of China

National Commander Reistad, distinguished guests and most of all extraordinary veterans and your families, good afternoon. It is such a great honor of mine to be here, especially to address the veterans who have selflessly served your country. On behalf of the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China, I hereby extend our sincerest respect and regards to all of you. Also from President of the Republic of China Tsai Ing-wen, who unfortunately could not attend the convention herself. She has made a video message to send her sincerest regards and respects to all of you, the American patriots and heroes.

Before we play the video, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your continued support to my country over the years, especially passing the resolution of supporting Taiwan at each annual convention. This valuable friendship will always be kept in our mind.

Also, I would like to present National Commander Reistad with a Medal of Honor of the Veterans Affairs Council, First Class, in recognition of his dedication to maintaining the friendships between our organizations and promoting the welfare of veterans, family.

Here is the video message from President Tsai. Many thanks for your consideration. I wish you a very successful convention and also wish you all personal health and happiness. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Video Greetings: Honorable Tsai Ing-wen
President, Republic of China

Hello, everyone. Good afternoon. It is an honor to address America's largest and one of its most prestigious veterans organizations. I want to thank National Commander Brett Reistad for his invitation and staunch support for Taiwan, support that is rooted in our shared ideals of freedom and democracy. While I cannot be here in person, I want to congratulate The American Legion on this important anniversary, as you commemorate a century of service to freedom around the world.

Over the past 100 years, American soldiers have fought and sacrificed to preserve the universal values we hold dear: That is, the belief that we are born free, society should be just, and power should be placed in the hands of the people. From the battlefields of Europe to the islands of the Pacific, millions of American soldiers have bravely honored those principles. With every sacrifice made, the world inched towards a more just future. And because of these efforts, countries were able to throw off the yoke of oppression and were given the freedom to join the community of free societies.

Last December, Brett led a delegation from The American Legion to Taiwan. We discussed our shared interest in protecting liberty in the Asia Pacific, in the hope that we never again have to settle our differences through war. We also exchanged views on how

we can take better care of our veterans, to honor their selfless service to our countries. As I said to Brett then, and I will say again now: The best way to ensure peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region is to preserve the strong relationship Taiwan and the United States enjoy today, and to remain resolute in our defense of freedom and democracy.

As we all know too well, the struggle for domination and control has played out throughout human history, even though it has taken on new forms. Today, just across the Taiwan Strait, we struggle with a giant that has chosen to use new tools of technological advancement not for the greater good but to sow disinformation and discord in free and open societies. As I have said again and again, Taiwan will never succumb to this pressure, not on my watch. But we cannot face this challenge alone. We need reinforcement from the global community of like-minded countries.

Fortunately, thanks to the support from organizations such as The American Legion, the relationship between Taiwan and the United States is stronger than ever. And we have seen a number of significant developments over the past year. We commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, a piece of legislation that has assured the people of Taiwan that the United States will always stand by our side. As Ronald Reagan once said, "We keep our promises to Taiwan. Period."

We celebrated the formal opening of the new AIT compound, the U.S. representative building in Taipei which signifies the multitude of interests our countries share. We acknowledged enduring bipartisan support from Congress, exemplified through Taiwan's inclusion in legislation such as the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act and the John McCain National Defense Authorization Act. This follows the passage of the Taiwan Travel Act in 2018.

We marked the continued sale of important defensive arms to Taiwan, as showcasing our commitment towards our own defense, and the security of the Asia Pacific region as a whole. And on this note, I am pleased to share with you that last week, the U.S. government formally agreed to sell 66 new F-16Vs to Taiwan following recent sales of new M1A2 tanks and missile capabilities. These latest sales mean that our men and women in uniform will soon be driving M1A2s to protect our beaches and homeland, and piloting the F-16Vs across our skies.

I want to be clear: We don't purchase military hardware because we pursue conflict. We do so because we know, as you do, that power only responds to strength. As we face Chinese fighter planes that barrel across the center line of the Taiwan Strait and cut through our air space, we cannot afford to be naive about their intentions. We cannot deter aggression if we are not prepared to protect ourselves. We must show that we are firmly resolved to defend our freedom, democracy, and way of life. The determination to stand up for our values and beliefs, no matter the odds, is what truly defines our two countries.

As Vice President Mike Pence stated, in words that resonated across the region: "America will always believe that Taiwan's embrace of democracy shows a better path for all the Chinese people."

The relationship between Taiwan and the United States is also strengthened by robust civil exchanges, such as our long standing friendship with The American Legion. Many would be surprised to learn that our bond with the Legion dates back almost half a century, when we first sought advice from the Legion on how to improve veteran care. More recently, the Legion has graciously welcomed our presence at its National Conventions and national commanders have continued to visit Taiwan.

One issue that came up in our conversation last year in Taiwan was how this relationship leads to substantive results, and how we trade best practices when it comes to providing access to quality health care, better jobs, and more dignified long-term care. We discussed ways Taiwan can learn from the Legion's job training and support workshops, while sharing our expertise in providing high quality health care at an affordable cost. Following our dialogue we're looking into the possibility of sending a veterans affairs representative to the U.S. so that we can follow up on these initiatives. Furthermore, we

will be looking for ways to facilitate exchanges in veterans' health care encouraging more personnel from our veterans' hospitals to visit the U.S.

I know that in small towns and rural communities across America, even if there is no grocery store to be found, you can often find one building emblazoned with the words: American Legion. As a student in the small town of Ithaca in Upstate New York, I used to pass by these buildings regularly, wondering what went on inside those unassuming offices. Today, I recognize that the full scope of the Legion's work encompasses not only supporting veterans and communities across America, but also serving as a force for peace and stability around the world.

The servicemembers that the Legion represents, all of you seated here today, recognize the sacrifices that have been made in defense of freedom and democracy around the world. All of you know, as we do, that we must continue to be vigilant, that we can never take our liberty for granted. The best way to honor these past sacrifices is to do everything we can to avoid future conflict, without ever compromising our core beliefs.

As the president of the Republic of China, Taiwan, I share in this pursuit with all of you. We will not pursue conflict with China, but we ask that they respect our democracy. We will not intentionally provoke China, but neither will we be naive to China's true intentions. We will continue to work hand in hand with the United States, and other like-minded countries around the world in the interests of preserving the peace that has served our region so well for decades.

Today, I want to thank The American Legion and all of its members for your life long devotion to our shared principles and values. Your service towards the preservation of liberty resonates around the world. I also want to offer my congratulations on your 100th anniversary. I wish you a very successful national convention and look forward to working even more closely with you all in the future. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A resident of Scituate, Massachusetts, our next speaker guides the policies and oversees the headquarters operations of the Sons of the American Revolution. He leads an organization that is composed entirely of the descendants of veterans who served in the American Revolution. A member of the New Hampshire Sons of the American Revolution, his organization shares many of the same patriotic values as does The American Legion. Please welcome the president general of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, John T. Manning. *(Applause)*

Greetings: John T. 'Jack' Manning
President General, National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

Good afternoon. Commander Reistad, distinguished guests, Legionnaires members of the Auxiliary and brother members of the Sons of the American Legion, it is a distinct honor and privilege to stand before you as the 116th president general and bring greetings from the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution. The National Society is a congressionally chartered premier male lineage society with 16 U.S. presidents and 27 Medal of Honor recipient compatriots on our member roles. With more than 208,000 members admitted since the founding in April 30, 1889, the SAR members are intensely devoted to serving the community from which they hail in all 50 states and five countries abroad. SAR members honor all that answer the country's call in every major American conflict, beginning with the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, and continue to this present day.

By joining the SAR, we are honoring our patriot ancestor and ensuring that the American Revolution is not forgotten. The SAR promotes and teaches citizenship through our many youth programs and teacher programs. On a personal note, being here today, I honor my father and his two brothers who are Navy veterans that served in the South Pacific during World War II. His younger brother was a Navy corpsman who served in the Korean conflict and was awarded the Bronze Star on Pork Chop Hill. Also, my mother's brother,

who was an Army MP, who served in both Africa and Italy, and my father-in-law was a China marine during World War II. And his sister, my wife's aunt, was also a Marine, and she will turn 99 in February. Thank you all for your service to your country. *(Applause)*

I just want to read a quote: "Poor is the nation that has no heroes. Shameful is the ones having heroes, forgets." Marcus Tullius Cicero. I can confirm to you the SAR will never forget the sacrifices that you and the previous generation of veterans and future veterans have done to make us a free nation, and my family enjoys the freedoms that you folks have earned for us. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Now it is my privilege to present the SAR Distinguished Patriot Award to National Commander Brett Reistad.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Let me give you an update on the Legacy Fund collection. When we started the Legacy Run, we had $128,487 in donations. During the run, we collected $292,222 in donations. Here on stage today, $590,152 in donations. And, in the miscellaneous category, $4,346 in donations. So the total for the year thus far is $975,208.63. *(Applause)*

So many thanks to all of you for your generosity. A veteran of the United States Navy, our next guest served as a submariner and a diver, taking part in multiple deployments in support of the global war on terrorism. He earned a bachelor of science degree at Florida State University and a master of public administration at Syracuse University. Please join me in welcoming the president and chief executive officer of Student Veterans of America, Jared Lyon. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Jared S. Lyon
President, Student Veterans of America

Thank you for the kind introduction. Over the past year, I've traveled, quite literally, around the United States and around the world. We've heard from some of our comrades from the United Kingdom and from Canada, and I recently returned from London, where I attended an international thought leadership summit on the invisible wounds of war and military transition, where our three countries came together to come up with solutions. Our comradeship goes well. I would also like to thank each of you for keeping me out of Washington, D.C., for one more day. Thank you all very much for that.

I'm a proud member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion, and my good friend, John Rowan, the national president of Vietnam Veterans of America, is here onstage as well. And I always love to say the best gift I ever received in my life was from a marine who served in Vietnam, my wife's father. Salute. Give it up for my wife. It'll do well for me for when I return home. *(Applause)*

Thank you. I'd like to salute Commander Reistad for his decisive leadership over this past year, as well as share a special thanks to a few individuals who work tirelessly at your office in Washington, D.C. John Kamin from your Veterans Employment & Education division, Jeff Steele from Legislative, and for the man from the greatest state of Massachusetts, my home state, your executive director, Mr. Lou Celli. *(Applause)*

Those folks like champions back there. Tough place in Indianapolis to say that, I suppose. So we all know what it's like to stand watch in the military, and your fierce advocates in your D.C. office and on your national staff are standing watch always, making sure to fight for good policy ideas and to prevent bad ones from happening. They're some of the finest humans that I've ever had the chance to work with, and I'm honored to work alongside them in D.C.

The Student Veterans of America is a bit unique from The American Legion in the sense that our D.C. office and our national headquarters are in the same building, just a few blocks from your D.C. office, just downtown, which is how I've gotten to know your team there so well. Whenever you all might visit the nation's capital in the future, I'd encourage you to look us up at Student Veterans of America's headquarters and stop by to say hello.

Joining me is the woman who runs our D.C. office, our vice president of government affairs and an Iraq War veteran of the United States Army, Lauren Augustine. Thanks for joining me, Lauren. *(Applause)*

Since our founding in 2008, we have been fortunate to benefit from the legacy and foundation of The American Legion. Without this great organization, there would be no SVA. In our early days, it was The American Legion that lent a helping hand as we began, serving as mentors to us and even helping us with our first office space to conduct our business before we ever had an office of our own. In fact, we owe our gratitude to several other organizations that are here as well, as I've already mentioned, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

What a difference 11 years can make in our history. Thank you for helping us set our foundation and continuing to allow us to stand on our own today. Since our humble beginnings of just 20 chapters in 2008, we have grown in size to represent 754,000 student veterans on over 1,500 campuses in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and four countries overseas. This makes Student Veterans of America one of the country's largest and most influential student organizations.

Our early growth, with the support of The American Legion, built more than just a framework for scalable success, it imprinted an everlasting dedication to service. When we first got our start, we looked at the lasting impact of awesome programs, such as Boys and Girls State, across the country that has held up students through times of both peace and war and has provided a beacon of teaching leadership through civic engagement to our country's youth.

We thought what better way to reinvigorate our country's servicemembers than by teaching them how to be servant leaders on college campuses. Through what we call our Leadership Continuum, our SVA summits, our Leadership Institute, and National Conference and through events held by our chapters across the country, student veterans are stepping up as leaders that we know they can be for our country.

There are student veterans, such as our National Student Veteran of the Year for 2019, an Air Force veteran named Alexandria Sawin, who attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, before her husband, also an Air Force veteran, was transferred to Boston. She is getting ready to start her junior year as a biology major on a pre-medicine track at Boston College. Alex's story is not too dissimilar from my own, and I can say with confidence that I would not be where I am today without the support of Student Veterans of America and organizations like The American Legion.

I first joined the United States military on August 5, 2001. I joined a peacetime military, but it was while I was in Great Lakes, Illinois, for basic training for the Navy that evil men, hell-bent on destroying the very fabric of our nation, brought down the Twin Towers and attacked the Pentagon. That would serve as the basis for my generation, the post-9/11 era, for deployments throughout the world and specifically in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Like the majority of today's servicemembers, I decided to pursue an education after separating from active duty service. In fact, nearly 3 out of 4 members of the United States military wind up in a college classroom today within seven months of separating from active duty. It's quite literally the front door to not only the VA, but to membership in outstanding organizations like The American Legion.

Unlike my personal experience with the GI Bill, I used mostly the Montgomery GI Bill, today's student veterans get the benefit of what is commonly known as the Forever GI Bill, an education without an expiration date. Without you and the support of The American Legion, there would be no Forever GI Bill. It therefore seemed fitting that this historic initiative should formally be named in honor of one of your very own Legionnaires, a gentleman with a rich and storied relationship with both the Legion and the GI Bill. He was, in fact, the man who drafted the original GI Bill in 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of that same year. It is Mr. Harry W. Colmery, a proud Legionnaire, with the heritage of the GI Bill, that the Harry W. Colmery Education Assistance Act of

2017, the Forever GI Bill, bears his name. He is someone who would have deeply appreciated our national motto at Student Veterans of America of "Yesterday's warriors, today's scholars, and tomorrow's leaders."

Today, student veterans have among the highest grade point average nationwide, we graduate at significantly higher rates than our peers, and we get marketable degrees in fields such as electrical engineering, biochemistry, accounting, health care, and mental health, just to name a few. We don't just go to college to find ourselves. We leave that to high school students. Ours is a generation that goes to college to create ourselves, and we're outperforming our civilian peers.

At SVA, we pride ourselves on being an inclusive organization, where all veterans, regardless of gender or era of their military service, are welcomed with open arms and an equal opportunity to serve. Counter to the facts, a sad myth persists, that veterans are charity cases, that we're somehow broken, that we're not smart enough to go to college, let alone succeed in school or after graduation. Whether spoken aloud or even lurking internally as a subconscious thought, this is a false perspective, and we must work to change it.

And we, The American Legion and Student Veterans of America, can work together by opening your posts, inviting student veterans in to take on roles and volunteer activities in your local communities, but to build the legacy of the American Legion, because Student Veterans of America does not produce lifetime members. We produce college graduates that go on to join The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Thank you. I'd like to encourage you all to encourage my generation to join your great organization. I separated from active duty in 2005, but I only joined The American Legion last year, and the only reason I hadn't joined yet is because nobody had asked me to. So please ask my generation. Every time that you're with them, recruit them into this organization and continue to have The American Legion be strong with my generation playing a future leadership role. *(Applause)*

I'd like to thank each and every one of you for the difference you've made and will continue to make in both the lives of individual students and their SVA chapters and for our nation by fostering the next greatest generation. I do not have the fanciest of plaques, but I'd like to present your national commander with a token of our appreciation, our National Headquarters Challenge Coin. Inscribed on the back is a simple notion that "Any nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools." Thank you all so much for the support. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: A veteran of the United States Air Force, our next guest served as a linguist with the 6990th Security Squadron in Vietnam and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, providing Strategic Air Command with intelligence on Vietnam's surface-to-air missile sites to protect U.S. bombing missions. He holds a B.A. in political science from Queens College and a master's in urban affairs from Hunter College. He was re-elected to a seventh term as national president of Vietnam Veterans of America during the organization's 18th National Convention in New Orleans. Please welcome National President John Rowan. *(Applause)*

Greetings: John Rowan
National President, Vietnam Veterans of America

Thank you, Commander Reistad and all the distinguished guests we have on the dais, all these leaders, the other organizations, really fun. And by the way, I want my chaplain back. Father Phil's been our chaplain for many, many years before he came over to you guys. We'll trade him for a player to be named later if you make me a good offer. Anyway, it is indeed an honor and a privilege to join you here today, comrades, because I am one of

you. I was just looking at my card. I had just gotten my renewal back. Forty-seven years ago I joined The American Legion. *(Applause)*

But unfortunately, as a sign of the times, my Post 298 in Elmhurst, New York, is no longer functioning, and I've been moved over to Ridgewood Post 562. Anybody here from New York? Any of the New Yorkers back there? *(Cheers)*

The Legion, of course, we've been working together on many, many issues over the years, and I was looking at the most recent magazine celebrating 100 years in the Legion, and it was interesting in the timeline that we showed all sorts of different issues as we went by. A couple really kind of piqued my interest, and if I can take my few minutes this afternoon to talk about them.

One was the suicide issue. There was a note in the Legion magazine about June 2, 1922, notes that there was complaints about two veteran suicides a day, and we're talking the World War I folks. Nobody ever talked about suicide in that period of time, I can tell you that. And I have a personal little story on that issue, and I didn't learn this until my aunt was literally on her deathbed in the mid-80s when she finally told a story about my grandfather's brother.

Both of them were New Yorkers living on the west side of Manhattan, who, of course, in that period of time in World War I, were drafted and assigned to the 71st Regiment of the New York National Guard and then later moved them to become part of the United States Army. My grandfather, he had four children, so he didn't go, but his brother only had one son. Thomas only had one son, and Thomas went. Thomas had been married off to a fairly well-off lady, who you could tell how well off they are, they had a chauffeur and a car. Unfortunately, while Thomas was off in Europe fighting in the war, his wife and the chauffeur died in a car accident. He comes home from the war, deals with his son, who was about 13 or 14 at the time. He gets the son squared away, gets the son off to college. The son went off to Cornell, which was upstate New York, near where his grandparents lived, and five years after the war, walked into Riverside Park in Manhattan and hung himself.

Now, that's a story that you may hear about today, but you didn't hear about 85 or 95 years ago, which was too bad because, if we had talked about it then, maybe we wouldn't be talking about it still today. I find it disturbing that 100 years later we're still talking about veteran suicide like it's something new, and it doesn't seem like the VA's got a very good answer for it, and I hope that we can work together to try to find that answer. *(Applause)*

I think it's extremely important, given the problems that we see with suicide in the population at large, and if you've been reading your newspapers, you saw the unfortunate spate of suicides that we've had in the NYPD in New York City. Veterans are not the only ones that get stress from their job. There are many people in that situation, and unfortunately, not a lot of interest in doing much about it.

One of the other things that we in VVA have had fun doing over the years is suing people, especially the VA, DoD, anybody else we think isn't doing the right thing by the veterans. We've been working with the Legion and other organizations over the years on lots of different issues. Again, a note I saw in the Legion magazine, The American Legion and VVA had filed simultaneous lawsuits in U.S. District Court against the federal government for failing to complete a congressionally mandated study of the effects of Agent Orange on Vietnam veterans. They still haven't done that study. They still aren't doing the right thing. They still don't know what the multigenerational effects of dioxin and all these other wonderful things we were kicking around in Vietnam is doing to us and the next generations after us. And we've really got to keep putting the feet to the fire of the government and the VA.

We can be grateful, at least, for a little bit of reprieve because, frankly, the victory that all of us won with the brown-water Navy. Finally we got the federal courts on our side, and now we're just waiting to see how the VA gives us whatever they're going to give us and bring the brown-water Navy in with the rest of the Vietnam veterans and get the care and the services and, frankly, the benefits they deserve. *(Applause)*

Unfortunately, Agent Orange was the Vietnam veterans' issue, but toxic exposures seems to be a modern day problem. We've been following ever since the first foot stepped in Afghanistan about what's happened to the veterans of the more recent vintage wars, particularly with wonderful things like burn pits, all of the crazy sarin gas stuff that Hussein kicked around in Iraq. All kinds of other things that have been exposed to our troops in the field, and we have no idea what all of those, dioxin and all those chemicals, are going to do to our people and to their progeny. We need to make sure that we keep the feet to the fire of the VA officials to do those studies.

I truly believe that many of the work we've done on Agent Orange and others can be brought back home, and I would like to issue this challenge to the leadership here and to the folks in the audience when you go back home. One of the things I've been looking at and getting some reports from my folks back home on, we need to do more research and more work on, it's what's going on in the military bases in this country. Camp Lejeune was just the tip of the iceberg. We are starting now to see report after report, particularly at the air bases, about polluted water, contaminated water affecting not only those who are serving on those air bases and their families, but rolling over into the civilian world in those communities.

I got involved with this because I saw an e-mail from one of my members who happened to be in the Air Force like I was, in the security service out of Shemya, Alaska. Anyone here stationed in Shemya? No? You're lucky. You can just think about it, though. If you're in a place like Shemya, Alaska, where it's freezing all the time and you're trying to get aircraft off the ground, what do you got to do? De-ice them. You've got to spray that stuff on the aircraft so the ice falls off. Where does it go? If it's caustic enough to get rid of the ice, imagine what it does if it gets into your water supply, and I can guarantee you nobody's out there mopping it up on an air base in Shemya or anywhere else. So what are we doing to our own communities back here in the states? Unfortunately, we've brought the ravages of dioxin and Agent Orange back home. So I call upon everyone, all of us as veterans and in all of the organizations, to start taking a look at these issues seriously. It's really important for us to try to help not only us, but to our folks coming after us.

Frankly, having been involved with Vietnam Veterans of America for 40 years and dealing with Vietnam veterans, that's been a problem enough, but when I hear somebody tell me about the problems of their grandson or granddaughter, that's scary and sad. So I urge you to go back home and see what you can do. See if we can work together to try to identify these issues and make sure that they're brought up to the level of being taken care of by the VA and DOD back home. It's not just where they sent us overseas. It's here.

But I really congratulate the Legion in 100 years. It's amazing. It's a privilege, by the way, to be somewhere that's older than I am. Seriously, though, that's an unbelievable milestone, 100 years. Generations after generations of veterans have come through these halls and come through your organizations and come back home. Come back, unfortunately, many times broken, but you've been there to welcome them home. You've been there to take care of them. You've been there to make sure they got what they deserved. Interestingly, of course, as everything changes, we can see the changes in the demographics in our own organizations, the number of women and what their problems are, by the way, which are always different than the men's, health-wise, et cetera.

So I congratulate you on your 100th. I look forward to at least hopefully seeing a few more years of your activities. I'm certainly not going to get to another hundred. The bottom line is you should be very proud of yourselves, your organization, and all the work that you and your Auxiliary and your Sons of The American Legion and all the rest of the groups provided, including the Riders, I really get a kick out of them, and congratulations on a job well done for 100 years and hopefully for 100 more. Thank you. *(Applause)*

...The Convention viewed a video.

National Commander's Report to Convention
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

Fellow Legionnaires, Legion Family members and friends, History repeats itself. We saw an example of it this morning. After seeing last year's fantastic opening in Minneapolis, I didn't think anything else would come close to it until this morning. But as entertaining as it was, the viewing population in this room is just a tiny sliver of our entire American Legion Family. No, the history that I'm referring to is not something that can be represented by a stage show. It is a history of major accomplishments that make meaningful life-changing impacts, not on the lives of thousands of people, but on the lives of millions.

It is a history brought to you in large part by The American Legion. We saw that with the GI Bill, the Flag Code and creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs. But today, I am going to focus on the historical achievements of this past year that will also make a difference to enough people that can fill this convention center hundreds of times over.

In June, the president of the United States signed the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act of 2019. For years, The American Legion has called for disability benefits to cover Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange while serving on ships off Vietnam's coast. It's not just the living veterans themselves who will benefit from this long overdue legislation, but the spouses of those who died way too early and the children who also suffered from some of the debilitating effects of that exposure which was passed down from their parents.

Do you know what else happened in June? The American Legion once again etched itself in the annals of Supreme Court history. It is fitting that not only did we successfully defend a cherished veterans memorial, but we also protected a symbol of sacrifice erected by Gold Star Mothers and early members of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

With a 7-2 victory, The American Legion versus American Humanist Association, the Supreme Court ruled that a cross-shaped memorial to fallen World War I heroes in Bladensburg, Maryland, can stay in place. *(Applause)*

Just as our predecessors paid it forward to ensure that America's future veterans are taken care of, we paid it backward to ensure that they continued to be honored as their families and fellow veterans had intended. Families of fallen and departed veterans can rest assured that crosses, stars of David, Islamic crescents and other symbols of faith that populate our national cemeteries are now protected from those who have shown little respect for the First Amendment rights of all Americans. *(Applause)*

Like so many other American Legion achievements, the recent Supreme Court decision was, in short, monumental. You are also about to hear me say some kind words about Congress. The American Legion has always believed that VA health care is a system worth saving, but, while good, it had several areas that needed improvement. The system needed a modernizing facelift to better serve veterans of all generations. Last year, Congress passed the VA Mission Act, the most comprehensive overhaul of VA since it achieved cabinet-level status.

Implementation of this historic act has now started. By reforming VA health-care infrastructure, streamlining community care, expanding caregiver benefits, increasing access to private-sector care and recruiting quality health-care professionals, Congress and the White House are living up to President Lincoln's mission to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan. Families have always been important to The American Legion, especially military families. That's why when the government shut down, we stood up for the United States Coast Guard. *(Applause)*

Earlier this year, thanks to the contributions and donations of so many in this room, we provided more than $1 million of financial assistance to Coast Guard families with children. Keep in mind this was $1 million more than the government provided during that same period. They were eventually paid, but it was immoral to delay the well-earned compensation to those who risk their lives defending our shores. This is just an example of The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, specifically our Temporary

Financial Assistance program, making a real and, yes, historic difference. And The American Legion is still calling on Congress to pass the Pay Our Coast Guard Act, so our government does not again neglect its responsibilities toward those who protect us.

Our most recent legislative victory also belongs on the Legion historical timeline. Last month, I had the honor of visiting the Oval Office as President Trump signed the Let Everyone Get Involved In Opportunities for National Service Act. In short, the LEGION Act. Contrary to what some have said, this is not some new membership program. It is about fairness. It is about recognizing the approximately 1,600 military men and women who were killed or wounded in hostile acts and operations not previously recognized by the United States Congress. We were founded as a wartime organization, and The American Legion is still a wartime organization. *(Applause)*

But the simple fact is, whether widely publicized or not, we have been at war in various parts of the world since December 7, 1941. It also doesn't appear to be changing anytime soon. We've always believed a veteran is a veteran. It doesn't matter to us whether you served in New Guinea or in New Jersey. The willingness to put your life on the line is inherent in your willingness to serve.

Those who served in what we commonly refer to as the Cold War have earned the right to be called Legionnaires, and their family members have earned the right to join The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion as well. We know that there are approximately 4.2 million living veterans who before last month were not eligible to join The American Legion. Let's make a special effort to tell them about the LEGION Act and welcome them into the best veterans organization in the country.

But as great as I believe our American Legion is, that doesn't mean we can't become even greater. While the LEGION Act opens our doors to new members, we still have to ask ourselves are we being totally inclusive? Veterans of every demographic need to feel welcome in our American Legion Family. It goes without saying that men and women who meet our eligibility requirements need to be welcomed regardless of their ethnicity, religion or orientation. But are we truly welcoming them? Do they have equal opportunities to advance at the post, district, and national levels? I am not advocating for a quota system, but we should at least strive to match the same percentages that are seen in the United States military.

In the military, you are seeing more women and minorities than ever before advance to senior NCO, field-grade and flag officer positions. We must also root out ageism. Age discrimination runs two ways. We all love to see new young members, but that never excuses pushing out the experienced, loyal members who have served their country and their American Legion for many years. So you have, on one hand, the energy of youth, and on the other, the wisdom of experience. It should never be a binary choice, but rather an unbeatable combination. *(Applause)*

We will always have the common bond of military service, and we need to ensure that the bond continues in service to The American Legion. It's a bond that I tried to reinforce by instituting a national week of calling, also known as our Buddy Check program. There is no single Holy Grail of membership, but we do know that engagement works. Recruitment is pointless if we are unable to renew existing members. I hope that, when you leave Indianapolis and return to your departments and posts, that you share what's been said here. Remind your members and all potential members that the history of the American Legion is not gathering dust in some rarely opened books.

Yes, the GI Bill turned 75 this year. And, yes, The American Legion turned 100. But history is what we are doing every year. It's what we are doing for the Blue Water Navy vets, the Cold War vets and the United States Coast Guard. It's what we are doing to protect religious freedoms and the American Flag. It's what we are doing for the patients that desperately rely on VA and the caregivers that are sacrificing everything for the veteran that they love.

History is represented on our centennial coins authorized by Congress. Congress only extends this honor to two organizations each year. The other organization this session is

NASA, marking the 50th anniversary of the moon walk. Not only are we in pretty good company, it tells you something about the esteem and respect that Congress and the American people have for The American Legion. So please support The American Legion by purchasing these rare and collectible coins. Time is running out, and unsold inventory will be melted down by the United States Mint at the end of the year. There are advertisements all over the Legion website and The American Legion Magazine about purchasing these coins, with proceeds supporting our great programs.

History is being made by you at your local post. History is being made right here at this convention in Indianapolis. It is being measured by the lives we touch. And it will continue to be made by the American Legion Family of tomorrow. Thank you and God Bless. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you. Thank you very much. Maestro, please give us a musical interlude. Thank you. *(Musical interlude)*

Would everyone please take their seats. Thank you, Maestro. I now call on National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler of the Department of Virginia to issue the Call for Convention.

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

The 101st Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 23 through 29, 2019. The convention business sessions are held in the Indiana Convention Center, Halls A & B, 1st level, August 27-29, starting at 8:00 a.m. each day.

Purpose

The Annual National Convention is The American Legion's legislative body. The convention is called for the purpose of setting The American Legion's programs for the ensuing year, amending the national constitution and by-laws, and transacting such other business as may be brought before it.

On Thursday, August 29, 2019, by twelve o'clock (noon) of the final session, or at the conclusion of all other business of the National Convention, whichever first occurs, officers for the ensuing year will be elected, these being the national commander and five national vice commanders, in that sequence.

Representation

Representation in the convention shall be by department, and in accordance with the provisions of the national constitution (Article V, Section 3), to wit: "... 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 (July 26, 2019) and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid; and to one alternate for each delegate."

In addition to the above, the members of the National Executive Committee are delegates to the National Convention with vote, which "shall be exercised with their respective departments, except that the vote of the national commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as chairman of the National Convention." (Article VII, Section 3). "Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote." (Article V, Section 4). Delegates to the National Convention shall be accredited in writing to the national adjutant in the number and manner prescribed by Articles V, VI and VII, of our national constitution.

The rights of departments to make and accredit substitutes for absentee delegates or alternate delegates shall be recognized by the national adjutant, provided that such substitution shall be officially certified by the department commander and department

adjutant at the time of the certification required by the national constitution or at any time prior to adjournment of the first session of the National Convention.

Alternate Delegates

Alternates shall have the power to vote only in the absence of regular delegates. The selection of alternates to represent absent delegates is a matter for decision within the respective delegations. The vote of any registered absent delegates who are not presented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his/her department.

National Executive Committee

A meeting of the new National Executive Committee will be held at the call of the national commander within twenty-four hours after the adjournment of the National Convention, as provided by the national bylaws.

Department Officials

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

Convention Committees

Americanism, Convention Committee Joint Meeting
- Americanism - One Delegate
- Children & Youth - One Delegate

Constitutional Amendments - One Delegate
Credentials & Rules - One Delegate
Finance - One Delegate
Internal Affairs
- Membership - One Delegate
- Other Internal Matters - One Delegate

Legislation - One Delegate
National Security
- Aerospace - One Delegate
- Conventional Armed Forces - One Delegate
- Foreign Relations - One Delegate
- Law and Order & Homeland Security - One Delegate
- Military Benefits & Quality of Life - One Delegate
- National Guard & Reserve Forces - One Delegate
- Unconventional Forces & Intelligence - One Delegate

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- Health Administration - One Delegate
- National Cemetery - One Delegate
- Veterans Benefits - One Delegate

Veterans Employment & Education
- Employment & Veterans Preference - One Delegate
- Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness – One Delegate.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you very much, Mr. Adjutant. I now declare the 101st Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened. The Chair now recognizes George West of New Hampshire, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Rules, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Credentials & Rules
George West, New Hampshire, Chairman

Commander and my fellow delegates: There were forty two delegates to the Committee on Credentials and Rules which met at 8:30 a.m., August 25, 2019, in the JW Marriott, Grand Ballroom, Section 8, Third Floor. George West of New Hampshire was elected Chairman, and C.W. Sparks of Texas was elected Secretary.

The Committee proceeded to the business agenda by considering the Rules of the Convention. A motion was unanimously approved by the Committee to adopt the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion which approved the revised edition of May 10-11, 2017.

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 which is based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution which the National Adjutant just stated in the Call for Convention.

In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on July 26, 2019, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 2,171 plus the National Commander for a total of 2,172 delegates to the National Convention allocated as follows:

Alabama	26	Montana	17
Alaska	14	Nebraska	36
Arizona	47	Nevada	14
Arkansas	19	New Hampshire	22
California	99	New Jersey	48
Colorado	29	New Mexico	17
Connecticut	26	New York	107
Delaware	16	North Carolina	46
Dist. Of Col.	8	North Dakota	19
Florida	127	Ohio	97
France	10	Oklahoma	23
Georgia	50	Oregon	24
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	150
Idaho	17	Philippines	7
Illinois	86	Puerto Rico	10
Indiana	83	Rhode Island	10
Iowa	50	South Carolina	30
Kansas	32	South Dakota	25
Kentucky	27	Tennessee	31
Louisiana	26	Texas	75
Maine	24	Utah	14
Maryland	58	Vermont	17
Massachusetts	42	Virginia	54
Mexico	7	Washington	32
Michigan	75	West Virginia	23
Minnesota	78	Wisconsin	61
Mississippi	20	Wyoming	12
Missouri	45		

The Credentials and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action. It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the report on behalf of the Committee.

Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the department of New Hampshire, I move that the Report of the Convention Committee on Credential and Rules, to include the afore-mentioned Delegate Strength 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 be approved. Thank you, Commander for allowing me the time to make my report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: All in favor, say aye. All opposed, say nay. The motion is carried. The report is accepted. The report of Credentials and Rules is adopted. I'll now entertain a motion to adopt the rules of convention. ...*Moved and seconded.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: All in favor, say aye. Opposed, nay. The rules of the convention are adopted. The Chair recognizes Gaither Keener of North Carolina, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Finance
Gaither M. Keener, Jr., North Carolina, Chairman

Forty-three members met at the JW Marriott in the Grand Ballroom section 1 at 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 25, 2019, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Shawn Long, CPA (Indiana), National Finance Director, opened the meeting as staff liaison and informed the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary. Gaither M. Keener, Jr. (North Carolina) was elected chairman, and Carl E. Levi (Tennessee) was elected secretary, by unanimous vote.

Gary W. Gifford (Maryland) made a motion to empower the Secretary to deliver the report if the Chairman was unable. The motion was seconded by David Warnken (Kansas) and passed by unanimous vote. Reports were received from Mike Rohan (Wisconsin) Chairman of the Marketing Commission and Walter Ivie (Texas) Chairman of the Media and Communications Commission.

Chairman Keener reported that the 2018 consolidated financial statements were audited by Crowe, LLP who issued an unqualified opinion.

The Chairman then introduced the National Treasurer, George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Indiana), who updated the committee on the economy. Treasurer Buskirk completed his report with a recommendation for national per capita to remain $18.50. Paul A. Morin (Massachusetts) made a motion to keep dues at $18.50. The motion was seconded by Mike Leon (Kentucky) and adopted by unanimous vote.

Chairman Keener finally introduced Shawn Long, CPA (Indiana) to report on the financial position and activities of the National organization. A motion was made by David Warnken (Kansas) to reject **Resolution No. 12: Limitations on Direct Mail Solicitations to Members** (Colorado). The motion was seconded by Alan Lennox (California) and passed unanimously.

A motion was made to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee by Gary W. Gifford (Maryland). It was seconded by Leon Martinez (New Mexico) and approved unanimously. A motion was made to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions without changing the substance or meaning by Paul Evenson (South Dakota). It was seconded by Tim Smith (Oklahoma) and approved unanimously. As being no further business, the meeting recessed subject to the call of the chair at 9:45 a.m.

National Commander, as a duly authorized delegate to the convention from the Department of North Carolina, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: All in favor, say aye. Opposed? The motion is carried. The report is accepted. The report of Finance is adopted.

Collection of Donations to American Legion Charities and Veterans & Children Foundation

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Next we will be accepting donations. First for American Legion Charities, the National Emergency Fund, and then for the Veterans & Children Foundation. Those presenting checks will please proceed to the microphone, announce the amount and donor, and go to the front, on the floor, for a photograph.

...National Vice Commander Pisa assumed the Chair.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: FODPAL donates $1,000 to Legion Charities.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FR): The Department of France donates $2,003 to the Legion Charities.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (TN): The Department of Tennessee donates $1,000 for Legion Charities.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MO): Great state of Missouri, $6,112.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MT): From the great state of Montana, $3,410.61.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NH): Department of New Hampshire, Live Free Or Die state, $1,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (GA): From the Department of Georgia, home of Past National Commanders Bob Turner and Dale Barnett, past alternate NEC Willie Pitts, and Past Adjutant Knox donates $15,000 to NEF, $5,000 to Child Welfare.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): Department of Ohio charities donate $10,000 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): The great first district of the Department of Ohio donates $100 to NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AR): Post 64, Heber Springs, Arkansas, $1,000 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): From the great state of Florida, home of National Commander Clarence Hill, $1,500 to NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WA): The members of Post and Unit 28 in Ephrata, Washington, held a dinner and auction fundraiser in conjunction with the Coast Guard birthday. Although there were only 40 members present, we managed to raise $2,623 for TFA.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): Post 347, Lady Lake, Florida, $3,500, NEF; $3,500 to the Endowment Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MI): The Department of Michigan donates $2,000 to the NEF and $500 to the Endowment Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MN): The Department of Minnesota donates $1,000 to NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NJ): The Department of New Jersey donates $10,000 to the NEF and $7,000 to the TFA.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PA): The Department of Pennsylvania, home of Past National Commanders Dominic DiFrancesco and Ronald F. Conley, donates $4,450 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IA): Mr. Commander, Department of Iowa, home of Past National Commander David K. Rehbein. We're pleased to present a $1,000 check for the Veterans & Children Foundation and a $1,000 check for the NEF. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MA): From the great state of Massachusetts, we're pleased to donate $545 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NM): From the great state of New Mexico, we're happy to donate $1,745 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NC): Great state of North Carolina, home of American Legion World Series, donates $12,000 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WY): From the great state of Wyoming and Post 14 in Laramie, Wyoming, we have $400 for the Temporary Assistance Fund.

...National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I want to thank everybody for their generosity. *(Applause)*

Salute to Colors and Recess

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Legionnaires, please join me in a salute to the Flag of the United States of America. By the numbers. One.

...The delegates rose and saluted the Colors.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Two. The time is now 4:03 p.m. The convention will stand in recess until 8:30 tomorrow, and I look forward to seeing many of you tonight at our banquet.

...At 4:03 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, August 28, 2019, at 8:30 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
Second Day

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the second day of the 101st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had.

Call to Order and Salute to Colors
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Convention will come to order. Sergeant-at-Arms.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS RANSOM: Our flag being in place, hand salute.

...The delegates rose and saluted the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS RANSOM: Two.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain Philip G. Salois of Massachusetts. Ladies and gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation
Father Philip G. Salois, Massachusetts, National Chaplain

Good morning, everyone. I see everybody got through security all right this morning. What caught me was my rosary beads. They thought I had a chain in my pocket. I got through anyway. I want to also, for the good of the order, announce that Reverend Dan Seehafer was just dehydrated yesterday, and he's being released from the hospital today and will be returning home. We also want to remember Marty Conaster's mom who passed away yesterday. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we give You this wonderful day. We ask You to bless this wonderful day for us. Bless each and every one of us, all the delegates here at The American Legion Convention. We ask You to bless the incoming Vice President Pence who will be addressing us this afternoon to bless all of us. Bless the deliberations and all of the awards that will be given out this morning for all the good work that The American Legion does and continues to do. And we ask You to watch over all of our men and women in uniform who are serving our country in Afghanistan and Syria, Iraq, and other places of great danger. Watch over them, Lord. Protect them, and bring them safely home to their loved ones. May we have a moment of silence now for our POWs and MIAs, those who are still unaccounted for. *...The Convention observed a moment of silence.*

And finally, Lord, remember all of our hospitalized veterans, those who find themselves homeless or incarcerated during these times, we ask You to bless them and console them in their time of need. We make this prayer in Your holy name, amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you, sir. Ladies and gentlemen, please remain uncovered as Sergeant-at-Arms Willie D. Ransom leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance
Willie D. Ransom, Virginia, National Sergeant-at-Arms

...The Convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Convention is now in session. I would now like to call our national vice commanders to join me on stage for our next presentation, which will be given by the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Foundation Chairman of the Board Louis Cavaliere.

ANNOUNCER: The Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion from the Chapel of Four Chaplains is granted for extraordinary contributions to the well-being of others at the national or world-level, to world peace, or to interfaith or inter-ethnic understanding. The medallions are being presented by Chapel of the Four Chaplain Foundation Board Chairman Louis Cavaliere. They are being awarded to: National Commander Brett P. Reistad; National Vice Commander James E. Wallace; National Vice Commander Steve Sweet; National Vice Commander James E. Pisa; National Vice Commander John F. Milburn, and National Vice Commander Paul I. Spedaliere.

Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion
Louis Cavaliere, Chairman of the Board, Chapel of Four Chaplains Foundation

So I give you greetings this morning from the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. You know, our national commander has spoken all year about the legacy of The American Legion for the past 100 years. And the Four Chaplains have been part of that legacy since 1943 when the Dorchester went down in the North Atlantic.

I'm joined here today, and they are giving the awards out right now, by Bill Kaemmer, our new executive director; if whom you haven't met, please meet. Bill is retired Army, and he's from Wisconsin. I'm also joined by Chaplain Captain Randy Cash, who is a U.S. Navy retired, and he was also a past chaplain for The American Legion. So we've got you all covered. Both sides, Army, Navy and Air Force, of course, because the Four Chaplains were Army Air Corps.

The Chapel is a unique organization. The Chapel of Four Chaplains, which celebrates four Army chaplains, is in the middle of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. But it all makes sense because the *Dorchester* was an Army ship. It was crewed by the U.S. Merchant Marine. It was carrying U.S. Army Air Corps personnel with a Naval and Marine Corps armed guard and a U.S. Coast Guard communications team and also four Army chaplains. So all of the services were represented on the ship. And when that ship was torpedoed, they had 20 minutes in which to decide their fate. That's why there were only 230 survivors out of 900. But the four chaplains, they knew what their fate was, and they gave up their life jacket in a tremendous image and example for all of us of selfless service.

One of the four chaplains, George Fox, from Vermont, he served in World War I as an Army medic. After World War I, he became a chaplain, but he also joined The American Legion, and he became the state chaplain for the state of Vermont. So whatever your service branch is, and whatever your state is, and whatever your faith is, you are connected to the sinking of *Dorchester* in some way, in more ways than you know. My challenge to all of you today is to make something of that connection, to go out and do acts of selfless service, to do something with your life jacket.

I invite you to join us. We have four programs for Four Chaplains. If you don't know about our Legion of Honor program, which we're presenting today, please go on our website or give us a call. If you have children or grandchildren, get them involved in our scholarship essay contest. This is very important, if you have first responder chaplains in your communities or at your post, we do chaplains training, not only in Philadelphia but all over the country. We will go out to your state and do that chaplain's training. And finally, our fourth program is our biggest, and this is our veterans outreach. You know, when you go down on a ship at sea, the family has no tombstone to visit at some national cemetery somewhere because those bodies are somewhere in the Atlantic. However, in the Chapel, we have bronze plaques of everybody who went down on the Dorchester and those families still come and now we're seeing grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who were on that ship. But in addition to that, we have a huge veterans mental health program, and we serve the families of all veterans because it is the family that is affected.

Finally, I want to thank you all because this humbles me to come here and speak in front of you and everywhere we go all over the country when we present awards for the

Legion of Honor. I want to thank you all for your financial help, which we get from posts all over the country because with that support, we have been able to grow our four programs way beyond our capacity. And that really humbles me.

So, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very, very much and I present to you now the latest inductees into the Legion of Honor. Will everyone please stand. To all who hear these present greetings, the Chapel of Four Chaplains is pleased to induct the national staff, National Commander Brett Reistad, Vice Commanders James Pisa, Paul Spedaliere, John Milburn, James Wallace, and Steve Sweet, into the Legion of Honor in recognition of their lifetime of service to all people regardless of race or faith. And this award symbolizes, for all of us, the unity of this nation founded upon the fatherhood of one god. We are ordinary people who are doing extraordinary things. And please keep on doing the extraordinary. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I have a couple of announcements to make. First, let me review the collections that have been taken so far, contributions to our various charities. For The American Legion charities in general, the contributions that were presented on stage amount to $7,148. Total for the year $1,100,777. For our Veterans & Children Foundation, collected on the stage was $20,489. For the year, total of $1,450,424. For the National Emergency Fund, contributions made here on the stage amounted to $85,973 and for the year-to-date, $483,363. And lastly, for the Legacy fund, collected onstage, $590,152, and for the year-to-date $975,208. *(Applause)*

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce the tenth secretary of veterans affairs, the Honorable Robert Wilkie. Mr. Wilkie was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 23, 2018, and sworn in on July 30, 2018, after earlier serving as VA's acting secretary. Before coming to the VA, Mr. Wilkie was undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, the principal advisor to the secretary and deputy secretary of defense on total force management. He brings to the department more than two decades of experience at the national and international levels. The recent implementation of the VA Mission Act occurred under his tenure. As undersecretary of defense, Mr. Wilkie served under Secretary James Mattis. As assistant secretary of defense, he served both Robert Gates and Donald Rumsfeld. Before that, Mr. Wilkie was a special assistant to the president and a senior director of the National Security Council. He is a colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve, and he previously served in the United States Navy. Mr. Wilkie is a recipient of the Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest non-career civilian award for that department. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the secretary of veterans affairs, Mr. Robert Wilkie. *(Applause)*

Address: Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you. This is the second time I've had to follow your national commander on the stage. The first was on National Public Radio this morning, and I always benefit from the encounter. So thank you. Thank you all for your kind welcome. Thank you to your past national commanders. Thank you to the men and women of the Legion. But I also want to single out one person and hopefully not embarrass him. You know, Washington is a place full of those folks who pretend to know a lot about how government works. They get paid a lot of money. They go to a lot of parties. But there's one person in your midst who knows a lot about how government works. There's nobody better. And whenever he does something, it is always with the goal of putting veterans at the front of the line. And I want to thank your executive director, Lou Celli, for everything that he has done for America's veterans. *(Applause)*

He is the reason that the president of the United States signed the LEGION Act. And he's the reason that you all were able to stand up and say: No matter what Washington calls

an international conflict, everyone who serves deserves recognition. So I thank Lou for his leadership on that legislation. *(Applause)*

Just weeks ago, we celebrated two very important anniversaries: The 75th anniversary of the assault on Hitler's fortress Europe. And the 75th anniversary of the signing of the GI Bill. Probably the most important legislation signed by a president of the United States, with the exception of the Civil Rights acts. I also had a more somber anniversary. I talk about growing up at Fort Bragg as the son of an Airborne ranger. There were many times in my childhood when kindergarten and elementary school classmates were called to the principal's office and they weren't going there because they had a doctor's appointment. They were going there because there was bad news from Southeast Asia. That is what happened on April 4, 1975. Just before Saigon fell, President Ford ordered the evacuation of all the orphanages in Saigon before the North Vietnamese arrived. He asked for volunteers from the United States Air Force to aid in the effort. One of those volunteers was Master Sergeant Denning Cicero Johnson from my neighboring county, Harnett County, North Carolina. On April 4, his C-5 lifted from the Tan Son Nhut Air Base. It didn't make it to the runway. A faulty cargo door forced that plane down. 138 lives were lost that day, most children, but 11 airmen who had volunteered for that humanitarian mission. Sergeant Johnson was one of the last to die in Southeast Asia.

On April 4 of this year, I escorted his daughter, Denise, my classmate and childhood friend, to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial 44 years to the day after her father passed. She touched his name on the last row on the last panel, Panel 1-W, at the center of that memorial. The names on that wall mean something to me, and they mean a great deal to the members of the Legion. I will note in the years that have passed since the end of that conflict much has changed for veterans across America.

My memory of that conflict was my father coming back from a year at Tripler Army Hospital weighing half of what he did when he went to Vietnam. Then struggling three years to get back into sufficient shape to return to the Army. I also remember in those days how our veterans were treated. There was my father, a senior officer in the most decorated combat unit in the Armed Forces of the United States, the All-American division. He was unable to wear his uniform off post because of the treatment our warriors were getting at that time. That was in southeastern North Carolina. The '60s and the '70s were a dark time when America forgot that freedom was not guaranteed by protesters or professors or journalists. It is guaranteed by the souls of 41 million Americans who have served their country since the first shots were fired at Lexington in 1775. *(Applause)*

But today thankfully we are a pro-veteran country. We see it everywhere. We see people standing for veterans at the ball games and in the airports. Videos of veterans surprising their children after coming off a long deployment automatically go viral. It seems that even most celebrities in Hollywood say they are pro-veteran. And in a political climate as charged and divisive as this one is, veterans are the only things that Republicans and Democrats seem to agree with. *(Applause)*

There's a reason for that, it is this Legion. This Legion knows something about where we came from and the importance of reminding us all of the shared sacrifice that these members have. You were chartered 100 years ago, the end of World War I. My family's contribution was that my great-aunt, who was the first woman to serve as a judge on the Board of Veterans Appeals, started the American Legion Women's Auxiliary in the great Magnolia state of Mississippi shortly after that war.

You helped establish the agency that is today your VA. And you wrote the biggest check to build the Vietnam Wall where I was just months ago with those who continue to think about the effects of that struggle. So on behalf of the president of the United States, thank you, thank you for reminding us. *(Applause)*

Thank you for reminding us of our great history of cherishing and caring for veterans. There's something else that's happening in this country that's reinforcing the importance of America's veterans. Many of the burdens borne by veterans now are some of the same

issues facing Americans in all walks of life. Things like suicide and opioid abuse, and this VA is playing an important part in the president's efforts to tackle these issues.

Suicide prevention is the number one clinical priority for the president of the United States. And it remains my top priority for veterans. As long as we are still seeing veterans struggle, we must all guide them back to the community of this brotherhood and this military family. They need our love and support. You know the statistics. Every day 20 American veterans take their lives. About half of those warriors are over the age of 65, and the majority of those are soldiers of Vietnam. Let me put that into historical perspective. Lyndon Johnson left Washington D.C. 50 years ago in January and we are still dealing with the effects of that conflict.

Of the 20 veterans who commit suicide, that last tragic act, the VA only sees six. But here's what we're doing for the six who do use VA care. Any veteran who walks through our doors for health care is now screened for mental health. We also provide same-day mental health care. And just as importantly, we are talking about this issue more within the active duty force of the armed forces. The practice of my father's generation not to talk about these things is now giving way to an open discussion among our active servicemembers who have now learned the importance of looking out for signs in themselves and signs in their comrade's distress.

But no VA secretary, no federal department, can solve this problem from Washington. Especially when most of those veterans we need to reach are not in our system. We will not get anywhere on veteran's suicide until this nation has a national conversation about life and that's a conversation that veterans can start today. The federal government needs to build those partnerships with organizations like the Legion, our states and localities, to get to those in the community who can deliver aid directly to those veterans in need. For example, there's important legislation in the Congress now that would let VA direct funding to groups like yours, to community partners across the country, so they can support veterans at risk of suicide. Senator John Bozeman of Arkansas introduced in the Senate and the former commander of the 3rd Marine Division, General Jack Bergma, Minnesota, introduced it in the House, and I know this has the full support of the Legion.

Opioid addiction is another factor that's hit both veterans and nonveterans. And it's another issue in which the VA is leading the way. When I was in the White House with President Trump last month, I told him we've had success in reducing our opioid prescriptions by 51 percent during his administration. And we are continuing to make progress. We are looking at other options that would never have been considered in my father's day: yoga, tai chi, acupuncture. If I had told my father that I would treat the pain of his wounds with acupuncture or tai chi, my nose would have been flat against my face. But the culture is changing. And we're giving veterans healthier alternatives as a result.

VA is now also at the center of the most successful piece of legislation since the GI Bill, the MISSION Act. The MISSION Act is the greatest change in our department since Omar Bradley sat at the desk that I now occupy. But while Bradley gave us the modern VA system, this president has revolutionized the way we look at veterans by saying conclusively that it is VA's job to fit the needs of the veterans instead of forcing America's veterans to design their health care around the needs of the VA bureaucracy. *(Applause)*

Under MISSION, veterans can now get care in their community, if a VA facility is too long a distance away or if the VA does not have the care that they need, or even when that veteran says it is in our best interests to go elsewhere. And finally, it begins to give veterans what their neighbors have had for so many years: The option of getting urgent care close by, without having to drive to a VA, without having to go into an emergency room for a cold or the flu. And that means we are finally on the cusp of providing veterans 21st century medicine. *(Applause)*

Some worry that we're on some strange path to privatization. Let me address that as I've addressed it under oath. I was privileged to present the largest budget in the history of this department to the United States Congress. $220 billion. I'm the only member of the president's cabinet who was ordered not to present any budget cuts to the Office of

Management and Budget. And I can tell you that I have the same standing orders for next year's budget. *(Applause)*

A $220 billion budget, calling for a workforce of 390,000 employees, is a very strange way to privatize a department. And I want to say that veterans are voting with their feet. When people warn us that the VA will be put out of business by the private sector, I remind them that this is not the same VA you were reading about five years ago. The Journal of the American Medical Association, the Annals of Internal Medicine say our care is as good or better than any in the private sector. And our veterans are voting for their feet. This year alone we've had over 1.5 million more appointments at VA than we did in all of last year. That is an improvement that veterans across America are taking in. And it is an improvement that we will continue to build on.

But our force is also changing. In my father's day, when he was commissioned two months before President Kennedy was inaugurated, less than one-half of one percent of the force was female. The force I was responsible for under General Mattis was 17 percent female. And it is going up to 20 percent. What does that mean for VA? That means that 10 percent of those we serve are America's women warriors. By the end of the next decade, that figure will be at 25 percent. I just returned from my boyhood home, my hometown, Fayetteville, North Carolina. The Fayetteville VA already, 20 percent of those that we see are women. So the future is not only happening in North Carolina, it is happening across the country. So while the MISSION Act gives Veterans the option of permanent choice, it is our goal, again, to make it a tough choice. We know that America's veterans prefer VA because they want to go where people speak the language and understand the culture.

So I will conclude with two more items that this group cares, cares, and cares about. One is electronic health records. You will be glad to know that we're about to launch the first testing of the new electronic health record in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska in the next few months. No longer will warriors have to carry around hundreds of pages of paper records that are disintegrating in their hands. *(Applause)*

That means doctors will never have to guess again what you went through at the Chosin Reservoir, at Da Nang, at Hue City, Khe Sanh, Grenada, Panama and the sands of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan, it will be there. The other advantage that it will have is that it will finally be interoperable. That means if you go to that urgent care facility, if you go to your private doctor, those doctors will have the ability to tell VA what they have done for you and what you need for your future care. So that regardless of what anybody says about the future of this institution, the VA will always be at the center of your health care, and that is the way America should have it. *(Applause)*

The last is the Blue Water Navy. One of the last circles that we close from that conflict that I have been talking about throughout my remarks. On the 1st of January, we will begin giving the benefits to those who sailed in the waters of Southeast Asia. As we speak, we are focusing on training, hiring over 2,000 people to put in place the processes and the procedures needed to make sure that these claims are finally awarded, benefits that 75,000 sailors and Marines deserve and deserved a long time ago. So that is underway, and it has the full support of the president of the United States. *(Applause)*

So we've had a lot of victories. As I said, this is not the same VA that it was five years go. But in an organization of 400,000, there will always be a hiccup. There will always be one or two people who aren't doing the right thing. That is where you come in. That is where the vigilance of your executive director comes in. We have an open door. This VA is a creation of The American Legion. You remind us that a broad community of service exists far outside the swamps of Washington D.C. A community that cares not only about warriors today, but warriors in the future, caring for them while they're in uniform, but also when they return home. The Legion is the force that fulfills the fondest wish for America's warriors; that they live full and engaged lives in the country they fought to defend.

I want to close with two stories from the greatest of all Airborne warriors, General Matthew Ridgway. As you know, General Ridgway commanded the All-American division in the victories in North Africa and Sicily. But he was terribly disappointed when

he couldn't jump in with the 18th Airborne Corps on the evening of D-Day. He was asked to plan the airborne assault on Hitler's fortress Europe. He planned for the 82nd, for the 101st and the British 1st Airborne. He tried to get some sleep that night because there was nothing left for him to do. And actually he fell out of his cot. He was in great distress, and he reached for the Old Testament, and he looked to the passage in the book of Joshua, the Battle of Jericho. The greatest battle in the history of the Hebrew people. And he asked to say over and over again: God's command to Joshua on the evening of that battle that I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. In 1986, President Reagan awarded General Ridgway the Presidential Medal of Freedom. And President Reagan said about the General that "Heroes come when they are needed. Great men step forward when courage seems in short supply."

That is The American Legion: A group of American patriots who do not fail nor forsake their warriors or their country. But heroes and great men and women who step forward when courage is often in short supply. So on behalf of the president, I thank you for everything that you do. Not only for the freedom of our country, but for the freedom of the world. God bless the Legion and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next guest is a man who epitomizes public service and private sector success. That shouldn't surprise us, since he attended American Legion Hoosier Boys State. He later served as chief of staff to Senator Richard Lugar, a senior advisor to President Reagan, and OMB director under President George W. Bush. He continued his results-oriented leadership as a top executive of Eli Lilly and Company, including as president of its North American Pharmaceutical Operations. During his two highly successful terms as Indiana governor, this state went from an $800 million deficit to its first AAA credit rating. He passed sweeping education and health-care reforms and Indiana led the nation in infrastructure building. As president of Purdue University, he fostered an environment that is welcoming of veterans. Under his leadership, the university has not increased tuition since 2012 and student borrowing has dropped 33 percent, while investments in student success and STEM research have undergone unprecedented growth. Amazingly, it is less expensive to attend Purdue University today than it was in 2012. He holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and a law degree from Georgetown. It is my pleasure to present the 2019 American Legion Patriot Award to former Indiana governor and current Purdue University President Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion Patriot Award presented to Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., for staunch advocacy of patriotic values during your career of public service. A graduate of The American Legion Boys State program, your innovative ideas have had major impacts in the business, political and academic communities. After serving in the administrations of President Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, you were elected to two successful terms as the 49th governor of Indiana. During your time as governor, you visited U.S. military troops deployed overseas, appeared at Blue Star Salute events and met with Gold Star Family members. As president of Purdue University, you froze tuition and created a veteran-friendly campus with a thriving Reserve Officer Training Corps program. You maintain a seat as a valued member of The American Legion 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee. On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion, thank you for your patriotism and service to America. Presented this 28th day of August 2019 at the 101st National Convention of The American Legion, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Presentation: The American Legion Patriot Award
Mitchell E. Daniels, President, Purdue University

Good morning, everybody. In the last couple of jobs I've had, particularly get a lot of awards you probably don't deserve, and I think this is another one of those occasions. But I cannot tell you what it means to me to be with you and to have this opportunity to express my own gratitude to this organization and to all the individuals who have made it up over all the years.

My first exposure to The American Legion was one of the earliest, I should say, Legionnaires, PFC Russell Wilkes, U.S. Army, 1917 and '18. My grandfather took me to the Legion hall many, many times in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. Other relatives took me to their own halls. I saw this organization, always, as one of the great emblems of our country and great assets of our country. Later in life, I got a chance to meet hundreds, maybe thousands, of today's younger Legionnaires.

In my last job, I always said that of all the things we were involved in, far and away my number one responsibility was the support of the Indiana National Guard, technically I guess it's commander-in-chief. Those eight years happened to coincide with the eighth largest deployments of the Indiana National Guard, other than World War II, in its history and sadly with the largest number of casualties. The adjutant general for all those eight years, I had my cell phone on his speed dial, vice versa, and I confess that every time his number came up, I held my breath a minute or two. Twenty-four of those calls were the ones I feared where we had lost someone, and then subsequently there were 24 of the most difficult days, in that otherwise rather joyful assignment, to honor and say goodbye to those that we had lost.

But my most vivid encounter with this great organization of yours was for six indelibly memorable days in 1966, Hoosier Boys State, subsequently through someone's selection on to Boys Nation and another week of fascinating learning. And the thought I want to leave with you, the reason that I was so especially glad for the chance to spend these couple minutes with you this morning was that I just, as important and as valuable as the programs like that have been and the example that the Legion sets has been, we've never needed it more than today. Back at that time, our country had its arguments and had its divisions, but in general Americans were patriotic, they were grateful. They understood how incredibly fortunate we all have been to live in this country and the freedoms we enjoy.

You may have seen, within the last two weeks, a very disturbing survey which showed that from a number like in the 70 percent range, in the 90s, undoubtedly 80 or 90 percent, when I was a student, a young person, a Boys State attendee. The percentage of Americans now saying that patriotism is a very important thing to them has fallen to 60 percent and among our young people to 40 percent. I don't blame the young people for that. Many of them, even among the brightest, that we welcome at our school and at other places. However much they may know about other things have not been taught much about American history. In some cases they've been mistaught. And they don't know much about our civic traditions. And so it's not their fault that they don't have as much appreciation as they should for the wonders that this country has meant to the world and for the great gift it has given to each of us. Ignorance of that kind can lead to ingratitude, and in combination those are two very dangerous character traits for a country of free people trying to govern themselves.

I want to say thank you for this award. I told Commander Reistad, whoever's idea it was, please don't fire them; their judgment won't fail them often. But more so even for the chance to encourage you to press on. The example of this organization, individuals in your communities, what you represent in your local communities. I was in every Legion hall in this state, I promise you during the 10 years I served or sought to. But what you do as a national organization, all these things have always been, throughout your century, an incredibly important part of American life. Never more so than today. Thank you and God bless this great Legion of yours. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes Robert Newman of Indiana, chairman of the Convention Committee on Internal Affairs, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman

At 9:30 am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, the Convention Committee of Internal Affairs, consisting of the two Subcommittees of Other Internal Matters and Membership met in the Grand Ballroom, Section 8, Third Floor at the JW Marriott for the purpose of electing a Chairman and Secretary for Internal Affairs. Robert E. Newman (IN) was elected Chairman and Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer (WI) was elected Secretary for the purpose of reporting to the Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to accept and sign the report of the Convention Committee on Internal Affairs on behalf of its delegates.

It was moved and seconded that the Chairman, Internal Affairs Convention Committee be authorized to accept the actions of the two sub-committees assigned to Internal Affairs on the resolutions assigned to the respective subcommittees.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Chairman and Secretary may 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).

No further business was discussed at this point and the delegates were then released to the two sub-committees assigned to the Internal Affairs Convention Committee--- Membership and Other Internal Matters--- for the purpose of reviewing and acting on the assigned resolutions. The Internal Affairs Committee was recessed at this point subject to call by the chairman if required.

The Convention Subcommittees met and considered their assigned resolutions as follows:

Membership Subcommittee
Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin, Chairman

At 10:00 am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, 49 delegates assigned to the Convention Subcommittee Membership met in the Grand Ballroom, Section 10 on the third floor of the JW Marriott. Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer (WI) was elected Chairman and Gary Schacher (NY) was elected Secretary. There were no resolutions to come before the Membership Convention Subcommittee.

Those in attendance received updates on the LEGION Act, the DMS program, membership workshop, district revitalizations, post to national dues processing through myLegion, the 2020 membership goal and the M&PA Committee meetings held this past January and in August prior to the membership workshop.

Other Internal Matters Subcommittee
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman

At 10:00 am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, 42 delegates assigned to the Convention Subcommittee on Other Internal Matters met in the Grand Ballroom, Section 8 on the third floor of the JW Marriott. Robert E. Newman (IN) was elected Chairman and William O.

Moore, Jr. (KY) was elected Secretary. The committee considered 15 resolutions and their dispositions are as follows:

Approved Resolutions

Resolution No. 26: Amending The POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony
Origin: Connecticut
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The American Legion is the nation's largest veterans service organization, which firmly believes that no comrade should be left behind, which is why it is important for The American Legion to remember our POW/MIAs; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion performs the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony at all official meetings as a reminder to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 288, titled "Support "Empty Chair" Program (POW/MIA)", calls for the implementation of the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony at all official meetings of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 288 was adopted at The American Legion's 67th National Convention; and

WHEREAS, The POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony currently reads, "...the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for..."; and

WHEREAS, Due to fluctuations which may increase or decrease the actual number of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for, from all conflicts with the United States of America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That in the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony, the phrase "...the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for..." be changed to read "...the many American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for..."; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That any and all American Legion publications that contain the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony be updated to reflect this change.

Resolution No. 56: Appreciation To Host City
Origin: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The 101st National Convention has been held in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28 and 29, 2019; and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of Indiana, the officers of the convention corporation and the department, and by the officials and the people of Indianapolis, Indiana; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That we express our deep appreciation to Governor of Indiana Eric Holcomb; Mayor, City of Indianapolis, Joseph Hogsett; the state of Indiana and city of Indianapolis officials, Indiana, including the fire department, police department, and other public safety officials, the Department of Indiana and The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Indiana, Inc., and, be it finally

RESOLVED, These officials and organizations built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable convention.

Resolution No. 57: Coin Commemoration Of The 75th Anniversary Of The End Of World War II

Origin: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The National World War II Museum was designated as "America's National World War II Museum" by the United States Congress in 2004; and

WHEREAS, The mission of The National World War II Museum is to tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and

WHEREAS, The United States entered World War II as a result of the surprise Japanese attack against our fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, which killed 2,403 people of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The United States joined the wartime Allied cause against the militarist, fascist, and racist dictatorships of Germany, Japan, and Italy (the Axis), fighting for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear); and

WHEREAS, The United States placed 16,000,000 of its citizens into uniform in the course of the struggle, enduring a string of early defeats, recovering to conduct a total war on land, sea, and 'air, and eventually establishing total dominance over its enemies; and

WHEREAS, The war took the lives of 405,399 United States military personnel, fellow citizens who made the supreme sacrifice in a perilous moment in the history of the United States, giving their lives for the cause of democracy and peace; and

WHEREAS, The conflict led to a comprehensive transformation of the home front from a civilian economy dedicated to peacetime production into the mightiest engine of military might in human history (labeled the "Arsenal of Democracy"), demanding the participation of the entire citizenry and thus leading to increased opportunities for racial minorities and women; and

WHEREAS, The war ended on September 2, 1945, after the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan, amounting to a total victory for the United States and the Allies; and

WHEREAS, The generation of United States citizens who fought World War II is passing away with the march of time, and that therefore the urgent need to give honor to those who served is all the more critical; and

WHEREAS, The period from May 8, 2020, to September 2, 2020, will mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the involvement of the United States in World War II and the surrender of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan; respectively; and

WHEREAS, The commemoration of the end of World War II is not only an appropriate time to mark the achievement of the World War II generation, but to further the mission of The National World War II Museum in telling the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, commemorative coin programs have been successfully conducted for other worthy causes related to veterans and the military; and

WHEREAS, The United States Mint, in compliance with the Commemorative Coin Reform Act of 1996 ("CCRA of 1996"), Public Law 104-208, conducts commemorative coin programs to honor a person, place or event; and

WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The National World War II Museum has demonstrated the ability to raise funds from private sources, "in an amount that is equal to or greater than the total amount of the proceeds of such _surcharge derived from the sale of such numismatic item"; and

WHEREAS, The proceeds from the sale of this 75th anniversary of the end of World War II commemorative coin will benefit the educational mission of The National WWII

Museum to tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and

WHEREAS, The Commemorative Coin Program provides for surcharge payments to be made from proceeds received from the sale of commemorative coins; and

WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The National World War II Museum must submit an audited financial statement and submit the results of the annual audits to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the secretary of Treasury, that it has qualified for surcharge proceeds and is properly expending them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports The National World War II Museum proposed legislation to mint coins commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II by the United States Mint with the understanding that the surcharge payment will be earmarked to benefit the educational mission of The National World War II Museum.

Referred to Standing Internal Affairs Commission

Resolution No. 4 (NE): **Expand Admittance Criteria To National American Legion College**
Resolution No. 7 (CO): **Gender Neutral Caps Regulations**
Resolution No. 23 (TX): **Emblem Regulations For American Legion Riders Vests**

Referred to Standing Convention Commission

Resolution No. 27 (PA): **City Of Philadelphia Offers To Host The 2026 National Convention**
Resolution No. 43 (OH): **Band Contest Point System**

Received And Recorded

Resolution No. 9 (CO): **Endorsement Of John W. "Jay" Bowen For National Commander**
Resolution No. 42 (OH): **Protection Of Memorials And Monuments**
Resolution No. 47 (VA): **Endorsement Of Michael Mitrione For National Vice Commander**
Resolution No. 50 (NH): **Endorsement Of Michael J. Pollitt For National Chaplain**

Rejected

Resolution No. 3 (NE): **Names Of Merchant Marines To Be Added To The Vietnam Veterans Memorial**
Resolution No. 13 (SD): **Recognition Of National American Indian Veterans Inc.**
Resolution No. 35 (IL): **Dual Member Legion/Sons Cap**

I would like to take a moment to discuss a journey that began last October when our National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 1. We now know this as the LEGION Act. President Trump signed this into law on July 30, 2019, and it recognizes the more than 1,600 servicemembers who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared war periods. Now the U.S. government, due to the LEGION Act adoption, recognizes the service of these wartime veterans and opens up all benefits of American Legion membership to an additional 4.2 million veterans. To date, we have had 1,400 join The American Legion since it was signed into law. Keep in mind that it also allows millions of spouses, mothers, daughters, sisters, granddaughters or grandmothers and male descendants to join The American Legion family.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has been and always will be my sacred responsibility to look out for each other, our fellow veterans, their families. This is why the LEGION Act was unanimously supported by Congress and why we have been given this great opportunity to open our arms and welcome them all into the American Legion Family. Just to let you know, updated membership applications can be picked up in the back of the convention hall by the doors you entered. At this time the 2019 American Legion College selectees will be displayed on the screens. After the convention, each department will receive written correspondence on the selections. We'll pause for a minute while you take those names down. Commander, thank you for allowing me the time to make these two reports, and as duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Indiana, I move for the adoption of these reports. ... *Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second to adopt the reports. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried, and the report of Internal Affairs is adopted. *(Applause)*

America is blessed to have so many amazing and dedicated police officers and firefighters. Their split-second decisions can mean life or death and often invite intense scrutiny. Many military veterans also make second careers as emergency responders. I know. After I left the Army, I served as a firefighter and later as a career law enforcement officer. These next two awards are particularly meaningful and special to me. This year we are honoring two women who represent the best of the best. I'm going to deviate from my script just for a second to tell you that last night at the reception, prior to the national commander's banquet, you may have heard that our fellow Legionnaire, Dan Seehafer from Wisconsin, had a medical emergency, and both of these awardees immediately responded to his aid. So you know this is not just a job. They are literally on call 24 hours a day. *(Applause)*

Our 2019 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year has been a member of the Colorado Springs Police Department for 29 years. By all accounts, she has served and led with integrity, excellence and a true community service-oriented spirit. She is the recipient of numerous internal and external letters of appreciation, commendations and awards. She continues to mentor and coach local youth in a variety of athletic events. She has been active in local charities and exemplifies what it means to be a professional law enforcement officer. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm round of applause to our Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Lieutenant Jane Anderson. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: This is to certify that The American Legion has bestowed the title of National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year upon Jane Anderson for outstanding, selfless service over and above normal duties through heroic acts, community service and professional achievement, thereby exemplifying the meaning of the phrase: America's Finest. You reflect great credit upon yourself, the Colorado Springs Police Department, and law enforcement officers everywhere.

2019 National Law Enforcement Officer of Year
Lt. Jane Anderson, Colorado Springs Police Department
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Good morning. I'm honored to be here this morning to accept this award. I want to thank The American Legion for hosting such an amazing event, and I think you would agree, and for your never-ending respect and support of first responders. Thank you American Legion for all of the things that you do nationwide. I would like to thank the CSPD awards committee for nominating me for the initial award, and I would then like to especially thank the Colorado regional and national American Legion awards committee for selecting me for this award, even better. I want to give a shout-out to my Colorado folks here. And they're over here on the left-hand side, my left. *(Applause)*

I am truly honored and humbled by this experience. So thank you. Being a police officer has always been a calling to me. I remember going on a field trip to a bank when I was in elementary school. And I didn't really care about all the money in the bank; I was fascinated by the surveillance system and how it helped catch bank robbers. I watched Adam-12, Emergency, Hawaii 5-O, and I loved every single minute of it. I was the bus-safety monitor, if anybody remembers those. I got to wear a white sash with a belt, and it had a badge on it. And I get to tell kids to sit down in their seats and follow other safety rules such as don't cross that white line in the front of the bus. I'm telling you, I was born to be a cop. I studied criminal justice in college. I worked campus safety and later held other security jobs pursuing my dream of being a cop. I had to borrow $600 from my college friend, Sue Brison, so I could pay to attend the Pikes Peak Regional Law Enforcement Academy to get post certified back in 1987. And how cool is it, she's in the audience today because she lives here. So, thank you, Sue, for being here. *(Applause)*

After graduating I had the opportunity to serve as a reserve officer in the Fountain Police Department here in Colorado. In 1989, I was hired by the Colorado Springs Police Department, and this time I got paid to go to the academy. I'm so thankful for the many opportunities I was given while serving 30 years at CSPD. My favorite job was always being in patrol. I loved being in uniform, driving a cruiser, helping citizens in their time of need and of course catching criminals. I even signed up for extra duty assignments as a lieutenant just so that I could put on the uniform and interact with the community instead of doing administrative work. I've been very blessed by the many people at CSPD who have provided me guidance, training and job opportunities along the way.

I want to especially thank Maggie and my family members who helped with the who helped with the kids while I was on call or working crazy cop hours over the years. Yes, the saying is true. It takes a village to raise a family. In Colorado Springs we're fortunate to have the community support, the military support and organizations such as The American Legion to remind everybody that the military and first responders are important. I'm proud to say that I was able to represent CSPD as an officer, a sergeant and a lieutenant, now for over 30 years. I know I made a difference. I had a lot of fun, but at the same time saw stuff that nobody should have to see, the same as our military. It seems that I've forgotten a lot of things because cops always come up and say, remember we went on this call or that call for service, but for some reason I can't seem to remember a lot of it even though they're talking about some really cool things that I did over the years and I was a part of it. I only wish I had written a journal.

Of course, cops always remember the stupid things that we did and are not shy about reminding any of us cops about what we did and they tell the stories over and over. As you can tell, I'm not wearing my police uniform this morning. It is because I don't have one anymore. I retired in July, and I do miss my brothers and sisters in blue, and I will miss being a police officer sometimes. But I can tell you I certainly am not missing the stress. So life is good.

The influence I've had on my children and others makes me smile as they continue to serve their communities. My son is a police officer in Arvada, Colorado, and my daughter getting dual master's degree in public health and administration. In addition, several of the kids that I've coached and mentored over the years are now in law enforcement. I am giving back as well as I volunteer for my police department. I volunteer for Shield 616, and I'm now told I can sign up to be an auxiliary member of The American Legion and can't wait to help. Yes! *(Applause)*

Thank you, American Legion, for all of the work you do and please keep up the good work. Thank you for this prestigious award, and I'm truly, truly honored. Thank you, again. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Few acts require greater bravery then entering a blazing inferno. On top of that, our Firefighter of the Year has the challenge of leading a department in a city that is known as the "Overdose Capital of America." She is

the star of the Netflix documentary "Heroin(e)." A title that describes not just the drug but the courage it takes to succeed as a firefighter and paramedic. A graduate of Marshall University, she has served her community as a fire department shift commander, training officer and a registered nurse at the Cabell Huntington Hospital Emergency Department. In 2017, she was promoted to the rank of chief and is the first woman to serve in the top position of a West Virginia fire department. Please welcome our 2019 National Firefighter of the Year, Chief Jan K. Rader. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: This is to certify that The American Legion has bestowed the title of National Firefighter of the Year upon Chief Jan K. Rader for outstanding, selfless service over and above normal duties through community service and professional achievement, thereby exemplifying the meaning of the phrase: America's Bravest. You reflect great credit upon yourself, the Huntington Fire Department and firefighters everywhere.

2019 National Firefighter of Year
Chief Jan K. Rader, Huntington Fire Department, Huntington, West Virginia

It is quite an honor to be here today. I'm very humbled by this. You know, Huntington is known for the opioid epidemic of the country, but what we've been able to achieve in Huntington has turned us into the city of solutions. And first responders are a big part of that. Your first responders have a very similar makeup as to all of you in this room today. We are known for putting the safety and wellness of others before ourselves. Self-sacrifice at any cost is ingrained in our makeup. I'm part of a large family, which is the fire service. I'm one small person in that sea of people doing incredible work, not only in Huntington and in West Virginia, but throughout this nation and will continue to do that. But I found a family today, in the last few days, that is actually larger than the fire service. And I thank you for allowing me to be here and to be part of this. I would like to thank the commander for his support and his leadership that has led to this. I want to thank my West Virginia delegates. Can I get a "We Are Marshall"? ...*We Are Marshall!*

And I have a special thanks for Fred Buchanan. He's an amazing human being, and I strive to be just like Fred, and I consider him an incredible friend. Thank you so much for all that you do, and thank you for The American Legion for recognizing your first responders and especially your firefighters. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes Randall Fisher of Kentucky, chairman of the Convention Committee on Legislation, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation
Randall Fisher, Kentucky, Chairman

Good morning, Commander Reistad, Adjutant Wheeler, past national commanders, distinguished guests, Legionnaires, and friends. I am honored to stand before you today on the stage of our 101st National Convention.

The National Convention Committee on Legislation met on Sunday, August 25th, 2019 at the Indianapolis Convention Center, Room 212, Level 2. There were 44 delegates to the Committee present and 7 guests in attendance. Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, Randall Fisher, a delegate from the Department of Kentucky, was elected Chairman following a motion from Russell Hanseter, a delegate from the Department of Wisconsin. Joe Gugliuzza, a delegate from New Jersey, was elected Secretary following a motion from Jim Willis, a delegate from the Department of Oregon. The Legislation Convention Committee received no resolutions for consideration and no new business was discussed. A motion by Roger Hagan, a delegate from the Department of Montana, was initiated to

allow the Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary and appropriate, and to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation. This motion was unanimously approved and adopted by the Legislative Convention Committee.

In closing, I thank all of you for your service to this great nation, and more importantly, for your continued service through The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary; Sons of The American Legion, and The Legion Riders. Thank you for this incredible honor.

National Commander Reistad, as a duly authorized delegate to this Convention from the Department of Kentucky, I move for the adoption of this report. ... *Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second to adopt the report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed. The motion is carried, and the report is adopted.

I call on Past National Commander Denise H. Rohan to present the plaque of appreciation to Past National Commander Daniel A. Ludwig of Minnesota for the outstanding job that the National Convention Corporation of Minneapolis and the Minnesota American Legion Family did in hosting the 2018 Convention.

Presentation: Plaque to the City of Minneapolis
Denise H. Rohan, Wisconsin, Past National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROHAN: Thank you. And good morning. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am a die-hard Green Bay Packer fan, and that I was a little nervous when I made Vikings purple the color for the membership shirt last year. Now, I have no idea if that purple shirt made a difference to how well the National Convention in Minneapolis went last year, but it certainly did. So I am here on behalf of the entire American Legion Family to thank the Minneapolis Convention Corporation, the Minnesota American Legion Family and the city of Minneapolis for making our 100th Convention a week that I will never forget. So thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LUDWIG: Thank you, commander. I accept this plaque on behalf of the city of Minneapolis and Minnesota and the entire American Legion Family of Minnesota. While I wasn't there, I am convinced that the Doughboys of Minnesota were proud and honored to host the first National Convention in 1919. And you've got to know that The American Legion Family of Minnesota was proud and honored to host the 100th National Convention. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next guest may come from a famous family, but that is not why we are happy to have him as part of our own American Legion Family. A Navy SEAL veteran who served two tours in Vietnam, he is an avid conservationist and patriot. He is a highly successful investment banker and the 2018 recipient of the Past Department Commanders Club James V. Day "Good Guy" Award. He is the managing director at Barclay's Capital Corporation and also the chairman of the American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Honorary Committee. From the Department of New York, please welcome Theodore Roosevelt IV. *(Applause)*

Address: Theodore Roosevelt IV, Chairman
100th Anniversary Observance Honorary Committee.

National Commander, thank you for that kind introduction, which was as unwarranted as it was generous, and for inviting me to be part of the 100th anniversary celebration of The American Legion. I am deeply honored to be here with you here today. And I want to give you personally special congratulations and also to your formidable staff here in Indiana and to all of the volunteers, to all of you who embody the spirit of service, duty

and comradeship upon which the Legion was founded. I also want to personally thank you for being so flexible, allowing me to accept an important conservation assignment going down the middle fork of the Salmon River in Idaho. *(Applause)*

One of the other things I learned as being part of the centennial committee is that if one young lady, Lowry Finley-Jackson, asks you to do something, there's only one answer: Click your heels and say, yes, ma'am. *(Applause)*

My grandfather, Ted Roosevelt Junior often said "no one man can claim to be the founder of the American Legion." In fact, I doubt that the Legion would have endured if it was simply the realization of one man's efforts. It was not that. The Legion was an idea and an ideal that resonated with all of those who served in World War I. It is the expression of their deep comradeship, their sense of duty and honor.

Grandfather often told the story of the man who inspired the Legion. He met him at a hospital camp in France. Grandfather was recovering there from a gunshot wound to his leg. Sergeant William Patterson was near the end of his own recovery from a combat wound. The two men talked under a shade tree in France. In the midst of war, they talked. Always deeply interested in his fellow soldiers, grandfather asked the sergeant what he intended to do when he got home. Sergeant Patterson answered, "Go home, sir, and start a veterans association for the good of the country."

Sergeant Patterson never made it home. He was killed in action. But the returning soldiers, sailors and Marines all rallied around this idea. To do what needed to be done for our veterans and for the good of the country on the home front. And that is what today is about. All of you, this community and communities across our nation that share this goal: The good of our veterans, the good of our country. A country that, with two fateful exceptions, never sought out international conflict, but will rise with a mighty roar when conflict finds it; a country that is about nothing so much as a tough, pragmatic idealism, valor that does not require medals, but does require all of us to rise to the occasions before us. And all of you here today do that: Rise to the occasion. You know what it takes.

That is why I've been so pleased to participate in The American Legion's 100th anniversary celebrations. I suspect that grandfather would not be surprised in the least at the endurance of this organization, founded as it is on a fundamental principle: "A veteran is a veteran." Ted Junior only saw the soldier, nothing else. Because nothing else mattered. Not race, rank, or duty station; not social position, education or money. The only things that mattered then and now: service, comradeship, loyalty. For grandfather and all the founders, this was clear: Those who gave all deserved all in return.

One of my grandfather's favorite heroes in WWI was William Henry Johnson. His story is a perfect illustration of why we needed and continue to need The American Legion. Grandfather described William as "one of the five bravest soldiers in the war." The Germans called him the "Black Death." He fought with the 369th or Harlem Hellfighters. It sounds a little like a Quentin Tarantino movie, but it was the real McCoy, real life, real men, veterans.

That African American unit spent 191 days in combat, more than any other outfit. They never lost a foot of ground or had any man taken as prisoner. But it was the story of William Henry Johnson that stands as a sad and shameful warning of what the neglect of our soldiers can mean. Johnson was posted, along with Needham Roberts, at a listening point in no-man's land, a treeless, barbed-wire wasteland between enemy trenches. They were on look-out for enemy activity. Needham heard a click, click, click: Germans cutting through the wire, launching an assault. Early in the melee, Needham was badly injured, leaving William Henry Johnson to defend their post and his comrade. He killed four men in hand-to-hand combat, using the butt of his jammed rifle and a knife. It is estimated that he withstood an assault of at least 30 men.

The papers later wrote: "Germans ran shrieking into the night." Now, that might have been a bit of propaganda. While both men received the Croix de Guerre from the French, our nation failed them. William Johnson only received a medal after his death. Even worse, he was badly injured in the battle, but the injury never made it into his military record. He

had a silver plate in his foot and could no longer work as a porter as he had done before the war. He died unacknowledged and penniless.

The American Legion was founded, and continues the hard fight, to ensure that this is not the story for returning veterans: That we do not forget their service, or neglect their aid and comfort. Unfortunately, it remains an ongoing struggle that requires concrete and continuous action from all of us. Concrete action that does not falter, that does not waver, that is not subject to the whims of politics. As you all know, the American Legion has given us the VA health system, recognition and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and illnesses caused by Agent Orange. Recently I just lost one of my fellow officers in Vietnam from Agent Orange. So it's a tragedy that was needlessly inflicted on ourselves. It gave us a massive support network for needy families and children.

It is important to remember that there was no VA when The American Legion was established. There was no GI Bill for education and career opportunities. Now, millions of veterans receive health care, home loans, education and training through the VA. At any one time today, some 3,000 American Legion service officers are working on nearly 800,000 VA benefits cases free of charge. Millions of volunteer hours are being logged at VA health-care facilities every year by the American Legion Family. A healthy VA for the future must always be a priority for The American Legion, regardless of what century it is.

Undoubtedly, we have many challenges before us and among these engaging with and connecting to the post-9/11 veterans. While, as President Theodore Roosevelt firmly believed, military service is the great equalizer, while it unites all of us in what we share, it is also painfully unique to each of us. As you heard: I am a Vietnam War vet. What is specific to that conflict unites me most with the men and women who also served there: The terrain in which we fought, the jungles of Southeast Asia; the politics on the home front; the first televised conflict; Agent Orange; the bitter return for so many of us who were ignored or reviled.

We seemed to speak our own language then. It was in the music that we listened to, the particular guns that we carried, unfortunately, for many, the drugs to which they resorted. It felt as though our DNA was changed in ways that only Nam vets understood. Other vets from other generations were our comrades, but we needed acknowledgment of what was specific to Vietnam: What was left behind there, what remained an obstacle to a healthy return for so many.

Much of that fight for acknowledgement was still being waged on the home front as recently as the struggle of Diane Carlson Evans, a combat nurse in Vietnam who fought for almost a decade for a monument on the Mall in D.C. for the 11,000 women who served there, a monument that was finally dedicated in 1993. The American Legion, I'm immensely proud to say, was a critical part of that effort. I cannot pretend to understand the specific challenges of our veterans of more recent conflicts, from Somalia to Bosnia to Afghanistan and Iraq. We know many of them, and we are continuing to learn. On the home front, there are traumatic brain injuries, depression and suicide that result, amputations, opioid addiction and MST. Our rural veterans are additionally suffering from the dearth of health-care availability and increasing isolation in rural areas. This is a large-scale social challenge, the rural/urban divide, but it is having an additional negative impact on our veterans. We cannot allow what is similar for our veterans to obscure what is unique to each conflict, each branch of the service, each generation.

Engagement with the newest generation of veterans, communicating across generational lines, across technologies, across cultures, is essential. Honoring our history should not be an impediment to speaking to our present and future vets. In fact, honoring our history requires that: requires that we stretch, adjust, and do what it takes to stay on mission. We can't understand younger vets unless we are hearing directly from them and that means their generation needs leadership roles in The American Legion.

Another challenge is the utilization of social media. Believe me, that's almost insurmountable for myself. Fortunately, the Legion has established a 21st Century Task Force to guide us, and it is being led by the newest and youngest generation of veterans.

We are also building out partnerships with a host of organization founded by this generation: Student Veterans of America. Their leader, Jared, is here today. Red, White, and Blue. Team Rubicon, and others. Together, we will rise to this occasion as well.

I have full faith in the timeless foundation that was laid by those who returned from World War I and by each subsequent generation of the Legion. The mortar of this association is our devotion to one another. It is the gift of the American Legion. Our mission belongs to neither party and to no ambition than memory and duty.

The American Legion's founders believed that mission came ahead of party politics. And this has allowed us to be intimately woven into the fabric of this nation, through rural and urban landscapes. Across our country, there are American Legion posts and volunteers, your neighbors and mine coming together to meet the needs of their veterans and their communities. While there are still local newspapers, there are American Legion stories: "Post 64 sends four local residents to State Trooper training program." "Salisbury to Host American Legion Baseball State Championship." "American Legion hosts sock drive for combat troops."

Famously, in 1835, Alexis de Toqueville wrote this about America. "Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds constantly unite... Everywhere that, at the head of a new undertaking, you would see the government in France or a great lord in England, count on it that you will see an association of citizens in the United States."

This is the practice of democracy: The free association of the like-minded to advance a shared cause. And there are few causes as great as ours. But we are also all soldiers. We know the cost of a lack of discipline. We know what it takes to storm the hill or hold the bridge. We know what it takes to get it done. And so we did. And so we will continue to do, because we must. We have The American Legion because the World War I Doughboys and Doughgirls came home from war and remembered. They remembered their comrades in arms so well that they have shielded, comforted and lifted up more generations than they ever knew.

We are the children whom most of those soldiers never met. I never met my grandfather. We are their legacy. But it is not just about those bonds to grandfathers; it is about the obligation we must feel to grandsons, even those whom we may never meet. Together we struggle to ensure that a William Henry Johnson will never again be abandoned. Today, we honor our mutual resolve, our comradeship, our loyalty to one another and to this great nation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Presentations: Department Membership Awards

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: It is now time for the membership awards. The departments and individuals who will be joining me onstage are being recognized today for their outstanding membership efforts for the 2018–2019 membership year. Membership is the lifeblood of our extraordinary organization. We are The American Legion, made up of veterans, by veterans, and for veterans. We have a responsibility, every one of us, to extend our arms and embrace our fellow veterans and make them aware of who we are and what we do. This year has been truly remarkable for membership, not because so many departments met or exceeded their goals for the year, but because we set conditions for enduring success in the future.

The LEGION Act is the realization of our mantra that "a veteran is a veteran." So now our recruiting efforts can extend to the nearly 4.2 million veterans now eligible for membership who were not eligible just a month ago. Since 1919, we have advocated for every single veteran regardless of when or where they served. Now, more veterans can call The American Legion home and advocate for future generations of veterans as was done before them.

Recruiting is about having an organization worth serving and worth being a part of. At this time I would like for all the Gold and Silver Brigade recruiters to please stand up.

These men and women recruited over 10,000 members into our organization. Thank you all for a job well done. *(Applause)*

Now, retention is every bit as important as recruitment. It requires leadership. It is about delivering on our promise to care for veterans, their families, and the communities that welcome us. When we open our hearts to the communities we serve and deliver the programs under our Four Pillars, Legionnaires will stay, and this is why personal contact is important. That's why in January I asked our posts to conduct a Buddy Check and reach out to every member within our ranks to simply see how they are doing and if there was anything we could do to help. This was conducted around our 100th birthday. We conversed with our veterans and their families because it is our sacred responsibility to take care of our fellow veterans.

I set a goal to charter 100 new posts this year. Although we did not charter as many as we hoped, it was a start. During the Department Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., I told the department leaders that: Team 100 doesn't just mean 100 years old. It can also mean Team 100 percent. And if you made 105 percent, I'll let you lead a Team 105 cheer from the big stage in Indianapolis. Here we are, on stage for the 101st National Convention, and we have five departments at or above 105 percent. *(Applause)*

I would like the departments of France and Mexico to join me in a Team 105 cheer. Be loud, France and Mexico: We are team 105! We are team 105! Excellent, excellent. Hawaii is Team 107. We are Team 107! We are Team 107! That's not bad for two guys. And finally, Alabama and the Philippines are Team 109. Where are they? We are Team 109! We are Team 109!

Now let's recognize all the departments on stage and a few individuals for their outstanding efforts in membership this year. I now ask that National Vice Commander Steve Sweet assume duties at the podium and that the national vice commander assigned to each department join the chairman and I as we congratulate departments from their areas.

...National Vice Commander Sweet assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SWEET: First, I would like to present the General Henri Gouraud Trophy Award to three departments for being the first to exceed its National Membership Goal in their respective categories. In Category 2, Department of California. In Category 5, Department of Alabama. In Category 6, Department of France. Please join me in congratulating these fine departments! *(Applause)*

The next series of awards are being presented to the 11 departments for their hard work and dedication to establishing a culture of growth in their departments by reaching 100 percent of their goals. These are outstanding accomplishments and a testament to the motivation of their members and their ability to implement their strategic plan. By implementing and working the five priorities within the strategic plan, these departments saw their membership grow over the last year. These departments are receiving a 100 percent Department Membership Award and a Culture of Growth shadowboxes. These awards are being presented to: Department of Alabama, Commander Harry Christian, Jr.; Department of Alaska, Commander Nathaniel Carter; Department of California, Commander Larry Leonardo, Sr.; Department of France, Commander James R. Dennis; Department of Hawaii, Commander John L. Williams; Department of Idaho, Commander Charles T. Abrahamson; Department of Mexico, Commander Milo Vukovich; Department of New Hampshire, Commander Emil A. Ouellette; Department of Philippines, Commander John T. O'Brien; Department of Utah, Commander Grant H. Stromness, Jr.; Department of Wyoming, Commander Richard F. Dansereau, Jr. *(Applause)*

Congratulations, commanders. Your members should take pride in knowing their hard work paid off this year. Our next award is the most prestigious award a district commander can earn. The American Legion Race to the Top Award is given to district commanders who attain at least 100 percent of the district's assigned membership objective by March 31, and these four district commanders' leadership helped their districts exceed their membership goal this year. These district commanders are receiving a new cap, polo shirt and a shadowbox plaque for their efforts. And the winners are: Richard F. Devlin, III of

Colorado. Category 1, District 1. Benjamin David Gibson of California. Category 2, District 24. Stephen C. Hamrick, Florida. Category 5, District 12. *(Applause)*

Commanders, Thank you for your leadership and dedication in motivating your districts to achieve this goal.

Presentation: National Membership Recruiter of the Year

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SWEET: Finally, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to present the National Membership Recruiter of the Year Award. This award is given to the individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all of the departments. From the Department of Idaho, recruiting 748 members, please join me in recognizing the 2019 National Membership Recruiter of the Year, from Post 101, Charles T. "Abe" Abrahamson! *(Applause)*

He is receiving a new cap, polo shirt, shadowbox plaque and a Recruiter of the Year ring. Congratulations, Abe, on a job well done. Would you like to say a few words?

DELEGATE ABRAHAMSON (ID): First off, I'd like to thank the Department of Idaho for letting me tour the state, meeting a lot of great veterans and heroes that live in our country. Secondly, I know you have the expectation that I'm going to make you some kind of challenge, but I'm one of those guys that like to exceed your expectations. So here's my challenge to each and every one of you. I want each and every one of you to recruit one new member, and you've heard that before. How I want to make that different is I want you to bring that new member to your post and have him join your fellow veterans in your post and show him the comradeship that he or she has lost since their time in service. So that's my challenge to each and every one of you. Thank you again.

...National Vice Commander Wallace assumed the Chair.

Presentation: Consolidated Post Reporting 2018-2019

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WALLACE: The Consolidated Post Report is a summary of what the American Legion posts have accomplished in their communities. It's an opportunity to tell the story of your post on an easy-to-fill-out form. For the past 20 years the average response rate has been about 60 percent. When the commander testified before congress in February, only 8,649 posts had submitted their report. In order to increase our response rate, the commander continued with Commander Rohan's challenge to all departments to improve responses from all of their posts. This year's response rate improved 3 percent over last year's. Our response rate rose to 69 percent with 8,777 Posts reporting out of 12,701. As you can see, there is still room for improvement. These department commanders have met the commander's challenge of 75 percent response rate with Washington, Oregon, North Carolina, Kentucky, Colorado, Vermont, Nevada, West Virginia, Virginia, Ohio, Alaska, Maryland, Wyoming, and Florida. The commanders think they deserve a round of applause. *(Applause)*

Now, I ask to join me on stage today for special recognition those departments that exceeded the challenge and had a response rate of 100 percent. At this time, we will present their plaques to the department commanders. Harry Christian, Jr., Department of Alabama; James H. Stewart, Department of Delaware; Charles T. Abrahamson, Department of Idaho; Kerry L. Boardman, Department of Missouri; Richard A. Klose, Sr., Department of Montana; Lyle D. Bartels, Department of Nebraska; Emil A. Ouellette, Department of New Hampshire; Evon E. Harrison, Department of New Mexico; James Ching, Department of Oklahoma; Stephen T. Weismann, Department of Tennessee; Grant H. Stromness, Jr., Department of Utah. *(Applause)*

Once again, congratulations to these 11 departments that went above and beyond the call of duty. Please don't stop the hard work. We have a long way to go before we get our reporting numbers up and with your help we will.

I have an announcement from chairman Dan Seehafer. He's heading home. Nothing wrong that food, water, and rest won't fix. He thanks everyone for their help and prayers. Devotion to mutual helpfulness is what makes The American Legion special. Good luck, Dan. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WALLACE: Daniel J. O'Connor was the chairman of the National Americanism Commission from 1962 to 1983. He was chairman emeritus from 1984 until his passing in 2004. The Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism trophy is given to the department that achieves the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs. These programs advance patriotism among the citizens of this nation and participation in our youth activities. Ladies and Gentlemen, the winner of the Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy is the Department of Virginia. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy awarded to the American Legion Department of Virginia in recognition of the most outstanding Americanism program. Presented at the 101st National Convention of The American Legion, Indianapolis, Indiana. Brett P. Reistad, National Commander, and Richard W. Anderson, Chairman of the American Legion National Americanism Commission.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would just like to say, on behalf of the Department of Virginia, I thank you for turning in all of your consolidated reports this year. This is the 13th trophy our department has won, and this is the fourth in a row. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SWEET: The Chair recognizes Richard Anderson of Connecticut, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism, for the purpose of a report.

...National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.

Report: Convention Committee on Americanism
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

At 8:30 a.m., Sunday, August 25, 2019, there were 98 delegates present assigned to the Convention Committee on Americanism, consisting of the two subcommittees of Americanism and Children & Youth, who met in the J.W. Marriott Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Sections 3 & 4, Third Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared. Richard Anderson (CT) was elected chairman and Mark Avis (MA) was elected secretary for the purpose of reporting to the Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the committee chairman and secretary be authorized to accept and sign the report of the Convention Committee on Americanism on behalf of its delegates. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the chairman of the Americanism Convention Committee be authorized to accept the actions of the two subcommittees assigned to Americanism regarding the resolutions assigned to each of the respective subcommittees.

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the chairman and secretary may make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this convention committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s). No further business was discussed at this point and the delegates were then released to the two subcommittees assigned to the Americanism Convention Committee - Americanism and Children & Youth - for the purpose of reviewing and acting on the assigned resolutions. The Americanism Convention Committee was recessed at this point, subject to recall by the chairman if required. The Convention subcommittees met and considered their assigned resolutions as follows:

Children & Youth
Herbert Petit, Louisiana, Chairman

At 9:00 am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, there were 50 delegates present assigned to the Convention Subcommittee on Children & Youth who met in the J.W. Marriott Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Section 2, Third Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared. Herbert Petit (LA) was elected chairman and Donald Suchy (NE) was elected secretary. The subcommittee considered a total of 2 resolutions with disposition as follows:

Resolutions Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism

Resolution No. 5 (CO): **School Safety**

Rejected Resolutions

Resolution No. 6 (CO): **Eddie Eagle Gun Safety Program**

Americanism
Richard Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

At 9:00 am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, there were 48 delegates present assigned to the Convention Subcommittee on Americanism who met in the J.W. Marriott Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Sections 3 & 4, Third Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared. Richard Anderson (CT) was elected chairman and Mark Avis (MA) was elected secretary. The committee considered a total of 6 resolutions with disposition as follows:

Resolutions Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism

Resolution No. 8 (CO): **Compliance With Flag Code For Flying The Flag At Half-Staff**
Resolution No. 49 (OR): **Changes To The American Legion Eagle Scout Of The Year**

Rejected Resolutions

Resolution No. 19 (TX): **Baseball Player Recruiting**
Resolution No. 24 (CT): **Girl Scouts Of America As An Official Program Of The American Legion**
Resolution No. 25 (CT): **Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Program**
Resolution No. 53 (IA): **Flag Essay Contest**

As a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Connecticut, I move for the adoption of this report. ... *Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second to adopt the Americanism report. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried, and the Americanism report is adopted.

Having completed the adoption of the Americanism report, it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards.

Presentation: Frank N. Belgrano, Jr., Trophy

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Frank Belgrano, Jr., was national commander from 1934-1935. He was a founder of the Galileo Post in San Francisco and was the department commander of California during a peak year for membership and activity in the Golden State. The Frank Belgrano, Jr., Trophy is given annually to the department rendering the most outstanding service to the Boy Scouts of America program during the 12-month period beginning August 1. This year's winner is the Department of North Carolina. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: It's only fitting that an education award be named after a national commander who graduated from Harvard Law School and interrupted his term as a county attorney in Kansas so he could serve in World War I. The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Award is given to the department within the United States documenting the greatest activity in operating the American Legion School Medal Program. The winning department shows what can be accomplished by an active and involved American Legion. The winner is the Department of Vermont. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: In 1952, Department Commander Dr. Garland D. Murphy, Jr., of Arkansas came to The American Legion with an offer to provide a valuable contribution to be used solely for children. After much study and discussion, the idea of a foundation was adopted. Eventually, on October 15, 1953, the National Executive Committee approved the establishment of the foundation and entered into a trust agreement with Dr. Murphy. Legal work was completed, and on July 9, 1954, the foundation was duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana. At that time, Dr. Murphy assigned to the foundation deeds to fractional mineral rights on nearly 10,000 acres of land in the oil-rich Williston Basin in Montana and North Dakota. To date, more than $15 million has been awarded to organizations to assist the children of this country from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to present this award to the Department of Florida. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award is presented by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to The American Legion Department of Florida for the program year 2018-2019, 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.

Presentation: U.S. 'Udie' Grant Legacy Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: It is now time for me to present the U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award. Udie was a member of the National Executive Committee for 38 years. From the Department of Kansas, he also served as a longtime director and later president of our National Child Welfare Foundation until he joined Post Everlasting in 2004. The U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award recognizes the collective efforts of the American Legion Family in a department. It goes to the department that collectively raises the most money for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. The winner of this prestigious award is the Department of Florida. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award presented by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Florida for the program year 2018-2019 in recognition of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. We thank you.

Presentation: Child Welfare Foundation Meritorious Achievement Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Next we are presenting the Child Welfare Foundation Meritorious Achievement Award for the highest increase in per capita giving to this great cause. And the winner is the Department of Nevada. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Meritorious Achievement Award achieving the highest increase in per capita giving for 2018-2019, The American Legion Department of Nevada. The board of directors gratefully recognizes your outstanding support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Service to the critical needs of America's children is made possible through your caring and generosity.

Presentation: Child Welfare Foundation Excellence Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We just recognized the department that had the highest increase in the per capita giving for the Child Welfare Foundation. Now it's time for the Child Welfare Foundation Excellence Award, given to the department which has the highest per capita giving to the Child Welfare Foundation. Again, the winner is the Department of Nevada.

ANNOUNCER: The Excellence Award, achieving the highest in per capita giving for 2018-2019, The American Legion Department of Nevada. The board of directors greatly recognizes your outstanding support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Servicing the critical needs to America's children is made possible through your caring and generosity.

Presentation: Child Welfare Foundation Presentation to the National Commander

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT BOLAND: Commander Reistad, it's indeed an honor, on behalf of the board of directors, to present you with the Child Welfare five diamond lapel pin. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: That's beautiful. I'll wear it with pride.

Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The man who, has served as our national chaplain this year has been an articulate spiritual leader. A Vietnam War veteran of the United States Army, he was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1984 and served as the Department of Massachusetts chaplain for 30 years. He retired as the chief chaplain of the VA Boston Healthcare System and is a founder of the National Conference of Vietnam Veterans Ministers. He is a member of American Legion Post 20 in Attleboro. It is an honor for me to present a certificate of appreciation marking his year of service as national chaplain to Father Philip G. Salois. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Certificate of Appreciation, presented to Father Philip G. Salois, National Chaplain of The American Legion, 2018-2019. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion. Signed Daniel S. Wheeler, National Adjutant; Brett P. Reistad, National Commander.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SALOIS: I want to thank the commander for naming me as the national chaplain. I enjoyed my service. That one year went very fast, and before I knew it, it was over. So if you need any help in the future, I'm always available. I'm retired. I have not that much to do. Between this and Vietnam Veterans of America, I can handle it. So call on me any time. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: If anyone has donations for the Child Welfare Foundation, I will now accept those onstage. Those presenting checks should proceed to the microphone, announce the amount, the charity, and the donor. Then go to the front, on the floor, for a photograph. I now ask National Vice Commander Paul Spedaliere to assume duties at the lectern.

...National Vice Commander Spedaliere assumed the Chair.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): On behalf of the great state of Ohio, we'd like to present to the Child Welfare Foundation a check for $10,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): The great First District from the Department of Ohio, Child Welfare, $100.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NH): From the state of New Hampshire, "Live Free Or Die" state, a donation of $1,000 to Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MI): On behalf of the Department of Michigan, we are proud to donate $2,000 to the Child Welfare Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CT): The Constitution State, the proud Department of Connecticut donates $1,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MA): From the great State of Massachusetts, collection of loose change from our post, we donate $185, for a grand total of $410 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: With Tropical Storm Dorian closing in on Puerto Rico and the coast of Florida, the great Southern Block this morning, the 17 states of the southern block donated to the National Emergency Fund $10,970.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NE): From the great state of Nebraska, $1,834, Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (ND): On behalf of the great state of North Dakota and a day late, we donate $2,652 to the National Emergency Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NY): The Empire State, the great state of New York, home state of Past National Commander Fang A. Wong, another $500 from Post 942 to the Legacy Scholarship Fund, $3,010 to Comfort Warriors, and $51,239 to the NEF.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): From the Grand Canyon state, Department of Arizona, we're proud to present a check for $4,000, including $1,000 from Post 24 in Tombstone, Arizona.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OR): From the great state of Oregon, home of Past National Commander Charles E. Schmidt, we have checks for the Child Welfare Foundation, $202.90; Operation Comfort Warriors, $200; check for Veterans and Children Fund; $777.75; and the National Emergency Fund check for $1,200. *(Applause)*

...National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Just a couple of quick announcements here. The Child Welfare Foundation raised here $57,067, the total for the year being $596,177. Thank you all. *(Applause)*

The Chair recognizes Vincent J. Troiola of New York, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Employment and Education, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
Vincent J. Troiola, New York, Chairman

On Sunday, August 25, 2019 (76) members of your Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness met at 9:00am at the J.W. Marriott, White River Ballroom, Section A & B, First Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana, and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committees were called to order by Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr. (DC), Liaison Representative, appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. John Kamin and Ariel De Jesus, Jr. (DC), Assistant Director's for the National Veterans' Employment & Education Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received and elected:

Convention Committee	Vincent J. Troiola (NY), Chairman James Fratolillo (MA), Secretary

After the opening business, the following convention committees received nominations and elected:

Employment and Veterans Preference:	James Fratolillo (MA), Chairman Dennis Tipsword (IL), Secretary
Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness:	Eric Measles (CA), Chairman Jerry Hines (TX), Secretary

A Veterans' Employment & Education Resolutions Screening Committee met on Friday, August 23, 2019. A report of their actions, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committees for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committees substantially. It was chaired by Vincent J. Troiola, Chairman of the National Veterans' Employment & Education Commission and was composed of the following persons:

James Fratolillo (MA)
Dennis Tipsword (IL)
Eric Measles (CA)
Lloyd H. Woods (ME)

There were 4 resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention. The following actions on the resolutions were taken by the Convention Committees:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	3
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	0
Referred to the Standing Commission	0
Received and Recorded	1
Rejected	0

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign and deliver the report on the Convention Committees' behalf.

A report of action taken on the 3 resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Employment & Education Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Employment And Veterans' Preference Committee
Approved Resolutions Or Approved With Amendment

Resolution No. 55: Mandatory Use Of The Veterans First Contracting Program
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education

WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a veterans benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans First Contracting Program (Vets First) at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was created to grow the veteran small business industrial base; and

WHEREAS, VA has been hesitant in fulfilling the statutory intent of the Veterans First Contracting Program; and

WHEREAS, VA might outsource supply chain contract administration tasks to large businesses or other federal agencies in order to work around Veterans First Contracting Program; and

WHEREAS, VA's resistance to utilization of veteran small businesses led to low participation rates among veteran small businesses; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports legislation requiring mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program (Vets First) on all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract actions, regardless of the entity (public or private) that fulfills the contractual terms; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That if it is VA dollars, Vets First applies; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion fully supports legislation requiring Vets First be applied to all contract actions, including micro-purchases.

Resolutions Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 21 (TX): **Small Business Administration Direct Loans for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses**

Committee on Veterans Education, Other Benefits, & Homelessness Approved Resolutions or Approved With Amendment

Resolution No. 54: GI Bill Eligibility for Reserve and National Guard Service
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, Reserve and National Guard servicemembers may only attain eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill through authorized active duty service; and

WHEREAS, 38 USC §3311(b)(2)(A) affirms that armed services individuals are entitled to 100 percent GI Bill eligibility after "...discharge or release from active duty in the Armed Forces for a service-connected disability"; and

WHEREAS, National Guard servicemembers may while on deployment sustain injuries that trigger "Release from Active Duty" orders transferring them back to respective National Guard home stations, whereupon further review, said National Guard units may initiate "Line of Duty" investigations that result in medical retirement discharges issued with NGB Separation Form 22; and

WHEREAS, Since this discharge is not technically release from active duty, said discharge is not entitled to 100 percent GI Bill entitlement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports legislative action to amend 38 USC §3311 to provide NGB 22-discharged servicemembers commensurate Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility with DD214-discharged National Guard servicemembers.

Resolution No. 22: Support The Immediate Refund Of All Improperly Received VA Home Loan Guaranty Funding Fees
Origin: Texas
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) administers the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Home Loan Guaranty Program; and generally, veterans must pay a funding fee to the VA on the day the veteran borrower signs the final loan application; this fee offsets the costs of administering the VA Home Loan Guaranty; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are exempt from paying the VA funding fee if they are entitled to receive VA disability compensation for service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, A 2019 Office of the Inspector General review audit estimates that approximately 72,900 veterans paid the funding fee at loan origination despite qualifying for the funding fee exemption; the range of funding fees paid were from a low average of $4,483 and as high as $19,470; and

WHEREAS, An Office of the Inspector General review of the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program's funding fee procedures and policies estimates that between CY 2012 and CY 2017, the VA has not returned approximately 53,000 of the 72, 900 total exempt veterans their home loan funding fee refunds for charges totaling approximately $189 million; in CY 2017 and 2018, the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program generated $2.2 and $2.0 billion respectively for the Department of Treasury; and

WHEREAS, Effective immediately the VBA's Loan Guaranty Service management should take immediate steps to establish policies and institute program-wide continuous improvement and controls to prevent future incorrect home loan funding fee charges; and

WHEREAS, Effective immediately, the VBA's Loan Guaranty Service management should be accountable and transparent in their plans to refund all improperly received funding fees to exempt veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports the immediate refund of all improperly received Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty funding fees.

Commander Reistad, as a duly registered delegate for this convention from the Department of New York, I move for the adoption of this report. Thank you. ... *Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second to accept the Convention Committee on Veterans Employment and Education report. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried, and the report is accepted.

Military members transitioning home have few priorities that are more important than finding meaningful employment. A number of outstanding employers were recognized by The American Legion at the Veterans Employment & Education Convention Committee meeting for their work in hiring veterans, but we would like to recognize a couple of other award winners today.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans, Large Category Grunt Style, LLC, Carol Stream, Illinois

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: For their outstanding record of hiring veterans, in the large business category of 200 or more employees, Grunt Style, LLC, in Carol Stream, Illinois. Accepting the award is CEO Daniel Alarik. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Large Employer of Veterans 2018 presented To Grunt Style, LLC, Carol Stream, Illinois, for an

exceptional record in the employment of veterans presented at the 101st Annual National Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 28, 2019.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Accepting on behalf of Mr. Alarik is Dennis Tippesord.

Presentation: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year Award Mark Simmons, Colorado Springs, Colorado

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The American Legion is also proud of the men and women who work on behalf of disabled veterans seeking employment. This year I am happy to present the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, DVOP, Specialist of the Year Award to Mark Simmons of Colorado Springs, Colorado. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist 2018 Presented to Mark Simmons, for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Colorado. Presented at the 101st National Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 28, 2019.

MARK SIMMONS: Good morning. Or at least I think it's still morning. There's no clock in here. It feels almost like a casino, but I won't have to worry about my wife fussing at me losing money leaving here. First of all, I would like to say God is good, and the reason why I say that is last week, actually almost to this date in time, I was in the ER for several hours, which was the result of me tearing a ligament in my knee from a fall. Fast-forward to this past Monday. After meeting with my ortho doctor to go over my MRI, he informed me of the significant damage that I caused. I wasn't really too concerned about that. I asked him if I would still be able to attend this conference. He had asked me what conference this was, and I explained to him what the conference was, The American Legion conference, and that I would be recognized for a national award for the work I do. So before I could say another word, he said, "Oh, no," he said, "we're not letting this injury prevent you from attending this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. *(Applause)*

So I stand before you today to say, although I'm still in a lot of pain, I made it. I must say that I'm truly honored and humbled to be the recipient of such a prestigious award. My success in connecting my veterans, clients, to meaningful employment isn't merely of my own doing. I am truly blessed to work with an amazing group of individuals back in Colorado who are passionate and determined in helping our veterans and spouses of Colorado reaching their employment goals. So with that being said, I would like to accept this award on behalf of Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment, my fellow colleague DVOPs William Spindler, Alfredo Garcia, Monica Grant, David Johnson, Antonio Ford, Anthony Mason, John Cannon, and our two LVERs, Matt Broker and Tim Anther. Tim Anther is with me today and played a big part in my professional growth and development as a DVOP. In addition, I would like to publicly thank all the Colorado Workforce Centers, with particular acknowledgement to the Pikes Peak Workforce Center for their prodigious partnership of our veteran team in serving El Paso County, Tiller County, and Pueblo County veterans and spouses.

In closing, I would like to end with this: Not often do individuals get to be recognized on the national level for doing exceptional work in the program that they themselves have credit possibly of saving their lives. I myself struggle with some issues and barriers, as many of my client veterans I currently serve, in getting back into the civilian workforce. If it had not been for a chance meeting, running into my current colleague, DVOP William "Bill" Spindler at the VA, who informed me about this amazing veterans employment program that was funded through the Department of Labor called Jobs For State Grants, I couldn't tell you where I would be today.

Thank you for not just recognizing me, American Legion, for the work that I'm doing in this program, but also thank you for allowing me to show the nation that, given the opportunity, veterans like myself with significant barriers to employment can go on and do

pretty awesome things in the civilian workforce when given a chance. So I say thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: On behalf of every veteran in America, I extend to you our congratulations and say those words all workers love to hear: Thank you for a job well done. We're certain you will keep hiring or assisting veterans. Please tell other employers about the reliability and work ethic of veterans.

No veteran should be in need of a job, nor should veterans have to live on the streets. And those with disabilities often prove to have many abilities. Thank you and congratulations to our award winners. *(Applause)*

The chair recognizes the Honorable Vincent Gaughan of Illinois, chairman of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 25, 2019, JW Marriott, Indianapolis, Indiana. The Committee was reconvened on August 27, at the Indianan Convention Center at 10:00 a.m. Committee Liaison National Judge Advocate Kevin J. Bartlett (MI) called the roll and announced that 44 members of the Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was authorized by the members and is hereby submitted to this Convention.

The meeting was opened by National Judge Advocate Kevin J. Bartlett (MI), who acted as temporary Chair. He stated a quorum was present and proceeded to the first order of business, which was the election of a Chair and secretary.

Vincent M. Gaughan (IL) was elected Chair and Cathy J. Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary. Thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, the Charter of The American Legion, National Constitution and By-Laws and the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion, which include the Standing Rules of Convention, were made available to all members of the Committee prior to and at the meeting.

A motion was made by Charles G. Mills (NY) and seconded by J. R. Johnson (LA) that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting, but not actual delegates to the Convention Committee be seated with voice but no vote. The motion was carried.

The Chair called upon Kevin J. Bartlett, National Judge Advocate, to give a summary background report on the resolutions assigned to the Committee, which was done.

The following issues were discussed by the Constitutional Amendments Committee:

(A) Were the ALA consulted on this change to our Constitution?

Leadership of both sides met to discuss this change to The American Legion Constitution. It is understood that the ALA leadership discussed this matter amongst themselves and it is our understanding that this information was disseminated to the organization.

(B) Why make the changes to The American Legion Constitution, Article XIII to go from "wives" to "spouses"?

A full discussion by the Committee concerning the eligibility of The American Legion Auxiliary and the United States Supreme ruling was discussed along with the IRS considerations.

The reasons why such change is necessary is to follow the terminology in use by the IRS and in light of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. ___ (2015).

The Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) includes two subsections [501(c)(19) and 501(c)(23)] which provide for tax-exemption under section 501(a) for organizations that benefit veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Internal Revenue Code section 7701(a)(15) defines "Armed Forces of the United States" to include all regular and reserve components of the uniformed services which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary

of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force, and each term also includes the Coast Guard.

To be exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(19), an organization must be either:

- a post or organization of past or present members of the United States Armed Forces
- an auxiliary unit or society of such post or organization

An organization may be exempt under section 501(c)(19) as an auxiliary unit or society of a veterans' post or organization if it meets the following requirements:

1. It is affiliated with, and organized in accordance with the bylaws and regulations of, a veterans' post or organization described above
2. At least 75 percent of its members are veterans, spouses of veterans, or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity (i.e., grandparent, brother, sister, grandchild represent the most distant allowable relationships)
3. All members are either members of a veterans' post or organizations described above, or spouses of a member of such post or organization, or are related to a member of such post or organization within two degrees of consanguinity
4. No part of its net earning inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

(C) Eligibility for joining the American Legion Auxiliary

Membership in The American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

(1) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918 and any time after December 7, 1941 who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941 who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments held a complete and thorough discussion on Resolution No. 1 (NEC). It was noted that Resolution No. 1 originated at the NEC. Resolution No. 1 was also presented to the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws along with the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs.

Resolution No. 1 (NEC) was considered. The Chair announced this resolution was in order. J. R. Johnson (LA) made a motion, seconded by Robert Ray (OH) to accept Resolution No. 1 (NEC) as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 1: Amendments to the American Legion National Constitution and By-Laws
Origin: Resolution No. 1 (NEC) May 2019
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is very careful and cautious in the drafting of its National Constitution and National By-Laws; and

WHEREAS, A complete and through review of the National Constitution and National By-Laws has not occurred in a number of years; and

WHEREAS, Since this last review numerous changes have taken place within The American Legion, including but not limited to, the election of Past National Commander Denise Rohan, the election of numerous female national vice commanders and national officers; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee, along with the Internal Affairs Commission and the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, has reviewed these changes and submits to the National Convention that it recommends amending of the National Constitution and National By-laws as attached; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion's National Constitution and National By-Laws be amended to read as attached hereto.

Charter of The American Legion

National Constitution and By-laws

Uniform Codes of Procedure for the Revocation, Cancellation or Suspension of Department and Post Charters

Official

The National Constitution of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion as set out herein, is in full force and effect and represents action taken by National Conventions, being the Constitution adopted at the First Annual Convention, Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. 10-12, 1919, and as amended at the Second Annual Convention, Cleveland, Oh., Sept. 27-29, 1920; Fourth Annual Convention, New Orleans, La., Oct. 16-20, 1922; Fifth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., Oct. 15-19, 1923; Sixth Annual Convention, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 15-19, 1924; Seventh Annual Convention, Omaha, Nebr., Oct. 5-9, 1925; Ninth Annual Convention, Paris, France, Sept. 19-22, and Ratification Convention, New York N.Y., Oct. 19-22, 1927; Twelfth Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., Oct. 6-9, 1930; Fifteenth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 2-5, 1933; Nineteenth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Sept. 20-23, 1937; Twentieth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., Sept. 19-22, 1938; Twenty-first Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Sept. 25-28, 1939; Twenty-second Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., Sept. 23-26, 1940; Twenty-third Annual Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., Sept.18, 1941; Twenty-fourth Annual Convention, Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 19-21, 1942; Twenty-fifth Annual Convention, Omaha, Neb., Sept. 21-23, 1943; Twenty-seventh Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 18-21, 1945; Twenty-eighth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., Sept. 30-Oct. 1-4, 1946; Twenty-ninth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Aug. 28-31, 1947; Thirtieth Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., Oct. 18-21, 1948; Thirty-first Annual Convention, Philadelphia, Pa.,

Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 1949; Thirty-second Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., Oct. 9-12, 1950; Thirty-third Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., Oct. 15-18, 1951; Thirty-fourth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Aug. 25-28, 1952; Thirty-sixth Annual Convention, Washington, D.C., Aug.30-Sept. 2, 1954; Thirty-seventh Annual Convention, Miami, Fla. Oct. 10-13, 1955; Thirty-eighth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., Sept. 3-6, 1956; Fortieth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Sept. 1-4, 1958; Forty-second Annual Convention, Miami Beach, Fla., Oct. 17-20, 1960; Forty-eighth Annual Convention, Washington, D.C., Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 1966; Fifty-second Annual Convention, Portland, Ore., Sept. 1-3, 1970; Fifty-fourth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Aug. 22-24, 1972; Fifty-fifth Annual Convention, Honolulu, Hi., Aug. 21-23, 1973; Fifty-sixth Annual Convention, Miami Beach, Fla., Aug. 20-22, 1974; Fifty-eighth Annual Convention, Seattle, Wash., Aug. 24-26, 1976; Fifty-ninth Annual Convention, Denver, Colo., Aug. 23-25, 1977; Sixty-first Annual Convention, Houston, Tex., Aug. 21-23, 1979; Sixty-ninth Annual Convention, San Antonio, Tex., Aug. 25-27, 1987; Seventy-second Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 28-30, 1990; Seventy-third Annual Convention, Phoenix, Arizona, Sept. 3-5, 1991; the Seventy-seventh Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Ind., Sept. 4-6, 1995; Seventy-ninth Annual Convention, Orlando, Fla., Sept. 2-4, 1997; Eighty-second Annual Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., Sept. 5-7, 2000; and reiterated at the Eighty-third Annual Convention, Charlotte, NC, Aug. 27-29, 2002; Ninety-fourth Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 28-30, 2012; ~~*and Ninety-seventh Annual Convention, Baltimore, MD, Sept. 1-3, 2015*~~, Ninety-seventh Annual Convention, Baltimore, MD, Sept. 1-3, 2015 and the One Hundred and First Annual Convention, Indianapolis, IN, August 27 – 29, 2019. *Article IV, Section 1 and Article XIII, Section2 were automatically amended upon the enactment of the LEGION Act (Public Law 116-35).

The By-Laws as adopted at the Fourth Annual Convention, New Orleans, La., Oct. 16-20, 1922, and as amended at the Fifth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., Oct. 15-19, 1923; Sixth Annual Convention, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 15-19, 1924; Eleventh Annual Convention, Louisville, Ky., Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2, 3, 1929; Fifteenth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 2-5, 1933; Nineteenth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Sept. 20-23, 1937; Twentieth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., Sept. 19-22, 1938; Twenty-first Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., Sept. 25-28, 1939; Twenty-second Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., Sept. 23-26, 1940; Twenty-third Annual Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., Sept. 15-18, 1941; Twenty-seventh Annual convention, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 18-21, 1945; Twenty-ninth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Aug. 28-31, 1947; Thirtieth Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., Oct. 18-21, 1948; Thirty-first Annual convention, Philadelphia, Pa., Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 1949; Thirty-third Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., Oct. 15-18, 1951; Thirty-fourth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., Aug. 25-28, 1952; Thirty-ninth Annual Convention, Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 16-19, 1957; Fifty-second Annual Convention, Portland, Ore., Sept. 1-3, 1970; Fifty-eighth Annual Convention, Seattle, Wash., August 24-26, 1976; and Fifty-ninth Annual Convention, Denver, Colo., Aug. 23-25, 1977; and Ninety-Second Annual ~~National~~ Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 2010; Ninety-fifth Annual Convention, Houston, Texas., Aug. 23 - 29, 2013; ~~and Ninety-seventh Annual National Convention, Baltimore, MD, Sept. 1-3, 2015 (as found in italic print).~~ Ninety-seventh Annual Convention, Baltimore, MD, Sept. 1-3, 2015; and the One Hundred and First Annual Convention, Indianapolis, IN, August 27 – 29, 2019.

***Daniel S. Wheeler,* National Adjutant**

CONSTITUTION
of The American Legion

PREAMBLE

For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

ARTICLE I

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion.

Section 2. The National Headquarters of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be located ~~at the site of the Indiana World War Memorial~~ in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana or a surrounding community.

ARTICLE II

NATURE

Section 1. ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ 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~~ The American Legion; no members shall be addressed by ~~his~~ their military or naval title in any convention or meeting of ~~the~~ The American Legion.

Section 2. ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ 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

ORGANIZATION

Section 1. ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be organized in Departments with a minimum of one thousand members and these in turn in Posts. There ~~shall~~ may be one Department in each state, ~~in~~ the District of Columbia, and ~~there may be one Department~~ in each territory and insular possessions ~~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. An individual is eligible for membership in The American Legion only if the individual – (1) has served in the Armed Forces of (A) the United States at any time during – (i) the period of April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918; or (ii) any time after December 7, 1941; or (B) a government associated with the United States Government during a period or time referred to in subsection (A) of this section and was a citizen of the United States when the individual entered that service; and (2) was honorably discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorably during or after that period or time; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably during or after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject themselves 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 one time of more than one Post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled from The American Legion by a Post, and such ~~expelling~~ expulsion reported by the Department to the National Headquarters within thirty (30) days, 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~~ such person 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

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 1. The legislative body of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ 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 two weeks before the National Convention at Department Conventions or in any other manner specified by any 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~~ one's Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates, except that of voting. A registered delegate is ~~one~~ a person who has received ~~his~~ one's credentials after ~~his~~ one's registration fee has been paid.

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at a National Convention when sixty percent of the Departments are represented as provided above.

Section 6. The National Executive Committee shall provide a Uniform Code of Procedure for the orderly organization and operation of National Conventions with continuing power of revision, and said Code shall be applicable at all National Conventions unless it is amended, suspended, or repealed by a majority vote of the total authorized representation at a National Convention.

ARTICLE VI

NATIONAL OFFICERS

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 persons 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~~ 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~~ 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 of The American Legion 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~~ Committee Member and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to act only in the absence of the National Executive ~~Committeeman~~ Committee Member.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive ~~Committeemen~~ Committee Member and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive ~~Committeeman~~ Committee Member and alternate shall commence immediately upon the adjournment of the National Convention next ensuing after their election and shall end at the adjournment of the second next succeeding annual National Convention.

Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective Departments,

except that the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in ~~his~~ their capacity as ~~chairman~~ chair of the National Convention.

ARTICLE VIII

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Departments shall be chartered by the National Executive Committee and shall be composed of the Posts within their respective areas, and such other Posts as the National Executive Committee may approve. Each Department charter shall be signed by the National Commander and National Adjutant.

Section 2. Each Department shall have a Department Commander, one or more Department Vice Commanders, a Department Adjutant ~~and~~ , a Department Executive Committee, a Finance Officer, a Judge Advocate, and may have a Chaplain and such other officers as the Department ~~shall~~ may determine.

Section 3. Departments shall have authority to create and charter intermediate bodies between the Posts and Department to act as a liaison between such organizations and for the purpose of promoting the programs of The American Legion.

Section 4. The Department Executive Committee shall define the powers of such intermediate groups, but in no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives now vested either in the Post or Department or National Organization.

Section 5. Such intermediate bodies now existing within the Departments and heretofore authorized or recognized by such Department are hereby officially recognized to the extent of the powers herein granted.

ARTICLE IX

POST ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Those who desire to form a Post shall ~~make application~~ apply for a temporary charter to the Commander of the Department in which they reside. The temporary charter shall be issued by the National Commander and National Adjutant upon receipt of the application properly executed by the charter members of the ~~projected~~ applying Post, but only when such ~~application~~ applying Post is approved by the Commander of the Department or by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 2. The minimum membership of a Post shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the Department in whose area it lies.

Section 3. No Post shall be named after any living person.

Section 4. Upon receipt and processing of a proper application a ~~A~~ temporary charter shall be granted and shall state that it is granted on the recommendation of the Department and on the following terms and conditions:

1. **All acts heretofore duly and properly taken for the formation of the ~~above-named~~ above named Post are recognized and confirmed by the National Executive Committee.**

2. **The ~~above-named~~ above named Post shall uphold the declared principles of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion and shall conform to and abide by the regulations and decisions of the Department and of the National Executive Committee,**

or other duly constituted national governing body of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion.

3. This charter is subject to revocation by the National Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Department, or by such authority that may hereafter be established by the National Convention.

Section 5. After a temporary charter has been in effect for a probationary period of at least ninety days, application for a permanent charter may be made. Such probationary period shall not exceed one year upon the termination of which the Department shall determine whether or not a permanent charter shall be issued or denied and the action of the Department shall be final.

Section 6. All charters shall be countersigned by the Commander and the Adjutant of the Department.

Section 7. Each Department may prescribe the Constitution of its Posts. Permanent charters may be suspended, cancelled or revoked by the Department Executive Committee as provided in ~~the~~ their respective Department By-Laws.

ARTICLE X

FINANCE

Section 1. The revenue of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be derived from annual membership dues and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 2. The amount of such annual dues shall be determined by each National Convention for the ensuing year.

Section 3.1. The annual dues shall be collected by each Post and transmitted promptly through the Department to the National Treasurer. Departments are designated agents for collection for ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion with respect to such annual dues and upon the receipt thereof shall remit them promptly to ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion. In no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by a Department and the remittance thereof to ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion exceed thirty (30) days.

Section 3.2. The annual dues shall be collected in such alternate method(s) as determined by the National Executive Committee from time to time and thereafter communicated to the Departments for communications to the Posts provided that (a) in no instance shall the National Organization or the Departments be empowered to retain, or withhold, more than each ones published amount of per capita dues; (b) in no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by the National Organization and the remittance thereof to the Departments exceed thirty (30) days; and (c) any such alternative method shall be in addition to and not in substitution for method 3.1 above.

Section 4. Annual dues shall be payable October 20 of each year, for the succeeding calendar year.

ARTICLE XI

DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The National Executive Committee, after notice and a hearing before a

subcommittee as hereinafter provided, may cancel, suspend or revoke the charter of a Department for any good and sufficient cause to it appearing.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee may designate, appoint and authorize a subcommittee to hear and try and make written findings of fact and recommendations with reference to the matter of the cancellation, suspension or revocation of the charter of any Department of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion after said Department shall have received due and proper notice of said hearing and trial. Said subcommittee shall make its written findings and recommendations to the National Executive Committee for its approval or rejection, and the action of said National Executive Committee upon such findings and recommendations shall be final and conclusive.

Section 3. The hearing and trial of any cause involving the cancellation, suspension, or revocation of the charter of any Department in ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be had and held under rules of procedure to be adopted by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. Upon suspension of the charter of any Department of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion, the National Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed, by and through its duly authorized agents, to take possession, custody and control of all of the records, property and assets of and belonging to such Department, and to provide for the government and administration of such Department during said suspension.

Section 5. Upon cancellation or revocation of the charter of any Department of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion, the National Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed, by and through its duly authorized agents, to take possession, custody and control of all of the records, property and assets of such Department, and to take all necessary and proper steps and proceedings to conclude and close the affairs of such Department, and said National Executive Committee may provide for such continued recognition and activities of Posts in said Departments as it may deem proper.

ARTICLE XII

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

Section 1. Any member in good standing in a Post ~~removing~~ moving from ~~his~~ one's ~~Department~~ Post to any other Post shall be entitled to ~~a certificate~~ verification from ~~his~~ one's original Post stating ~~his~~ one's membership therein and the duration thereof.

ARTICLE XIII

AUXILIARIES

Section 1. ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion recognizes an auxiliary organization, known as ~~the~~ The American Legion Auxiliary.

Section 2. *~~Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of THE AMERICAN LEGION, and to the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989,~~*

~~*to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being citizens of the United States at the time of their entry therein, served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any of said periods, and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION.*~~

Membership in The American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

(1) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918 and any time after December 7, 1941 who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941 who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.*

Section 3. The American Legion **Auxiliary shall be governed in each Department of** ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion **by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee and thereafter approved by such Department of** ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion.

ARTICLE XIV

RATIFICATION

Section 1. All acts performed and charters heretofore granted by the temporary organization to ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion **are hereby ratified and confirmed.**

ARTICLE XV

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation thereat, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee by mailing same to them at least twenty (20) days prior to the convening of the next National Convention; any such proposed amendment may be amended without further notice by a two-thirds vote of the total authorized representation thereat, provided it does not increase the modification proposed by the amendment and it has received the approval of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments; and, provided further, it may be amended by unanimous vote at any National Convention without notice.

Section 2. That no proposed amendment shall be submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee, as provided

in Section 1 of this article, unless said proposed amendment shall have been first submitted by a Department Convention, Department Executive Committee, or the National Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XVI

NATIONAL INCORPORATION

This Constitution is adopted conformably to the Act of Congress of the United States of America of September 16, 1919, and all amendatory acts thereto.

ARTICLE XVII

~~In the event the~~ If the Congress of the United States shall amend the eligibility ~~clause~~ section in the Act creating ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion, this Constitution shall be ~~deemed~~ automatically amended in conformance therewith, but subject to all consistent limitations and restrictions in this Constitution ~~contained~~.

BY-LAWS
of The American Legion

ARTICLE I

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. In case of death, resignation or removal by ~~his~~ their respective Department of any National Executive ~~Committeeman~~ Committee Member or alternate to the National Executive Committee, the successor shall be selected as such Department shall determine and shall serve for the remainder of such unexpired term.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee shall meet within twenty-four hours before and after each National Convention and within ~~forty-five~~ fifty-five days following its adjournment, provided however, that the National Commander shall have authority to extend said ~~forty-five~~ fifty-five day period for sufficient reasons ~~to him appearing,~~ upon approval by the National Executive Committee, and in May of each year. Special meetings may be held upon reasonable notice at the call of the National Commander. The National Commander shall call a meeting of the National Executive Committee upon the written request of National Executive ~~Committeemen~~ Committee Member from fifteen or more Departments.

Section 3. Twenty-five members shall constitute a quorum of the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. The National Commander shall name such committees as ~~he~~ shall be ~~deem~~ deemed advisable, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee at its next meeting succeeding the appointment.

Section 5. The National Executive Committee shall appoint, upon nomination by the National Commander, a Finance Commission to be composed of seven (7) members. Of the seven members appointed following the National Convention (1945) at which this amendment is adopted, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of one year, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of two years, and three shall be appointed to serve for a term of three years; thereafter each succeeding appointee shall serve for a term of three years or

until removed by the majority vote of the National Executive Committee. The National Commander and the National Treasurer shall be ex officio members of said commission and the National Adjutant shall be ex officio secretary of the said commission. The Finance Commission shall be charged with the preparation of the yearly budget and the handling of funds under that budget, and such other duties as shall be prescribed by the National Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee.

Section 6. ~~***There shall be the following standing commissions: Americanism Commission, Convention Commission, Finance Commission, Internal Affairs Commission, Legislative Commission, Marketing Commission, Media & Communications Commission, National Security Commission, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, Veterans Employment & Education Commission.***~~

There shall be the following standing commissions: Americanism Commission, Convention Commission, Finance Commission, Internal Affairs Commission, Legislative Commission, Marketing Commission, Media & Communications Commission, National Security Commission, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and Veterans Employment & Education Commission.

The commissions shall consist of such number of members of ~~***THE AMERICAN LEGION***~~ **The American Legion as the National Executive Committee may from time to time determine. Appointments to such commissions shall be made by the National Executive Committee upon nomination by the National Commander. The National Executive Committee is empowered to assign duties and responsibilities to all standing commissions and committees and to group standing committees with commissions for the purpose of efficient supervision and coordination of activities.**

Section 7. 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 affairs of ~~**THE AMERICAN LEGION**~~ **The American Legion, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.**

Section 8. All questions affecting the election, eligibility and conduct of national officers shall be referred to and determined by the National Executive Committee. All questions affecting the election, eligibility and conduct of the National Executive ~~**Committeeman**~~ **Committee Member from any Department, or of Department officers, or members of Department Executive Committees, shall be referred to and determined by the Executive Committee of the Department involved, which shall be the final authority thereon.**

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. NATIONAL COMMANDER: The National Commander shall be the executive head of ~~**THE AMERICAN LEGION**~~ **The American Legion with full power to enforce the provisions of the National Constitution, National By-Laws, and the will of the National Convention.** ~~**He**~~ **The National Commander shall be the** ~~**chairman**~~ **chair of the National Convention and the National Executive Committee.** ~~**He**~~ **and shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.**

Section 2. NATIONAL VICE COMMANDERS: The National Vice Commanders shall act as representatives of the National Commander on all matters referred to them ~~**by him**~~**, and shall, on** ~~**his**~~ **the National Commander's request, preside over the meetings of the National Convention or National Executive Committee, and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.**

Section 3. NATIONAL ADJUTANT: The National Adjutant shall be charged with the administration of the policies and mandates of the National Convention, the National Executive Committee, and of the National Commander. ~~He~~ The National Adjutant shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office. ~~He~~ and shall also be authorized, in event of the death or resignation of the National Commander, to summon the National Executive Committee for the election of a successor~~, and in~~ . In the event the National Adjutant shall fail, refuse or neglect, within fifteen days after said death or resignation, to issue a call for said meeting of the National Executive Committee to be held within thirty days after said death or resignation, then said meeting for the purpose of electing a successor may be held upon the written demand therefore signed by representatives from fifteen or more Departments, giving fifteen days' notice thereof.

Section 4. NATIONAL TREASURER: The National Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the National Organization. ~~He~~ The National Treasurer shall sign all checks disbursing the funds of the National Organization, and shall make reports upon the condition of the national treasury when called for by the National Commander. The National Treasurer shall furnish a surety bond as hereinafter prescribed. ~~He~~ The National Treasurer shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 5. NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE: The National Judge Advocate shall advise the national officers and the National Executive Committee on all legal matters, including the construction and interpretation of the National Constitution and By-Laws, and shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 6. NATIONAL CHAPLAIN: The National Chaplain shall perform such divine and nonsectarian services as may be necessary, adhering to such ceremonial rituals as may be recommended by National Headquarters from time to time.

Section 7. NATIONAL HISTORIAN: The National Historian shall collect from year to year all records and data of value and interest for the National Headquarters of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion, and shall compile during ~~his~~ their term of office a complete history of the year's activities. ~~He~~ The National Historian shall also assist Department and Post historians so as to coordinate and unify the work of these officials, and shall have such other duties as the National Executive Committee shall prescribe.

ARTICLE III

CHARTERS

Section 1. The Department Executive Committee may suspend, cancel or revoke a Post Charter. The action taken by the Department Executive Committee shall be final and conclusive unless an appeal is taken to the National Executive Committee within thirty days from the date of said suspension, cancellation or revocation. The action taken by the National Executive Committee upon appeal shall be final.

Section 2. Any Post failing to meet the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution and By-Laws, or ceasing to function for six months as an American Legion Post, or voluntarily ceasing to function as a Post, or merging with one or more other Posts, or refusing to pay the Department and National per capita dues, or under such other conditions as might make such action necessary shall, upon order of the Department Executive Committee, surrender its charter for cancellation. Upon failure to surrender such charter, immediate steps may be taken for its revocation, suspension or cancellation.

Section 3. Upon revocation, cancellation or suspension of the charter of a Post in any Department of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion, said Post shall immediately

cease operations and upon revocation or cancellation shall turn over its charter to its Department Commander or Department Executive Committee, and the Department Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed by and through its duly authorized agent to take possession, custody and control of all the records, property and assets of said Post; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed as requiring any Department to take over or assume any financial responsibility as to such property. Said Department Executive Committee may provide for the transfer of the members in said Post to other Posts of their choice, subject to the approval of such other Post.

Section 4. The National Executive Committee shall provide a uniform code defining the procedure to be followed in the revocation, cancellation or suspension of Post charters and providing for a method of appeal and further providing a code of procedure for the revocation, cancellation or suspension of Department charters with continuing power to revise said code, provided, however, that the procedure now in effect shall continue until such code is so adopted.

ARTICLE IV

DISCIPLINE OF POST AND POST MEMBERS

Section 1. Each Post of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of the Constitution and By-Laws, except that no person who is a member of an organization which has for its aim the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence, or who subscribes to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government, shall be eligible to become or remain a member of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion.

Section 2. A Post may suspend or expel a Post member ~~Members may be suspended or expelled~~ from ~~the~~ The American Legion only after providing the member due process and ~~upon~~ a proper showing of cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty ~~and~~ and/or conduct unbecoming a member of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion. All charges must be made under oath in writing by the accusers, and no member in good standing shall lose ~~his~~ their membership until given a fair trial by the Post or Department in such manner and form as the Post or Department By-Laws and Post or Department Executive Committee shall prescribe.

Section 3. Any member who has been suspended or expelled has the right of appeal to ~~his~~ their Department Executive Committee, or to the Department Convention, according to the provisions in the By-Laws of such Department. The decision of the Department shall be final.

Section 4. A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by January first shall be classed as delinquent. If ~~his~~ their dues are paid on or before February first, ~~he~~ the member shall be automatically reinstated. If ~~he~~ the member is still delinquent after February first, ~~he~~ the member shall be suspended from all privileges. If ~~he~~ the member is still under such suspension on June ~~thirtieth~~ first of such year, ~~his~~ their membership in ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Post and payment of current dues for the year in which the reinstatement occurs~~. Provided~~ ; however, ~~that~~ the Posts, Departments and the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion is membership in the National Organization of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion by affiliation with Posts.

ARTICLE VI

MONIES AND COLLECTIONS

Section 1. *~~All national employees and volunteers handling all American Legion monies and negotiable instruments shall be covered by fidelity/crime insurance in an adequate amount as desired by the Finance Commission and said fidelity/crime insurance policy(s) shall be approved by the National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, and Finance Commission.~~*

All national employees and volunteers handling all American Legion monies and negotiable instruments shall be covered by fidelity/crime insurance in an adequate amount as desired by the Finance Commission and said fidelity/crime insurance policy(s) shall be approved by the National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, and Finance Commission.

Section 2. National Headquarters shall, should it be deemed advisable, detail special auditors to investigate the membership roll and financial statement of any Department, and should that Department so desire, assist in a similar audit of Posts within that Department.

ARTICLE VII

TRANSFER OF POSTS

Section 1. Posts of ~~THE AMERICAN LEGION~~ The American Legion formed within units of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard or other organizations, including U.S. Merchant Marines who served during the December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946 timeframe, liable to transfer from one place to another, and which are organized under the Department in which they are then located, may transfer to another Department in a manner similar to the transfer of individuals from one Post to another.

Section 2. Any existing Post in the territorial or insular possession of the United States or in foreign countries, which is not under the jurisdiction of a present existing Department, shall within one year following the adoption hereof, unless extended by the National Executive Committee, request the National Executive Committee to place it under the jurisdiction of a Department to be selected by such Post. Said request shall have attached thereto the formal consent of such Department. Should a Post fail or refuse to make such request or be unable to obtain the consent of a Department, then the National Executive Committee shall designate the Department.

ARTICLE VIII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation thereat, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee by mailing same to them at least twenty (20) days prior to the convening of the next National Convention; any such proposed amendment may be amended without further notice by a two-thirds vote of the total authorized representation thereat, provided it does not increase the modification proposed by the amendment and it has received the approval of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments; and, provided further, it may be amended by unanimous

vote at any National Convention without notice.

Section 2. That no proposed amendment shall be submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee, as provided in Section 1 of this article, unless said proposed amendment shall have been first submitted by a Department Convention, Department Executive Committee, or the National Executive Committee.

Resolution No. 44 (OH) was considered. The Chair announced that this resolution was incorrectly written but because of the important subject matter should be referred to the Resolutions Subcommittee.

Robert Ray (OH) made a motion, seconded by Doug Uhrig (WY) to **refer Resolution No. 44 (OH) to the Resolutions Subcommittee**. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair then asked for a motion that the Chair and Secretary be permitted to sign the report to the Convention on behalf of the members of the Convention Committee. Larry Marcouillier (DE) made the motion and it was seconded by Frank Porter (MD). The motion carried unanimously.

Frank Porter (MD) made the motion, seconded by J. R. Johnson (LA) to attach the Report of the Constitution and By-laws Committee to this report as an exhibit. The motion was carried unanimously.

Cory Bates (RI) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chair. The motion was seconded by Larry Mach (NE). The motion carried unanimously.

The Chair then thanked the Committee for its cooperation and productive meeting. The meeting was declared in recess pending a call from the Chair of the Committee.

A motion was made by Larry Marcouillier (DE) to approve the full discussion concerning The American Legion Auxiliary requirements. The motion was seconded by Frank Porter (MD). The Committee on Constitutional Amendments unanimously approved the full discussion.

A motion to recess subject to recall was made by Gerald Lake (OK), seconded by J. R. Johnson (LA), and approved unanimously.

Mr. Commander, as a delegate to the 101st national convention of The American Legion, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Is there a second?...*Second.*
All those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The report is adopted. It was carried by two-thirds of a vote.

Ladies and gentlemen, for many years The American Legion has been fighting to protect veterans memorials from secular and atheist organizations who attempt to dismantle any symbol that they deem to be religious on public property. This year we prevailed in a historic Supreme Court case, The American Legion vs. American Humanist Association. The decisive victory protected a World War I memorial, which consisted of a large cross in Bladensburg, Maryland. These courtroom victories are only possible because of our representation by great legal minds, and that's what we have at First Liberty Institute. Presenting the Philip Onderdonk Religious Liberty Award is one of those great legal minds, our friend, the president and CEO of First Liberty Institute, Kelly Shackelford. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Philip Onderdonk Religious Liberty Award
Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO First Liberty Institute

Last year I ended my talk with you talking about the Bladensburg Peace Cross and how we were going to go to the Supreme Court and do everything in our power to make sure that cross was not going to be torn down, and I want to show you the video of how I ended my talk with you last year. So let's look at that. It's very short. *(Applause)*

...*The Convention viewed a video.*

I bring you news from the Supreme Court: The Bladensburg Cross is not coming down. *(Applause)*

We won at the Supreme Court, and if you want to go as deep as you want looking into the opinion, the case, the briefs, any of it, you can always go to our website at firstliberty.org. In fact, you can see even new cases. We have a new, very important case, a POW/MIA case that I think all of you would be interested in. Feel free to go there and call us if we can ever help you, but let me give you the report of what happened.

I think most of you know the story of the Bladensburg Peace Cross. This was a memorial that was put up almost 100 years ago by The American Legion and by mothers who lost their sons in World War I. That was on American Legion property, but eventually, since this was right outside of Washington, D.C., this memorial was actually dedicated to the 49 men in Prince Georges County, Maryland, who gave their lives in World War I, but eventually roads were built around this, and so the government took over the property. Go years later than that, and the American Humanists came along and said, hey, there is a cross, and it's on government property. We can't allow that, and they filed a lawsuit. Of course, the Federal Court of Appeals in their wisdom determined that this was, after almost 100 years, all of a sudden now unconstitutional.

One of three things could have happened as a result of this case. Number one, the Supreme Court could have said, yes, tear down this peace cross that's been up for almost 100 years. That would have not only been horrible for what that would have meant for that memorial and those families, but that would have set a precedent, a religious cleansing that would have occurred across our country. Only two miles from there is Arlington National Cemetery. They would have had to go in and tear down the crosses in Arlington, the large free standing crosses. That was option number one. Option number two is they could have said we're going to protect this memorial, but they could have given us no help for future attacks, which we have been having to defend all over the country. Or number three, they could say not only is this memorial okay, but we're going to really do something to help stop these attacks on our veterans memorials across the country with religious imagery. I'm here to report the great news, that they did number three. They said this memorial is not going down, and these attacks need to stop. *(Applause)*

From now on, the Supreme Court has said every memorial and monument that is up, even if it has religious imagery, is presumptively constitutional, and you'd better come with a lot of evidence to say there's something wrong with one of our memorials or monuments in this country. That is a huge change of 50 years of hostile attacks we've been having to endure and great news.

Let me say thank you. You put on the uniform and served this country, but what I love about The American Legion is, even when you left the military, you didn't leave your fight for this country, and we stood together on the grounds of the United States for God and country. And we just won, not just a victory, we changed history. And you are a part of that, and that is one of the reasons why this group, The American Legion, is so special.

You know, over the past years, we have now donated at First Liberty over $9 million of free legal time, standing with The American Legion battling for these different freedoms. For instance, when the Pledge of Allegiance was attacked, we stood with The American Legion in court, and we won and repelled that attack against the Pledge of Allegiance in our schools. When "In God We Trust," our national motto, was attacked, we stood with The American Legion representing them in court saying, no, you're not going to change our national motto, and, again, another victory in court, a decision defending and upholding In God We Trust as our national motto. And when Mt. Soledad was attacked, when the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial was attacked, The American Legion stood up and said no, and we did too, and those memorials still stand today. And, of course, now we have a victory at the United States Supreme Court on behalf of the Bladensburg Peace Cross and really all memorials in the country. This is because The American Legion, even today, is not afraid to stand for our freedoms and fight. *(Applause)*

And so now we get to what we get to do every year, which is really, really a privilege, and that is give the Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Award to the person in this country who has really done the most for religious freedom in our country. Watch this quick video, and then I'm going to give and announce the award winner. ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

We know that more battles are ahead, and we will be standing with The American Legion in these battles. That's one of the reasons every year we're going to give this award, Philip Onderdonk, Jr. Award, named after this great American Legion member that we started the award in conjunction with.

So every year we're going to give, because of the graciousness of Henry, they donate this rifle every year in this award. This is a spectacular rifle. We just can't thank Henry Repeating Arms enough for what they do as well. *(Applause)*

This year's award winner was kind of obvious. One of the biggest cases in the history of the country, in fact, changing history. The case that will always be referred to, because this is the official name, The American Legion case. Who was the person who spent the most time, the most brilliance, the most gathering of the team? It was Chris DiPompeo. Chris DiPompeo works at the international law firm of Jones Day. He was the mastermind behind all of our work on this case and did an unbelievable job. So I could not be more proud than to be able to give this year's Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Award, the Henry rifle, to Chris DiPompeo. *(Applause)*

CHRIS DIPOMPEO: Thank you, Kelly. Thank you, Roger and First Liberty for this award. It's quite an honor. It's something I'll cherish for many years. I will say the big honor of this case for me was that I was able to represent The American Legion for so many years in such a great case with a great outcome. It was a long time coming. We've been representing The American Legion in this case for five years. The case just ended this past June. I'm so happy it resulted in a win that's a historic win. It's going to be a landmark win.

For years in our profession, people have referred to the lemon case and the lemon test as kind of the case that defined religious liberty in this country in really a negative way. I'm so gratified to know that in the future, when people think about the Supreme Court decision that dictates what religious freedom means within this country, they're going to be referring to The American Legion decision that we're a part of. So I'm so grateful for this opportunity. I've never been so proud to represent a client as I was for The American Legion or to be involved in a case like this. So thank you so much for this and for the opportunity to serve you in this way. *(Applause)*

KELLY SHACKELFORD: I want to end with what we did last time about the Bladensburg Cross. It's not coming down. It's not coming down. It's not coming down. *(Applause)* ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Our next speaker spent 32 years in the United States Army as a logistician, rising up to the rank of major general and becoming the assistant deputy chief of staff for Logistics Headquarters Department of the Army. She holds a bachelor's in psychology from Edinboro State University, an MBA from Florida Institute of Technology and is a graduate of the United States Army War College. She is currently the chairwoman of the Woman in Military Service Memorial Foundation. She's also the newest member of The American Legion Department of Virginia. Please give a warm welcome to Retired Major General Jan Edmunds. *(Applause)*

Address: Major General Jan Edmunds, USA (Ret.)
Chairwoman, Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation

How lucky am I? I was supposed to be after the vice president. And I figured after the vice president, everybody would be running for the restrooms. So because I get to be the warm-up act, I have a much bigger opportunity to talk to you today about the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation. I want to thank Commander Reistad, a fellow Virginian for the opportunity, and a special shout-out to Denise Rohan, who has

been a member of the Women's Memorial for over 20 years. And I want to thank the rest of the leadership of The American Legion and the convention organizers for giving me a few minutes to tell you briefly what we're doing on behalf of the 3 million women veterans who have served past and present.

First, the newest news. We've selected a new foundation president: Chief Warrant Officer 5, Phyllis Jean Wilson, who will succeed Major General Dee Ann McWilliams, who is only our second president. The first being Air Force Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, who has addressed this convention on multiple occasions. We're extremely excited to have Phyllis as our new leader. She's a contemporary soldier who mobilized during Desert Shield/Desert Storm and deployed twice to Iraq during current conflicts. She served on both active duty and in the reserves as an intelligence warrant officer, and in her citizen soldier role she was a registered nurse. She reached the highest rank in her career field becoming the fifth command chief warrant officer for the Army Reserve. And to top it off, she has eight children, four sons, having served or are serving in uniform, and one daughter-in-law in uniform.

Next, since The American Legion from the national level to the hundreds of individual posts and Auxiliary units, in that you've invested and supported the Women's Memorial from the beginning, a brief update on our overall status. We're now in our 22nd year since dedication. And we're setting a course for the next quarter of a century of preserving the history of military women and women veterans. We are fortunate to finally be out of debt. Fundraising will always be hard. But we have no remaining red ink. We're also fortunate enough to have secured some federal funding to perform long overdue repairs on the outside of the memorial, which, if you've been there, you know it is the entryway to Arlington National Cemetery. It should be fully preserved. In addition, we're at the early stages of redesigning all of our exhibits, bringing them up to date with the amazing history that has been recorded over the last 20 years.

So those are the big updates. And I'll take my remaining few moments to talk about our shared passion: Continued service to the nation and ensuring our veterans are honored, recognized and remembered. There's always more opportunity if we work together. Twenty years seems like a long time in our memorial's lifespan. But we're an infant compared to The American Legion. Wow, 100 years. What's amazing to me is that the Legion included women veterans from the very beginning. As I heard today, a veteran is a veteran.

So it's also a hundred years since the first all-women American Legion post, the USS Jacob Jones Post, was formed in Washington D.C., becoming the second American Legion post to be formed. The following year, women got the right to vote. In fact, it was the women who served in uniform in World War I that were the tipping point for women finally getting the vote.

The rest of history is not so inclusive. It took until 1977 for the Women's Air Service pilots of World War II to be recognized as actually being on active duty in the armed forces; 42 years after the fact. And only three years ago, after a 75-year struggle, those same WASPs were finally entitled to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Women have never had to fight to be included in The American Legion. But, sadly, far too many members of the general public don't think of a woman when they hear the word veteran or bravery or courage. Everyone here has obviously acknowledged that you're a veteran, but there are many who have served who are not here and who don't see themselves as veterans.

Women, in particular, though the current number of living women veterans who have served is 2 million strong, and women who have been fighting and volunteering to serve since the very beginning of our nation, they generally don't see themselves included in the word veteran. As a result, the contribution of women who have served goes under-recognized and under-recorded, making the women who served end up feeling invisible.

The 20 World War I Yeomen Fs that petitioned for the formation of the USS Jacobs Jones Post in 1919 were proud of and wanted to remain connected to their service. They wanted to be included. Remember, this is before they even had the right to vote and well

before the Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948, which allowed women to serve as permanent regular members of the armed forces, actually being in and not with the armed forces. Obviously kudos to The American Legion for leading history, but we can't rest on these laurels. Until the word veteran automatically means men and women, we have work to do. So how do we change it? How do we make sure women service is included? That's where the opportunity to do more together comes in.

Many of you know about our memorial dedicated to women, military women of all branches through history. But many, many people don't know that a memorial and museum was dedicated and opened in 1997 to ensure the contributions of military servicewomen were preserved and celebrated as a part of America's historical narrative.

At the women's memorial we have collections and artifacts, to be sure. But more importantly, we have a living history database where we collect, curate and preserve the story of servicewomen. I say living, because it's not something just for people who have passed on or concluded their service; it's for all the women who are serving or who have served. It's also living because people's stories change over time. They have beginnings, middles, and, yes, ultimately ends. When I talk to military women from across the country trying to encourage them to register and be part of history, most of the reason that's given for not registering is, oh, I didn't do anything important. Except that every single person, man and woman, who has served in something immensely important. Every one of you did something immensely important. You raised your right hand and said I do solemnly swear I will support and defend. Think about the fact that less than 1% of the public will ever serve. The first most courageous act anyone can perform is volunteering to serve. There's no guarantees after that. No one joins to be famous. No one joins to be a hero. They join to serve.

Uniquely in our history, every woman who has ever served has been a volunteer. Some women through history fought or lied to be able to serve. Women like Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts who enlisted twice disguised as a man to fight in the Revolutionary War, once as Timothy Thayer, the other as Robert Shurtliff. She had no idea at the time she would become famous. That was not why she donned a uniform. She joined to fight for freedom. There were undoubtedly more women who found a way to serve. Unfortunately for us, most of their stories went under-recorded and, as a result, unremembered. No one knows when they joined, but they'll be the first one to blaze a trail for opportunity for others to follow.

We only know these things when looking back through the lens of history. Knowing our role in history gives us power. It helps us focus on what we can do, not what we're told we cannot. It expands our sense of what's possible, encouraging us to strive for more. It helps us uphold our promise to be a country where anyone, regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic status, can achieve their dreams.

That's why we need everyone to be part of this story. Ultimately, if we're successful, together we'll change the face of courage. In the way, in the minds of the American public so that when you say the word veteran or courage or service, people will think of a woman as well as a man. That's our goal. *(Applause)*

To make sure that every woman veteran is included and every story of service is remembered. Your story should be remembered. And the stories of your friends and fellow veterans who are not here today deserve to be remembered and not forgotten. I ask the women here: If you're not registered at your national memorial, if you're not yet included, I hope you'll take your rightful place in history. I ask everyone here, if you know of a woman veteran, be they your mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, a neighbor, make sure they're included. Make sure they're part of our history. Make sure they're registered at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial so that we can make sure history always remembers their name. Thank you for your time, and thank you for your continued service to America. *(Applause)*

...The Convention viewed a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The TriWest Healthcare Alliance is working to ensure that veterans in roughly half the nation have access to high-quality health care when it's unable to be provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our next guest is the president and CEO of TriWest and has more than 30 years of experience, success and accomplishments in national health-care policy development, business development and leadership in both government and the private sector. He holds a master's in administrative sciences from Johns Hopkins University. Please welcome David J. McIntyre, Jr. *(Applause)*

Address: David J. McIntyre, Jr.
President and CEO, TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Thanks for that kind introduction. My father and now retired Vietnam-era veteran doctor, whose service I've sought to honor daily in my work of leading a team this last quarter century supporting DOD and now VA in the provision of community care, would be very proud. The one change I'd make to the introduction, and it wasn't in the notes that went forward, was for a moment, we're serving the entire country, never intending to do that, but on December 7, in honor of the World War II veterans in this country, we in VA started a climb to replace a company that was not doing what they needed to do. And so we now, for a moment, serve the entire country.

National Commander Reistad, National Adjutant Wheeler, executive director and my good friend Lou Celli, Medal of Honor recipient Doc McCloughan, Legionnaires, American Legion's fellow VSO leaders and my three capable long-term colleagues who are here with me today, retired Navy Doc Mac McGuire, Glen Gray and April Sinclair from Alaska, who is one of your Auxiliary members, and ladies and gentlemen, congratulations to The American Legion on 100 amazing years. *(Applause)*

Your voice is critical. And it matters, just as was your service in defense of freedom. It's been our privilege to come alongside Team 100 over the last several years to understand more effectively how we might do our work. Lou, if you had the opportunity, I would gladly take an application for joining The American Legion, given the fact that the LEGION Act has been recently passed and I'd love to be in the shadow of my father as a Son of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

It's an honor to stand before you on behalf of Team TriWest, our nonprofit owners which includes Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans across the country and two university hospital systems that are very proud affiliates with VA who have been owners of this company for 25 years. Our employees who are mostly veterans and veteran family members are subcontractors and the more than 1.1 million community providers that are leading forward at the side of VA each and every day across the country to ensure that VA can deliver on its commitment to veterans.

I came here today to say thank you for your input, for your feedback, for your pushing, but I also came here, more importantly, to double down on a commitment. It's a commitment that we started with The American Legion right after the Phoenix crisis. I live in Phoenix. The commitment was that we would do our part to stay focused and flex to support VA's community care needs. That we would forge ourselves with the input of The American Legion and the other VSOs so that VA, who is necessarily needing to be in charge, might more perfectly deliver on its responsibilities and its privilege to support the health-care needs of those that have served in defense of freedom. That's a commitment that I reiterated to those that lead The American Legion at the signing of the MISSION Act. And it's a commitment that we reiterate today because a couple of weeks ago we were informed that we will have the privilege of continuing to serve at the VA's side for years to come as the next generation contractor in the west. *(Applause)*

Six years ago, next week, we were selected by VA to come to their side in supporting the development of a consolidated community care network that would be available to them when they needed services in support of VA for a veteran. And that we would pay

our claims on an accurate and timely basis. Ten minutes after that press release came out, I got a call. It was from Admiral Mike Mullen. You probably know his name. He said, "Dave, I'm not sure what you're in for, for you and your company, but you're uniquely equipped to serve in this critical capacity. You've been tested. Uniquely understand the needs of those that have served because of your nearly two decades' work in TRICARE. And you're relentlessly focused on successfully scaling mountains in front of you in full collaboration and at the side of government."

He went on to say that, "I'm not really sure what the path is going to be, but you just remember when the days get hard, that you are equipped and that we all expect you to stay extremely focused." As you might expect, my answer was, "Yes, sir." Seven months later, I found myself calling him to exclaim, "Admiral, are you a prophet?" For, you see, we had just begun the work in Arizona and 20 other states a couple months prior to when all hell broke loose in Phoenix, Arizona. My call to him was preceded by a person you honored yesterday. And that was my long-time former boss John McCain, who had pulled the plug on an Eastern Europe trip in the middle of the trip and flew back to Phoenix on an all-nighter, to engage with the VA on behalf of his veteran constituents to understand what was going on, what the problems were, and what needed to be done in response to the crisis. As you might expect, he was in very rare form, even for John McCain.

Not long thereafter, I reached out to one of my other heroes, then Secretary Shinseki. And then I reached back to Mike Mullen. I committed to all of them that we would stay focused on whatever the task was that was required in front of us. We didn't really know what that meant. But together, your organization, all of you that have given input, the great team at VA led by the very capable Secretary Wilkes, who is working tirelessly to lead us all through the resetting of VA for the benefit of this generation and the next, members of Congress from across the aisle in both houses, this administration and the last, and most importantly, those who should expect our very best are the ones that we all remain committed to. I want to make one thing extremely clear. And we won't be the only ones doing this work, but I know that if she was here, General Patty Horoho would be making the exact same comment. We are not here to privatize VA. Period. *(Applause)*

You know, there was a time in DOD at the beginning of TRICARE where that same conversation was going on. We opposed it then and we oppose it now. We've all invested in VA. It needs to be strengthened. But at the same time, since 9/11, we've had Navy SEALs who came from the middle of the country a long, long way away from a VA facility who have done 16 deployments. They've moved back to their family ranch and they have needs. So do they drive 600 miles, or do they get their care in the community? That's fundamentally what our challenge is. Our role is not to replace VA. Our role is not to tell a veteran what they should be doing, because the VA and veterans need to be at the core. Our responsibility is to make sure that there are providers available when needed to deliver the care. We've now supported the making of more than 2 million veteran appointments across the country with a network of 1.1 million providers that includes one of your own in this audience, Charles O'Leary from Oklahoma, who are leaning forward when they need to. And we're paying our bills in less than 20 days to 98 percent accuracy. *(Applause)*

We're not perfect, and we're never going to be, but we're aiming for a very high bar. There's a day when I want that to be at five days. We now have capital in excess of $600 million. Why is that important? Because we pay the bills and then the VA reimburses us. If we don't have the money necessary to do that, care cannot be delivered. And we have access to money above that. And it's for the purpose of making sure that there will never be a wait because there wasn't enough money in the till to pay the provider who was delivering the services. We've also been privileged this last number of months to stand up the urgent care benefit that was birthed in the MISSION Act for which we did several pilots over the last several years and have done that nationwide. We're almost finished with the development of the network but today, on a weekend, if you have a sinus infection, or if you live a long way from basic care and you've got a problem and need it tended to, or you cut your hand like I did at one point in my life, you can go in and get stitches there, versus

having to wait or having to drive a long distance. Ninety percent of this nation's veterans that are eligible for urgent care have to drive no more than 30 minutes from their house to get access. *(Applause)*

And so it's been quite a ride. I want to thank The American Legion for pushing, for being transparent, for being insistent, for being supportive, for being a teammate in this journey of ours that we will celebrate the sixth anniversary of on Tuesday. It has been the privilege of our life to be engaged in this work. It's what we do. It's all we do. It's why we built this company. And we were privileged to do the work at 9/11 and beyond at the side of DOD, and there's nowhere we would rather be as human beings and as fellow citizens standing next to the VA, at the doorstep of the VA as they greet our fellow citizens who have come back from war and are now going to be supported by the VA.

I can't imagine a better person to lead the VA at this moment. Informed by his own experience, and it's a privilege to work at the side of he and will be at the side of the former Army Surgeon General Patty Horoho as the son of an Army doc who, together, we will stretch ourselves to make sure that we fulfill what you believe needs to be done as we work together to make sure that the VA is strengthened and that it does what it needs to do to fulfill Abraham Lincoln's commitment on behalf of a grateful nation as we move through this generation and the next. God bless you all. God bless The American Legion. I look forward to being the Son of a Legionnaire in the very near future. And I'd like to close with a brief video that gives you a perspective of a couple of veterans about the enterprise of VA that is in the process of being constructive. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

...The Convention viewed a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, our next speaker is a man most responsible for making The American Legion World Series in Shelby, North Carolina, a gigantic success. Please welcome Eddie Holbrook. *(Applause)*

Address: Eddie Holbrook, Chairman
American Legion World Series Committee

Thank you very much. On behalf of the state of North Carolina, Cleveland County, and Shelby, North Carolina, the World Series, I would like to say hello and thank you for all of your support. A couple of brief comments. When this journey for The American Legion World Series location began some 10 years ago, The American Legion national office selected Shelby, North Carolina, to host. We said at that time the World Series can be only as good as the two of us can make it. We must be a partner, and that's what we have been. And I'd like to say a special thank you to The American Legion national organization and to the national office for the support that they have given this event.

This event has grown tremendously, from a non-televised event, to this past year, which we've just concluded, live ESPNU, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and this year, because of a rainout, Wednesday morning. The series has been extremely successful because of sponsorships and support that have underwritten it financially. Cleveland County is a small county of about 100,000 people, Shelby being a city of only about 20,000. To demonstrate the support that the national office has received in this event, sponsors in our vicinity purchased, this past year, 120,000 tickets for the American Legion World Series. 120,000. *(Applause)*

Don't ask me what we would have done if they all had shown up at one time because I really don't know. But I think that demonstrates what The American Legion World Series has become to our community. It has had an economic impact in our small community of some $6 million a year. It has had an income impact regionally of some $15 million a year. So needless to say, our community and our state are very happy with the American Legion World Series. And our motto, when we began this, was to the national office: Our charge is to make you feel proud that you selected Shelby and North Carolina to host The American Legion World Series. And more important, it's important for us to show our appreciation to the veterans, to The American Legion, and to this country and for what this

organization has meant to all of us. So on behalf of the many citizens of Cleveland County, the state of North Carolina, I extend our gratitude and appreciation to you for allowing us to have this opportunity.

And in closing, I'd like to take a personal privilege, if you don't mind. I'd like to really introduce to you my right arm, my right leg and my real chairman, my wife, who works with me so closely in this event and helps guide the event, my wife, Millie. I'd like to introduce her and give her to have the opportunity to meet the commander. Thank you very much. *(Applause) ...The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Fellow members of the American Legion Family, this is a bit of a homecoming for our next speaker. Not only is he a former governor of Indiana, but he is a distinguished alumnus who excelled in one of our American Legion youth programs. In 1977, as a senior at Columbus North High School, he won the American Legion Department of Indiana Oratorical Contest. *(Applause)*

He had been a runner-up the year before. He earned a bachelor's degree in history at Hanover College and a law degree at Indiana University. He practiced law and hosted a radio talk show before being elected to represent Indiana's 2nd Congressional District in 2000. In 2008, Esquire Magazine listed him as one of the "ten best members of Congress." The son of a Korean War veteran, our distinguished guest is also the father of a United States Marine. *(Applause)*

He is a strong supporter of the Second Amendment and religious freedom. Throughout his political career, he championed limited government and low taxes. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my high honor to introduce the vice president of the United States, the Honorable Mike Pence. *(Applause)*

Address: Honorable Michael Pence
Vice President of the United States

National Commander Brett Reistad, National Adjutant Dan Wheeler, distinguished guests, but most of all, all of you members of The American Legion who have worn the uniform of the United States of America, it is great to be here with you in the city of Indianapolis at the 101st National Convention of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Starting a new century of leadership. And let me say what an honor it is to be able to welcome so many of you here to the Hoosier State and to be back home again in Indiana. Got some Hoosiers in the house. I'm awfully proud to stand with all of you. The American Legion is the largest and most influential veterans organization in America, and its headquartered right here in Indiana. *(Applause)*

It really is great to be with so many friends from all across the country, veterans all who served this country over the course of your life and are continuing to serve in your efforts through The American Legion. But let me mention one friend in particular. I'm especially honored to be joined today by a Vietnam combat veteran, a two-time recipient of the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and when I was governor, he was one of the greatest champions of veterans this state has ever known, and now he's one of Indiana's newest members of the Congress of the United States Would you join me in welcoming Congressman Jim Baird to this American Legion National Convention. *(Applause)*

What a great American. And speaking of friends of mine, allow me to bring greetings from another friend of mine, who when I told him I was headed here to see all of you people here today, I think he sounded just a little bit jealous. He is a champion of the men and women of our armed forces and their families. He is a champion of the veterans of the United States of America, and I bring greetings from our nation's commander-in-chief and the 45th president of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. *(Applause)*

You know, it really is the greatest honor of my life to serve as vice president to a president who gets up every day and fights to keep the promises he made to the American people and to all of those who serve in uniform today and have served in the uniform of

the United States. Frankly, this administration, just like The American Legion, has been standing for all of the same things. Like the Legion, we've stood with our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard, and we're giving them the resources and the support they need to accomplish their mission again. *(Applause)*

We've stood by our veterans, giving them the benefits and the care that they deserve once again, and under this president, this administration will always stand by our American Flag. We will always stand for our National Anthem, and just like The American Legion, we will always defend the freedom and sacrifice they represent. *(Applause)*

I promise you. Those cherished ideals are really what The American Legion is all about. It's amazing to think 100 years ago veterans of this nation gathered in the city of Minneapolis at the request of the United States Congress to build a community of veterans, and so you have. When they gathered in Minneapolis, history records they swore to associate themselves "for God and country," and to this day, The American Legion stands strong on its four founding pillars, to care for our veterans, a strong national defense, the well-being of America's youth, and championing the cause of Americanism.

You've come alongside those who have borne the battle and for the families, the families that supported them. Last year alone the Legion helped more than 2,400 veterans find jobs, and The American Legion raised more than $1.4 million for VA hospitals and donated almost 4 million hours of community volunteer service. The American Legion is making a difference for our veterans. *(Applause)*

And as the national commander just said, I can testify firsthand, you've been busy teaching our young people about the principles that make our country great, whether it's through the Boy Scouts, American Legion baseball, or that American Legion oratorical contest. You know, I just did an interview with the magazine, and I feel I owe a debt of gratitude to The American Legion because it was in that American Legion oratorical contest that my love affair for the Constitution of the United States of America began, and you have my thanks. *(Applause)*

The truth is, looking out at all of you and all of the distinguished leaders gathered on this stage, I know you come from the rest of us, but make no mistake about it, your president and I know you're the best of us. On behalf of a grateful commander-in-chief, on behalf of a grateful nation, let me simply begin today by saying thank you for your service. We'll always be grateful. *(Applause)*

The American Legion is not only filled with members who have dedicated your lives to serving this country, first in uniform and now standing alongside our veterans, but this organization has also lent your voice to the cause of the American veteran throughout the land, and I'm here to tell you, I've been serving alongside him now for a little more than two-and-a-half years, American veterans have a champion in President Donald Trump. *(Applause)*

I see it every time we're talking about issues affecting the veterans. This president is very impatient when it comes to us meeting the promises we've made to our veterans, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that and what together we've been able to accomplish under this president's leadership. The president put it well not long ago. He said, our veterans have fought for our country, and now our administration is going to keep fighting for you. Since the first days of this administration, I can tell you, your president, this vice president, and our administration have been doing just that, and not a moment too soon.

The truth is three short years ago, years of budgetary neglect combined with ever growing foreign commitments was sapping the strength of our men and women in uniform today and challenging their morale. Scandal after scandal at the VA revealed a cold indifference to the fate of our veterans, but under President Donald Trump, those days are over. *(Applause)*

If you remember, in his speech to The American Legion in September of 2016, as a candidate our president promised to rebuild our depleted military and, as he said, ensure every veteran in America gets timely access to top-quality care, and, most importantly, we

were going to stop apologizing for America and we were going to start celebrating America, and that's exactly what we've done. *(Applause)*

Three years later, this president has delivered with the strong support of our allies in the Congress. I stand before you today, America is more prosperous, our military is stronger, and our veterans are finally getting the care and the respect that you deserve every single day. *(Applause)*

As the father of a United States Marine, I couldn't be more proud to serve alongside a president who cares so deeply about our men and women of our armed forces and their families. I'm proud to report to you as well that, since the first day of this administration, our president has worked to make the strongest military in the history of the world stronger still, and President Trump has actually signed into law the largest increase in our national defense since the days of Ronald Reagan. This month we signed a budget deal that secured $738 billion for our military and gave our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard, the biggest pay raise they've had in the last ten years! *(Applause)*

With that renewed investment, our Army will have nearly 300 new M1 Abrams tanks, the Navy will deploy the most advanced class of aircraft carriers in history, the Air Force will have hundreds of brand-new joint strike fighters, the F-35. And tomorrow the president will install four-star general John Raymond as the first commander of U.S. Space Command, and very soon we will stand up the sixth branch of our armed forces. The United States Space Command will be here soon. *(Applause)*

As the president has said, "Our active duty personnel are now the best-equipped, best-trained, and most technologically advanced fighting force in the history of the world." It's true. And with this renewed American strength, we are once again embracing our role as leader of the free world. As the world witnessed again at the G7 Summit just this last weekend, we have a president who is standing up for America on the world stage. He's putting America first every single day. Under this president's leadership, we're once again standing with our allies and standing up to our enemies. Our NATO allies are contributing more to our common defense than ever before. We confronted the world's largest state sponsor of terror when we withdrew from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. *(Applause)*

After being taken advantage of in trade by many countries for more than a quarter of a century, this president has stood strong for American jobs and American workers. And we've put China on notice that we'll no longer tolerate their unfair and abusive trade practices. And the United States military will ensure the freedom of navigation on the seven seas, around the world. *(Applause)*

And as we all know, we've taken the fight to radical Islamist terrorists, on our terms, on their soil. You know, five years ago, the so-called ISIS caliphate actually controlled nearly 35,000 square miles in Syria and Iraq. They subjected 5 million people to unspeakable barbarism and oppression. But today, thanks to the courage of our armed forces and the leadership of our commander-in-chief, earlier this year, the last inch of territory controlled by the ISIS caliphate was captured. *(Applause)*

The territory of the ISIS caliphate has crumbled. It's an extraordinary accomplishment for our troops and a source of great American pride. Beyond that, from the outset of this administration, this president also stood strong against North Korean aggression and, now North Korea is at the negotiating table. And as I stand before you today, there's no more nuclear tests, no more threats against America, three historic meetings have taken place, and thanks to the leadership of this president, North Korea's leader has promised to return the remains of all fallen U.S. servicemembers in the Korean War. *(Applause)*

And I have to tell you, the national commander mentioned that I'm not only the father of a Marine, but I'm the son of a Korean combat veteran, and I have to tell you, I told the president this, he never gave me any greater honor than when he allowed me to represent him when the remains of the first 55 soldiers returned to American soil in Hawaii in July of last year. Watching those 55 small, flag-draped caskets come off the plane was an extraordinary experience. We brought back our heroes, and there's more to come. We received then word that the very first soldier that was identified was Army Master Sergeant

Charles H. McDaniel of Vernon, Indiana. And now the master sergeant is resting at home where he belongs. *(Applause)*

And at this point, more than two dozen have been identified and restored to their families in their communities. And I want to assure you that, as we continue negotiations with North Korea, as we continue to seek peace on the Korean peninsula, the denuclearization of North Korea, this president and this administration will not rest until we bring all our boys home from the Korean War. *(Applause)*

So we've been rebuilding our military, restoring the arsenal of democracy, and renewing American leadership on the world stage. But as President Trump has said, "As we take care of those serving today, just like The American Legion, our administration is equally committed to taking care of every warrior that returns home as a veteran." In this White House, let me be clear, this president and this administration know veterans' benefits are not entitlements, they are the ongoing compensation that was earned in the uniform of the United States of America. *(Applause)*

And since day one our administration has taken decisive action to ensure that America keeps the solemn promises that it made to each and every one of you and all of our nation's heroes, and that began with fixing the VA. Under this president's leadership with our partners in Congress, we passed the VA MISSION Act, the most sweeping VA reform law in half a century, and today nearly 3 million veterans have been able to see the doctor of their choice and get the medicine they need. *(Applause)*

The president also signed the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act to ensure that our veterans receive the highest quality of service in the VA system. And today I'm pleased to report that under this administration, we fired more than 7,000 VA employees for negligent behavior. The era of abuse at the VA is over. We're not going to put up with it anymore. *(Applause)*

And since our administration took office, wait times have dropped by 33 percent. In fact, the AMA says that wait times are now shorter for the VA than they are for private doctors. And that's just how it should be for our veterans. This year alone, the VA has processed more than 1.2 million claims for compensation and increased the number of appeals decisions by 70 percent. We're off to a great start making sure that our veterans are getting the health care that you earned, but we're going to keep pressing on it. I mean, the results really speak for themselves. Before President Trump took office, trust in the VA among veterans was only 59 percent. Today trust in the VA among veterans is 88 percent and rising, but as the president said, we're not going to stop until it's 100 percent of veterans approving the VA. *(Applause)*

We also increased funding for mental health services by almost $9 billion. The VA is now providing mental health screenings to every patient that walks through the door. And as we meet the health-care needs of our veterans, let me make you another promise: This administration will always make room for the spiritual needs of our heroes at the VA as well. *(Applause)*

You might have heard even today that there's a lawsuit to remove a bible that was carried in World War II from a missing man table at a VA hospital in New Hampshire. There's a lawsuit underway. It's really no surprise because under the last administration, VA hospitals were removing bibles and even banning Christmas carols in an effort to be politically correct. But let me be clear. Under this administration, VA hospitals will not be religion-free zones. We will always respect the freedom of religion of every veteran of every faith, and my message to the New Hampshire VA hospital is the bible stays! *(Applause)*

Beyond our VA hospitals, we've also been making sure that our veterans get the care they need outside of our institutional care. We've actually found permanent homes for nearly 30,000 homeless veterans. There should be no homeless veterans in America. We've put an end to this scourge in at least 76 communities and three whole states. We've expanded the GI Bill so that veterans can get up to $24,000 to attend the college of their choice at any point in their careers. And just two weeks ago, President Trump directed the

Department of Education to eliminate every last penny of student debt owed by permanently disabled veterans. *(Applause)*

With the stroke of a pen, President Trump wiped out as much as $750 million owed by more than 25,000 heroes, and he couldn't have been more right. He couldn't have been more right when he says our heroes "should not have to pay to live their dreams after they have paid so much for the American dream." *(Applause)*

And, of course, the greatest benefit of any returning veteran, people coming home from service in uniform, is a robust, dynamic, and growing economy, and we've delivered on that as well. This president has taken decisive action to reignite the engine of opportunity so that when America's war fighters return to civilian life, they have an abundance of opportunities to earn a good living and pursue their dreams. From early in this administration, we went right to work. After the slowest economic recovery since the great depression, where in the last eight years our economy only grew by 2 percent, this president and our administration went to work with Congress, and we cut taxes across the board for working families and businesses.

We rolled back red tape. We cut more red tape in the first two years than any president in American history. We unleashed American energy so that next year America will be a net exporter of oil and national gas for the first time in 70 years, and we fought for trade deals that put American jobs and American workers first. *(Applause)*

For our veterans coming back in the workforce and for every American since election day, businesses large and small have created more than 6 million new jobs. The unemployment rate has fallen to a near 50-year low. The unemployment rate among veterans has fallen by nearly 40 percent, and under our administration veterans' unemployment has reached the lowest level in nearly 20 years. Our veterans are working again and finding jobs. *(Applause)*

In fact, veterans' unemployment is now lower than even the national average. It's incredible. To those of you who have a friend or family member or veteran looking for work, you might remind them there's actually more job openings in America today than there are people looking for work. Never a better time to come back and go to work in this country. Over the past three years, with the strong support of The American Legion, our administration has replaced weakness with vigor, doubt with confidence, and neglect with compassion and care of the American people. Together, we are forging a new future of American strength, and together we are making America strong, we're making America secure, we're making America great again. *(Applause)*

But if we want to keep America great, we've got to keep on fighting, keep standing strong, keep demanding government as good as our people. I promise you, we will. We're going to keep fighting also for all the ideals that The American Legion has held dear and held up since your founding more than a century ago, the ideals that are the essence of Americanism, expressed in our Declaration that recites that we're endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights, endowed by our creator with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The ideals that are enshrined in our glorious Constitution that all of you in this room put on the uniform to defend. And I promise you those rights, those rights, God-given liberties enshrined in our Bill of Rights, I promise you this president, this vice president, and all of the 140 judges that we've seen appointed to our federal courts at every level are going to uphold all those liberties, from the freedom of speech, to the freedom of religion, to the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. *(Applause)*

And just like The American Legion has done, like you did in the service to this nation and this organization has done through its long and storied history, we'll always stand for freedom. It is remarkable to think that some in Washington today openly advocate an economic system that has impoverished millions and stolen the freedom of generations. That system is socialism. But as those who have fought to defend our freedom know well, it was freedom, not socialism, that gave us the strongest and most prosperous nation in the history of the world. It was freedom. *(Applause)*

It was freedom, not socialism, that ended slavery, won two world wars, and stands today as a beacon of hope for all the world. So in the weeks and months ahead, I say to all of my friends in The American Legion and all those looking on around the country, in the days that lie ahead, we must say with one voice, and as the president said in his State of the Union Address, "America will never be a socialist country." *(Applause)*

We'll do this for this generation of Americans and for our posterity. We'll do this to preserve the last best hope of earth. But make no mistake about it, we will also do this to honor the service and sacrifice of all those in this room and in the generations who've gone before to preserve freedom and defend it. Ronald Reagan used to say, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." And so as we look ahead, let me remind you, we can't just settle to win the next election. We've got to win the next generation. We have to carry the message of freedom to every American. *(Applause)*

Because we have to remember, as all of you know better than me, the price that was paid for freedom. Standing before you today it's deeply humbling. My life did not take me into the uniform of the United States, but as the son of a combat veteran and a father of a member of the service and soon to be the proud father-in-law of a Navy pilot. *(Applause)*

My daughter just got engaged. It's an honor to be before you today and to be among those in my family who answered the call that you answered. All of you did your part, and the truth is, through your work in The American Legion, you're still doing it. But now more than ever we need your commitment to support our men and women in uniform today, to stand by those who have borne the battle and their families. Now more than ever, we need you to stand with all of those who are willing to stand up for the ideals that have always been synonymous with The American Legion, ideals at the very heart of the American way of life. Ideals you fought to defend and that many defended at the cost of their very lives. As men and women of The American Legion know, freedom isn't free. It's bought at a price and has been defended with the dearest price of all.

Last Friday, my wife, Karen, and I were at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where servicemembers that fall in combat come home. We were there for the return of two combat soldiers, warriors, who fell in a fire fight about a week ago in Afghanistan. Master Sergeant Jose Gonzalez and Master Sergeant Luis DeLeon, Special Forces, 7th Army. They were the best of the best, incredible men. Both of them had been on multiple deployments overseas, never hesitated to go back.

I actually met Jose at Walter Reed Hospital in February of 2017. He was recovering from combat injuries he'd received and was preparing to get back to the fight. But as we were talking with his wife, Brenda, she told me that, as he was recovering at Walter Reed, it was Luis that came to her house, and he said to her that Jose was going to be fine and that, when he returned to the fight, she shouldn't worry, because he said, "I'll never leave him." Karen and I stood there. We looked into the eyes of these two extraordinary women, with tears in their eyes and tears in ours, and as I watched the two flag-draped coffins come off that aircraft together, all I could think is he kept his word.

He never left him. They both went back into the battlefield together, and from there to eternity, and today their earthly remains are home. But I promise you, this nation will never forget or fail to honor the service and sacrifice of Master Sergeant Jose Gonzalez and Master Sergeant Luis DeLeon. *(Applause)*

I recite their names with reverence, and I know there are names in your minds that you're thinking of now. We remember them. We're inspired by them, and our resolve is steeled. Continue to stand for all they fought to defend. Ours is the land of the free because it's always been the home of the brave, and you are the brave. You stood in the gap, you held a far, distant post for freedom, and you counted our lives more important than yours. And the American people will always be grateful. As the Psalmist wrote, "You trained your hands for war, and we thank Him who gave you the grace to advance against a troop and come home safe to serve all of those who also served."

So thank you for your service. Thank you for your courage. And thank you for doing your part in uniform and every day since to stand by our military and to stand for our

freedom. Doing your part to preserve this last best hope of earth for ourselves, our children, and our children's children. May God bless The American Legion and the entire Legion Family. May God bless the men and women of our armed forces. May God bless America. Thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

Salute to Colors and Recess

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Please join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. By the numbers. One.

...The delegates rose and saluted the Colors.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Two. The time is 1:55 p.m. The convention will stand in recess until 8:30 a.m. tomorrow.

...At 1:55 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, August 29, 2019, at 8:30 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
Third Day

Thursday, August 29, 2019

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the 101st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had.

Call to Order and Salute to Colors
Brett P. Reistad, Virginia, National Commander

Ladies and gentlemen, as we begin our program this morning, please join me in a round of applause for Rick Pedro at the keyboard. Thank you, Rick. *(Applause)*

The convention will now come to order. Please stand and join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America by the numbers. One!

...The delegates rose and saluted the Colors.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Two! Please remain standing and uncover. For the invocation, I call on Past National Chaplain Randy Cash of North Carolina.

Invocation
Randy Cash, North Carolina, Past National Chaplain

Let us pray. Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations before the mountains were brought forth, wherever You had formed the Earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. From our many faith traditions, oh Lord, we stand together united in service to God and country for we know life without freedom is intolerable and freedom without courage is impossible. Be with those this day standing the watch. These things we ask as we serve one another, our country and Your kingdom forever. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you, Chaplain Cash. Ladies and gentlemen, please remain uncovered as National Sergeant-at-Arms Willie Ransom of Virginia leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance
Willie D. Ransom, Virginia, National Sergeant-at-Arms

...The Convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Please be seated. The Convention is now in session.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We begin this morning by recognizing outstanding achievement in journalism that had a positive impact on a community. The American Legion Fourth Estate Award is difficult to earn. It's a testament to the demanding nature of the competition and the quality of entries. Not only do the reports have to be informative and entertaining, they also have to provide a tangible benefit to society.

Being honored in the Broadcast Category is KNTV of San Jose, California. In its comprehensive series "Failure to Report: Sex Abuse Victims Silenced," the NBC affiliate examined sexual abuse allegations made by students at a private high school in San Jose. As a result of the station's reporting, the school revised its policies on the handling of abuse accusations, two teachers were put on administrative leave and the school's president resigned. Please turn your attention to the video monitors.

...The Convention viewed a video.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, Investigative Reporter Vicky Nguyen. *(Applause)*

Broadcast Category
KNTV, San Jose, California

VICKY NGUYEN: Well, thank you so very, very much. It is my honor to be here with you all today. On behalf of our entire investigative unit and our newsroom at NBC Bay Area we just thank you so much. Thank The American Legion for this tremendous honor recognizing our reports, exposing the failure of trusted adults to report allegations of sexual abuse involving the children in their care.

Now these reports all came from an all-girl Catholic high school in San Jose, California, the Silicon Valley. It was called Presentation High, as you saw. The motto there was "Deeds not words." I wish I could say things like this no longer happen, but as we all know, even in the headlines today, we're learning more about the alleged child sex trafficking by Jeffrey Epstein and potential links to some of the most powerful people in our country. That's why this Fourth Estate Award is so meaningful to us.

It really represents one of the greatest pillars of this country: The fact that we have an independent and free press. That we can hold the powerful accountable and that we can provide a platform and give a voice to individuals among us who speak out to expose the truth. That's really how this series started. A woman wrote an essay to a paper talking about her high school Spanish teacher, how he touched her and showed her pornographic images, and how she told the adults that she trusted the most, the women who were in charge of this all-girls Catholic high school. She thought surely they would do the right thing. But as it turns out, they did not.

They didn't do the right thing for many years, after many reports involving different girls, different teachers and different coaches. The reports included a teacher who was caught kissing a 16-year-old student who was later found to have exchanged thousands of inappropriate texts with her, who later went on to another school and is now a convicted sexual offender. A water polo coach who took advantage of a 14-year-old player. A Spanish teacher allowed to chaperone an overseas overnight trip reported for sneaking into a girl's room and sexually abusing her. These were the types of incidents reported to school leaders at Presentation High School time and again. The adults who were trusted to protect these young girls failed to do so. They intimidated the girls and in some cases intimidated their parents. They protected the school and its reputation over the children.

Our reports, as you saw a slice of there, unfolded over a 14-month period, and they did result in the resignation of the school's beloved president. We truly share this honor with the women and the young girls who trusted us to tell their stories. They were part of a sisterhood that none of them asked to join. But in their courage to speak out, and to support each other and to endure the bullying and skepticism that faces so many survivors of abuse, we commend them. It truly was our honor, our privilege and our responsibility to vet their stories and to report them accurately. And to see that they made a difference, we are truly, truly honored.

Sadly, I'm no longer at KNTV, the local NBC Bay Area station. I now work for NBC News in New York and our reports appear on Nightly News with Lester Holt and the Today Show. And as much as I truly miss my colleagues at NBC Bay Area, I'm really proud to represent them here today. I also know that we all, collectively, as journalists, have much more work ahead, more investigative reporting to do. On behalf of my colleagues at NBC Bay Area and now NBC News, we are truly humbled by this honor from The American Legion. Thank you so very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Fourth Estate Internet/New Media Award goes to Military.com. Reporter Oriana Pawlyk wrote about an Air Force policy

which prohibits its pilots from using the HIV-preventative drug Truvade, despite the prescriptions' approval for use by pilots of the other military branches. Shortly after the report was published, 14 members of Congress signed a letter to the Air Force secretary. The service soon reversed its policy. We have a brief video about this. Please turn your attention to the screen. ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Oriana Pawlyck. *(Applause)*

Internet/New Media Category
Military.com

ORIANA PAWLYCK: Thank you, and thank you for this opportunity. I think by researching and reporting this story, as many of you saw in the video above, ultimately it prompted change for a community within the Air Force that felt marginalized by outdated policies.

We've heard from countless officials right here at this very conference just how bureaucratic practices can ultimately stifle progress in an organization. In this case, these pilots and air crew wanted answers before they uprooted their lives or separated from the service too early. The story was about them and their courage to come forward and speak up to promote change. I'm humbled to be a part of this prestigious group of journalists.

At a time when credible, accurate reporting is more important than ever, I hope to continue this quest for this community much like journalists who have broken such important stories before me and that impact servicemembers every day. From base water contamination, the ongoing base housing crisis, and the rising suicide deaths in the armed forces, there are a myriad of issues that simply cannot be overlooked or neglected or pushed off for the next batch of leaders. Servicemembers want action, and they often need that extra voice. Thank you so very much for this opportunity to myself and on behalf of military.com. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Republican of Springfield, Massachusetts, is being recognized in the print category for its profile of World War II Army Nurse Corps veteran Louise Fleming. "There is another side of war, a time when beauty appears," the feature said. The piece, authored by managing editor Cynthia Simison, highlights the distinguished service by Fleming and fulfills The American Legion's longtime goal of promoting the honorable nature of military service. Let's take a look at this great work. ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Accepting the award is Cynthia Simison. *(Applause)*

Print Category
The Republican, Springfield, Massachusetts

CYNTHIA SIMISON: Good morning. Greetings from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I bring with me not only my own thanks but also the thanks of Louise, who is now 103, thriving, living a wonderful life. *(Applause)*

All of you here know better than I that we are losing. I'm sorry, this is very emotional for me, but we're losing the voices of our World War II veterans. I've made it my mission since 1991, when we did a series about the 50th anniversary of the war, to share their stories.

Back then, I met a gentleman who had been at Pearl Harbor. And he shared with me a story about meeting some young people at a water fountain one day and how he asked them if any of them knew about Pearl Harbor, and one of the young people said, "Who is she?" Well, Bob Greenleaf became one of my dearest friends, and he passed away two years ago. I made a promise to him that as long as I am employed by the Republican in

Springfield, I would ensure that the story of Pearl Harbor was never forgotten. So I continue that commitment. *(Applause)*

He is one of my inspirations. Another is my own father, who walked on to Omaha beach the day after D-Day. He didn't share his story. But I want all of you to know that you should share your stories, whether it's Korea or Vietnam or Afghanistan and Iraq. Do not let your stories be forgotten, because that way you'll help fulfill one of the missions of your organization: to ensure that veterans and their families receive the benefits they so richly deserve for what they do for our nation. That's my message today.

Reach out to the media in your hometowns. Find out who the decision makers are. Share your stories. Share your call for veteran services. Get the message out to young people about Girls State and Boys State, about the voice of democracy. Even about American Legion Baseball, which is facing its own challenges these days. It's in your hands to guide our nation to learn more about those who give their service to our country. I thank you for all you do, but I also thank you for this great honor. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The American Legion believes every missing U.S. servicemember and POW deserves a full accounting. It's why we reserve an empty chair in their honor at all of our meetings. Our next guest leads the agency charged with providing that accounting and for identifying and repatriating remains of our fallen heroes. After retiring as an Air Force major general with 34 years of service, he served as a deputy director and now the director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. He holds a master's and bachelor's degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mr. Kelly McKeague. *(Applause)*

Address: Kelly K. McKeague
Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Patriots of The American Legion, good morning. I salute you on your 100 years of dedicated service to our nation. To National Commander Reistad, National Adjutant Wheeler, distinguished veterans, it's a distinct privilege for me to be able to share with you our nation's commitment to account for our missing. It appropriately is a sacred mission and a moral imperative.

And that is that our missing American heroes who currently lie on an unknown piece of soil in a foreign land need to be returned to American soil. No more profound is this commitment than what you see here. This is a picture of a joint Vietnamese-U.S. team in Quang Binh Province, Vietnam. They're searching for the remains of two Air Force airmen who crashed in an F-4 during the Vietnam War. Every single set of remains, it may even be a single tooth, is afforded what you see there: a full military honors burial. This is this nation's commitment to our heroes. *(Applause)*

Fulfilling the promise made to those who went off to combat and never came home and their families is surely an element of the Americanism that is the principle of The American Legion and what Secretary Pompeo lauded you for yesterday. First and foremost, let me thank profusely The American Legion for your staunch support to your missing comrades and to their families. Thank you for strongly advocating to your members of Congress how vitally important this mission is. Thank you for flying the iconic POW/MIA flag over your posts and for attending the military burials of our returning servicemembers. Thanks to your state department leaders who regularly attend our family member updates held across the nation. And a specific thanks goes to the Legion posts and the Auxiliary in Hutchinson, Kansas, who raised money to fund the installation of an eternal lamp at the county POW/MIA memorial there in Hutchinson.

Your commitment at all levels truly makes a difference not only to our POW/MIAs but, more importantly, to their Gold Star families. The number of missing Americans from combat is a staggering 82,000. 82,000. Now, of that, we estimate 39,000 are recoverable. The rest being deep water at sea losses. That number of 39,000 is a daunting number. But

it's more than just a figure. Each one of those 39,000 losses, along with the others, represents a unique story that transcends generations and time. Family members still care deeply. There's a void in their heart, in their lives, that decades of time have not healed. And it's why this nation vigorously pursues the return and accounting for of their loved ones. Across the world we work with 46 countries, countries where Americans went missing in combat. Those 46 countries fortunately cooperate extensively with the United States, because each one recognizes this as a humanitarian effort. It's one that we will never stop pursuing as we do.

Allow me to share with you the story of Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Leo and Fireman 1st Class Rudolph Blitz. Twin brothers from Lincoln, Nebraska. Sailors on the USS Oklahoma. They were killed when their ship was attacked and sunk in Pearl Harbor on December 7. The Blitz family, with Leo and Rudolph being two of 15 children, received a telegram notification on, sadly, Christmas Eve of 1941. The twins were four months away from their 21st birthday and their discharge from the Navy. At the time of the attack, Rudolph was on deck, and as soon as the first torpedo hit, instantly ran down below deck where his brother, Leo, was. Along with 386 of their shipmates, they were unidentified when they were recovered in 1943, and then buried as unknowns in a Honolulu cemetery. Highly commingled, one casket had 94 different individuals in it. The USS Oklahoma remains were disinterred finally in 2015. Through the talent and dedication of DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory scientists, 225 have been identified to date. *(Applause)*

Leo and Rudolph Blitz were buried on August 10 in their family's cemetery in Lincoln, Nebraska. Their 93-year-old sister, Betty, along with countless nephews and nieces, now draw some comfort from having their brother and their uncles home. Leo and Rudolph Blitz enlisted in the Navy at the age of 17. Together, they made the supreme sacrifice at the age of 20. And together they are now at home. *(Applause)*

Last year, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency accounted for 203 servicemembers. Those are 203 families who now have answers to the uncertainty that plagued their families for decades. In Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, those governments are increasingly cooperative, assisting in expanding U.S. efforts with Vietnam offering more unilateral support to this noble mission. Across the world, DPAA is partnering with universities and private entities to do more research, more investigations and more recoveries. This very day, 180 DPAA and partner professionals are deployed in eight countries. And over the last, two weeks teams from Laos and Solomon Islands returned home with remains that they had recovered from their respective missions.

There is one aspect of our work that is both hopeful and unfortunately still elusive. Both Secretary Pompeo and Vice President Pence spoke about this. And that is the 5,300 servicemembers still missing in North Korea. President Trump securing the commitment from Chairman Kim for both the repatriation and the recovery of these remains was a historic event. *(Applause)*

The hope was that the 55 boxes turned over by the North Koreans on August 1 continued to provide answers to families. To date, our scientists have identified 32 Americans from those 55 boxes. And here's the amazing thing. Our scientists have determined that in those commingled remains are the DNA sequences of 250 individuals, 170 of which are of western origin. And of those 170, only 20 have been previously identified. So in the months ahead, you can expect to have more of these Americans returned to their families. *(Applause)*

The elusive part of this is that we have not been able to reach an agreement with the North Korean Army to resume field operations which were last conducted in 2005. We remain open to working with the North Korean Army, to make arrangements for our teams to resume those field operations next spring.

The vice president mentioned that the first American to be identified from those 55 boxes happened to be a hometown Indianan, Army Medic Master Sergeant Charles McDaniel from Vernon, Indiana. The second was laid to rest at Arlington National

Cemetery last Thursday. This is Private 1st Class William Jones, known as Hoover to his family. 19 years old, from Whitaker, North Carolina. He fought with the 24th Infantry Regiment, the last segregated unit of our United States military. He went missing November 26, 1950, three days after Thanksgiving, near Pukchong, North Korea. After almost 59 years of not knowing the whereabouts of their brother, his sisters, Elizabeth, Ida and Thelma, all in their 90s, you can imagine, were overjoyed to have their brother finally home.

The fact that the United States of America vigorously pursues this noble mission is the right thing to do and it defines us as a nation. It's a tangible example of your Americanism ideal. Our nation's fulfilling a promise not to just those who made the supreme sacrifice, your comrades, but also to their families. This national commitment also serves as a marker to those of us who are veterans, as well as to those who serve in uniform today that this nation will never forget and never leave a fallen warrior behind. *(Applause)*

Thank you again to The American Legion. Thank you for your dedication and your support to these unreturned veterans. You do take care of veterans. And the fact that these are unreturned veterans who you care for speaks volumes to your passion and your dedication for this important work.

Thank you also for taking care of their families, each of whom is a Gold Star family. The only difference being is that they're Gold Star families whose loss and grief are exacerbated by the uncertainty. May God bless each of you. May he shed his grace on the Legion's next 100 years. And as always may he always bless our great nation. God bless you all. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: If I could take a moment of personal privilege, I want to let you know that our travel delegation to the Far East had made a stop before we headed out to South Korea in Hawaii, and we had the opportunity to visit the DPAA facility there. I can tell you that that's a remarkable facility, staffed by remarkable people, doing remarkable things. General McKeague also made a presentation to The American Legion in the Washington D.C. office some months ago, after the return of those remains from North Korea. What he did was present us with one of the American flags that draped the remains, and that is on display now in the conference room at our Washington headquarters. The question I wanted to ask you, general, I saw the dig that you spoke of there, looking for the F-4. Would that have included a Major Jones who was a physician maybe in the back seat?

The reason I ask you that is I met a woman, her brother sat in the back seat of an F-4 that had crashed and they're still looking for the remains. I thought it might have been the same one. I want to take the opportunity to thank you for coming here. *(Applause)*

The Chair recognizes E.C. Toppin of North Carolina, chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on National Security
E.C. Toppin, North Carolina, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 26, 2019, 299 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security initially met in the Indianapolis Convention Center, level one, rooms 120-126. Mr. E.C. Toppin (North Carolina) as Chairman, and as Secretary Ken Trumbul.

After the initial meeting, the following convention committees met, held elections and dealt with the resolutions assigned to them:

Aerospace	Rick Oertel (VA), Chairman Ted DeMicchi (WI), Secretary

Conventional Armed Forces	Charles E. Kruger (MN), Chairman Alvin Diaz (AK), Secretary
Foreign Relations	Paul Espinoza (NM), Chairman Michael Landkamer (NE), Secretary
Law and Order & Homeland Security	George Wehrli (FL), Chairman Richard Keiser (NY), Secretary
Military Benefits & Quality of Life	Steven Brennan (MD), Chairman Shirley Douglas (FL), Secretary
National Guard and Reserve Forces	William Goede (MN), Chairman Thomas Saunders (VA), Secretary
Unconventional Forces and Intelligence	Doug Haggan (FR)Chairman Jeremy Ehart (KS), Secretary

At 10:30am, Sunday, August 25, 2019, the delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security met in the Indianapolis Convention Center Sagamore Ballroom Level two, sections one and two. The seven committees attended breakout sessions in The Indianapolis Convention Center Level one rooms 120-126. The convention committee reconvened in Sagamore ballroom one and two. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of eight resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security or prepared by the Committee to meet issues which were held to be of concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives. The Convention Committee authorized the Chairman to sign the report of the Convention Committee on National Security on behalf of its delegates and make technical and administrative corrections to the resolutions reported out of the Committee.

Aerospace
Rick Oertel, Virginia, Chairman

No Resolutions

Conventional Armed Forces
Charles Kruger, Minnesota, Chairman

Referred To Standing Commission

Resolution No. 10 (MT): **Role Of The American Legion In Electromagnetic Pulse Defense**

Received And Recorded

Resolution No. 46 (VA): **State Funeral For The Last World War Ii Medal Of Honor Recipient**

Foreign Relations
Paul Espinoza, New Mexico, Chairman

Received And Recorded
Resolution No. 14 (AK): **Taiwan Straits Dialogue**

Approved

Resolution No. 41: Protection Of The POW/MIA Flag
Origin: Ohio
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, In 1970, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of POW/MIA Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs, following approval by the League's Board of Directors at a meeting held January 22-23, 1972, POW/MIA flags were manufactured for distribution; and

WHEREAS, On March 9, 1989, an official League flag – flown over the White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day 1988 – was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress; and

WHEREAS, The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it stands as a powerful symbol of America's determination to account for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation"; and

WHEREAS, The importance of the POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's unreturned veterans, other than "Old Glory," the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, displayed since 1982 in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day; and

WHEREAS, Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act required that the League's POW/MIA flag fly six days each year: Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day, and it must be displayed at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the headquarters of the Selective Service System, major military installations as designated by the secretary of defense, all federal cemeteries and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the specific dates stipulated, the Department of Veterans Affairs voluntarily displays our POW/MIA flag 24/7; and

WHEREAS, The National Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans and World War II Memorials are now also required by law to display the POW/MIA flag daily - most state capitols have adopted similar laws, as have local governments nationwide; and

WHEREAS, It has been reported in the news and on social media outlets that the POW/MIA flag has been taken down and replace by another supplemental flag which is a disgrace to America's unreturned veterans and their families; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That the American Legion takes a stand in protecting the integrity of the POW/MIA Flag; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Congress to pass a resolution for not replacing the POW/MIA flag with any other symbol.

Law And Order & Homeland Security
George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

Resolution No. 16: Coast Guard Pay Discrimination
Origin: Minnesota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security
(As Amended)

WHEREAS: The longest government shutdown in American history caused undue hardship in a discriminating manner by withholding pay to thousands of United States Coast Guard members, chartered in the Department of Homeland Security, while continuing to pay all other active duty members of the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS: 14 U.S. Code § 1 - Establishment of Coast Guard states: "The Coast Guard, established January 28, 1915, shall be a military service and a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States at all times."; and

WHEREAS: Every member of the armed forces of the United States shall complete a DD Form 4, Enlistment/Reenlistment Document Armed Forces, including Section H, Paragraph 22A

22a. IN A REGULAR COMPONENT OF THE ARMED FORCES:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend

The Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God; and

WHEREAS: U.S. Coast Guard members are members of a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at all times; and

WHEREAS: U.S. Coast Guard members affirm the Confirmation of Enlistment Oath (DD Form 4); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion advocates for the president of the United States and the United States Congress to take measures to ensure all active duty members, of the U. S. Coast Guard, armed forces of the United States, shall not experience discrimination in the future; to include pay and benefits the same as the other armed forces receive.

Referred To Standing Commission

Resolution No. 20 (TX): Oppose Deportation Of Non-Citizen Immigrant Veterans

Rejected

Resolution No. 45 (OH): Penalties For Distribution Of Illegal Drugs

Military Benefits And Quality Of Life
Steven Brennan, Maryland, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 40: Gold Star Children Access To Base Exchange, Commissaries And MWR Facilities
Origin: Florida
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion (TAL) and the nation have a responsibility to ease the grief of children who have survived the loss of a parent that died in the performance of military service; and

WHEREAS, A historic role of TAL has been to support the entire military "family," including widows and surviving children; and

WHEREAS, The Headquarters, Defense Human Resources Activity, has informed TAL, that the current policy of the Department of Defense (DoD) is to end their access to Base Exchange, Commissary and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities upon the survivor's attaining an age of 21 to 23 years (DoD Manual 1000.13,Vol.1); and

WHEREAS, The death of a military parent is a permanent loss to the surviving dependent, the current policy merely extends benefits temporarily; and

WHEREAS, These benefits aiding the children of our fallen comrades will support the morale of active troops and support the military family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support efforts to ensure the Base Exchange, Commissary and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) access for all (Gold Star) children of servicemembers who died on active military duty, regardless of age will not cease.

National Guard And Reserve Forces
William Goede, Minnesota, Chairman

No Resolutions

Unconventional Forces & Intelligence
Doug Haggan, France, Chairman

No Resolutions

Mr. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am particularly pleased to announce the winners of the National Blood Donor Awards for this past year.

Category I - Departments with 100,000 or more members
Post & Individual Participation: Florida
Category II - 70,000 to 99,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission
Category III - 40,000 to 69,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission
Category IV - 25,000 to 39,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: Massachusetts
Category V - 10,000 to 24,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: Montana
Category VI - less than 10,000 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission

Many of our Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. 879 medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 2018-2019 are the Departments of Connecticut, Montana, and Florida. This 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 North Carolina, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second for the adoption of the report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The motion is carried and the report is adopted.

Collection of Donations to Operation Comfort Warriors

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I will now accept donations for Operation Comfort Warriors. ...*National Vice Commander Pisa assumed the Chair.*

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NJ): Department of New Jersey, $2,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AR): Post 64, Hebrew Springs, Arkansas, $500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AR): On behalf of the members of Post 341, Bella Vista, Arkansas, we donate $1,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (VT): The Department of Vermont, in association with Vermont Moose Charities, donates $1,200 in memory of Past Department Commander John Heald.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (RI): Department of Rhode Island, Westward Post 2 Legion Riders, donates $200 to Operation Comfort Warriors and the Department of Rhode Island state chapter donates $1,125 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PA): The Department of Pennsylvania, home of Past National Commanders Dominic DiFrancesco and Ronald F. Conley donates $12,690 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NY): Department of New York, home of Past National Commander Fang A. Wong, and The American Legion Riders of Department of New York, give $9,619.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (ID): From the great state of Idaho, home of The American Legion National Baseball champions, office OCW, donation of $350 and a couple of late donations for National Emergency Fund, one from the state for $843.71 and one in honor of one of our 37-year members having some real medical problems, Cleve Rice, for $500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): On behalf of The American Legion Riders from the great First District of Department of Ohio, we donate $1,000 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE DVORAK (MN): Good morning, everyone. I'm the Department Commander of the great state of Minnesota, and we're donating $1,000 Operation Comfort Warriors.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MA): From the Department of Massachusetts, we want to donate $190 to Operation Comfort Warriors, with a grand total of $4,240. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IL): Good morning. I'm with Naperville Post 43, Department of Illinois. For a number of years we've always donated 100 percent of our Poppy Day proceeds to Operation Comfort Warriors. This year the check is $4,483.52. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MO): From the great Department of Missouri, home of the Stanley Cup, $500 for Operation Comfort Warriors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER KOUTZ: From Indiana and a few other departments, Holiday Foods Incorporated from Santa Claus, Indiana, $150. American Legion Riders Family Hero Family Ride, Osceola, Indiana, $500. Kevin and Brenda Hinton, $100. Jerry and Velma Armstrong, $30. Roman and Hunter Funeral Homes, $75. American Legion Post 2, American Legion Riders, West Warwick, Rhode Island $250. American Legion Post 204, Sellersburg, $1,000. American Legion Auxiliary 111, Bluffton, Indiana, $600. SAL Squadron 200, Bloomington, Indiana, $101. Steve and Cynthia Massawick from Streetsboro, Ohio, $150 and the Cicero American Legion Riders from the Battle Ride we just had, $3,400, for a total of $6,356. *(Applause)*

...*National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I want to thank everybody for the Operation Comfort Warriors contributions. In that very short period of time that we received them, we received a total of $38,463 in contributions, making the total for the year-to-date, $416,972. Thank you, everyone. *(Applause)*

The Chair recognizes Ralph Bozella of Colorado, chairman of the National Convention committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman

On August 25, 2019, 124 members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. in the JW Marriot, White River Ballroom, Section F, First Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana. This report is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Chanin Nuntavong (CA), liaison representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Melvin Brown (VA), Health Policy Coordinator, VA&R Division, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. Ralph P. Bozella (CO), Chairman of the National VA&R Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

Exercising the authority granted to him, the Chairman accepted nominations for secretary to the Convention Committee. Pat Rourke (NY) was voted as Committee Secretary. During their breakout sessions the subcommittees elected William J. Smith (PA) as Chairman of the Veterans Benefits Subcommittee, and K. Robert Lewis (CT) as Secretary; Phil Youngblood (GA) as Chairman of the Health Administration Subcommittee, and James Stanko (CO) as Secretary; Richard Neville (NC) as Chairman of the National Cemetery Subcommittee, and Mike Wilson (NJ) as Secretary.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Chanin Nuntavong (CA), Director, National VA&R Division to the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; Greg Nembhard (VA) the Deputy Director for Claims to Veterans Benefits Subcommittee; George Mitchell (MD) the Deputy Director for Health Policy to Health Administration Subcommittee; and Gerardo Avila (DC) the Deputy Director for Military Boards & Memorial Benefits to the National Cemetery Subcommittee.

A screening committee comprised of Department Service Officers in a pre-convention meeting on August 23, 2019. The committee screened and grouped the VA&R resolutions. A report of their action, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The screening committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. It was chaired by Ralph P. Bozella, the Chairman of the VA&R Commission, and was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

- Michael Hartt (NH)
- John Hickey (IN)
- Gary Easterling (MI)
- Jeremy Wolfsteller (MN)

The 20 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee. The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	8
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	0
Referred to the Standing Commission	2
Received and Recorded	5
Rejected	5

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign and deliver the report on the Convention Committee's behalf.

A report of action taken on the two (2) resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Approved Resolutions Or Approved With Amendment

Resolution No. 11: Environmental Exposures At Fort McClellan
Origin: Kansas
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Fort McClellan, Alabama has been acknowledged to be a former United States military installation and home to several contractor presences in the areas or disciplines of chemical warfare and battlefield chemical use, to include herbicides and deforestation chemicals; and

WHEREAS, Numerous reports and studies by both independent and governmental agencies delineate a high concentration of chemicals similar or identical to those found in herbicides already known to cause significant illness, injury and damage to personnel working in close proximity to them, such as PCBs; and

WHEREAS, The following excerpt from the January 1998 US Army Environmental Center Final Environmental Baseline Study clearly states the presence of environmental contaminants in a dangerous concentration to occupants in its executive summary, located on page ES-1:"The BRAC environmental restoration program requires investigation and cleanup as necessary of federal properties prior to transfer to the public domain. The BRAC environmental restoration program is similar to the Army's Installation Restoration Program (IRP), except that it has been expanded to include environmental issues such as asbestos, lead-based paint, radon, radiological hazards, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), unexploded ordnance (UXO), chemical warfare materiel (CWM), and other environmental concerns not typically addressed by the IRP."; and

WHEREAS, The potential pool of connected victims of exposure to toxic chemicals and radioactive materials in known to number in excess of 700,000 servicemembers, spouses, dependent children and associated support staff; and

WHEREAS, A House resolution has been introduced in all but 2 of the last 6 years directing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to create a registry of sufferers for the purpose of identification and service; and

WHEREAS, It has been noted that congressional actions regarding Fort McClellan move from the committee in which they are introduced to the Subcommittee on Health with ever-increasing rapidity and stall there; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of claimants having served at Fort McClellan seeking VA service connection for themselves, their co-located-dependents and immediate descendants have been repeatedly denied connection of the same disabilities inherent with PCB-based chemicals, such as Monsanto's Agent Orange, one of the chemical herbicides stored and tested there; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion urges Congress to support and foster legislation to grant and ensure service connection and compensation for feasible claims, to include spouses and child dependents, who were exposed at Fort McClellan between dates established that concentrations of dangerous chemicals and radiological materials were present; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress to direct that a list of presumptive conditions similar to the list existing for Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam veterans be created and maintained for the purposes of expeditious handling of claimants' filings; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion desires this resolution to be applied to the reiteration list, as adopted, until a final congressional determination be made, and listed for retention on addendum for the pertinent congressional committee(s).

Resolution No. 17: Department Of Veterans Affairs Provide Dental Care For Veterans With A Complicating Medical Condition

Origin: Minnesota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 17.38 states medical need is a treatment, procedure, supply, or service considered medically necessary when, in the judgment of an appropriate clinical care provider, and in accordance with generally-accepted standards of clinical practices, the treatment, procedure, supply, or service:

(1) Promotes health by:
   (a) Enhancing quality of life or daily functional level:
   (b) Identifying a predisposition for development of a condition or early onset of disease, which can be partly or totally improved by monitoring or early diagnosis and treatment; and
   (c) Preventing development of future disease,

(2) Preserves health by:
   (a) Maintaining the current quality of life or daily functional level;
   (b) Preventing progression of disease;
   (c) Curing disease; and
   (d) Extending life span,

(3) Restores health by restoring the quality of life or the daily functional level that has been lost due to illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 17.38 states dental care for eligible veterans must be provided in a manner consistent with the following core values: timely access, quality outcomes, cost effectiveness, evidence-based care, patient and provider satisfaction, and patient safety; and

WHEREAS, 38 CFR 17.160-17.166 also sates the goal of VA Dental Services is to provide high quality, cost-effective and evidence-based dental treatment to eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, All VA dentists are to be knowledgeable regarding the scope of care to be provided under each dental classification; and

WHEREAS, 38 CFR 17.160-17.166 further states eligibility for dental care under Class VI (medical need) is under the authority of the VA Dental Chief to make eligibility determination; and

WHEREAS, VA established an Outpatient Dental Program, which is categorized into classifications; and Class VI was created to provide dental services to a veteran that is receiving care and requires dental care for a condition complicating a medical condition currently under treatment; and

WHEREAS, The following list identifies the patient categories that are to be provided dental care in compliance with applicable VA regulations and directives: Inpatients with a compelling medical need, such as a defined dental condition which has a significant negative impact on the medical management of the patient, regardless of service connection; veteran for whom outpatient dental care is reasonably necessary to complete dental care that was initiated while they were inpatients; outpatient Dental Class I through VI beneficiaries; and individuals with dental emergencies who are provided outpatient dental care on a humanitarian basis; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That if a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dentist removes a veteran's teeth under Classification VI (Medical Need) that the VA is required to provide dentures in accordance with its medical benefits package promoting health, enhancing quality of life and daily function.

Resolution No. 18: Payment For Emergency Transportation To A Department Of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility
Origin: Minnesota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Veterans who encounter a medical emergency as defined by Public Law 106-117, Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, can have their emergency ambulance transportation expenses paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in accordance with the requirements set forth Title 38 United States Code 1725 and corresponding regulations, 38 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 1000 through 1008; and

WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 1003, covers payment or reimbursement for ambulance services, including air ambulance services, if the conditions set forth in 38 C.F.R. 1003 (a) through (e) are met; and

WHEREAS, Subsection (a) of 38 C.F.R. 1003 requires that the emergency treatment be provided at a non-VA facility; and

WHEREAS, Emergency transportation companies are required by law to transport patients to the nearest medical facility; which can result in VA denying payment of a veterans emergency ambulance transportation expenses if the veterans is transported to a VA medical facility and the veteran is not eligible for payment of emergency ambulance transportation expenses under VA's beneficiary travel rules set forth in Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and corresponding regulations 38 CFR Part 70, Subpart A Beneficiary Travel and Special Mode Transportation; and

WHEREAS, A veteran whose emergency ambulance transportation would have been reimbursed by VA under Title 38 U.S.C. 1725 and VA's corresponding regulation 38 C.F.R. 1000 through 1008 if the veteran was taken to a non-VA facility; and;

WHEREAS, VA is denying payment of the emergency ambulance transportation expenses because the veteran was transported to a VA medical facility, had no choice in the decision where they are transported, and does not qualify for payment under Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and VA's corresponding regulations 38 CFR Part 70, Subpart A Beneficiary Travel and Special Mode Transportation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to resolve the inequity between Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and Title 38 U.S.C. 1725 and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay for a veteran's emergency transportation when the veteran is transported by an emergency transportation company to a VA medical facility, does not qualify for payment of emergency transportation expenses under Title 38 U.S.C. 111 but meets all of the payment requirements set forth under Title 38 U.S.C. 1725.

Resolution No. 28: Department Of Veterans Affairs To Provide A Wider Variety Of Sleep Apnea Equipment
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and community based outpatient clinics provide various machines to treat sleep apnea including continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), automatic positive airway pressure (APAP) and bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) machines; and

WHEREAS, The VA also provides replacements for masks, hoses, filters and straps; and

WHEREAS, The cleaning of these devices is the responsibility of the veteran and they are instructed to use baby shampoo and water to clean the mask, hose, tank and filter; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans may not do a good cleaning job of these machines which may cause the build-up of mold, germs and bacteria; and

WHEREAS, There are several machines on the open market that can thoroughly and effortlessly sanitize these devices; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion shall encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a wider variety of sleep apnea machines that can be easily sanitized for veterans.

Resolution No. 32: Veterans Burial/Plot Allowance Payment
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs currently pays a burial allowance and plot allowance when a veteran dies in a Veterans Administration hospital, nursing home, from a service-connected condition or at the time of death was getting paid Veterans Administration compensation or pension; and

WHEREAS, This benefit ranges from approximately $1,500 up to $2,000 depending on the cause of death of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, The intent of this benefit is to help reimburse the cost of the funeral and burial; and

WHEREAS, Under the current law this benefit is paid to the first living person who files a claim in any of the following groups, spouse, children regardless of age, parents of the veteran or the executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, Our Service Officers in various Departments have experienced sad situations where an estranged spouse or prodigal son or daughter knows the benefit is paid to the first one who files a claim, had nothing to do with the payment of the funeral/plot expenses and yet gets this VA benefit; and

WHEREAS, We believe the original intent of this law was to help reimburse those who bore the cost of the funeral/plot expenses of the deceased veteran; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana August 27, 28, 29, 2019, that the American Legion support legislation to amend this law found in Title 38 United States Code, to pay the burial/plot allowance only to the person, related to the veteran or not, who actually paid these expenses; and be it further

RESOLVED, That if the burial/plot expenses were prepaid before the veterans death then this benefit be paid to the surviving spouse of the veteran, and if no surviving spouse then to the estate of the veteran.

Resolution No. 52: Antidepressant Harms Analysis
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) an average of twenty (20) veterans died by suicide each day in 2014, approximately 6,079 veterans died by suicide in 2016, and veterans now account for eighteen (18) percent of all deaths by suicide among U.S. adults; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the average suicide rate for veterans who used Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services between 2005 and 2016, were on average 32% higher than for veterans who did not use VHA services; and

WHEREAS, According to the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DPSO), Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR), 3rd Quarter, CY 2018, from CY 2016-2018, 797 Active Component servicemembers, 575 Reserve Component servicemembers and 346 National Guardsmen died by suicide; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services have greater access to psychiatric care than veterans who do not have access to VHA services; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition and have access to psychiatric care are more likely to be prescribed antidepressant drugs than veterans who do not have access to psychiatric care or VHA services; and

WHEREAS, According to the VA, the suicide rate for male veterans between the ages of 18-34 is 451/100,000, and it is this veteran population at the greatest risk to die by suicide; and

WHEREAS, A study comparing suicide rates between seven (7) different types of anti-depressants, found that the suicide rate for the first ninety (90) days of treatment for six (6) of those seven (7) drugs studied, had suicide rates greater than 451/100,000, more than ten (10) times that of even the most at risk veteran population, male veterans between the ages of 18-34; and

WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been over 128,000 deployed veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) between 2000-2014, and

WHEREAS, According to a study by the Department of Defense (DoD), antidepressants were prescribed to 70-80% of servicemembers that had been diagnosed with depression or PTSD; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and servicemembers have been prescribed antidepressant drugs that could take months and years to safely withdraw from, but may not have provided informed consent related to those withdrawal risks; and

WHEREAS, Antidepressant drug makers are required by the Food & Drug Administration to include a "Black Box Warning" that antidepressants can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in young adults; and

WHEREAS, In spite of the "Black Box Warnings" and other indicators listed above that identify the use of antidepressants could be causing veteran suicides and other physiological and psychological harms, the word "antidepressant" is not mentioned one time in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs 42 page "National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, 2018-2028"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) to investigate the role antidepressants have in veteran, active and reserve component servicemembers and National Guard personnel suicides; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the VA and DoD conduct a comprehensive "Antidepressant Harms Analysis" to investigate the harm antidepressants may cause, to include, but not be limited to: suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, lifelong disabilities, and depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the VA and DoD investigate the possible harms caused to veterans, servicemembers and members of the National Guard who were prescribed antidepressant drugs, but who may not have been provided information to allow them to provide informed consent for the need to taper off of these drugs over the course of many months and years, once they have begun treatment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion research the role antidepressants have in veteran suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, and permanent disabilities from PTSD, and may instead be the side

effects of antidepressant drugs exacerbating existing depression or PTSD; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to require the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to conduct a comprehensive antidepressant harms analysis as it relates to the role of antidepressants in veteran and servicemember suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, and lifelong disabilities that may be the side effects or withdrawal effects of antidepressant drugs exacerbating pre-existing depression or PTSD; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the completed antidepressant harms analysis be provided to the president of the United States, the United States Congress and The American Legion to show the total number of acts of suicide, homicide and violent crimes that veterans and servicemembers committed while they were actively taking or had recently withdrawn from an antidepressant drug, and should also show the number of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) using veterans and servicemembers who have open prescriptions for antidepressants and have not recently seen a psychologist or counselor; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the report also detail veteran and servicemembers information related to job loss, relationship failures, homelessness and disabilities that may be related to antidepressant drugs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That every veteran or servicemember who has an open prescription for an antidepressant and has not recently been seen by a psychologist or counselor shall receive a wellness check from the VHA or DoD health-care providers to ensure the veteran or servicemember patient's health and safety, and that the veteran or servicemember be re-enrolled in counseling services at the patient's request.

Resolution No. 58: Department Of Veterans Affairs Accreditation Of Individual Claims Agents
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Title 38 United States Code 5901 stipulates that no individual may act as an agent or attorney in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim under laws administered by the secretary of veterans affairs unless such individual has been recognized for such purposes by the secretary; and

WHEREAS, The secretary may recognize representatives of the American National Red Cross, The American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and such other organizations as the secretary may approve, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the secretary, as set forth in 38 C.F.R. 5902 (a) (1); and

WHEREAS, Subsection (b)(1)(A) of 38 C.F.R. 5902 stipulates no representative of a recognized organization shall be recognized under this section unless the individual has certified to the secretary that no fee or compensation of any nature will be charged any individual for services rendered in connection with any claim; and

WHEREAS, The secretary may suspend or exclude from further practice before the department any agent or attorney who has failed to comply with any other condition specified in regulations prescribed by the secretary under subsection (b) 38 C.F.R. 5904; and

WHEREAS, The Office of General Counsel (OGC) reports that in 2018, a claims agent was almost 30 times more likely than an attorney and almost 20 times more likely than a veterans service organization representative to be the subject of a complaint received by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and that the high number of complaints against claims agents demonstrates that veterans are significantly less satisfied with the representational services provided by claims agents than by any other type of representative; and

WHEREAS, The VA OGC opined that it appears that over half of all accredited agents are not using their accreditation to provide representation before VA, which is the purpose of VA accreditation, but instead are using the accreditation to promote a separate business interest; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to amend Title 38, to remove authority to accredit individuals as Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognized claims agents for the purpose of preparing, representing or prosecuting any VA claims on behalf of veterans.

Resolution No. 59: Establish Green Alert System Interagency Group Or Committee For Veterans In Crisis
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, A Green Alert system is an emergency notification system that is activated for veterans with a history of service-related mental health issues, including neurocognitive disorders, suicide attempts or impulses, or substance use disorder, and these veterans go missing; and

WHEREAS, A Green Alert system will work similarly to other well-known Amber and Silver Alert systems currently in use in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Congress has pending legislation to establish an interagency committee on development of Green Alert systems; and

WHEREAS, At present, no interagency group or committee exists that develops best practices and provides technical assistance to states that are attempting to establish Green Alert systems; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to establish an interagency group or committee regarding the development of Green Alert systems for veterans.

There were (2) resolutions referred to the Standing Commission for Staff Study or Appropriate Administrative Disposition.

Referred to Standing Commission

Resolution No. 38 (FL): **Abolish Premium Penalty for Delayed Enrollment for Medicare Part B for Veterans Eligible for Medical Benefits from The Department of Veterans Affairs**
Resolution No. 60 (VA&R Committee): **Housing Allowance for Department of Veterans Affairs Employees Living in High Cost-of-living Areas**

Resolutions Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 2: (NE): **Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans**
Resolution No. 15: (MN): **WWII Veterans' Hospital and Medical Entitlements**
Resolution No. 30: (IL): **Designate Prisoners of War, Purple Heart, and Medal of Honor Recipients as Priority Group 1 Veterans**
Resolution No. 33: (IL): **Department of Veterans Affairs Child Care Program**
Resolution No. 39: (FL): **Effects of Environmental Exposures on Descendants**

Rejected Resolutions

Resolution No. 29 (IL): **Two Levels of Compensation for Tinnitus**

Resolution No. 31 (IL): **Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Program and Routine Office Visits**
Resolution No. 34 (IL): **Internment of War and Service Dogs in National Cemeteries**
Resolution No. 36 (MD): **Reducing Processing Delays for Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Applications**
Resolution No. 48 (VA) **Restrictions on Participation in the Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Program**

Mr. Commander, I, Ralph Bozella of Colorado, as a duly elected registered delegate of this convention, move for adoption of this report. Respectfully submitted. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There's a motion and a second for the adoption of the report. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried and the report is adopted. Thank you, Chairman Bozella. Excellent as always. I'd like to make an announcement before we move on to our next item of business. It's been brought to my attention that as of this moment the American Legion Family charities has exceeded $10 million in contributions this year, for a total of $10,035,880.06. *(Applause)*

I ask you to continue to donate generously. Raise funds for these charities. I'm especially interested in my project this year, which is the Veterans & Children Foundation, where we're endeavoring to raise about $25 million. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: With the adoption of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation report it is time to announce the winner of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. William F. Lenker was the chairman of The American Legion National VA&R Commission from 1967 until 1988. He was a true champion for America's veterans. This trophy is awarded annually to the department that best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. For the 2018-2019 program year the trophy is awarded to the Department of Colorado.

Special Presentations

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I would like now to call my family to the lectern. With me is my brother, Craig, also a member of The American Legion, same post as me, Post 270 in McLean, Virginia, and his lovely wife, Vladamira. *(Applause)*

I want to take the opportunity as well to thank my department, the Department of Virginia, for all the support that they have given me through my Legion experience to include helping immensely with my two-year campaign and supporting me throughout this year.

Would my national vice commanders please come forward? I can't believe that time is coming near. All of my vice commanders have represented me well during the past 12 months. I appreciate their devotion and sacrifice for this great organization. Every one of them has done a magnificent job supporting The American Legion and myself in representing us as well. One thing I can say about all five of these gentlemen is that I never had to look over their shoulder at anything that they were doing. It was very clear and obvious to me from not only the reports I was receiving and the feedback I was getting, but the photographs that I was looking at on Facebook of every one of them being involved in the activities as they traveled. They just absolutely have done a magnificent job. I would like to present them now each with a gift.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MILBURN: Commander, it's indeed my pleasure to represent the other four national vice commanders. You served us well this year. We know you had several challenges, and this is just a gift from us. To get to it,

though, we'll give you one more challenge. So we hope you enjoy it. Use it well. You won't be able to get to it right away.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I have to explain this to everybody. Because you probably are not going to know what it is just looking at it from afar. This is a puzzle. It's like that labyrinth game where you try to roll the little ball and get around the holes to get to the end. Or a maze. The contents of which is a gift certificate from JoS. A. Bank from my five national vice commanders, and I'll be working on this today. *(Applause)*

I now call on the national historian, sergeant-at-arms, and my aide to come forward. You each played important roles in the success of our organization during the past year. I salute you for your service. Please accept these gifts as a token of my appreciation. *(Applause)*

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS RANSOM: I would like to, on behalf of the historian, chaplain and the sergeant-at-arms, I would like to give the commander a gift. I'd like to give him a gift of $300 from us for the Children and Veterans Foundation. Thank you all.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Next a few words from National Adjutant Dan Wheeler.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Before I begin, I have an important announcement to make. Some time ago I found the national commander's aide, Ken Knight, awake, at which time I put him on probation. So I would like to announce that prior to his being fired in a couple of hours, I'm taking him off of probation. Congratulations, Ken. *(Laughter and applause)*

If our executive directors and national treasurer and judge advocate would join me here, please. Mr. Commander, your staff has been honored to serve with you this year. You're truly a great American Legion commander and we will always cherish the year that we spent with you and we hope that we will spend many more in service with you to God and country. Want to thank you for that. Engagement was a big part of your membership theme this year. Your "Buddy Check" week of calling initiative was based on engagement. Now, commander, I'm not going to get down on one knee because I may not be able to get up. But I do have a ring for you. *(Laughter and applause)*

It has the American Legion Emblem on one side and the other is the American Flag and Team 100, has a beautiful onyx stone. And so as I look into your blue eyes, I wonder if you would be our past national commander. *(Laughter and applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: It fits perfectly, too. As you can probably tell I'm trying to prolong this. I'm not quite ready for the change. I brought my family up here earlier, and I thought there was a purpose, but it wasn't spelled out in the script that I could see. But what the reason I brought them up there was to thank them for the support that they have given me over the year. Even longer than that, knowing of my lengthy involvement in The American Legion. I am so thankful to have you both here and participate in this.

...National Vice Commander Spedaliere assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER SPEDALIERE: Before our next presentation, please turn your attention to the video monitor as we reflect on our national commander's year in office. *...The Convention viewed a video. (Applause)*

After serving this past year as national vice commander I am honored to represent all members of The American Legion in presiding over the next order of business. This is the time when we present to our national commander, Brett P. Reistad, the Colors of his year in office and a plaque. At this time I call on Past National Commander Daniel Dellinger to present the Colors.

Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Past National Commander (Colors) John P. Comer, Massachusetts, Past National Commander (Plaque)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DELLINGER: Will the delegates to this National Convention please rise? I ask for the Doughboys of American Legion Post 396, Department of New York, to bring the Colors of the national commander to center stage.

Commander Reistad, you and I are both from the Department of Virginia. Some may have wondered why the same department would have two national commanders within five years. In this case, the answer is simple. Service. You have been a public servant since your days in the Army. As a volunteer firefighter, you put your life on the line for us. You followed that up with a successful law enforcement career, retired as a lieutenant with the Fairfax County Police Department. When you became a candidate for national commander, I had no doubt that you would protect the image and integrity of The American Legion as unflinchingly as you have protected the citizens of Northern Virginia for more than 40 years. Even though you originally came from the northeast and some would call you a carpet bagger. *(Laughter)*

You have truly earned your status as a Virginian. You've also proven to be a great national commander. On behalf of your American Legion Family, thank you for making us proud. And I salute you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Color Guard, retire my Colors. Hand Salute! ...*The delegation rendered a salute to the Colors.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Two! You may be seated. Thank you, Commander Dellinger. You have been a great advisor and a close friend. Perhaps the best aspect of having a one-year-term for national commander is that it provides a large pool of talented past national commanders that can continue to offer advice and leadership to future national commanders and the organization as a whole. You have all heard my signature rallying call of "Team 100!" Well, every team needs good coaches, and I have benefited from a number of great ones. There are far too many people that have helped me through my Legion career for me to start naming them here. But rest assured that you are one of them. ...*National Vice Commander Pisa assumed the Chair.*

PAST NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER PISA: I now call on Past National Commander John P. "Jake" Comer to present the plaque to our outgoing national commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Thank you, National Vice Commander Pisa. The plaque will read: Brett P. Reistad 2018-2019, given on the 29th day of August 2019 before the delegates assembled at the 101st Annual National Convention held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Commander, will you please join me. The headline for your profile in The American Legion magazine called you "The Centennial Commander." And you have done a great job in leading us through our 100th anniversary. You instituted "Buddy Checks," a concept that everybody from the military can recall, when service meant that you were taking care of your brothers-and-sisters-in-arms and checking on their well-being.

Some historic legislation passed under your watch, including the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act and the LEGION Act. I was honored to be present in the Oval Office when President Donald Trump and yourself, Past National Commanders Ludwig and Dellinger and others, as he signed that LEGION Act. As you said in your report to this Convention, veterans who served outside the previously recognized wartime periods earned the right to be called Legionnaires. And who could forget the way you led our organization during the government shutdown and the assistance that The American Legion provided to Coast Guard families at a time of great need and anxiety for those risking their lives on our behalf?

You have traveled the length and breadth of this world. And commander, you have represented us so very well. I am happy and honored to present to you a plaque which

attests to your election to the high office of national commander of The American Legion for the year 2018-2019. It is given in appreciation of your dedicated leadership and in recognition of your devoted service to God and country, and in token of the high esteem of your fellow Legionnaires. I know that my fellow national commanders here assembled and those that could not be with us are going to be so proud to have you as one of our team. It is presented this 29th day of August before the delegates assembled at the National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. Commander Reistad, congratulations, as I salute you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you, Past National Commander Comer. The one thing about being a "Centennial Commander," is that we only get one every hundred years. I truly hope that I have lived up to this enormous honor. But we are all centennial commanders in a sense. We each served a single year, and it is only through a cumulative effort by our entire American Legion Family that this organization was able to become the most influential veterans service organization in the country.

I spoke a lot about our Centennial Coins the last couple of days. Passage on that legislation was significant. But what is far more significant is our worthiness to be on those coins. What is it that Congress, the White House and the United States Mint saw about our organization that deemed us worthy in their eyes to be one of only two groups to be honored? I can tell you what it is. It's the spirit of volunteerism and patriotism that I see in American Legion posts everywhere, and right here in Indianapolis in all of the seats in this convention center. It is a spirit that we saw during your year as national commander and your continued service and leadership to our organization. I thank you for your support and friendship, sir. ...*National Commander Reistad resumed the Chair.*

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We have now come to a special order of business: the election of national officers. National Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett will read the Rules of Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE BARTLETT: Good morning, everyone. The rules for election of national officers are as follows: Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call is demanded by the chairman of at least three departments.

Election of national officers shall be by roll call. 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 their choice.

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. 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. 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.

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 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.

The convention will nominate and elect a national commander, and five national vice commanders, in this sequence. 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. This is the end of the rules.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: As chairman of this convention, I now appoint as judge of the election, Dale Chapman, adjutant of the Department of Virginia; and as tellers of the election Randy Cash, adjutant, Department of North Carolina; William West, adjutant, Department of Texas; and Larry Abshire, adjutant, Department of Kentucky. Will the judge and tellers of the election please come forward? National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler will now call the roll of the departments. The purpose of the roll call is to receive nominations for national commander of The American Legion.

[The national adjutant called each department in turn.]

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BRADSTREET (AL): Mr. Commander, Ron Bradstreet, chairman of the delegation from Alabama. Mr. Commander, Alabama yields to North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN THOMPSON (NC): Mr. Commander, Evan Thompson, chairman of the delegation from North Carolina. Mr. Commander, I request that the Chair recognize Gaither Keener for the purpose of a nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes Gaither Keener of the Department of North Carolina.

DELEGATE KEENER (NC): Delegates, members, and guests to the 101st National Convention of the American Legion, my name is Gaither Keener. I'm a duly elected delegate from the Department of North Carolina. I've had the honor to serve this great organization in numerous roles. However, today is my greatest privilege and honor to nominate a fellow son of the Old North State to the high office of the national commander of the American Legion.

The needs of the American Legion make it imperative we elect as the next national commander a person with extended experience and large executive ability coupled with the ability to lead us in the future needs of our country. I've personally known our candidate for over 30 years. He is a great Legionnaire who places our organization and the veterans in all of his endeavors. The veterans of the United States demand, as the leader of this grand organization, a person of intelligence, a person of integrity, a person who's well-known, an approved veteran foresight.

Veterans demand a statesman to lead us in our legislative causes. We demand a leader with the highest and broadest capabilities and a leader of superb moral integrity and courage. We demand and need a man acquainted with veterans and public affairs, connected with the needs of our veterans, just not the requirements of the day, but the demands of the future for our young, deployed, active military.

We need and demand a veteran broad enough to comprehend the relationships of our federal and state governments to the needs of our veterans, their families, and troops. We need a leader who's well versed in our four pillars while leading us to safely preserving the history of this organization and the foresight to expand our footprint, but at the same time, a leader well versed in the needs of our members, veterans, our active troops, who is willing to work with our government leaders to preserve the veteran rights and benefits you so honorably earned.

We need a leader who knows veteran benefits come from the government, who understands the sacrifice of his young men and women and the senior veterans. We need a leader who will educate and preach the sacrifice of veterans every day, a leader who knows our government should protect not only our form of government but should protect every citizen at home and abroad because we as veterans know freedom is not free. Freedom comes from the sacrifices of placing others first. Our leader will and shall exemplify that premise we hold sacred. We demand and expect a leader whose reputation is as spotless as a star, whom government officials and veterans will respect and listen to his words of wisdom on important veterans' issues. The leader has all these qualifications among us.

Our Legion, crowned with numerous, vast, and marvelous achievements over its 100 years, asks for and demands a national commander worthy of our past history and is prophetic of our future. We ask for and demand a national commander who's willing to take whole risk. We demand a leader who has the unique combination of heart, conscious, courage, and intelligence, who would deliver our goals and objectives.

This is a grand year. This is a year filled with recollection of our 100th birthday, a year filled with proud and tender memories of the past, with the sacred regards of our national past commanders and leaders, a year when our national commander Reistad led our organizations to new highs of accomplishments and numerous victories for the veterans with his grandest achievement, the passing of the LEGION Act. We demand a national commander who will continue carrying the torch for veterans benefits as so gallantly executed by Commander Reistad. Like a gallant warrior, our candidate will continue the fight, expand the lighted torch for more veterans' benefits and the benefit of our organization and our democracy.

Our candidate is now and has been for years a bearer of sacred standards in the four pillars of the American Legion. I call it sacred because we agree no human being can stand beneath our colors without becoming and remaining free. Delegates of the American Legion Convention, in the name of the great republic, the only republic that has ever existed upon this earth, in the name of her veterans, defenders, and all her supporters, in the name of her active duty military personnel and living veterans, in the name of her war veterans dead upon the field in the sea of battles, in the name of our members, in the name of our children and our grandchildren, the Department of North Carolina hereby nominates for the next national commander of The American Legion, my good friend, James William "Bill" Oxford, who will embrace and bring into fold all American veterans who have served honorably since December 7, 1941. Thank you, commander. *(Applause)*

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BELL (AK): Mr. Commander, Art Bell, chairman of the delegation from the great state of Alaska, the Land of the Midnight Sun. Mr. Commander, Alaska yields to Wisconsin.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WISCHER (WI): Mr. Commander, Dave Wischer, chairman of the delegation from Wisconsin. Mr. Commander, I request that the Chair recognize James Michael Rohan for the purpose of seconding the nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes James M. Rohan.

DELEGATE ROHAN (WI): Good morning. National Commander Reistad, National Adjutant Wheeler, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates, members of the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, our American Legion Riders and guests. It is my honor to stand before you today to second the nomination of Bill Oxford of North Carolina for the high office of national commander of The American Legion.

Bill is a graduate of Chadwick University with a bachelor of science degree in environmental studies. He's a highly decorated Army officer who has received a Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Vietnam Service Medal with a Bronze Service Device, just to name a few.

After three years of service in the United States Marine Corps and a deployment to Vietnam, Bill came back to North Carolina to join the United States Army, where he was commissioned a second lieutenant and quickly established himself as a leader. He spent a total of 35 years in service to his community, state, and nation. As a leader of the U.S. Army, Bill brought focus and professionalism, both appearance and conduct, to every level of his command. He set the standard in conduct and in ethics. He led by example. He developed leaders along the way.

One of my favorite sayings is that there are only two types of people in the United States Army, leaders and those training to be leaders. Bill was and is a solid leader. He

sought to create an environment where leaders at all levels could voice their ideas, enabling them to aid in problem solving. He knew his job. Whether it was transportation, quartermaster, or tactics, Bill was very strict on knowing the job. His subordinates were expected to know ethics, not from a memorization standpoint, but to enable quick decision-making while conducting operations.

He was accountable. In command, you have to remember that, while you are a leader, you are also part of the team, and as accountable to it as any other member. In addition to knowing the job, Bill felt that self-development should never cease. From the Marine Corps basic training to the United States Army Command and General Staff course, Bill demonstrated a willingness to learn and grow as a person, a soldier, and a leader.

Outside of his military service, Bill shared his leadership abilities as alderman and mayor for more than 11 years. He served as a member of the board of directors for Western Piedmont Safety Council and the Baton Water Corporation board of directors.

That, my fellow Legionnaires, is exactly what makes Bill Oxford the right leader for The American Legion in our second century of service. Commander Reistad and delegates of this 101st National Convention of The American Legion, as a duly registered delegate from the Department of Wisconsin, it is my distinct honor and privilege to second the nomination of a United States Marine Corps veteran, a United States Army veteran, and a great Legionnaire, James "Bill" Oxford, for the high office of national commander of The American Legion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I now call on the national adjutant for continuation of the roll call.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN AGUIRRE (AZ): Mr. Commander, Steve Aguirre, chairman of the Grand Canyon State of Arizona. Mr. Commander, Arizona yields to Georgia.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ASBERY (GA): Mr. Commander, Eddie Asbery, chairman of the delegation from Georgia. Mr. Commander, I request that the Chair recognize Phil Youngblood for the purpose of seconding the nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes Phil Youngblood.

DELEGATE YOUNGBLOOD (GA): Commander Reistad, national officers, delegates to this 101st National Convention, good morning.

Greek philosopher Herclitus is quoted, "For the battle, out of every 100 men, 10 shouldn't even be there, 80 are just targets, 9 are the real fighters, and we're lucky to have them, for they make the battle. But the one, one is a warrior, and he'll bring the others back." I am Phil Youngblood from Georgia. It is indeed an honor to stand before you as a delegate to this convention and second the nomination of a longtime friend, mentor, and distinguished member of The American Legion, Bill Oxford, for national commander of the American Legion. Mr. Keener addressed the warrior. Bill Oxford is the warrior, and he'll bring us back.

Bill is the sixth of seven children born in Lenoir, North Carolina. With both parents working to support the family, Bill learned to be independent, self-sufficient, and honed the skills necessary to fulfill a legacy. Though he started working during high school, he transitioned to the maintenance and engineering field.

Bill met Frances in 1966 prior to entering the United States Marine Corps. They were married in 1967. They've been married for over 50 years. From this union, Frances and Bill have two children, son Charles and daughter Jackie. Charles is a graduate of Appalachian State and is married to his elementary school sweetheart Deah Reid. Charles and Deah have two sons. Isaiah is a community college graduate and works in the family plumbing business. Micah is a student at Western Carolina University. Jackie may have the hardest job in the family. She's a stay-at-home mom but finds time to be a school volunteer. That spirit of volunteerism has seen Jackie twice honored as a school volunteer. Jackie is married to Mike Carr. Mike owns and operates Tri-County Marine. Their two sons are Jaggar, who's a high school student, and Dawson, a middle school student. All four grandsons are very

involved in athletics. Proud grandparents Bill and Frances' favorite activity is watching them compete.

I'm confident that Bill Oxford, the warrior, will use his many talents to ensure success for The American Legion. It's both an honor and a privilege that I second the nomination for Bill Oxford for the high office of national commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

...At this time, a demonstration of support ensued.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Please take your seats. Apparently, there's somebody by the name of Bill Oxford running for national commander. *(Applause)*

I call the convention back to order. The adjutant will continue the roll call.

DELEGATE ERDMAN (AR): Mary Erdman, NEC, and duly elected delegate from the great state of Arkansas. We cast all 19 votes for national commander for James W. "Bill" Oxford from North Carolina.

DELEGATE GRIMSLEY (CA): Ed Grimsley, from the great state of California, seconds and casts all votes for the nominee.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CO): Colorado seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FLOWERS (CT): National Adjutant Wheeler, Tom Flowers, delegation chairman from the state of Connecticut. The Department of Connecticut seconds the nomination for James W. "Bill" Oxford for the high office of American Legion national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN STEWARD (DE): Mr. Adjutant, James Stewart, delegation chairman for the Department of Delaware. We second the nomination of Bill Oxford for national commander.

DELEGATE BOLAND (FL): Diane Boland, from the state of Florida. We second the nomination for James "Bill" Oxford.

DELEGATE HAGGAN (FR): Mr. Adjutant, Doug Haggan, duly elected delegate to this convention of Department of France, the birthplace of the American Legion, proudly supports the nomination of Bill Oxford for national commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (ID): Idaho seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford for national commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IL): Illinois seconds the nomination of Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CONLEY (IN): Mr. Adjutant, Alan Conley, delegation chairman, Department of Indiana. We proudly second the nomination of Bill Oxford, North Carolina, for the high office of national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MOLINE (IA): Mr. Adjutant, Jay Scott Moline, delegation chairman. Iowa seconds the nomination of Bill Oxford for national commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KS): Mr. Chairman, the great state of Kansas, the Sunflower State, seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KY): Kentucky seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE GRIFFIN (LA): Ricky Griffin, delegate from the great state of Louisiana, seconds Bill Oxford for national commander.

DELEGATE WOODS (ME): Lloyd Woods, NEC, from the state of Maine. The state of Maine casts all 24 votes for Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MD): Maryland seconds the nomination of Bill Oxford from the great state of North Carolina.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PAJAK (MA): Jodie Pajak, delegate chairman of Massachusetts, seconds the nomination of James W. Oxford of North Carolina for the national commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MX): Mexico seconds the nomination of Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN STRIGGOW (MI): Steve Striggow, delegation chairman for the great state of Michigan, seconds the nomination of Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MN): Minnesota seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE TEAL (MS): James Teal from the Hospitality State of Mississippi casts 20 votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE BORGMAN (MO): Cary Borgman from the great state of Missouri. Second the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE NELSON (MT): Mr. Chairman, Jeff Nelson from the great state of Montana, department commander, Big Sky Country supports the nomination of Bill Oxford for national commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NE): The Cornhuskers from Nebraska cast its votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE MICHALSKI (NV): Mr. Chairman, Ron Michalski, NEC, from Nevada, cast all 14 votes for the next national commander, James "Bill" Oxford.

DELEGATE BROOKS (NH): Mr. Adjutant, Oliver Brooks, department commander, New Hampshire casts all 22 votes for Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NJ): New Jersey proudly seconds the nomination.

DELEGATE SPINOSA (NM): Mr. Chairman, Paul Spinosa, Department of New Mexico, proudly supports and seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford, North Carolina.

DELEGATE MCDERMOTT (NY): Mike McDermott, department of New York, seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WAHUS (ND): Glenn Wahus, delegation chairman of North Dakota seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE SCHMIDT (OH): Robert E. "Bob" Schmidt from the Department of Ohio, casts all our votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JAMES (OK): Jimmy James, delegation chairman, Oklahoma, 23 votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HARRIS (OR): Thomas Harris, chairman for the delegates of the great state of Oregon. We cast all of our votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOHN (PA): Mr. Chairman, Robert John, delegation chairman for the Department of Pennsylvania, the Keystone State, home of past National Commanders Dominic DiFrancesco and Ronald Conley. The department with the largest Legion Family membership seconds the nomination for James "Bill" Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WADE (PI): Mr. Chairman, Lawrence Wade, Department of The Philippines, duly elected chairman. Philippines casts all our seven votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ORRIA (PR): Carlos Orria, delegation chairman from Puerto Rico. We cast all our votes to Bill for national commander.

DELEGATE WILLIAMS (RI): Mr. Chairman, Dave Williams, one of the original 13 colonies, cast all our votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BRITT (SC): Mr. Chairman, John Britt, delegate chairman for the great state of South Carolina, home of the football champion Clemson Tigers, cast all of our votes for Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (SD): South Dakota, the birthplace of American Legion Baseball, cast all our votes for the next commander of the American Legion Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (TN): Delegation from Tennessee seconds the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BUCKMASTER (TX): Lloyd Buckmaster, delegation chairman for the great state of Texas, home of past National Commander John Brieden, seconds the motion of Bill Oxford.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (UT): Utah seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WOODWARD (VT): Mr. Chairman, Dave Woodward, delegation chairman for the Department of Vermont, casts all our votes for Bill W. Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN QUICK (VA): Thomas James Quick, Sr., delegation chairman. Mr. Adjutant, we cast a second vote for Bill Oxford for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CLARK (WA): Mr. Chairman, Bob Clark, delegation chairman for the great state of Washington. We cast all our votes for Bill Oxford.

DELEGATE BURDETT (WV): Barbara Burdett, from the great state "Almost Heaven" West Virginia, casts all of our 23 delegate votes for the honorable Bill Oxford.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DANSEREAU (WY): Richard Dansereau, delegation chair from Wyoming, casts all of our votes and seconds the nomination for Bill Oxford for our next commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Mr. Commander, that completes the roll call.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I now recognize from the floor, microphone one.

DELEGATE SMITH (FL): Mr. Commander, Colleen Smith, from Florida. I move that we suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the national commander and the nomination and election of the national vice commanders which rules shall be reinstated at the conclusion of the election of national vice commanders.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: 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 of national vice commanders. ...*Second.*

Hearing a second, this motion is nondebatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. The motion is carried. I now recognize from the floor, microphone two.

DELEGATE BLOOM (PA): Mr. Commander, Charlene Bloom, delegate from Pennsylvania. Mr. Commander, I move that nominations for the office of national commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We have a motion that nominations for the office of national commander be closed. Is there a second? ...*Second.*

Hearing a second, the motion to close nominations is a nondebatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye. All opposed, signify by saying nay. The ayes have it. The motion is carried. I now recognize from the floor, microphone one.

DELEGATE JAMES (CA): Mr. Commander, Autrey James, delegate from California. Mr. Commander, I move that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention and that James W. Oxford be elected national commander by acclamation. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There is a motion before us that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention and James W. "Bill" Oxford be elected national commander by acclamation. All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye. Those opposed, by saying nay. The ayes have it. The motion is carried. I now call on the national adjutant.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: As national adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention for the election of James W. "Bill" Oxford as the national commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I declare James W. "Bill" Oxford elected national commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Will the sergeant-at-arms assist the new national commander of The American Legion to the platform. He will be escorted to the stage by NEC member from the Department of North Carolina, Jeff Joyner. The Chair recognizes Past National Commander David Rehbein for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the new national commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: James Oxford, as we come to the podium for this great moment in your life, I think of another North Carolinian that stood in this spot and took this oath. Ray Smith faced many of the same challenges that you and your team will face as you begin your year as national commander. He was successful at stopping the decline in membership.

We are confident that you and your team will be equally as successful in that very important part of your year as national commander. Over my shoulder, you see a group of Legionnaires who once stood in your position and who stand ready now to support you as you lead this great organization. All Legionnaires, those in this room and around the country, stand ready behind you to lend their support under your leadership.

Now, if you will raise your right hand, give your name where I give mine, and repeat after me: I, Bill Oxford, do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially, the duties of the office of national commander of The American Legion. I further pledge that I will support and defend the Constitution of The United States of America and the National Constitution and By-laws of The American Legion. I do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government, so help me God. Commander, congratulations. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, the 2019-2020 national commander of The American Legion, James W. "Bill Oxford. *(Applause) ...The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER OXFORD (via video): I live in Lenoir, North Carolina. It's a little, small town 75 miles northwest of Charlotte. My family and previous generations have been here for several hundred years. I was one of seven kids. We grew up dirt poor. I mean, that's just the way it was. But we had a good life. I knew from an early age that I was supposed to be a soldier. It was just in the genes, in my DNA, just who I was. When Sergeant John Grindle, he was the Marine Corps recruiter, showed up at my door and said, 'Son, I want you,' it was like a fisherman setting a hook, and reeling me in.

My military career started late 1966. If I had not been able to make that transition from civilian to Marine, I know I would not be who I am today. It was just an opportunity that I am extremely to this day thankful for. Got through basic training. I survived, ended up in Chu Lai in Vietnam, joined VMA-533, which was an A-6 squadron. I don't think anybody that had the opportunity to serve in Vietnam was what they expected. Got back from Vietnam, got out of the Marine Corps, and within a few months I ended up as a national guardsman in the maintenance section of a truck company. From there, I applied for officer candidate school, ended up at the North Carolina Military Academy at Fort Bragg. Went from 2nd lieutenant to 1st lieutenant, became a company commander. Later became a battalion commander.

I spent about 30-plus years in the North Carolina Guard, from the North Carolina Guard I transferred to the Army Reserve and retired as an O6 with 34 and a half years. I'm extremely proud of my military service, and if I had the opportunity, I'd do it again. There's always a bond between soldiers. And anybody whoever served, they know and understand the bond that you have with a fellow soldier.

When I think about our next year, our American Legion is about our programs. If we think about where we came from, we've been successful because we've got a great team. We need to look forward. We've got to look to the next hundred years, and that's what our programs are about. We are creating the foundation for the future of this organization so we can celebrate another hundred years. (Applause)

Acceptance Speech: Newly Elected National Commander
James W. "Bill" Oxford, North Carolina

Before I get started, we need to recognize the fact that Hurricane Dorian is bearing down on the islands and the mainland of the United States. The American Legion is here to provide assistance and help if it's needed, but we need to keep those folks in our prayers as we continue through today and move on to the end of the weekend.

Before I go too far along, I need to do some introductions. I would like to introduce my wife, Frances. We've been married 52 years this past July. *(Applause)*

I am extremely lucky to have her on our team and on my side. My son Charlie and his wife, Deah. Charlie's a plumber by trade, not a plumber like you think, but he runs, owns, and operates a commercial construction plumbing company. *(Applause)*

His two sons, Isaiah and Micah, Isaiah is part of the family business. Micah is a senior at Western Carolina University, and I warn you, if you shake hands with those two guys, be careful because they can hurt you. *(Applause)*

Jackie's family, she's married to Mike Carr. Mike runs a boat company, boat repair and sales company. If someone needs a boat, we can hook you up. And Jackie's two sons are Jaggar and Dawson. Jaggar is a junior in high school, and Dawson's a sixth grader. Tremendous family, love them to death. Just wanted to make sure you knew those folks before we got too far along. *(Applause)*

I'd like to also take this chance to say thank you to some folks. I'd like, first of all, to Commander Brett, thank you. Job well done. We appreciate the work and effort you put in this past year. The next thank you I'd like to say is most people here, or a few people remember Jerry Hedrick. Jerry is a longtime friend, a mentor, a sponsor. He's not here with us. He passed in 2014, but Jerry started this journey for me a few years back, and I just want to say to Jerry, and he's probably looking down on us, but to Jerry and his family: Thank you, Jerry. We love you, still love you, brother. I'm here because of you, Jerry. That's what it comes down to. *(Applause)*

I'd like to say thanks to Dave Rehbein, longtime friend and mentor, for participating in this event for me. In a few minutes, Jimmie Foster's going to play a part. I'll give Jimmie a thank you up front. Jimmie was my national commander in 2010 when I was department commander, just a longtime friend and mentor there too. I'll run through the next group pretty quickly. Our North Carolina team, Jim and Linda Quinlan, David Cassidy, Evan and Shirley Thompson, Dick and Sharon Neville, Scottie and Becky Thomas, Jack and Karen Ward, David Phillips, Tony and Joe Rielli, Randy Cash, the entire headquarters staff. Debbie is here somewhere. Debbie, thank you. Drew Lacey, Bill Richard, Larry Klein, Jim Mayhugh, Lou Cook, all of those folks, and I hope I didn't forget anybody or miss anybody, but they have been just a tremendous asset to me as we traveled this year. Their help, advice, and time during the past two years is irreplaceable, and I can't thank them enough.

Changing gears, the centennial celebration of The American Legion is coming to an end on Veterans Day. Can you think about 100 years of successes of the things we've been able to accomplish? We can reminisce and remember and see and realize all of the successes that we have had, and I'll just hit a few. The original GI Bill and the multiple updates, the creation and updates to the veterans administration, the flag code, the centennial coin, the LEGION Act, many, many others, and we've been able to do these things and accomplish these things because we have a great team. And when we think about our team, it's our Legion family.

The Auxiliary since 1919, getting ready to celebrate their 100th birthday soon. New president Nicole, I know you're here, look so forward to working with you and your team. The Sons of The American Legion since 1932, membership over 370,000, the 46th consecutive year of an all-time high in membership. Really looking forward to working with your new commander, Clint Bolt. We heard a number this morning, the SAL had raised more than $7 million this year, more than $400,000 to the Child Welfare Fund, significant contributions. *(Applause)*

We have a great team, and we will continue to have a great team, but we need a great team. When we think about all of the things that we do, that team makes it possible to accomplish the things that we do, and I'll just talk about a few of them. Our baseball program, 55,000 players, 81 American Legion players in the Baseball Hall of Fame, started in 1925 in South Dakota. Shout out to South Dakota. But here's a trivia question for you. Who won the first American Legion World Series? 1926, Yonkers, New York, defeated Pocatello, Idaho, in Philadelphia. But that leads me to another thing. I'd like to congratulate Idaho for winning the recent World Series. Good work. *(Applause)*

Outstanding teams. Outstanding play in Shelby. The season started with more than 3,500 teams and the last eight great teams made it to Shelby, but it was Idaho and North Dakota in the finals, two outstanding teams, congratulations.

How about Boys State? Boys State programs in all 50 departments. Over 19,000 participants nationwide, and if you look at alumni of our Boys State programs, there's vice presidents, there's governors, there's vice presidents, Senators, CEOs, CFOs. That is pretty fast company when you think about Boys State alumni, and looking at the Boys Nation in Washington, D.C., they typically have 100 Senators. They recently elected Louis Acevedo from Massachusetts and Thomas Penley from Montana as president and vice president. Outstanding young men. Terrific program. *(Applause)*

Our national high school oratorical contest, over 10,000 young people competed across the country when Patrick Junker from Iowa won an $18,000 scholarship at the national finals. I was fortunate enough to be there. Those young folks put in a tremendous amount of time, effort, research, and it's first class. If you haven't been, I would recommend you go see that sometime.

Our junior shooting program, that's an outstanding way to support second amendment and teach gun safety, discipline and, personal development. Earlier in the week, we met the junior shooting winners, Jaden Ann Fraser from Tennessee, who won the sporter division, and Makenzie Sheffield from Texas, who won the precision match. Both young ladies, but terrific shooters, terrific program. Our youth cadet law enforcement programs in 21 departments, teaching and training young people who are interested in careers in law enforcement and/or the military.

Let me switch gears a little bit and talk about our Legion charities. The National Emergency Fund provided over $6 million to individuals in Legion posts that have been affected by natural disasters, fire, flood, hurricanes or tornadoes. Our TFA program, more than $1 million. More than $1 million to the Coast Guard when the government shutdown affected their paychecks earlier this year. You need to be proud of yourself for that because that's something every Legionnaire participated in. *(Applause)*

You deserve it. Our Child Welfare Foundation, 680 grants totaling over $16 million to nonprofit organizations that contribute to the spiritual, emotional, and mental health of children. Operation Comfort Warrior providing comfort items for wounded soldiers. All great charities that we all raise money in support. But when we think about those charities, there's one special thing about the Legion charity. 100 percent of the funds go toward the programs because all operational and administrative costs are covered by The American Legion. All of that money goes to those charities. *(Applause)*

You're right. We deserve that. We talked a little bit about scholarships just a minute ago with the different winners, but if we look at across the board at The American Legion charities, the Samsung charity, the $5 million endowment originally provided by the Samsung corporation to show appreciation for the services provided in the Korean conflict. Since the inception of the scholarship, more than 2,000 winners have received more than $5.5 million. That's the Samsung scholarship. Our Legacy Trust Fund set up to provide scholarships with the priority being children of the fallen and then children of the disabled since 9/11. Another scholarship, our baseball scholarships give away $22,000 in 2016. The oratorical contest, we had an $18,000 one, a $16,000 winner, and a $14,000 winner to the top three finalists. That's a lot of money. Our Eagle Scout scholarships, one $10,000 and three $2,500 scholarships per year.

All of these things that we've just talked about, and it shows who we are, but it also shows what we do, and when we think about what we do, promoting Americanism, that's just making sure America stays as patriotic as it's always been. Supporting flag education, veterans in schools, youth education, promoting a strong national defense. Tonight we've got soldiers, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and the space force just started up. I don't know where they are, but we've got servicemen in 140 different countries scattered around this world at more than 500 bases, and we know this country cannot and will not survive without a strong national defense, essential to this country's survival. *(Applause)*

Promoting and protecting veterans affairs and benefits. We send Americans to protect this country, and if they are injured in service to this country, we have a responsibility to provide the care for them. That's what promoting and protecting veterans affairs is about. We have a responsibility to do that.

Promoting, protecting, and supporting America's children and youth. We took an oath when we entered boot camp. I know many folks have heard me talk about falling in on the yellow footprints. That was a changing point in my life. But the oath that I took to support and defend the Constitution of this United States didn't have an expiration date. I still feel the same way, and I hope everybody else does because part of protecting this country is supporting our children and youth, educating, teaching, training, mentoring, developing our young people to carry on the legacy that we have created.

Now, does all of that sound familiar? I think it does because we are talking about the four pillars of the American Legion. That's the thing that's made The American Legion the largest, most powerful veterans organization in this country. But that's sort of a summary of what we've accomplished in the first 100 years, but we are embarking, we are entering the next centennial.

I'd like to look where we're going, and it's critical to realize that, as I look around this room, we are the future of this organization, and many of you have heard me say that. We control the future of this organization. We are the future of this organization. The things we did yesterday, the things we do today, and the things we will do tomorrow are building the foundation for the future of this organization. And if we think about The American Legion policies, programs, efforts, we've got to consider what makes those programs work. Those programs work by the people who participate in them. Membership is the key to our success and will be.

Last year our membership goal was 1.8 million Legionnaires. We had a retention rate of 86 percent with 68,000 new members. But with the passage of the LEGION Act, we need to recognize and pursue the 4.2 million veterans now eligible to become Legionnaires due to the passage of the LEGION Act. The all-time high Legion membership in 1946 was 3.3 million people, and that needs to be our goal. If we can do that, I'll be completely satisfied, I promise you. Just a couple of personal goals. Everybody's got their membership goals from the M&PA Committee, and we've talked a lot about a lot of those, and I've talked to a lot of folks about those goals. Some of you are not happy with them, but if we keep doing the same thing, we're going to keep getting the same results.

We've tried to enhance our membership goals. My personal membership goals and challenge to you, a 90 percent retention rate. Last year it was 86 percent. If we can retain at a 90 percent rate, we will be almost at our goal. Last year we assessed 68,000 new members. I'd like to see us reach 100,000 new members, and with the LEGION Act, that should be fairly simple to do. Nothing's simple, but if we get everybody involved, we can gain 100,000 new members.

Something sort of related to that, one of my goals is 100 percent CPR submission. This year we're somewhere just a little bit south of 70 percent, still a lot of posts not making that submission of the CPR. 100 percent is my goal. Not a goal we can measure, but something we all need to do and will all help us with membership increase our Legion visibility. If there's a fish fry, baseball game, flag retirement, regardless of what the event is, you need to do two additional things. There needs to be a news release before it's out so people will know about it, invite them to come and participate and help. After the event,

that news release should be just as important as washing the last pot. It's doing the same thing. We are trying, and we need to increase our Legion visibility.

We all know what the Legion is, the value we add, and the relevance we know. But does everybody else? Media and communications have done a lot about rebranding and increasing the visibility. If we do that, good things happen. Think about it, just visibility, a photo, an article, a video, a blog, and use social media. Follow me on Facebook after today. I'll be out there trying to keep everybody informed about who we are and what we're doing.

My projects for the year. Commander Reistad talked about our centennial coin. Those centennial coins make great gifts, and the Legion makes a reasonable amount of money off of those, but the centennial coins give you American Legion memorabilia. They make great gifts, and I know in North Carolina we're going to use those centennial coins as membership incentives. The clad coins or the silver dollars are not too expensive. They make great incentives for people who reach membership goals or do good things in membership related issues.

After January our emphasis was shipped to the Veterans and Children's Foundation. You heard an ultimate goal of $25 million. That's probably a little bit more than we can raise this year, but our long-term goal is $25 million. It should not be too difficult if we spread that out over four or five years or so, but ultimate goal is $25 million.

As I look around this hall today, I am humbled beyond belief or beyond what I can describe to accept this nomination as your national commander. I understand one thing completely. I'd like to say I will fix The American Legion, but The American Legion is not broken. We have a terrific organization. *(Applause)*

I'm going to say, whatever this job is, I will do it to the best of my ability, but I can't do it alone. I need everybody here on my team helping us reach our goals and objectives. That's programs, policies, Legion business. It's membership. It's pursuing Legion goals and fund-raising issues and efforts. We are all stakeholders in this organization. We are the future of this organization. As we think about who we are, what we do, as stakeholders, as the future of this organization, we are building the foundation for the future of the organization for the next 100 years. I hope you're on board. I need you to be on board. Will you help me do that? Thank you very much. It's an honor and a privilege. *(Applause)*

First Lady Presentation

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, as a point of personal privilege, I would like to call on Mary Ludwig, wife of Past National Commander Daniel Ludwig, for a presentation by the first spouses to the new first lady of The American Legion.

MARY LUDWIG: Frances, would you join me here at the podium. Frances, on behalf of us former First Ladies and First Gentleman Mike, I am very proud to present you with this badge as our newest first lady. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Thank you, Mary. I now recognize microphone two.

Election of National Vice Commanders

DELEGATE WILSON (OH): Mr. Commander, Jean Wilson, delegate from Ohio. Mr. Commander, since the rules of this Convention have been suspended, I move that nominations for the office of national vice commander be made from the floor of this Convention. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: There is a motion before us that nominations for the office of national vice commander be made from the floor. Hearing a second, the motion is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye. Those opposed by nay. Motion is passed. We will now entertain

nominations for the offices of national vice commander from the floor. I now recognize microphone one.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MOLINE (IA): Mr. Commander, Jay Scott Moline, chairman of the delegation of Iowa. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Past National Commander David K. Rehbein for the purpose of a nomination for office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The Chair recognizes David Rehbein for the purpose of a nomination.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: Thank you, commander. Iowa is once again proud to come to the podium at convention to nominate an outstanding Legionnaire for election to wear the red cap of a national vice commander of The American Legion. That individual is Bruce Feuerbach of Merkel-Bocholt American Legion Post 107 in Keystone, Iowa. Bruce is a 51-year member of The American Legion, having joined The American Legion immediately following his U.S. Army service in Vietnam. That service began in Post No. 107 but has continued with service and every level of our great organization and will continue throughout the remainder of his life, as Bruce was recently presented with an honorary life membership by the Merkel-Bocholt Post.

His service includes leadership in command positions at his post, district, and the Department of Iowa. Bruce also proved his worth as a working member of a leadership team, as his career moved toward those command positions. His committee and commission responsibilities are too many and varied to detail here, but in each Bruce has continued to learn more about The American Legion as he contributed wherever he was assigned. Bruce served two terms on the National Executive Committee with positions on the national commissions and committees sandwiched around those two terms. He is ready to continue that service next year as national vice commander.

His 51 years of membership have prepared him for that position, but those 51 years have not dimmed Bruce's enthusiasm nor drained his energy. He is ready for a year of traveling in his assigned departments, providing motivation and guidance to them. The American Legion faces challenges in the next year, particularly in membership. Bruce is the right person to assist Commander Oxford in meeting and overcoming that challenge.

From personal experience, I can testify that Bruce, Velda, and their family have met challenges in the past and have become stronger and more willing to provide leadership as a result of those challenges. He will help us overcome our membership challenge in the next year. It is with pride and great pleasure that I nominate Bruce Feuerbach of Merkel-Bocholt Post American Legion No. 107 as a candidate for the office of national vice commander for 2019-2020. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I call on microphone number two.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MOORE (KY): Mr. Commander, Bill Moore, chairman of the delegation from Kentucky. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Randall A. Fisher for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair recognizes Randall A. Fisher for a nomination.

DELEGATE FISHER (KY): National Commander, national adjutant, distinguished guests, past national commanders, delegates of the 101st National Convention, I want to place in nomination a friend of mine, David L. King, for the high office of national vice commander. David is an Army veteran, served 20 years in the United States Army, started out as enlisted and was later commissioned and came out of 20 years' service as a captain in the United States Army.

He's been very dedicated to the Legion, been a member 38 years. He served as state commander, post commander, every office in the Legion, and now he serves as an oratorical chairman for the Department of Kentucky.

He's been married 45 years, has two children, one's a political adviser, lives in Somerset, his daughter. His son is serving on the USS Farragut. David has just been very,

very dedicated in community service in his community and the state and then also, as I said earlier, in The American Legion. I'd like to place David L. King in nomination for the high office of national vice commander for the year 2019 and 2020. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I now call upon microphone number one.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PAJAK (MA): Mr. Commander, Jodie Pajak, chairman of the delegation from Massachusetts. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize James C. Fratolillo for the purpose of a nomination for office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair recognizes James C. Fratolillo for the purpose of a nomination.

DELEGATE FRATOLILLO (MA): Thank you, commander. As a duly elected delegate from the great state of Massachusetts, where it all began, it's a great honor and privilege to be asked to nominate Francis J. MacDonald, Jr., for the position of national vice commander. Francis J. "Frank" MacDonald, Jr., has been a Legionnaire for 40 years.

His eligibility in The American Legion is from his eight years of active duty in the U.S. Navy and later serving in the U.S. Army Reserve, retiring after 35 years of commendable service as command sergeant major. Frank has held various offices at every level in The American Legion, the Department of Massachusetts, including, to name a few, post commander, department historian, department senior vice, department commander, and National Executive Committeeman.

He has served on a number of department and national commissions and committees, including Commission on Children & Youth, Legislative Commission, National Security Council, Marketing Commission, just to name a few. He is a member of the National Association of Department of Historians of The American Legion, the National American Legion Press Associations, ANAVICUS, and the Past Department Commanders Club. He has been able to balance family, work and Legion appointments. Somehow, in his spare time, because of his dedication to our organization, he holds the title of leading membership Legionnaire for the Department of Massachusetts with 16 Gold Brigade awards.

Frank holds an MBA from Western New England University. He retired from the federal government as a supervisory logistic management specialist in 2006. He currently works part time as an administrator from the town of Sandwich in Cape Cod.

He is married to his wife Maureen. They have two daughters, one son, and four grandchildren, who are all members of the American Legion Family. He enjoys traveling with his wife, baseball, gardening, and spending time with his family. When I was asked to do the nomination speech, I was given his bio of three pages. I've kept this nomination speech short in the style of Frank. He can talk the talk, but he walks the walk.

Comrade Commander, it is with great pride, I, James Fratolillo, duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Massachusetts, place in nomination the name of Frances J. McDonald, Jr., for the high office of national vice commander in the largest and best veterans service organization, The American Legion. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair now recognizes microphone two.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BOARDMAN (MO): Kerry L. Boardman, chairman of the delegation from the great state of Missouri. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Kenneth J. Goth for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair recognizes Kenneth J. Goth for the purpose of a nomination.

DELEGATE GOTH (MO): Good morning, American Legion Family and guests. My name is Kenny Goth. I'm the National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Missouri. It is with great honor that I place in nomination for national vice commander the name of Richard A. Heigert.

Rich was born in Litchfield, Illinois, and grew up in Staunton, Illinois. He graduated from Southern Illinois in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts in geography. Rich entered the United States Army in 1966 and received his officer's commission in 1967 and was sent to

Germany until 1970, and at that time, he joined the Army Reserve, where he remained active and retired in 2003 as a colonel.

In 1963, Rich moved to the great state of Missouri, when he began his employment with the United States Air Force Aeronautical Chart and Information Center and was later drafted in the United States Army in 1966 and thus began his illustrious military career.

Rich joined the Rock Memorial American Legion Post 283 of Imperial, Missouri, in 1981. He is both an honorary life member as well as a paid-up-for-life member, demonstrating his devotion and dedication to the American Legion Family. Rich has been a tremendous asset to his post, serving many jobs, including post commander, and still serves as the post finance officer. He has been District 13's commander and is currently serving as District 13's finance officer.

On the department level, he has been chairman of various committees and as department commander in 2004. He served as alternate National Executive Committeeman from 2004 to 2008. He served as National Executive Committeeman from 2008 to 2012. Rich has served as a member of the Missouri Boys State staff from 1994 and currently still serves on staff and attends this prestigious program annually.

On a national level, Rich has served on various committees and commissions, among them, Subcommittee on Committees, the national Foreign Relations Committee and Commission, along with the Marketing Commission. Rich also serves on Missouri's Veterans Commission Foundation as secretary and as a member of the Jefferson Barracks POW/MIA Museum board, serving as the board's secretary. He also served on Missouri's Association of Veterans Organizations as a legislative chairman.

Rich and his wife share three daughters, Shanda, Christine, and Keva, one grandson, and two granddaughters. Rich will be a great asset as a national vice commander. As a duly elected delegate to this convention, it is with great honor and a privilege that I place in nomination for national vice commander for the year 2019-2020 a dedicated Legionnaire, Richard A. Heigert from the Department of Missouri. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair recognizes microphone one.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HARRIS (OR): Mr. Commander, Thomas Harris, chairman of the delegation from Oregon. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Past National Commander Charles E. Schmidt for the purpose of nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The chair recognizes Past National Commander Charles Schmidt for the purpose of a nomination.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, sir. Commander Reistad, Adjutant Wheeler, national officers, past national commanders, my fellow delegates, guests, ladies and gentlemen. On November 12, 1919, delegates at the first American Legion National Convention elected five national vice commanders that established a leadership tradition and began a century of service to veterans, their families, and to our nation. One of those national vice commanders elected was William Follett from the Department of Oregon. Today we continue the tradition of electing five national vice commanders but also start a new century of service to America and her veterans.

It is an honor for the Department of Oregon to nominate another Oregonian at the start of another century of service by The American Legion. Robert "Rob" D. Liebenow's American Legion eligibility is derived from his service in the United States Navy that began in 1966. Following boot camp, Rob was assigned to a destroyer base in Lemoore, California. His attack squadron VA-163 was attached to the USS Hancock that spent 7 1/2 months off the coast of Vietnam. Rob was honorably separated from the Navy in July of 1969 as petty officer third class.

Rob joined Oregon's Sherwood Post 56 in July of 1972 and served as first and second vice commanders and two years as commander. In 1980 he transferred his membership to Hillsborough Post 6, where he is still a current member. He still serves as their membership chairman, and over the years has helped increase membership in his post by over 150 percent. Serving as adjutant, vice commander and commander in one of Oregon's largest

districts, membership was boosted to 108 percent under Rob's leadership. Prior to his election to department commander in 1995, Rob was department vice commander. Later he served our department as finance officer, chaired our Americanism, Constitution & By-Laws, and Internal Affairs committees. He served as our vice president of our Oregon American Legion Foundation, and he has also served on many other commissions and committees.

His service to our national organization has been on the Distinguished Guest and Counter-Subversive Activities committees, Americanism and Veterans Employment & Education councils, and our Commission on Children & Youth. Elected as Oregon's alternate National Executive Committeeman in 2013, Rob served on the Liaison Committee to the Convention Commission.

In 2016, he assumed the position of National Executive Committeeman and currently serves on the national Subcommittee on Resolutions and the NEC Liaison Committee for the Marketing Commission. Rob retired from a career in corporate retail in 2015. He and his wife, Linda, make their home in Wilsonville, Oregon, and Linda is a past department president and currently serves as department secretary. Rob and Linda have two adult children and three grandchildren. One son and two grandsons are SAL members. His daughter, granddaughter, and daughter-in-law are all American Legion Auxiliary members. While not serving veterans, Rob enjoys spending time with his family and following the Oregon Ducks athletics, and as he has done for more than 20 years, continues to volunteer at the Portland VA Medical Center.

An outstanding American who proudly and honorably served our nation, Robert D. Liebenow is a veteran who has unselfishly given 47 years of service to our American Legion, holding many key leadership positions from post to national. Rob Liebenow is a dedicated Legionnaire who is ready to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the high office of American Legion's national vice commander with duty, honor, and respect for the strong values and traditions our great organization reveres.

Mr. Commander, as a registered delegate to this convention, it gives me great pleasure to place into nomination the name of Robert D. Liebenow of Oregon for the high office of national vice commander for the 2019-2020 membership year. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I now recognize microphone number two.

DELEGATE COOLEY (WV): Mr. Commander, Frank Cooley, delegate from West Virginia. Mr. Commander, I move that the nominations for the office of national vice commander be closed. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We have a motion and a second that nominations for the office of national vice commander be closed. The motion is nondebatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed by nay. The ayes have it. The motion is carried. The chair recognizes microphone number one.

DELEGATE MUI (NY): Mr. Commander, Gabe Mui, from New York. Mr. Commander, I move that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote five times for the entire delegate strength of this Convention and that the nominated five candidates, Bruce C. Feuerbach, David L. King, Francis J. MacDonald, Richard A. Heigert and Robert D. Liebenow, be elected national vice commanders by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: We have a motion that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote five times for the entire delegate strength of this convention and that the five nominated candidates, Bruce C. Feuerbach, David L. King, Francis J. MacDonald Jr., Richard Heigert and Robert D. Liebenow, be elected national vice commanders by acclamation. Is there a second? ... *Second.*

Hearing a second, the motion is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. The ayes have it. The motion is carried. I now call on National Adjutant Daniel Wheeler.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: As national adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote five times with each vote representing the entire delegate strength

of this Convention for Bruce C. Feuerbach , David L. King, Francis J. MacDonald, Jr., Richard Heigert, and Robert D. Liebenow for the offices of national vice commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: I declare Bruce C. Feuerbach, David L. King, Francis J. MacDonald, Jr., Richard Heigert, and Robert D. Liebenow elected national vice commanders of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Will the new national vice commanders come to the platform to be introduced and sworn in, please.

Installation of National Vice Commanders

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: At this time, I am honored to swear you into your newly elected office as a national vice commander. I know you will uphold the trust that has been placed in you by the comrades who nominated and supported you and the Convention delegates that elected you. I trust you will fulfill every obligation required of you. I challenge you to familiarize yourselves with the duties of your office and carry them out with the same spirit from which arose The American Legion.

The welfare, success and integrity of this great organization depends on you, as you travel in the departments and throughout this country promoting the mandates of The American Legion as approved by the National Convention and the National Executive Committee. It is your duty to protect the good name of The American Legion with the people of our great nation, who you will meet as you travel. Help them to know the Legion's purposes and policies. Remember the four pillars that motivate us, as members to serve this nation. As you serve, always remember there is no rank, for we all serve as equals. We all are aiming for the same goals, the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty.

This means you should always employ the cardinal principles of The American Legion to all of those that we serve. The rehabilitation of all disabled veterans and the care of those who now suffering from wounds, disease, and want to include the care of their family members; the education of our children; educating citizens on the ideals of true Americanism; maintaining a strong national defense. In your travels representing The American Legion, always practice these four pillars in your promotion of service to the community, state and nation.

Please raise your right hand and repeat after me: I, state your name, do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of The American Legion I am about to assume, and I further pledge myself I will uphold the principles outlined in the National Constitution and the Preamble of The American Legion in service to our veterans and their families, their communities, state and nation. You may lower your hands. Congratulations, national vice commanders. Ladies and gentlemen, Let's have a big round of applause for your newly elected national vice commanders. *(Applause)*

I now call on Past National Commander Jimmie L. Foster to present the Colors to our incoming national commander.

Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FOSTER: Commander Oxford, please join me at the lectern. Legionnaires and distinguished guests, please rise for the presentation of our National Colors by the Doughboys Color Guard of Post 396, Department of New York to the national commander. Color guard, please present the colors of the new national commander of The American Legion. Hand Salute!

...The delegation rendered a salute to the Colors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FOSTER: Two! National Commander Bill Oxford, You stand before this convention, having received a unanimous vote of confidence in your ability to represent not only Legionnaires, but also all American veterans in the

coming months. As a veteran, I know that you are up to the challenge. You served as one of my 55 department commanders and very proudly in numerous other capacities over your many years of Legion experience. You have the expertise, experience and knowledge to lead us in the upcoming years. I know, and the delegates know, you are the right leader to carry out our great organization forward within the coming years and the next century.

You served the country as a Marine, National Guardsman, and an Army Reservist, retiring as a full colonel after 34 years of military service. Now you get to serve us as a leader of veterans. Your election was earned through hard work and service, just like your predecessors. May the Colors that we present to you be a source of inspiration and pride. National Commander Oxford, God bless you, God bless our American Legion as you lead us into the next century. Congratulations. *(Applause)*

Color Guard! Return the colors of the national commander of The American Legion to its post. Hand Salute!

...The delegation rendered a salute to the Colors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FOSTER: Two! *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: This is an exciting time for any National Convention. We have elected a new national commander and look forward to an exciting and historic time as we build a foundation for the future. This is also the time when the American Legion Auxiliary elects a new president, as this important part of our Legion Family is also poised to meet the needs of veterans and their loved ones.

The woman chosen to lead the American Legion Auxiliary has worked many years for veterans and their families. She served as the organization's national vice president and has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for 44 years. She was very, very young when she joined. Eligible for Auxiliary membership through her grandfather, World War II Navy veteran Roger Schroder, she brings a wealth of valuable experience to our American Legion Family. She has a master's degree in nursing administration and has been a president and CEO of a hospital. She has twice been recognized as one of Becker's 50 Rural Hospital CEOs to Know in the United States. She is a proud member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 127 in Gladbrook, Iowa. Please give a warm welcome to National President of the American Legion Auxiliary Nicole Clapp. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Newly Elected National President, American Legion Auxiliary
Nicole Clapp, Iowa

Good afternoon. Team 100, congratulations on a tremendous year, and now congratulations, Commander Bill. It's been a pleasure getting to know your vice commanders through our orientation, and I have to say a special congratulations to Bruce Feuerbach. We hail from the same 3rd District in the great state of Iowa. Congratulations to all of you. *(Applause)*

Legionnaires, you have elected a very outgoing, dedicated, and true southern gentleman to lead your organization in the upcoming year. I feel very fortunate to be serving alongside Commander Oxford and SAL Commander Clint Bolt.

As the national president for the American Legion Auxiliary during our centennial 100th anniversary. Thank you to The American Legion founding fathers, who had the foresight to create the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. So logically, we are a bit younger. We will be celebrating our big birthday on November 10 of this year. It is an honor to represent the ALA during our milestone anniversary year with Commander Clint and Commander Bill.

As we promote the American Legion Family with the passage of the LEGION Act, our membership flood gates should be opening wide for the benefit of our entire family. The opportunities are endless, and we have a collective strategy to work membership hand in hand together. We have to continue to evolve and remain relevant to all of our current and future members' needs and wants. As we focus on our mission delivery, we can make

significant differences in the lives of our veterans, military, and their families. My love of the poppy started the lifelong journey to want to give back to the organization in which I was raised, as the commander said, at a very young age. To say it politely, I was four years old. The poppy is the focal point of the American Legion Auxiliary centennial theme, Celebrating a Century of Service. Try to envision a poppy field at night giving way to a sky full of fireworks.

The poppy fields of World War I are the reason we exist to be celebrating a century of service at this milestone year. I believe celebrating a century of service blends the past and the future of our organizations in such a way that people will want to gravitate towards our mission. In 2019-2020, the American Legion Auxiliary membership of over 600,000 strongly will support and embrace Commander Bill's theme of Foundation For the Future while we are celebrating a Century of Service. I believe it is a very fitting blend of the appreciation of the past and hope for the future of the American Legion Family. Thank you very much and God bless. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: The man chosen to lead the Sons of The American Legion is the grandson of World War II Navy veteran Kennard "K.C." Bolt. He is a 22-year member of the detachment of Virginia, a great state, and a proud member of Squadron 72 in Warrenton, Virginia. He has served the Sons at every level, and I am confident that this great program of The American Legion will continue to grow under his leadership. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the national commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Virginia's own, Clint Bolt. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Newly Elected National Commander, Sons of The American Legion
Clint Bolt, Virginia

Thank you, Commander Brett. Congratulations to fellow Virginian National Commander Brett on what an outstanding year and inspiration he's been to me personally throughout my Legion career. National Commander Bill, American Legion officers, members and guests, good afternoon. As you heard, I am a grandson of a Navy veteran of World War II, and it was his service that allows me to be a member of this great organization. I'm proud to be here today to honor his service and all the veterans that he served with and all those since.

Membership for us this year is job one. I have a goal of 400,000 members for the Sons of The American Legion this year. That's a goal that I believe can and will be met. To help us with this growth is the passage of the LEGION Act. This opens the door for over 4 million veterans and their sons to grow our whole organization. But the Sons of The American Legion must help the Legion. We must help the Legion recruit these new veterans and their families, and more importantly, welcome them into our ranks.

Supporting our Legion charities is more important than ever. The American Legion stepped up, stood tall, and assisted the Coast Guard when the government shut down. This TFA fund had an unexpected draw of over $1 million on it. The Sons of The American Legion will do all we can to help replenish those moneys and keep The American Legion toolbox ready to go. *(Applause)*

As The American Legion starts the new century of service, the Sons of The American Legion will be a steadfast family member committed to our veterans, building a foundation for the future by serving those who served. I want to congratulate National Commander Bill, his officers, and we look forward to serving with him and serving on his team. Thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Ladies and gentlemen, National Commander Oxford, National President Clapp and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Bolt, our dynamic leadership team for the upcoming year. Your American Legion Family leaders! *(Applause)*

Before we move on, I want to take a moment of personal privilege to say a few words. It's difficult to thank everybody that impacted on my success, on our success this year. There's no way I can remember all the names, but everyone played a part in The American Legion's success. There are two people in particular that I feel I should comment on that really helped me. One is my wife, Jessica, who you probably haven't seen anything of, if at all. She's disabled, and she can't travel with me, but she is here with me at every American Legion meeting and function in spirit. *(Applause)*

Jessica was a most beautiful and helpful first lady when I served as department commander about a dozen years ago. But I had a phone call with her the other day, and she says, "You know something," she says, "I was planning for this since 2006," meaning me being in this position. I can't thank her enough for standing by my side, for giving me the authorization, for lack of a better word, to travel and to do what I did this year. I love her. Jessica, if you're watching, I love you. Thank you so much for that. *(Applause)*

The other person I want to mention is someone that traveled by my side for the whole year, someone who I suspect I gave a little bit of notoriety, if you were following me on Facebook, a great aide. Yes, he does sleep. He sleeps a lot, but that's how he recharges his batteries. But I want to single him out because he's been a great aide this year, very attentive to everything, and I want to thank his wife, Pat, for allowing him to be with me this year. What a lot of people don't know, with the little back-and-forth banter with Kenny and I, is that we've known each other for about 35 years. We've served together as district officers. I was their best man when they got married about 23 years ago. So I know him pretty well. He knows me pretty well. So when we're picking on each other in front of everybody, it's just a show. That's all it is. Let's give Kenny a round of applause. And he's got those famous glasses on. You've got to see them. He's famous now. What can I say. (*Applause)*

Legionnaires, please uncover and rise as Past National Chaplain Cash offers the benediction.

Benediction
Randy Cash, North Carolina, Past National Chaplain

Let us honor God by prayer as we close this convention. Our Heavenly Father, we ask for Your benediction to rest on us this day. You have graciously preserved our nation through the years and have led us in wondrous ways and grant that we may be worthy of our high calling as a nation. Make us reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, and generous in the protection of weakness. Inspire the men and women who direct our great American Legion, that they may guide it wisely and well. And especially do we pray for our Past National Commander Brett Reistad, as he moves to new responsibilities, and for our new national commander, Bill Oxford. Grant them in all their duties Your help, in all their perplexities Your counsel, in all danger Your protection. For this we pray in Your most holy name, and all God's people said amen.

Retirement of Colors and Adjournment

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Please remain standing. Uncover. Sergeant-at-Arms, retire the POW/MIA Flag. ...*The POW/MIA flag was retired.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Please cover. The Color Guard will retire the Flag of the United States. The delegates will stand and hand salute on my command. Hand Salute! ...*The delegation rendered a salute to the Colors.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER REISTAD: Two! The time is now 12:40. I now declare this 101st Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, sine die.

...At 12:40 p.m., Thursday, August 29, 2019, the 101st Annual National Convention of The American Legion was adjourned.

2019 OFFICIAL AWARDS
ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL RECIPIENT(S)

The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually to an individual(s) or organization for their outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion by nomination by department action or by the National Commander.

RECIPIENT: Honorable John McCain (posthumous)

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: Neil Walker, Miami Marlins

Bob Feller American Legion Pitching 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: Randon Hostert, Post 56, Idaho Falls, ID

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: Idaho Falls Post 56, Idaho Falls, ID

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: Ron Franklin, Drestrehan Post 366, Drestrehan, LA

The 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: Fargo Post 2, Fargo, ND

Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.

RECIPIENT: Department of North Carolina

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: A Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.

RECIPIENT: Trevor Marsh, Randolph County Post 45, Asheboro, NC

The Howard P. Savage, Jr. 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: Idaho Falls Post 56, Idaho Falls, ID

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award: Awarded annually to the manager and coach of the national championship team, as representative of the adult leadership Jack Williams stressed during his lifetime.

RECIPIENT(s): Manager: Ryan Alexander, Post 56, Idaho Falls, ID
Coaches: Nathan Byram, Easton Dahlberg and Michael Webster

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: Alex Cortez, Idaho Falls Post 56, Idaho Falls, ID

American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Trophy: Awarded annually in four categories to the top performing Individual and Team in the Sporter and Precision categories competing in the annual USA Shooting National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championship who are members of clubs and teams affiliated with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program.

RECIPIENT(S):	**Precision Team:**	Granbury High School, Texas Post 491, The American Legion of Texas, Makenzie Sheffield, Philip Becker, Clarissa Layland, and M'Leah Lambdin
	Precision Individual:	Makenzie Sheffield, Granbury High School, Texas, Post 491
	Sporter Team:	Nation Ford HS MCJROTC, South Carolina Post 31, The American Legion of South Carolina, Marcus Stallings, Levi Carlson, Preston Jaeger, Donte Hayes
	Sporter Individual:	Jaden-Ann Fraser, Volunteer NJROTC Rifle Team, Tennessee, Post 3

The American Legion Baseball "Slugger" Trophy: Plaque is presented to recipient, or designated representative, by appropriate official upon the conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series.

RECIPIENT: Ron Franklin, Drestrehan Post 366, Drestrehan, LA

Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.

RECIPIENT: Department of Vermont

The American Legion Baseball "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: Trevor Marsh, Randolph County Post 45, Asheboro, 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: Department of Iowa

Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship Award: Awarded annually to the athlete competing in The American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and fair play.
RECIPIENT: Samantha Louis, California, Selma High MCJROTC, Post 12

Daniel J. O'Connor Award: 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. (Originally named the William Randolph Hearst Trophy)
RECIPIENT: Department of Virginia

The American Legion and Scouting "Square Knot" Award: This award is designed to recognize American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program. This award is not meant to be a selective or limited award, but one that is available to any American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who completes the requirements for the award. The Award is meant to recognize dedication and work required by an American Legion, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member to assist in furthering the Scouting program in The American Legion.
RECIPIENT(s): Geoffrey Forbes (MN), Charles Pettibone (NY), William Sloan (AL), Keith Burkenmeyer (AZ), David Hartin (AL), James Hughes (MS), Christopher Ragusa (FL), Jerry Peeler (FL), John Merrell (SC), Eric Mueller (PA), Lisa Fountain (MI), Walter Sporisky (TX).

The American Legion National Education Award: Awarded annually to an individual, group or organization which has conducted the best all-around promotion of the education programs of The American Legion, education programs that correspond to the goals of The American Legion or has promoted or advanced education programs at the national level.
RECIPIENT: None Awarded

The American Legion Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of authentic veterans' organization in Canada. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans' affairs and in the development and perpetuation of the spirit of international good will and comradeship between the United States and Canada and between their veterans' organization and The American Legion.
RECIPIENT(S): **ANAVICUS** – None Awarded
INDIVIDUAL - None Awarded

Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting: Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post Reports.
RECIPIENT: Departments of Montana and New Mexico

National Employer of Veterans Award Recipient(s): Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.

RECIPIENT(s):	**Category I**	Bravehearts Therapeutic Riding & Education Center
2018	**Category II**	HICAPS Inc.
Winners	**Category III**	Grunt Style, LLC

Note: The 2019 recipient(s) will not be announced until the 2020 National Convention.

National Employment Service Award Recipient(s): 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:**	Osvaldo "Ozzie" Montalvo, Norcross, GA
2018	**DVOP of the Year:**	Mark Simmons, Colorado Springs, CO
Winners	**ES Office of the Year:**	Pikes Peak Workforce Center, Colorado Springs, CO

Note: The 2019 recipient(s) will not be announced until the 2020 National Convention.

Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award Recipient: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the AETNA Company, to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.

RECIPIENT(s): Bobby Dodd Institute, Atlanta, GA
2018 Winner

Note: The 2019 recipient will not be announced until the 2020 National Convention.

National Employer of Older Worker Award Recipient: The program provides an Employer of Older Worker Award for a company that consistently hires older workers, especially veterans and serves as an inspirational recognition of a company with a record of support and commitment to the hiring of America's older workers.

RECIPIENT(s): Workforce Connection-Wise Title V
2018 Winner

Note: The 2019 recipient will not be announced until the 2020 National Convention.

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):	North Carolina	**(One-Year Narrative History)**
	Missouri	**(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):	Carroll Post 143, Carrollton, GA	**(One-Year Narrative History)**
	Lt. Julius L. Shryer Post 430, Durant, IA	**(One-Year Yearbook History)**

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United

States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s): Philippe Colinet, Belgium

Distinguished Public Service Award: Awarded annually by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the Commander's Advisory Committee at the time of the annual Washington Conference. It may be awarded to one or more person(s) of the United States Congress.

RECIPIENT(s): Honorable Jon Tester, United States Senate (MT)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I – 200-1,000 members; II - 1,001-3,000 members; III - 3,001-6000 members; IV – 6001-12,000 members; V – 12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s):	**Category I**	Detachment of Mississippi
2018	**Category II**	Detachment of North Carolina
Winners	**Category III**	Detachment of Wisconsin
	Category IV	Detachment of Arizona
	Category V	Detachment of Florida

General Henri Gouraud Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said Department having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

RECIPIENT(s):	**Category I**	None qualified
	Category II	Department of California
	Category III	None qualified
	Category IV	None qualified
	Category V	Department of Alabama
	Category VI	Department of France

General John J. Pershing Honor Award: Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more, of the post's previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.

RECIPIENT: Department of Kentucky

Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.

RECIPIENT: Department of Oklahoma

The American Legion National Recruiter of the Year: Awarded annually to the individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all of the departments.

RECIPIENT: Charles T. Abrahamson, Department of Idaho

Jerry L. Hedrick Membership Award: Awarded annually to the Department, not included among the several state Departments or the Department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year's membership.
RECIPIENT: None awarded for 2019

O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.
RECIPIENT: Department of Alabama

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 Kyle LeLand

The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.
RECIPIENT: Ensign Helen Oh

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 Brendan McKeever

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 Jesse Palmer

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 Francis Kim

National Commander's Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program.
RECIPIENT(s):
Category I - Departments with 100,000 or more members:
Post Participation: Department of Florida
Individual Participation: Department of Florida
Category II - Departments with 70,000 to 99,999 members:
Post & Individual Participation: No Submissions
Category III - Departments with 40,000 to 69,999 members:
Post & Individual Participation: No Submissions
Category IV - Departments with 25,000 to 39,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Massachusetts
Individual Participation: Department of Massachusetts
Category V - Departments with 10,000 to 24,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Montana
Individual Participation: Department of Montana
Category VI - Departments with less than 10,000 members:
Post & Individual Participation: No Submissions

The American Legion 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: Lt. Jane Anderson, Colorado Springs, CO

The American Legion National Firefighter of the Year Award: To recognize an outstanding firefighter as selected from Department 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: Chief Jan K. Rader, Huntington, WV

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): Departments of Connecticut, Florida and Montana

The American Legion 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: Broadcast: KNTV, San Francisco, CA
Print: Cynthia Simison/The Republican, Springfield, MA
Internet: Oriana Pawlyk/Military.com

The American Legion Patriot Award: Awarded to an outstanding citizen who has demonstrated a profound and exceptional commitment to military personnel and their families.

RECIPIENT(s): Honorable Mitch Daniels

The American Legion Spirit of Service Award: Awarded annually by the Department of Defense and the six military departments that have identified the most outstanding men and women that have received press coverage in Armed Service News dispatches, the Pentagon Channel, their military base newspapers and their hometown publications.

RECIPIENT(s):	**Army:**	Sgt. Joshua R. Evans
	Navy:	Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph B. McPhail
	Marine Corps:	Sgt. Anthony K. Marinelli
	Air Force:	Staff Sgt. Heather M. Carden
	Coast Guard:	Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin McMullen
	Air National Guard:	Staff Sgt. Benjamin P. Forsberg

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, Williamsville, NY

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: Harrisburg Post 472, Houston, TX

The Lemuel Bolles Trophy: Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.
RECIPIENT: American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Williamsville, NY

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy: Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.
RECIPIENT: Department of Colorado

Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Provider of the Year Award: To be awarded annually at the Washington Conference to one outstanding non-physician direct patient care provider in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), nominated and selected under such conditions as the Internal Affairs Commission should from time to time select as necessary and consistent with the effective administration of such an award.
RECIPIENT: Nurse Keith Harmon, VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System

Department of Veterans Affairs Physician of the Year Award: To be awarded annually at the Washington Conference to one outstanding physician in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), nominated and selected under such conditions as the Internal Affairs Commission should from time to time select as necessary and consistent with the effective administration of such an award.
RECIPIENT: Dr. Murray Altose, VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Brett P. Reistad, Virginia. Membership was strong with 2 million veterans in more than 13,000 posts throughout the nation and overseas. We recorded another year of rewarding service to America, her veterans, and their families.

The American Legion National Headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to the Indianapolis facilities, offices are maintained in Washington, DC, to house those organizational functions requiring a close working relationship with the Congress and the appropriate agencies of the federal government. The editorial and advertising staffs of *The American Legion Magazine* are located at The American Legion's Indianapolis Headquarters.

The National Commander's report is published herein as a part of the National Convention proceedings. Reports of the other national officers, the national commissions, financial statement with accompanying data, and a report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary are included.

Throughout the year, the two organizations continued to provide vital leadership to the nation and, through our activities and programs, contributed significantly to the preservation of the American way of life. We are proud of our accomplishments and look forward to the challenges ahead in the coming year.

Daniel S. Wheeler
National Adjutant

EXCERPTS FROM CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

ARTICLE II
Nature

Section 1. The American Legion is a civilian organization; membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service. Rank does not exist in the Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any convention or meeting of the Legion.

Section 2. The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

ARTICLE III
Organization

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
National Convention

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.

Section 6. The National Executive Committee shall provide a Uniform Code of Procedure for the orderly organization and operation of National Conventions with continuing power of revision, and said Code shall be applicable at all National Conventions unless it is amended, suspended, or repealed by a majority vote of the total authorized representation at a National Convention.

ARTICLE VI
National Officers

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 act only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive Committeeman and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive Committeeman and alternate shall commence immediately upon the adjournment of the National Convention next ensuing after their election and shall end at the adjournment of the second next succeeding annual National Convention.

Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective Departments, except that the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as chairman of the NationalConvention

Past National Commanders

Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
John P. Comer, Massachusetts
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Bruce Thiesen, California
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
Richard J. Santos, Maryland
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts
Martin F. 'Marty' Conatser, Illinois
Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
David K. Rehbein, Iowa
Clarence E. Hill, Florida
Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska
Fang A. Wong, New York
James E. Koutz, Indiana

Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia
Michael D. Helm, Kansas
Harold D. Barnett, Georgia
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon
Denise H. Rohan, Wisconsin

National Executive Committeemen

Willis Frazier, Alabama
Steven L. Huisman, Alaska
Judith S. Beischel, Arizona
Mary V. Erdman, Arkansas
Lawrence Van Kuran, California
Thomas J. Florez, Colorado
D. Joseph Jackson, Connecticut
Robert L. Michael, Delaware
George E. Roundtree, D.C.
Dennis R. Boland, Florida
James M. Settle, France
Charles F. Wessinger, Georgia
David R. Carlson, Hawaii
Robert L. Skinner, Idaho
Bernard A. Stegmueller, Illinois
Jerry L. Jordon, Indiana
Jerry D. Sebben, Iowa
David O. Warnken, Kansas
Joseph M. Flynn, Kentucky
Charles D. Aucoin, Louisiana
Lloyd H. Woods, Maine
Patricia A. McCoy, Maryland
Louis E. Brault, Jr., Massachusetts
Michael D. Wood, Mexico
Raymond W. Moore, Michigan
Marland A. Ronning, Minnesota
Robert E. Gosa, Mississippi
Kenneth J. Goth, Missouri
David A. Driver, Montana
William D. Crosier, Jr., Nebraska
Ronald L. Michalski, Nevada
William R. Roy, New Hampshire
Charles K. Robbins, New Jersey
Felix M. Trujillo, New Mexico
Edward Bertrand, New York
Jeff W. Joyner North Carolina
Robert L. Krause, North Dakota
Robert M. Klostermeier, Ohio
Timothy W. Smith, Oklahoma
Robert D. Liebenow, Oregon
Dennis C. Haas, Pennsylvania
Lawrence E. Wade, Philippines
Angel O. Narvaez Negron, Puerto Rico
Cory D. Bates, Rhode Island
Michael D. Strauss, South Carolina
James Huls, South Dakota
Don E. Mathis, Tennessee
C. W. Sparks, Jr., Texas
Terry D. Schow, Utah
Marlys A. Lemnah, Vermont
Michael F. Mitrione, Virginia
Ken C. Lee, Washington
William W. Kile, West Virginia
Robert L. Shappell Wisconsin
Terry E. Miller Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

Hardwick "Rico" Hall, Sr., Alabama
James L. Van Horn, Alaska
Andre James, Jr., Arizona
C. Jacob Greeling, Arkansas
Kenneth A. Kramlich, California
John W. Bowen, Colorado
Robert S. Murray, Connecticut
Jeffrey K. Crouser, Delaware
Carlton T Durham, D.C.
Arthur J. Schwabe, Florida
Hans J. Stockenberger, France
Phil Youngblood, Georgia
Marvin R. Siegfried, Hawaii
Ronald Derrick, Idaho
Tom Marciciak, Illinois
Edward J. Trice, Indiana
Dennis J. Soppe Iowa
Gaylord K. Sanneman, Kansas
William O. Moore, Jr., Kentucky
Rudolph A. Bourg, Sr., Louisiana
Randall G. Kluj, Maine
David J. Johnson, Maryland
James E. Brehio, Massachusetts
Jerry A. King, Mexico
John W. Knox, Michigan
William C. Barbknecht, Minnesota
Thomas K. Goodin, Missouri
Peter Hal Rice, Montana
Frederick C. Craigie, Nebraska
Jeanette R. Evans, Nevada
Kenneth B. Maynard, Jr., New Hampshire
Berley Hanna, Jr., New Jersey
Paul L. Espinoza, New Mexico
William R. Kearsing, Jr, New York

Patricia A. Harris, North Carolina
Dean Overby, North Dakot
Stephen M. Masowick, Ohio
Donald O. Kuntze, Oklahoma
Robert A. Millar, Oregon
E. Michael Stelacio, Pennsylvania
Stanley Gene Wylazlowski, Philippines
Isaac Rodriguez, Puerto Rico
David A. Williams, Rhode Island
Robert D. Scherer, South Carolina
Terry L. Hanson, South Dakota
Earl C. Watson, Tennessee
Kenneth W. Mueller Texas
Richard G. Fisher, Utah
Frederick E. Latour, Vermont
Linden B. Dixon, Jr., Virginia
Dale F. Davis, Washington
Frank Cooley, West Virginia
Dale H. Oatman, Wisconsin
Douglas Uhrig, Wyoming

EXCERPTS FROM BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
ARTICLE I
National Executive Committee
Commission, Committee, and Employees

Section 6. There shall be the following standing commissions: Americanism Commission, Convention Commission, Finance Commission, Internal Affairs Commission, Legislative Commission, Marketing Commission, Media & Communications Commission, National Security Commission, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, Veterans Employment & Education Commission.

The commissions shall consist of such number of members of The American Legion as the National Executive Committee may from time to time determine. Appointments to such commissions shall be made by the National Executive Committee upon nomination by the National Commander. The National Executive Committee is empowered to assign duties and responsibilities to all standing commissions and committees and to group standing committees with commissions for the purpose of efficient supervision and coordination of activities.

Section 7. 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 affairs of The American Legion, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James E. Pisa, Alaska

As the leading candidate for National Vice Commander for the Western Area, I met with the membership chairpersons and department Commanders from the western Area, at the annual membership meeting in early August 2018 in Indianapolis, IN. There we discussed our plans on how to increase the West membership. Many ideas were brought up from all the Departments. At that time, I made the Challenge to department Commanders, that if their department reached 100% membership, I would buy them a set of Converse Chuck Taylor sneakers. The color would be my choice. But they had to wear them in the National parade. The challenge was accepted by all commanders. Working with national membership Michele Steinmetz, western area liaison, we planned to hold monthly conference calls with all the department commanders and membership chairpersons.

I was elected to the position of National Vice Commander of The American Legion, Western Area at the 100th National convention in Minneapolis, MN on August 30, 2018. And so, the challenges and work of National Vice Commander.

One of my first duties as NVC was on September 10,2018 I attended the dedication ceremony on Joint Base Elmendof/Richardson for the new Fisher House II. This is a well needed facility for our veterans and families in need of medical care in the Anchorage area.

On September 11th, I attended the 9-11 ceremony held at Susitna Valley Post 35 in Wasilla, AK. In attendance were the firefighters from the Mat-Su Fire Department honoring their fallen brothers and sisters who gave it their all on that Faithful day. Also present was Legionnaire Matt Larson form Susitna Valley Post 35 who's brother died when the twin towers went down. Fire Chief Bill Kay spoke honoring all fallen firefighters.

In late September and early October, I served on the Honor Guard at two military funerals for local veterans. Presented flag to both families. I then attended the Fall NEC meetings in Indianapolis. From there back to Alaska to attend their annual fall conference, held at Susitna Valley Post 35 in Wasilla.

October 26th, 2018, I attended the Department of Montana Fall conference in Helena MT. During the conference we discussed membership and reported on the NEC fall meeting held in Indianapolis. We visited the local National Guard Base and visited with the troops. Discussed membership and what The American Legion can do for them.

Early November I attended the Department of Arizona Fall Conference in Tucson. I attended several committee meetings including the Sons of the American Legion. Attended their 100th Anniversary committee meeting. They discussed the plans from all the districts and posts on the 100th anniversary.

November saw several of the departments reach the 65% membership mark, that included Nevada, Hawaii, Wyoming, Utah, Montana Alaska, Idaho. During this period the western area chartered two new post.

December had visitations to the Department of New Mexico. The American Legion Riders escort from the airport to the Conference was well received. Attended their annual Pearl Harbor Day ceremony. Met with the VA director Mr. Andrew Welch. Received a briefing on the Spinal Cord Trauma Center. Outstanding VA facility in Albuquerque, NM. Held a Post revalidation membership day at Post 99. Over 20 legionnaires were present and many Buddy Check and membership phone calls were made. Overall 50 members were transferred from the department holding post to active post in their area. Bill Jennings, the membership chairman did an excellent job of coordinating this activity. Visited several posts in the Albuquerque area for a meet and greet with the membership. Thanks to the following Posts. Post72, Post118, Post69, Post 100, Post13 for their hospitality.

With the start of the 2019 year, we were off to the department of Oregon for their conference and membership meeting. On January 5th we held a post revalidation and buddy check calls to our members. Overall it was a successful day in transferring members to active post and checking up on members. Visited several posts in the local area for membership. Visited the new veteran's home and talked to the veterans and staff. A very well-run Veterans Home.

January 10th took us to the Department of Idaho for their Mid-Winter Conference in Boise. Attended several committee meetings with the focus on membership. Very well attended meetings. Attended the Commander's Banquet and Fun Night that evening with Department Commander Abe Abrahamson. Spoke on Membership and issues on going in The American Legion. Met with several Retired Coast Guard Shipmates.

On January 19, Made a trip to Joseph T Craig Post 3 in Ketchikan, Alaska with Department Commander Nate Carter to present Alaska Legionnaire of the Year award to Hunter Davis.

January 24 – 27 arrived in Denver Colorado for their Mid-Winter Conference in Greely, CO. NEC Tom Florez and Leading Candidate for National Commander Bill Oxford. After opening ceremonies, the following morning, attended several committee meetings. Met with Membership Chairman Dean Noechel to discuss Colorado membership strategy. Attended the Commander's Banquet. Spoke on the Legion Membership and Centennial 100-year plans.

The month of February had me travel to the Department of Nevada held in Reno. Attended the department Oratorical contest. Five (5) students from around the state spoke on the Constitution. Presented awards to the winners. Attend opening ceremonies and

spoke more on membership and the 100-year centennial. Attended several meetings on Boys State and American Legion baseball.

February 14-21, I returned to the Department of Colorado for a for a 6-day road trip around the state to visit many posts for award presentations, post revitalization and over all camaraderie. On 15 February the membership road team visited the following Posts, 178, and 161. We spoke on the post revitalizations, buddy checks and how important their membership is not only to the post but for the veteran voice in Washington, DC. February 16 had us attending a District commander meeting at Department HQ. With Membership Chairman Dean taking the lead on the meeting and presenting his plans for membership. It was well received, and enthusiasm was high. That evening visited Post 1 for dinner and speeches. Reunited with many friends. On February 17, we headed to Colorado Springs to Post 209 for post revitalization, buddy check phone calls and district meetings. Great discussions and ideas were presented. Departed for a visit to Post 38 for dinner and camaraderie with legionnaires and families. On 18 February, we Headed for Rockford and visitations with Posts 2-8 and 9. Open roundtable was presented with many questions concerning VA issues, membership, buddy checks and National Legion questions. Awesome time. Visited the Hall of Hero's (Medal of Honor Recipients) in Pueblo. Back to Post 2 for dinner and an open roundtable question and answer period. February 19 visitations at Cripple Creek Post 171, Manitou Springs Post 39 and Woodland Parks Post 39. February 20 Visited the following Posts. Broomfield Post 58, Fort Collins Post 4, Estes Park Post 119 and Longmont Post 32. Presented new Post Charter to Wellington Post. Open roundtable with VA&R Chairman Ralph Bozella and Legionnaires.

February 21 had us depart the Department of Colorado for the Winter Conference in Washington, DC. Attended several Commission meetings and Commanders Call. Visited the Alaska Congressional Leaders, senators Murkowski, Sullivan and Congressman Don Young to discuss The American Legion's concerns on Veterans issues with the VA as well as the new Legion Act. Very well received by our leaders.

After the Washington DC, we arrived in Spokane Washington with NEC Ken Lee. We visited several Posts for the purpose of Post revitalization, Buddy Checks and membership. Visited several Post

March 8-11 took us to the Department of California Conference in Santa Maria, CA. Adjutant Paul Brown met Candidate for National Commander Paul Dillard and Jim Pisa, NVC and transported us to the conference. Over 30 District Commanders were present with reports of their districts. California leadership was enthusiastic with California on track to reach 100% membership.

March 15-18 brought us to Department of Utah for their spring conference in Salt Lake City. Once again attended several meeting including Boys State, Boy Scouts and Legion Baseball. All meetings were well attended. Great discussion on Boy Scout program and how the Church of LDS will not support the program and how this will affect the American Legion Post.

April 3-7, Attended the Annual U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association convention in Washington, DC. Meet with many of the Senior Enlisted leadership on how The American Legion was helpful to the Coast Guard during the government shutdown when they USCG didn't get paid. They were very Thankful for our assistance during this timeframe.

April 25-28 attended the Department of Alaska Convention in Anchorage Alaska. National commander Brett Reistad was in attendance. Candidate for National commander Paul Dillard was in attendance. Attended several meetings and banquets. Swore in the Newly Elected Commander Art Bell and other elected officers. PNC Jimmie Foster was also in attendance.

May 4-9 attended the Spring meetings in Indianapolis, IN. Attended several meetings and the NEC meeting where approximately 30 resolutions were passed.

May 19-22, I attended the U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduation and awards ceremonies. Presented The American Legion Award to Ensign Helen Oh for here

Championship Rife Shooting and her goal of being on the US Olympic team. Met with superintendent of the academy and athletic director. Graduation Ceremony was very impressive.

June 19-23 attended the Department of Wyoming Convention. Had the honor of swearing in the newly elected Department Commander Mike Cooke and his newly elected officers. I then presented outgoing Department Commander Richard Dansereau his pair of PINK Converse Chuck Taylor sneakers for the department of Wyoming reaching the 10% membership mark.

July 18-21 attended the Department of Washington Convention in Spokane, WA. Once again attend several meetings with fellow legionnaires. Attended the Departments Spirit of Service award. Presented to Local Active duty members for their outstanding service to the community. Swore in newly elected Officers.

With the National Convention in Indianapolis and my term as National Vice Commander coming to an end. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve this great organization. The highlight of my year was the Western Regions outstanding year on membership. Out of the 15 departments in the west 8 reached the 100% membership goal. Congratulations to the following departments. Philippines. Hawaii, Mexico, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Alaska and California. Each department Commander has earned the award of Converse Chuck Taylor PINK sneakers for achieving 100% membership. They will be worn in the Nation Parade.

Once again it has been an honor to serve with National Commander Brett Reistad and my fellow National Vice Commanders. For God and Country.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
John F. 'Jack' Milburn, Maryland

My year began on August 30, 2018 in Minneapolis, MN; when I was elected National Vice Commander for The American Legion. October began with the Annual Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, IN. In addition to the meetings I attended the National Commander's banquet honoring members of the National Executive Committee. Meetings proved to be interesting and informative. My first assignment was to attend the dedication of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus , OH. I arrived on Oct. 26th and on the following day I was invited to a Pre-Dedication Reception and tour of the Museum. The dedication followed, The whole day was outstanding.

December, Peg and I were able to attend a revitalization in Tennessee from the 14th to the 16th. I was fortunate to be able visit with patients at the Alvin C. York, V.A. Medical Center. We worked our way from the eastern part of the state to the central part, we visited posts in 6 Districts. While visiting posts we made numerous calls inviting former and delinquent members to re-up. We ended our stay in Nashville having dinner with the Commander, Adjutant and Adjutant's wife and then The Ryman.

In January, from the 11th to the 13th, we were in Little Rock Arkansas, for their Mid-Winter where I addressed the Legion Family. It gave me my first of many chances, to lead the attendees in "WE ARE - TEAM 100". From the 24th to the 27th we were in Texas for their Mid-Winter. I attended several of their committee meetings on Friday and Saturday and brought greetings.

February proved to be a busy month. I started out in Montgomery Alabama from the 7th to the 10th. First day I was able to visit some historic sites, such as Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Spent the rest of the stay in Milbrook at Post 133 doing revitalizations, helping transfer over 140 members into active posts. On the final day along, with the Riders of Post 133, we delivered a wheelchair to the local Harley dealership for the Truck-in for Troops Program. March 15th took me to the Maryland State House to help accept, Proclamations and Citations from the Governor and State Senate recognizing The American Legion's 100th Anniversary. On the 22nd I attended the Northern Central District of Maryland membership Rally, where Posts, Units and Squadrons are honored for their

membership achievements. The following day we were off to the Department of D.C. for the National Commander's Luncheon at the Navy Yard. From there it was off to D.C. for the Washington Conference and National Commander's Testimony.

March, was just about as busy. I started out in Portsmouth Virginia where I attended their Spring Meetings from the 1st to the 3rd. I was able to address the Legion Family, as well as attend a luncheon for the National President and a Dinner for the National Commander. From the 22nd to the 24th Peg and I attended the National Commander's Banquet and breakfast at Post 128 in Aberdeen Maryland. on the 23rd I attended a breakfast in his honor at Post 55 in Bel Air. From there we took him to Perry Point V.A. Medical Center for a tour of the facility and lunch. Sunday evening had us at Towson Post 22 for their Centennial Banquet. Peg and I finished off March by going to Florida. We visited 14 posts from Pensacola to Tallahassee. One was just remnants due to the storms last year, but they're still alive and active. Ending up in Tallahassee we visited the V.A. Clinic. Then on to the V.A. Cemetery for a program on the Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemoration; where I was able to speak on the subject.

For April, I started out in Charlotte North Carolina from the 4th to the 7th. I participated in their Pony Express and public relations drive held by the Legion Riders of North Carolina. It spanned two days, we started out in Shelby then on to headquarters in Raleigh. Along the way we visited 11 posts in several Districts picking up memberships. All the posts were very gracious. When arriving in Raleigh I was able to attend a memorial service at the Vietnam Memorial. Oklahoma City Oklahoma was the final stop for Peg and I in April, from the 18th to the 21st. First stop was in Elgin where I visited the Fort Sill National Cemetery. From there it was on to Fletcher to visit the Commander's Post 308. The following morning we went to Weatherford to visit the Stafford Air and Space Museum, named after Astronaut Thomas Stafford. Saturday I was taken to Guthrie to participate in their annual 89er Day Parade. Prior to the parade I attended a reception hosted by a local bank. It was a great day from start to finish.

May began with the Annual Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, IN. Interesting time with numerous resolutions passed. It ended with the Department of South Carolina's annual convention held in Columbia. Due to my schedule, it was a brief visit, but very informative and I was able to address the Legion and Auxiliary delegations.

June proved to be very busy. It started out in Washington, DC, on the 1st where I spoke at their convention luncheon. From the 6th to the 9th I attended the Louisiana's state convention where I was able to address the Legion and Auxiliary delegations. On the 14th I was at the Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY to make a presentation on behalf of The American Legion. Immediately following I was off to Alabama for their annual convention where I addressed the delegation and installed the new officers and executive committee. I addressed The League of Families at their 50th annual meeting on the 20th in Crystal City, VA. On the 23rd I attended the Detachment of Maryland's annual convention and installed their new Detachment Commander. June 27th to the 30th I was In Valdosta, GA to attend their annual convention and addressed both the Legion and Auxiliary delegations. Concluded the visit by attending their convention banquet which honored the retiring leaders of The Legion Family.

From July 16th to the 19th I attended the annual convention of the Department of Maryland as well as their Legion College. I was able to address the Legion delegation. I attended The Department of Maryland baseball tournament from July 29th to August 2nd and was honored to throw out the first pitch.

I will attend the National Convention, arriving in Indianapolis on the 23rd attending several peripheral activities prior to the convention's start. I will attend the convention from the 27th to the 29th, and this will conclude my term of office.

During the year I made numerous phone calls to District Commanders and organizers of new posts in my region; congratulating and thanking them for creating a new post in their area. I also conducted conference calls with the Departments of the Southeast Region to discuss any pertinent info at that time and ways of working membership. To stay in tune

with what was going on Nationally I participated in several conference calls with my fellow Vice Commanders discussing many topics along with membership.

It has been a distinct honor to represent National Commander Reistad and the National Organization at these activities throughout the year.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Paul I. Spedaliere, Connecticut

In early August 2019 the five incoming National Vice Commanders (NVCs) and National Commander attended National Officers Orientation in Indianapolis and Washington DC, learning what to expect in our upcoming year and the functions of each division in the organization. Later in August at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis I was elected National Vice Commander for the Centennial Year of our great organization. My wife Sandra, did an outstanding job delivering my nomination speech, she made me very proud of her! Sandra received many compliments on her delivery of the speech.

My duties as NVC outside of being the representative for the National Commander in his absence, was to assist my 11 assigned Northeast Region Departments consisting of: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and France with their annual membership goal. Our goal this year was to stop the slide in membership. In addition, work on renewing current members and then to focus on their expired members.

My wife Sandra, also a retired Navy Chief and Past Post Commander served as my official Aide to accompany me on my many visitations. In her absence Legionnaires Richard Linnon, Michael Kellett and Charlie Burke accompanied me. I visited 11 of 11 Northeast Region Departments, 10 personally, and France via Skype. My travels around the Northeast Region were via my personal vehicle logging over 6,512 miles.

During September I traveled around my home state of Connecticut attending district meetings and installing the officers of Post 75 Middletown and Post 66 Clinton. Upon returning from the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis in October, I then went on to the Department of Vermont for my first official visit. While in Vermont my mission was to address the membership, along with PNC Marty Conaster at their Fall Conference and get the department motivated.

In late October, I had the privilege to get involved with and experience the workings of a System-Worth-Saving at VA Medical Center in Leeds, MA. Along with the Department Leadership of Massachusetts and the National VA&R Commission members Patrick Rouke and Edwin Thomas. It was quite remarkable on the positive reactions by the Department Heads at responding to the questions asked by the team. Visited the Department of Delaware to participate in a District Revitalization for Kent County held at Post 7 Harrington. I looked up phone numbers on whitepages.com, while the department officers made phone contact with members to transfer from the department holding post to a local post, including gaining back some expired members. Over seventy-two members transferred and/or renewed. Two veterans inquired about VA benefits from the Service Officer. Also, assisted the American Legion Family of Harrington Post 7 pass out Halloween Treats to the students of the elementary school, while the Harrington Police Officer Corporal Carl conducted Halloween Safety instruction.

November, after attending the Department of Connecticut's 100th Anniversary Gala, held at the Aqua Turf in Southington, which was superbly done! Sandra and I visited the Department of New York to participate in the NYC Veterans Day Parade, I would recommend if ever given the opportunity to attend this parade to do so. My official visit to my home Department of Connecticut, I participated in a membership event VETS ROCK at Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville. This is where all veterans' organizations and organizations that want to help veterans are under one roof at the same time for veterans to come and get any type of assistance.

Visited the Department of Massachusetts, attending their Membership and DEC meetings along with speaking at Department Commander Fred White's Testimonial Dinner held in Marlborough.

Ended November by visiting the Department of Rhode Island, touring USCG Station Castle Hill, Post 2 West Warwick and their war memorials. The evening included a reception at the Department Commander's home post, Post 85 Fairmount, and then served as guest speaker at Department Commander David Malone's Testimonial dinner held in Smithfield.

December visited the Department of New Jersey for a speaking part in the Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony in Toms River, a tour of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, highlighted by a visit to the crash site of the Hindenburg with a presentation by a local historian of the events that led to the crash, tour of Hangar 1 and museum. Visited Post 348 Brick, NJ, which was devastated by Superstorm Sandy, they fully recovered and repaid the $500,000 repair mortgage. Attended the Great County of Ocean Christmas party at Post 232 Barnegat, NJ. On the final day, attended the Department of New Jersey's DEC meeting in Trenton. Prior to their DEC meeting, the various Committees and Commissions met, then regrouped and reported at the DEC meeting. I had the opportunity to speak at each meeting and addressed the DEC meeting, where later I was presented with a beautiful gift of a US Navy emblem blanket.

Connecticut Department Service Officer K. Robert Lewis, Richard Linnon and I presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Parker Street Used Auto Parts of Manchester for their donation of rear seat headrests for the Veteran Service Office Van. Participated in a Wreathes Across America ceremony at my home post.

Represented the National Organization along with national Americanism Chairman Richard Anderson attending PNVC and Past National Americanism Chairman Joseph Caouette's Calling Hours & Funeral in Dover, NH.

January, Sandra and I attended the Department of New Hampshire's Mid-Winter Conference held at Post 7 Rochester. At the joint opening with the AL Auxiliary, I spoke before the delegation about the latest happenings in the American Legion and membership. In route to New Hampshire, national assigned me to stop at US Coast Guard Station Boston to present TFA checks to 6 Coastguardsmen along with national media representative Schelly Stone. I would like to convey the great appreciation that was received. This was a spot-on idea that National Commander Reistad did for the Coastguardsmen and our Organization.

February allowed me to travel mostly within our department. Attended Four Chaplain's Ceremonies, one at Post 104 Taftville and another at Post 154 Thompsonville. Accompanied members from Post 107 Hoboken New Jersey to visit Connecticut Post 15 Jewett City's 18 Veterans Housing apartments, inquired about lessons learned from them, as they were in the process in Hoboken in building a new post home with 6 apartments for transitioning homeless veterans.

My wife Sandra accompanied me at the Washington Conference. It was great to see personally that the American Legion has a great relationship with our Legislators. During the National Commander's testimony, each Senator and Representative reiterated the strength and influence that The American Legion Family has on legislation. We speak about it at post and district meetings but to hear from our legislators speaks volumes.

The month of March was exciting with all the centennial celebrations. Over 30 legionnaires plus legislators gathered at the State Capitol for the General Assembly to recognize the Department of Connecticut and the National Organization with Citations recognizing the 100th Birthday of the American Legion. Post 210 New Haven signed their permanent Charter as our centennial post and we finished our birthday weekend with the American Legion Family Bowling Tournament.

Early in the month of March, I visited the Department of New Hampshire for a District Revitalization, along with the membership team from National Kevin Mook and Nick

Arnett, in Merrimack, NH. Accompanying me on this trip was ADSO Richard Linnon where he was able to assist a couple veterans with claims.

At the end of March, I had the honor of attending American Legion Weekend at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY along with Charlie Burke of Post 76 North Haven. Featuring Hall of Famer and American Legion Baseball alumnus Lee Smith, he spoke on how AL baseball shaped his professional career playing for the St. Louis Cardinals and Chicago Cubs.

April, Department of Connecticut Commander Tom Flowers and I had the honor of participating in recognizing a 105-year-old, WWII Merchant Marine and 69 continuous year legionnaire Jesse Solafia of Post 75 Middletown with certificates and accolades from the state and national organization. I also had the honor of being a guest speaker at the Town of Somers celebration of the American Legion's Centennial along with our department officers.

Visited the Department of Pennsylvania for their DEC Meeting and Department Commander Jim Vollrath's Testimonial held in Harrisburg, where I served as guest speaker at both events, accompanying me on this trip was Connecticut's 3rd District Commander Mike Kellett. I learned that the department has a Housing for Homeless Veterans Corporation. The corporation owns properties, 4 in Pittsburg, 1 in Ephrata, 1 in Philadelphia and 1 in Harrisburg, these homes help homeless veterans' transition back into society. The corporation raises its own funds to operate these homes and provide grants to veterans in need.

Sandra and I visited the Department of New Jersey to attend and serve as guest speaker at Department Commander Ray Miller's Testimonial Dinner held in Toms River.

Attended a USO Show at the New Hampshire Veterans Home in Tilton. Members of Lebanon, NH Post 22 practice songs and skits to then perform their show at their post home as a fundraiser. Every Easter weekend, they perform for the veterans' home residents and donate from their proceeds to the veterans' home recreation department and to the USO. I served as guest speaker at Department of Connecticut Commander Tom Flowers testimonial dinner held in Berlin.

May started with a visit to the Department of Maine to attend Commander Scott Paradis's testimonial held in Augusta. Sandra and I were given a tour of the Department's American Legion Family Compound in Winslow. On the compound is the main headquarters building, Auxiliary and SAL headquarters building, along with Legion Riders, and a general meeting/training room building where they conduct their DEC meetings and Legion Family College. You could feel the sense of pride exhibited by the members present and it made you feel like you wanted to be a part of the Department of Maine. Attended Department of New Hampshire Commander Emil Ouellette's testimonial dinner at Post 51 Epping.

Memorial Day week was the pinnacle of my duty as NVC. Starting with my visit to the Military Academy at West Point to present the American Legion Award, established in 1935, a silver pitcher to Cadet Jesse Palmer of Plaino, TX for outstanding achievement in Chemistry. The next day attended the Graduation Review Parade, what an outstanding display of field pageantry. Returning home to Lebanon Connecticut, I had the honor of being the guest speaker at my home town Memorial Day Parade Ceremony.

On Memorial Day, I had the honor of representing National Commander Brett Reistad and the National Organization in laying the American Legion Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington. Accompanying me to lay the wreath was my wife Sandra, National Security Director Rhonda Powell, and our daughter Laura who served as my historian.

The month of June attended the Department of New York's Legion Family College held in Morrisville. Their structured curriculum contains 13 courses from ALA to VA&R training, with class sizes of 10-15 legion family mixed. Attended the Department of Massachusetts Convention held in Plymouth, I had the honor of being the guest speaker.

Visited the Department of Massachusetts participated in Bunker Hill Days, along with National Commander Brett Reistad. The morning started with a breakfast at the Knights of Columbus honoring a local First Responder Charlie McGonagle followed by a parade through town past the Bunker Hill Monument.

The month of July attended the Massing of the Colors on July 4th at the Connecticut State Capitol, I had the honor of being keynote speaker for our 243rd Independence Day Celebration.

I had the honor of being a guest speaker at the ribbon cutting for the reopening of Post 107 Hoboken, NJ. They lost their post home during Superstorm Sandy and rebuilt it, ground up, to include 6 apartments for transitioning homeless veterans, like Post 15 Jewett City.

Sandra and I attended the Department Convention for Rhode Island in Warwick, Connecticut in Trumbull and New York in Buffalo where I had the honor of being guest speaker at each.

August attended the first day of games at American Legion Baseball Northeast Regionals in Worcester Massachusetts and later in the week attended the Northeast Junior Regionals. Also participated in the VJ Day Parade held in Moosup Connecticut along with Sons of the American Legion National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs.

In closing, I have enjoyed serving as National Vice Commander during our Centennial Year, it has been a humbling experience and the hospitality shown to me and those that accompanied me by the departments have been top-notch. I would also like to express my thanks to the staff of our National Organization for their timely assistance in all matters pertaining from travel, expenditures and the many administrative facets associated with the position. Thank you and We are TEAM 100!!

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Steve Sweet, Mississippi

Beginning with my election, August 2018, I began my visits to my eight departments; Mississippi, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota.

Throughout my travels I found that regardless the size of the membership or the size of the towns or cities The American Legion is very involved in these communities. The support that each gives to the other makes for some surprising developments, working and together they support their veterans and that helps them both and brings the community together.

It didn't matter which state I was visiting, it was clear that patriotism is alive and well. The members were proud of their post and the work they were doing both in The American Legion family and the support of their communities. When I arrived at the different post I was greeted and next was a tour of their post and an explanation of the various pictures and awards they had received.

I also had an opportunity to attend and mark the anniversary of the Saint Louis caucus where the original members gathered to form The American Legion. We stayed at The Missouri Athletic Club which was the same place the founders stayed during their time in Saint Louis. The building where they met no longer stands, but the present bank building has a plaque on its wall that honors this site.

I have visited museums in small towns that are true treasures of the American spirit. Some of these are only known to locals and that is a shame. The towns where some of these museums are located were off the beaten path, but had so much to offer. Some have WW I articles that I haven't seen in the larger museums around the country. These are true treasures and I learned more than I educated.

Some of the post have suffered due to declining membership, but they are still out there working to try to support their veterans and their families. I know that they will continue to the last man to work and support their post, community, city, state and nation.

On July 29th I left to ride to Pharr, Texas to join up with other American Legion Riders to ride Highway 281, The American Legion highway that runs from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. I led the southern group and we met the northern group in Great Bend, Kansas after a three day ride. All along the way we met with members of Centennial post to thank them for their commitment to their veterans and community. Not only were we visiting with veterans, but the community turned out to welcome us and I believe we were great ambassadors for The American Legion.

On August 15, I will ride to Lady Lake, Florida where on August 18; our American Legion Legacy Scholarship ride will begin. Our five day ride will take us through; Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky and finally end up in Indianapolis, Indiana for our national convention.

Our Legacy Ride raises money along the way to provide scholarships for dependents of military veterans killed since 9/11 or veterans rated 50% or greater disable. This is our 14 year and we have assisted many young people with an opportunity to attend college.

At the conclusion of our convention I will complete my year as National Vice-Commander . This has been a busy but rewarding experience for me. I look forward to returning to my Department of Mississippi and continuing my work for The American Legion.. For God and Country,

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James E. 'Jim' Wallace, Michigan

While attending the May 2018 Spring Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, I was interviewed by representatives of the American Legion National organization for the position of National Vice Commander. In attendance from Michigan was PDC Al Ford and NEC Ray Moore .

I attended orientation for the position of National Vice Commander August 4-11, 2019 at Indianapolis Headquarters and August 11-14, 2019 at Washington, D.C. headquarters.

It was my pleasure and honor to have been nominated and elected by my peers to the high office of National Vice Commander of the Central Region on August 30, 2018 at the 100th Anniversary American Legion National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota to serve with National Commander Brett Resitad. The following is a synopsis of the activities accomplished by me throughout the regional and national organization from August 30, 2018 to August 29, 2019.

August 2018:

August 30, 2018 - Elected National Vice Commander, Central Region, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

August 31, 2018 – Returned home to review items presented for the next year's upcoming activities and prepare for the National Commanders visit to the Michigan Veterans Retreat – Wilwin at Cignet Cove.

September 2018:

September 2, 2018 – Meet with National Commander Brett Reistad at the Michigan Veterans Retreat, Wilwin at Cignet Cove, Custer, Michigan. Toured the facility and grounds with the National Commander, State Commander, Adjutant and several Michigan members. Discussed and reviewed the National Commanders plan and direction for the coming year.

September 9, 2018 – Spoke at the Department of Michigan's 6th District meeting in Howell, MI and installed District Officers.

Arraigned visit requests from Departments within the Region by date and time. Prepared travel needs and specific speech materials.

September 20-23, 2018 – Attended the Department of Michigan's Fall Conference in Flint, MI as my official visit, to encourage the Department's legionnaires to participate in all activities that will assist veterans and their families and to deliver the new membership ideas and programs developed by National Commander Reistad.

September 26, 2018 – Set-up a Regional conference call for 10-2-18 @ 1400 hrs. Made a call to the Department of Wisconsin to congratulate them on being #1, as of 9-25-18, in overall national membership. Called Chad Woodburn of the Department of Illinois to discuss membership.

October 2018:

October 1, 2018 – Prepared for the first Regional Conference Call on 10-2-18,

October 2, 2018 – Conference Call @ 1400 hrs. with the Central Region Departments, with the exception of Wisconsin and Kentucky. Discussed membership, Team 100 activities, CPR's, political gatherings without legion emblem apparel on, and National's Fall Meeting. Each Department presented ideas and discussed potential programs to increase membership and attendance to programs.

October 3, 2018 – Sent out thank you notes to Michigan Governor Richard Snyder, Senator Joe Hune, Representative's Lana Theis and Hank Vaupel for the receipt of a special tribute from the State of Michigan for being elected to the position of National Vice Commander of the American Legion National organization for 2018-2019.

I sent out thank you notes to Department of Michigan's Commander Steve Striggow, Adjutant Ron Runyan and NEC Ray Moore for the invitation and hospitality shown to my wife, Linda, and me during their Fall Conference 9-20 to 9-23-18.

October 5, 2018 – Contacted the Department of Wisconsin regarding their fall conference from 11-8 to 11-12-18. Prepared and processed plans for the Department of West Virginia's Mid-Winter February 8-10, 2018.

October 13-18-2018 – Attended the National Fall Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. Had a breakfast meeting with the Central Region Department and discussed membership and program ideas. Talked with Department Adjutants throughout the conference.

October 26-28, 2018 – Attended the Department of Kentucky's Fall Conference as a non-official request and spoke on membership activities and programs. Addressed the Sons of the American Legion.

October 31, 2018 – Wrote out thank you notes to Kentucky Commander Michael Moses, Adjutant Larry Abshire and NEC Joe Flynn for the hospitality and invitation to attend their Fall Conference.

November 2018:

November 5, 2018 – Called NEC Bob Shappell of Wisconsin regarding plans for the Wisconsin trip. Worked on speech for Wisconsin, flight plans, arraignments and itinerary.

November 6, 2018 – worked on Wisconsin speech. Contacted Matt Herndon regarding Regional Conference Call.

November 8-12, 2018 – Visit with Department of Wisconsin for non-official membership visit to various post and community events during Veterans Day activities. Attended a "Host a Hero" luncheon at Concordia University, participated in a Veterans Day program at Port Washington High School, participated in a membership rally and the Milwaukee Veterans Day Parade and ceremony at the memorial.

November 14, 2018 – Check in for Illinois plane trip. Contacted Mike Schultz of Dept. of KY membership chair for 65% membership. Left message for Indiana Adj. John Crosby regarding membership.

November 15-18, 2018 – Visited Department of Illinois for official visit at the 82nd Annual Haven Jamboree veterans retreat and attended an open house steak fry and plaque dedication. Visited the Marion VA Hospital and spoke with veterans.

November 26, 2018 – Contacted Audra Leavy of Department of Indiana regarding Mid-Winter conference January 11-13, 2019 and left message with Adjutant John Crosby regrading membership. Left a message with Department of Ohio Adjutant Suzette Heller regarding Mid-Winter Conference January 25-27, 2019. Made plane reservations for Department of Wisconsin Mid-Winter conference January 17-20, 2019 with Joyce Hamilton.

November 30, 2018 – Telephone conversation with Indiana Adjutant John Crosby regarding membership and mid-winter conference January 11-13, 2019. Discussed Indiana districts 1, 9 and 10 regarding membership.

December 2018:

December 1, 2018 – I left a message with Indiana 9th District Commander Jerry Melton. Talked with 1st District Commander Kevin Urbanczyk regarding membership, new incentives and Mid-Winter meeting.

December 3, 2018 – Wrote thank you notes to Wisconsin and Illinois officers. Talked with Indiana 9th District Commander Jerry Melton regarding membership, programs, problem with a Post and baseball program. He stated they did a district drive around over the weekend and received 100 legion, 120 SAL and 100 Aux. members.

December 6, 2018 – Wrote Christmas cards to all Central States Commanders, Adjutants, NEC's and other legionnaires.

December 11, 2018 - Prepared for Central Region conference call. Confirmed Department of Kentucky visit with Jennifer Norton for June 20-23, 2019.

Commenced Central Region conference call at 1400 hrs. with Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and Michigan regarding membership, programs to encourage membership and incentives. All States gave a discussion on what they are working on and shared information with each other.

December 20, 2018 – National Vice Commanders Conference Call with Matt Herndon regarding activities and new ideas, D.C. trip, membership and programs.

December 27, 2018 – Talked with Ohio Adjutant Suzette Heller regarding Mid-Winter Meeting January 25-27, 2019 regarding agenda, hotel arrangement, meeting schedules and activities.

December 28, 2018 – Left message with Joyce Hamilton regarding TSA Pre Check for flight scheduling.

January 2019:

January 3, 2019 – Talked with Mary Rooney regarding the Washington D.C. trip. Called Adjutant Miles Eply of West Virginia regarding Mid-Winter meeting February 8-10, 2019, will mail agenda. Phone message to Indiana NEC Jerry Jordan regarding Mid-Winter January 11-13, 2019. Talked with Department of Illinois 11th District Commander John Reece regarding new Post #2011 and Commander Bob Boehm of new Post #2011.

January 5, 2019 – Left message for Indiana Commander Rodney Strong regarding Mid-Winter Meeting January 11-13, 2019 regarding needs, ideas and agenda.

January 7, 2019 – Talked with Indiana NEC Jerry Jordan regarding Mid-Winter Meeting.

January 8, 2019 – Held Central Region conference call.

January 10-13, 2019 – attended Department of Indiana's Mid-Winter Conference

January 16, 2019 – Contacted Doug Chace, National HQ, regarding mylegion.org and trips for membership. Called Illinois 11th District Commander John Reece regarding new Post #1944 and Post #1944 Commander Granholm to discuss activities, needs and availability for additional information. Prepared for trip to Wisconsin.

January 17-20, 2019 – Traveled to Madison, Wisconsin for Mid-Winter Conference.

January 21, 2019 - Reviewed Wisconsin activities and prepared Wisconsin Expense Report.

January 22, 2019 – Conference Call with National Vice Commanders and Matt Herndon regarding trips, visits and new incentives. Wrote a greeting for the West Virginia Mid-Winter Conference booklet. Prepared for Department of Ohio Mid-Winter Conference.

January 23, 2019 – Discussed with Indiana Tim Sporals his request for the membership ride around in April. Prepared for the Ohio Conference. Called National HQ regarding D.C. trip. Called Michigan Executive Secretary Kim Siedelberg for dates and activities for Mid-winter Conference.

January 24, 2019 – Final Preparation for Ohio Mid-Winter Conference.

January 25-27, 2019 – Department of Ohio Mid-Winter Conference.

January 28, 2019 – Contacted Ohio Adjutant Heller regrading donations received at meeting. Contacted Jennifer regarding adding events in Michigan to NVC calendar. Contacted Doug Chace regarding who to send donations from Ohio to. Worked on Legion paperwork

January 29, 2019 – Wrote thank you note to Department of Ohio's Commander, Adjutant, NEC and A/NEC. Reviewed membership reports and messages.

January 31, 2019 – Worked on Americanism speech for 2/2/19.

February 2019:

February 1, 2019 – worked on speech for 2/2/19. Sent out invites for Scouts BSA Troop 310 (Girls inauguration on 2/18/19).

February 2, 2019 – Gave Americanism Banquet speech at Stitt Post 232, Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

February 4, 2019 – preparing for West Virginia Mid-Winter Conference 2/8-10/19.

February 6, 2019 – Conference Call for Highway 281 Legacy Ride for National's 100th Birthday. Judging for the Department of Michigan's 6th District oratorical contest at Swartz Creek Post 294.

February 7, 2019 – Preparing for the Department of West Virginia Mid-Winter conference.

February 8-10, 2019 – Attended Department of West Virginia's Mid-Winter conference.

February 11, 2019 – Wrote thank you note to Tim Hicks of West Virginia. Prepared for Department of Michigan's Mid-Winter conference 2/15-17/19.

February 13, 2019 – Wrote thank you notes to Department of West Virginia's Commander, Adjutant and NEC. Prepared for Department of Michigan's conference.

February 14, 2019 – Conference Call for Highway 281 Legacy Ride at 1100 hrs. Final Preparations for Department of Michigan Mid-Winter Conference.

February 15-17, 2019 – Department of Michigan Mid-Winter Conference key note speaker at the banquet.

February 18, 2019 – Presented Certificate and spoke to the New Michigan Scouts BSA Troop 310 (Girls) at Pinckney Post #419.

February 19. 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100 hrs. Central Region Conference Call at 1400 hrs. Prepare for D.C. trip

February 20, 2019 – National Vice Commander's Conference Call at 1400 hrs.

February 21, 2019 – Call with Bob Sussan regarding Highway 281 Legacy Ride. Prepare for D.C. trip.

February 22, 2019 – Packing and planning for D.C. Trip.

February 23-27 2019 – Washington D.C. Legislative Conference.

March 2019:

March 2, 2019 – Presented speech at the Port Huron Charles Hammond Post 8 for their 100th birthday party.

March 4, 2019 – Talked with Jim Davis of Department of West Virginia regarding visit to West Virginia Boys State June 8-13, 2019. Sent e-mail to Jennifer regarding West Virginia Boys State visit.

March 5, 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100 hrs.

March 6, 2019 – Talked with Indiana 7th District Commander Ken Pridemore regarding new post #1919.

March 12, 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100 hrs.

March 14, 2019 – Attended Department of Michigan's Legislative Breakfast for State Senators and Representatives. Was on the Michigan Senate floor to speak regarding the 100th Birthday Proclamation received by the Department of Michigan.

March 16, 2019 – Attended and marched in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade with the Department of Michigan Pinckney Post #419 honor guard.

March 20, 2019 – National Vice Commander's Conference Call at 1400 hrs.

March 21, 2019 - Left message for Department of Illinois 19th District Commander Cheryl Walker regarding new Post #2019. Worked on paperwork and Central Region Department membership lists.

March 22, 2019 – Prepared for Highway 281 Legacy Run and Central Region conference calls.

March 26, 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100 hrs. I had a Central Region Conference Call at 1400 hrs.

April 2019:

April 2, 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100hrs. Completed form for "The Four Chaplains" nomination and sent to Bron Mogenis and Jennifer via e-mail.

April 4, 2019 – Highway 281 Legacy Ride Conference Call at 1100 hrs.

April 10, 2019 - Talked with NVC Sweet regarding Highway 281 Legacy Ride.

April 18, 2019 – Worked on Membership pin information and Department of Indiana trip activities.

April 22, 2019 – Prepared for Central Region Conference Call.

April 23, 2019 – Conference Call with Central Region Departments at 1400 hrs. Installation of officers for the Department of Michigan Linden Post #119.

April 24, 2019 – Talked with Indiana NEC Jerry Jordan regarding travel to Indiana for membership "ride around". Prepare for Indiana trip. Called Jim Richley at Department of Michigan Cadillac Posts 100th Birthday Party on July 27, 2019. RSVP with regrets due to previously scheduled activities. NVC Conference Call at 1400 hrs. No one else was on the call to 1415 hrs.

April 25-29, 2019 – Attended Department of Indiana's "Ride Around" for membership.

April 30, 2019 –Responded to Department of Michigan regarding their convention with RSVP positive. Tried to reconfirm Air Force Academy activities for 5/27-29/19. Contacted Department of Ohio 5th District Commander Leonard White, Jr. regarding new Post #0608. Tried to contact Commander George Ruggiero of Post #0608, Fremont, however, phone number disconnected. Contacted Department of Ohio Adjutant for new contact information. Waiting on call from Mike Kennedy of Ohio.

May 2019:

May 2, 2019 – Contacted Bob Sussan regarding Highway 218 Legacy Ride and planning on meeting at National's Spring Meeting.

May 4, 2019 – Preparing NVC Activities from August 30, 2018 to May 9, 2019.

May 5, 2019 – Final Preparations for the National Spring Meeting.

May 6-9, 2019 – Attend the National Spring Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

May 13, 2019 – Communicated with W. Virginia Boys State Director Jim Davis and Administrator Randall Kocsis.

May 14, 2019 – I made preparations for United States Air Force Academy visit.

May 20, 2019 – Attended Department of Michigan finance committee meeting at their HQ.

May 23, 2019 – Attended the Michigan Senate Chambers as a guest with Senator Lana Theis for the Memorial Service for Michigan Active Duty Service Personnel killed in action within the past year and recognition of past KIA's and their families.

May 24, 2019 – Conference Call regarding Highway 281 Centennial Ride at noon.

I called Jay Bowen regarding USAF Academy visit on 5/27-29/2019.

May 26, 2019 – prepared for trip to Colorado Springs, CO for USAF Academy trip.

May 27-29 2019 – Attended the graduation at the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, CO and presented an Academic award to graduate Lyle Leland.

May 30, 2019 – Conference Call regarding Highway 281 Centennial Ride at noon.

I called Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota regarding pre-ride information.

June 2019

June 5, 2019 – Conference Call regarding Highway 281 Centennial Ride at noon.

June 6, 2019 – Received call from Jennifer Norton regarding Centennial Ride.

June 7, 2019 – Preparations for W. Virginia Boys State visit.

June 8-13, 2019 – Traveled to Jackson Mills, W. Virginia for the 82nd Mountaineer Boys State program as their unofficial (2nd) visit. Guest speaker for the Rhododendron Girls State program held at Davis & Elkins College.

June 14, 2019 – Attended the ground breaking of the first Fisher House in Michigan at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital in Michigan.

Attended and participated in the Flag Day flag retirement ceremony at the Pinckney Memorial Post #419, Pinckney Michigan.

June 17, 2019 – Spoke with NEC Flynn (KY) about the scheduled arrival at Department of Kentucky's convention.

I prepared for trip to Department of Kentucky.

June 18, 2019 – NEC Flynn (KY) called and cancelled Wednesday arrival to Thursday due to a mix up with the Department of Kentucky scheduling.

June 19, 2019 – I made final preparations for trip to Department of Kentucky.

June 20-23, 2019 – Attended the Department of Kentucky Convention (Official Visit) in Louisville, KY.

June 25, 2019- Prepared for visit to Department of Michigan convention.

June 26-30, 2019 – Attended the Department of Michigan Convention in Kalamazoo, MI

July 2019

July 8, 2019 – Contacted Wisconsin 11th District Commander Harvey regarding a new post #1925. I left message with his son.

I contacted Post #2020 Commander Koshaba and left message

I contacted Illinois 19th District Commander George Hor regarding a new post #2020. He stated that he was taking it to the department convention for approval.

July 9, 2019 - Wisconsin 11th District Commander Harvey called and we discussed Post #2020.

I participated in a conference call regarding the Centennial Ride at noon.

Set up lodging for the 2019 Legacy ride.

July 16, 2019 – Conference call for the Centennial Ride at noon.

July 23, 2019 – Conference Call for the Centennial Ride at noon.

July 24-28, 2019 – I was preparing for the Centennial Ride.

August 2019

July 28 to August 6, 2019 – Traveled to North Dakota via motorcycle through Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota for the American Legion Memorial Highway 281 Centennial Ride Team Legacy beginning in North Dakota (August 1-4, 2019 starting at Highway 281 and the Canadian Border) through South Dakota, Nebraska and ending in Great Bend, Kansas on August 4, 2019 to honor the 100th Birthday of the American Legion. I then traveled back to Michigan through Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

I plan on participating in the National American Legion Riders Legacy Foundation Ride on August 18-22, 2019.

I will be attending the National American Legion Convention in Indianapolis, IN August 23-29, 2019 to complete my duties as National Vice Commander 2018-2019 with Team 100 and National Commander Brett Reistad.

I would like to thank all Commanders, Presidents, Directors, Officers, Staff and Legion Family Members of all posts, units, squadrons, chapters, districts and departments for the fantastic hospitality and generosity that was shown to me and my wife, Linda, during my tenure as National Vice Commander.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
Father Phillip G. Salois, Massachusetts

I was appointed National Chaplain at the close of the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis held from 24-30 August 2018. I am a Roman Catholic Priest and a Missionary Priest of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. I ordained in 1984. I am a Vietnam War Veteran having served as a rifleman with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Sep) (Light), Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1h Infantry Regiment from 1969 - 1970. I am a recipient of the Silver Star, the third highest award for bravery-in-action. In 1990 I took a commission as a 1st Lieutenant Priest-Chaplain in the United States Army Reserves assigned to the 455th Field Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. When this unit inactivated, I transferred to several other units until I was assigned to the 883rd Medical Company (CSC) [combat stress control]. I resigned my commission in 2002 when the unit was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 due to hardship to care for my ailing 84-year-old Mother. I am a 100% Service-Connected Disabled Veteran.

My priestly life has been dedicated in service to war veterans with a specialty in the spiritual healing of those suffering from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). I worked for the 27 years at the VA Boston Healthcare System as the Chief of Chaplain Service.

In November 1990 I founded the National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers - an organization designed for the spiritual healing for former military Chaplains and former enlisted and officers who served in war and later became ordained ministers. One of the main components of the NCVNVM was to offer spiritual healing weekend retreats for war veterans and their spouses and/significant others. Over the years NCVNVM offered over 25 of such retreats. NCVNVM's mission expanded to other English-speaking nations (United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand) to former war veterans and former Chaplains who were engaged in war and invited their membership. The NCVNVM became the ICWVM (International Conference of War Veteran Ministers).

Veteran Service Organization involvements:

1) The American Legion: Life Member since 1987 (32 continuous years) Massachusetts Post #20 and Massachusetts Department Chaplain since 1990 to present.
2) Veterans of Foreign Wars - Life Member and Chaplain to Rhode Island Post #11519.
3) Disabled American Veterans -Life Member and Chaplain to Rhode Island Chapter #12.
4) Vietnam Veterans of America -Life Member and National Chaplain since 1993 to present and President and Chapter Chaplain to VVA Chapter #818 for the past 15 years.
5) Military Order of Foreign Wars -National Chaplain since 2017 and Chaplain to the Rhode Island Commandery since 2016.
6) AMVETS and Catholic War Veterans -Life Member to both

Legion Activities as National Chaplain

November 11, 2018 -Veterans Day -offered prayers at Armed Forces Park, Woonsocket, Rhode Island and offered prayers at the dedication of the World War I memorial at the Rhode Island -Fairmount Post #85.

November 17, 2018 -Massachusetts Department Commander's banquet in Marlboro, Massachusetts and offered banquet prayers and Holy Mass for Catholic legionnaires.

March 11, 2019 -Celebrated Funeral Mass in the Fort Myers Post Chapel and interment of SGT Ed Ryan in Arlington National Cemetery.

March 23, 2019 -Attended the Team 100 celebration for the Post 10,rh banquet at the Crowne Plaza in Natick, Massachusetts and offered the invocation and benediction.

March 27, 2019 -Featured guest on PEGRI (local Rhode Island TV station)

March 29, 2019 -Vietnam Veteran Day -offered prayers at a ceremony at the State Veterans Home in Bristol, Rhode Island

April 13, 2019 -Attended and National Commander's testimonial and banquet in Marlborough, Massachusetts and offered invocation and benediction.

June 7-9, 2019 -Attended the Massachusetts Department Convention in Plymouth, Massachusetts and offered opening banquet prayers, convention prayer and Holy Mass on Sunday for Catholic legionnaires. As the Election Committee Chairman, I oversaw the elections of new Department officers.

August 2018 appointed National Chaplain at the 100th Annual Convention, Minneapolis; attended the ANAVICUS breakfast and Mass for Catholic members.

September 27-30, 2018 conducted the Department Chaplains Conference -Indianapolis along with the ALA National Chaplain and SAL National Chaplain -celebrated Mass for Catholic legionnaires

October 12-18. 2018 - Attended the Fall NEC Conference - delivered invocations and benedictions at all delegate meetings. Participated in the Americanism Commission meeting by offering the invocation and benediction at the opening and closing of the meeting. Attended the National Commander's reception and banquet offering pre-dinner and post-dinner prayers. Offered Mass on Sunday for Catholics legionnaires.

February 24-27, 2019 - Mid-Winter Conference - Washington, DC - attended the American Legion caucus in the Senate building. Delivered the invocation for the opening of Congress at the invitation of Congressman David Cicilline (D-RI) with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) presiding. Attended and offered invocation and benediction for the National Commander's reception and banquet.

May 8-9, 2019 - Spring NEC Conference - Excused from attending due to an auto accident I sustained.

July 6, 2019 - Attended the Rhode Island Department Convention and offered invocation at the banquet.

July 20-23, 2019 - Boys Nation - Washington, DC - Celebrated Holy Mass on Sunday and conducted the Memorial Service for those who have died during the previous year. Laid a wreath along with the National Commander and two of the boys at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery

August 2, 2019 - Region 1 National Vice-Commander, Paul Spedaliere's Testimonial Reception and Banquet - offered the invocation and benediction.

August 23-29, 2019 - 101st National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana and offered opening Convention prayer, Memorial Service and prayers for the National Commanders reception and banquet.

In addition to my duties I sent 48 spiritual bouquets/Mass cards to 51 past National and Department Commanders who entered Post Everlasting during my tenure.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN
Frederick S. Doten, Nevada

It has been a great honor and distinction to serve National Commander Reistad as his national historian during the 2018-2019 American Legion Centennial year. It also was a fun time traveling with him during his visit to the Department of Nevada. Serving him during his visit, not only as national historian, but also as the Department of Nevada historian, was a unique experience that I will always remember. The photographs taken will be part of our Department historical record; and I will look back on them with gratitude of being part of it.

As with most positions, you must start somewhere. Being the National Historian, my first task was organizing and conducting the annual national history book contest. I covered the results of this event during our fall NEC meeting; so, I will just state that without the help of Howard Trace and his outstanding staff the event would not have been completed successfully. It was a great learning experience for me and will be very beneficial as I continue my work with The American Legion.

The next milestone was participating in the Washington conference. For those of you who have been there, it is without a doubt a very educational experience. The interaction with the Political arm of our nation is without a doubt something every Legionnaire should experience. It was very apparent that we were heard, but the question is, will they comply. Long term, I believe our messages will bring results. So, we must continue to pursue our objectives because they will eventually be completed. Also, being present for the commanders testimony at the joint meeting of the Veteran Affairs committees has provided me with a wealth of information that I have used when briefing Posts within our state.

My next major effort is preparing for the National Historian's luncheon. We will have two guest speakers. Nicole Clapp will provide us with an overview of the Auxiliary's centennial celebration and Donald Dickerson, IMS Historian, will brief us on the activities of his organization

During the year it was a privilege and an honor to attend the Fall and Spring meetings and provide a report to the National Executive Committee on my activities as national historian.

I was also active downward in supporting department and post historians in their efforts to improve their processes for documenting their legacy through newsletters and media outlets. I also communicated with department historians on how to improved the evaluation process of our annual history book contest. I will leave detailed notes to the incoming historian for future improvements of the evaluation process.

As a final comment, I just had the opportunity to participate in the Legacy Run. It was a first time for me and also for National Commander Reistad. I believe we set a record as being the first two to make the complete run together. I should also note that National Vice Commanders Steve Sweet and Jim Wallace also participated in this year's run.
As with every job there must come an ending. I can state that it has been an outstanding year for me. I learned a lot, participated in events that I would never have thought possible and owe a debt of gratitude to Commander Reistad for the opportunity to serve him and the American Legion. Thank you and God bless America.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE
Kevin J. Bartlett, Michigan

Employee Salary Savings Plan – 401(k) Plan

We have changed our TPA and administrator of the plan which will result in decreasing the costs/fees, yet as we keep similar product offerings and results the plan is improved.

The American Legion Retirement Plan (for National & Departments)

There has been no change as this plan has been frozen since 2008.

International Headquarters Activities

The National Judge Advocate's job includes being TAL's Chief Compliance Officer. This additional title comes with the additional management responsibilities over the Internal Affairs division, Membership division, Library/Museum and Insurance/Risk Management. Please find attached to this report the Library/Museum's material discard list for your approval.

Under insurance/risk management the "request for proposal" (RFP) for a potential change in our insurance broker went out to the marketplace. Six companies and our current broker submitted their answer to our RFP. The Finance subcommittee reviewed these RFPs. Upon their recommendation three companies and our current broker were scheduled and met with for in-house interviews to determine their capabilities to serve as our National insurance broker. All companies were given the same amount of time to present and answer questions. The Finance subcommittee met after the interviews and discussed the possible choices. At the National Convention the subcommittee discussed their options

and the National Finance Commission selected NFP Property and Casualty, Inc. as the new insurance broker of record for TAL beginning immediately.

All legal documents, contracts and TAL books/brochures are continually being reviewed and updated as needed. Of particular note: the LEGION Act (P.A. 116-35), based upon our Resolution 1 of 2018 was signed into law by President Trump on July 30, 2019 resulting in millions of additional veterans being recognized as war-time veterans. Additionally countless hours were spent updating TAL's National Constitution & By-Laws with such updates approved at the 2019 National Convention. Lastly the corrective membership change to the American Legion Auxiliary has resulted in numerous membership opportunities for The American Legion Family.

NJA Duties

Since October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 the following events have taken place through the office of National Judge Advocate: 2,202 media articles were read and reviewed prior to publishing; 512 U.S. Memorial website submissions were reviewed; 127 on-line videos were watched and reviewed; 87 contracts were read, reviewed and worked; issued 355 oral opinions and 480 written opinions; been consulted on 50 Resolutions; wrote 23 Resolutions; issued 158 Department/Post correspondence opinions; reviewed and issued 25 List Protection Agreements; received and given 45 litigation updates; researched and issued 33 TAL Emblem violation "Cease and Desist" letters; researched and issued 209 Post tax letters; issued 44 Legion Charities indemnity documents; reviewed 100 DD-214's; attended 15 TAL Divisional meetings; attended 27 Special Committee meetings; participated in 27 various trademark activities; assisted the Ladies Auxiliary on 5 contracts and 17 opinions; attended 6 Ladies Auxiliary meetings; performed 30.00 hours of Ladies Auxiliary work; attended 17 Retirement committee events; approved 507 Division requests; drafted 2 license agreements; reviewed 3 podcasts; attended 1 Citizens Flag Amendment meetings; assisted the Abvie Hep-C tour, traveled to WDC numerous times for TAL matters including meeting with various Members of Congress regarding the LEGION Act, attended, represented TAL and was a key note speaker at the Student Veterans of American National Conference, met with local PA counsel, was deposed in a Pennsylvania lawsuit; taught at a California American Legion College, traveled to New York for fundraising discussions, and made trips to the Department Conventions of Kansas, Alabama, California & Pennsylvania where I spoke and taught JA classes to nearly 2,000 people, attended the American Legion World Series, attended a Georgetown University Law School legal class, attended a Legal/MBA class and visited at least five posts – amongst numerous other duties as your National Judge Advocate.

Trademark Activities

This year we had a lot of trademark activity. Our "American Legion Riders" trademark was extended until 2/24/2029; "The American Legion Legacy Run" trademark was extended until 03/24/2029; the American Legion Rider "Eagle" trademark was extended until 07/28/29; the trademark emblem of The American Legion was extended in New Zealand until 10/05/29 and in Australia until 10/06/29; the American Legion Rider motorcycle design was reapplied for continuation in the USA; the trademarked American Legion emblem was applied to be continued in India, Mexico, Kuwait, the European Union, Pakistan, the Republic of Panama and the Dominican Republic; and lastly The American Legion World Series baseball trademark has been transmitted to the US Patent Office for trademarking registration.

Current Litigation

From October 1 through September 30, 2019 as your National Judge Advocate I have managed a large number of legal proceedings and lawsuits throughout the country in which The American Legion has been served and/or contacted for legal purposes. All of these matters are being handled as required and in conjunction with our co-counsel as needed.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Louis J. Celli Jr., Massachusetts
Executive Director of Government and Veterans Affairs

James Baca, New Mexico
Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

Executive Director Louis Celli is the liaison with all government agencies, in particular those associated with veterans affairs and benefits.

Executive Director James Baca is responsible for corporate development, marketing and media outreach.

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Howard Trace, Director

The mission of The American Legion Library is to provide an information storage and retrieval system for The American Legion. Indexing of documents continues, and internal and external materials are added to the collection regularly.

The Digital Archive continues to grow at a rapid pace and includes more than 10,000 items. A significant milestone was reached this year with all currently active resolutions being available on the Digital Archive. Digitization activities included newsletters and large format photographs. With the 100th anniversary celebration we have had requests for over 500 individual items to be digitized for various projects. Work continues on evaluation of the photo collection, with over half of the collection reviewed, to provide better accessibility and protection of these highly requested materials. The poster collection is also being evaluated and re-housed, and the reboxing and reorganization of the microfilm collection has been finished.

A number of researchers made extensive visits to the library. Areas of research involved World War I war trophies, foreign relations, early Legion history, and department activities.

Books and Pamphlets cataloged	173
Museum Collection Items Added or Assessed	784
Items added to Digital Archive	1,642
Pages Digitized	7,468
Correspondence Written by Staff	1,139
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Sent	543
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Received	189

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Library and Museum

Donated by Dewitt B. Tilden Memorial Post 316 (FL): Two framed pictures of the USS *American Legion* (APA-17).

Donated by Past National Historian Paul D. Bennett: "HUE 1968;" "Whiteman Air Force Base" and "The Unknowns" books.

Donated by Susan Tobler: American Legion money clip.

Donated by Martin L. "Marty" Grady Sr.: 75th Anniversary Banner from the 1993 National Convention.

Donated by Kevin M. Phillips: Ceramic tray with an image of The American Legion National Headquarters.

Donated by Past National Commander Brett P. Reistad: "Maintain Law & Order;" "Hire Vets" and "America is #1 Thanks to Our Veterans" bumper stickers.

Donated by Past National Historian Robert B. Craig: "Honoring Hoosier Heroes: Indiana War Memorials" promotional DVD.

Donated by Past National Vice Commander Doug Haggan: "A History of the American Legion Department of France 1920-2019" digital and paper copy; and FODPAL Meeting Documents.

Donated by Kenneth Reagan: "Manual for Post Service Officers" (1929) pamphlet.

Donated by the Department of North Carolina: Various national publications.

Donated by Lewis T. Weeks: American Legion School Award Medal (1966).

Donated by the Department of France: Two photos from 1927 Pilgrimage; Correspondence related to 1927 Pilgrimage; 1927 car horn; "Threat of Communism" pamphlet; 1942 National Convention souvenir.

Donated by Hans Stockenberger: China Post 1, Department of France, Centennial Coin.

Donated by Past National Commander Denise H. Rohan: Department of Wisconsin Centennial Challenge Coin.

Donated by Allen D. McCrady: 1937 American Legion Foreign Pilgrimage medal with ribbon; 1937 American Legion Official Certification of Identification.

Donated by Joseph J. Stockner: Newspaper supplement of the history of American Legion Post 28, Perrysburg, Ohio and Post 533, Rossford Ohio.

Donated by Debra J. Swanson: Documents relating to the 1927 Pilgrimage to France.

Donated by Commander Robert S. Riebel, China Post 1: Digital post records from 1949 to 2019; digital version of "The Story of China Post 1, 1989-2019."

AMERICANISM COMMISSION
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman
Jill Druskis, Nebraska, Director

The Americanism Commission of The American Legion was created by a recommendation adopted by the National Convention of The American Legion held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1919. It read: "We recommend the establishment of a National Americanism Commission of The American Legion whose duty it shall be to endeavor to realize in the United States the basic ideal of this Legion of 100 percent Americanism through the planning, establishment and conduct of a continuous, constructive educational system."

It is the objective of the Americanism Commission to translate Americanism precepts, principles and ideals in a clear and practical manner to Legion posts and other groups and individuals, including young Americans.

While the Americanism program consists of a broad, objective, general plan that features wide-range community service, and sound citizenship and youth development, 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 and scholarships, sponsoring and conducting oratorical contests, cooperating with education and citizenship groups, promoting proper flag etiquette and display, and sponsoring objective youth development programs;
- Do important work for the youth of America, sponsoring American Legion Baseball, American Legion High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, American Legion Junior Shooting

Sports Program, American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement, Boy Scouts of America activities, and many other citizenship and objective training activities;

- Work for the assimilation of immigrants through schools of citizenship and other agencies and stand for the regulation of immigration so that this assimilation may approach perfection.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued to be actively involved in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among our legislative priorities are voluntary prayer in public buildings and establishing English as the official language of the United States. Two current legislative initiatives of The American Legion are: (1) the continuing efforts to effect a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws, and (2) coordinating a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment Clause lawsuits.

This commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of four standing committees: Baseball Committee, Committee on Children & Youth, Committee on Youth Education and Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee.

The following is a summary of several programs that are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 2018-2019 American Legion program year.

American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its form of government, it must have a citizenry that has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what The American Legion Boys State program does for the young men of our nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government at the state level.

It was 84 years ago that Legionnaires in the state of Illinois first recognized the need for a program that would help high school boys understand and appreciate the government they were learning about in the classroom. It was a time in the history of this nation when un-American ideas significantly threatened its future. Established in 1935, the overarching concept of American Legion Boys State, then and now, is to show young people that beyond a doubt, our form of government is good; however, its preservation depends upon intelligent, informed and loyal citizens, in combination with an honest and impartial administration of government activities.

Each year, over 19,000 young Americans take part in American Legion Boys State, and throughout it's over 80-year history, the program has graduated well over 2,000,000 young men. These young men are chosen as the brightest within their communities, gathering together to form fictitious political parties. Within these parties platforms are introduced, built upon, debated and voted for through proper parliamentary procedures. Elections are held, positions filled, and a state governor rises from among the ranks.

Ten years after the inception of Boys State as a program of The American Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a similar program at the national level and, in 1946, established American Legion Boys Nation. Boys Nation provides a practical, hands-on education to youth delegates about the structure and function of our nation's federal government. This year Boys Nation celebrated its 73rd anniversary year.

From each of the American Legion Boys State programs; a rigorous selection process produces two outstanding graduates, known as Senators, to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation in Washington D.C. This week of government training in the nation's capital combines lectures, forums, and committees with visitations to federal agencies, institutions, and memorials in order to punctuate the importance of our nation's creation and the sacrifices necessary for its conservation. In addition, The American Legion provides unique occasions by facilitating visits to the White House and the offices of U.S. Senators. This valuable time is used to deliberate topics of importance to the participants'

generation with their own elected officials. This crafts a truly unique and educational experience for both the Boys Nation senators and our nation's leadership.

These young men are charged with writing legislative bills and resolutions to be presented, debated, and conceivably passed in the Boys Nation Senate. This year produced 61 resolutions, the highest number brought to American Legion Boys Nation in its history. In addition, of the 89 bills submitted, 86 were presented to the Boys Nation Senate, 27 passed Committee, and 11 were finally passed on the Boys Nation Senate floor. This entire process occurs over the time span of one week. This is accomplished through the random assignment and organization of fictitious party conventions, creation of party platforms, and guidance from the program's legislative team of counselors. One of the program's many highlights is the nomination, debate and election of an American Legion Boys Nation President and Vice President. Lou Acevedo of Maryland was elected President and Thomas Penley of Montana was elected Vice President during the 2019 session of American Legion Boys Nation.

The volunteers who staff this program is comprised primarily of former Boys State/Boys Nation participants, junior counselors, specifically, are alumni of the Boys Nation program, who during their tenure as a delegate were unknowingly evaluated for their leadership abilities, understanding of government, and grasp of legislative processes. Those who surpass their peers in these areas have the honor of invitation to return as staff. The program's senior counselors and administrative staff are primarily comprised of Boys State directors and staff chosen for their abilities and unwavering faith in the American Legion Boys Nation program.

Boy Scouts of America

The American Legion chartered more than 2,300 Scout units in communities across the country involving over 61,000 young people in the past year. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion continues to support the Boy Scouts of America because of its unique ability to provide opportunities to young people for leadership training, peer fellowship, life skills development and community service.

The American Legion selected Jaden Anderson from Utah, as its 2019 Eagle Scout of the Year. Selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive a $10,000 scholarship from The American Legion.

The three runners-up are N'Jhari Jackson of Florida; Trevor Burke of Texas; and Rhylan Peterson of Minnesota. Each will receive a $2,500 scholarship.

In addition, an estimated 8,000 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

Since its inception in 2003, there have been 667 American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members who have received the Scouting "Square Knot" award to recognize their dedication and work to assist in furthering the Scouting programs of The American Legion.

Citizenship and Naturalization

Citizenship & Naturalization efforts of Americanism include: (1) promoting grassroots involvement at the post level in understanding, appreciating and actively participating in the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship and American government; (2) developing new ideas and initiatives aimed at promoting grassroots involvement at the post level in assimilating prospective citizens/legal immigrants into local communities and American society; and (3) monitoring and maintaining a portfolio of resolutions specific to the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship and the assimilation and naturalization of prospective citizens/legal immigrants.

The Americanism Commission strongly urges American Legion posts, districts and departments (states) to undertake activities and collaborate with the U.S. Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services to help newly arriving legal immigrants and legal

residents become assimilated and seek citizenship. To assist with this effort, The American Legion has produced a booklet entitled *Citizenship Outreach Guide* that is available online at www.legion.org/publications.

In celebration of The American Legion's centennial year, the Americanism Commission is hosting a naturalization ceremony at the 101st National Convention of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana. About 100 new citizens will be sworn-in by a Federal Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana. Additionally, the Marion County Board of Voter Registration will be present to ensure that each of these new citizens have an opportunity to register to vote, an important part of our democracy.

Flag Education

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, thousands of letters, phone calls and electronic mail messages are routinely answered giving factual information on the display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

The American Legion continues distribution and sale of *For Which It Stands*, a multimedia instructional resource about the history of the flag of the United States, the significance and meaning of our flag and respecting and caring for our flag. It is intended primarily for use with students in the upper elementary and middle/junior high school grades.

Additionally, the publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* and 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 provided at little cost to those requesting it.

The American Legion continues publication of *Our Country's Flag*, an educational comic book for use in elementary schools. Well over one million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced in 1988. The educational booklet, *I Pledge Allegiance*, published in May 1995, is also for use in elementary schools. *Our Country's Veterans* was added to The American Legion's list of educational publications in 2005.

Over 48,000 individuals and organizations are subscribed to the American Legion Flag Alert, which provides an e-mail notification when the flag of the United States is to be displayed throughout the entire nation at half-staff.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the United States flag from physical desecration. All 50 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws. Working with other organizations of The American Legion-founded Citizens Flag Alliance, The American Legion shepherded a flag protection Constitutional amendment through the House of Representatives during several Congresses. In June of 2006, The American Legion spearheaded a drive for the amendment in the U.S. Senate, coming within one vote of passage there. The legislation was introduced, again, in the 116th Congress.

High School Oratorical Contest

The American Legion has awarded over three million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual High School Oratorical Contest.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant, taking not less than eight nor more than ten minutes for delivery. Each contestant must also give an assigned topic presentation on a constitutional topic (randomly selected during the contest from the four topics for the contest year) taking not less than three or more than five minutes for delivery.

Funds totaling $138,000 in college scholarships are available to national level contestants from each department, with the top winner receiving an $18,000 scholarship. Funds for these awards are provided by The American Legion. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National Organization, there are scholarships awarded by intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 82nd Annual National Oratorical Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana, in April 2019 with 53 department (state) finalists competing. The three finalists were: First place – Patrick Junker of Iowa, sponsored by American Legion Post 403; second place – Caleb Maue of Illinois, who was sponsored by American Legion Post 1080; and third place – Eden Carnes of Tennessee, sponsored by American Legion Post 70.

The American Legion continues to enjoy a mutually-beneficial relationship with the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA).

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 rifle safety and marksmanship training for young people and to offer a wholesome recreational activity through organized competition. The Junior Shooting Sports program has more than 1,550 active clubs with almost 15,000 young people participating annually.

The 29th Annual Junior Three Position Air Rifle National Championship was conducted July 23 – 27, 2019, at the USA Shooting range facility on the campus of the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The tournament climaxed two rounds of postal matches which began in November 2018 and involved nearly 1,400 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision three position air rifle and sporter three position air rifle. Medals were awarded to the top scorer in both categories, as well as in each of the prone, kneeling and standing positions.

The two marksmen to win national titles for the 2019 The American Legion's Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship were Makenzie Sheffield of Texas in the precision category and Jaden-Ann Fraser of Tennessee in the sporter category. Each champion received scholarships totaling $5,000 from The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

Service to God and Country

A program of fundamental Americanism, "Service to God and Country," seeks to prevent the spiritual decay of America by charging the electorate with a spirit of unquestionable Americanism, respect for law, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

"Service to God" emphasizes regular public worship, daily family prayer and the religious education of children, while "Service to Country" attempts to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation. These objectives are aimed at preparing young Americans to take up tomorrow's responsibilities by teaching them moral and spiritual values, renewed interest in our Country's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, ideals of loyalty and honesty.

Each year, a conference for the department chaplains of The American Legion is held under the direction of its National Chaplain. Program information is provided for further dissemination to district and post chaplains who coordinate the program at the local level.

BASEBALL COMMITTEE.
Gary Stone, Missouri, Chairman
Steve Cloud, Indiana, Program Manager

American Legion Baseball's 93rd World Series tournament took place August 15-20, in Shelby, North Carolina, on Veterans Field at Keeter Stadium and was hosted by American Legion Post No. 82. After having experienced a tremendously successful year in 2018, ESPNU subsequently agreed to expand the live television coverage of the six day event to now also include Friday evening pool-play games in addition to the previously broadcasted Saturday's Military Appreciation Day, semifinals and championship.

The 94th season of American Legion Baseball saw 3,415 teams registered to play American Legion Baseball. Approximately 60,000 players, representing 49 states and Canada, wore a Legion baseball uniform this year.

More than $7 million in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. One million dollars is appropriated by The American Legion National Organization to conduct eight regional tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

The 2018 George W. Rulon American Legion Baseball Player of the Year was Christopher Ludman, a player of the 2018 American Legion World Series championship team from Wilmington, Delaware, American Legion Post No. 1.

Many American Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. Eighty-one Hall of Fame members played American Legion Baseball, including the 2018 inductees Trevor Hoffman, Chipper Jones, Jack Morris, Jim Thome and Alan Trammell. Other American Legion Alumni inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame include Tony Gwynn, Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Carl Yastrzemski, Brooks Robinson, and Paul Molitor.

American Legion Baseball is a fully compliant Pitch Smart youth baseball program, following an initiative supported by Major League Baseball and USA Baseball. Pitch Smart features a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries of their youth and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. In addition, American Legion Baseball participated in three "Play Ball" events, part of a Major League Baseball initiative focused on engaging youth players.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Louisiana, Chairman
Stacey Cope, Indiana, Program Manager

The American Legion has been a staunch supporter of America's children and youth since the organization's founding in 1919. The young people of our nation continue to be of paramount concern to the Committee on Children & Youth, as its commitment strengthens and it seeks ways to improve the well-being of all children.

Through the decades that followed our founding, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and has remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. The early years were devoted to progressive childcare and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations – the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, as well as supporting independent organizations such as the Eight & Forty – many states and communities improved their own child welfare provisions.

The development of new and expanded public programs designed to provide economic security for children made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other problems affecting young people. To date there is no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency – private or governmental – in its ability to expand into every area of concern for child welfare and child health.

As stated in a 1924 resolution adopted by the National Executive Committee, The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'". This remains our ultimate goal and the definitive challenge for the years ahead.

To attain this goal, The American Legion, in 1925, adopted the "Whole Child" plan, which states: "every child should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity". Its foundation is based on three guiding principles:

1. To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society, recognizing that the most normal environment for children is a home with their own parents;
2. To commend sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth;
3. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines for Action, working together:

1. PREVENTION – Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems;
2. EDUCATION – Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth;
3. LEGISLATION – Maintaining knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws that affect young people at the national, state and local levels;
4. MATERIAL AID – Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past 100 years, The American Legion's Children & Youth Programs have contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. While our list of achievements is extensive, it is by no means complete. The American Legion has and will maintain a deep, community-centered interest in children in order to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. There is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. Our survival may well depend upon the quality of care, education and training that we, as parents and citizens, provide for all children today.

The American Legion is proud of its Legionnaires, and the members of its affiliated and supporting organizations, as well as 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.

2018-2019 Programs

The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920s. In 1992, the Committee on Children & Youth designated the Child Safety program as one of its annual programs. Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to assure that they have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

As long as Halloween activities are sponsored and promoted in our various communities by duly appointed and elected officials, the Committee on Children & Youth of The American Legion believes that children and parents should know how to make this observance as safe as possible. To assist in this effort, the Committee on Children & Youth

produces and distributes a brochure, "Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night," to educate children and parents about trick-or-treat safety.

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 20,000 children under the age of 19 die in automobile crashes, fires, through the improper use of firearms and drowning. In homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present. To help educate the public, the Committee on Children & Youth produces and distributes "Play it Safe", a brochure to inform parents about the six most common causes of death among children and prevention strategies.

As a major threat to the welfare of our nation's youth, The American Legion is very concerned about youth suicide. It continues to be the third largest cause of death among 15-24-year-olds. The suicide rate among adolescents has grown steadily over the last four decades, quadrupling since 1960, and over 4,000 young people take their own lives every year. Suicide is a senseless tragedy but may be preventable. The Committee on Children & Youth produces and distributes a brochure entitled "Know the Warning Signs of Youth Suicide", designed to assist youth and adults in understanding some of the warning signs and facts about suicide.

The American Legion is also mindful of the pressures facing young people today, as well as the destructive consequences of drug use. Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants and marijuana are often readily available and considered to be the entryway to a life of drug dependency and delinquency. Gateway drugs are so-called because the use of these drugs often leads to drug abuse, addiction and to the use of other drugs such as heroin, cocaine and LSD. The teenage years are challenging and pressure from peers to use drugs can be extremely intense; however, individuals are ultimately responsible for their own behavior. Decisions made today can have far-reaching effects on one's life for years to come. To help combat this problem and educate our nation's youth about the dangers of gateway drugs, the Committee produces and distributes a brochure titled "Gateway Drugs…Choose not to Use". This tool can equip parents and children with the facts of gateway drugs and help children lead a healthy lifestyle.

As sure as The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in the world, there are veterans' families who require assistance. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because a parent is sick, disabled, deceased or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion, and the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program is the vital tool our organization uses to help meet the maintenance and health needs of qualifying veterans' children.

Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid to veteran's children, TFA remains unique in the social-work field even today and is still a very active program. Made possible by the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, the TFA program is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and medical needs for the minor child(ren) in the home when their parents or guardians are unable to do so. Through TFA, a Legion post may call upon national level of The American Legion for cash grant assistance to help meet the basic needs of qualifying veterans' children. Funds can be granted for eligible children when it has been determined by investigation that the minor child is in need and that no other sources are available or those that are available are inadequate.

The minor child may not be older than 17, or 20 if still enrolled in high school or is physically handicapped. The minor child must be the biological child, stepchild, or in the legal custody of, a qualifying veteran. A qualifying veteran is defined as a member of the United States Armed Forces serving on federal orders current under Title 10 of the United States Code, inclusive of all components, OR any veteran possessing an up-to-date membership in The American Legion. Active duty applicants are considered without being a member of The American Legion. A single onetime non-repayable Temporary Financial Assistance grant of up to $1,500 is permitted for the minor child(ren) of a qualifying veteran. During calendar year 2018 there were 376 minor children of 179 Legionnaires and

servicemember throughout 35 states who received $228,975 in non-repayable cash grant assistance from the national level.

In January 2019 The American Legion stepped up in a massive effort to support active-duty Coast Guard servicemembers with minor children in their households in the wake of the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history that interrupted the pay of the U.S. Coast Guard. Unlike the other four branches of the uniformed Armed Services that are budgeted through the Department of Defense, the U.S. Coast Guard is budgeted through the Department of Homeland Security and therefore the only branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that was affected. Citing the Coast Guard's motto of "Semper Paratus", the National Commander of The American Legion, Brett Reistad, stated The American Legion is "Always Ready" to support those in uniform and directed that our organization swiftly administer requests made by Coast Guard families needing financial assistance for the minor children in their households because of the government shutdown. Expedited processing procedures for The American Legion's TFA program were then temporarily implemented. Because of the collective herculean efforts of Legionnaires and Legion Family members throughout many Legion departments (states) and at National Headquarters of The American Legion located in Indianapolis, The American Legion awarded over $1 million through its TFA program to aid 3,120 children of 1,713 Coast Guard families before the crisis abated with the reopening of the government.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one means by which the Committee on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goals during the 2018-2019 program year. The following summarized resolutions are a sampling of the children & youth legislative resolutions that were either approved or retained at the National Convention of The American Legion in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28-30, 2018, as part of the legislative program of The American Legion for the 116th Congress:

Res. No. 278: Financially Assist Families Faced By Catastrophic Illness Of Their Children: It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Unfortunately, many of our nation's children are not receiving the necessary medical care due to the extreme requirements placed on the financial abilities of the average family. Consequently, children with severe catastrophic illnesses are not receiving the needed medical care. The rising cost of medical care in such cases is not covered by even the best medical policies. The American Legion believes that the state and federal governments should enact legislation to financially assist those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Res. No. 279: Support Funding Comprehensive Health Care for Children & Youth Programs. Many of our nation's children continue to face health needs that are not properly addressed due to the high cost of our health care delivery system. The American Legion continues to support and endorse the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, the Healthy Start Initiative, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and the Abstinence Education Program.

Res. No. 112: Support Funding For All Drug Trafficking Prevention Programs. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution urges funding for all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of the substances that are being made available in this country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users and decrease demand.

Res. No. 282: Oppose Any Attempt to Weaken Present Laws Governing Penalties for the Production, Sale and Distribution of Pornographic or Obscene Materials to Minors. 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.

Res. No. 283: Urge The President and Congress To Establish "National Family Week". One of the basic principles of the children and youth program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast-paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country: the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and stability to our society. We urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

Res. No. 285: Urge Congress To Appropriate Sufficient Funds For School Nutrition Program. The American Legion again reaffirms its position that the Congress of the United States and the various state legislatures be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs. This is necessary to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

These are the highlights of our 2018-2019 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Committee on Children & Youth continually urges departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our national objectives. Local posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances that deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. The Children & Youth legislative program is a never-ending struggle, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 96 years, the Committee on Children & Youth records activities from The American Legion Family – posts of The American Legion, squadrons of The Sons of The American Legion, units of the American Legion Auxiliary, and salons of the Eight and Forty. The contributions and expenditures of departments (states) and of the National Organization are obtained for the 12-month reporting period of June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019, and combined with these reports (see Table No. 1). Table 2 illustrates a historical record of expenditures from national temporary aid funds by American Legion department (state) according to years.

During the reporting period the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation recorded $619,457 in donations from members of the American Legion Family and individuals from across the country. During the same reporting period, our Temporary Financial Assistance program expended over $1,209,572 in grants to 3,402 children of 1,849 veterans. Table 1 shows that for the 2018-2019 Children & Youth program year The American Legion and its affiliated and supporting organizations reported a combined grand total of $15,463,275 in expenditures and contributions to benefit over a half million children throughout America.

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH EDUCATION

Michael Westergren, Arkansas, Chairman
Scott Wynn, Indiana, Program Manager

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship continues its tradition of awarding needs-based scholarships to children of fallen Post-9/11 service members as well as children of those Post-9/11 veterans receiving 50% or more disability through Veterans Affairs. Children of the fallen remain our highest priority in awarding this scholarship.

We again this year hit a record milestone for awards. This is credited in part by the continuous improvement of our application system that gives applicants examples of what is required to apply and a more streamlined process. For 2019 there was $1,122,624 awarded in American Legion Legacy scholarships. A total of 57 applicants were awarded a scholarship of $20,000 each, exhausting the total amount available. This is an overall

50.8% increase in financial awards over the previous year of 2018. These awards may be used for undergraduate or graduate-level education at a nonprofit and regionally-accredited institution of higher learning.

In addition to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, our scholarship programs include American Legion High School Oratorical scholarships, Boys Nation scholarships, Junior Shooting Sports scholarships, Eagle Scout of the Year scholarship, American Legion Baseball Leadership and All-Academic Team scholarships and the Samsung American Legion Scholarship.

Samsung Electronics gifted The American Legion with a $5 million endowment in 1996 as means a of showing appreciation for U.S. veterans who came to Korea's aid during its struggle against communist forces in the Korean War. As a result, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship program established a series of scholarships. Being good stewards of this generous endowment, The American Legion has continued to nurture and grow these funds through the years and since inception of the scholarship over $6,254,000 Samsung American Legion scholarships have been awarded. This is achieved by awarding scholarships to (10) $10,000 national scholars, (10) $5,000 runners-up, and (79) $1,250 department (state) finalists in conjunction with the American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs. Samsung continues to believe in The American Legion's visionary leadership for educating and growing patriotism in the youth of America.

The American Legion continues to believe that education is key to a united and informed citizenry. As such, we strive to improve our scholarships, education programs and youth development programs in a manner showing our dedication to the education of America's youth. The promotion of Americanism to our future leaders threads throughout every American Legion scholarship and program. The resources that we provide to our Legion Family and communities at-large are specifically developed to aid in the expansion and culturing of such values among 21st-century youth.

YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Larry L. Price, South Dakota Chairman
Jeff Hendricks, Indiana, Interim Program Manager

The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement (YCLE) program is an excellent vehicle through which young people may be empowered to realize early on that peace officers stand as staunch supporters for moral and legal rights, and that the dedication and impact they have within local our communities, states, and nation should be regarded with respect and appreciation. The YCLE program serves as an influential stepping stone for those high school students considering a career in law enforcement as they become familiar first-hand with professional practices and concepts of policing during a week-long program conducted at a law enforcement training academy.

There are currently twenty-one departments that offer an YCLE program: Arizona; Connecticut; Delaware; Florida; Illinois; Indiana; Kansas; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; Missouri; Oregon; Nebraska; North Carolina; Ohio; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; South Dakota; Vermont; Virginia; and Wisconsin. The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee was formed in order to develop strategies and methodologies for promoting the YCLE program and its growth throughout the nation, as well as working toward an ultimate goal of pursuing the development of a national capstone program – the vision is that this national capstone program would be analogous of what The American Legion Boys Nation program is to The American Legion Boys State program. Materials are available on The American Legion website at www.legion.org\youthlaw providing information for American Legion departments working with law enforcement agencies to adopt and further promote the program.

AMERICANISM COMMISSION EXECTIVE SECTION

Richard W. Anderson, Cromwell, CT – Chairman
Larry L. Price, Gettysburg, SD – Vice-Chairman
Douglas Boldt, Callaway, NE – National Commander's Representative
Eugene Thompson, Marseilles, IL – Consultant
Steve M. Tatro, Dunkirk, MD – Consultant
Gary Stone, Independence, MO – Chairman, American Legion Baseball Committee
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Kenner, LA – Chairman, Committee on Children & Youth
Michael Westergren, Beebe, AR – Chairman, Committee on Youth Education
Larry L. Price, Gettysburg, SD – Chair man, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee

AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.

Dennis R. Boland, Florida, President
Meagen Sweet, Indiana, Executive Secretary

In 1954 The American Legion endorsed the separate incorporation of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the foundation has granted over $16 million dollars to other non-profit youth-serving organizations. The foundation exists to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth and to add to progress in the child welfare field through research, studies, surveys, projects or in other ways, including but not limited to all, youth activities now or hereafter sponsored by The American Legion.

At the annual meeting in October 2018 the board of directors approved $766,761 to 24 nonprofit organizations to be completed in the 2019 calendar year. These grants have been awarded to support youth-serving projects that seek to enhance the lives of children by addressing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of children. The following is a brief summary of the grants awarded for 2019:

American Printing House for the Blind of Louisville, Kentucky, was awarded $21,029 for their project, "Braille Tales: Sharing the Joy of Reading." This grant will provide Braille Tales books to 2,500 visually impaired children throughout the U.S. The American Legion Auxiliary supports this grant.

Building Better Days of Edgewater, Maryland, was awarded $10,000 for their project, "Power of Play". This project provides pediatric patients with a building toy to take their mind off of treatments. The American Legion Auxiliary supports this grant.

Children's Hospital and Medical Center Foundation of Omaha, Nebraska, was awarded $12,000 for their project, "Safe Sleep Education Program." This project will fund Halo Sleep Sacks to more than 1,500 hospitals in North America.

Children's Organ Transplant Association of Bloomington, Indiana, was awarded $6,000 for their project, "The American Legion Family Friendly Fundraising Initiative." This project will create The American Legion Family Friendly Fundraising Guide online to support COTA families and local post activities throughout the nation. The Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary support this grant.

Families Helping Families NOLA of New Orleans, Louisiana, was awarded $10,000 for their project, "Computer Coding for young people with Autism." This project will funding to modify their current program curriculum to insure success for youth with autism.

Father Flanagan's Boys' Home of Boys Town, Nebraska, was awarded $35,000 for their project, "Boys Town National Hotline: suicide prevention and mental health outreach." This project will fund 18 weeks of online outreach in 2019 for the Boys Town Hotline. The Eight and Forty supports this grant.

Gift of Adoption of Techny, Illinois, was awarded $25,000 for their project, "Adoption Support for Vulnerable Children." This project will fund the final needs to complete the adoption of vulnerable children in the U.S. - giving them permanent families and the chance to thrive. The Sons of The American Legion support this grant.

Gulf Coast Council – Boy Scouts of Pensacola, Florida, was awarded $7,000 for their project, "Rebuilding the Adventure for Generations to Come - Youth Camping Program." This project will sponsor a handicap water lift for their summer boy scout camping program. The Eight and Forty support this grant.

John Hopkins All Children's Hospital of St. Petersburg, Florida, was awarded $25,200 for their project, "Pragmatic Acquisition of Language Skills, P.A.L.S. - A therapeutic Social Skills Group." This project will provide a program for small group instruction of students on the high-end autism spectrum who have near-normal to above-average verbal and nonverbal skills. The Eight and Forty support this grant.

Mercy Medical Angels (MMA) of Virginia Beach, Virginia, was awarded $51,000 for their project, "Angel Wings and Wheels for Children." This project will maintain MMA's website to more effectively promote its services for children and to promote our MayDay4KIDS annual campaign to raise funds. The Eight and Forty support this grant.

National Autism Association of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, was awarded $58,408 for their project, "Big Red Safety Box." This project will fund Big Red Safety Boxes designed to educate, raise awareness and provide tangible tools that may assist in preventing and responding to dangerous wandering- related incidents in the autism community.

Organization for Autism Research of Arlington, Virginia, was awarded $14,250 for their project, "A Parent's Guide to Research: 2019 Outreach." This project will print and distribute the revised resource, "A Parent's Guide to Research".

Our Military Kids of McLean, Virginia, was awarded $53,905 for their project, "Empowering a Generation of Military Kids." This project will fun award packets, publish their quarterly newsletter and annual impact report, update the program website, and produce a benefits video. The Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of the U.S. of Asheville, North Carolina, was awarded $15,500 for their project, "The Starfolio Resource Notebook for Families of Children with Brain Cancer." This project will provide a free resource notebook designed to help families of newly diagnosed patients' partner with their child's healthcare team and organize medical information during treatment.

St. Vincent Hospital Foundation of Indianapolis, Indiana, was awarded $6,714 for their project, "Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent Healing Arts Program." This project will fund the Healing Arts Program and services that are offered to any child hospitalized at Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent. The American Legion Auxiliary supports this grant.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis, Indiana, was awarded $51,000 for their project "2019 American Legion National Youth Programs Scholarships." This grant will provide academic scholarships to the following youth programs: Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Baseball and Eagle Scout of the Year. The Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis, Indiana was awarded $75,000 for their project "The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program-2019." This grant will provide temporary financial assistance to children of veteran's in need of shelter, food, utilities and clothing. The Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis, Indiana was awarded $138,000 for their project "The American Legion National Oratorical Contest-2019." This grant will provide scholarships for youth competing in the 2019 American Legion Oratorical Contest. The Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

The Common Strand Foundation of Dumfries, Virginia, was awarded $28,500 for their project "Children of PTSD Victims." This grant will fund a website with "kid-

friendly" downloadable reference material to help children cope with their situation and create a more balanced and nurturing home environment.

The Eight and Forty Foundation of Lake Dallas, Texas, was awarded $15,000 for their project "Breath Better Today for a Healthier Future." This grant will fund 300 children (with asthma, allergies, or cystic fibrosis) the cost of breathing treatment, equipment, or medication. The Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

ThinkFirst Foundation of Naperville, Illinois, was awarded $13,380 for their project, "Protecting Babies from Injury." This grant will produce 5 brochures, identification cards, and CellSlip pouches to new parents that cover a host of injuries that could cause death or disability.

Too Small to Fail of New York, New York, was awarded $50,000 for their project, "Increasing Access to Early Language Development Resources through Diaper Banks." This grant will add 10 additional diaper banks in especially high-need communities, with a focus on agencies that serve military and veteran families.

Truth in Nature of Vila Rica, Georgia, was awarded $20,000 for their project, "Truth in Nature Program Expansion." This grant will fund the opening of new chapters of outdoor Christian ministries for boys from fatherless & one parent homes in the following states: LA, GA, SC, NC, and MI. The Sons of The American Legion support this grant.

United Through Reading of San Diego, California, was awarded $24,875 for their project, "United Through Reading App Book Sponsorship." This grant will fund books for 5,000 military children. The American Legion Auxiliary supports this grant.

At a board of directors meeting in Indianapolis on May 5, 2019, the following officers were elected: Dennis R. Boland of Florida, president; Peggy Moon of Minnesota, vice president; Joseph J. Frank of Missouri, secretary; and Robert S. Turner of Georgia, treasurer. Administrative personnel appointed by the board were George A. Buskirk Jr., assistant treasurer, and Meagen Sweet, executive secretary.

Under the 1969 Tax Reform Act, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation retains its tax-exempt status. Gifts, therefore, are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law, and bequests are deductible for federal inheritance tax purposes to the extent permitted by the Federal Tax Act.

AMERICAN LEGION ENDOWMENT FUND.
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, President
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana, President (until March 2019)

In 1925, World War I veterans, widows and children continued to struggle to return to a regular life. The members of The American Legion, aware of the vital responsibilities entrusted to them by those who had served, knew the time had come to take action. More than 900,000 Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members and other American citizens joined the campaign, raising nearly $5 million and establishing the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation.

Since those early days, over $30 million has been distributed to disabled veterans and the children of those who served our great nation. Your gifts and donations are added to a trust that is administered by the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation. The foundation, whose members are selected by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, takes great care to ensure that these gifts are wisely invested. Income from fund investments is then passed on to The American Legion national organization to administer programs of Children & Youth (C&Y) and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R), that include funding for the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program, Department Service Officer school and Board of Veterans Appeals training.

During calendar year 2018, the American Legion Endowment Fund transferred trust earnings of $136,200 to The American Legion to support TFA. Donations to the American Legion Endowment during this time totaled $433,015. It is important to note that due to

the structure of the fund as an endowment; only the earnings on the fund are spent, ensuring that donations will continue to support veterans and their children for generations.

During this program year, the American Legion Endowment Fund underwent a name change. The American Legion Endowment Fund will remain the legal name, but will now be doing business as the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation. This change was made to spark a renewed focus upon helping the veterans and children of this great country.

William M. Detweiler served as president of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation until his passing in March 2019. At a board of directors meeting in Indianapolis on May 7, 2019, the following officers were elected: Hon. Vincent M. Gaughan, president; James Koutz, vice president; and Anthony Jordan, treasurer. Administrative personnel appointed by the board were George A. Buskirk Jr., assistant treasurer and Meagen Sweet, secretary.

Under the 1969 Tax Reform Act, the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation retains its tax-exempt status. Gifts, therefore, are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law, and bequests are deductible for federal inheritance tax purposes to the extent permitted by the Federal Tax Act.

Table No. 1 **Children & Youth Expenditures and Number of Children Served**

Region and Department	Reporting Legion	Temporary Financial Assistance by National	Contributions to Child Welfare Foundation by Posts and Units	Direct Aid from Posts, Units and Departments	Contributions to Other Child Serving Agencies by Legion and Auxiliary	Other Expenditures for Children by Legion and Auxiliary	Department Administrative Expense by Legion	Total Number of Children Served	Total Aid Legion Lines 3 thru 8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
REGION 1									
Connecticut	42%	$0.00	$922.17	$9,930.00	$5,200.00	$48,633.00	$4,787.00	2,608	$69,472
Maine	61%	$0.00	$1,396.03	$31,273.00	$4,885.00	$37,319.00	$7,200.00	17,453	$82,073
Massachusetts	49%	$2,857.84	$1,111.00	$12,110.00	$28,864.00	$81,099.00	$9,610.00	7,174	$135,652
New Hampshire	100%	$0.00	$146.66	$23,480.00	$36,155.00	$126,404.00	$3,365.00	70,345	$189,551
Rhode Island	33%	$0.00	$0.00	$950.00	$5,147.00	$6,700.00	$800.00	1	$13,397
Vermont	81%	$0.00	$75.00	$27,357.00	$29,755.00	$75,778.00	$14,903.00	2,855	$147,868
TOTAL:	**58%**	**$2,857.84**	**$3,650.86**	**$105,100.00**	**$110,006.00**	**$375,933.00**	**$40,465.00**	**100,436**	**$638,013**
REGION 2									
Delaware	100%	$0.00	$150.00	$9,625.00	$20,775.00	$14,685.00	$2,620.00	248	$47,855
D.C.	4%	$0.00	$20.00	$1,500.00	$2,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	$3,520
Maryland	80%	$1,245.00	$2,145.00	$150,895.00	$90,955.00	$103,852.00	$10,500.00	4,394	$359,392
New Jersey	48%	$4,000.00	$375.00	$106,958.00	$76,142.00	$141,665.00	$11,716.00	3,841	$340,856
New York	48%	$1,464.82	$2,421.54	$1,341,797.00	$97,883.00	$433,426.00	$53,062.00	28,120	$1,930,054
Pennsylvania	49%	$854.05	$5,709.00	$162,272.00	$140,260.00	$316,293.00	$33,937.00	8,021	$661,325
Virginia	79%	$2,669.00	$4,300.00	$96,855.00	$77,255.00	$169,807.00	$51,425.00	4,823	$404,311
West Virginia	81%	$9,070.03	$942.54	$25,410.00	$10,140.00	$54,650.00	$54,765.00	3,815	$154,978
TOTAL:	**54%**	**$19,302.90**	**$16,063.08**	**$1,897,112.00**	**$515,410.00**	**$1,236,378.00**	**$218,025.00**	**51,262**	**$3,902,291**
REGION 3									
Alabama	91%	$2,380.00	$1,386.13	$46,400.00	$24,391.00	$75,218.00	$9,560.00	4,450	$159,335
Florida	88%	$11,498.98	$57,678.16	$176,826.00	$176,754.00	$381,884.00	$37,026.00	30,594	$841,665
Georgia	64%	$2,375.00	$75.00	$69,673.00	$42,015.00	$1,229,998.00	$101,966.00	6,512	$1,446,102
Kentucky	78%	$11,924.43	$3,353.53	$31,167.00	$23,210.00	$70,901.00	$17,758.00	4,790	$158,314
North Caroiina	76%	$22,070.40	$428.00	$45,729.00	$36,819.00	$180,715.00	$15,703.00	28,912	$301,464
South Carolina	41%	$1,465.28	$3,348.71	$13,887.00	$20,977.00	$38,711.00	$7,150.00	5,810	$84,467
Tennessee	100%	$20,667.87	$936.13	$95,278.00	$73,970.00	$165,035.00	$45,788.00	7,070	$401,675
TOTAL:	**78%**	**$72,409.94**	**$67,203.66**	**$478,760.00**	**$397,236.00**	**$2,142,462.00**	**$234,951.00**	**90,138**	**$3,393,023**
REGION 4									
Arkansas	44%	$0.00	$380.00	$6,833.00	$7,329.00	$30,402.00	$6,609.00	1,399	$51,553
Louisiana	13%	$554.16	$720.00	$3,990.00	$2,172.00	$28,500.00	$925.00	648	$36,861
Mississippi	25%	$0.00	$2,812.00	$5,640.00	$31,525.00	$254,056.00	$38,605.00	1,825	$332,638
Oklahoma	100%	$3,000.00	$285.00	$18,284.00	$22,782.00	$167,212.00	$12,862.00	2,974	$224,425
Texas	68%	$7,044.41	$4,625.66	$102,629.00	$152,113.00	$296,659.00	$42,927.00	44,033	$605,998
TOTAL:	**53%**	**$10,598.57**	**$8,822.66**	**$137,376.00**	**$215,921.00**	**$776,829.00**	**$101,928.00**	**50,879**	**$1,251,475**
REGION 5									
Illinois	42%	$8,214.06	$2,110.00	$51,403.00	$56,047.00	$120,377.00	$22,979.00	13,189	$261,130
Indiana	69%	$14,217.97	$5,556.00	$309,732.00	$93,337.00	$249,408.00	$34,953.00	4,322	$707,204
Michigan	24%	$1,450.00	$2,054.80	$132,731.00	$21,600.00	$98,051.00	$7,975.00	1,971	$263,862
Missouri	100%	$0.00	$1,685.24	$51,123.00	$24,909.00	$96,975.00	$17,158.00	6,267	$191,850
Ohio	76%	$2,585.46	$115.00	$222,955.00	$159,245.00	$897,068.00	$22,285.00	67,077	$1,304,253
Wisconsin	68%	$0.00	$4,480.00	$63,672.00	$34,468.00	$196,152.00	$14,513.00	22,679	$313,285
TOTAL:	**61%**	**$26,467.49**	**$16,000.84**	**$831,616.00**	**$389,606.00**	**$1,658,031.00**	**$119,863.00**	**117,505**	**$3,041,584**
REGION 6									
Iowa	64%	$0.00	$1,619.45	$32,897.00	$18,676.00	$101,344.00	$8,384.00	15,898	$162,920
Kansas	67%	$1,459.61	$0.00	$38,728.00	$885.00	$59,037.00	$8,655.00	17,619	$108,785
Minnesota	51%	$0.00	$8,740.82	$201,054.00	$201,205.00	$147,912.00	$3,501.00	7,278	$562,413
Nebrasia	100%	$1,356.03	$844.82	$24,301.00	$13,260.00	$87,040.00	$9,737.00	12,784	$136,539
North Dakota	59%	$0.00	$25.00	$50,116.00	$29,115.00	$69,358.00	$6,791.00	6,933	$155,405
South Dakota	70%	$4,204.97	$1,775.85	$58,415.00	$10,351.00	$14,985.00	$1,936.00	630	$91,668
TOTAL:	**67%**	**$7,020.61**	**$13,006.94**	**$405,511.00**	**$273,492.00**	**$479,676.00**	**$39,004.00**	**61,142**	**$1,217,710**
REGION 7									
Arizona	70%	$22,302.68	$3,584.28	$39,610.00	$53,598.00	$135,505.00	$17,255.00	21,920	$271,855
California	65%	$3,000.00	$3,829.39	$154,003.00	$136,446.00	$327,950.00	$32,416.00	19,803	$657,644
Colorado	79%	$14,720.93	$3,635.00	$38,715.00	$31,784.00	$181,795.00	$8,037.00	11,456	$278,587
Hawaii	24%	$1,500.00	$0.00	$100.00	$500.00	$200.00	$0.00	20	$2,300
Nevada	81%	$3,000.00	$6,130.00	$14,170.00	$7,400.00	$15,940.00	$400.00	2,634	$47,040
New Mexico	92%	$0.00	$1,095.18	$29,045.00	$19,714.00	$60,728.00	$3,275.00	3,026	$113,857
Utah	96%	$3,000.00	$50.00	$12,425.00	$2,775.00	$32,115.00	$2,767.00	3,081	$53,132
TOTAL:	**73%**	**$47,523.61**	**$18,323.86**	**$288,068.00**	**$252,217.00**	**$754,233.00**	**$64,150.00**	**61,940**	**$1,424,515**
REGION 8									
Alaska	83%	$0.00	$225.00	$44,281.00	$47,843.00	$44,455.00	$18,769.00	3,015	$155,573
Idaho	100%	$1,500.00	$35.00	$9,587.00	$1,960.00	$54,946.00	$2,673.00	2,914	$70,701
Montana	101%	$4,969.41	$204.40	$9,191.00	$9,912.00	$27,190.00	$4,060.00	5,373	$55,527
Oregon	74%	$23,782.14	$1,150.00	$34,141.00	$11,390.00	$31,617.00	$3,600.00	7,535	$105,680
Washington	74%	$8,443.04	$1,997.59	$14,578.00	$30,062.00	$36,707.00	$3,665.00	1,727	$95,453
Wyoming	88%	$0.00	$3,252.61	$8,300.00	$5,875.00	$12,184.00	$700.00	5,531	$30,312
TOTAL:	**86%**	**$38,694.59**	**$6,864.60**	**$120,078.00**	**$107,042.00**	**$207,099.00**	**$33,467.00**	**26,095**	**$513,245**
REGION TOTALS:	**64%**	**$224,875.35**	**$149,935.49**	**$4,263,621.00**	**$2,260,930.00**	**$7,630,641.00**	**$851,853.00**	**559,397**	**$15,381,856**
FOREIGN									
France	48%	$0.00	$0.00	$2,500.00	$4,250.00	$3,850.00	$850.00	850	$11,450
Mexico	16%	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$9,400.00	$375.00	70	$9,775
Philippines	30%	$0.00	$25.00	$950.00	$2,297.00	$10,350.00	$965.00	146	$14,587
Puerto Rico	42%	$4,100.00	$0.00	$4,150.00	$6,647.00	$28,281.00	$2,430.00	3,786	$45,608
TOTAL:	**38%**	**$4,100.00**	**$25.00**	**$31,666.00**	**$10,180.00**	**$47,917.00**	**$3,712.00**	**5,114**	**$97,600**
GRAND TOTALS:	**64%**	**$228,975.35**	**$149,960.49**	**$4,295,287.00**	**$2,271,110.00**	**$7,678,558.00**	**$855,565.00**	**564,511**	**$15,479,456.84**

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2018 - MAY 31, 2019

Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	$89,027.49
Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$69,043.97
Child Welfare Foundation by 8/40	$10,261.63
Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals	$23,804.96
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$0.00
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$427,315.84
CFC/United Way	$3.88
Total	**$619,457.77**

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-45	1946-65	1966-85	1986-95	1996-2005	2006-2015*	2016 - May 2019	Grand Total
Alabama	$29,181.33	$51,167.06	$76,790.45	$152,617.32	$137,824.69	$110,931.35	$25,580.00	$584,092.20
Alaska	$0.00	$1,627.56	$1,550.00	$0.00	$3,500.00	$2,185.98	$11,200.00	$20,043.54
Arizona	$26,061.70	$8,732.00	$21,380.31	$192,830.21	$289,526.72	$492,329.53	$31,431.56	$1,062,312.03
Arkansas	$33,873.20	$25,982.22	$2,881.07	$55,004.98	$16,181.61	$26,959.04	$0.00	$160,862.12
California	$30,106.15	$16,026.45	$1,550.00	$7,559.00	$30,034.44	$194,533.72	$85,600.00	$365,409.76
Colorado	$41,621.11	$22,618.11	$1,395.00	$12,205.83	$17,592.15	$172,131.92	$19,920.93	$287,485.05
Connecticut	$1,854.00	$440.00	$450.00	$1,192.00	$7,971.56	$32,258.56	$14,700.00	$58,866.12
Delaware	$2,035.00	$1,000.00	$475.00	$2,635.00	$8,497.64	$12,491.00	$9,000.00	$38,133.64
DC	$2,570.00	$1,203.50	$600.00	$26,136.75	$2,319.00	$6,375.63	$600.00	$39,804.88
Florida	$33,341.28	$25,520.50	$2,530.00	$27,060.88	$64,469.51	$457,310.37	$151,726.96	$761,959.82
Georgia	$69,894.07	$86,084.42	$4,865.00	$8,498.51	$12,861.80	$84,941.92	$13,175.00	$280,320.72
Hawaii	$870.00	$0.00	$800.00	$0.00	$6,168.40	$2,767.97	$26,600.00	$37,206.37
Idaho	$7,593.50	$5,771.85	$7,368.39	$20,228.20	$195,485.15	$244,319.48	$1,500.00	$482,264.57
Illinois	$30,220.79	$4,343.53	$10,525.73	$92,128.56	$276,545.19	$294,819.85	$19,563.47	$727,947.12
Indiana	$31,850.08	$9,066.40	$2,920.00	$126,545.18	$173,400.66	$511,401.98	$28,061.71	$883,246.01
Iowa	$17,493.08	$597.00	$3,928.45	$13,782.47	$227,865.82	$186,827.05	$1,100.00	$431,393.87
Kansas	$20,766.80	$42,064.35	$8,923.00	$9,241.54	$16,291.60	$61,167.11	$5,759.61	$164,234.01
Kentucky	$23,843.50	$45,527.90	$64,854.38	$44,238.66	$12,445.22	$163,862.00	$21,983.50	$376,755.74
Louisiana	$23,400.50	$38,454.30	$3,395.00	$7,340.45	$33,897.24	$15,051.72	$44,654.16	$166,193.37
Maine	$3,618.94	$1,910.26	$2,676.55	$15,912.00	$22,305.05	$15,627.26	$11,100.00	$73,150.06
Maryland	$5,887.00	$3,390.57	$3,383.00	$4,770.00	$31,620.94	$50,096.67	$19,645.00	$118,793.18
Massachusetts	$2,754.50	$455.00	$150.00	$4,650.00	$18,888.67	$22,670.48	$55,857.64	$105,426.29
Michigan	$23,895.33	$33,281.24	$15,346.82	$14,012.24	$52,676.66	$80,139.96	$36,379.97	$255,732.22
Minnesota	$8,610.77	$23,322.79	$11,840.33	$137,579.21	$89,538.19	$41,094.06	$6,000.00	$317,885.35
Mississippi	$40,293.83	$63,254.14	$117,892.56	$51,214.88	$84,261.79	$59,465.38	$6,600.00	$422,982.38
Missouri	$53,073.08	$47,799.64	$11,056.00	$17,969.51	$38,984.13	$149,530.46	$3,100.00	$321,512.82
Montana	$5,414.25	$1,668.85	$1,575.30	$38,571.40	$57,913.91	$97,516.22	$6,469.41	$209,129.34
Nebraska	$18,470.10	$17,795.68	$17,531.06	$3,373.25	$759.49	$19,801.41	$1,956.03	$79,687.02
Nevada	$585.00	$766.00	$7,272.00	$995.00	$16,818.94	$81,164.64	$3,000.00	$110,601.58
New Hampshire	$4,250.50	$4,941.50	$0.00	$53,557.79	$12,610.00	$23,124.23	$4,400.00	$102,884.02
New Jersey	$8,995.53	$1,948.00	$4,478.00	$55,578.20	$53,194.60	$48,721.88	$44,000.00	$218,912.21
New Mexico	$20,074.30	$53,098.74	$58,723.89	$111,071.87	$49,262.39	$40,257.73	$0.00	$332,488.92
New York	$7,887.54	$4,803.00	$1,150.00	$33,784.24	$83,432.27	$47,376.63	$29,664.82	$208,098.40
North Carolina	$46,597.50	$81,019.60	$9,740.00	$20,750.18	$68,774.55	$278,311.46	$105,964.03	$611,157.32
North Dakota	$26,017.45	$11,788.21	$5,771.32	$8,499.40	$11,426.94	$13,983.32	$0.00	$75,486.64
Ohio	$23,930.43	$5,116.25	$11,513.89	$11,357.65	$13,289.44	$108,007.84	$22,085.46	$195,400.96
Oklahoma	$40,458.05	$65,406.47	$88,956.03	$156,914.96	$203,764.51	$483,767.24	$4,489.63	$1,043,756.89
Oregon	$1,250.50	$13,750.15	$24,595.95	$42,465.83	$14,796.00	$252,933.02	$57,273.41	$407,064.86
Panama	$675.00	$534.00	$600.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,809.00
Pennsylvania	$22,847.41	$651.00	$19,204.85	$38,183.37	$29,380.12	$169,089.68	$10,254.05	$289,610.48
Puerto Rico	$17,057.00	$57,754.00	$55,499.50	$43,420.00	$11,100.00	$18,844.64	$16,400.00	$218,075.14
Rhode Island	$1,582.00	$1,641.00	$1,060.00	$18,499.38	$16,182.72	$5,049.90	$7,300.00	$51,295.00
South Carolina	$68,453.05	$26,693.34	$5,339.00	$500.00	$13,810.16	$86,964.71	$26,795.26	$228,355.52
South Dakota	$42,430.27	$16,362.05	$725.00	$30,886.38	$5,358.30	$1,000.00	$4,204.97	$100,766.97
Tennessee	$31,144.77	$54,613.20	$20,504.30	$56,068.79	$36,561.35	$94,079.68	$44,578.69	$337,848.78
Texas	$35,373.50	$47,392.43	$26,714.50	$7,884.74	$31,484.75	$236,342.07	$97,589.41	$482,781.40
Utah	$11,125.48	$3,248.00	$3,396.00	$12,014.42	$14,034.34	$31,707.70	$3,000.00	$78,525.94
Vermont	$1,824.50	$9,251.50	$0.00	$4,925.00	$6,004.26	$7,701.44	$0.00	$29,706.70
Virginia	$45,310.31	$28,037.78	$17,836.00	$31,930.40	$66,509.94	$377,640.08	$77,769.00	$645,033.51
Washington	$3,378.00	$427.50	$625.00	$66,884.89	$611,131.69	$742,910.02	$56,746.81	$1,382,103.91
West Virginia	$27,829.98	$11,395.94	$3,460.00	$17,750.68	$40,628.59	$113,016.71	$11,848.57	$225,730.47
Wisconsin	$15,881.98	$8,087.25	$9,878.00	$16,242.78	$74,327.21	$95,856.52	$8,300.00	$228,553.74
Wyoming	$8,180.00	$1,993.00	$1,350.00	$979.00	$13,746.91	$34,232.42	$0.00	$60,481.33
Other Depts	$560.00	$173.50						$733.50
Miscellaneous**	$19,499.21							$19,499.21
TOTAL	$1,121,572.95	$1,089,976.73	$777,325.21	$1,926,240.98	$3,327,257.91	$6,958,291.54	$2,698,012.14	$17,898,677.06

**For the year 1926--Department totals not available

CONVENTION COMMISSION
Michael E. Walton, Illinois, Chairman
Bridget A. Robinson, CMP, Georgia, Director

The 100th annual National Convention of The American Legion convened in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24-30, 2019. National Commander, Denise Rohan of Wisconsin called the National Convention to order at 8:30AM on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, welcoming Legionnaires to Minneapolis and thanking them for their continuing service to our Country and to our veterans. The 100th National Convention began with master of ceremonies, Melissa Stockwell, who addressed nearly 6,000 American Legion Family members on Tuesday morning. A special guest to the Convention was The Honorable Michael R. Pence Vice President of The United States. Later in the day, The Honorable Amy Klobuchar U.S. Senate; The Honorable Tina Smith U.S. Senate; The Honorable Mark Dayton Governor of the State of Minnesota; The Honorable Jacob Frey Mayor of the City of Minneapolis; 2017–2018 Department Commander of Minnesota Michael J. Schaffer and, Jeffrey Olson, President of the 2018 National Convention Corporation welcomed Legionnaires to the National Convention. Other guest speakers addressing the 100th National Convention of The American Legion were The Honorable Mark Takano United States House of Representatives Committee on Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Tim Walz United States House of Representatives; The Honorable Phil Roe, M.D., Chairman House Committee on Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Jon Tester U.S. Senate, Ranking Member, Veterans Affairs Committee; and Stuart Parker, Chief Executive Officer, USAA.

There were many highlights during the 2018 National Convention, but four events conducted at the National Convention deserve special mention. On Friday, August 24 the Color Guard Contest took place. Fourteen color guard units competed in four categories with Harrisburg Post 472 from Houston, Texas, being crowned as National Champions. Additionally, six bands participated in the Competitive Concert Band Contest with The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas from New York, being crowned National Champions. The Patriotic Memorial Service, featuring the Minnesota Boychoir, and an i parade, both held on Sunday, August 26, 2018, were attended by nearly 2,000 American Legion Family members. On Tuesday, August 28, 2018, the National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests was held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The banquet featured Three Dog Night as the entertainment and was attended by over 2,300 Legionnaires and guests.

Future conventions and dates:

Indianapolis, Indiana.....Aug. 23 – 29, 2019
Louisville, Kentucky.....Aug. 28 – Sept. 3, 2020
Phoenix, Arizona.....Aug. 27 – Sept. 2, 2021
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.....Aug. 26 – Sept. 1, 2022
Charlotte, North Carolina.....Aug. 25 – 31, 2023
New Orleans, Louisiana.....Aug. 23 – 29, 2024

FINANCE COMMISSION

Gaither M. Keener, Jr., North Carolina, Chairman
George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana, National Treasurer
Shawn T. Long, CPA, Indiana, Director

The primary obligation of the Finance Commission is to prepare a yearly budget for the National Executive Committee, handle funds under that budget, and exercise reasonable oversight to see that the various divisions and departments of the national organization operate within appropriations. The Finance Commission includes seven members, with the national adjutant as ex-officio secretary and the national commander and national treasurer as ex-officio members. Also attending these meetings are the executive directors of the Washington and Indianapolis offices and the finance director and liaison observers from the National Executive Committee.

The national organization had an operating income of $2,876,885 for 2018. We received $18.50 dues per member, allocating $15.50 to the General Fund and $3 to The American Legion Magazine. Income of the national organization derives from annual membership dues, interest on investments, magazine advertisements, Emblem Sales, contributions and other approved activities.

A full financial statement is incorporated in the auditor's report, found in the 2019 National Convention Program and the 2019 Annual Report.

MAIL

June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019

Incoming Letters and Parcels (distributed to Divisions for processing).....735,330
Incoming Parcels.....2,545
Outgoing Letters/Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales).....7,001,688

FREIGHT AND EXPRESS

June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019

Out – Cartons.....3,801
Out – Pounds.....90,960
UPS – In.....1,451
UPS – Out.....5,371

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman
John W. Querfeld, Illinois, Director

The National Internal Affairs Commission was established by resolution of the National Executive Committee in 1947. The original charge for this constitutional commission still remains: to formulate and recommend policies and to oversee the implementation of adopted policies relating to activities conducted for organizational purposes.

Among those purposes are all those not properly the responsibility of any other national commission, as well as membership strategies, post formation, clerical and records administration for posts and individual members and special projects. The Commission provides guidance and assistance to the National Adjutant on necessary administrative operations. Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline and commemorative activities. The Commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities that potentially affect Legion posts and departments, recommending appropriate courses of action.

The Commission has six standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination: 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemorative Committee, 75th Anniversary of WWII Commemorative Committee, 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, American Legion Riders Advisory Committee, National Convention 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.

The Internal Affairs Commission also provides guidance for the following programs:

Sons of The American Legion -- The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) is the largest veteran support organization in the world. For the 46th consecutive year, the (SAL) are at an "All-Time High" in overall membership, with nine detachments (states) surpassing their highest-paid membership ever. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 2018 with a record 371,020 members. This number represents a 1% increase over the previous year, with 31 detachments achieving 100% membership or higher.

Membership in the SAL for 2019 is expected to be another record-setting year. The SAL is instrumental in supporting several American Legion programs with a heavy emphasis on Americanism, Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services (VAVS), and the Child Welfare Foundation (CWF). In 2018, the SAL provided over 303,113 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded $1.3 million nationwide. Other projects include our Americanism programs of which over $3.5 million was donated along with 843,309 hours of volunteer service to their country and communities. A portion of those hours (49,935) went towards placing American flags at veteran's grave markers and educating the community on US Flag etiquette and anti-flag desecration. Within Americanism, seven programs directly impact our youth, providing leadership, sportsmanship and scholarships. It is the SAL who plays an intricate role in making The American Legion Americanism programs so successful. The Child Welfare Foundation is the flagship program of the SAL. In 2018, the Sons have raised over $327,594 for the Child Welfare Foundation and provided numerous grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons of The American Legion have contributed over 7.25 million dollars to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. It is the Sons of The American Legion who year after year carry on the legacy of their fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers dating all the way back to WWI. The SAL will continue this legacy as The American Legion moves into its second 100 years.

The American Legion Riders – The National Executive Committee established The American Legion Riders (ALR) as a national program in October 2007 to be supported and administered by posts and departments. The American Legion Riders National Advisory

Committee is responsible for advising the national leadership on resolutions before the Internal Affairs Commission and to act as sources of information for departments and posts. This committee also provides significant guidance for the planning and execution of The American Legion Legacy Run each year. Of particular importance to the committee is the establishment of program protocols adhering to federal rules regarding The American Legion's trademarks and proper supervision provided to the ALR programs by the posts.

Members of the American Legion Riders National Advisory Committee also serve as liaisons within six national regions to provide information and support to departments and posts.

The Riders raise money for many charitable causes, most notably for children and youth programs and for wounded or returned servicemen and women. Since 2006, the annual American Legion Legacy Run has conducted fourteen major cross-country, multi-day motorcycle runs totaling over 18,000 miles and helping our organization raise over $14 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship trust program. The scholarship program is administered by the Americanism Commission.

National Emergency Fund -- From January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018, The American Legion provided $256,870 in grant monies to Legion and SAL members and to American Legion posts. During the same period, the National Emergency Fund received donations totaling over $550,000. This prepares us to support future natural disasters.

Every dollar contributed to the fund is used for providing financial assistance to members of The American Legion Family. The grants are to be used for immediate needs – lodging, food and clothing – and not as a substitute for insurance. In order to qualify, members must have been displaced or evacuated from their primary place of residence and be a member in good standing at the time of loss. Monies to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and to conduct fundraising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

The National Emergency Fund is unique and members know they can turn to The American Legion for immediate financial assistance, without payback. Through the generosity of Legion and Sons of The American Legion members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the needs of our Legion family in the aftermath of local, state and national weather related disasters.

Consolidated Post Reports -- The Consolidated Post Report was established in 1975 in order to assist departments in the documentation of the various activities a specific post has done during the twelve-month reporting period, June 1st through May 31st. During the 2018-2019 reporting year, sixty-seven percent of posts reported some activity.

Throughout the reporting year American Legion post members volunteered 723,170 hours in assisting veterans at VA Hospitals; 44,046 Legionnaires gave over 69,053 pints of blood; 119,930 events covered through different media outlets totaled; performed 123,638 funeral honors at a cost of $2,486,177; sponsored 1,746 American Legion baseball teams at a cost of $4,791,444; Legion posts sponsored 1,842 Boy Scout units for a cost of $1,598,896; through various school assisted programs they spent $955,897; presented 19,697 American flags at a cost of $287,656; performed 4,415,832 community service hours while spending $5,034,407 in support of those activities; and all other donations to Family Support Network, Cancer Research, United Way, Legion Endowment Fund, Children's Hospitals, National Emergency Fund, Special Olympics, Temporary Financial Assistance, Children & Youth Programs and other various activities totaled $10,679,784.

The National American Legion College-- Each November, the National American Legion College (NALC), which was reinstated in 1998, hosts many talented young ambitious Legionnaires at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis for a week of intensive training. These students return to their departments with enhanced knowledge and appreciation for The American Legion. They are taught the core values and

contributions of the organization and are challenged to think critically and creatively working as a team confronting The American Legion.

Candidates for the NALC must be veterans who served during the Lebanon/Grenada era or later, with demonstrated potential for higher leadership roles. Student candidates are nominated by their respective departments and rank ordered by a selection committee. In 2018 55 students attended the National American Legion College.

There are over 800 graduates making a difference in leadership roles and membership teams across the country. Many have moved up the ranks to department and national level positions while others are used in various leadership and teaching roles within their respective departments. Graduates are encouraged to utilize the skills and knowledge by coordinating with their fellow graduates to develop a training platform that will benefit and enhance their departments knowledge and leadership base.

American Legion Basic Training -- Basic Training is The American Legion's on-line, self-paced training program free to American Legion members. It is the quickest way for those who want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veteran's service organization. It is a great introductory course to learn the organization and its history. Since August 2017, the Basic Training course (replacing the previous American Legion Extension Institute) has been taken by over 7,500 members. More courses are being developed to expand the on-line training available.

National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee
Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts, Chairman

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the 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, between 200 and 300 resolutions will be assigned.

Constitution And By-Laws Committee
Hon. 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 & By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the constitution and by-laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the revocation, cancellation or suspension of department and post charters of The American Legion.

Membership & Post Activities Committee
Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin, Chairman

Membership and programs go hand in hand to making The American Legion an organization able to provide people and resources to serve the needs of veterans and their families. Membership & Post Activities is pleased to report a continuing membership of over 1.8 million members worldwide.

Membership - Final 2017 membership – 1,941,607

Final 2018 membership – 1,881,901

2019 membership as of July 26, 2019 – 1,801,919

56th Annual National Membership Workshop -- The 56th Annual National Membership Workshop convened in Indianapolis on August 8-10, 2019, with more than 360 department and district officers from 50 departments in attendance.

Many who attended already had a good understanding of The American Legion's membership program, especially as it pertains to their departments and districts. When the workshop concluded, they are prepared to face day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of the Legion as it relates to potential members.

The goal of the workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to serve The American Legion's membership. Whether they are involved in recruitment or program implementation, the workshop teaches veterans to help veterans and provide communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

New Post Development/Revitalization -- The Membership & Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996 designed to assist posts, districts and departments in developing and revitalizing posts. The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers, along with practical, hands on field application.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization and development of more than 5,000 American Legion posts in the past 23 years. Many departments have succeeded in revitalizing posts without any direct assistance from National Headquarters staff. Whether departments request field assistance or just send members to the training workshop, positive results follow if they adhere to the guidelines established.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
Paul Dillard, Texas, Chairman
Matthew Shuman, Arizona, Director

This report covers activities of the Legislative Commission from August 15, 2018 through August 24, 2019. During this period, the Commission met two (2) 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 American Legion is officially interested. The Commission also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of 35 members and 5 National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee created the National Legislative Council in 1975, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their Members of Congress. There is one council member for each Member of Congress. A Council Chairman heads the Council, and is assisted by a Vice Chairman in each Department. The Chairman, Vice 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; these mandates are expressed in resolutions adopted at the annual National Convention and by the National Executive Committee at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. The Legislative Division is located in Washington, DC and consists of the director, a senior legislative associate, two legislative associates, a legislative associate/grassroots coordinator, and an administrative assistant. The director and associates are registered lobbyists and submit semi-annual lobbying reports to Congress; in addition the Legion submits quarterly reports

on legislation which our organization lobbies Congress. Because The American Legion is a federally chartered organization, an annual report is also prepared and submitted to Congress.

116th Congress, 1st Session

The First Session of the 116th Congress was seated on January 3, 2019. The Congress began their business in the midst of the longest government shutdown in American history. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers revolved mainly around ending the government shutdown, working with President Trump to address the border wall, and passage of FY 2020 appropriations. The American Legion has participated in twelve (12) congressional hearings thus far.

On January 25, 2019 President Trump signed Public Law (PL) 116-5, ending the 2018-2019 Shutdown and appropriating funding for FY19 for federal government operations for all federal departments and agencies until February 15, 2019. Consolidated appropriations for the remainder of FY19 were enacted on February 15, 2019 under Public Law (PL) 116-6.

The budget has been a key point of contention between Republicans and Democrats in Washington D.C. which led to a government shutdown in early 2019. However, the Budget deal which reopened the government was only a temporary measure and further negotiations were needed for a long-term solution. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and Speaker of the House Pelosi began talks to reach a budget agreement which would be agreed upon by the Administration and both chambers of Congress.

The eventual budget deal reached was passed by Congress with a vote of 284-189 in the House and 67-28 in the Senate. President Trump signed the budget deal on August 2nd. The two-year, $2.7 trillion budget agreement signed by President Trump on August 2nd wards off $126 billion in automatic spending cuts and suspends the debt ceiling through July 2021. The deal does not remove the possibility of a government shutdown at the conclusion of the fiscal year ending Sept. 30. It only sets spending levels for House and Senate appropriators and Congress must still pass an appropriations package to avoid another government shutdown.

AMERICANISM

In February 2019 Representative Steve Womack (AR) began work on a House Joint Resolution (HJ Res. 65), as a constitutional amendment to protect the flag. The legislation will be assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. The measure currently boasts 18 cosponsors. A Senate companion measure was will be introduced on June 14, 2019 (Flag Day) as a Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.49), and currently has 7 cosponsors. The American Legion will continue to seek passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag because it is the right thing to do. Let "We the People" decide.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Upon the passing of Past National Commander William Detweiler, Senator Cassidy (LA) and Senator Kennedy (LA) offered a statement for the congressional record. Further, Congressman Scalise (LA) as a member of leadership also offered to speak on the House floor for the record to commemorate the life and service of Commander Detweiler. Congressman Richmond (LA) flew a flag over the Capitol and gave a floor speech to commemorate the life and service of Commander Detweiler.

On February 14th, Senator Kyrsten Sinema (AZ) and Senator Tom Tillis (NC) introduced S. 504: The Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act (LEGION Act), extending the membership periods of The American Legion to allow for servicemembers who did not serve during official periods of war to sign up for membership in The American Legion. Congressman Correa (CA), Congressman Cisneros (CA), and Congressman Kline (VA) introduced the companion legislation, H.R. 1641, in the House of Representatives on March 8th.

The Senate passed S. 504 on June 11th and sent the bill to the House of Representatives where the House passed the LEGION Act on July 23rd. The LEGION act was signed into law by President Trump on July 30th 2019 and became Public Law (PL) 116-35.

Sens. Mike Braun, R-Ind., Jon Tester, D-Mont., Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and Todd Young, R-Ind., introduced the resolution designating Aug. 23-29 as "American Legion Week" to coincide with the Legion's national convention in its home city of Indianapolis. The resolution was passed on July 31st in the Senate by unanimous consent. Representative Andre Carson, D-Ind., introduced a companion resolution in the House on August 20th which has yet to receive a vote.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Since January 2019, the National Security Division has submitted four (4) letters of support.

On January 7th, staff submitted a letter of support to Senator John Thune (SD) to express support for S.21 - A bill making continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations act expires prior to the enactment of a new appropriations act. The U.S. Coast Guard is the only military branch working without pay during the government shutdown.

On January 10th, staff submitted a letter of support to Senator Richard Burr (NC) for "Gold Star Wives Day", which would recognize the work of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. and their dedication to service, support and friendship to the spouses of fallen servicemembers and veterans. The service and sacrifice of servicemembers and their families should not be forgotten, and through this proposed legislation it will not.

On March 19th, the staff wrote a letter of support to Senator Tammy Duckworth (IL) and on March 26th to Representative Raul Grijalva (AZ) for draft legislation "Veterans Visa and Protection Act of 2019". The legislation enables the return of eligible veterans removed from the United States, protect veterans and servicemembers residing in the United States from removal, and facilitate naturalization through service in the Armed Forces.

On March 26th the Legislative Division in partnership with National Security and the Japanese Embassy held an event on Capitol Hill to forge a continued partnership between the Japanese government and The American Legion.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has seen intense debate among the Republican led Senate and the Democratic held House. The Department of Defense, Administration, and the Senate asked for a DoD budget of $750 Billion while the House would eventually vote to appropriate only $733 Billion. The budget deal struck by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, signed by President Trump on August 2nd, would keep the defense budget at $738 Billion. However, the NDAA must head to a Conference Committee to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill and there are several key sticking points between Senate Republicans and House Democrats including:

Low Yield Tactical Nuclear Weapons: The DoD is fighting for increased capabilities in the use and employment of low yield tactical nukes by modernizing the nuclear arsenal and placing tactical nuclear devices in Nuclear Ballistic Submarines (SSBN). The DoD and Republicans view this as a way to threaten a "flexible response" should an adversary, such as Russia, from employing a tactical nuclear device. Democrats view this as a waste of resources and prefer deterrence through mutual assured destruction (MAD) even if an adversary only employs a low yield tactical nuke.

Use of DoD funds for construction of a border wall: Democrats want to prohibit the use of DoD funds to build a border wall because they view it as a misallocation of defense funds. Republicans view that these are an appropriate use of DoD funds.

Guantanamo Bay facilities: Democrats want to continue to push for efforts which draw down activity at the Guantanamo Bay detention facilities while Republicans want to keep captured terrorist detainees out of the United States.

Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF): Democrats are concerned that President Trump could use the 2001 AUMF to start a war with Iran and are looking to prohibit such actions. Republicans view this as a partisan attempt to tie the Presidents hands to react to changing national security issues.

Missile Defense Systems: The DoD and Republicans want to continue development, testing, and deployment of missile defense systems, both theater and strategic systems, to protect the U.S. and military forces. Democrats see this as destabilizing for relations with nations such as Russia and China who oppose the development of Missile Defense Systems.

The members of the Conference committee have yet to be announced but congressional staff has been having ongoing discussions over the August recess to try and hammer out an agreement before the members of Congress return in September.

The American Legion was proud to support extensive legislative efforts to end the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) – Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset, better known as the Widows Tax. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate introduced stand-alone bills to end the Widows Tax during the 116th Congress (H.R.553 & S.622). Such language was also present in the House version of the NDAA which passed on July 12th, however, it was not included in the Senate version. Presently, The American Legion is continuing advocacy efforts to ensure language to end the Widows Tax is included in the final version of the NDAA.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

The American Legion was happy to support the Retired Pay Restoration Act addressing concurrent receipt. The American Legion offered letters of support to the two bipartisan cosponsors, Representative Tulsi Gabbard and Gus Bilirakis. The legislation would remove the tax on veterans who receive retirement pay from their federal service as well as their service in the military.

The American Legion also support to Representative Hartzler on the VA Hiring Enhancement Act. The legislation would expedite hiring processes at VA and ensure individuals who wish to work at VA are not waiting extended periods. The legislation asks VA to focus on critical positons that provide direct and immediate healthcare to veterans and VA healthcare recipients.

Last year, the House unanimously passed a bill, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, to provide benefits to affected service members. But Wilkie objected, saying the science does not prove that they were exposed to Agent Orange. Veterans and their advocates had argued that the ships' distilling systems used Agent Orange-tainted seawater, exposing sailors on board to concentrated levels of dioxin. However, the bill failed in the Senate when two Republicans, Sen. Michael Enzi of Wyoming and Mike Lee of Utah, said they wanted to wait for a vote pending the outcome of a current study on Agent Orange exposure.

The calculus changed after the Supreme Court's decision in Procopio. The Department of Veterans Affairs stated it would not appeal a January court ruling that ordered it to provide health care and disability benefits for 90,000 veterans who served on Navy ships during the Vietnam War. This action will likely pave the way for "Blue Water Navy" sailors and Marines to receive Agent Orange-related compensation and VA-paid health care benefits. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie told members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on March 26, 2019 that he would recommend the Justice Department not fight the decision, handing a victory to former servicemembers who fought for years to have their diseases recognized as related to exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange.

During the 116th Congress, the House again voted unanimously to approve H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, and sent the bill to the Senate for approval.

This time, the Senate did not block the bill and voted unanimously to approve the H.R 299. On Tuesday, June 25, President Trump signed into law H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

The American Legion has worked with Representative Brownley to introduce legislation that would address homeless veterans. Our letter extended support to the Homeless Veterans Family Act, which would reimburse payments to organizations providing housing for not only homeless veterans but also their dependents. Often times veterans will forego assistance rather than leave their family behind. Representative Stivers also introduced similar legislation, The Housing our Military Service Members (HOMeS) Act, which would also provide housing for veterans their dependents experiencing homelessness. The American Legion has worked with both members to advance our priority of ending veteran homelessness.

Legislation was introduced to revamp the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Program and move towards a digital friendly program. Currently, servicemembers and those eligible receive a stack of documentation that often ends up disposed. As the newer generation of servicemembers are geared towards media presented on electronic devices, Congressman Smith's office has led the charge by working with VA, DOL, and DoD to provide more information in digital format.

The new Congress has also shifted towards addressing predatory lenders, the 90/10 rule, and ensuring for-profit private universities are not targeting servicemembers and veterans for their GI Bill benefits.

MARKETING COMMISSION
James M. Rohan, Wisconsin, Chairman
Scott Miller, Indiana, Director

The American Legion Marketing Commission was formed in October 2015 to strategize and execute the organization's activities to promote membership growth, strengthen the fundraising program, maximize merchandising opportunities, nurture corporate alliances and achieve greater brand awareness. In its fourth year, the commission continues to oversee multiple initiatives to better integrate marketing efforts executed by all divisions and to provide professional support for departments, districts, counties and posts. Efforts are still underway to upgrade the digital media infrastructure that aims to improve the user experience for those who wish to learn about The American Legion, join, donate, buy merchandise, engage in a corporate alliance and participate in programs.

The American Legion national website continues to produce an increase in visitation year over year, and a jump of access to legion.org via mobile devices. Increases in online joining and renewal continue to be reflective of the visitation growth. The website infrastructure is designed in such a way that departments, districts, counties and posts can replicate it to better synergize the user experience and to improve brand consistency at every level.

As these developments have occurred, the commission has overseen day-to-day performance in key areas of the organization's business, including membership, fundraising, corporate relationships, merchandising and branding.

The American Legion National Headquarters has developed a team of staff members and agencies to improve brand awareness through high-profile events, such as The American Legion Legacy Run, National Poppy Day, National Convention, American Legion Baseball World Series and a major Veterans Day parade in New York City, as well as the 500 Festival Parade in Indianapolis.

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act set a record for coin bills in Congress, with 385 House members and 75 senators signing on as co-sponsors. Surcharges received from the sale of the American Legion commemorative coins – five

dollar gold, silver dollar and clad half-dollar – will benefit the organization's programs, which will continue to assist in supporting veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Media attention to these and other American Legion activities have been cultivated through multiple alerts, personal contact with media outlets and message-point strategies for national participants at the events. Staff and agencies have supported improved engagement with outside media.

The American Legion Marketing Commission continues it work with staff and agencies to establish long-term strategic plans to deliver an effective, cohesive and best-in-class marketing program that maintains the integrity of the organization and its legacy while applying the most modern tools of communication

EMBLEM SALES COMMITTEE
Sally Nay, Massachusetts, Chairman
Richard B. Keith, Indiana, Director

The American Legion emblem is the exclusive property of the National Headquarters. The sale of the emblem, emblem pins, merchandise carrying the emblem and other items of organizational equipment is the responsibility of the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The following tables show gross sales, net earnings, etc., for the entire calendar year 2018 and for the first three months of 2019.

January 1 to December 31, 2018
(12 months)

Gross Sales	$13,946,282
Cost of Goods Sold	$7,486,855
Overhead	$4,473,103
Operating Profit	$1,986,324

Total number of 2018 orders processed was 119,268.

January 1 to March 31, 2019
(3 months)

Gross Sales	$2,959,917
Cost of Goods Sold	$1,560,353
Overhead	$997,104
Operating Profit	$402,460

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 2019 was 25,859.

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Walter Ivie, Texas, Chairman
R. Jeffrey Stoffer,Montana, Director
Henry Howard, Indiana, Deputy Director

The American Legion Media & Communications Commission oversees the majority of print and digital media products delivered from American Legion National Headquarters, including the monthly magazine, website, social media channels, e-newsletters and more. The commission also supervises the organization's media outreach program, including news releases, press conferences, appearances in external media and other responsibilities.

In addition to fulfilling obligations for dozens of print and digital media products as well as media queries, Media & Communications staff members promote initiatives by the national commander, key volunteer leadership, American Legion departments and other

headquarters divisions. The Media & Communications Division also supports and coordinates marketing initiatives and corporate relationships.

The flagship of the media program is *The American Legion Magazine*, the nation's best read and most widely circulated veterans magazine, according to an independent audit. With a circulation of nearly 2 million households and a readership exceeding 3 million, *The American Legion Magazine* ranks No. 1 in readership frequency, according to a survey by researcher GfK MRI. That means subscribers have read three out of the last four issues more often than readers of the other nearly 200 U.S. magazines surveyed. Its content is general interest, driven by the organization's main areas of engagement – patriotism, defense, veterans, children and youth, national and international affairs.

The Media & Communications Division draws most of its revenue from advertising sales into the magazine. In 2018, the year-end sales figure was $8,138,693, or 91.9 percent of total advertising revenue, the remainder representing advertising placed in digital media products. The bulk of the rest of the division's operating revenue comes from a $3 per member allocation.

In August 2018, The American Legion officially kicked off its centennial celebration anniversary, which concluded in November 2019. The American Legion Media & Communications Division has been a driving force behind the organization's centennial program, including organizational structure, merchandising, promotion, media products and general support. The division produced media in traditional and non-traditional forms related to the centennial meant to inform, educate and inspire members and the general public about the Legion's legacy and future. Among those: a 13-episode documentary and wall exhibit chronicling the Legion's history, a traveling museum exhibit to honor the GI Bill's place in history, a "Legacy and Vision" website dedicated to the first- century history and the second-century future of the organization, two-sided placemats featuring well-known Legionnaires from different departments, a chronology of American Legion accomplishments and multiple promotional materials.

The division's media channels and assets include:

- **Print.** This category includes *The American Legion Magazine*; The American Legion *Dispatch* (monthly leadership newsletter); The American Legion Annual Report; The American Legion National Convention Guide; the National Commander's Testimony to Congress; brochures and internal documents and additional print media as assigned from national leadership, including event programs; and other specialty products such as Our Pillars, Your Platforms, which is published during each presidential election year. Additionally, the division fulfills editing and designing needs of 200 brochures and documents associated with other National Headquarters divisions.
- **Media outreach.** The division is responsible for promoting the organization's programs, messages and priorities to outside media and stakeholders. This includes the writing and distribution of press releases; regular engagement with national broadcast, print and web media producers; twice-annual radio show tours by the national commander; the development and delivery of media events and press conferences; timely alerts and audience quantification.
- **Web.** The American Legion national website at www.legion.org is the nation's most-visited veterans web platform and serves as a gateway to virtually all American Legion media products and channels. The site receives than 1 million page views per month. It offers news, videos and photography; transactional engagement through donations, membership and merchandising; entrance to special-interest microsites on such topics as the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion and Legiontown USA, where veterans and family members are invited to create and share their own content; the revamped American Legion Basic Training module; and the BurnPit blog site, among others. Legion.org is also the entry point to the organization's interactive and transactional platform supporting American Legion Baseball. The American

Legion's video vault, called LegionTV, houses all of the organization's current video content in one microsite, also accessible on YouTube.

- **E-mail.** The division produces a portfolio of popular e-newsletters, led by the weekly American Legion Online Update, which reaches about 900,000 subscribers every Thursday with links to the top stories of the week on the Legion.org platform. Another e-newsletter with nearly as many subscribers (850,000) is the National Commander's Message, which goes out twice monthly, typically to promote a particular subject or program. The Online Update and the National Commander's Message receive open rates around 25-30 percent on a frequent basis — a rate far above the industry standard. Other e-newsletters include Dispatch, Flag Alerts, The American Legion Riders, The American Legion Baseball Dugout, The American Legion Career Center and Ham Radio Club. Each newsletter has an open rate equal to or above the industry standard.
- **Social.** The American Legion has a fast-growing network of social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram. The Legion's Facebook community exceeds 150,000 followers, and the national Twitter following has surpassed 100,000 in the past year.
- **Mobile**. The American Legion's mobile audience has grown rapidly, now representing just over 50 percent of page views, compared to 12 percent five years ago.
- **Smartphone apps:** The American Legion Media & Communications Division has produced and developed a collection of smartphone mobile apps, including a general American Legion app introduced in 2014 that has generated more than 41,000 downloads; an American Legion World Series app, which has been downloaded 12,000 download times; along with an annual National Convention app and a Sons of The American Legion app.
- **Supporting posts, departments:** Division staff members work with American Legion department and staff members to promote various events. For example, the division sends out a media kit to departments that are used as a guideline with resources to promote System Worth Saving visits conducted at the post level. Other media kits, resource information, videos, posters, flyers, press releases and other material has been designed and distributed for departments, districts and posts to use in order to generate awareness of programs like the American Legion Legacy Scholarship.
- **Training:** Division staff members provide media training to volunteer leadership as well as post members. Each year, the national volunteer leadership team is briefed on media engagement. Additionally, the Media & Communications Division provides state and local American Legion media producers with effective communication tools and strategies throughout the year.
- **Physical.** The American Legion Media & Communications Division produces a variety of physical displays, including parade floats, plaques, billboard designs, convention booths, banners, posters and other forms of physical media for the organization.

The goal of this integrated approach to American Legion media is to maximize efficiencies, resources and talents to deliver the organization's message in a well-branded, effective strategy that aims to improve internal and external awareness, generate membership, inform visitors, stimulate interactions and ease transactions. These tools are used for veterans outreach, which includes promoting the many values, programs and interests of The American Legion.

Overall, the media and communications program is built to replicate and represent the values and interests of The American Legion, from the individual member to the local post to the state department to the national headquarters, internal and external, and beyond.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
E.C. Toppin, North Carolina, Chairman
Kenneth J. Trumbull, Illinois, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 26, 2018, 280 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security initially met in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101 Sections A-C. Mr. G. Michael Schlee (Maryland) was elected Chairman and Mr. E.C. Toppin (North Carolina) was appointed Secretary.

After the initial meeting, the following convention committees met, held elections and dealt with the resolutions assigned to them:

Aerospace	Rick Oertel (VA), Chairman Anthony Heath (MA), Secretary
Conventional Armed Forces	Charle E. Kruger (MN) Chairman Jake Cabuag (WA), Secretary
Foreign Relations	Daniel Seehafer (WI), Chairman David Evans (NV), Secretary
Law and Order & Homeland Security	George Wehrli (FL), Chairman Richard Keiser (NY)Secretary
Military Benefits & Quality of Life	Robbie Walker (IL), Chairman Glover Beverly (PA), Secretary
National Guard and Reserve Forces	William Goede (MN), Chairman Roy Weber (IL), Secretary
Unconventional Forces and Intelligence	Doug Haggan (FR), Chairman Sherman Baxa (WV), Secretary

At 10:15 am, Sunday, August 26, 2018, the delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security reconvened in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101 Sections A-C. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 25 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security or prepared by the Committee to meet issues which were held to be of concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives. The Convention Committee authorized the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report of the Convention Committee on National Security on behalf of its delegates and make technical and administrative corrections to the resolutions reported out of the Committee.

AEROSPACE
Rick Oertel (VA), Chairman

NO RESOLUTIONS

CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES
Charles Kruger (MN), Chairman

APPROVED

RESOLUTION NO. 34
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES
ORIGIN: Maryland

WHEREAS, United States has a vital national security interest in promoting stability in certain fragile and conflict affected states to guard against threats that emanate from state weakness, political subversion, or collapse; and

WHEREAS, Stabilization activities are necessary to consolidate military gains into lasting strategic success, and may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution mechanisms, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the voluntary return of displaced people; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) has only limited authority to provide non-reimbursable logistic support, supplies, services, and training to interagency counterparts for stabilization activities in these complex settings; and

WHEREAS, Once implemented, these initiatives will improve DoD's ability to prioritize, plan, and execute stabilization activities (logistic support, supplies, services and training) on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis with interagency partners (Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, or other Federal agencies) to support stabilization in foreign areas; and

WHEREAS, DoD's new stabilization policy provides a conceptual framework for DoD's supporting role and core responsibilities during U.S. stabilization efforts; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion supports legislation, " Department of Defense support for stabilization actives in National Security Interest of the United States". Allowing The Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State and in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Director of Office of Management and Budget, provide support for the stabilization actives of other Federal agencies.

RESOLUTION NO. 35
SUBJECT: NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET
ORIGIN: Maryland

WHEREAS, The American Legion views a strong national defense as paramount to national security; and

WHEREAS, The President has submitted a proposed $717 billion total defense budget for 2019; authorizing $639.1 billion in base funding, $69 billion in the Overseas Contingency Operations fund to cover contingency operations, and $8.9 billion for mandatory defense spending; and

WHEREAS, The proposed budget reverses sequestration and increases defense spending caps; and

WHEREAS, The proposed legislation increases the force end strength, it also increases service members pay and benefits, which prevents the loss of highly trained men and women; and

WHEREAS, The proposed budget includes the purchase of aircraft and ships to replace our aging fleets, improving our military's overall readiness against current and emerging threats; and

WHEREAS, This legislation supports *rebuilding military infrastructure* by increasing funding for facilities sustainment allowing for military construction, including family housing; and

WHEREAS, The United State of America's major adversaries, Russia and China, along with rogue nations are ramping up their military stocks and capabilities; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion urge Congress to support budget increase in military spending to reverse the effects of sequestration; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress never allows our military forces to reach a weakened state in these uncertain and perilous times.

RESOLUTION NO. 41
SUBJECT: STATE FUNERAL FOR THE LAST WORLD WAR II MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT
ORIGIN: Virginia

WHEREAS, The time has come to prepare for a final salute to our World War II service members for which 472 Medals of Honor were awarded. Only four of those recipients survive today; and

WHEREAS, The opportunity is slipping away "A funeral not for one man, but to join the hearts and minds of 330 million Americans."; and

WHEREAS, Only three classes of citizens are entitled to a state funeral: A President-elect who dies before being sworn into office, a sitting President or former President of the United States, and any other person designated by the President; and

WHEREAS, In view of the foregoing, we the membership of The American Legion, respectfully petition the President of the United States to designate that the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient lie in state on behalf of the 16 million World War II Veterans as a final tribute to their service and sacrifice to achieve world peace in troubled times; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 20, 2018, That The American Legion respectfully requests that the American Legion support a petition to the President of the United States on behalf of more than 16 million veterans of World War II; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion duly petition the President of the United States to designate, on behalf of the selfless service members of World war II, a State Funeral for the last living Medal of Honor recipient – not for one man, but to join together the hearts of millions of Americans in a unifying event honoring the legacy of all World War II Veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 99
SUBJECT: COMMISSION THE USS AMERICAN LEGION
ORIGIN: OHIO
CONSOLIDATED WITH RESOLUTION NO. 3 (SD)

WHEREAS, The American Legion seeks to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars and is synonymous with National Defense and National Security; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is on the cusp of its centennial anniversary in 2019; and

WHEREAS, There was a prior U.S. Navy ship named the USS American Legion launched 11 October 1919; and

WHEREAS, The ending of World War I resulted in the ship seeing commercial service until laid up until 1939 with the name "American Legion"; and

WHEREAS, The ship was formally transferred to the War Department in December 1939 as USAT American Legion until transfer to the U.S. Navy commissioned USS American Legion (AP-35) and later reclassified as attack transport (AP-17); and

WHEREAS, As the conditions worsened in Europe the U.S. President directed the American Legion to proceed to Petsamo, Finland and embark Crown Princess Martha of Norway and her party and also embark a host of American nationals and refugees from Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands for a total of 897 passengers including young Danish comedian/musician, Victor Borge; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion also took on board a twin mount 40-millimeter Befors antiaircraft gun which was adopted by the U.S. Navy and proved significant in upgrading antiaircraft capability on U.S. Navy ships; and

WHEREAS, The ship completed its Atlantic Theater operations and was transferred to the Pacific Theater in 1942 where it participated in the invasion of Guadalcanal and Bougainville for which the USS American Legion was awarded two battle stars for its World War II services; and

WHEREAS, The ship became an amphibious warfare training ship in 1944 until 28 March 1946 when its name the "American Legion" was struck from the Naval Vessel Register; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Navy has a long standing tradition of continuing the reuse of historic names of its ships, another "American Legion" named vessel would honor and commemorate both organizations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The United States Navy proposed FY2019 budget requests funding for 10 new ships, one of which is an Expeditionary Sea Base ship (ESB), which is a highly flexible platform that may be used across a broad range of military operations; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and American Legion Riders feel that in observance of the American Legion's 100TH year of organization, it is time that another United States Navy ship bear the name of the American Legion; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion urge the Department of the Navy to name the newest Expeditionary Sea Base ship the U.S.S. American Legion to recognize and honor the legacy of the America Legion's centennial of service to the nation, and to perpetuate its commitment to the future strength of our National Defense and National Security for generations of Americans to come.

REFERRED TO STANDING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 57
SUBJECT: OPPOSE PROPOSED MILITARY PARADE
ORIGIN: Illinois

RESOLUTION NO. 80
SUBJECT: COLD WAR SERVICE RIBBON
ORIGIN: New York

RECEIVED AND RECORDED

RESOLUTION NO. 8
SUBJECT: SET MINIMUM NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET AT FIVE PERCENT OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT
ORIGIN: Montana

RESOLUTION NO. 67
SUBJECT: EXTEND SELECTIVE SERVICE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE REGISTRATION OF WOMEN AGES 18-25
ORIGIN: Illinois

REJECTED

RESOLUTION NO. 54
SUBJECT: RECOGNIZE KOREAN WAR AS AN ONGOING CONFLICT
ORIGIN: Illinois

FOREIGN RELATIONS
Daniel Seehafer. Wisconsin, Chairman

APPROVED

RESOLUTION NO. 37
SUBJECT: TAIWAN DEFENSE ARMS SALES
ORIGIN: Maryland

WHEREAS, The Republic of China, also known as Taiwan, is a long-time friend having fought with the United States against Japanese Imperialism during World War II and against communism during the post-war period; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a major trading partner and democratic ally of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Asia-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), the United States is committed to provide defense equipment and defense services, in such quantities that the Government of the Republic of China may maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion supports the sales of the latest American weapon systems, including naval vessels, submarines, military aircraft, high-tech electronics, communications equipment and air-defense missile systems to Republic of China of such quality and in such quantities so as to enable the Government of the Republic of China to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the continued sales of sophisticated U.S. weapon systems, including, but not limited to, F-16 fighter aircraft, anti-submarine equipment and torpedoes, anti-aircraft/anti-missile systems, and electronics and communications equipment to Republic of China; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Government of the Republic of China be given preferential pricing for these items but not equal to that given to the U.S. government, to enable the Republic of China to purchase sufficient quantities of these items for their defense needs.

RESOLUTION NO. 38
SUBJECT: TAIWAN STRAITS DIALOGUE
ORIGIN: Maryland

WHEREAS, The Republic of China (Taiwan) is a long-time friend, ally, and major trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China, closely cooperated with the United States against Japanese imperialism during World War II and in the fight against Communism during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interests of all parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resolve political differences peacefully; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to encourage the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) to promote peaceful dialogue and avoid any negative actions by either side to change the status quo, which might lead to military conflict.

RESOLUTION NO. 117

SUBJECT: JAPAN ARMS SALES
ORIGIN: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Since the U.S.-Japan Security and the San Francisco Treaties were signed in 1951 Japan has been a friend; and

WHEREAS, Japan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Asia-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, Japan is a major trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The presence of U.S. forces in Japan is vital to the United States' commitment to the defense of Japan and the security of the region; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Reciprocal Defense Procurement the United States is providing missile defense platforms in quantities to allow sufficient self-defense capability; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion supports the sales of the latest American missile defense platforms to Japan of such quantities so as to enable Japan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

RESOLUTION NO. 118
SUBJECT: SUSTAINING UNITED STATES COMMITMENTS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC
ORIGIN: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States' national security grand strategy has long been premised on global leadership, which entails great and multiple responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, The Indo-Pacific region is home to a rising proportion of global GDP and a center of the world economy; and

WHEREAS, The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with the 2008 financial crisis, left many Americans disillusioned with global involvement and receptive to arguments that the alliances and institutions they supported for many decades no longer serve their interests; and

WHEREAS, Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share, should remain an objective of U.S. foreign policy; and

WHEREAS, The presence of U.S. forces in Asia is vital to the United States' commitment to the prosperity, defense and security of the region; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion support legislative or executive efforts to create a renewed long-term policy framework that demonstrates U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region and the rules-based international order.

APPROVED W/ AMENDMENT

RESOLUTION NO. 2
SUBJECT: RETURN OF CHURCH BELLS FROM F. E. WARREN AFB TO THE PHILIPPINES
ORIGIN: Philippines

WHEREAS, the year 2017 marked the 75th Anniversary of the Defense of the Bataan Peninsula and the shared sacrifice of 77,000 Americans and Filipinos who fought side by side delaying the advance of the Japanese Imperial Army resulting with over 1,000 Americans and 9,000 Filipinos perishing in the infamous Bataan Death March; and

WHEREAS, for over 100 years the Philippines has been America's strongest friend in Asia and a staunch ally in World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War and The War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, over the past several decades, there is precedence for religious bells and artifacts removed from Japan, Germany and Russia, during periods of conflict, being

returned to the churches and temples from which they were taken, including bells long held by the United States Naval Academy, Virginia Military Institute, Harvard University and many American cities, because it was the right and honorable thing to do; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the United States Military Academy at West Point returned an 800 pound church bell taken from the Philippines in 1901 that had been held on display for over 100 years to the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union, because it was the right and honorable thing to do; and

WHEREAS, General Order 100, also known as the Lieber Code and Lincoln's Code, was placed in effect by General Arthur MacArthur during the Philippine American War {1899-1902) specifically prohibiting the taking of personal and religious property; and

WHEREAS, the Iwo Jima Association of America encourages the return to Japanese families of personal property and artifacts brought to the U.S. during World War II as a gesture of reconciliation and friendship; and

WHEREAS, the monuments men of the monuments, fine arts and archives section of thirteen allied nations persevered to protect and preserve looted private property taken by German forces during World War II, because it was the right and honorable thing to do; and

WHEREAS, in 1904 the U.S. Army 11th Infantry Regiment brought to Fort D.A. Russell (Today Francis E. Warren Air Force Base) in Cheyenne, Wyoming from a quarter master salvage yard on the Philippine Island of Leyte, two 600-pound bells which had originally hung in the belfry of the church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the small town of Balangiga on the island of Samar; and

WHEREAS, the 11th Infantry abandoned the bells in place in 1913 and later the U.S. Army again abandoned the bells in 1947 when the base was turned over to the U.S. Air Force because they held no special significance to either the legacy or history of the 11th Infantry or the U.S. Army; and

WHEREAS, an existing monument and memorial to those soldiers of company C who died as a result of the encounter exists at Sackets Harbor, New York, home of the 9th U.S. Infantry at that time; and

WHEREAS, for several years it was incorrectly believed that the bells of San Lorenzo de Martir, taken from the church in the town of Balangiga, had been rung during the Philippine American War as a signal of surprise attack on American soldiers of Company C, 9th U.S. Infantry that was garrisoned in that town; and

WHEREAS, these two 600 - pound bells ultimately became known through pejorative writing and distorted history as the "Bells of Balangiga" and a source of misunderstanding and rancor between friends and allies; and

WHEREAS, the Philippines is predominately a Catholic nation where church bells play a very important role in the lives of Filipinos as well as reflective of their National Patrimony representing the very fabric of their cultural heritage and history and because the bells were bought and paid for the parishioners of San Lorenzo de Martir to return the bells would be the honorable and right thing to do and result in national jubilation; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March and the historic military ties and camaraderie between Americans and Filipinos and given that new and accurate information on the history of the two bells now exists, that the Secretary of Defense in collaboration with Veteran organizations, take action to return the two Catholic church bells now on display at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (formerly Fort D.A. Russell) in Cheyenne, Wyoming to the parishioners of the church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the town of Balangiga, province of Eastern Samar, republic of the Philippines; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 56 of the 2016 National Convention of The American Legion held in Cincinnati, Ohio titled, Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States, is hereby rescinded.

RECEIVED AND RECORDED

RESOLUTION NO.15
SUBJECT: TAIWAN STRAITS DIALOGUE
ORIGIN: Alaska

REJECTED

RESOLUTION NO.16
SUBJECT: PROTECTION PRESERVATION AND RETENTION OF FEDERAL AND MILITARY MONUMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES
ORIGIN: Wyoming

LAW AND ORDER & HOMELAND SECURITY
George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

APPROVED

RESOLUTION NO.29
SUBJECT:U.S. BORDER PATROL
ORIGIN: Texas

WHEREAS, Curtailing illegal immigration remains one of The American Legion's major objectives in achieving the fulfillment of the first three purposes for which Legionaries associate ourselves together, "to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, to maintain law and order, to foster and perpetuate a 100% Americanism"; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 23 was approved by The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, resolving that The American Legion supports the Department of Homeland Security and urges the Administration and Congress to make security of the United States the top national priority; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Border Patrol is an operational component of the Department of Homeland Security whose primary mission is to detect and prevent the illegal entry of aliens into the United States; and

WHEREAS, A priority of the U.S. Border Patrol's mission is preventing terrorist and terrorist weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from entering the United States; and

WHEREAS, By executing its mission since its inception in 1942, the U.S. Border Patrol has historically played a vital role in the preservation of our national security; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Border Patrol agents are well known for their compassion, for their respect for the dignity of all others no matter what the circumstance, and for the untold lives they have saved by virtue of their humanitarian assistance provided to immigrants in distress; and

WHEREAS, A large fraction of U.S. Border Patrol agents are military veterans; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That the American Legion recognizes the U.S. Border Patrol's mission to be an essential contribution to our national security; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion greatly appreciates the practice of the U.S. Border Patrol to employ military veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion highly commends the U.S. Border Patrol for its noble and heroic efforts, frequently in the face of danger and adversity, to preserve our national security; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion commits its steadfast support to the U.S. Border Patrol.

REFERRED TO STANDING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO.17
SUBJECT: MAXIMIZE ALIEN PRISON TRANSFERS
ORIGIN: Kansas

MILITARY BENEFITS AND QUALITY OF LIFE
Jerry Jordan, Indiana, Chairman

APPROVED

RESOLUTION NO.5
SUBJECT: PUBLICIZE & PROMOTE TO INCREASE UTILIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOMES
ORIGIN: District of Columbia

WHEREAS, The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH-W), formerly known as and limited to the Army and Air Forces Retirement Home, but now available to and includes former members of all branches of the U.S. Military Services, notwithstanding their total years of service; and

WHEREAS, The complete living facilities and services are located on the property within the City Limits of Washington in the District of Columbia, which was originally purchased by the General of the Army Winfield Scott, with the approval of the U.S. Congress, but without initial use of Federal funds, and for private maintenance; and

WHEREAS, Since 1851 has operated as a sanctuary and hospice for former male and female U.S. Military personnel, and has the original National Cemetery created especially for deceased military persons, and is presently operated with oversight by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD); and

WHEREAS, A second site, The Armed Forces Retirement Home at Gulfport, MS. (AFRH-G), has a significant background in providing similar facilities and services to retired U.S. Naval personnel and now to those from all branches of service, and is now under the same oversight of The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD); and

WHEREAS, These facilities are capable of accepting additional Veteran eligible residents and are presently considering opening accommodations for military members recently leaving the services of our nation and to their spouses, regardless of length of service, branch of service, transition to civilian life or retirement, no matter what part of the nation they deem home; and

WHEREAS, The existence and purpose of these facilities has had little publicity, and their availability is little known, even among the U.S. Military Services; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That the U.S. Department of Defense and the several Federal Agencies (such as each branch of the military services, the U.S. Department of Labor, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Assistance, etc.) involved in helping U.S. Military Personnel to prepare for transition from military to civilian stature (e.g., Transition Assistance Programs, - TAP – Retirement), include in both written information and in the oral and classroom transition presentations sufficient information about both the AFRHs, their services, availability, eligibility and requirements for former service personnel and their spouses, so that those separating from

service fully understand the option and opportunity available to them, and thus increase utilization of existing facilities.

RESOLUTION NO.6
SUBJECT: RETAIN & MAINTAIN BOTH AFRHS IN TOTAL FOR INCREASED RESIDENTIAL HABITATION
ORIGIN: District of Columbia

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the Department of the District of Columbia, and the Department of the District of Columbia Post 70 desire to focus special attention during the 2019 Anniversary Celebration of 100 Years of service to Veterans rendered by The American Legion, and to assure continuation of that success in helping Veterans to have adequate housing upon leaving Military Service or upon retirement; and

WHEREAS, There are two sites presently providing similar services and facilities to help achieve these common goals at widely separated locations and under the same oversight by The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), The Armed Forces Retirement Home in the District of Columbia (AFRH-W), and The Armed Forces Retirement Home Gulfport, MS. (AFRH-G), formerly referred to as Navy Retirees Home, (these two sites are entirely separate from those Veteran Residential facilities provided, maintained or supported by The U.S. Veterans Administration); and

WHEREAS, The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH-W), formerly known as The Old Soldiers Home, then the Army and Air Force Retirement Home, limited to Military Personnel retired from those Services, is now available to and includes members from all branches of the U.S. Military, notwithstanding their total years of service; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH-W was founded by the General of the Army Winfield Scott, with authorization from the U.S. Congress in 1851, to establish a sanctuary and hospice for members leaving the military, so long as it was purchased and initially maintained without Federal funds; and

WHEREAS, The 272-acre historic estate within the City Limits of the District of Columbia has, for 168 years, fulfilled that vision of General Scott for military veterans; and

WHEREAS, The first National Cemetery for Military Veterans was established and has been maintained on the grounds of AFRH-W (long before Arlington Cemetery was initiated); and

WHEREAS, The AFRH-W site includes the horse mounted statue commemorating General Scott, and the esteemed "Cottage" where President Abraham Lincoln spent much of his time away from The White House; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH-W grounds has additional buildings and capacity to sustain and increase utilization for U.S. Veterans for years to come, as was initially envisioned by General Scott, and the AFRH-G has adequate facilities to continue and expand such services; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH-W facility has always been open to both male and female Veterans of the Army and Air Force, and more recently included Veterans of the Navy, Marine Corp and Coast Guard, and the AFRH-G has a significant background providing facilities and services to retired U.S. Naval personnel and is currently open to all U.S. Military Veterans, both male and female; and

WHEREAS, Both sites were recently notified of a drastic increase in individual housing fees to be effective October 1, 2018, (from the present 40% rate of all incomes, including retirements, disability allowances, etc. to 60% of all incomes), to help meet increasing operating costs, along with the potential that the Federal Government could consider parts of both sites for commercial development to minimize maintenance expenses; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion use the 100th Anniversary celebration to promote the existence, available services, capabilities

possible and encourage increased use by veterans, and recognize the historic significance of the present AFRH-W and AFRH-G as achievements among its services by Veterans, for Veterans, and for their communities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the U.S. Department of Defense and its affiliated agencies to continue to retain, sustain, maintain, preserve and promote both these entire and total historic places, and the worthy vision for the future established by the General of the Army Winfield Scott, without the drastic increase in individual housing fees, as fully functioning services for any U.S. Veterans to select as an option for their transition from military to civilian life and for possible retirement.

APPROVED W/ AMENDMENT

RESOLUTION NO.98
SUBJECT: CONTINUATION OF MILITARY DEATH BENEFITS DURING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN
ORIGIN: Ohio

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the purpose of advocating for veteran 's rights and benefits; and

WHEREAS, The federal government has shut down operations eighteen times since 1976 due to Congress' inability to pass a timely budget; and

WHEREAS, The United States military operations do not stop during a federal government shutdown; and

WHEREAS, The federal government has no law allowing for the death and gratuity payment or government funded travel for the remains of military personnel back to Dover, Delaware, or any other location, during a federal government shutdown; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion urge Congress to create legislation that during a government shutdown American active duty military who lose their life shall be awarded the death and gratuity benefit as if the government was operating normally.

REFERRED TO STANDING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO.36
SUBJECT: SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN
ORIGIN: Maryland

RESOLUTION NO.43
SUBJECT: EXCLUDE TRICARE ELECTION FROM THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM
ORIGIN: Minnesota
Note: Resolution No.43 was inadvertently left out of consideration during the convention committee meeting. The oversight was discussed with the Department Adjutant and the National Judge Advocate and it was decided that the committee did not need to reconvene. It was agreed that the resolution will be referred to the National Security Commission for consideration at the 2018 Fall Meetings of the National Executive Committee.

National Guard and Reserve Forces
William Goede (MN), Chairman

REJECTED
RESOLUTION NO.30: ISSUE DD-214 TO RETIRING RESERVISTS
ORIGIN: TEXAS

Unconventional Forces & Intelligence
Doug Haggan, France, Chairman

NO RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am particularly pleased to announce the winners of the National Blood Donor Awards for this past year.

Category I - Departments with 100,000 or more members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission
Category II - 70,000 to 99,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission
Category III - 40,000 to 69,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: Maryland
Category IV - 25,000 to 39,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission
Category V - 10,000 to 24,999 members
Post & Individual Participation: Montana
Category VI - less than 10,000 members
Post & Individual Participation: No submission

Many of our Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. Close to 4,500 medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 2017-2018 are the Departments of Connecticut and Maryland. This speaks well for these Departments and The American Legion in their recognition of the youth of America enrolled in ROTC programs.

Mrs. Commander, as a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Maryland, I move for the adoption of this report.

Pursuant to Resolution No. 25 approved in October 2016 by the National Executive Committee the following resolutions previously approved by a National Convention or the National Executive Committee are to remain as part of the legislative program of the American Legion through the 116th Congress.

Addendum A
Resolutions to Remain Part of the Legislative Program

No.	Year	Meeting	Title
16	2016	CONVENTION	SECOND AMENDMENT
17	2016	CONVENTION	POSITION ON THE OPERATIONAL RESERVE
20	2016	CONVENTION	FULLY ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAWS
22	2016	CONVENTION	GUARD AND RESERVE SPACE-A TRAVEL
23	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND COAST GUARD
24	2016	CONVENTION	ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION POLICY
25	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE NON-FEDERAL ROLES OF THE NATIONAL GUARD
28	2016	CONVENTION	RESERVES AND NATIONAL GUARD RETIREMENT BENEFIT FAIRNESS
29	2016	CONVENTION	COMMERCIAL SHIPBUILDING FOR DEFENSE
32	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT DOMESTIC ENERGY PRODUCTION
33	2016	CONVENTION	RARE EARTH ELEMENTS
45	2016	CONVENTION	POLICY ON THE ARCTIC REGION
85	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE STANDARDS
90	2016	CONVENTION	SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLAND BUILDING
91	2016	CONVENTION	CYBERSECURITY AND IDENTITY THEFT

93	2016	CONVENTION	CODIFY BURIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
94	2016	CONVENTION	EARNED MILITARY BENEFITS
96	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FULL FUNDING AND RESOURCING FOR THE U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
98	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
100	2016	CONVENTION	MILITARY COMMISSARIES
102	2016	CONVENTION	OPPOSE TRICARE FEE INCREASES
105	2016	CONVENTION	REFERENCE VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AT DISCHARGE
107	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT ARMED SERVICES RETIREMENT HOMES
109	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT RESEARCH, TREATMENTS AND THERAPIES AT DOD, VA AND NIH
173	2016	CONVENTION	SECURE NATIONAL BORDERS AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS
174	2016	CONVENTION	SECURITY OF OVERSEAS EMBASSIES
176	2016	CONVENTION	AUTHORIZE AND FUND TRICARE FOR RESERVE COMPONENTS AND DEPENDENTS
200	2016	CONVENTION	EXTENDED CARE HEALTH OPTION (ECHO)
201	2016	CONVENTION	ENHANCED FUNDING FOR USAID
202	2016	CONVENTION	MILITARY RETIREE MAIL AT OVERSEAS EMBASSIES
204	2016	CONVENTION	POLICY ON LATIN AND CENTRAL AMERICA
205	2016	CONVENTION	FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES
206	2016	CONVENTION	MIDDLE EAST/GULF STATES FOREIGN POLICIES
207	2016	CONVENTION	POLICY ON THE UNITED NATIONS
208	2016	CONVENTION	PROHIBIT FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN U.S. DEFENSE INDUSTRY
209	2016	CONVENTION	SPACE-A TRAVEL FOR UNEMPLOYED AND DISABLED VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS
210	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION
211	2016	CONVENTION	SECURING PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL
213	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS
214	2016	CONVENTION	GLOBAL TRADE POLICIES
216	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
218	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR THE SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION PROGRAM
219	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY BUDGET
222	2016	CONVENTION	POLICY ON AFRICA
223	2016	CONVENTION	POLICY ON CUBA
224	2016	CONVENTION	SUPPORT FOR CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION
225	2016	CONVENTION	FULLY FUND NASA
17	2017	CONVENTION	COUNTER TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

19	2017	CONVENTION	HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC
20	2017	CONVENTION	NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY STRATEGY
22	2017	CONVENTION	POW/MIA POLICIES
9	2018	SPRING	MILITARY COMMISSARIES
10	2018	SPRING	EXPEDITED CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR DEPORTED VETERANS

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OCTOBER 17-18, 2018

You have received a copy of the report of the meeting of the National Commission during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota which took place on August 28th-30th. The National Security Commission and its seven committees along with the council continue to review developments in the national security and foreign relations arenas. The 100th National Convention adopted 13 resolutions which, when added to the more than 80 existing resolutions, comprise the Commission's policy and legislative agendas for the year ahead.

On Tuesday, October 2nd, an extensive conference call meeting took place of the ex-officio members of the National Security Commission and staff. On the call for the commission were G. Michael Schlee (MD), Commission Chairman; E. C. Toppin (NC), Commission Vice Chairman; Charles E. Kruger (MN), Chairman, Conventional Armed Forces Committee; George W. Wehrli (FL), Chairman, Law and Order & Homeland Security Committee; George H. Bolling (MD), Chairman, Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee; William B. Goede (MN), Chairman, National Guard & Reserve Forces Committee; and Douglas C. Haggan, (IN), Unconventional Forces & Intelligence Committee. Staff on the call were Joseph Sharpe, Acting National Security Division Director, Freddy Gessner, Deputy Director, and Jeff Steele, Assistant Director.

Reviewed were six (6) resolutions which were referred to the standing Commission from the National Convention and 2 from Department Executive Committees. Two resolutions were recommended to be approved: 1) Survivor Benefit Plan; 2) Exclude TRICARE election from the federal employees health benefits program. The recommended actions for the six (6) resolutions that were not recommended for approval are noted on Addendum A. The Commission also reviewed three (3) new resolutions and recommended all for approval.

The Commission Chairmen were also provided an update with highlights of National Security Division's activities since National Convention. Noteworthy items include coordinating for the National Commander several desk briefings with specialists at the Pentagon and Department of State in preparation for the upcoming Far East tour. The Division has hosted and visited the Japanese embassy on several occasions to coordinate meetings in Tokyo during the trip as well as plan a Congressional reception this Fall. The Division is now reaching out to all of Embassies of the countries the National Commander will be visiting in order to coordinate additional preparatory briefings.

The following are brief updates on several critical areas for your review:

CURRENT THREAT ENVIRONMENT

North Korea

In early October, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he had "productive talks" with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang, with the pair reportedly agreeing to hold a summit between Kim and President Trump "as soon as possible" to discuss North Korea's nuclear program. The Department of Defense and Department of State have been working

together with US Navy and allied Navy ships to enforce sanctions that pressure North Korea to come to the negotiating table.

The UN Security Council has layered on ten rounds of increasingly stringent sanctions on North Korea in response to prohibited nuclear weapon and missile tests, and now cumulatively targets nearly 100 percent of North Korean exports and significantly restricts imports of oil, luxury goods, and all industrial machinery. North Korean ships are subject to inspection wherever they go in the world, and tens of thousands of North Korean laborers abroad are required to return home, denying the Kim regime of an alternate source of foreign currency. North Korean access to the international financial system is strictly limited.

U.S. and South Korean diplomats have already had to seek certain exemptions to UN-authorized sanctions in 2018 just to hold various leadership summits and preparatory meetings, and U.S. President Donald Trump suggested after his meeting with North Korean Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol that economic aid could flow to North Korea relatively soon in return for progress in denuclearization, raising questions about how and under what authority this could be done. The interactive can help inform a wider public discussion regarding various options and the pros and cons of pursuing them.

China

China's rising military capabilities and increased assertiveness in the East China Sea pose a challenge to the Japanese Ryukyu Islands and by extension the United States, which maintains a strategic military presence on the largest island of Okinawa. Along with the islands of Taiwan and the Philippines, the Ryukyu Islands represents a geographic chokepoint for China's naval and civilian activities. As a strategic impediment to China's power projection, the island chain has been a major focal point of Beijing's recent military modernization and expansion.

The PRC's rising military capabilities coincide with increasing Chinese aggression beyond the country's borders. China has unilaterally attempted-successfully to this point-to change the status quo in the South China Sea. It has constructed artificial islands on reef to assert territorial and military claims and argued, contrary to international law and custom, that the entire sea falls under its exclusive economic zone. The United States has conducted freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, and the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague has ruled against China's territorial claims, Nevertheless, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has nearly completed construction of military facilities on the artificial islands and stationed PLA forces to include nuclear-capable bombers. It has even quietly installed defensive anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and electromagnetic communications-jamming systems on the reefs.

Russia

Russia has recently furthered its aggression against Ukraine by attempted to seize control of the Sea of Azov which is a clear violation of international law. The U.S. Coast Guard has transferred two decommissioned 110-foot armed cutters to Ukraine this month to assist against Russia's aggression. In September the United Kingdom announced that it would deploy additional forces to the region to deter Russia from further aggression. Ukraine is calling for the United Nations to deem these actions as illegal under the Convention of the Law of the Sea and that it requires a strong response, including an enhanced sanctions policy and other targeted measures.

Iran

This month the State Department said it will withdraw from the 1955 Treaty of Amity with Iran, which affirmed friendly relations between the two nations, after a United Nations court ruled in Iran's favor in a case that challenged newly imposed U.S. sanctions on Tehran. The court ordered Washington to ease some sanctions, saying they violated the treaty's provisions. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo dismissed the ruling by the

International Court of Justice, based in The Hague, as "meritless" and said the decision to scrub the little-known treaty was "39 years overdue," a reference to the 1979 Islamic revolution that led to the seizure of U.S. hostages and put an anti-American theocracy in power.

The U.S. and its regional allies in the Middle East have long worried about Iran's influence in Iraq; as well as its actions in Syria, where it supports President Bashar al-Assad; its backing of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia movement; its role in the Yemeni civil war, where Tehran is engaged in a proxy war with its main rival, Saudi Arabia; and its influence over Shia minorities throughout the majority-Sunni Arab world.

TRICARE UPDATE

Since 1 January 2018, there has been several changes to the TRICARE benefit.

- Beneficiaries can choose to enroll in or change their TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select coverage during an annual open enrollment period from 12 November – 10 December, 2018 for coverage beginning on January 1, 2019. Failure to enroll in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select results in the termination of coverage for civilian care. These beneficiaries who choose to not enroll may only receive care at a military clinic or hospital on a space available basis.
- Beginning January 1, 2019 dental and vision coverage will be replace with the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).
- Section 701 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act will be implemented and synchronized with the Department's transition to the TRICARE 2017 contracts, beginning January 1, 2018.
- Broadened access for beneficiaries by setting the requirement that at least 85 percent of U.S. beneficiaries have ready access to network providers in TRICARE Select and gives Select beneficiaries access to no-cost preventive services from network providers.
- It expands TRICARE coverage of preventive care services, treatment of obesity, high-value care, and telehealth.
- It establishes the annual open season enrollment period that beneficiaries will participate in each year to choose their health plan, and the rules for qualifying life events that will allow for changes outside that open season. It also establishes 2018 as a transition year, during which enrollment changes will be available throughout the year as beneficiaries adjust to this new process.
- For Prime beneficiaries, it establishes new requirements for timely appointments and more access to care without the need for referrals, reinforcing standards for access to care. Prime beneficiaries will also have expanded access to urgent care without the need for a referral from their primary care manager.
- For Select beneficiaries, DOD has converted the current cost-shares, where you pay a percentage of the total cost, to a fixed dollar amount.
- It preserves benefits for active duty dependents and TRICARE-for-Life beneficiaries.
- It restructures and continues authority to update TRICARE Prime retiree copayments, which have not changed since 1995.
- TRICARE Select will replace TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra on January 1, 2018. TRICARE Select brings together the features of TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra in a single plan. Select enrollees may obtain care from any TRICARE authorized provider without a referral or authorization. Enrollees who obtain services from TRICARE network providers will pay lower cost sharing amounts for network care.
- All current TRICARE beneficiaries were automatically enrolled in their respective plan on January 1, 2018. TRICARE Prime enrollees will remain in TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Standard and Extra beneficiaries will be enrolled in TRICARE Select. Appendix B outlines what actions will unfold automatically, effective January 1,

2018. Future beneficiaries, or beneficiaries wishing to change their TRICARE plan must proactively change their enrollment during enrollment eligibility periods.

- Beneficiary out-of-pocket costs have been updated.
- 2018 is a transition year with a grace period for enrollment. To allow beneficiaries to adjust to making their health care option choices during an annual open season enrollment period or to remember to elect their coverage when a QLE occurs, beneficiaries can elect to make their coverage changes anytime during 2018 to ensure they have the right coverage in place starting in 2019.
  Read more about these upcoming changes at TRICARE's website: https://tricare.mil/About/Changes

READINESS

Army Recruiting Shortfall - For the first time since 2005, the U.S. Army missed its recruiting goal this year, falling short by about 6,500 soldiers, despite pouring an extra $200 million into bonuses and approving some additional waivers for bad conduct or health issues.

Army leaders said they signed up about 70,000 new active duty recruits in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30th - well below the 76,500 they needed. The Army National Guard and Army Reserves also fell far short of their goals, by more than 12,000 and 5,000 respectively. The Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, meanwhile, all met their recruiting goals for 2018.

The Army has stated that the shortfall was fueled by a strong American economy and increased competition from private sector employers who can pay more. The Army has since increased its number of recruiters. Army leadership has stated that they will not lower standards to meeting higher recruiting goals and are confident that they can meet future goals.

Overall DoD Readiness - In September National Security Division staff met with senior officials from the Department of Defense Readiness Office to discuss the top readiness issues the Department is facing. DoD is working on major changes from within the Department that will drive how well today's military are ready for future operating environments.

Those priorities include:

- A review of how the Army recruits its soldiers and a plan to improve.
- Improving the leader-to-led ratio and resourcing in initial entry training.
- Successfully standing up Army's Futures Command.
- Fielding a new Combat Fitness Test and changing the force's fitness culture.
- Ramping up Multi-Domain Operations into doctrine and practice.

DEFENSE BUDGETING

FY19 NDAA - The 2019 Defense Budget has been approved by Congress and signed by President Trump in record speed with a 2.6 percent pay increase and a $716 billion national defense budget. This is the earliest the defense budget has been passed in the last 40 years. This is the first time in more than a decade that the DOD is able to begin a fiscal year with an enacted appropriation instead of operating under a continuing resolution. The funding level is consistent with the $716 billion 2018 Bipartisan Budget Act national defense spending cap for FY 2019.

The topline budget differences between the bills and the Presidential Budget Request (PBR) are as follows:

	FY19 PBR	FY19 HASC NDAA	FY19 SASC NDAA	FY19 HAC-D Defense Appropriations
Base budget	$617.1 billion	$639.1 billion	$639.2 billion	$606 billion
Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO)	$69 billion	$69 billion	$68.5 billion	$73.9 billion

The defense appropriations bill has more than $606 billion in base defense spending and nearly $68 billion more in overseas contingency funds, in line with White House requests and spending targets outlined in the annual defense authorization bill approved earlier this summer. The measure funds a 2.6 percent pay raise for troops starting next January and a boost in military end strength of 16,400 spread across the active-duty and reserve forces. Operation and maintenance spending totals $243.2 billion of the defense total, and research and development efforts another $96.1 billion. Defense health and military family programs would receive $34.4 billion.

INDO-PACIFIC TOUR

While in Washington, D.C. the National Commander received several briefings from desks within the Far East offices of the Department of Defense and Department of State in preparation for the upcoming Far East tour this December. Additionally, the National Commander met with Defense Assistant Secretary of Defense Joe Felter to discuss the position of the Secretary of State on the return of the Bells of Balangiga. The American Legion passed a resolution at National Convention supporting the Secretary's position.

The first location the party will visit will be Hawaii and will include a tour of the new Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency headquarters and forensic lab as well as an update on the progress of the 55 boxes of remains turned over by North Korea this summer. In preparation for the rest of the tour the National Commander will receive a command briefing from Pacific Command headquarters on readiness, troop quality of life, and current focuses of the Major Command.

The trip will also include visits to Department of Defense installations, American Legion Posts, and meetings with heads of state throughout Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan before returning to the United States just prior to the week of Christmas. National Security staff will provide updates to the itinerary in the weeks leading up the trip in the weekly reports.

CONGRESSIONAL RECEPTION

The National Security Division has held several meetings with officials from the Embassy of Japan in preparation for the National Commander's trip to the Far East. As a result of building this relationship, the National Commander has been invited to act as an ambassador to Japan and visit Tokyo to meet with the Japanese Minister of Defense and other senior officials to include a potential meeting with Prime Minister Abe.

Additionally, the National Security Division is working with the Legislative Division and the Embassy of Japan to host a Congressional reception, in early 2019, in honor of the Guidelines of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. These guidelines set the parameters for cooperation between U.S. military and Japanese Self-Defense Forces in case of military attack against Japan. Created in 1979, they were revised in 1997 and 2015 to allow greater flexibility for the defense planners in both countries.

National Security staff is also tracking legislation that would address China in the Asia-Pacific. The plan will develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive,

multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region. The legislation's likeliest course to passage is through a unanimous consent agreement. Companion legislation has been filed in the House and we believe it will get a boost if the Senate acts first.

POW/MIA UPDATE

On Wednesday, September 26th at the American Legion headquarters in Washington, D.C. the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Mr. Kelly McKeague presented National Commander Brett Reistad with one of the two flags from first two U.S. servicemembers identified from the remains turned over by North Korea this summer.

The two soldiers were Master Sgt. Charles Hobart McDaniel and Private First Class William H. Jones who both went missing in November 1950. Two of the 55 boxes contained two partial skulls that had dental remains, along with two clavicles. DPAA researchers used dental records, chest x-rays and DNA samples to conclusively identify the remains of the two soldiers.

Full funding of DPAA is something we continue to be concerned about. The effects of continuing resolutions and threats of government shutdowns are crippling to DPAA efforts. Without guaranteed funding recovery teams are threatened with having to end their mission and return stateside short of mission dates. Mission planning is impacted as well. The difficult mountains of Vietnam can only be excavated during the warm months and without guaranteed funding opportunities may be missed.

Unaccounted for From Past Conflicts

WWII	Korean War	Vietnam War	Cold War	Iraq & Other Conflicts
72,000+	7,800+	1,602	126	5

The National Security Commission thanks National Commander Brett Reistad, our NEC Liaison and the distinguished members of the National Executive Committee for their continuing support for Commission efforts to take care of troops and "provide for the common defense"

ADVANCE REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION TO THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
February 25 – February 27, 2019
E.C. Toppin, North Carolina, Chairman

The National Security Commission convened on February 25th during the 59th Annual Washington Conference at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C. The following report is a summary of this session:

The Commission was honored to welcome National Commander Brett Reistad. The National Security Commission was honored by his attendance and very appreciative of his participation.

National Commander Reistad addressed some key policy areas that the National Security Commission covers, particularly the importance of the National Commander and Security Division's recent Far East Tour to the Indo-Pacific Region (South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Hawaii). The primary focus of the Far East Tour was to gather intelligence on U.S. national security issues relating to China and North Korea.

The program proceeded in the following sections:

- Opening remarks and roll call;
- District of Columbia National Guard brief;
- Future of Military Health System (MHS) brief;
- Selective Service brief; and

- Valor Medals Review Task Force brief.

Finally, two foreign policy panels were hosted in partnership with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and the U.S. Department of State. The panels discussed U.S. national security issues relating to international development and regional conflicts in Europe and Asia with a particular focus on Russia, China, and the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by these revisionist powers.

I. District of Columbia National Guard

The National Security Commission welcomed BG Aaron R. Dean II, Adjutant General, District of Columbia National Guard. Established by Thomas Jefferson in 1802, the DC National Guard plays a vital role in securing national security in times of war, times outside of war, and during operational conflict. The DC National Guard's mission is to protect the capitol and defend the nation, it is the only national guard assigned to protect the federal government, and it reports to the President of the United States. Missions include countering terrorists, crime, cyber security, state and non-state actors, manmade and natural disasters. As former Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis once remarked:

> Our military's role is to keep the peace; to keep the peace for one more year, one more month, one more week, one more day. To ensure our diplomats who are working to solve problems do so from a position of strength and giving allies confidence in us. This confidence is underpinned by the assurance that our military will win should diplomacy fail.

Secretary Mattis's philosophy extends to the DC National Guard's mission. In addition to its traditional functions, the DC guard puts first responders in a position of strength (there are 29 law enforcement agencies in the DC area). The concept of an "operational reserve" offers a continuum of operational support. The DC Guard continues to evolve as a continuing total force.

II. Future of Military Health System (MHS)

The Commission's next speaker was Mr. Thomas McCaffery, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Mr. McCaffery discussed the importance and uniqueness of the MHS, describing the system's dual missions as: (1) supporting the warfighter; and (2) supporting the warfighter's family and retirees. He then spoke about two major changes to the Military Health System: (1) the 2017 NDAA's mandate for integrating and consolidating four major health services into a single health system known as the Defense Health Agency (DHA); and (2) the deployment of Electronic Health Records (EHR).

III. Selective Service

To address selective service, Mr. John Prigmore, Deputy Director of the Selective Service Administration, introduced himself and held a question and answer session from the audience. Mr. Prigmore accompanied National Commander Reistad to participate in a wreath laying ceremony at General Lewis B. Hershey's grave site, located in section 7 of Arlington Cemetery. The Selective Service System was invited to provide and update and answer questions regarding the interim report released January 23rd by the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service.

IV. Valor Medals Review Task Force

The Commission's final speaker was Mr. Christopher Leins, Chair of the Advisory Subcommittee, Valor Medals Review Task Force. Mr. Leins began by introducing a video documentary covering the National World War I Memorial project.

Mr. Leins then spoke to the sacrifices paid by many minority servicemen of World War I, recounting numerous historical events and referencing historic documents. The

Valor Medals Review Task Force is charged with correcting past failures to recognize overlooked minority servicemen for their heroism, sacrifice, and wartime contributions. The U.S. World War I Commission is supporting an extensive review of all World War I veterans that were not recognized, mostly due to racial bias. The Commission is now looking to expand its investigation into all disenfranchised minorities that includs, Jewish, Asian, Hispanic, and other service members. Every American solider of the Great War exemplifying the gallantry associated with the Medal of Honor and other valor medals, should receive recognition, regardless of his/her ethnicity, religion, and/or color of skin.

V. National and Regional Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Selection Committee

Prior to the Washington Conference the Chairman of the Law and Order and Homeland Security Committee appointed an awards selection subcommittee to review all the nominations that had been received during 2018 from the Departments for the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year award programs. The Subcommittee met Monday, February 25, in the International Ballroom East in the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C., to select the 5 regional Firefighter of the Year winners and the 5 regional Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Winners. There were 13 law enforcement officer nominees and 15 firefighter nominees submitted.

The selections for the Regional Firefighter of Year Award winning Departments are:

NEW ENGLAND:.....Jason D. Trumbauer
Department of Pennsylvania
CENTRAL:..... Jan Radar
Department of West Virginia
SOUTHERN:.....Jeffrey Cash
Department of North Carolina
MIDWESTERN:.....Matthew D. Gibbons
Department of Nebraska
WESTERN:.....Andrew Lowe
Department of Colorado

The selection for the Regional Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award winning Departments are:

NEW ENGLAND:..... Matthew R. Neidinger
Department of Pennsylvania
CENTRAL:..... Christopher Chiaravalloti
Department of Maryland
SOUTHERN:..... Stephen G. Lanier
Department of North Carolina
MIDWESTERN:..... Bradley D. Wangler
Department of Nebraska
WESTERN:..... Jane Anderson

The subcommittee then reviewed the regional winners to select one National Firefighter of the Year and one National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.
The selection for the National Firefighter of the Year is:

The selection for the National Firefighter of the Year is:
NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR:.....Jan Radar
Department of West Virginia
The selection for the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is:

NATIONAL LAW OFFICER OF THE YEAR:.....Officer Jane Anderson
Department of Colorado

The winners and runner-ups have been contacted and the Regional winners will receive their awards during their respective Department Conventions. The National winners will receive their awards on stage from the National Commander during National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

VI. Foreign policy panels

After lunch, the National Security Commission, in partnership with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and the U.S. Department of State, hosted two foreign policy discussions surrounding U.S. national security issues relating to (1) international development; and (2) regional conflicts in Asia and Europe with a particular focus on Russia, China, the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by these revisionist powers.

Keeping America Safe: Strengthening Diplomacy and Development alongside Defense

- *Lt. General Kip Ward, USA (Ret.), National Security Advisory Council, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition*
- *The Honorable Tom Ridge, National Advisory Council, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition*
- *Moderator: Alice Stewart, Political Commentator, CNN*

This first panel focused on the importance of diplomacy and development used in conjunction with a strong military. In particular, what is America's role in the world? The role of the DoD is to project power; however, the military is only one prong in a multifaceted approach toward enhancing global security and stability. The long-term use of soft power, i.e., foreign aid, is critical to maintaining the post-WWII world order. Furthermore, the deliberate use of American development and diplomacy programs is crucial to enforcing American values and achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

Less than 1% of discretionary spending is on foreign aid; however, the return on investment is indispensable. The U.S. military, which accounts for the majority of discretionary spending, should only be used as the third and last option. Diplomacy and development should be used as the first two options, addressing the needs of developing regions proactively, instead of reactively.

Furthermore, the U.S. must deal with a rising power seeking to project its global influence. China's strategic focus of international development has increased 500% and is forward thinking. China seeks to exploit natural resources abroad, build infrastructure within the developing world, offer unconditional money, and collect on loans. On the other hand, the U.S. doesn't just hand out money—it ties money to participation in diplomatic programs that enhances the well-being of the people, placing values and conditions on developmental aid. The U.S. cannot compete dollar-for-Yuan; however, the U.S. can and does offer aid in a far more diplomatic and recipient-friendly manner.

Finally, if the U.S. does not commit resources to global development and stability, strategic competitors like China, Russia, Iran, etc. will fill the vacuum. It is in America's best interest to increase engagement in the development systems budget. The reasons to do so are political, economic, strategic, and are inextricably linked to American national security.

State Department Speakers: Russia and China

- *Christopher Robinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs*
- *Sona Ramesh, International Relations Officer, Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs*
- *Moderator: Jeff Steele, The American Legion National Security Policy Advisor*

The second panel focused on what the National Defense Strategy refers to as the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by revisionist powers.

Russia

Mr. Christopher Robinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs opened the discussion with talking about the continuing threat of Russia. Mr. Robinson stated that channels of communication with Russia are currently open; however, sanctions, expelling diplomats, spies, and other measures have been used in order to increase costs with Russia until Russia changes course on certain issues.

Russia has adopted a new maligned strategy. The Russian threat has evolved from external and military one into a brazen attempt of influence campaigns with the goal of manipulating the American public. Influence campaigns are not attached to a particular party and have existed prior to the 2016 elections with the goal of creating chaos and inspiring violence on all sides.

The Russian effort is a systemic and sustained campaign to exploit fault lines. It's a geo-strategic hybrid warfare campaigns against international norms and undercutting the U.S. influences. Russia has rejected the post-Cold War world order. Therefore, carrying out mass influence campaigns to manipulate populations and getting governments to make decisions in accordance with Russian prerogatives are now proving successful. Technology and the increased consumption of information on social media platforms has enabled Putin's success.

China

Ms. Sona Ramesh, International Relations Officer with the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs spoke about the One Belt One Road initiative, South China Sea, and the denuclearization of North Korea.

U.S.-China relationship

According to Ms. Ramesh, the overall U.S.-China relationship is influenced by the Trump Administration's *America First* policy. America seeks to cooperate when our interests align with China's; however, we will also compete vigorously when our interests do not. The Trump Administration also suggests that such an approach should be taken by other countries as well. Concerns on China, from U.S. allies, should be raised publicly and in multilateral settings. A reciprocal economic stance, the U.S. remaining in the Indo Pacific; and showcasing American values abroad are the backbone of American policy toward China.

China's "One Belt One Road" initiative

The One Belt One Road initiative is a way for China to increase engagement around the world and expand its economic reach. The U.S. believes that engagement is not zero sum; however, all international development that takes place overseas should conform to an international system, protect national sovereignty, and remain sustainable. The U.S. does not intend to match China dollar-for-Yuan; however, a free market, private sector approach is the best way forward.

The South China Sea

Beijing's construction in the South China Sea with militarized features is intended for coercion and intimidation. The U.S. is opposed to such action. China has committed to exercise self-restraint; however, actions have proven otherwise. Respect for international law and freedom of navigation in air and sea remain at the forefront of the U.S. stance in the South China Sea.

Denuclearization of North Korea

The U.S. remains committed to the full denuclearization of North Korea and sanctions continue to remain in full effect. China is seen as a key partner and the U.S. continues to work with China to make sure that UN Resolutions and sanctions are fully enforced. Secretary of State Pompeo meets with North Korean and Chinese leadership often and continues to work on these issues.

U.S.-China Trade

The 90-day deadline for negotiations ends on March 1, 2019; however, President Trump has further delayed the trade deadline. A U.S. delegation is traveling to Beijing to iron out final details with "great progress" having been made.

Human Rights in China

China's Xinjiang region is the site of "reeducation centers" that the U.S. sees as internment camps. Secretary Pompeo is concerned with the number of detainees (estimates range between 800,000 to 2,000,000) and detentions that can last between a few months to years. High tech surveillance measures are used, bio data, and other information is collected during the process, and state sponsored propaganda is forced on detainees. China claims this is an internal matter which relates to international security.

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MAY 8-9, 2019

The National Security Commission and its seven committees along with the council continue to review developments in the national security and foreign relations arenas. An executive session of the National Security Commission met by conference call on Tuesday, April 11th to act on 1 resolution regarding the Marshall Islands.
Presiding was Chairman E.C. Toppin (NC)
Vice Chairman present: Kenneth Trumbull (IL)
Committee Chairman present included: Rick Oertel (VA), Charles Kruger (MN), Paul Espinoza (NM), George Wehrli (FL), Steve Brennan (MD), Bill Goede (MN), and Doug Haggan (FR)

The following are brief updates on several critical areas for your review:

NATIONAL SECURITY UPDATES
CURRENT THREAT ENVIRONMENT

North Korea

Last year's summit represented an aggressive attempt at diplomacy engineered primarily by South Korea and the United States to avoid the collision course of war with North Korea that we appeared to be on due to the 20 ballistic missile tests by North Korea throughout 2017 and the response from President Trump.

The summit between the two Koreas is another positive step in diplomacy that keeps the situation around the Korean peninsula peaceful, moving away from last year's atmosphere of crisis. The positive atmospherics of the meeting, and North Korea's continued adherence to a weapons testing moratorium should also be welcomed. However, the inter-Korean summit perhaps raises more questions than it answers. There is clear agreement between the two Koreas that there should be no war on the Korean peninsula anymore. But it is still unclear whether the North Korean regime defines denuclearization in the same way as the United States (CVID—complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization). It is still unclear whether there will be an attenuation of the U.S. alliance commitment to South Korea as a condition for North Korea's denuclearization.

Since then, President Trump also made what appeared to be a major concession to North Korea, suspending joint military exercises with South Korea, saying the exercises were expensive and very provocative.

Trump and Kim held a second summit in Vietnam that began on February 27, 2019. After two days of talks, the leaders failed to reach an agreement. The American president said Kim wanted all sanctions on North Korea lifted, but didn't offer sufficient dismantling of the country's nuclear program in exchange.

A statement from a North Korean official after the summit said the North wanted only "partial" relief from sanctions in exchange for dismantling "all the nuclear material production facilities" at the country's main nuclear site at Yongbyon.

Syria

Last month President Trump announces that ISIS forces in Syria had been defeated. He ordered a withdrawal of U.S. forces from the country. Right now, DoD is crafting plans to keep nearly 200 U.S. forces in Syria, working as advisers to the Syrian Defense Forces or providing other support to local militias battling the Islamic State. Their mission is being labeled a peace keeping force and may be stationed at the Al-Tanf base in southern Syria.

China

China intends to become a global military power and is currently building the capability to do so. Militarily, China seeks to limit our access and undermine our important alliances in the Indo-Pacific. While modernizing their nuclear enterprise, China is also developing a full range of air, maritime, space, and cyber capabilities. Their continued militarization of the South and East China Seas accompanies expanding sovereignty claims that have no basis in international law. They leverage diplomatic and economic influence through the Belt and Road Initiative, and China's military interests have followed these initiatives into the Indian Ocean, South Asia and beyond. And while we continue to seek Chinese cooperation on a number of fronts, especially with respect to North Korea, their projection of a state-controlled, 'strong-rule-the-weak' global order is incompatible with U.S. interests and a rules-based international order.

Russia

Russia continues to modernize and invest across the full range of military capability, including new aircraft, submarines, armor, counter-space, and air defense systems, while also modernizing conventional and nuclear strike capabilities. These investments and activities are specifically designed to limit our power projection capability and undermine the credibility of U.S. alliances, especially NATO.

The U.S. and NATO have responded by increasing the number of troops deployed to installations through Poland as well as held frequent joint exercises with rotating forces. The U.S. already has roughly 4,000 troops in Poland. In addition to an armored brigade on rotation, infantrymen guard Poland's border with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and a U.S. Air Force detachment operates in Lask. The Navy also has a contingent of sailors in the northern Polish town of Redzikowo, where work continues on a missile defense site that integrates with systems in Romania and at sea.

Violent Extremism

We continue to grapple with the challenge of violent extremism, including ISIS, a resurgent al Qaida, and associated movements. Our strategy remains focused on cutting the flow of finances, foreign fighters, and their disruptive narrative, while working by, with, and through local partners to sustain pressure on their networks, disrupt attacks, and dismantle their capabilities.

Iran

Iran also continues to project malign influence and threaten freedom of navigation in the Middle East. They are also modernizing their space, cyber, missile, and conventional maritime capabilities which pose a direct threat to our Allies and our interests in the region.

The American Legion's Position: The National Security Commission has Resolution No. 175: Oppose Iran Nuclear Deal. We urge Congress not to lift any sanctions in connection with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The United States must be prepared to exercise all options, up to and including military action, in the interest of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

READINESS

The Department of Defense (DOD) faces a strategic choice: whether to focus on modernization for high-tech conflicts with China and Russia or expand forces and improve readiness to meet a superpower's commitments for ongoing conflicts and crisis response. In their FY 2019 budgets, the services all complain that they are too small for the demands being put on them and hedge toward expanding forces and readiness.

In 2013, readiness took a hit as a result of sequestration. Because cuts had to be made late in the fiscal year, the services were forced to cut facility maintenance, international exercises, and most significantly, training activities. The services have been digging out of that hole ever since.

The administration emphasized readiness in its FY 2018 and FY 2019 budgets. Nevertheless, readiness data are conflicting. Some metrics, like Army rotations to Combat Training Centers, service flying hours, and Navy ship steaming days, have recovered from post-2013 lows, but others, like Navy and Marine Corps aircraft availability, remain depressed. With overall DOD budgets rising, targeted readiness increases, such as aviation spare parts, may be better investments than across-the-board increases.

High ops tempo is a policy choice, though often not in the branches' hands. The United States could reduce deployments, and the new National Defense Strategy proposes doing that, but such reductions are often regarded as detrimental to alliances. DOD could build more forces, and the administration plans to do some of that, but such expansion is expensive, and DOD's current plan is to emphasize modernization. The services sometimes argue that replacing "tired iron" with new equipment will help readiness. While such modernization may increase capability, it may not improve readiness. Flying hour costs for an existing F-18, for example, are about half that of a new F-35B/C. High readiness is desirable in forces and equipment. However, readiness is also very expensive and highly perishable—it must be renewed constantly. Buying more means that DOD cannot buy something else, for example, modernization or force structure. In the new DOD strategy being developed for 2019 and beyond, the services hope to pursue all three goals—expand forces, improve readiness, and increase modernization—but the fiscal future is highly uncertain, and they will likely have to make difficult trade-offs.

Army Recruiting Shortfall - For the first time since 2005, the U.S. Army missed its recruiting goal last year, falling short by about 6,500 soldiers, despite pouring an extra $200 million into bonuses and approving some additional waivers for bad conduct or health issues.

Army leaders said they signed up about 70,000 new active duty recruits in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30th - well below the 76,500 they needed. The Army National Guard and Army Reserves also fell far short of their goals, by more than 12,000 and 5,000 respectively. The Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, meanwhile, all met their recruiting goals for 2018.

The Army has stated that the shortfall was fueled by a strong American economy and increased competition from private sector employers who can pay more. The Army has since increased its number of recruiters. Army leadership has stated that they will not lower standards to meeting higher recruiting goals and are confident that they can meet future goals.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Japan Embassy Reception

On March 26th the National Security Division in coordination with the Embassy of Japan held a reception to honor the future of U.S. and Japan cooperation and friendship at the Capital Building. The event included remarks from the National Commander, the Ambassador of Japan, and several Congressmen on the importance of this alliance in a time of international uncertainty.

Foreign Policy Panels

On February 25, the National Security Commission, in partnership with the United State Global Leadership Coalition and the Department of state, hosted two foreign policy summit to discuss global issues that affect the United States' relations with China and Japan, as well as Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East.

The first panel examined strengthening diplomacy and development alongside defense. The expert speakers were Lt. General Kip Ward, USA (Ret.), National Security Advisory Council, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and the Honorable Tom Ridge, National Advisory Council, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. The panel was moderated by CNN Political Commentator, Alice Stewart.

The second panel discussed the many challenges that the U.S. and its allies face in regard to China and Russia and how we are struggling to manage and how these collectively increase political volatility and risk for investors. Among the expert speakers included Christopher Robinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and Sona Ramesh, International Relations Officer, Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs

INDO-PACIFIC TOUR

While in Washington, D.C. in September the National Security Division staff coordinated for the National Commander to receive several briefings from desks within the Far East offices of the Department of Defense and Department of State in preparation for the upcoming Far East tour. Additionally, the National Commander met with Defense Assistant Secretary of Defense Joe Felter to discuss the position of the Secretary of State on the return of the Bells of Balangiga. The American Legion passed a resolution at National Convention supporting the Secretary's position.

The first location the party visited was Hawaii and included a tour of the new Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency headquarters and forensic lab as well as an update on the progress of the 55 boxes of remains turned over by North Korea this summer. In preparation for the rest of the tour the National Commander received a command briefing from Pacific Command headquarters on readiness, troop quality of life, and current focuses of the Major Command.

The trip also included visits to Department of Defense installations, American Legion Posts, and meetings with heads of state throughout Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan before returning to the United States, totaling almost a full month of travel. National Security Division staff have created a post trip briefing booklet that is available upon request.

MILITARY AND VETERAN QUALITY OF LIFE

Military Family Housing

Several hearings took place earlier this year to discuss the state of housing for military families. A survey from the Military Family Advisory Network was released just prior to the first hearing that reported more than half of military families surveyed about their privatized housing reporting a negative experience with problems ranging from mold, vermin, and lead paint.

Staff have participated in several meetings and conference calls with senior defense officials to receive updates on how DoD is addressing this issue. At this point rush works

orders have been fulfilled on life emergency repairs. Commanders have been mandated to get involved and have held town halls at all installations to address issues. Customer service has been addressed to where families should have a more accurate date for when their maintenance repairs will be made. We will continue to track this issue closely as our servicmembers and their families deserve to live in safe and affordable housing.

Defense Health
Staff has attended monthly meetings with senior defense officials from the Defense Health Agency to discuss a series of major Tricare changes that were implemented January 1, 2018, ushering in fee changes for almost all beneficiaries, a new plan name, a new regional map and new regional contractors.

The updates are the result of a periodic federally mandated contracting process combined with new legislation passed by Congress in 2016.

Impacts for All Users

Tricare's annual fee schedule will now operate on a calendar year -- January 1 to December 31 -- instead of the fiscal year system used the past. That change impacts all beneficiaries, including Tricare for Life users, who are otherwise untouched by the shifts.

Last year, the plans known as Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra were combined into a single plan, known as Tricare Select.

Active duty family members who use Tricare Prime saw no major changes, so long as they stayed in that plan.

Starting January 1, 2019, active duty families and those who retire from active duty were longer be able to switch at will between plans. Instead, they must wait for annual fall "open enrollment" period to move plans or experience a "qualifying life event." Tricare has yet to release a final list of what those "life events" will include.

Last year, TRICARE pharmacy copayments changed for all beneficiaries, except Active Duty Service Members, dependent survivors of ADSMs, and medically retired service members and their dependents.

Retail Network Pharmacy Copayment Changes (up to 30-day supply)

- Generic formulary drugs will increase from $10 to $11.
- Brand-name formulary drugs will increase from $24 to $28.
- Non-formulary drugs will increase from $50 to $53. *(NOTE: Non-formulary drugs are generally only available through home delivery.)*

TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery Copayment Changes (up to 90-day supply)

- Generic formulary drugs will increase from $0 to $7.
- Brand-name formulary drugs will increase from $20 to $24.
- Non-formulary drugs will increase from $49 to $53.

Military Treatment Facility Pharmacy Copayment Changes

- Beneficiaries can still fill their prescriptions for $0 copay at MTF pharmacies.

The American Legion's Position: The National Security Commission has Resolution No. 102: Oppose Tricare Fee Increases which states that the American Legion is strongly opposed to hikes in premiums and or enrollment fees being paid by enrollees in TRICARE. The American Legion urges Congress to decisively reject these unjust proposed increase in the military retirees' TRICARE enrollment fee, deductibles, or premiums.

DEFENSE BUDGETING

FY20 NDAA - The 2020 Defense Budget request has been submitted by the President and includes a 2.8 percent pay increase, the largest in a decade, and a $718.3 billion national defense budget. 2019 was the first year in more than a decade that the DoD was able to

begin a fiscal year with an enacted appropriation instead of operating under a continuing resolution. We hope to see Congress approve the FY20 budget to ensure DoD can operate with a guaranteed budget again. The funding level is subject to the Budget Control Act and the actual appropriations are expected to be affected by sequestration.

The topline budget differences between the bills and the Presidential Budget Request (PBR) are as follows:

Department of Defense Budget *$ in billions*	**FY 2017 Actuals**	**FY 2018 Actuals**	**FY 2019 Enacted**	**FY 2020 Request**
Base	523.5	599.6	616.1	544.5
Overseas Contingency Operations	82.5	65.2	68.8	66.7
OCO for Base	--	--	--	97.9
Emergency	--	5.8	--	9.2
Total	**606.0**	**670.6**	**685.0**	**718.3**

The President's FY 2020 budget request for defense is for $718 billion. This budget represents 4.9 percent nominal growth (2.8 percent real growth) over the current FY 2019 enacted appropriation. Total DoD five-year program settles at $747 billion in FY 2024.

The FY 2020 budget request continues to advance the objectives of the National Defense Strategy by sustaining the gains in FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 and continuing to build a bigger more lethal and ready force. Military pay and benefits funding grows by more than $3.4 billion over the FY 2019 request. This increase includes funding for a 3.1 percent military pay raise, the largest in a decade, and an end strength increase of approximately 7,700 over the currently projected FY 2019 levels, which is designed to increase overall capacity and improve readiness through reduced operational and personnel tempo. In addition, these end strength increases will allow the Services to better support advanced capabilities like cyber, electronic warfare, and special operations needed to contend with our most capable, potential adversaries and fulfill the National Security Strategy charter to preserve peace through strength.

The FY 2020 budget request includes $9.2 billion of emergency funding for unspecified military construction to build border barriers, backfill funding reallocated in FY 2019 to build border barriers and rebuild facilities damaged by Hurricanes Florence and Michael. This funding and the required transfer authority would be provided through a general provision.

The American Legion's Position: These budget increases and proposed increases for fiscal year 2019 in defense spending are a step in the right direction to rebuild our devastated military but we must continue to advocate for full funding of the military. The National Security Commission has Resolution No. 35: National Defense Budget which urges Congress to support budget increases in military spending to reverse the effects of the 2013 Budget Control Act also known as sequestration and to not allow our military forces to reach a weakened state in these uncertain and perilous times.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

One of the most important parts of the work of the National Security Division is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony as well as letters of support on issues of national security and the quality of life of servicemembers. Since January 2019, the National Security Division has submitted four (4) letters of support.

The following is a synopsis of the congressional hearings and correspondence held from January to May 1, 2019, on matters pertaining to the National Security Commission:

On January 7th, staff submitted a letter of support to Senator John Thune (SD) to express support for S.21 - A bill making continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations act expires prior to the enactment of a new appropriations act. The U.S. Coast Guard is the only military branch working without pay during the government shutdown.

On January 10th, staff submitted a letter of support to Senator Richard Burr (NC) for "Gold Star Wives Day", which would recognize the work of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. and their dedication to service, support and friendship to the spouses of fallen servicemembers and veterans. The service and sacrifice of servicemembers and their families should not be forgotten, and through this proposed legislation it will not.

On March 19th, the staff wrote a letter of support to Senator Tammy Duckworth (IL) and on March 26th to Representative Raul Grijalva (AZ) for draft legislation "*Veterans Visa and Protection Act of 2019*", which would enable the return of eligible veterans removed from the United States, protect veterans and servicemembers residing in the United States from removal, and facilitate naturalization through service in the Armed Forces.

POW/MIA

On Wednesday, September 26th at the American Legion headquarters in Washington, D.C. the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Mr. Kelly McKeague presented National Commander Brett Reistad with one of the two flags from first two U.S. servicemembers identified from the remains turned over by North Korea this summer.

The two soldiers were Master Sgt. Charles Hobart McDaniel and Private First Class William H. Jones who both went missing in November 1950. Two of the 55 boxes contained two partial skulls that had dental remains, along with two clavicles. DPAA researchers used dental records, chest x-rays and DNA samples to conclusively identify the remains of the two soldiers.

Unaccounted for From Past Conflicts				
WWII	**Korean War**	**Vietnam War**	**Cold War**	**Iraq & Other Conflicts**
72,000+	**7,800+**	**1600+**	**126**	**6**

Full funding of DPAA is something we continue to be concerned about. The effects of continuing resolutions and threats of government shutdowns are crippling to DPAA efforts. Without guaranteed funding recovery teams are threatened with having to end their mission and return stateside short of mission dates. Mission planning is impacted as well. The difficult mountains of Vietnam can only be excavated during the warm months and without guaranteed funding opportunities may be missed.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION COMMISSION
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman
Chanin Nuntavong, California, Director

The following report covers the activities of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission and Division during the program year from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

The 100th Annual National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Meeting of the National Executive Committee in Indianapolis, Indiana, approved positions expressed in resolutions submitted to those bodies through the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, and the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, respectively.

The approved resolutions are as follows:

2018 National Convention
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
11	Agent Orange and Kidney Disease	CO
18	Amend Set Dates of Agent Orange Illness	CT
42	Support the Use of Presidential Lincoln Second Inaugural Quote by the Department of Veterans Affairs	VA
48	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for Surviving Spouses	IL
49	Exempt Certain Income from VA Pension Rate Determination	IL
53	Means Test for Married Veterans	IL
58	Compensation for Veterans Requiring hearing Aids for Service Connected Hearing Loss	IL
59	Automatic Waiver for Over-Payment of $300 or Less	IL
64	Department of Veterans Affairs Dental Care for Rating of 50% or More	IL
68	All Blood Work by the Veterans Health Administration Include Hepatitis C Test	IL
73	Allow Beneficiaries to Retain $90 of Their Benefits While in Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes	IL
74	Amend the Eligibility Requirements and Extend the Eligibility Time Period for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance	IL
75	Increase Maximum Coverage Under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance	IL
79	Improve Special Monthly Compensation (K) Award	IL
85	Designate Prisoner of War, Purple Heart and Medal of Honor Recipients as Priority Group I	NY
87	Establish and Enforcing Requirements For Contract Examiners Conducting medical Examinations for VA Compensation Purposes	NY
93	Agent Orange	WI
115	Outdoor and Adaptive Sports Programs for Veterans	VA&R
116	Post-Traumatic Growth	VA&R

2018 National Executive Committee Meeting
Indianapolis, IN

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
17	Encourage VA to Conduct Research on the Effects of Anti-Malarial Drug Mefloquine For a Suspected Link to Mental Health Disabilities	WA
18	Continuous Glucose Monitoring and Veterans' Care	VA&R

2019 National Executive Committee Meeting
Indianapolis, IN

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
10	Allow Updates to the Burn Pit Registry With Additional Veteran's Information As Needed	VA&R
11	Oppose Service-Connected Veterans Paying Co-Payments For Any Service-Connected Conditions	VA&R
12	Establish New Eligibility Criteria for Burial and Interment at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)	VA&R

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the VA&R Commission held two meetings during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 25, 2018, during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 59th Annual Washington Conference on February 25, 2019. It was the 96th consecutive year the VA&R Commission met.

The first annual meeting was held in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101, Section D & E, Level One, on Saturday, August 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Dr. Richard Stone, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health/Executive–In-Charge, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman of the Board of Veteran Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Randy C. Reeves, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Nancy Bernardy, Associate Director for Clinical Networking, National Center for PTSD, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John H. Windom, III, Director, Electronic Health Records Modernization, Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Anjum Ansari, Senior Product Manager, Government Marketing, Abbott Diabetes Care; Dr. Jeanne Mager Stellman, Consultant, TBI/PTSD Committee, and Dr. Steven D. Stellman, Professor, Columbia University; and Ms. Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The second annual meeting was held at the Washington Hilton, Jefferson Room, Concourse Level, on Monday, February 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Joseph R. Tober, Executive Director Veterans Canteen Services, Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Richard A. Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Randy C. Reeves, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mark Mullot, Jason Thenisen, Kara Titus, and Nora Riley from Cerner; and Pradheep Sampath, Chief Product Officer and Meredith Work, Public Sector Accountant Executive from ID.me.

Health Administration Committee Meetings

Members of the Health Administration Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 25, 2018, during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 59th Annual Washington Conference on February 25, 2019.

The first annual meeting was held in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101, Section F & G, Level One, on Saturday, August 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Committee: Dr. Keita Franklin, Acting Director, Suicide Prevention Office of Mental

Health and Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Guy Kiyokawa, Deputy Director, Defense Health Agency.

The second annual meeting was held at the Washington Hilton, Piscataway Room, Lobby Level, on Monday, February 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Margaret Kabat, National Director, Caregiver Support Program, Department of Veterans Affairs.

National Cemetery Committee Meetings

Members of the National Cemetery Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 25, 2018, during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 59th Annual Washington Conference on February 25, 2019.

The first annual meeting was held in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101, Section H & I, Level One, on Saturday, August 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Committee: Amerophan Callahan, Executive Cemetery Director, Fort Snelling National Cemetery and Mr. John Knapp, Deputy Director, Fort Snelling National Cemetery; and Ms. Norka Rojas, Director of Interment Services, Arlington National Cemetery and Major Shannon Way, Strategic Planner, Arlington National Cemetery.

The second annual meeting was held at the Washington Hilton, Shaw Room, First Floor Level, on Monday, February 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Ms. Renea C. Yates, Deputy Director, and Major Shannon Way, Strategic Planner, Arlington National Cemetery.

TBI/PTSD Committee Meetings

Members of the TBI/PTSD Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 25, 2018, during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 59th Annual Washington Conference on February 25, 2019.

The first annual meeting was held in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Room 1B-102, on Friday, August 24, 2018. The following officials addressed the Committee: Chad Spangler, Director of the Outward Bound for Veterans Program; and Dr. Michelle Madore, a clinical Neuropsychologist with the Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) Clinical Program, VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

The second annual meeting was held at the Washington Hilton, Embassy Room, Terrance Level, on Sunday, February 24, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Dr. Keita Franklin, Acting Director, Suicide Prevention Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Jeanne Mager Stellman, Consultant, TBI/PTSD Committee.

Veterans Benefits Committee Meetings

Members of the Veterans Benefits Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 25, 2018, during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 59th Annual Washington Conference on February 25, 2019.

The first annual meeting was held in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 101, Section D & E, Level One, on Saturday, August 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Committee: Ms. Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman of the Board of Veteran Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs; and David Mclenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The second annual meeting was held at the Washington Hilton, Jefferson Room, Concourse Level, on Monday, February 25, 2018. The following officials addressed the Commission: Ms. Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman of the Board of Veteran Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Awards

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy

National Executive Committee 2006, Resolution No. 2, *Revised Rules Governing The Award Of The William F. Lenker National Service Trophy,* established the current rules governing the National Service Trophy. This award is to be presented annually to the Department of The American Legion that excelled in the welfare and rehabilitation work for war veterans and their dependents. At the 100th National Convention, in Minneapolis, MN., The Department of Montana received the award for 2018.

Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Provider and Physician of the Year

National Executive Committee 2017, Resolution No. 7, *Department of Veterans Affairs Health-care Provider of the Year,* and Resolution No. 8, *Department of Veterans Affairs Physician of the Year,* established the awards presented by The American Legion. These awards recognize the contributions VA health-care providers and physicians have to the veterans they serve. At the 2019 Washington Conference, Nurse Keith Harman, East Colorado VA Health Care System, and Dr. Murray Altose, Northeast Ohio VA Health Care System, received the awards for 2018, respectively.

VA Voluntary Service Award

National Executive Committee 2015, Resolution No. 21, *Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Award,* established the award presented by National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. This award is presented to the outstanding volunteer hospital worker from the department of the National Commander at the Washington Conference. At the 2019 Washington Conference, Mr. Roscoe Eagle, from the Department of Virginia, received the award.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

Vision Statement

To ensure that all veterans have access to the complete range of services they have earned through their honorable service, and to guarantee that the services they receive is of the highest possible quality, delivered by public servants who honor and respect the veterans who have guaranteed their right to live in a free and secure society.

Mission Statement

To assist all veterans either personally, or through our network of service officers, departments, posts, stakeholders, federal partners, or any other service that is empowered to assist, and to support the VA&R Commission by following our guiding resolutions, our outline of authorizations, our bylaws, and our charter.

Who We Serve

We serve veterans and their families directly or indirectly through the VA&R Commission, its committees, and subcommittees.

Our Services

We assist veterans with:

- Access to high quality and timely healthcare through the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Processing service connected disability claims and appeals
- Certifying, training, and tracking American Legion accredited service officers
- Assisting with representation before Veteran Law Judges, Veteran Law Courts, Decision Review Officers located at VA Regional Offices
- Coordinating and organizing VA volunteer hours
- Access to debt management services when resulting from VA overpayments

- Assistance and representation before Military Evaluation Boards, Military Discharge Review Boards and Physical Evaluation Boards
- Access to combat veteran pensions for indigent veterans
- Assistance with insurance and pension programs through the VA
- Assistance with mortuary affairs provided by VA
- Onsite representation and site visits at VA Medical Centers and Regional Offices around the country and abroad

Additional Duties

While our primary duties involve direct veteran representation, the VA&R Division supports the VA&R Commission and its Committees administratively at all meetings and gatherings of The American Legion to include National Executive Committee meetings, National Convention, Washington Conference, and as required.

The Division staff also participate in congressional research and testimony; evaluation of policy in relation to veteran law; attendance at professional briefings, seminars, workgroups, and similar types of sessions at both the national and local level.

We conduct regular visits to Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities and Regional Offices to analyze their strengths and weaknesses. And we host two resident service officer training courses annually, that teach and refresh a range of advanced skills for claims processers.

The Division director oversees and manages a contractual relationship with the law firm Bergmann and Moore, LLC, the foremost authority of veterans' law in the nation. Services range from training to legal representation of our veteran claimants, to amicus and Supreme Court briefs written and submitted on behalf of The American Legion.

Core Values

- To be well informed – Assist and educate our members and the VA&R Commission on the latest and most relevant information regarding the large portfolio of services we provide.
- To be well spoken – Speak professionally by reflecting the voice and intent of our members.
- To be well mannered – Appropriately represent The American Legion from the highest levels of government to the general public.

Personnel and Organization

National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Personnel and Organization

National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.	
Director	1
Deputy Director for Claims Services	1
Deputy Director for Health Policy	1
Deputy Director for Military Boards and Memorial Benefits	1
Team Trainer, BVA	1
TBI & PTSD Programs Coordinator	1
Claims Service Coordinator	1
Health Policy Coordinator	3
Veteran Disability Claims Specialist	5
Administrative Assistant	1
VA Board of Veterans Appeals, Washington D.C.	
Team Lead, BVA	1
Team Trainer, BVA	1
Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist	1

Veteran Disability Claims Specialist	4
Claims Administrative Coordinator	2
John H. Geiger Operations Center, Indianapolis, IN	
Team Lead, BVA	1
Team Trainer, BVA	2
Veteran Disability Claims Specialist	8
VA Regional Office, St. Paul, MN	
Team Lead, PMC	1
Veteran Benefits Specialist	2
VA Regional Office, Milwaukee, WI	
Veteran Benefits Specialist	1
VA Regional Office, Philadelphia, PA	
Veteran Benefits Specialist	1
Total VA&R Division Staff	*41*

Legislative Activities

The VA&R Division staff participated in a total of six (6) hearings:

Date	Committee/Subcommittee	Testimony	Subject
August 1, 2018	Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee	Chanin Nuntavong	Pending Legislation
September 5, 2018	House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs	Greg Nembhard	Pending Legislation
November 29, 2018	House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs	Greg Nembhard	The Department of Veterans Affairs development and implementation of policy initiatives
April 29, 2019	House Veterans Affairs Committee	Statement for the Record	Tragic Trends: Suicide Prevention among Veterans
May 1, 2019	House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs	Chanin Nuntavong	Pending Legislation
May 22, 2019	Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee	Greg Nembhard	Pending Legislation

Informational Services/Distribution of VA&R Releases

The American Legion has several pamphlets and brochures available upon request to veterans and organizations in need. The VA&R Division offers the following publications:

- *System Worth Savings Executive Report*
- *Agent Orange Benefits & programs*
- *For Service To Your Country*
- *From Crisis To Confidence*
- *Gulf War Era Benefits & Programs*

- *Know your Benefits*
- *Longman-Gordon Report – VA Healthcare: A System Worth Saving*
- *Missing In America Project Brochure*
- *Post Service Officer Guide*
- *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*
- *Service Officer Code of Procedure*
- *The Road Home – Treatment of TBI and PTSD*
- *The War Within – Treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress*
- *Veteran Suicide White Paper*
- *Veterans Affairs Service Brochure*
- *Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Handbook*
- *What To Do before a Veteran Dies*

Claims Services

The Claims Services staff improves the quality of veterans' lives through representation of veterans seeking, or appealing, claims for disability benefits and ensuring a fair and thorough claims development through collaboration with the VA Regional Offices and the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

The VA implemented the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) of 2017. The AMA was signed into law Aug. 23, 2017. Under the act, Veterans will now have three options for claims and appeals: (1) supplemental claim; (2) higher-level review; or (3) direct appeals to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. All decision reviews submitted after February 2019 fell under the new system. Under the AMA, VA's goal is to complete supplemental claims and higher-level reviews averaging 125 days. Decisions appealed to the Board under its direct docket will average 365 days. Under the legacy process, appeal resolutions averaged three to seven years. The new law: modernizes the current claims and appeals process, includes three review options for disagreements with decisions, requires improved notification of VA decisions, provides earlier claim resolution, ensures you receive the earliest effective date possible, and preserves the opportunity for an in-person hearing.

On June 25, 2019, Congress passed H.R. 299 – Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. The new law is beneficial to veterans who served on a Blue Water Navy ship on the coastal waterways – of not more than 12 nautical miles seaward of a line commencing on the southwestern demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975 – and likely had contact with Agent Orange. Passage of H.R. 299 was made possible by the Court's ruling in Procopio v. Wilkie, which reversed a 1997 VA decision to deny that so-called "Blue Water" veterans were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in the waters off Vietnam. The Procopio decision ruled that the VA should presume those sailors were exposed to the toxic chemical at some point during their service, and grant them the same benefits their ground troop comrades qualify for. The VBA has until January 3, 2020, to implement the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 and is currently in the development process. Affected veterans are encouraged to submit their claim now to secure the earliest possible effective date; though, the claims will be held in abeyance until the law is fully implemented; with the exception of those which are granted expedited status due to serious illness and other serious hardships. Given these new developments, the BVA teams continue to work diligently to improve the process of reducing the backlog of legacy appeals.

Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA)

Veteran Disability Claims Specialists represent veterans before the Department of Veterans Affairs' BVA. They review VA claim files, interview claimants in preparation for personal hearings, prepare oral presentations and written briefs, and act as counsel on behalf of claimants during hearings.

During this program year, The American Legion represented 18,532 claimants seeking benefits. For the claims receiving dispositions, 13,807 or 74.5% were either determined to have been inadequately developed and prematurely denied or were erroneously denied by the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). As of June 2019, there are 4,868 cases assigned to The American Legion. Veteran Disability Claims Specialists prepares over 1,200 individual hearing presentations each month, arguing on behalf of veterans and their families.

The American Legion find's that VA Regional Offices continue to inadequately develop and prematurely deny claims. A failure to comply with its duty to assist or misapplication of laws when adjudicating is too frequently occurring. The VBA's lack of proper development, results in a remand of the majority of appealed cases back to the regional offices for the necessary development, thus extending the time to have a final disposition on the appeal. Through continuous profession training and thorough knowledge of VA laws and regulations, American Legion personnel achieve greater outcomes in their advocacy efforts. Bergmann & Moore, LLC, provides new hire training to provide the necessary tools for new employees to successfully represent claimants. Additionally, Bergmann & Moore's legal team provides unit and individual training to update personnel on changes in laws, court decisions, etc.

Regional Office Action Review (ROAR)

The Claims Services staff conduct ROAR site visits at VA Regional Offices managed by the VBA. ROAR visits fall under the umbrella of Health Policy's System Worth Saving (SWS) program and its purpose is to improve the accuracy and delivery of disability compensation benefits to veterans by reviewing the quality of VA claims adjudications. Claims Services staff and seasoned attorneys also review randomly selected claims adjudications and the overall processing of VA claims at selected facilities.

These ROAR site visits include a review of randomly selected claims adjudications to evaluate the overall development of VA claims, interviews with VA employees, and discussions with local American Legion claims representatives. During this program year, eight ROAR visits have been conducted:

- November 12-13, 2018 - Muskogee Regional Benefits Office, Muskogee, OK
- December 11-12, 2018 - Huntington Regional Benefits Office, Huntington, WV
- January 20-21, 2019 - New York Regional Benefits Office, New York, NY
- February 12-13, 2019 - Lincoln Regional Benefits Office, Lincoln, NE
- March 12-13, 2019 - New Orleans Regional Benefits Office, New Orleans, LA
- April 9-10, 2019 - Little Rock Regional Benefits Office, Little Rock, AR
- May 21-22, 2019 - Wilmington Regional Benefits Office, Wilmington, DE
- June 18-19, 2019 - St. Petersburg Regional Benefits Office, St. Petersburg, FL

Scheduled ROAR site visits:

- July 23-24, 2019 - Newark Regional Benefits Office, Newark, NJ
- August 14-15, 2019 - Hartford Regional Benefits Office, Hartford, CT
- September 10-11, 2019 - Providence Regional Benefits Office, Providence, RI
- October 23-24, 2019 - Washington Regional Benefits Office, Washington, D.C.
- November 5-6, 2019 - Winton-Salem Regional Benefits Office, Winston-Salem, NC
- December 3-4, 2019 - Montgomery Regional Benefits Office, Montgomery, AL

Department Service Officers (DSO) School

Since 1985, The American Legion has authorized the VA&R Commission to conduct Department Service Officer (DSO) schools bi-annually for accredited representatives of The American Legion. This bi-annual school represents the organization's ongoing

commitment to developing a network of highly trained and experienced service officers to effectively advocate for veterans and their families.

The purpose of the DSO school is to provide current information about changes in veterans' law and, VA regulations, and VA adjudication policies. The DSO school allows American Legion service officers to improve their advocacy skills. The program of instruction includes training suitable for new service officers and advanced training on issues relating to claims processing, disability ratings, personal hearings, development of appeals, and the interpretation and application of precedent decisions by the U.S Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The American Legion conducted two session of DSO Schools during this program year:

- Summer: August 9-11, 2018 (Sheraton Indianapolis City Center Hotel, Indianapolis, IN)
- Winter: February 27-March 1, 2019 (Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)

Health Policy

The Health Policy staff ensures the VA healthcare system remains the healthcare system of choice for veterans. The Health Policy portfolio includes: Hospitals, Clinics and Vet Centers, Caregivers, Telehealth Services, VA Veterans Canteen Service, VA Voluntary Service, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse, Military Sexual Trauma, PTSD, Polytrauma/TBI, Women Veterans Health Care, Vaccines and Immunization, Seniors (Geriatrics and Extended Care), Minority Health, Rural Health, Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders, Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services (Amputation, Audiology & Speech Pathology, Automobile Adaptive Equipment, Blind Rehabilitation, Chiropractic Care, Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA), Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service, and Recreation Therapy).

System Worth Saving (SWS)

In 2003, then-National Commander Ron Conley visited and assessed the delivery of health care at more than 60 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities across the country. Commander Conley assessed the delivery of health care delivered to the nation's veterans to determine if the VA health care system was a "System Worth Saving."

The following year, The American Legion passed a resolution making System Worth Saving a permanent program under the National Commander. The American Legion's National Executive Committee later realigned the program under the VA&R Commission.

Annually, commission members and staff conduct a series of site visits to VA medical facilities and regional offices. While on site, they meet with veterans, their families, and VA administrators and employees to discuss successes, challenges, and limitations. Each site visit culminates with a report that informs the members of the American Legion, and provides additional insight to the President of the United States, members of Congress, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. After nearly two decades, The American Legion has conducted more than 150 System Worth Saving visits to VA facilities in the United States, it's territories, and the Philippines.

The American Legion remains true to one of its original purposes stated in the original chartering documentation in 1919, "to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to the country." Since then, The American Legion remains committed to mutual helpfulness by ensuring that the VA continues intact and properly funded to achieve President Abraham Lincoln's charge, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." The American Legion believes in the quality of care at VA facilities and we stand behind our mantra that it's a "System Worth Saving."

Health Policy Coordinators conduct SWS site visits in Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISN) managed by the VA Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The purpose of SWS site visits is to understand what works best at medical centers, identify

challenges and make recommendations to help overcome them. Health Policy staff selects VA/VHA sites through a ranked selection process and recommendations to the VA&R Commission. Health Policy staff ranks and recommends visits to VA/VHA health facilities based on requests from American Legion departments, reports from the VA Office of the Inspector General (VAOIG) and Government Accountability Office (GAO), VA's Nationwide Access Reports, Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) model, and the media. A site visit consists of a veteran's town hall meeting, a visit to the local VA healthcare facility, and a meeting with the executive leadership team. At the end of each SWS site visit, a report is issued that is shared with the medical center, the VA secretary and under secretary of health, congressional members and the President of the United States.

A SWS site visit covers two and a half days, beginning with a veteran's town hall meeting on the evening of the first day. The second and third days consist of a visit to the local VA healthcare facility, and meetings with the executive leadership and departmental staff to discuss challenges and best practices.

The VA&R identified 14 VA Health Care facilities for a SWS site visits in calendar year 2019. The locations were submitted and approved during the 2018 National Executive Committee meeting. During this program year, Commission members and Division staff have conducted 11 site visits to VA facilities:

- August 6-8, 2018 - Minneapolis VA Health Care System, Minneapolis, MN
- September 17-19, 2018 - Atlanta VA Health Care System, Atlanta, GA
- October 29-31, 2018 - VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, Leeds, MA
- November 19-21, 2018 - Marion VA Medical Center, Marion, IL
- December 10-12, 2018 - Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson, AZ
- January 21-23, 2019 - James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa FL
- February 4-6, 2019 - VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA
- February 11-13, 2019 - El Paso VA Health Care System, El Paso, TX
- March 11-13, 2019 - Southern Louisiana Health Care System, New Orleans, LA
- April 8-10, 2019 - Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks, Fayetteville, AR
- June 17-19, 2019 - Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Scheduled SWS site visits:

- July 22-24, 2019 - Martinsburg, VA Medical Center, Martinsburg, WV
- August 5-7, 2019 - Illiana Health Care System, Danville, IL
- September 23-25, 2019 - Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.
- October 22-24, 2019 - Lexington VA Medical Center, Lexington, KY
- October 22-24, 2019 - Colmery O'Neil VA Medical Center, Topeka, KS
- November 4-6, 2019 - Salisbury VA Medical Center, Salisbury, NC
- December 2-4, 2019 - Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System, Montgomery, AL

TBI and PTSD Programs

In 2017, The American Legion declared suicide prevention as one of its top priorities. Increasingly concerned by the number of veterans taking their own lives, The American Legion established a Suicide Prevention Program and aligned the program under the TBI & PTSD Committee. This committee reviews methods, programs and strategies that can be used to treat TBI & PTSD. In order to reduce veteran's suicide this committee seeks to influence legislation and operational policies that can facilitate quality health care for veterans regardless of combat their era.

The TBI/PTSD Program Coordinator launched the 2019 Mental Health Survey on May 16, 2019. The purpose of the survey is to identify traditional and alternative programs

used to treat veteran mental health and prevent suicide. There have been continual efforts to promote the survey which include, setting up an informational booth at the 2019 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Governor's Challenge Implementation Academy, working with a variety of Veteran Service Organizations like Paralyzed Veterans of America, Wounded Warriors, Military Officers Association of America, Texas Veterans Commission, The Retired Enlisted Association, and internal organizational marketing strategies.

VA Voluntary Services

The American Legion's Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program continues to support VA initiatives that support the care and treatment of veteran patients in VA medical facilities. During fiscal year 2018, Legionnaires volunteered at over 200 VA facilities, which included VA medical centers, community clinics, Vet Centers, Fisher Houses, state Veteran's Homes and national cemeteries.

A total of 4,642 regularly scheduled volunteers contributed 706,996 hours and 13,932 occasional visits contributed an additional 59,568.75 hours for a grand total of 766,564.75 hours volunteered by American Legion members. With more than three quarters of a million hours volunteered, The American Legion saved the VA nearly $19.5 million in 2018.

Military Boards and Memorial Benefits

The Military Boards and Memorial Benefits (MBMB) staff assist veterans, active duty members and their families, on issues pertaining to the memorial affairs, Department of Defense (DoD) Medical Evaluation Process, Discharge Review and Correction of Military Records; as well as the VA Debt Management Center, VA Pension Management Center, and the VA Life Insurance program.

Memorial Affairs

MBMB staff ensures veterans and their dependents are honored with final resting places in VA national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, state, tribal or private cemeteries. They provide assistance on all National Cemetery Administration (NCA) benefits including headstones, marker, medallions, Presidential Memorial Certificates, military honors, burial flag, burial allowance and survivor benefits.

Discharge Review and Correction of Military Records

Title 10, United States Code, sections 1552 and 1553, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Military Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for Correction of Military Records. The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of these boards shortly after World War II and has represented former service members petitioning them for relief since. Assistance is provided by representing applicants before the board, educating veterans on their due process and how to apply, review and submit applications, and conducting outreach to veterans with "bad paper" discharges. These requests involved a wide variety of issues including character of service upgrades, narrative reason for discharge changes, entitlement or amendment of physical disability severance or retirement, issuance or reissuance of military awards and decorations, requests for military personnel files and service medical records, and administrative corrections to official military records. Each of the discharge review and correction boards is under a congressional mandate to adjudicate cases within one year from the date of acceptance. Currently, none of the boards are meeting this requirement with average timeframes ranging from 16 to 24 months. The following support was provided by the MBMB staff:

Military Discharge Reviews

	Record Reviews	Hearing Reviews	Total Upgraded
Air Force	19	8	6
Army	53	10	5
Navy	27	11	3
Marine Corps	55	6	3
Coast Guard	0	0	0
Total	*154*	*35*	*17*

Correction of Military Records

	Record Reviews	Hearing Reviews	Total Corrected
Air Force	17	0	4
Army	54	0	3
Navy	22	0	5
Marine Corps	21	0	3
Coast Guard	1	0	0
Total	*115*	*0*	*15*

Pension Management Center (PMC)

The VA PMC processes adjustments of benefits for individuals in receipt of non-service connected disability pension, death pension and dependency indemnity compensation. Non-service connected pension is a need-based benefit available for those "most at need" wartime service veterans and their dependents. The American Legion's Veterans Benefits Specialists are located in St. Paul, MN, Milwaukee, WI, and Philadelphia, PA. They expedite the delivery of benefits when beneficiaries meet the criteria for receipt in order to reduce a financial hardship. This is accomplished by reviewing all claims for accuracy, ensuring supporting material is included, acting as the counsel and presents verbal arguments on behalf of claimant before VA and preparing claimants for their hearing. This program year, the following activities were reported: 9,057 new pension claims and 222 appeals.

Restricted Access Claim Center (RACC)

Sensitive files belonging to current and former senior government officials, VA employees and Veteran Service Organization's representatives, are handled at the St. Paul Restricted Access Claim Center. This program year, the following was reported: 310 restricted access compensation claims.

VA Life Insurance

VA life insurance, including Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI), Veterans Group Life Insurance and Family SGLI, TSGLI, and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance, are handled at the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA. The American Legion's Veterans Benefits Specialists assist surviving beneficiaries file for disbursement of policy at the time of need and ensure veterans are aware of eligibility window for enrollment. This program year, the following was reported: 1,590 insurance activities.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

Vincent J. Troiola, New York, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Director

This report covers the programs, activities, and accomplishments of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission, its two standing committees (Employment and Veterans Preference and Veterans Education, Other Benefits &

Homelessness), and the staff from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019. Since the commission and the committees always meet concurrently, all future references to the commission in this report will automatically indicate the inclusion of the committees.

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission chaired by Vincent Troiola (NY). The division consists of Director Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Assistant Director Ariel De Jesus, Jr., Assistant Director John Kamin, Assistant Director Davy Leghorn, Homelessness and Housing Policy Associate Darren Allison, and Administrative Assistant Edwin Cruz.

National Veterans Employment & Education Commission

- Employment & Veterans Preference Committee
- Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness Committee
- Veterans Employment & Education Council
- Awards Subcommittee
- Small Business Task Force Advisory Board
- Homeless Veteran Task Force Advisory Board

2018-2019 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 Veterans Employment & Education Commission met on Saturday, August 25, 2018, in the Hilton, Marquette VIII & IX, Second Floor, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in conjunction with the One-Hundred Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, August 27, 2018. 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 Veterans Employment & Education Commission was held in the headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 16-17, 2018. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 2018.

(3) At the 59th Washington Conference, on Monday, February 25, 2019, which was held in the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC; commission members and guests met to hear the latest on subjects of concern to them.

(4) The chairman of the commission met May 8, 2018, in the headquarters office of The American Legion, in Indianapolis, Indiana. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, May 8-9, 2019.

Legislative Appearances

A vital part of the work of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony on issues affecting the economic well-being of America's veterans. During the period covered by this report, the commission staff testified before Congress, and also participated in the preparation of testimony presented by other members of the Legion staff on several occasions.

The following is a synopsis of the congressional hearings and correspondence held from August 1, 2018, to July 31, 2019, on matters about the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission:

- On July 17, 2018, an Assistant Director from VE&E Division testified in a joint hearing before the House Small Business' Subcommittee on Investigation, Oversight and Regulation and House Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on

Oversight and Investigations regarding the implementation of Sections 1832 and 1833 of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act.

- On December 5, 2018, an Assistant Director from VE&E Division testified before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Veteran Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations regarding the status of VA's implementation of the ruling handed down from the US Supreme Court's Decision in *Kingdomware Technologies Inc. v United States*
- In February 2019, the staff delivered testimony to the House Small Business Committee hearing regarding the progress of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Small Business Administration implementation of sections 1832 and 1833 of the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.
- In February 2019, the staff testified in front of the House Small Business Committee. The hearing's purpose was to examine the challenges faced by underserved businesses; the American Legion took the opportunity to discuss the Small Business Administration's Veterans-focused Entrepreneurial Development and Loan programs.
- In February 2019, the staff submitted a letter of support for the Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act a bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), John Kennedy (R-LA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) to help Veteran entrepreneurs grow their small businesses, create jobs and expand economic opportunity.
- On March 13, 2019, the staff assisted the Department of New York in drafting a Memorandum of Support to the New York State Senate Higher Education Committee for closing the 90-10 loophole.
- In April 2019, the staff submitted a letter to VA objecting to the awarding of a VA healthcare supplies and services contract to a large business Rotech Healthcare Inc.
- In April 2019, the staff signed on to an opposition letter to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees underscoring our deep reservations on small business policy changes recommended by the Section 809 Panel in its final report published in late January 2019.
- In April 2019, the staff prevented the advancement of the BRAVE Act, which proposed a new federal preferred contracting group within VA for large businesses that hire veterans.
- On April 9, 2019, Staff testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity concerning H.R 95, H.R. 444, H.R. 1448, and draft legislation
- On May 23, 2019, Staff submitted a letter to the VA IG requesting an investigation and additional oversight on health service contractors who administer direct care to veteran patients. How VA purchases medical supplies and services affects the most vulnerable segment of our constituency. That's why The American Legion is committed to working with VA to ensure our veteran patients are adequately cared for and protected from unscrupulous and predatory contractors.
- On June 27, 2019, Staff submitted a letter to the VA Office of the Secretary in response to MSPV 2.0 Prime Vendor Solicitation by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, for the upcoming Medical Surgical Prime Vendor 2.0 contract. The American Legion reviewed the solicitation and made policy suggestions as it pertains to Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses inclusion. Though these comments prompted by a review of the Request For Proposals, The American Legion's policy suggestions apply to all VA procurements.
- On July 10, 2019, Staff testified before United States House of Representatives Committee on Small Business regarding the substantial role of veteran

entrepreneurs in the economy, the challenges they face and federal programs and legislative efforts meant to foster veteran entrepreneurship.

- On July 17, 2019, Staff testified before the United House of Representative Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding draft bills to amend title 38 United States Code. To authorize State approving agencies to carry out outreach activities A discussion draft To amend title 38 United States Code to require that educational institutions abide by Principles of Excellence as a condition of approval for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs and other purposes.

Administrative Activities

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission and its two standing subcommittees on Employment and Veterans Preference and Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness are responsible for ensuring that America's veterans have the opportunity to provide, with honor and dignity, the economic necessities of life for themselves and their families. To achieve this goal, the commission and its committees work closely with governmental agencies and liaison to assist the organization's members.

A staff responsibility is answering the large volume of mail and electronic mail that is received annually from veterans seeking information or assistance on issues which come under the commission's jurisdiction. While the staff can neither place individual veterans in jobs nor represent them in labor disputes, the staff does provide information, guidance, and, when appropriate, referral. Besides correspondence from individuals, the staff also receives and answers frequent requests and inquiries from government agencies, members of Congress, congressional committees, private organizations, and other groups regarding veterans' economic issues.

Employer of the Year Awards

One of the commission's major programs is its awards program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program, The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who has established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers, and to exceptional members of the state employment security agencies.

Each year since 1969, the Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission has sponsored an Employer of the Year Awards Program. This program seeks to honor those employers across the country that has established an outstanding record in the employment and retention of veterans. Before this year's Washington Conference, the chairman of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission, Vincent Troiola (NY), appointed a seven-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 2018 in the Employer of Veterans Awards Program.

The Commission's Awards Subcommittee met to select the following National winners:

- **Large Employer**: Grunt Style, LLC, Illinois
- **Medium Size Employer**: HICAPS Inc., North Carolina
- **Small Employer**: Bravehearts Therapeutic Riding & Education Center, Illinois

Employment Service Awards

Three awards beginning in 1993 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 genuinely outstanding veteran-dedicated staff members.

National winners are as follows:

- **LVER of the Year**: Osvaldo "Ozzie" Montalvo, Georgia
- **DVOP of the Year**: Mark Simmons, Colorado
- **Employment Local Office**: Pikes Peak Workforce Center, Colorado

Other Awards:

- **Employer of Older Workers**: Workforce Connection- Wise Title V, Wisconsin
- **Michael Guty's Homeless Veterans Outreach Award**: The American Legion Department of New Jersey
- **Enhance the Lives of Disable:** Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI), Georgia

EMPLOYMENT & VETERANS PREFERENCE COMMITTEE
James Fratolillo, Massachusetts, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Director

The mission of the committee is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans. To accomplish this, the committee works at the national level with Congress and various federal agencies. The committee does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on its network of employment chairpersons to assist individual veterans in finding employment. Their Posts and Departments appoint these employment chairpersons. Occasionally, Departments also appoint them at the County and District levels. Additionally, this committee is charged with promoting veterans' preference throughout the federal government and ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

VETERANS EDUCATION, OTHER BENEFITS & HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE
Eric W. Measles, California, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Director

This committee is charged with ensuring that veterans' educational benefits provided by the federal government are sufficient and that every generation of veterans has substantially the same as, or better benefits than, the previous generation. Also, this committee is to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled as recompense for their military service on behalf of a grateful nation while continuing to push for federal and local governments to allocate adequate resources to combat and ultimately eliminate veteran homelessness.

Federal Veterans' Economic Programs

The following is a brief overview of the Commission's interactions with those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

EDUCATION

The National Veterans Employment & Education Division convened a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) GI Bill Symposium. Charmain Bogue, Interim Director of VA Education Service, led the GI Bill symposium after opening keynote remarks from Margarita Devlin, VBA Principal Deputy Under Secretary. Ms. Bogue shared that as of February 27, pending inventory is 115,000 claims (85,000 Chapter 33).

Ms. Bogue provided updates on a new provision of the Forever GI Bill. The Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) sets forth a 5-year pilot program to eligible GI Bill beneficiaries connecting them to accelerated learning courses

in media applications, computer software, computer programming, data processing, or information sciences to help them secure meaningful employment.

- VET TEC website went public on February 12
- VET TEC Veteran application will go live no later than March 25
- Housing Stipend paid in accordance with Section 107
- Unused funds ($15 million annually) roll-over to the following year

Additionally, we discussed the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Scholarship. It authorizes VA to provide a scholarship of up to an additional nine months of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to eligible individuals - Maximum is $30,000, then highlighted vital points to the Colmery Act, that included VA updated monthly housing rates for the Fall 2018 and processed over 450k corrections in December, and Spring 2019 processing times are consistent with goals.

Furthermore, following the remarks from Ms. Bogue, VE&E staff provided schools in attendance the opportunity to share with VA their concerns. Unanimously, the schools in attendance expressed that the student veterans affected by the late payment fiasco last fall were not happy with the way VA handled the situation.

Finally, Tanya Ang, Director of Government Affairs for Veterans Education Success shared that VA Education staff has been diligently working to ensure that the next tuition payments go out on time and that there will never be a repeat of the events of last fall. VA Education staff patiently listened to further concerns and offered their assurance that they would communicate future updates on implementation progress.

Finally, a new report suggests some of the schools that receive the most Post-9/11 GI Bill money spend the least on teaching students.

The study, conducted by the nonprofit group Veterans Education Success, analyzed more than 4,600 higher-education institutions and found that in 2017, 427 of those schools spent less than 30 percent of their gross tuition dollars on instruction, according to VES. That's about $980 million in GI Bill money that went toward costs other than directly educating student veterans, VES estimates.

The three schools receiving the most GI Bill money nationwide from the fiscal year 2009 through the fiscal year 2017 – University of Phoenix, DeVry University and Strayer University, all of which are for-profit schools – spent only 15.3 percent, 12.4 percent, and 10.9 percent respectively of their overall revenue on instruction in 2017.

The VES study defines "instruction" in line with the Education Department's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Outcome Measures Survey, including funds for academic and training essentials like providing classes and professors.

It notably does not include investments in academic support or student services in that definition. The study used data from the Education Department's IPEDS Outcome Measures Survey, the 2016-17 IPEDS Finance Survey, the College Scorecard database, and VA's records of schools' GI Bill tuition and fee payments.

VES calculated how much of a school's GI Bill revenue is going toward teaching and learning by dividing the total amount schools spent on instruction by the total amount they received in tuition and fees. In addition to analyzing GI Bill revenue, the report also looked at schools' success graduating their students within eight years of enrolling and whether those graduates were making more or less than $28,000 a year — what the average U.S. high school graduate makes — within six years of entering a college.

The study concluded that seven of the top 10 schools receiving GI Bill funds failed to graduate more than 50 percent of their students. It also found that only about 47 percent of GI Bill students at those schools were earning more than $28,000 a year within six years of starting school. The worst schools — or the ones the VES dubbed the "bottom of the barrel" — for allocating GI Bill money for instruction were all for-profits: Colorado Technical University, American Intercontinental University, and Capella University, all of which spent less than 10 percent of their gross revenue on instruction in 2017.

Licensing & Certification

On March 12, 2019, The American Legion hosted a "Best Practices for Lowering Credentialing for Military Spouses Roundtable" at its D.C. Headquarters. The discussion followed part of the Legion's ongoing mission to focus and provide a more effective way for military spouses to get and keep their licensing and credentials.

The meeting consisted of presentations from the DOD-State Liaison Office, Department of Labor (DOL), Blue Star Families, and Military Spouse Judicial Network (MSJDN). The topics covered updates and changes to state licensing legislation, new DOL efforts to synchronize spouse credentialing requirements, the economic profile of military spouses, and non-profit advocacy techniques.

As part of the roundtable, a landscape of status of state licensing issues was discussed, which included 19 states implementing methods to enforce the military spouse teacher certification. As of July, that status has now grown to 31 states. Additionally, the Physical Therapy License Compact is endorsed in 21 states. The Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact has been affirmed in 30 states. The Emergency Medical Services Compact (REPLICA) is additionally being supported in 16 states. Mental Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) has likewise been approved in 6 states. On state models, three case studies identified: Utah, Iowa, and Florida.

The primary takeaway of the roundtable was the value of The American Legion amplifying military spouse stories and connecting them with community partners. By working with them & knowing the tools military spouses can bring to the table, effective change made with the understanding that overhead and time limits expected.

Veterans' Preference

The staff discussed a proposed draft bill from Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler (MO-04) that would afford all those servicing in the Reserve Component (Reserve and Guard) Veterans' Preference status. The purpose of Veterans' preference is to provide eligible veterans with an advantage when they compete with equally qualified non-veteran candidates for Federal employment.

By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces over 180 days consecutively or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-veterans both in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and in retention during reductions in force.

"[v]eterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-veterans both in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and in retention during reductions in force."

The draft bill states that Veterans' Preference should include or not limit its preference to national guardsmen and members of the reserve Armed forces.

The Committee believes that the economy and the Federal Government, as a whole, benefit from having more qualified Veterans employed within their ranks. Unfortunately, there are specific segments of veterans and servicemembers that do not qualify for veterans' preference due to an outdated statute that does not accurately reflect the current characteristics of the U.S. Armed Forces.

To be entitled to preference, a veteran must meet the eligibility requirements in section 2108 of title 5, U.S.C., which states that the veteran must have an honorable or general discharge and serve a 180 days consecutively active duty. Military retirees at the rank of major, lieutenant commander, or higher are not eligible for preference unless they meet requirements to be considered a disabled veteran. Guard and Reserve active duty for training purposes do not qualify for preference unless they are granted preference for time served on a campaign or have a service connection.

The Committee is also concerned that section 2108 of title 5, U.S.C., does not allow for retired members of the Armed Forces to receive some form of veterans' preference.

Veterans Affairs Administration defines a veteran as an individual who— (A)served on active duty any time in the armed forces for a period of more than 180 consecutive days any part of which occurred during the period beginning on, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last date of Operation.

The American Legion can support this bill with the following stipulations, for striking "consecutive" in each instance and inserting "cumulative" with regards to the 180 days' time frame; however, that a rolling over period should be implemented and accumulated within a specified period, that being three years.

The Committee also states that this section will additionally, further amend section 2108 of title 5 U.S.C., to allow retired members of the Armed Forces to qualify for veterans' preference. The Veterans Employment and Education Commission agrees that a leveled playing field for veterans preference that includes all retired military servicemembers and they should not be limited to rank be mandated. With that said VE&E recognize that the three-tier preference eligibility applies to all veterans: 1) sole survivorship (0 point preference eligible), 2) non-disabled veteran (5 point preference eligible) and 3) service-connected disabled (10 point preference eligible).

Finally, after meeting with Jared Patterson, a Defense Fellow representing the Office of Congresswoman, Vicky Hartzler, discussing the bill in its entirety, we agreed that some of the language surrounding the bill needs to be revised. He stated that he was not aware of the issue encompassing National Guardsmen, is that they fall under the State and not Federal, during their drill weekends and annual training that they are required to complete. The question remains, should they be awarded this preference when in actuality they are under the State unless called to active duty by Executive order.

We concluded that the language of the bill needs further clarification. The American Legion will decide if cumulative should be implemented disregarding time constraints.

Employment And Career Fairs

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission of The American Legion collaborated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to host a hiring event, in the International Terrace, Terrace Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC. This event started with an opening ceremony, which included speakers Mark Toal, Program Manager, Department of Labor, Veterans Employment & Training Services, District of Columbia; Denise Rohan, Past National Commander, The American Legion; and Vincent Troiola, Chairman, Veterans Employment and Education Commission, The American Legion. Sixty employers from various industries and 315 attendees participated in the Career Fair. There were 96 on the spot interviews, 20 potential job offers, and three immediate hires at the event.

The American Legion's table was staffed by VE&E and HR staff. They discussed opportunities for The American Legion to assist veterans with their reintegrating back into their local communities. Additionally, they answered servicemembers and veterans' questions concerning benefits and described the Legion's programs, as well as; they explained how to become a Legion member. Overall, the employers and participants at this event were pleased with the outcome. The employers noted the participant's professionalism and overall high-level of qualifications. The participants commented that they were impressed with the variety of employers from different industries and their willingness to hire veterans.

Additionally, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a Financial Literacy and Resume Writing workshop at the Washington Hilton. These workshops were designed to help veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses find meaningful careers in the civilian workforce, expand their networks, and gain the tools necessary to stand out throughout the hiring process. Speakers for these workshops included Rodney Rolland, Director of Human Resources, American Legion, and Judy Viccellio, Partner, New York Life. Following the morning workshops, attendees were able to mingle with each other and prospective employers during a networking luncheon. The

forum speakers included: Dave Wallace, Military Relations Project Manager, Lockheed Martin, Talent Acquisition Strategy & Solutions (TASS); Mark Escherich, Military and Veteran Programs Manager, U.S. Transportation Security Administration; Ralph Hernandez, Military Senior Program Leader, Amazon; Brian Armstrong, Manager of Military Recruitment, Hilton; and Gary Patton, Major General, U.S. Army (Retired), Vice President, Veterans Outreach, CACI.

The Job Fair/Workshop dynamic that The American Legion and U.S. Chamber of Commerce created has stepped outside the traditional hiring-fair template by developing programs and engagements that target the frustrated veteran job seekers. Of note, the veterans in attendance took advantage of the opportunity to improve upon the skills they developed during the sometimes challenging job search process. Many veterans stated that the workshops and the Job Fair were very informative and complete with many quality job opportunities.

Additionally, on Thursday, February 21, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division had its first meeting of the Employment Innovation Task Force. The Task Force was formed to combine the talents, expertise, and innovations of government, nongovernment organizations, and private sector companies in bringing solutions forward for The American Legion to champion with its federal agency partners to improve employment opportunities for transitioning servicemembers and veterans. This includes introducing both service delivery, business process, and technology innovations in support of the Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) and credentialing of servicemembers. Also, the Task Force will be examining all aspects of TAP and credentialing from résumé writing, financial planning, goal setting, job searches, interviewing, networking, peer-to-peer support, family transition support, higher education, individual career development plans, entrepreneurship, VA benefits, and other elements of holistic support of transitioning servicemembers and veterans. The primary objective is to provide for a seamless transition from military service to the civilian workforce.

The purpose of the Task Force is to:

- Provide independent surveys and assessments of the efficacy and efficiency of delivering "for life" support to transitioning servicemembers and veterans in the digital era;
- Introduce innovations responsive to the digital age warrior and digital era employer;
- Identify best practices from the best of demonstrated veteran-friendly employers to encourage adoption by all employers;
- Use labor market and labor economic data to guide career goal setting and development of transitioning servicemembers and veterans;
- Introduce the use of digital tools and skill drills to support just-in-time delivery of information, assistance, support, training, and skill development underlying the "for life" concept;
- Ensure all outcomes further the goal of providing a seamless transition from military service to private-sector employment; and
- Create feedback loops for continuous improvement of TAP and credentialing programs along with constant innovation in the method and means by which transition and "for life" support is provided.

The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Division, through its relationships, continue to play a vital role in assisting American Legion Posts to produce successful Job Fairs, small business development workshops, and employment training services throughout America. Also, the staff of the National Veterans Employment & Education Division is involved in several advisory committees. Director Joseph Sharpe Jr. is a member of the Small Business Administration's Advisory Committee.

Aside from the advisory committee, The American Legion is also a stakeholder and active participant in numerous government agencies and private businesses' veteran

initiatives, where our input into their programs is highly valued. The American Legion has a representative on the Department of Labor's Advisory Committee Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) and Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small Business Development. Lastly, The American Legion participates in the Veterans' Entrepreneurship's Task Force (VET-FORCE) business forums and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Service Member's Affairs meetings.

Lastly, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division has participated in numerous Career Fairs throughout the nation, allowing The American Legion to get in front of more than 25,000 veterans and their families. The American Legion has been invited to participate in over 12 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) Events. The YRRP is a Department of Defense (DOD) effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. The American Legion is the only Veterans Service Organization that participates in these events. Locations for the YRRP included but were not limited to Florida, California, Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia, and Hawaii.

National Veterans Employment & Education Commission Forum

On Monday, February 25, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission assembled in Lincoln East, Concourse Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington D.C., to address education, employment and small business concerns regarding veterans and their families. The meeting started with The American Legion employment updates from four Departments – Juan Cruz (PR), John McKinney (TX), Michael Espinoza (AZ), and Bob Looby (NJ). This time was used to share best practices and successes that their departments had over the past year. The intent was to encourage others to have a more active role within their departments, to reduce the veterans' unemployment rate, and elicit new members. Next, the Commission conducted an employer panel consisting of employers from various industries. Participants included Ralph Hernandez, Military Senior Program Leader, Amazon; Brian Armstrong, Manager of Military Recruitment, Hilton; Edward Carr, Senior Project Manager, Military & Veteran Affairs, Comcast; Gary Patton, Major General, U.S. Army (Retired), Vice President, Veterans Outreach, CACI; Chip Meyers moderated the panel. The panel discussion focused on the hiring & retention of veterans and the evolution of cultural changes within their prospective organization. Following the panel, the Commission presented briefings on small business opportunities for veteran business owners. We hosted guest speakers from banks and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) that discussed market trends and lending resources for veteran entrepreneurs seeking start-up seed money or those ready to scale. We also received a briefing from the SBA and other Legion resource partners on the entrepreneurship development programming available for veterans.

Obtaining financing for a business venture is often challenging for veteran entrepreneurs. From being in the startup phase to growing a business, an entrepreneur faces difficulties with the requirements of traditional bank loans. However, the 7(a) Program may be able to help – it is the SBA's primary and most popular loan guarantee program. Through SBA's Veterans Advantage initiative, veterans, members of the Guard and Reserve, as well as, Military Spouses are eligible for a standard 7(a) loan of up to $350,000 and their loan guarantee fees waived.

Aside from the 7(a) loan program, veterans can also utilize the SBA's micro-lending program, which is administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund or CDFIs. Since 2013 veteran small business usage of micro-loans have almost doubled.

Over the last few years, the American Legion piloted a Small Business Program and partnered with the CFO of Foresight to roll out a new curriculum aimed at assisting veteran entrepreneurs in scaling their business. The *5 Habits of Profitability* is a two-day course

that guides participants towards drafting a customized plan to grow their business. We hope to develop more buy-in from our state partners and to gauge their interest in extending the program to the state level.

Since its implementation in 2012, the Boots to Business (B2B) capstone course taught as a part of the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) has been very successful. B2B is a lean program, administered solely through SBA's 22 Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs). For the last five years, the two day B2B curriculum has been the catalyst for the launch of many veteran-owned businesses.

Veteran Entrepreneurship

Our commission understands that for many veterans, entrepreneurship is a viable option, especially for those veterans who may find the job market tough to navigate. Consequently, The American Legion recognizes how important it is that we assist and advocate on behalf of our veterans who are self-employed. This is why The American Legion is one of the few Veterans Service Organizations that have invested in tangible programs and services for veteran entrepreneurs.

The American Legion also maintains a Small Business Task Force consisting of a consortium of accomplished veteran business owners who have volunteered to advise the Legion on legislative matters that pertain to veteran businesses. The group of sixty members shares their experiences -- ranging from the public to the private sectors -- to help inform the National Veterans Employment & Education Division on matters relating to federal contracting for veterans and other areas that affect veteran business owners.

Veterans Preference Committee Meeting held in the afternoon of February 25, 2019, focused on veteran small business. Our guest speakers from banks and CDFIs to discuss the market trends and lending resources for veteran entrepreneurs when they are seeking to start-up seed money or when they are ready to scale. We also receive a briefing from the SBA and the Legion's resource partners to on all the entrepreneurship development programming that is now available for veterans.

Community Banks: Obtaining financing for a business venture is often challenging for veteran entrepreneurs. From being in the startup phase to growing a business, an entrepreneur faces difficulties with the requirements of traditional bank loans. However, the 7(a) Program may be able to help – it's SBA's first and most popular loan guarantee program. Through SBA's Veterans Advantage initiative, veterans, members of the Guard and Reserve as well as Military Spouses are eligible for a standard 7(a) loan of up to $350,000 and their loan guarantee fees waived. Community banks make up the backbone of SBA's 7(a) loan program. That's why we brought out our friends at Capital Bank to talk with you all about their loan program for veterans, how it works and hopefully, our members can take what they learn here and share it with veteran entrepreneurs in their states.

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (LEDC): Aside from the 7(a) loan program, veterans can also utilize the SBA's micro-lending program which is administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund or CDFIs. Since 2013 veteran small business usage of micro-loans have almost doubled. That's why we invited our local micro-lender to come out to inform us about the amazing programs they have that are aimed at economic development.

The 2 Percent CEO: The American Legion has been piloting our own Small Business programs at the Legion. Over the last few years, we have partnered with Foresight CFO to roll out the new curriculum aimed at assisting our veteran entrepreneurs in scaling their business. The *5 Habits of Profitability* is a two-day course that guides the participants towards drafting a customized plan to grow their business. We hope to get more buy-in from the state leadership to see if this is a program they want to extend to their states.

US Small Business Administration: Since its implementation in 2012, the Boots to Business (B2B) capstone course taught as a part of the military's Transition Assistance

Program (TAP) has been very successful. B2B is a lean program, administered solely through SBA's 22 Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs). We are proud to report that during the recent government shutdown, 95 percent of the scheduled B2B sessions taught on and off military bases were administered. For the last five years, the two day B2B curriculum has been the catalyst that has launched many veterans owned businesses. Today we have SBA's Boots to Business program manager brief us on some curriculum updates, policy changes, and statistics regarding the Boots to Business program.

The Veterans Small Business Policy Roundtable: held on February 27, 2019, this meeting focused on the Medical/Surgical Prime Vendor contract vehicle that will be coming out in 2020. This will be the largest contracting vehicle VA will administer, as they plan to reorganize 80 percent+ of their medical supplies, services, and equipment under the new MSPV 2.0. 2019 will be the testing ground and study year for how the new MSPV framework will be implemented. The purpose of this roundtable is to get stakeholder organizations, small business distributors, and prime vendors in front of VA contracting officials to allow ourselves to be heard.

How VA purchases medical supplies and services affects the most vulnerable segment of our constituency – the veteran patients. VA's entire medical supply chain hinges on the success of this singular contracting vehicle. VA's ability to provide adequate care to our veterans critically hinges on this contracting vehicle. We have one chance to get this right.

This meeting was a closed, candid, and unrecorded session happening with senior VA contracting official from VAOSDBU, Strategic Acquisition Center, and VHA. The Legion intends to further the conversation on MSPV 2.0 to find a solution that works for VA, veteran-owned small businesses and most importantly serves the need of our veteran patients whether they are administered care at home, CBOCs or at the VAMCs.

Roundtable Discussion: The session opened with introductions to the new Executive Director assigned to VA OSDBU Ruby Harvey. With less than a month in her new job, this event served as an introduction to the leadership of all the major veterans small business advocacy groups.

Some topics we are here to discussed include:

1. VA's priorities and requirements in the creation of MSPV 2.0
2. The Prime and Subcontracting opportunities suggestions NVSBC has outlined
3. Hear from current MSPV contract holders and give them the chance to discuss best practices
4. The creation of an SDVOSB committee within VA

Scott Denniston, the executive director of the NVSBC, has been carrying the water on this issue. We have been asked by VA, HVAC, and HSBC to speak a united front and give them a list of demands that they can work with regarding MSPV 2.0. Scott has compiled the best practices. We asked him to walk us over some of his suggestions. Moreover, we also heard what currently works and what doesn't from current SDVOSBs on MSPV NG and medical supply manufacturers who were present.

Ideally, we would like to come out of this discussion with a uniform list of requirements we a small businesses and advocates would like to see and let leadership from VHA and the Strategic Acquisition Center take it from there as they craft MSPV 2.0.

Legal Analysis: There has been much confusion over a recent Court of Federal Claims decision as it pertains to the Justification & Analysis and MSPV NG. The confusion is heard in our conferences and meetings coming from our membership. We've invited Gunjan Talati, a senior partner from *Kilpatrick, Townsend and Stockton PLLC* to provide for our briefing on the significance and impact of the court case *ELECTRA-MED CORP. v. USA*. Not only does this case set a bad precedent for VA to craft false narratives around emergencies to sidestep *Kingdomware's* "rule of two" and abdicate their fiduciary responsibilities of administering a contract.

This legal briefing led to much strategic discussion of what veteran advocacy groups should do as the court of Federal Claim's decision is currently being appealed.

Outcome: There was skepticism regarding if the VA will follow through with all of the action items they said they would do or consider in MSPV 2.0. All of the stakeholders from VHA, VA OSDBU, SBA GCBD, and the advocacy organizations agreed that further conversations with and more "concessions" in writing would be necessary from VA.

Success: The VA's Strategic Acquisition's Center recognized from our roundtable that they need to fix MSPV at a very high level and it involved getting every level of the med/surgical supply chain in the same room.

VA has since replicated our roundtable twice and brought stakeholders at every level into work on MSPV 2.0, which will be the VA's largest contracting vehicle. VA invited everyone in the supply chain - VHA, SAC, CEOs of prime vendors, OEMs, and small business resellers/distributors present and had a phenomenal discussion. Companies who were competitors in the room realized that instead of working against each other jockeying for advantage, they must first stand up MSPV 2.0 and preserve the integrity of this market space. Because the only people that suffer, when MSPV 2.0 fails to modernize the medical equipment supply chain, are the veteran patients.

VA had three subsequent roundtable discussions about MSPV thus far. They gave The American Legion credit at each event, noting that it was The American Legion that got out in front of this issue and saw that everyone in the supply chain needed to work together to help VA build MSPV 2.0 before they start competing against one another. Despite their interests, all the CEOs and company representatives agreed - there was a higher purpose for MSPV 2.0, and we can never allow secondary gains to compromise the actual mission which is to assist VA to deliver the best healthcare possible to veteran patients.

Home Loan Guaranty Program

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the VA Home Loan set forward in the Legion's most significant legislative feat, the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. Since its inception, the Home Loan Guaranty program has allowed more than 24 million veterans to purchase homes. The Home Loan programs offer veterans a centralized, affordable, and accessible method of buying homes in return for their service to this nation. The program has been so successful over past years that not only has the program paid for itself but has also shown a profit in recent years. Administrative costs constitute a relatively small portion - less than 10 percent - of the total capital and operating costs. The controlling costs are claims costs and other costs associated with foreclosure and alternatives taken to avoid foreclosure. Each claim costs the federal government about $20,000. However, revenues that VA collects from different sources, including the funding fee that borrowers pay, property sales, and proceeds from acquired loans and vendee loans, offset this cost. In the fiscal year 2017 and 2018, the number of loans guaranteed through the program was 740,339 and 610,512. The average amount of the loan was $254,870 in 2017 and $264,197 in 2018.

In 1982, PL 97-253 was enacted and imposed a ½ percent funding fee (1/2 percent of the loan amount) on all veterans using the loan program, except those veterans in receipt of compensation for a service-connected disability. This was considered to be a temporary measure to help reduce the national debt. Unfortunately, this fee has become a fixture of the home loan program and, even more, unfortunately, it has been raised numerous times by Congress since 1982. PL 115-182 established the current funding fee rates through September 30, 2028. Today, veterans using the program for the first time pay 2.15 percent of the loan amount and those using it for a second time subsequently pay 3.3 percent. Reservist and National Guard veterans pay 2.4 percent of the loan amount, and those using it for a second time will pay 3.3 percent of the loan. In FY 2018, the VA Home Loan Guarantee program generated $2.0 billion in revenue, and in FY 2017 $2.2 billion in revenue.

Although veterans are permitted to include the fee in the loan amount, it constitutes an added financial burden. For example, a veteran using the program for the first time obtaining a $200,000 loan will pay $4,300. For a second time, using the fee on this loan amount would be $6,600. While this is substantial in and of itself, it is even more significant when you consider the amount of interest the veteran will pay on these amounts as a 30-year mortgage is amortized.

The following persons are exempt from paying the funding fee:

- Veterans are receiving VA compensation for service-connected disabilities.
- Veterans who would be entitled to receive compensation for service-connected disabilities if they did not receive retirement pay.
- Surviving spouses of veterans who died in service or from service-connected disabilities (whether or not such surviving spouses are veterans with their entitlement and whether or not they are using their benefit on loan).

The American Legion's position on this issue is reflected in Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee. However, we can do more. Moving forward, the VE&E Division will develop new resolutions that directly reflect your views on the funding fee. Also, we will continue to work with the VBA to establish a plan of action that is transparent and accountable to all veterans that have used the VA Home Loan Guaranty. Furthermore, the Legion will communicate our resolutions on the Hill and ensure that Congress has the information needed to provide the proper oversight to this issue.

Veteran Homelessness

VA and HUD reported roughly 37,878 homeless veterans on a single night in January 2018 (2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress). VA has taken decisive action toward its goal of ending homelessness among our nation's veterans. To achieve this goal, VA has developed a plan to assist every homeless veteran willing to accept services retain or acquire: a safe housing; needed treatment services; opportunities to retain or return to employment; and benefits assistance. Also, VA has implemented a prevention initiative - the Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF), which is VA's primary prevention program designed to help veterans and their families rapidly exit homelessness, or avoid entering homelessness.

The American Legion continues to place special priority on the issue of veteran homelessness. With veterans making up approximately 11 percent of our nation's total adult homeless population, there is plenty of reason to give the cause special attention. Along with various community partners, The American Legion remains committed to seeing VA's goal of ending veteran homelessness come to fruition. Our goal is to ensure that every community across America has programs and services in place to get homeless veterans in the housing (along with necessary healthcare/treatment) while connecting those at-risk veterans with the local services and resources they need. Over the past twelve months, we have increased our outreach efforts in the homelessness and housing space through the execution of our strategic plan:

- Joined the Coalition for the Homelessness Male Service Providers Working Group and participated in the VA Medical Health Advisory Councils Homeless Veterans Roundtables.
- Completed the Prince William County Virginia's Detention Center Volunteer Training Program in support of future service with incarcerated veterans in the detention center.
- Initiated efforts to collaborate with the VBA to revise the American Legion's On-Call Homeless Veteran and VA Home Loan Brochure.
- Developed a Housing and Homeless Veteran Program Strategic Action Plan for 2019-2020.

- Established a Homeless Veterans Task Force resulting in the appointment of a Legion member as the state-level representative for homeless veteran advocacy efforts.
- It is recognized and awarded a Department-level Homeless Veteran Outreach Award.
  Attended the VBA's VA Home Loan Conference and secured an invitation to participate and facilitate a VSO panel on veterans housing at the 2020 conference.
- Partnered with Habitat for Humanity International in the development of an interactive map that will highlight the locations of the Habitat projects and adjacent Legion Posts.
- Increased our Specially Adapted Housing Grant outreach and information sharing efforts to inform our Legion stakeholders better.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
National President
Kathy Dungan, Mississippi

Serving as the American Legion Auxiliary's national president during our 99th year truly has been a privilege and an enriching experience.

I hold close to my heart all of the Auxiliary and Legion Family memories made during the official visits as president. My travels took me to units, posts, VA medical centers, VA hospitals, transitional housing for homeless veterans, and similar sites all over the United States and beyond.

In those many places, I spent time with some of the most amazing people I've ever met: Auxiliary members—including our awesome Juniors, and others within our Legion Family—nonmember volunteers, military veterans, servicemembers, and their families. What a pleasure it was to get acquainted with more of our organization's members, volunteers, and the people we serve!

I witnessed some wonderful Auxiliary moments made by our members with their mission-based activities that occurred during my visits. We are constantly showing the world that our mission is more than words.

Our members impacted the lives of our military heroes and their families, mentored youth, improved communities, and promoted patriotism and good citizenship. I've seen many instances of the 2018–2019 national focus of "Serving Our Heroes," with a special emphasis on female veterans, being put into motion at our organization's grassroots level.

Often, this impact was made while working alongside The American Legion, and the Sons of The American Legion. The Legion Family at its best!

Here are a few Auxiliary moments I experienced as the 2018–2019 national president:

During my visit to the Department of Alabama, I attended a baby shower for several women veterans and their military families. The shower was presented by the Auxiliary's Department of Alabama, along with DAVA (Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary) and the VFWA (Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary), and held at the Birmingham VA Medical Center-Female Veteran Clinic.

There were so many necessities and goodies distributed at the shower, and the veterans and families voiced their sincere gratitude for what was done for them. Their smiles said a lot too!

At a few other locations, I visited transitional housing, living centers, and "forever homes" for women veterans. One of those sites was Maine's Cabin in the Woods forever home for veterans, including women veterans and their children. Auxiliary members from the Department of Maine delivered gifts of household items and children's toys. Auxiliary members at the other locations with similar types of housing facilities for veterans also had mission-based projects to benefit the veterans and/or the military families at these sites.

I also spent quality time at three different living centers in Vermont for women veterans. Auxiliary members from the area and I brought purses filled with essential items for the women there.

On several occasions, I got the opportunity to speak with our female military heroes. I learned more about some of the major challenges they faced when seeking life's basics: housing, employment, mental health care, counseling, medical care, and other vital services.

These are just a few of the numerous projects and programs, rooted in our mission, that I was able to see firsthand. I wish I could include all of them in this report.

It was my honor to represent our members at important events, such as the ceremonial striking of the first American Legion commemorative coin at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia; and with American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs in France during the 75th anniversary of the historic D-Day landing on the shores of Normandy.

The two national commanders and I stood together, as a Legion Family, paying respects to our fallen soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice during the D-Day landing, honoring the surviving D-Day veterans, and visiting servicemembers stationed in Europe. All of our military heroes—past and present, those who are alive and those no longer with us—deserve our appreciation along with a place in our hearts and minds forever.

The Auxiliary is almost at the eve of its 100th anniversary. Think about what our organization has achieved in that time. Consider all of the veterans and servicemembers we have helped and honored; all of the military families we have assisted; all of the youth we have mentored and inspired; and all of our successful efforts to encourage patriotism and good citizenship. That's a lot of Auxiliary moments!

As we get ready to start our next century, let's each ponder the question: What will I do to bring about Auxiliary moments of selfless service in the days to come? Your answer will likely be found in your heart… and in the reason you became, and remain, part of the American Legion Auxiliary.

National Vice President
Nicole Clapp, Iowa

What an intriguing year it was since being installed as the American Legion Auxiliary national vice president at the 98th National Convention in Minneapolis. Thank you for having faith in my ability to serve with Kathy Dungan during her term as national president.

Reflecting on the year that was, I realized there were various ways of *Serving Our Heroes* in the capacity of national vice president. Concepts that came to mind describing the initiatives of serving our heroes were education, advocacy, brand awareness, Americanism promotion, leadership development, organizational planning, and patriotic appreciation. In September and January, I presented and facilitated at Mission Trainings from Spokane to Charlotte, sharing with our members the outreach programs the ALA has perfected. In comparison, on the other end of the spectrum, I received education alongside leaders from the nation's finest orators during The American Legion National Oratorial Finals.

I witnessed The American Legion Family's Americanism on full display while participating in the Veterans Day Remembrance on the steps of the Indiana War Memorial followed by the pageantry of the parade. For a second time in as many months, the patriotic appreciation I felt was palpable when I heard the chants of "Thank you for what you do," and "USA-USA" echoed countless times riding upon The American Legion Rose Parade float entitled, "Still Serving America" on New Year's Day. The golden eagle masterpiece was a visual reminder to the world, kicking off the 100th anniversary celebration. That once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share this experience with Four Medal of Honor

Recipients, representing World War II to the present-day Global War on Terror, was very humbling, awe-inspiring, and a true heartful sense of patriotism.

Veterans advocacy took on many forms this year: attendance at American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad's testimony before the joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees; proudly demonstrated ALA's support of the midshipmen of the United States Naval Academy during their graduation week festivities; and I thoroughly enjoyed the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival held in my home state of Iowa.

Key areas of focus during the national vice president term were observation, data collection, along with the formation of future plans, and leadership development in our great organization. Upcoming national leaders Kathy Daudistel of Kentucky and Vickie Koutz of Indiana and I spent countless hours and days making appointments and drafting content with the assistance of ALA National Headquarters staff to prepare the national chairmen appointees and department leadership and membership teams to serve during the centennial year.

Organizational planning was another objective. I participated in the committee meeting work of Finance, ALA Foundation, and the National Executive Committee. Preparation also included reflection on the sunset of the current 5-year Centennial Strategic Plan, the role of the Future Focus Committee, and national committee structure alignment, all while searching for our next national secretary.

As you have read, Serving Our Heroes occurred in many settings during this administrative year. Thank you for allowing me this honor and privilege, which I treasure.

National Secretary
Linda Boone, Oregon

National Secretary responsibilities, as outlined in our constitution and bylaws, are to ensure corporate compliance with all government regulations and requirements, to ensure records are kept of all national organization meetings, and control of all trademarks, patents, and copyrights. I can report this has been done, and along with the national treasurer, we continually ensure we are fulfilling government requirements. Minutes and proceedings of all National Executive Committee meetings and National Convention are recorded. We work closely with the national judge advocate of The American Legion to ensure we are controlling the trademark. Reporting violations of unauthorized vendors and sending cease and desist letters is part of our responsibility. This year so far, we have received 144 emblem usage requests.

Executive director responsibilities are that as the management of the national organization and our assets. People assets include our National Headquarters staff of 40. We have had very little turnover this year, and we welcomed back several former employees. Compensation practices have been reviewed and updated to ensure fair and consistent practices. Regular staff meetings were adopted, and at the monthly all-staff meeting, divisions share information so that each staff member understands the overall operations and goals. There have been some shifting of responsibilities and staff to focus on goals of the new strategic plan and to create data for measuring outcomes that will aid in strategic decision making.

Another people asset is our relationship with The American Legion. Surprising to learn was the fraying of our working together as a family and the need to rebuild that relationship. National President Kathy Dungan and staff have worked closely with Legion leadership on both staff and volunteer sides to open lines of communication and to put processes in place that will enable us to strengthen our family connections.

The ALA organization purchased its building in 2017, and the move was accomplished in December 2018. This now becomes our biggest physical asset at approximately a $3 million value. There have been many challenges in acquiring and working in a 25-year-old building. Staff has been working through these and have successfully hosted the National Executive Committee meeting and Department

Organizational Effectiveness Training, as well as several smaller meetings. We look forward to hosting National Convention attendees.

National Treasurer
Sara Riegel, Indiana

The American Legion Auxiliary's national treasurer, as defined in the ALA's national constitution and bylaws, serves as custodian of funds of the national organization. During the 2018-2019 administrative year, many changes, challenges, and positive outcomes impacted the all-things-numbers area of our organization.

A new National Headquarters location in the form of buying a building has not been without challenges for the national organization. But the investment is positive in that we have more space for hosting national meetings, and maybe most beneficial – the pride in owning our own "home" for members on the eve of our centennial.

While membership continues to decline, we rely on our investment income to bridge the loss in membership revenue to cover expenses that provide services to departments, units, members, and our mission. The Finance Committee works with National Headquarters staff to monitor investment strategies and risks, along with overseeing the revenue and expense projections compared to actual to make corrections if needed.

Our annual audit from professional financial auditors once again found sound financial practices and procedures for the organization. The nonprofit sector financial benchmarks were exceeded that demonstrated mission-driven priorities in our spending.

The Finance Division at National Headquarters, the national Finance Committee, and the national treasurer position are all on the same page – educating each other on roles and responsibilities, plus regular communication, has allowed us to "become one" with matters relating to the ALA's finances. In the end, we're all here for one reason: to serve the ALA's mission.

National Chaplain
Dr. Deborah Blanch, Virginia

The year started with a wonderful visit to Mississippi for National President Kathy Dungan's homecoming. The fellowship and rich heritage was truly amazing. It was an honor to be a guest on the radio show *They Sacrificed for Us* in Cleveland, Ohio. This radio show is managed by American Legion Family members Bob Fratino and Susan Schofield Fratino. They educate the community about "What is our why?" My travels included being a guest speaker at The American Legion Post 166 for a Veterans Day prayer ceremony. I attended the Department of Virginia conference in Portsmouth Va., our Eastern Zone workshop, and both of our Department of Virginia 3rd District meetings.

I was blessed to visit the new American Legion Auxiliary Headquarters at the Mid-Year National Executive Committee Meeting in Indianapolis. First and foremost, we honored our women veterans with a "Special Prayer" every Thursday. Our women veterans are the rock and fabric that allows us the freedom we have today.

There were always two chaplain conference calls every month; one was in the morning, and one was in the evening. Keeping in mind that everyone has busy schedules was important so that we could fellowship together and build spiritual bonds to assist ourselves, our units, and departments. Praying together across the miles every day on the American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains Facebook group was the best way to start our day and fellowship together. We prayed special prayers together while telephone calls and emails were used to communicate as well. It was wonderful to see the chaplains set up Facebook pages and inspire their members with prayers, scriptures, and stories. It still takes a village to make a difference, and a family that prays together stays strong together. All of the *Auxiliary* magazine *Reflections* articles were published timely and contained

spiritual scriptures and prayers for use within units and departments. A blog was submitted to National Headquarters for spiritual unity for the American Legion Auxiliary.

May we continue to contact and communicate through telephone calls as part of the journey. It has been a pleasure to answer, check on members, and watch us bond spiritually. It is a true blessing to be a part of an organization that truly works for Service and Not Self! I must take a moment to honor the woman who gave me the start and inspiration for this entire journey: my mother, Ruth Jones.

Moving forward, we are going to have success, membership, and a growing family that will inspire the nation. Thank you for allowing me to be your national Auxiliary chaplain this year. Grace, peace, and mercy be unto each of you. We are on our way to a blessed 100th anniversary!

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." --Philippians 4:6-7

National Historian
Brenda W. Collins, South Carolina

Historian: a student or writer of history. A writer or compiler of a chronicle.

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community in providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families, by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

The American Legion Auxiliary is serving our veterans for the 99th year, beginning at the end of the 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis. The American Legion is celebrating its 100th year, and Auxiliaries around the country have helped the Legion celebrate.

This year, under the guidance of National President Kathy Dungan, the ALA has had a great year. We have seen many firsts and several things that have not been done in many years, such as the Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif. The American Legion had not participated in the parade in many years. In January, our national president, along with American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad, was a guest at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia for the first striking of The American Legion's commemorative coins. These coins commemorate 100 years of service to veterans and their families.

President Kathy traveled to many states and was welcomed by numerous Auxiliary members. They were graced by Kathy's southern charm; she is a true southern lady.

Hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, and floods affected many areas of the country this administrative year. It began with Hurricane Florence hitting the East Coast of North and South Carolina in August. Wildfires in California, historic flooding in the Midwest, and tornadoes in Oklahoma devastated families across this great nation. The ALA, as in years past, stood tall to assist those in harm's way in these disasters.

The Department Leadership National Conference was held in Indianapolis to assist with additional education for upcoming department leaders.

An ALA Mission Training session was held in four Auxiliary divisions. Two were held in the Western Division with Spokane, Wash., and Las Vegas. Attendance was up again this year.

Departments held Junior conferences and conventions, as well as all of the other senior department meetings. Officers were elected and installed.

Units and departments worked the programs of the ALA. Reports showed that members stood up for the mission of the Auxiliary, supported The American Legion, and honored the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

We should always be aware of our history and strive to not allow the negative to be repeated, always striving to allow the positive to be repeated in life. As we look back

through history, we can see how it has been repeated. Let us work to assure the negative is eliminated.

The 99th year of the American Legion Auxiliary was successful, and we will strive to have an even better 100th year!

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee
Kathy Daudistel, Kentucky, Chairman

ALA members truly embraced National President Kathy Dungan's focus of *Serving Our Heroes* and taking care of our veterans, especially our female veterans.

Department of Nebraska Vice President Elizabeth Paes started a project she dubbed "Purses for Homeless Female Veterans." Members were asked to look in their closets for slightly used purses and fill them up with feminine things such as scarves, makeup, soap, etc., and bring them to a department meeting. She hoped they might collect about 200 purses. To her surprise, Nebraska really embraced the project and exceeded her expectations when they collected more than 1,400 purses. They collected so many purses that they were able to share them with South Dakota and Wyoming.

Some departments reported setting up specific funding to help veterans help themselves. The Wisconsin Legion Family started a grant fund specifically for homeless women veterans in need. Last year, 24 of 31 applicants were approved with more than $25,000 paid out. The Department of New York has a Warriors Family Assistance Program, which provides grants to veterans who have been honorably discharged from service within the last 10 years and are having short-term financial challenges.

Across the country, members also volunteered, raised funds, and donated goods for homeless facilities that exclusively serve women and children such as the Betsy Ross House in Maine, Home of the Brave, Final Salute, and Safe Harbor, to name a few. Items such as backpacks for children, baby items, toys, and games, as well as clothing, bus tokens, and food were collected and donated.

Unit members in Florida partnered with the Final Salute organization to host a baby shower for female veterans in need. With the overwhelming generosity and support of almost 100% of the units, they provided brand new car seats, diaper bags, clothing, and giant goodie bags for 140 women veterans. They even had leftover items that they donated to the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society for their baby classes.

Members in Maine supported the Betsy Ann Ross House of Hope, a homeless female veteran home located in Augusta. This is a transitional housing project for female veterans and their children who are experiencing homelessness. Items from toys to furniture and everything in between were collected and delivered to the home. In addition to the items collected, more than $3,000 was raised, and construction will start soon to convert a porch to a children's playroom.

Units continued to provide fantastic support at their local VAs through both regular and occasional volunteering, hosting bingos, planning parties, organizing Christmas Gift Shops and coordinating outings for patients. Members also participated in stand downs, Honor Flights, and Quilts of Valor projects, as well as Veterans Creative Arts Festivals both at the local and national levels.

Children & Youth Committee
Vickie Koutz, Indiana, Chairman

A little more than 81,900 members reported volunteering 236,921 hours with 239,936 children served, and $1,639,160 spent.

Units presented 161 Good Deed and 41 Youth Hero awards at special ceremonies recognizing these brave young children.

Units in Florida reported some of their members volunteered with Guardian Ad Litem programs in their area and distributed gift cards to children to purchase clothing and

personal items. Units sponsored Boggy Creek, a camp for children with serious illnesses and their families. They could swim, fish, ride horses, and do everything other children do at traditional camps. Members collected formal wear for young special-needs teenagers so they could attend the "Night to Shine" event sponsored by The Tim Tebow Foundation.

West Virginia members had fishing rodeos and supplied prizes while giving direct help to nearly 300 military children and 1,300 community children.

Six schools in Kansas were taught about the Star Spangled Kids program, and educational materials were given out. A program at a kids food bank was supported with funds used to fill backpacks of food for children in need. Kentucky members collected food for "Blessings in a Backpack" and stocked food pantries at schools. And Idaho units donated to elementary schools' backpack program.

The Christmas Gift program in Illinois served 1,589 children in 35 facilities, with gifts totaling $15,890. Other departments such as Maryland and Michigan set up Halloween and Christmas parties, filled baskets for Thanksgiving, and coordinated mitten and hat trees for their children. Texas Unit 139 assisted the Hill Air Force Family Readiness Group with a "Hearts Apart" Christmas party for children with deployed parents. A unit in South Carolina held an Easter party for 15 special-needs students and their teachers.

Members in Montana purchased flowers and pots so their children could plant them in front of churches -- a fun time for young and old. Proceeds from dinners went to the Special Olympics, and members attended their meets and cheered for them.

Several units in Ohio hosted babysitting classes for 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls. They were given a test at the end of the 12-week class, and certificates were given.

Several departments participated in April's Children & Youth Month.

An Oregon unit went shopping for the school clothes closet, and homeless and abuse shelters. And a unit in Tennessee donated toys and clothing to a National Guard unit.

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to the Children & Youth program. We made it to 100 percent! As always, our members truly opened their hearts and wallets, ensuring the children in our communities are well taken care of.

Americanism Committee
Beth McGinn, Delaware, Chairman

Americanism can be interpreted in countless ways. Woodrow Wilson said, "Americanism consists in utterly believing in the principles of America."

The Department of Virginia's focus, "Promoting Pride in American Patriotism," best described their programs this year. One of the unique ways Virginia units promoted patriotic pride was by conducting citizenship classes to help applicants prepare for naturalization. They offered help with applications, reading, writing, and holding mock interviews.

Promoting flag etiquette in schools was widespread in units and departments. Communities were invited to post homes to learn the proper disposal of tattered and worn flags. Junior members prepared pocket flags, taught other young people how to the fold the American flag, and shared the meaning of the 13 folds. Pleasant Dale Unit 354 Juniors in Nebraska completed pocket flags that were presented to the Air National Guard in Lincoln. Pocket flags were packaged by Lock Haven's Unit 131 Pennsylvania and distributed to military preparing to deploy to Poland.

As a way of encouraging businesses to fly the flag, members used door hangers, presented certificates, and held thank-you dinners. The Department of Wisconsin expanded their "I Spy, You Fly" program to include homeowners. This new program saw ALA members going door to door to thank neighbors who fly the flag and at the same time promoted the benefits of joining The American Legion Family.

Midterm elections for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives were held Nov. 6, 2018. ALA units were there to help "Get Out the Vote," holding voting informational events and helping voters get to the polls. In California, the Auxiliary helped homebound

members fill out absentee ballots and even watched pets while their owners went to the polls. Oak Orchard-Riverdale Unit 28 Delaware held a meet–the-candidate night at their post home. Twenty-five federal, state, and local candidates were in attendance and shared their platforms with more than 80 engaged attendees.

Departments reported their members supporting The American Legion with their Americanism programs. In Idaho, members worked at snack stands and acted as chaperones for away games of American Legion Baseball. Others assisted Legionnaires at department Oratorical Contests, acting as judges and providing refreshments.

National President Kathy Dungan's focus this year was on homeless veterans, and the essay theme -- "How can we address and prevent veterans' homelessness in our communities?" -- highlighted this challenge facing our veterans. The essays received reflected how compassionate the youth of today are. To quote Jackie Kennedy, "All the changes in the world were first brought about by words." In the future, conceivably, some of these written ideas may make a difference in the lives of homeless in our nation.

Community Service Committee
Raleen Tolzmann, Minnesota, Chairman

Americanism can be interpreted in countless ways. Woodrow Wilson said, "Americanism consists in utterly believing in the principles of America."

The Department of Virginia's focus, "Promoting Pride in American Patriotism," best described their programs this year. One of the unique ways Virginia units promoted patriotic pride was by conducting citizenship classes to help applicants prepare for naturalization. They offered help with applications, reading, writing, and holding mock interviews.

Promoting flag etiquette in schools was widespread in units and departments. Communities were invited to post homes to learn the proper disposal of tattered and worn flags. Junior members prepared pocket flags, taught other young people how to the fold the American flag, and shared the meaning of the 13 folds. Pleasant Dale Unit 354 Juniors in Nebraska completed pocket flags that were presented to the Air National Guard in Lincoln. Pocket flags were packaged by Lock Haven's Unit 131 Pennsylvania and distributed to military preparing to deploy to Poland.

As a way of encouraging businesses to fly the flag, members used door hangers, presented certificates, and held thank-you dinners. The Department of Wisconsin expanded their "I Spy, You Fly" program to include homeowners. This new program saw ALA members going door to door to thank neighbors who fly the flag and at the same time promoted the benefits of joining The American Legion Family.

Midterm elections for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives were held Nov. 6, 2018. ALA units were there to help "Get Out the Vote," holding voting informational events and helping voters get to the polls. In California, the Auxiliary helped homebound members fill out absentee ballots and even watched pets while their owners went to the polls. Oak Orchard-Riverdale Unit 28 Delaware held a meet–the-candidate night at their post home. Twenty-five federal, state, and local candidates were in attendance and shared their platforms with more than 80 engaged attendees.

Departments reported their members supporting The American Legion with their Americanism programs. In Idaho, members worked at snack stands and acted as chaperones for away games of American Legion Baseball. Others assisted Legionnaires at department Oratorical Contests, acting as judges and providing refreshments.

National President Kathy Dungan's focus this year was on homeless veterans, and the essay theme -- "How can we address and prevent veterans' homelessness in our communities?" -- highlighted this challenge facing our veterans. The essays received reflected how compassionate the youth of today are. To quote Jackie Kennedy, "All the changes in the world were first brought about by words." In the future, conceivably, some of these written ideas may make a difference in the lives of homeless in our nation.

Education Committee
Lisa Williamson, Alaska, Chairman

Known for his work on child development, Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget once stated, "The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men who are capable of doing new things." This, in a nutshell, defines the ALA Education program. We create possibilities!

In an effort to create those possibilities, school supply drives such as Give 10 to Education allowed ALA members to provide school supplies to those who might have needed a hand up.

The common thought was to provide supplies at the beginning of the school year; many units also indicated they resupplied the schools after Christmas.

As well, school supply drives also netted gift cards, Box Tops for Education, maps, books, and even socks, coats, hats, and gloves. Some units paid overdue library fees and lunch program costs.

Getting supplies to those who needed them were as varied. Sometimes they were donated directly to the schools and sometimes to individuals. Some were set up as a store in which students shopped for supplies. Other times, backpacks were filled, like Utah's Unit 139 did it. Maryland Unit 106 combined backpacks with a shopping experience, allowing children to go shopping for needed school supplies, using a backpack as their shopping cart.

Not to be outdone, Michigan Units 179 and 47 partnered with their posts in providing dictionaries to the school to help enhance education.

Iowa Unit 272 worked with the Sheldon National Guard, placing "Give 10" collection boxes throughout their community to collect school supplies.

Of course, most units reported that they used the "Certificates of Appreciation" from our national website for those who participated in the Give 10 to Education project. Nothing like a pat on the back!

Patting the backs of our educators and support staff during American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week help make a difference in ensuring every child gets a quality education! Units in every department participated during both weeks. Goodies were provided to school staff, including bus drivers and custodians.

The Veterans in Community Schools Program also helped to provide educational opportunities for children. While working with teachers, several departments reported that units hosted events where veterans shared their military experience with school children.

Most notable of our Education Program are our national scholarships. This year, 25 recipients were awarded our Children of Warriors National Presidents' scholarship, the Spirit of Youth scholarship, as well as the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship, all worth more than $100,000! But stay tuned, as another scholarship opportunity is on the horizon.

All we do in the ALA Education program is aimed at creating "the possibilities for a child to invent and discover."

ALA Girls Nation Committee
Norma Tramm, Minnesota, Chairman

A premier program of the American Legion Auxiliary is ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation. This amazing program doesn't just happen; it takes many hours of preparation and numerous quality volunteers who continue giving year after year.

Communication was vital to the program, and many departments were on board. Indiana had Facebook and Instagram accounts for updates. Maryland's media team live broadcast some events for family and friends. Minnesota used Facebook in search of potential candidates. New York had a webpage and active Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts.

Families of active-duty servicemembers were recognized in many ways. Missouri posted Blue Star Banners on citizen room doors. Indiana presented a Blue Star Family coin to citizens and staff. Tennessee delegates counselors and staff were given a red, white, and blue thank-you ribbon to wear for the week. Arizona, Colorado, and others presented Blue Star Banners.

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and ALA Girls State has eligible citizens. Applicants for the Samsung Scholarship are eligible to join, and New York shared this information with their units. In Virginia, the honorary Junior department president speaks to an assembly, provides membership information, and answers questions during mealtimes. Maine has an Auxiliary membership table during registration. Wyoming shares an application with information in the welcome packet. All departments provide citizens with membership requirements.

Some of the ways ALA Girls State sessions highlighted our mission: Nebraska shared a poppy presentation and a POW-MIA table; Alaska made poppy ornaments; Washington donated $500; Iowa wrote notes that were distributed to participants of the Honor Flight Program; South Carolina citizens made poppies for a wreath placed at a veterans monument; California collected items for homeless female veterans; and Rhode Island citizens brought laundry supplies for the Homeless Veterans Clinic where they wash clothes for free.

And there's more! South Dakota had a journalism city where citizens produce the *Sacajawea Scroll,* and, during lunch, they have roundtable discussions with members of the local media. Tennessee participated in a program sponsored by the Secretary of State for youth voter registration. Delaware had a shadowing program where citizens follow their government counterparts for a day. Florida, Colorado, and others debated their bills in the House and Senate chambers of their state capitol.

Michigan's first flag ceremony of the session had an ALA unit's honor guard demonstrate flag rising and lowering and proper flag folding.

There are other programs teaching aspects of government, but none immerses their participants in Americanism as well as our ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation programs. Citizens depart with a greater appreciation for our country and veterans.

Junior Activities Committee
Carol T. Robinson, Ohio, Chairman

American Legion Auxiliary Juniors were busy this year keeping National President Kathy Dungan's *Serving Our Heroes* focus in mind by helping veterans, active-duty military, their families, and working in their communities with the support of The American Legion Family.

Senior members instructed Junior members to keep in mind strategic plan goals 3, 2, and 1 by investing in resources, identifying and developing leadership, and enabling members at all levels to demonstrate goodwill and create multiple pathways to serve.

Five Junior division meetings were held, and the majority of the girls were first-time attendees. Feedback received from the Juniors was positive and enthusiastic.

Congratulations to all of the honorary national Junior division vice presidents. They did an excellent job conducting the national Junior meetings in their division.

The national Junior meetings consisted of information sessions on Americanism, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Community Service, Junior Patch Program, ALA membership, and leadership. Each division had a guest speaker who spoke about female veterans with a focus on homeless women veterans.

Keeping in mind National President Kathy's focus, Juniors at each meeting decorated a white backpack and filled it with personal hygiene items for homeless women veterans. The backpacks were given to the guest speaker to take back and distribute to homeless women veterans.

Many departments reported their Juniors provided tray favors and cards to veterans, visited VA medical centers and nursing homes, sent packages to troops overseas, distributed poppies, placed flags on veterans' graves, babysat for military families, and participated in patriotic holiday parades, the four chaplains service and POW-MIA services.

In the Department of Montana, one Junior wrote Christmas cards to first responders in every Montana county. She sent 9,500 cards. When she ran out of cards, she made more. She asked for assistance with card donations and postage. She raised $980 for postage she could not hand-deliver.

The Department of Pennsylvania had an exceptional year, with 196 new Junior members and four Junior members graduating to senior members.

The Department of New Hampshire honorary Junior presidents raised money to purchase two benches. One bench was placed at the post home, and the other at the New Hampshire veterans cemetery, so veterans visiting the cemetery will have a pleasant place to sit and rest.

Our Juniors did a tremendous job this year in Serving Our Heroes. I encourage you, as a senior member, to continue promoting and inspiring active participation from your Junior members as they are our future for the American Legion Auxiliary.

Legislative Committee
Dr. Lisa Chaplin, DNP, Virginia, Chairman

The ALA national Legislative Committee was active during the 2018-2019 year, with 52 departments submitting reports documenting their members' work advocating for our veterans, our servicemembers, and their families. Members reported being involved with their lawmakers at all levels of government. Attending town hall meetings, hosting candidate forums and legislative rallies and inviting elected officials to Legion Family events were frequently noted as ways to establish and nurture relationships with lawmakers. Members placed phone calls and sent letters and emails to their elected officials at all levels of government. They also documented their department's Day on the Hill Legislative Day events where they joined other members of the Legion Family to make personal visits to their state lawmakers. Some attended the Washington, D.C. conference and visited their U.S. senators and representatives.

The Legislative program is not a one-size-fits-all formula; there are ways for every member to engage however they are able. For example, California reported 1,552 letters and emails sent to lawmakers advocating for veterans; Indiana reported 186 emails, 100 letters, 70 phone calls and 86 in-person visits to their elected officials. The District of Columbia reported that though they have no voting representation in Congress, their members promoted a positive image of the Legion Family when Unit and Post 8, located near the U.S. Capitol, hosted activities resulting in media coverage that exemplified the presence and mission of our organizations to legislators and their staffers from around the country. The Legislative chairman for the Department of Puerto Rico reported that she translates newsletters and bulletins so that all members have access to tools to guide their legislative advocacy efforts.

In addition to our efforts to garner support for each of The American Legion's legislative agenda items, this year presented opportunities for our members to engage with lawmakers at critical times when crucial votes were pending. We've been called upon to urge our U.S. Congressmen to support *The Legion Act, The Pay Our Coast Guard Act,* and *The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.* We were able to reach members on short notice through the ALA Legislative Facebook group with urgent requests to act on these and other priorities, providing sample letters, links to additional information, and updates on related Congressional activity. We formed an advocacy team to help lead the charge.

In alignment with our national president's focus on homeless veterans and women who have served, information specific to these areas was emphasized through weekly video

spots called *Tuesday Legislative Moments* on the ALA Legislative Facebook group, which were subsequently shared, sometimes nearly 100 times, to raise awareness within and outside of the Legion Family. Thank you, ALA members!

National Security Committee
Pamela Ray, Illinois, Chairman

Departments and units throughout the country worked for our active-duty military, Guard, and Reserve members and their families. We all focused on different aspects of the program, but we all had the same goal: improve the lives of these special people.

The departments of Indiana and North Dakota report that T.A.P.S. (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) was a special project in these states. The Indiana chairman shared how much she learned about this program, including camps for adult and child survivors over the Memorial Day weekend and a book called *Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope*, which is about a horse that wanted to be a race horse, but ends up being a very special horse that pulls our fallen soldiers to Arlington National Cemetery.

The Department of New York chairman was an online mentor for military spouses. She also worked with active-duty military transitioning back into civilian society. Other departments also reported having online mentors.

Rhode Island reported adopting families of deployed servicemembers. Other departments, such as the Department of Alaska, reported supporting individual military families in times of stress. Ann Robinson belongs to one such family. She is from Unit 33 in Anchorage. When hearing of a Coast Guardsman in distress due to his wife suffering pregnancy complications while he was away, Ann went to Fisher House and the Hospital to offer any assistance the family might need. She has since seen the baby and has had the opportunity to share in some of the baby's milestones. The Department of Florida stepped up to assist Coast Guard families with food drives and monetary donations during the government shutdown.

Denver Unit 1 in the Department of Colorado heard of a single active-duty military father who was about to have his home foreclosed. Money was raised to allow the father to stay in his home with his children.

Unit 33 in Beaumont, Texas, donated funds to schools to cover the cost of military family students with a negative balance in their lunch accounts. Several departments and units reported providing school supplies and backpacks for children of deployed servicemembers.

The Department of Illinois started a Gold Star wall of remembrance on the department website. Photos of soldiers appear with a short story on how they lived and died. They also supported a new shelter for homeless women (even those with children) by providing more than 150 sets of serving utensils and towels for the kitchens of the apartments as well as giving a monetary donation to assist with final repairs before the facility opens.

CERT programs, and Blue and Gold Star Banners were also areas focused on this year. Thank you to our members for providing support to all active-duty military, Guard and Reserve this past year.

Poppy Committee
Virginia Nelsen, Nebraska, Chairman

Poppy volunteers, you are getting the job done.

Poppy Lady Ann in the Department of Massachusetts provided poppies for Armistice Day in London where they were presented to each member of Parliament.

The Department of Kentucky reported their 2019 goal was to distribute enough poppies to cover the steps of their capitol building in Frankfort.

Departments reported providing thousands of poppies to any buyers, thereby increasing poppy makers and revenue.

The Department of Michigan held a poppy bonanza open to the public. It spread the word, teaches poppy assemblage and recruits.

Units reported that mailing poppies to members and veterans in their community almost doubled donations in their area.

Units proudly planned and succeeded with efforts to promote the poppy poster contest.

In Pennsylvania, female veterans (dual members) served as judges during their Spring National Security Conference.

Departments used Poppy funds to assist homeless veterans, many of whom are women.

Veterans Day, Memorial Day and National Poppy Day are the main avenues for promotion. Our organization is built on these remembrance days. Most states invite their Juniors to assist with Little Miss Poppy on-site to share the mission and teach patriotic Auxiliary values.

Texas reported using technology to display their poppy field banner and 3D poppies with your service member's name.

This year's National Poppy Day® expanded awareness coast to coast. Reports indicated that membership included civic leaders on all levels. The Department of Washington thoroughly embraced National Poppy Day. Proclamations were universally popular.

Almost all reported that they loved working together on poppy projects. Enjoying the volunteer journey was an indicator of good leadership, camaraderie, and membership growth.

The Department of Colorado invited female veterans to help collect funds and reported that this allowed everyone to enjoy each other's company, share experiences with the public, and build closer relationships. It was a reflection of strong cooperation within local Legion Families.

Poppy promotion was key, and participation on Facebook burgeoned. Information, encouragement, ideas, and the sharing of all of these things could not be dismissed.

Branding awareness was at full strength in photos. I am proud to report that poppy volunteers promoted the program and branding altogether.

Your work for the Poppy program provided an accomplishment trifecta: We sported emblem/poppy apparel, and we enjoyed the volunteer journey, building membership and honoring veterans all in one fell swoop.

Audit Committee
Jeri Brooks Greenwell, Maine, Chairman

The National Audit Committee serves the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, as prescribed by the National Audit Committee Charter, and is comprised of five outstanding professionals each with appropriate backgrounds and expertise. This year's five-member committee consists of Helen Riedlinger (South Dakota), representing the Finance Committee; Terri Wallace (New York), representing the ALA Foundation; and three members confirmed by the National Executive Committee: Paula Parker-Means (Indiana); Carol Westergren (Arkansas); and Chairman Jeri Brooks Greenwell (Maine), each providing new perspectives and fresh insight.

Audit Committee members were charged with assuming an independent oversight and advisory role, providing advice and recommendations to the NEC, and have continued to function in a conscientious and effective manner conducting business via emails, conference calls, and in-person meetings. Their responsibilities: planning the audit schedule; oversight of the financial reporting process and review of the IRS Form 990s for both entities; selection and remuneration of the independent auditor and terms of engagement; receipt of audit results, both internal and external; the review and update of policies; completion of risk assessments; and participation in annual training. The Audit

Committee is also identified in the ALA's Whistleblower Policy as the board-delegated authority in addressing complaints about financial mismanagement.

The Audit Committee engaged Alerding CPA Group Inc. to conduct the FY18 audit. In February, the financial statements were reviewed and accepted by the committee. During the mid-year meeting in Indianapolis, these reports were presented to the national Finance Committee and were duly accepted by the NEC. We are pleased to report that the Report to Governance found no material weaknesses or significant findings.

In April, the committee thoroughly reviewed the IRS Form 990 prepared by the external auditor for both ALA National Headquarters and the ALA Foundation. This annual report demonstrated that our organization continues to operate in compliance with all federal regulations and all information provided substantiated to the IRS, and the public, that the ALA functions in a manner consistent with its exempt, charitable purposes, and continues to serve the mission for which it was granted tax-exempt status.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the national Audit Committee performed a risk management self-assessment to help identify any potential exposure to financial, operational, organizational and reputational risks. This information served as a benchmark in evaluating possible impact, while providing direction in the update/development of necessary policies and/or procedures ensuring that risks were being appropriately managed and/or mitigated. The committee's recommendations will be presented to the NEC during the pre-convention session.

Our members acknowledge, with appreciation, the knowledge and expertise of the Alerding CPA Group as well as the efficiency and dedication of our National Headquarters staff whose adherence to ethical standards and execution, once again, resulted in a stellar audit.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee
Suzanne Knapp, Michigan, Chairman

How can I summarize information in the reports sent to me in only 450 words? After reading the reports received, it will be a difficult task. Not receiving all department reports, I didn't get a complete picture of all we have accomplished. But, the reports showed how the AEF program is intertwined with many other programs of the Auxiliary.

To the members, units, districts, and departments that donated to the AEF, thank you! Every single penny, nickel, dime, quarter, and bill dropped into a container as a donation supported the fund. Those pieces of metal we call money saves lives. Some units made donations of just $25 because that was all they could afford. And we appreciated that help! Thank you. We received donations from departments of more than $20,000, and we were grateful for their generosity. We received donations from smaller departments like the Department of District of Columbia, which set a goal of $1 per member, and they met their goal. Thank you.

The money raised will be used as grant money to members in need at a time of crisis in their life. According to the reports, those crises were many. Alaska had an earthquake in November. Florida had hurricanes. And California and Wyoming lost entire towns to wildfires. As I wrote this report, floods were wreaking havoc in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and other places. This year's tornado season rolled in with a deadly fashion. American Legion Auxiliary members were affected all year long.

Your donations mattered. Your donations saved lives. Thank you.

The same old message about the AEF might fall on deaf ears. To spread the word about the AEF, Barbara Washburn, AEF chairman of the Department of Nebraska, developed a skit to explain the AEF program. Barbara, I want to see your skit! What a great idea to perform for groups while sending a message of hope.

Kim Dixon, AEF chairman of the Department of Iowa, reminded us of the importance of saying "thank you." She sent certificates of appreciation to everyone who contributed a

donation. Whether it is a certificate, card, or just a phone call, remember to say "thank you" to everyone who gives.

The reports showed many units had a small AEF collection to assist with immediate needs. These funds helped especially during the U.S. Coast Guard pay crisis. Units in Alaska donated $1,000 in food gift cards to members of the Coast Guard during the holidays.

The work of the AEF never stops. So, thank you for every water bottle filled with coins and every pancake served at a fundraiser. It all made a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Constitution & Bylaws Committee
Melanie Taylor, California, Chairman

As you will recall, the American Legion Auxiliary's Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules were updated and adopted at the National Convention in 2013. This eliminated the amending of our governing documents every year, which is a red flag for the IRS.

This year, as in previous years since, departments and units were encouraged to update their Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules to conform to National's governing documents. This has been a slow but productive process.

The Department of Iowa established a Constitution & Bylaws Committee comprised of all Past Department Presidents. A chairman is appointed by the department president. All members of the department were invited to suggest changes and submit them on the form provided on the department website. After considerable review by the committee, changes to the policies were presented to the Department Executive Committee for their review and adoption and then presented to the department convention for approval.

The Department of Maine's chairman was pretty clever, inspiring her units to review their governing documents. We all know money talks. Her first year, she offered $100 to the first unit that reviewed and/or updated its Constitution & Bylaws and sent in their most recent copy to the department headquarters to put on file. Last year, she doubled the winnings to $200 and included the districts. This year, she offered one paid scholarship for a delegate to ALA Girls State. The unit or district had to produce the minutes of the meeting describing the review of the Constitution & Bylaws and action planned by Jan. 1, 2019. She reported that 12 units participated -- strengthening their organization (Goal 4) and creating a culture of goodwill (Goal 2) of the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan.

The Department of Arkansas reported that one unit took to heart her message on updating their governing documents. They spent months working on modifying their documents by taking the entire National Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules and formatting their documents to fit line by line.

As we end our 99th year of service and begin the 100th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary, remember that it is never too late to update your documents. This is an ongoing and never-ending task. Stay on top of them, and it won't be so overwhelming. Remember that updated governing documents can answer your questions and help to resolve problems before they become big issues. There are many resources available to help you.

Thank you to all of the committee members who served this year. You kept our divisions up to date and informed. And finally, thank you to all the hardworking chairmen in the units, districts, and departments who submitted their annual end-of-year reports.

Finance Committee
Peggy Thomas, Virginia, Chairman

The primary responsibility of the National Finance Committee is to oversee the financial health of the American Legion Auxiliary. This is vital in order to continue

enhancing the lives of our military, our veterans, and their families. The decline in membership and revenues has challenged the national Finance Committee in many ways; however, we continue to ensure we meet the challenges of good fiscal planning of our organization -- not only for today's needs, but for the future.

The Finance Committee is comprised of five appointed members with a solid background in finance, each serving a five-year term. One is a retired executive, one a certified CPA, one a past department secretary, one is a retired federal bank examiner, and another a Past National President to balance things out.

This committee reviews the draft budget, making any adjustments they consider necessary and then recommend the budget to the National Executive Committee for consideration and adoption, if approved.

Also, functioning as responsible fiduciary stewards, the national Finance Committee studies investment planning; reviews financial statements; monitors member benefits and fundraising campaigns; oversees the financial policies of the organization; and reviews the annual audits of both the Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation. In addition to this, the national Finance Committee makes recommendations for NEC action to ensure the national organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and governmental requirements.

Each year, the national Finance Committee appoints one committee member as a liaison to the ALA Audit Committee and another member as liaison to the ALA Foundation Board. These members report back to the national Finance Committee.

Due to responsible oversight, we were able to continue funding department visits by our five national divisional vice presidents. In addition, we funded department secretary training at National Headquarters; and this year, for the first time, department treasurers were brought into National Headquarters for additional training. Leadership recognized the need for this training, and it was well received.

We encouraged our members to use the USAA credit card, as revenues from it helps fund our programs. The number of people applying for, and using it, continues to increase, and the revenues are shared with departments. Since its inception, $45 million has been charged by cardholders, resulting in $25,000 in revenue to the ALA.

Each year brings its share of new challenges for our organization and for the national Finance Committee. Each year, the committee rises to meet these challenges, and this year is no exception. My gratitude goes to the members of this committee, who, together with strong support of the National Headquarters staff, contributed to another successful year.

The National Finance Committee urges each member to increase their financial knowledge of their department, district, county, and unit so we can continue to meet our obligations.

History Committee
Linda Newsome, Maryland, Chairman

Without writing an actual history of your department's activities for the current year, which is written by the department historian, what is a History Committee report? History is not just one year of activities, but a year of searching your history and preserving that history.

For example, some Arkansas units have a special room for display. If space is not available, they store valuable artifacts and important documents in display cases or plastic containers. They are also working to be more visible in the community by researching and sharing its history.

Colorado is redoing its 75th book and adding the current 25 years of department presidents and activities. One unit is collecting history items to be placed in the local museum.

One ambitious member in Georgia cleaned out her unit's storage closet and discovered certificates, yearbooks, and more. All records are now filed in chronological order for easy storage and retrieval.

Units in South Carolina (and elsewhere) are making the most of combining their history together with the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th anniversary. Bulletin boards and memory walls containing pictures showing present and past events are conveniently available for viewing for members and nonmembers alike. One unit is making disks to sell acknowledging the unit's accomplishments.

Wisconsin has a very beautiful Cavalcade of Memories room where they have historical information, memorabilia, and pictures of the Past Department Presidents are prominently placed in addition to articles and books. Wisconsin also has a Homeless Woman Veterans Grant Program. Its history beginning in 2010 has helped homeless women to the tune of a quarter-million dollars. These women will now have an opportunity to make their own history.

The District of Columbia Unit 8 had a unique history experience. Trudy Parker, a member in Delaware, contacted the D.C. department president regarding a charter she had come across online for 100th ALA memorabilia. She found a charter for Unit 8 dated July 25, 1924. Even though Trudy had expenses, she refused reimbursement and the unit has since had the charter professionally framed and plans to unveil it at a ceremony later in the year marking the ALA's 100th anniversary. The unit is also attempting to trace the charter's travels in those many years.

Leadership Committee
Trish Ward, Kansas, Chairman

Leading by example, generating greater awareness of leadership opportunities, and creating an environment where every member can feel valued and appreciated all remain the primary focus of the American Legion Auxiliary Leadership program. Leadership plays an enhanced role in the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan both in Goal 2: Create an Internal Culture of Goodwill, and Goal 3: Develop Leadership at All Levels. With these primary focal points, we'll set the stage for excellence across the American Legion Auxiliary global landscape. Members worked in tandem to align their projects and efforts with the intention of improving communication, mentoring new members, and developing activities that are inclusive to all members, not just a chosen few.

"Staying focused and true to our mission and purpose" was Georgia's blueprint to success for raising greater awareness and developing leaders who were challenged to listen, build bonds of trust, and increase integrity throughout leadership positions. In an effort to promote leadership, New Mexico highlighted the importance of core behavior concepts such as respect, courtesy, patience, and kindness and encouraged all members to embrace positivity when connecting with volunteers, the community, and those we serve.

Departments confirmed the ALA Academy is gaining momentum as the go-to resource for leadership concepts and training. These tools, combined with grassroots efforts to achieve improved knowledge, helped spread best practices in a manner each member could conveniently review and access. Florida's ABC Schools rolled out across the state to engage members and help them to achieve their full potential. A total of 336 members attended the Florida Schools of Instruction with new members accounting for approximately 25%. Documents, such as Minnesota's *Back to the Basics from A to Z*, and Ohio's, *THINK to be Thoughtful, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind*, served to lay the foundation for nurturing confidence in our members while they served in support of each other and on behalf of the greater mission outreach. The Leadership efforts of just one person made a difference when two dual members were openly welcomed and accepted into an American Legion Auxiliary unit in Vermont. Small acts of kindness result in huge rewards.

Department Leadership teams were inspired to revitalize existing leadership material to better align with enhanced technology and the evolving generational composition of our members. Wisconsin committed more than 125 hours to completing a restructured program with a focus on learning to utilize "personal power vs. positional power" to better fit with

the ever-changing volunteer landscape. Stressing positivity and encouraging members to achieve their highest potential served to enhance awareness and the importance of a positive mindset when serving and volunteering.

As we eagerly transition into a new era of American Legion Auxiliary activism, Leadership will continue to play a critical role in how we respond to new challenges and how we are perceived by those with whom we engage. Assuring our members are fully armed and capable, have the tools they need to succeed, and are willing and able to act with dignity, tolerance, and grace at every challenge, will be integral to our ability to evolve and thrive in an ever-changing volunteer landscape.

Liaison To Child Welfare Foundation
Sharon Conatser, Illinois, Chairman

At the annual meeting in October 2018, the board of directors of the Child Welfare Foundation approved $766,760 in grant funding to 24 nonprofit organizations for projects to be completed in calendar year 2019. These grants were awarded to support worthwhile projects and disseminate information about the project to the public. The following is a brief summary of a few of the grants awarded this year:

American Printing House for the Blind of Louisville, Ky., was awarded $21,029 for its project, "Braille Tales: Sharing the Joy of Reading." This grant will provide Braille Tales books to 2,500 visually impaired children throughout the country.

Children's Hospital and Medical Center Foundation of Omaha, Neb., was awarded $12,000 for its project, "Safe Sleep Education Program." This project will fund Halo Sleep Sacks to more than 1,500 hospitals in North America.

John Hopkins All Children's Hospital of St. Petersburg, Fla., was awarded $25,200 for its project, "Pragmatic Acquisition of Language Skills, P.A.L.S. - A therapeutic Social Skills Group." This project will provide a program for small group instruction of students on the high-end autism spectrum who have near-normal to above-average verbal and nonverbal skills.

National Autism Association of Portsmouth, R.I., was awarded $58,408 for its project, "Big Red Safety Box." This project will fund Big Red Safety Boxes designed to educate, raise awareness and provide tangible tools that may assist in preventing and responding to dangerous wandering-related incidents in the autism community.

Our Military Kids of McLean, Va., was awarded $53,905 for its project, "Empowering a Generation of Military Kids." This project will fun award packets, publish their quarterly newsletter and annual impact report, update the program website and produce a benefits video.

Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of Asheville, N.C., was awarded $15,500 for its project, "The Starfolio Resource Notebook for Families of Children with Brain Cancer." This project will provide a free resource notebook designed to help families of newly diagnosed patients partner with their child's health care team and organize medical information during treatment.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded $75,000 for its project "The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program-2019." This grant will provide temporary financial assistance to children of veterans in need of shelter, food, utilities and clothing.

Too Small to Fail of New York was awarded $50,000 for its project, "Increasing Access to Early Language Development Resources through Diaper Banks." This grant will add ten additional diaper banks in especially high-need communities with a focus on agencies that serve military and veteran families.

United Through Reading of San Diego was awarded $24,875 for its project, "United Through Reading App Book Sponsorship." This grant will fund books for 5,000 military children.

ALA departments are also eligible to apply for a grant. You can download the application and criteria at www.legion.org/childwelfare. From there, you can also view the full list of grant recipients.

Membership Committee
Ann King-Smith, Florida, Chairman

Writing this report gave me the opportunity to reflect on the wonderful members I met during the 2018-2019 Auxiliary year. Along with meeting members came the opportunity to hear amazing stories about the great things our members are accomplishing every day for our veterans, military families, and communities. Listening to what our members have to say was an important part of this year.

The Membership program was presented at Mission Trainings held in Albany, Spokane, Sioux Falls, Springfield, Charlotte, and Las Vegas. We focused on ideas to retain members since statistics show that our organization is much better at recruiting members than retaining them. Members shared ideas about how they keep members excited about working the ALA mission. A major focus was on how to make our meetings a more meaningful and pleasant experience for members. Units in all divisions reported that they worked on this effort and are now receiving great feedback from their members.

Although member retention was the focus, we did ask members to plan and participate in "offsite" recruiting events. Across America, members were spotted at fairs, flea markets, weekly street markets, holiday and patriotic events, sporting events, concerts and parades, and at VA hospitals and clinics with applications and information to share with everyone.

Auxiliary members from newly chartered Lovettsville Unit 1836 in Kentucky wore ALA branded clothing while working a joint Legion Family membership booth at Lovettsville Oktoberfest. The fall festival provided a great opportunity to share membership eligibility information with the community and help raise funds for ALA programs. ALA Unit 1836 has dual members among its charter members and grew membership to over 35 members in 2019!

This year, we chartered 35 new units and rechartered 20 units. We added 36,297 new senior members and 4,199 new Junior members as of June 2019.

Departments were given two opportunities to earn monetary awards this year. Monetary awards were presented to departments that achieved 2% over their previous year's membership totals as of Veterans Day and National Poppy Day®. When compared to their total on the same day last year, eight departments received an award and a $250 check for the Veterans Day Award: Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island. Five departments were given an award and a $250 check for the Poppy Day Award: District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Congratulations to these departments for working together to increase membership!

While this year had its struggles and challenges, it also was filled with heartwarming success stories from every single department. We must continue to remain dedicated to our great organization and always remember that *membership is everyone's job.*

Past Presidents Parley Committee
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, Wisconsin, Chairman

Past Presidents Parley programs across the country were active and pursued interesting and enlightening opportunities for member involvement in their units and communities. The contributions of units throughout our organization reached out in many ways to support community activities and efforts for veterans in need. The expertise of these unit members helped to provide services not always available in small-town communities.

Several of the best programs supported by the Parley program served and supported female veterans in myriad ways, as they are extremely vulnerable in many communities. Granting scholarships for deserving seniors graduating and going on to attend universities was also adopted by units across the nation.

At all levels, units and department reported mentoring by utilizing phone calls, texts, and email. Units paid for dual memberships, made quilts for female veterans, provided care packages for veterans in need, organized family outings with kids games, wrote to troops overseas, and most sponsored a Unit Member of the Year. Some departments reported that every unit annually submits a unit member's name for this award.

Many unit presidents adopted supporting female veterans as their project for the year. They hold special memorial services for deceased unit presidents. Many units provided services to nursing homes and VA hospitals in the area. Some units have a past president on every committee to help guide the committee in the right direction.

Many more units are utilizing the knowledge and expertise of past Auxiliary leaders and are being increasingly effective in service to their communities.

Public Relations Committee
Martha Corriher, North Carolina, Chairman

Auxiliary members across the nation took the PR challenge to a new level. They are now realizing that everything we do in all Auxiliary programs is an easy way to share their story in a multitude of ways, especially Facebook, while they are happening. Even the national chairmen began using Facebook live to promote important and current information as soon as they received information. Departments and units are still utilizing monthly newsletters that are mailed and emailed to their members. Most departments reported what some consider the old way of doing business — snail mail — is still a valuable way of sharing the information with the membership. Departments created a combined media contact list to share with their membership statewide listing of television stations, newspapers, and radio stations, and some included unit websites and Facebook pages for easier access. Many departments held launch parties for their newly created social media accounts, inviting unit members to join in so they too would be in the immediate circle of events.

Nebraska promoted their project, Troops Care Packages Packing Party, and said it was shared on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and in department newsletters and newspaper articles, resulting in the event being shared across social media. You can see the ripple effect one social media post can have when it is shared by others. When others share a post, it lets those who made the post know their efforts were appreciated and worthy to be shared.

The Department of Puerto Rico reported that even without a designated department PR chairman, their story would be shared. Units reported to their department president, Amanda Torres, their wonderful events and asked if she would post them on social media. This is leadership in action the PR way.

All departments shared that branding was in all areas of the Auxiliary. From apparel to brochures, units made sure the emblem or Auxiliary name was visible in every way possible.

Members across the country shared stories of the ALA's history during holiday events by sharing who we are, what we do, why we matter, and why it's just as important today as it was 100 years ago. If you look on any ALA social media page, you will be able to find some form of branding of the ALA.

While public relations has grown by leaps and bounds this year, we must continue to make communication between national and units a main priority. PR is not just the written word of events, but the written word explaining and sharing the goals and plans to keep all the ALA's programs growing and running for another 100 years.

Crowe

Crowe LLP
Independent Member Crowe Global

Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

Report on Financial Statements
We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of The American Legion National Headquarters ("Legion"), which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of December 31, 2018 and 2017, and the related consolidated statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements
Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion
In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters as of December 31, 2018 and 2017, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Emphasis of Matter
As discussed in Note 1 to the financial statements, the Legion has adopted ASU 2016-14 - Not-For-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-For-Profit Entities. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

Other Matter
Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements as a whole. The consolidating statements of financial position and activities are presented for purposes of additional analysis of the consolidated financial statements rather than to present the financial position and results of operations of the individual companies, and are not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements or to the consolidated financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements as a whole.

Crowe LLP

Crowe LLP

Indianapolis, Indiana
May 1, 2019

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 3,012,220	$ 2,174,906
Accounts receivable	5,460,308	5,040,578
Interest receivable	885,540	904,673
Prepaid expenses and deposits	2,755,099	953,487
Deferred membership expense	4,077,478	4,596,295
Inventory	2,861,202	2,761,406
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	11,070	11,511
Beneficial interest in trust	76,729	114,200
	19,139,646	16,557,056
Investments		
General	18,387,061	16,334,237
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved Funds	34,986,881	35,277,631
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	25,452,708	28,107,482
Samsung scholarship fund	7,209,799	7,768,802
Building funds	6,501,856	6,380,417
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	14,349,042	13,181,694
Special account – Endowment Fund	2,009,882	2,270,210
General account – Endowment Fund	8,037,160	7,610,997
National Emergency Fund	5,822,925	5,791,430
American Legion Charities	5,006,983	4,749,866
Other	3,817,097	3,853,224
	131,581,394	131,325,990
Property, plant and equipment, net	3,753,291	4,489,117
	$ 154,474,331	$ 152,372,163
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	$ 3,994,332	$ 3,327,417
Scholarships payable	1,406,831	1,346,892
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	453,450	283,453
Deferred income	1,416,956	929,571
Deferred dues income	24,893,121	25,316,796
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	3,382,071	3,708,642
Accrued vacation benefits	754,932	947,080
Accrued pension expense	17,838,379	19,449,457
Other liabilities	1,044,811	860,355
Notes payable	426,698	631,749
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life membership	22,367,575	23,664,141
Life memberships due to state and local posts	25,041,442	26,239,151
	103,020,598	106,704,704
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restriction	9,753,041	5,178,172
With donor restriction	41,700,692	40,489,287
Total net assets	51,453,733	45,667,459
	$ 154,474,331	$ 152,372,163

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended December 31, 2018

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Revenue, gains and other support			
National member dues	$ 30,394,651	$ -	$ 30,394,651
Direct membership solicitations	6,074,433	-	6,074,433
Member service fees income	636,526	-	636,526
Affinity income	4,228,914	-	4,228,914
Sales of emblem items	13,917,701	-	13,917,701
Advertising	8,674,307	-	8,674,307
Contributions	12,507,600	3,380,136	15,887,736
Label and printing fees	360,920	-	360,920
Interest and dividends	1,934,050	1,124,419	3,058,469
Net realized losses	(339,600)	(102,058)	(441,658)
Other	4,121,753	25,000	4,146,753
	82,511,255	4,427,497	86,938,752
Net assets released from restriction	2,669,226	(2,669,226)	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support	85,180,481	1,758,271	86,938,752
Expenses			
Salaries	17,262,927	-	17,262,927
Employee benefits	5,962,222	-	5,962,222
Cost of sales – Legion	7,468,856	-	7,468,856
Department and magazine costs	1,564,384	-	1,564,384
Direct publications	10,240,139	-	10,240,139
Executive, staff and program travel	3,823,788	-	3,823,788
Commission and committee	1,700,086	-	1,700,086
Printing and postage	12,567,362	-	12,567,362
Scholarships, grants and awards	2,083,162	-	2,083,162
Office and other operating	14,646,154	-	14,646,154
Occupancy and usage	2,120,396	-	2,120,396
Special projects and programs	3,714,040	-	3,714,040
	83,153,516	-	83,153,516
Change in net assets from operations	2,026,965	1,758,271	3,785,236
Net unrealized loss – investments	(2,225,419)	(546,866)	(2,772,285)
Net change in PUFL	2,702,057	-	2,702,057
Amortization of pension loss	(2,262,117)	-	(2,262,117)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	4,333,383	-	4,333,383
Change in net assets	4,574,869	1,211,405	5,786,274
Net assets, beginning of year	5,178,172	40,489,287	45,667,459
Net assets, end of year	$ 9,753,041	$ 41,700,692	$ 51,453,733

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended December 31, 2017

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Revenue, gains and other support			
National member dues	$ 31,799,455	$ -	$ 31,799,455
Direct membership solicitations	6,191,175	-	6,191,175
Member service fees income	579,943	-	579,943
Affinity income	2,128,372	-	2,128,372
Sales of emblem items	13,649,875	-	13,649,875
Advertising	9,353,077	-	9,353,077
Contributions	14,226,926	3,354,115	17,581,041
Label and printing fees	1,600,308	-	1,600,308
Interest and dividends	1,804,836	1,081,228	2,886,064
Net realized losses	(40,306)	(86,461)	(126,767)
Other	4,407,398	12,000	4,419,398
	85,701,059	4,360,882	90,061,941
Net assets released from restriction	1,901,056	(1,901,056)	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support	87,602,115	2,459,826	90,061,941
Expenses			
Salaries	16,829,990	-	16,829,990
Employee benefits	5,839,456	-	5,839,456
Cost of sales – Legion	7,364,200	-	7,364,200
Department and magazine costs	2,673,921	-	2,673,921
Direct publications	10,458,470	-	10,458,470
Executive, staff and program travel	4,060,552	-	4,060,552
Commission and committee	1,737,332	-	1,737,332
Printing and postage	14,148,656	-	14,148,656
Scholarships, grants and awards	2,850,847	-	2,850,847
Office and other operating	14,145,429	-	14,145,429
Occupancy and usage	2,404,297	-	2,404,297
Special projects and programs	2,316,772	-	2,316,772
	84,829,922	-	84,829,922
Change in net assets from operations	2,772,193	2,459,826	5,232,019
Net unrealized gain – investments	587,170	303,524	890,694
Net change in PUFL	234,749	-	234,749
Amortization of pension loss	(2,199,456)	-	(2,199,456)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(4,958,649)	-	(4,958,649)
Change in net assets	(3,563,993)	2,763,350	(800,643)
Net assets, beginning of year	8,742,165	37,725,937	46,468,102
Net assets, end of year	$ 5,178,172	$ 40,489,287	$ 45,667,459

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
Year ended December 31, 2018

	Program Services		Supporting Services			
	Veterans Programs Services	Americanism and Children and Youth Activities	Management and General	Member Development	Fundraising	Total
Salaries	$ 7,014,252	$ 518,571	$ 8,803,868	$ 926,236	$ -	$17,262,927
Employee benefits	722,259	52,277	5,096,699	90,987	-	5,962,222
Cost of sales - Legion	7,468,856	-	-	-	-	7,468,856
Department and magazine costs	1,439,535	-	17,608	-	107,241	1,564,384
Direct publications	10,240,139	-	-	-	-	10,240,139
Executive, staff and program travel	1,285,290	1,456,482	1,026,231	55,785	-	3,823,788
Commission and committee	867,076	254,430	488,504	90,076	-	1,700,086
Printing and postage	2,044,490	16,548	96,603	2,359,896	8,049,825	12,567,362
Scholarships, grants, and awards	555,333	1,394,383	-	133,446	-	2,083,162
Office and other operating	3,988,158	168,576	4,314,848	5,972,112	202,460	14,646,154
Occupancy and usage	18,835	1,426	1,574,119	526,016	-	2,120,396
Special projects and programs	2,235,451	681,254	797,335	-	-	3,714,040
Total	$ 37,879,674	$ 4,543,947	$22,215,815	$ 10,154,554	$ 8,359,526	$83,153,516

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
Year ended December 31, 2017

	Program Services		Supporting Services			
	Veterans Programs Services	Americanism and Children and Youth Activities	Management and General	Member Development	Fundraising	Total
Salaries	$ 7,297,987	$ 751,442	$ 7,669,565	$ 1,110,996	$ -	$16,829,990
Employee benefits	720,200	72,887	4,943,353	103,016	-	5,839,456
Cost of sales - Legion	7,364,200	-	-	-	-	7,364,200
Department and magazine costs	1,507,935	-	6,437	-	1,159,549	2,673,921
Direct publications	10,458,470	-	-	-	-	10,458,470
Executive, staff and program travel	1,411,059	1,596,223	968,933	78,234	6,103	4,060,552
Commission and committee	872,618	288,745	455,420	120,549	-	1,737,332
Printing and postage	1,694,117	19,404	129,693	3,042,156	9,263,286	14,148,656
Scholarships, grants, and awards	895,677	1,827,906	-	127,264	-	2,850,847
Office and other operating	3,712,389	249,772	4,314,787	5,339,023	529,458	14,145,429
Occupancy and usage	20,069	4,669	1,554,452	825,107	-	2,404,297
Special projects and programs	839,833	701,160	775,779	-	-	2,316,772
Total	$ 36,794,554	$ 5,512,208	$20,818,419	$ 10,746,345	$10,958,396	$84,829,922

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ 5,786,274	$ (800,643)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities		
Depreciation expense	791,860	777,333
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	-	154,736
Realized loss on sale of investments	441,658	126,767
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	2,772,285	(890,694)
Net change in Paid-Up-For-Life annuity	(2,702,057)	(234,749)
Amortization of pension loss	2,262,117	2,199,456
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(4,333,383)	4,958,649
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	(153,273)	(130,490)
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(419,730)	245,331
Interest receivable	19,133	(65,812)
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(1,801,612)	957,746
Deferred membership expense	518,817	354,110
Inventories	(99,796)	86,097
Beneficial interest in trust	37,471	37,794
Accounts and scholarships payable	726,854	177,182
Deferred income	114,918	(2,080,501)
Accrued pension expense	460,188	232,634
Other accrued liabilities	(7,692)	(723,250)
Net cash from operating activities	4,414,032	5,381,696
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(106,933)	(759,619)
Sales of property and equipment	50,899	17,607
Purchase of investments	(66,855,851)	(48,059,223)
Sales and maturities of investments	63,386,504	44,405,000
Investments in affiliate (CFA)	441	2,064
Net cash from investing activities	(3,524,940)	(4,394,171)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	153,273	130,490
Repayment on notes payable	(205,051)	(199,700)
Net cash from financing activities	(51,778)	(69,210)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	837,314	918,315
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	2,174,906	1,256,591
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	$ 3,012,220	$ 2,174,906
Supplemental cash flows information		
Interest paid	$ 19,278	$ 21,120
Investment maturities	-	(33,958)

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Nature of Organization: The American Legion National Headquarters ("Legion") is a national veterans organization, which was declared to be a corporate body by an Act of the United States Congress on September 16, 1919.

According to the Original Act and Subsequent Amendments, the purpose of the Legion is "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and goodwill among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country."

Approximately 40% of the Legion's income is derived from membership dues (including amounts allocated for magazine subscriptions). An additional 10 - 11% is generated through advertising for the American Legion Magazine. Another significant source of income is Emblem sales, which includes the sale of apparel, jewelry, and other items bearing the American Legion Emblem. Income is expended by the Legion on several different programs including The American Legion Magazine, Emblem sales, veterans' assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion baseball, oratorical contests and Boys Nation.

Principles of Consolidation: The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of The American Legion National Headquarters, The American Legion Charities ("ALC"), The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation ("ALEF"); and the National Emergency Fund ("NEF") (collectively, "the Legion"). All material inter-organizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation.

The American Legion Charities includes the consolidated balances and activities of the American Legion Charities Trust and the American Legion Charities, Inc. The ALC was established to solicit funds from the individuals, organizations and corporations and to disburse said funds as may be directed to various Legion programs and charities. The ALC also promotes the common good and general welfare of the people of the United States of America by raising money for the programs of the Legion and its departments and posts.

The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, a tax-exempt Indiana corporation, was created to provide permanent funding for the rehabilitation of American veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans.

The National Emergency Fund is a tax-exempt trust established to provide gifts and grants to relieve suffering and ameliorate financial hardship incurred by American Legion members, families and Posts.

Basis of Accounting: The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP").

Use of Estimates in Preparation of Financial Statements: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses, gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reported period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Financial Statement Presentation: The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with GAAP, which requires, among other things, that the financial statements report the changes in and total of each of the net asset classes, based upon donor restrictions, as applicable. Net assets are to be classified as without donor restriction and with donor restriction.

The following classes of net assets are maintained:

Net Assets Without Donor Restriction – The net asset without donor restriction 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 net asset without donor restriction of the Legion may be used at the discretion of management to support the Legion's purposes and operations.

Net Assets With Donor Restrictions – The net asset with donor restriction class includes assets of the Legion related to gifts with explicit donor-imposed restrictions that have not been met as to specified purpose, or to later periods of time or after specified dates. Unconditional promises to give that are due in future periods are classified as net asset with donor restriction. As the restrictions are met, the net assets are released from restrictions and included in net assets without donor restriction. Contributions for which the restrictions are met in the same period in which the contribution is received are also recorded as net assets with donor restrictions and released from restrictions. The net asset with donor restriction class also includes assets of the Legion for which the donor has stipulated that the contribution be maintained in perpetuity. Donor-imposed restrictions limiting the use of the assets or its economic benefit neither expire with the passage of time nor can be removed by satisfying a specific purpose.

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and less than 90 day deposit balances with banks. The Legion maintains all of its cash deposits in banks and brokerage firms. This may result in a concentration of credit risk in the case of a severe regional financial failure. The maximum amount at risk is the excess of the deposit liabilities reported by the banks over the amounts that would have been covered by federal insurance. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC") insures deposits up to $250,000 per financial institution.

Accounts Receivable and Allowance for Uncollectible Accounts: The Legion bills members, posts, and departments for dues and bills agencies for advertising in the Legion magazine. Interest is not normally charged on receivables. Management establishes a reserve for losses on its accounts based on historic loss experience and current economic conditions. Losses are charged off to the reserve when management deems further collection efforts will not produce additional recoveries. Management estimated that no allowance was necessary for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017.

The Charities collects donations from members, posts, and departments. Losses are charged off to the reserve when management deems further collection efforts will not produce additional recoveries. Management estimated that no allowance was necessary for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017.

Inventory: Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market using the first-in, first-out ("FIFO") method. Supplies which are not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

Investments: Investments are carried at fair value. The fair values of investments are based on quoted market prices, where available. If quoted market prices are not available, fair values are based on quoted market prices of comparable instruments. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the consolidated statements of activities. Premiums or discounts on investments are generally recognized at the time of disposal or maturity. Interest and dividends are shown net of fees on the statements of activities.

Property and Equipment: Expenditures for property and equipment and items, which substantially increase the useful lives of existing assets and are greater than $1,500 are capitalized at cost. The Legion records depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designated to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives. Buildings are depreciated on the straight-line method using a thirty year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from three to seven years.

Impairment of Long-Lived Assets: In accordance with GAAP, the Legion reviews its property and equipment for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of an asset may not be recoverable. If the fair value is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognized for the difference. No impairment loss has been recognized during the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017.

Collections: The Legion owns many collectible military related items and historical documents, which were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized.

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Some of these items have been appraised for insurance purposes.

Support and Revenue: The Legion reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Dues Income and Expense: Dues are recognized as income over the applicable membership period, which is on a calendar-year basis. In addition to other methods of obtaining new members, the Legion uses direct mail and other direct marketing approaches. The income generated from direct membership solicitation is recognized over the applicable membership period (calendar year). The direct-response expenses incurred in obtaining new members are deferred and recognized in the subsequent membership year.

Income Taxes: The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(19) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. ALC, ALEF and NEF are exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. None of the entities are considered to be a private foundation. The Legion is subject to income tax on unrelated business income. In 2018 and 2017, the Legion incurred no tax expense.

Current accounting standards require the Legion to disclose the amount of potential benefit or obligation to be realized as a result of an examination performed by a taxing authority. For the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017, management has determined that the Legion does not have any tax positions that result in any uncertainties regarding the possible impact on the Legion's financial statements. The Legion does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months. The Legion recognizes interest and/or penalties related to income tax matters in income tax expense. The Legion did not have any amounts accrued for interest and penalties at December 31, 2018 and 2017.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments: The carrying amount of all financial instruments of the Legion, which include cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, beneficial interest in trust, investments, accounts payable, and notes payable, approximate fair value.

Expense Allocation: Expenses have been classified as program services, management and general, member development and fund raising based on actual direct expenditures. Additionally, salary and employee benefits expenses are allocated among departments based upon estimates of the amount of time spent by Legion employees performing services for these departments.

Recent Accounting Pronouncement: In August 2016, FASB issued ASU No. 2016-14, *Not-for-Profit Entities* (Topic 958) ("ASU 2016-14"). ASU 2016-14 makes several improvements to current reporting requirements that address the complexities related to not-for-profit financial reporting. The guidance requires an entity to continue to present on the face of the statement of cash flows the net amount for operating cash flows using either the direct or indirect method but no longer requires the presentation of the indirect method reconciliation if using the direct method. It requires the entity to provide qualitative and quantitative information that communicates how the entity manages liquid resources available to meet cash needs within one year of the statement of net position date. It also requires the entity to disclose expenses by both natural and functional classification as well as methods used to allocate between program and support functions. ASU 2016-14 requires the entity to report investment return net of external and direct internal investment expenses and no longer requires disclosure of those netted expenses. ASU 2016-14 is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2017. The Legion implemented this guidance for the year ended December 31, 2018 and elected to retroactively apply it for the year ended December 31, 2017. The new disclosures are located in the statements of financial position, statement of activities, statement of functional expenses and Notes 11, 12 and 13.

Reclassifications: Certain reclassifications have been made to present last year's financial statements on a basis comparable to the current year's financial statements. These reclassifications had no effect on the change in net assets or total net assets.

Subsequent Events: Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to December 31, 2018, to determine the need for any adjustments or disclosures to the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2018. Management has performed their analysis through May 1, 2019, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

NOTE 2 – COLLECTIONS

The Legion owns many collectible military related items and historical documents, which were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized. These items have been appraised, or are in the process of being appraised for insurance purposes and are as follows:

	Appraisal date	Replacement value
World War I Posters	12/10/2015	$ 492,204
World War II Posters	12/10/2015	469,039
Military Unit Histories	12/10/2015	112,410
Fine Art Collection	12/10/2015	980,000
Museum Collection	12/10/2015	120,475

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENT IN AFFILIATE

The Legion, in conjunction with approximately 120 other organizations, has created a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. ("CFA") for the purpose of aiding in the campaign to secure a constitutional amendment empowering the Congress and the States to enact legislation to protect the Flag of the United States of America from physical desecration.

CFA recognized a change in net assets of $(440) and $(2,064) in 2018 and 2017, respectively. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been changed by these amounts and corresponding adjustments have been reflected in unrestricted net assets for 2018 and 2017.

NOTE 4 – BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN CHARITABLE LEAD TRUST

The ALEF has been named a beneficiary of a charitable lead trust. Under the charitable trust, the ALEF is to receive quarterly distributions in the amount of $9,919 until December 2020, or until the funds of the trust are exhausted. Based on the terms of the trust and a 3.01% discount rate in 2018 and a 2.57% discount rate in 2017, the present value of future benefits expected to be received by the ALEF is estimated to be $76,729 and $114,200 at December 31, 2018 and 2017, respectively.

NOTE 5 – FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Fair value is defined as the price that would be received for an asset or paid to transfer a liability (an exit price) in the Legion's principal or most advantageous market for the asset or liability in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date.

GAAP establishes a fair value hierarchy, which requires an entity to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. GAAP describes three levels of inputs that may be used to measure fair value:

Level 1: Quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the entity has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices such as quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities; quoted prices in markets that are not active; or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect a reporting entity's own assumptions about the assumptions that market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability.

NOTE 5 – FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. The lowest level of significant input determines the placement of the entire fair value measurement in the hierarchy.

The fair value of money markets and common stock are based on quoted prices in active markets (Level 1 inputs). The fair value of U.S. Government obligations, corporate bonds, and state and municipal bonds are based on quoted market prices of similar securities with similar due dates using the market approach (Level 2 inputs).

The fair value of beneficial interest in trust assets is determined using the income approach and is based on a valuation model that calculates the present value of estimated distributed income. The valuation model incorporates assumptions that market participants would use in estimating future distributed income. The Legion is able to compare the valuation model inputs and results to widely available published industry data for reasonableness; however, the Legion is unable to redeem the assets of the trust and only receives distributions (Level 3 inputs).

Assets and Liabilities Measured on a Recurring Basis: Assets and liabilities measured at fair value on a recurring basis are summarized below:

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2018 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Assets:			
Beneficial interest in trust	$ -	$ -	$ 76,729
Money market accounts	14,158,119	-	-
U.S. Government obligations		42,988,776	-
State and municipal bonds	-	29,242,544	-
Corporate bonds	-	44,736,885	-
Common Stock	455,070		
	$ 14,613,189	$ 116,968,205	$ 76,729

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2017 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Assets:			
Beneficial interest in trust	$ -	$ -	$ 114,200
Money market accounts	17,316,734	-	-
U.S. Government obligations		39,658,140	-
State and municipal bonds	-	27,969,090	-
Corporate bonds	-	45,920,019	-
Common Stock	462,007		
	$ 17,778,741	$ 113,547,249	$ 114,200

The tables below presents a reconciliation and statement of activities classification of gains and losses for all assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017:

	Beneficial interest in trust
Beginning balance, Jan. 1, 2018	$ 114,200
Change in value of split interest agreements	2,205
Distributions from trust	(39,676)
Ending balance, Dec. 31, 2018	$ 76,729

	Beneficial interest in trust
Beginning balance, Jan. 1, 2017	$ 151,994
Change in value of split interest agreements	1,882
Distributions from trust	(39,676)
Ending balance, Dec. 31, 2017	$ 114,200

NOTE 6 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The Legion's property and equipment, and the related accumulated depreciation at December 31, 2018 and 2017 are as follows:

	2018	2017
Washington, D.C., real estate		
Land	$ 80,000	$ 80,000
Building	5,661,735	5,661,735
Indianapolis real estate		
Land	389,264	389,264
Building	4,134,868	4,082,610
Furniture, fixtures and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis	6,946,165	6,931,764
Washington, D.C.	701,597	728,651
Construction in progress	-	34,470
	17,913,629	17,908,494
Less: accumulated depreciation	(14,160,338)	(13,419,377)
	$ 3,753,291	$ 4,489,117

Depreciation expense for the years ended, December 31, 2018 and 2017 was $791,860 and $777,333, respectively.

NOTE 7 – LONG-TERM DEBT

In 2013, the Legion refinanced its long-term debt. Principal and interest is payable in monthly installment, with the final payment due December 3, 2020. The stated interest rate is 1.35% plus the 30-day London Inter Bank Offered Rate ("LIBOR"). The outstanding balance on long-term debt is $426,698 and $631,749 as of December 31, 2018 and 2017.

The future maturities of the long-term debt are as follows

2019	$ 211,200
2020	215,498
Total	$ 426,698

Interest expense was $19,278 and $21,120 for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017, respectively.

NOTE 7 – LONG-TERM DEBT (continued)

As a strategy to mitigate exposure to the risk of interest rate fluctuations, the Legion entered into an interest rate swap agreement on the long-term debt on December 3, 2013. This interest rate swap has been designated as a derivative and provided for the Legion to receive interest from the counterparty at the 30-day LIBOR rate plus 1.35% and to pay interest to the counterparty at fixed rate of 2.98% on a notional amount of $426,698 and $631,749 at December 31, 2018 and December 31, 2017, respectively. The interest rate swap matures in 2020. Under the agreement, the Legion pays or receives the net interest amount monthly, with the monthly settlements included in interest expense.

NOTE 8 – LEASES

The Legion has several non-cancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, and copiers that expire at various dates through 2022. Rent expense under these leases for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017 was $386,313 and $361,660, respectively.

Minimum lease commitments are as follows:

2019	$ 365,404
2020	336,412
2021	296,500
2022	130,454
	$ 1,128,770

In addition, the Legion had a lease with the State of Indiana for rental of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis, which expired on June 30, 2013. The Legion is operating on a month-to-month basis until a new lease agreement extending the lease term is finalized. According to the terms of the lease, the Legion is required to maintain the interior of the building, and provide adequate insurance on the building in lieu of lease payments. The cost of maintenance for 2018 and 2017 was $901,879 and $1,024,409, respectively. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

NOTE 9 – PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND

The National Executive Committee approved the establishment of a life membership plan available to any member of a participating department. In accordance with the plan, the assets of the Paid-Up-For-Life ("PUFL") Membership Fund are included in without donor restriction, board designated net assets and segregated in a trust account from which funds equal to the annual dues of life members are withdrawn for current operations each year. The trust agreement provides that the Legion has the right to withdraw part or all of the assets of the trust account and to modify or terminate the trust agreement at its discretion.

Under the terms of the PUFL program, participating member's national, state and local dues are paid by the Legion for the remainder of the individual's life. Management has estimated and recognized a liability for the future payments to state and local Legion organizations. Likewise, management has deferred recognition of the national dues portion of the members' payment. Deferred PUFL dues are recognized in annual amounts equal to the national dues in effect each year. The liability and deferred revenue amounts are estimated by the Legion's actuaries using PUFL membership summaries and discount rates comparable to the Legion's recent investment performance.

NOTE 10 – RESTRICTED AND RESERVE DESIGNATED FUNDS

The restricted fund is designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee and reported as without donor restriction, board designated net assets. Earnings of the restricted fund, along with the principal, can be expended only upon recommendation of the National Finance Commission and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee at two successive meetings. It is the policy of the Legion to transfer 10% of the prior year's defined net income from operations to the restricted fund. The Legion made no transfers to the restricted fund in 2018 and 2017. As of December 31, 2018 and 2017, the restricted fund had a balance of $33,143,651 and $33,325,054, respectively.

The reserve fund is also designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee and reported as without donor restriction, board designated net assets. However, earnings of the reserve fund may be used for the general operations of the Legion. The principal can be expended only by action of the Legion at its national convention, or by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee in two successive meetings not less than 60 days apart. As of December 31, 2018 and 2017, the reserve fund had a balance of $2,130,151 and $2,243,241, respectively.

NOTE 11 – NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets with donor restrictions have assets that are donor-restricted for specific purposes or have assets that represent donor-restricted gifts that have been invested and are to be maintained in perpetuity.

Income from the Samsung scholarship fund is to be used to fund undergraduate scholarships for descendants of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U.S. service men and service women participated. Income from the American Legion Endowment Fund is to be used to support the veterans affairs and rehabilitation and children and youth activities of the Legion.

At December 31, 2018 and 2017, net assets with donor restriction by specific purpose and in perpetuity are as follows:

	2018	2017
With specific purpose		
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	$ 953,471	$ 972,346
Samsung scholarship	1,658,791	1,964,846
American Legacy Fund	14,425,418	13,360,721
National Emergency Fund	6,146,647	5,863,619
Boy Scouts	467,899	467,899
Operation Comfort Warrior	3,270,363	3,074,711
John DeVore	319,164	325,227
Edwin J. Dentz VA Boy's State	617,244	654,385
Samsung American Legion Alumni Association	89,235	184,676
Others	152,540	566,150
Total with specific purpose	$ 28,100,772	$ 27,434,580
In perpetuity		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	8,599,920	8,054,707
Total in perpetuity	13,599,920	13,054,707
Total assets with donor restriction	$ 41,700,692	$ 40,489,287

NOTE 12 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

	2018	2017
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Overseas graves decoration	$ 25,106	$ 25,298
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	1,712,649	1,215,669
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth programs	931,471	660,089
	$ 2,669,226	$ 1,901,056

NOTE 13 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION

The Legion's endowments include donor restricted endowment funds that are comprised of two separate funds, the American Legion Endowment Fund and the Samsung scholarship fund. In accordance with GAAP, net assets associated with endowment funds, including funds designated by the National Executive Committee to function as endowments, are classified and reported based on the existence or absence of donor imposed restrictions.

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The National Executive Committee has interpreted the State of Indiana's Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act ("SPMIFA") as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the gift date of the donor restricted endowment funds absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Legion classifies as permanently restricted net assets (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) net accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the governing documents of the Legion. The remaining portion of the donor restricted endowment fund that is not classified in permanently restricted net assets is classified as temporarily restricted net assets until those amounts are appropriated for expenditure by the Legion in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by SPMIFA. In accordance with SPMIFA, the Legion considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor restricted endowment funds:

(1) The duration and preservation of the fund
(2) The purposes of the Legion and the donor restricted endowment fund
(3) General economic conditions
(4) The possible effect of inflation and deflation
(5) The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments
(6) Other resources of the Legion
(7) The investment policies of the Legion

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2018:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Donor restricted endowment funds	$ 270	$ 15,258,711	$ 15,258,981
Total Funds	$ 270	$ 15,258,711	$ 15,258,981

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2017:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Donor restricted endowment funds	$ 457	$ 15,090,894	$ 15,091,351
Total Funds	$ 457	$15,090,894	$ 15,091,351

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2018:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	$ 457	$ 15,090,894	$ 15,091,351
Investment gain/(loss):			
Investment income, net of fees	43,767	395,371	439,138
Net depreciation (realized and unrealized)	(22,117)	(393,479)	(415,596)
Total investment gain	21,650	1,892	23,542
New gifts	-	653,274	653,274
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(21,837)	(487,349)	(509,186)
Net assets, end of year	$ 270	$ 15,258,711	$ 15,258,981

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2017:

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	$ (29,252)	$ 14,906,555	$ 14,877,303
Investment gain/(loss)			
Investment income, net of fees	52,214	420,684	472,898
Net depreciation (realized and unrealized)	(12,807)	(73,190)	(85,997)
Total investment gain	39,407	347,494	386,901
New gifts	-	130,490	130,490
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(9,698)	(293,645)	(303,343)
Net assets, end of year	$ 457	$ 15,090,894	$ 15,091,351

Return Objectives and Risk Parameters: The Legion has adopted investment and spending policies for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding to programs supported by its endowment while seeking to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment assets. Endowment assets include those assets of donor-restricted funds that the Legion must hold in perpetuity or for a donor-specified period(s). Under this policy, as approved by the National Executive Committee, the endowment assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce income while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives: To satisfy its long-term rate-of-return objectives, the Legion relies on a total return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation (realized and unrealized) and current yield (interest and dividends). The Legion targets fixed income securities to achieve its long-term return objectives within prudent risk constraints.

Spending Policy and How the Investment Objectives Relate to Spending Policy: Realized and unrealized gains/losses are added to the principal of the American Legion Endowment Fund and distributions are limited to cumulative interest, net of fees. On the Samsung scholarship fund, the capital appreciation can be spent, along with the interest, net of fees, according to the spending policy. Endowment fund principal, unless otherwise directed by the donor, shall not be disbursed except for emergency situations. In order to make a principal disbursement, a majority vote by the Legion National Executive Committee will be required.

NOTE 13 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (continued)

Funds with Deficiencies: From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor restricted endowment funds may fall below the level that the donor of SPMIFA requires the Legion to retain as a fund of perpetual duration. As of December 31, 2018 and 2017, the Legion did not have any funds with deficiencies.

NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Legion has a 401(k) savings plan with a qualified automatic contribution arrangement that was effective July 1, 2008. The plan calls for a 100% match of the first 1% contributed by the employee and a 50% match of the next 5% contributed by the employee. Thus, the maximum matching percentage an employee will receive is 3.5%. The Legion made contributions of $405,316 and $391,965 in 2018 and 2017, respectively.

The Legion has two defined-benefit pension plans. The first plan (Plan A) covers substantially all of its employees as well as those of certain affiliated and subordinated groups. The plan was established in 1944 by vote of the Legion's National Convention. Contributions to Plan A are made by the Legion, and other participating groups, on the basis of annual actuarial valuations. The second plan (Plan B) covers substantially all of its employees. The plan was established in October of 2016 and was effective January 1, 2017. Contributions to Plan B are made by the Legion on the basis of annual actuarial valuations.

In May 2008, the Legion voted to freeze the Plan A effective June 30, 2008. The result of the freeze is that current employees still received the benefits they had earned as of June 30, 2008, but no future benefits were earned and no new employees were added.

The following table sets forth the Legion's portion of Plan A's funded status and amounts recognized in the Legion's consolidated statement of financial position at December 31, 2018 and 2017:

	2018	2017
Benefit obligation	$ (56,910,890)	$ (61,779,828)
Fair value of plan assets	42,739,269	46,806,040
Funded status	$ (14,171,621)	$ (14,973,788)
Interest cost	$ 2,015,470	2,111,952
Actual (loss) return on assets	684,408	(4,644,872)
Amortization of prior service costs	442,267	121,085
Amortization of loss	2,208,584	2,199,456
Difference between expected and actual return on assets	(3,822,680)	1,608,755
Net periodic pension cost	$ 1,528,049	$ 1,396,376
Net gain (loss)	$ (1,887,949)	$ 1,639,779
Prior service cost	(442,267)	(121,085)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	$ (2,330,216)	$ 1,518,694
Prepaid benefit cost	$ 6,954,381	$ 8,482,430
Accumulated benefit obligation	56,910,890	61,779,828
Vested benefit obligation	55,894,475	60,623,063
Net periodic pension cost	1,528,049	1,396,376
Benefits paid	3,382,363	3,060,604
Measurement date	12/31/2018	12/31/2017

Estimated future benefit payments:

2019	$ 3,643,798
2020	3,625,510
2021	3,667,782
2022	3,718,102
2023	3,812,284
Years 2024-2027	18,581,096

The asset investment policy is a lower risk strategy with the primary objective of preservation of capital with an emphasis on long-term growth and generation of current income to provide adequate cash flow needed for benefit payments. The target asset allocation is 0-20% in cash or cash equivalents, 40-70% in fixed income and 30-60% in equities. Prohibited investments include real estate investment trusts, real estate partnerships, mutual funds, private equity, hedge funds and guaranteed investment certificates.

The fair value of Plan A assets at December 31, 2018 and 2017 are as follows. See Note 5 for descriptions of inputs for each type of asset.

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2018, using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued interest	$ 258,936	$ -	$ -
Money market accounts	873,336	-	-
U.S. Government and agency obligations	-	10,173,194	-
Asset backed securities	-	637,123	-
Municipal bonds	-	3,971,276	-
Corporate bonds	-	15,075,278	-
Common stock:			
Materials	320,739	-	-
Industrials	788,041	-	-
Consumer discretionary	750,589	-	-
Consumer staples	885,548	-	-
Energy	576,777	-	-
Health care	2,137,164	-	-
Financials	2,159,984	-	-
Telecommunication	821,890	-	-
Technology	2,765,154	-	-
Utilities	544,240	-	-
	$ 12,882,398	$ 29,856,871	$ -

NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (continued)

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2017, using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued Interest	$ 241,032	$ -	$-
Money market accounts	935,139	-	-
U.S. Government and agency obligations	-	8,551,030	-
Asset backed securities	-	776,636	-
Municipal bonds	-	3,146,546	-
Corporate bonds	-	14,956,524	-
Common stock:	-	-	-
Materials	-	-	-
Industrials	3,409,523	-	-
Consumer discretionary	2,148,353	-	-
Consumer staples	1,736,608	-	-
Energy	780,075	-	-
Health care	3,099,653	-	-
Financials	3,170,298	-	-
Telecommunication	-	-	-
Technology	3,292,621	-	-
Utilities	562,002	-	-
	$ 19,375,304	$ 27,430,736	$-

Historical returns of multiple asset classes were analyzed to develop a risk free real rate of return and risk premium for each asset class. The overall rate for each asset class was developed by combining a long- term inflation component, the risk free real rate of return, and the associated risk premium. A weighted average rate was developed based on those overall rates and the target asset allocation of the plan.

Weighted-average assumptions	2018	2017
Discount rate	4.01%	3.37%
Expected return on plan assets	7.00%	7.00%
Rate of compensation increase	0.00%	0.00%

The amounts of net loss and net prior service cost expected to be recognized as components of net periodic benefit cost for the year ending December 31, 2018 are $1,528,049 and $442,267, respectively.

The following table sets forth Plan B's funded status and amounts recognized in the Legion's consolidated statement of financial position at December 31, 2018 and 2017:

	2018	2017
Benefit obligation	$ (5,127,475)	$ (5,137,839))
Fair value of plan assets	1,460,717	662,170
Funded status	$ (3,666,758)	$ (4,475,669)
Service cost	$ 653,399	$ 541,379
Interest cost	185,551	147,058
Actual (loss) return on assets	112,162	(13,476)
Amortization of prior service costs	370,027	370,027
Amortization of loss	53,533	-
Difference between expected and actual return on assets	(180,416)	(9,274)
Net periodic pension cost	$ 1,194,256	$ 1,035,714
Net loss	$ (1,633,140)	$ 3,809,982
Prior service cost	(370,027)	(370,027)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	$ (2,003,167)	$ 3,439,955
Prepaid benefit cost	$ (651,075)	$ (385,503)
Accumulated benefit obligation	1,254,953	1,356,908
Vested benefit obligation	1,453,765	1,356,908
Net periodic pension cost	1,194,256	1,035,714
Benefits paid	17,975	1,517
Measurement date	12/31/2018	12/31/2017

Estimated future benefit payments:

2019	$ 29,501
2020	40,534
2021	54,964
2022	82,293
2023	112,241
Years 2024-2028	928,001

The asset investment policy is a lower risk strategy with the primary objective of preservation of capital with an emphasis on long-term growth and generation of current income to provide adequate cash flow needed for benefit payments. The target asset allocation is 0-20% in cash or cash equivalents, 40-70% in fixed income and 30-60% in equities. Prohibited investments include real estate investment trusts, real estate partnerships, mutual funds, private equity, hedge funds and guaranteed investment certificates.

NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (continued)

The fair value of Plan B assets at December 31, 2018 and 2017 are as follows. See Note 5 for descriptions of inputs for each type of asset.

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2018 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued interest	$ 7,941	$ -	$-
Money market accounts	31,639	-	-
U.S. government and agency obligations	-	497,647	-
Municipal bonds	-	49,579	-
Corporate bonds	-	467,949	-
Common stock:			
Materials	11,334		
Industrials	19,698	-	-
Consumer discretionary	27,082	-	-
Consumer staples	30,969	-	-
Energy	20,378	-	-
Health care	75,383	-	-
Financials	76,043	-	-
Telecommunication	29,247		
Technology	96,758	-	-
Utilities	19,070		
	$ 445,542	$ 1,015,175	$-

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2017 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Money market accounts	$ 18,769	$ -	$-
U.S. government and agency obligations		75,000	-
Municipal bonds		50,365	-
Corporate bonds		288,822	-
Common stock:		-	-
Industrials	42,501	-	-
Consumer discretionary	24,168	-	-
Consumer staples	30,483	-	-
Energy	18,576	-	-
Health care	38,109	-	-
Financials	44,118	-	-
Technology	31,259	-	-
	$ 247,983	$ 414,187	$-

Historical returns of multiple asset classes were analyzed to develop a risk free real rate of return and risk premium for each asset class. The overall rate for each asset class was developed by combining a long- term inflation component, the risk free real rate of return, and the associated risk premium. A weighted average rate was developed based on those overall rates and the target asset allocation of the plan.

Weighted-average assumptions	2018	2017
Discount rate	3.62%	4.21%
Expected return on plan assets	7.00%	7.00%
Rate of compensation increase	3.00%	3.00%

The amounts of net loss and net prior service cost expected to be recognized as components of net periodic benefit cost for the year ending December 31, 2018 are $1,194,256 and $370,027, respectively.

NOTE 15 – LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY

The Legion's financial assets available within one year of the statement of financial position date for general expenditure are as follows:

	2018	2017
Financial assets at year-end:		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 3,012,220	$ 2,174,906
Accounts receivable, net	5,460,308	5,040,578
Interest receivable	885,540	904,673
Investments	131,581,394	131,325,990
Total financial assets	140,939,462	139,446,147
Less amounts not available for general expenditure within one year:		
Donor-restricted endowment funds	(13,523,191)	(13,011,848)
Financial assets not available to be used within one year	(13,523,191)	(13,011,848)
Financial assets available to meet general expenditures within one year	$ 127,416,271	$ 126,434,299

As part of the Legion's liquidity management, the Legion invests its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due.

NOTE 16 – LITIGATION

The Legion is currently involved in and/or has been mentioned as a defendant or co-defendant in several legal actions. It is the opinion of the National Judge Advocate that these claims are without merit and any ultimate liability of the Legion with respect to these actions will not materially affect the financial statements of the Legion.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2018

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 2,145,654	$ 493,954	$ 105,199	$ 267,413	$ -	$ 3,012,220
Accounts receivable	5,430,308	272,534	311,874	2,880	(557,088)	5,460,308
Interest receivable	733,983	38,583	59,345	53,629	-	885,540
Prepaid expenses and deposits	2,755,099	-	-	-	-	2,755,099
Deferred membership expense	4,077,478	-	-	-	-	4,077,478
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	2,861,202	-	-	-	-	2,861,202
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	11,070	-	-	-	-	11,070
Beneficial interest in trust	-	-	76,729	-	-	76,729
	20,014,794	805,071	553,147	323,722	(2,557,088)	19,19,646
Investments						
General	18,387,061	-	-	-	-	18,387,061
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	34,986,881	-	-	-	-	34,986,881
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	25,452,708	-	-	-	-	25,452,708
Samsung scholarship fund	7,209,799	-	-	-	-	7,209,799
Building funds	6,501,856	-	-	-	-	6,501,856
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	14,349,042	-	-	-	-	14,349,042
Special account – Endowment Fund	-	-	2,009,882	-	-	2,009,882
General account – Endowment Fund	-	-	8,037,160	-	-	8,037,160
National Emergency Fund	-	-	-	5,822,925	-	5,822,925
American Legion Charities	-	5,006,983	-	-	-	5,006,983
Other	3,817,097	-	-	-	-	3,817,097
	110,704,444	5,006,983	10,047,042	5,822,925	-	131,581,394
Property, plant and equipment, net	3,753,291	-	-	-	-	3,753,291
	$ 134,472,529	$ 5,812,054	$ 10,600,189	$ 6,146,647	$ (2,557,088)	$ 154,474,331
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	$ 3,747,879	$ 803,541	$ -	$ -	$ (557,088)	$ 3,994,332
Scholarships payable	1,406,831	-	-	-	-	1,406,831
Due to American Legion National Headquarters	-	-	2,000,000	-	(2,000,000)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	453,450	-	-	-	-	453,450
Deferred income	1,416,956	-	-	-	-	1,416,956
Deferred dues income	24,893,121	-	-	-	-	24,893,121
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	3,382,071	-	-	-	-	3,382,071
Accrued vacation benefits	754,932	-	-	-	-	754,932
Accrued pension expense	17,838,379	-	-	-	-	17,838,379
Other liabilities	1,044,811	-	-	-	-	1,044,811
Notes payable	426,698	-	-	-	-	426,698
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	22,367,575	-	-	-	-	22,367,575
Life memberships due to state and local posts	25,041,442	-	-	-	-	25,041,442
	102,774,145	803,541	2,000,000	-	(2,557,088)	103,020,598
NET ASSETS						
Without donor restriction	8,113,877	1,638,895	269	-	-	9,753,041
With donor restriction	23,584,507	3,369,618	8,599,920	6,146,647	-	41,700,692
Total net assets	31,698,384	5,008,513	8,600,189	6,146,647	-	51,453,733
	$ 134,472,529	$ 5,812,054	$ 10,600,189	$ 6,146,647	$ (2,557,088)	$ 154,474,331

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2017

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,685,335	$ 405,725	$ 65,355	$ 18,491	$ -	$ 2,174,906
Accounts receivable	4,961,035	168,838	-	4,932	(94,227)	5,040,578
Interest receivable	752,706	34,470	68,731	48,766	-	904,673
Prepaid expenses and deposits	953,487	-	-	-	-	953,487
Deferred membership expense	4,596,295	-	-	-	-	4,596,295
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	2,761,406	-	-	-	-	2,761,406
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	11,511	-	-	-	-	11,511
Beneficial interest in trust	-	-	114,200	-	-	114,200
	17,721,775	609,033	248,286	72,189	(2,094,227)	16,557,056
Investments						
General	16,334,237	-	-	-	-	16,334,237
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	35,277,631	-	-	-	-	35,277,631
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	28,107,482	-	-	-	-	28,107,482
Samsung scholarship fund	7,768,802	-	-	-	-	7,768,802
Building funds	6,380,417	-	-	-	-	6,380,417
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	13,181,694	-	-	-	-	13,181,694
Special account – Endowment Fund	-	-	2,270,210	-	-	2,270,210
General account – Endowment Fund	-	-	7,610,997	-	-	7,610,997
National Emergency Fund	-	-		5,791,430	-	5,791,430
American Legion Charities	-	4,749,866		-	-	4,749,866
Other	3,853,224	-	-	-	-	3,853,224
	110,903,487	4,749,866	9,881,207	5,791,430	-	131,325,990
Property, plant and equipment, net	4,489,117	-	-	-	-	4,489,117
	$ 133,114,379	$ 5,358,899	$ 10,129,493	$ 5,863,619	$ (2,094,227)	$ 152,372,163
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	$ 3,416,388	$ 2,268	$ 2,988	$ -	$ (94,227)	$ 3,327,417
Scholarships payable	1,346,892	-	-	-	-	1,346,892
Due to American Legion National Headquarters	-	-	2,000,000	-	(2,000,000)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	283,453	-	-	-	-	283,453
Deferred income	929,571	-	-	-	-	929,571
Deferred dues income	25,316,796	-	-	-	-	25,316,796
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	3,708,642	-	-	-	-	3,708,642
Accrued vacation benefits	947,080	-	-	-	-	947,080
Accrued pension expense	19,449,457	-	-	-	-	19,449,457
Other liabilities	860,355	-	-	-	-	860,355
Notes payable	631,749	-	-	-	-	631,749
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	23,664,141	-	-	-	-	23,664,141
Life memberships due to state and local posts	26,239,151	-	-	-	-	26,239,151
	106,793,675	2,268	2,002,988	-	(2,094,227)	106,704,704
NET ASSETS						
Unrestricted	3,330,550	1,847,165	457	-	-	5,178,172
Temporarily restricted	22,990,154	3,509,466	8,126,048	5,863,619	-	40,489,287
Total net assets	26,320,704	5,356,631	8,126,505	5,863,619	-	45,667,459
	$ 133,114,379	$ 5,358,899	$ 10,129,493	$ 5,863,619	$ (2,094,227)	$ 152,372,163

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended December 31, 2018

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 30,394,651	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 30,394,651
Direct membership solicitation	6,074,433	-	-	-	-	6,074,433
Member service fees income	636,526	-	-	-	-	636,526
Affinity income	4,228,914	-	-	-	-	4,228,914
Sales of emblem items	13,917,701	-	-	-	-	13,917,701
Advertising	8,674,307	-	-	-	-	8,674,307
Contributions	14,418,100	2,012,773	653,273	596,115	(1,792,525)	15,887,736
Label and printing fees	360,920	-	-	-	-	360,920
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,534,510	144,604	199,740	179,615	-	3,058,469
Net realized gains (losses)	(357,477)	(24,758)	(34,180)	(25,243)	-	(441,658)
American Legion Endowment Fund income	227,000	-	-	-	(227,000)	-
Other	4,146,753	-	-	-	-	4,146,753
	85,256,338	2,132,619	818,833	750,487	(2,019,525)	86,938,752
Expenses						
Salaries	17,262,927	-	-	-	-	17,262,927
Employee benefits	5,962,222	-	-	-	-	5,962,222
Cost of sales – Legion	7,468,856	-	-	-	-	7,468,856
Department and magazine costs	1,564,384	-	-	-	-	1,564,384
Direct publications	10,240,139	-	-	-	-	10,240,139
Executive, staff and program travel	3,818,330	-	5,458	-	-	3,823,788
Commission and committee	1,700,086	-	-	-	-	1,700,086
Printing and postage	12,567,362	-	-	-	-	12,567,362
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,600,957	1,522,750	227,000	251,980	(1,519,525)	2,083,162
Office and other operating	14,589,104	38,460	16,694	1,896	-	14,646,154
Occupancy and usage	2,120,396	-	-	-	-	2,120,396
Special projects and programs	3,484,690	729,350	-	-	(500,000)	3,714,040
	82,379,453	2,290,560	249,152	253,876	(2,019,525)	83,153,516
Change in net assets from operations	2,876,885	(157,941)	569,681	496,611	-	3,785,236
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investments	(2,272,528)	(190,177)	(95,997)	(213,583)	-	(2,772,285)
Net change in PUFL	2,702,057	-	-	-	-	2,702,057
Amortization of pension loss	(2,262,117)	-	-	-	-	(2,262,117)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	4,333,383	-	-	-	-	4,333,383
Change in net assets	5,377,680	(348,118)	473,684	283,028	-	5,786,274
Net assets, beginning of year	26,320,704	5,356,631	8,126,505	5,863,619	-	45,667,459
Net assets, end of year	$ 31,698,384	5,008,513	8,600,189	6,146,647	-	51,453,733

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended December 31, 2017

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 31,799,455	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 31,799,455
Direct membership solicitation	6,191,175	-	-	-	-	6,191,175
Member service fees income	579,943	-	-	-	-	579,943
Affinity income	2,128,372	-	-	-	-	2,128,372
Sales of emblem items	13,649,875	-	-	-	-	13,649,875
Advertising	9,353,077	-	-	-	-	9,353,077
Contributions	14,931,713	1,765,402	130,489	1,010,094	(256,657)	17,581,041
Label and printing fees	1,600,308	-	-	-	-	1,600,308
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,383,318	112,009	234,631	156,106	-	2,886,064
Net realized gains (losses)	(60,210)	(7,129)	(58,578)	(850)	-	(126,767)
American Legion Endowment Fund income	89,400	-	-	-	(89,400)	-
Other	4,419,398	-	-	-	-	4,419,398
	87,065,824	1,870,282	306,542	1,165,350	(346,057)	90,061,941
Expenses						
Salaries	16,829,990	-	-	-	-	16,829,990
Employee benefits	5,839,456	-	-	-	-	5,839,456
Cost of sales – Legion	7,364,200	-	-	-	-	7,364,200
Department and magazine costs	2,673,921	-	-	-	-	2,673,921
Direct publications	10,458,470	-	-	-	-	10,458,470
Executive, staff and program travel	4,056,303	-	4,249	-	-	4,060,552
Commission and committee	1,737,332	-	-	-	-	1,737,332
Printing and postage	14,148,656	-	-	-	-	14,148,656
Scholarships, grants and awards	2,255,951	485,723	89,400	365,830	(346,057)	2,850,847
Office and other operating	14,096,878	20,622	18,840	9,089	-	14,145,429
Occupancy and usage	2,404,297	-	-	-	-	2,404,297
Special projects and programs	2,250,691	66,081	-	-	-	2,316,772
	84,116,145	572,426	112,489	374,919	(346,057)	84,829,922
Change in net assets from operations	2,949,679	1,297,856	194,053	790,431	-	5,232,019
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investments	720,117	104,087	(35,075)	101,565	-	890,694
Net change in PUFL	234,749	-	-	-	-	234,749
Amortization of pension loss	(2,199,456)	-	-	-	-	(2,199,456)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(4,958,649)	-	-	-	-	(4,958,649)
Change in net assets	(3,253,560)	1,401,943	158,978	891,996	-	(800,643)
Net assets, beginning of year	29,574,264	3,954,688	7,967,527	4,971,623	-	46,468,102
Net assets, end of year	$ 26,320,704	$ 5,356,631	$ 8,126,505	$ 5,863,619	$ -	$ 45,667,459