

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 103RD ANNUAL NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
DIVISION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 103RD ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
FROM AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 1, 2022



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, January 24, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: In compliance with current public law, we herewith transmit for printing as House documents The American Legion's 102nd Annual Report, The American Legion's Proceedings of the 102nd Annual National Convention, and The American Legion's Proceedings of the 103rd Annual National Convention.

JULIA MATHIS,
Legislative Director, Legislative Division.

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FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive résumé of what took place at the One Hundred and Third Annual National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022.

The final report of the national organization for the period ending December 31, 2021, and balance sheet as of December 31, 2021, and surplus analysis, January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, 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 T. Higuera, California; Jerrold W. Wilson, Ohio; Angel O. Narvaez, Puerto Rico; Cory D. Bates, Rhode Island; Michael F. Mitrione, Virginia.

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. Loneragan*, 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: 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: 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: 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. Wagoner*,

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 Connolly*,
Arizona; Alvin F. Grauerholz*, Kansas;

Joseph F. Ward*, New Jersey; John H. Wienand, Jr. *, Alabama; Nathan M. Wolfe*, South Carolina
Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen*, Minnesota
Chaplain: R. Drew Wolcott*, Mexico
Historian: Harry H. Kretzler, M.D.*, Washington
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

62nd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Boston, 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. Kogutck *, 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.*, Maryland

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

102nd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Phoenix, AZ, Aug. 31, Sept. 1, 2, 2021

Commander: James W. "Bill" Oxford, North

Carolina

Vice Commanders: Bruce C. Feuerbach,

Iowa; David L. King, Kentucky; Francis J.

MacDonald, Massachusetts; Richard A.

Heigert, Missouri; Robert D. Liebenow,

Oregon

Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia

Chaplain: Edward L. Harris, Jr., Indiana

Historian: James A. Mariner, New Mexico

Treasurer: Shawn T. Long, Indiana

103rd NATIONAL CONVENTION

Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1, 2022

Commander: Paul E. Dillard, Texas

Vice Commanders: James T. Higuera,

California; Jerrold W. Wilson, Ohio; Angel

O. Narvaez, Puerto Rico; Cory D. Bates,

Rhode Island; Michael F. Mitrione, Virginia

Adjutant: Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia

Chaplain: Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado

Historian: Robert B. Gilmore, Arizona

Treasurer: Shawn T. Long, Indiana

Judge Advocate: Mark Seavey, Virginia

**PROCEEDINGS
of the
103rd Annual Convention
of
The American Legion
Tuesday, August 30, 2022**

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the 103rd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander**

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The 103rd National Convention will come to order. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise as the color guard of American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291 in Newport Beach, California, presents the Colors, and then remain standing while rendering a salute for the singing of the National Anthem by retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Vann Morris.

... The delegation rose and rendered a salute to the Colors.

LCDR (RET.) EVANGELO 'VANN' MORRIS: Good morning, everyone. If you could, for a moment, drop your salutes for one second, for one second, per the commander. Hear me from my heart this morning. Today, in our nation, it appears that our country has adopted a mindset whereby one person comes on stage and sings the National Anthem, while everyone in the audience remains silent. Now, this is no reflection on anyone that has sung our beautiful National Anthem. This is about you and me. We, the people, nationwide, and for decades, we have remained silent during the one time we need to be the loudest. So, I ask you all this morning, will you sing loud and proud the National Anthem with me today? I can't hear you. *(Cheering)*

All right, so let's clear those vocal cords, and let's raise the roof in this place today. Hand salute! Ladies and gentlemen, I now present the United States of America's National Anthem sung by The American Legion. One. Two. Sing.

... At this time the delegation sang the National Anthem.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Color Guard, you may retire. Thank You very much. *(Applause)*

If everyone would please uncover for the invocation, I'll call on National Chaplain Pastor Stan of the Department of Colorado.

**Invocation
Reverend Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado, National Chaplain**

Has God been good to you? ...*Chorus of "Yes"* I didn't hear that. Has God been good to you? ...*Chorus of "Yes."* That's better. I pray he'll continue to be good to you and watch over you during this convention.

Dear Heavenly Father, as we gather for this opening session of The American Legion 103rd Convention, we thank you for watching over our national officers as they did their duties this past year. We especially thank you for watching over our national commander, Paul Dillard. We know that his plate was overflowing many times, but because you were there to guide him, he was able to complete the task that was in front of him. Thank you

for giving all of our national officers the guidance, comfort and strength they needed. And we thank you for our national commander so that he was able to do what he needed to do with your guidance.

Thank you for watching over all of our leaders in The American Legion, departments, posts and districts. We just pray, Heavenly Father, that the work that we did will be of benefit to all veterans and their families. And we pray that you have open arms for the many Legion members who have gone home to be with you. Comfort them all for they did their job, and they did it well. And we ask that you put your healing hands on the many that are ill and need your healing. Comfort them, but most importantly, allow them to be able to feel your presence, for this is really what they need. Your embrace. And now I leave you with my last three words. Go to church! And all God's children said ...*Chorus of "Amen."*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you, Pastor Stan. Please remain uncovered as National Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Griffith of Texas leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance
Michael Griffith, Texas, National Sergeant-at-Arms

Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country.
...*The convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony
Steve A. Brennan, Maryland, Chairman, National Security Commission
Kenneth J. Trumbull, Illinois, Vice Chairman, National Security Commission

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: At this time, we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from wars in which we have been engaged. We in The American Legion will never forget them. We will not ease the pressure on our government to do the right thing and continue to work for an accounting of all those missing. I now call on the chairman of the National Security Commission, Steve A. Brennan of Maryland, and Vice Chairman Kenneth J. Trumbull of Illinois, to place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

Preamble to Constitution
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander

Legionnaires, please join me and cover as we re-affirm our commitment to the principles and ideals on which our American Legion was founded by reciting the Preamble to the Constitution

...*The delegation recited the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution.*

Remembrance Ceremony
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander

I ask that we all pause for a moment of reflection. Some say that the Korean War is the "Forgotten War," but nobody could ever forget one of our past national commanders who served in it, Dominic DiFrancesco.

On September 6, 2021, this 67-year member of Post 594 in Middletown, Pennsylvania transferred to Post Everlasting. His legacy remains. Dominic never met a stranger and has been described as a "Legionnaire's Legionnaire." Under his leadership, American Legion membership reached 3,115,340, the third highest total in the organization's history. We have never had a higher year since. He was passionate about many issues, most notably

POWs and MIAs, and the need for a GI Bill to cover returning Gulf War veterans. His theme was "Success is a journey and not a destination." Nobody would argue, however, that his year was anything but a success. Let's listen to my friend Dominic in his own words. ...*At this time the delegation viewed a video. (Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Please join me in a moment of silence for this dedicated and accomplished Legionnaire. Past National Commander Dominic DiFrancesco. Thank you.

Old Glory Performance **Lieutenant Commander Evangelo 'Vann' Morris, U.S. Navy, Ret.**

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Ladies and gentlemen, before we move ahead with our opening, let's hear again from Vann Morris for a special tribute to the Flag of our nation.

LCDR (RET.) MORRIS: Audience, you may be seated. First of all, let me say, Commander Paul Dillard, sir, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to play a small role on this great 103rd National Convention. It's my honor to be here, sir. Thank you so much.

My fellow comrades, patriots, citizens, I bring you greetings. My wife and I, my three sons, they're all veterans. My wife was in the Army. She served. I have a son who is serving now as a captain over at Fort Bragg there. He's Army. And I have a son that served in the United States Air Force. And I have a son who served in the United States Marine Corps. And I served in the United States Navy. And the Navy paycheck fed all of them. *(Laughter)*

We bring you greetings. My wife and I, we were raised in the great state of Louisiana. Delegates from Louisiana, are you here today? *(Cheers)*

All right. Thank you there, Charlie, the folks over there. But we retired in the great state of Florida. Florida, are you in the house? *(Cheers)*

All right. All right. Thank you, Jerry. Appreciate that. And your team.

My friends, we've just heard a video, saw a video, and my heart is overjoyed today. So, he said something, the commander said that his motto was "life isn't a destination, it's a journey along the way." And that is what I want to tell you now. I'm about to recite a poem to you. The poem is a story about or the personification of the United States Flag. Also known as the Star-Spangled Banner. Also known abroad as the Beacon of Hope and known here local as Old Glory. And what it symbolizes is your sacrificial love.

It is a conduit that connects the servicemember to the Constitution, and that beacon of hope is what everything is about. So, when I recite this poem, I want you to know I never use the phrase "sacrificial love." It's implicit throughout the poem. I'm speaking to you personifying the Flag. The Flag is speaking to you. And thanking for your sacrificial love. Ladies and gentlemen, without any further delay, let us begin.

The Old Glory presentation you're about to witness is a time-honored tradition that symbolizes our servicemembers, our veterans and first responders' rise through the ranks. But most importantly, it represents their love for a nation that they so proudly serve.

Now, if I could get all of you to use your imagination just for a moment, imagine our Flag having a personality. What would that be like done? Now, imagine our Flag having a voice. What exactly would it say to its outstanding servicemembers? Its veterans, its first responders. What would it say to you? Well, I would like to draw your attention to a fact, the fact of the matter is the United States Flag is the most recognized symbol in the world for peace and freedom.

And my friends when it comes to freedom, well, freedom is not free. It comes with a price, paid for by our prisoners of war, by our missing in action. We have over 80,000 missing in action personnel right now today. And by our veterans who have accumulated countless injuries and by our outstanding servicemembers who are serving around the globe protecting our families.

So let there be no doubt that I believe that if our Flag could speak, it would say, "I am the Flag of the United States of America, but you can call me Old Glory.

"I fly atop the world's tallest buildings, and I stand watch in America's halls of justice. I fly majestically across the greatest institutions of learning, and I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world

Look up and see me. I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice. I stand for freedom. I am confident. I am brave. I am proud. And I am ready.

When I am flown with fellow banners, my head is held a little higher and my colors are a little truer. Except for my God, I bow to no one, and I am recognized all over the world. I am sovereign. I am saluted. I am respected. I am honored. I am loved...and yet I am feared.

I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years. Some of these battles include Gettysburg, Shiloh, Appomattox, San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, the Argonne Forest, Anzio, Rome, the beaches of Normandy, Guam, Okinawa, Korea, Saigon, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, deserts of Africa, the cane fields of Philippines, and scores of other places long forgotten by all, except those that were there with me. I know because I was there.

I led my special operations forces in the quiet of the night, and at the tip of the spear I saw them fight fearlessly around the globe every day of the year. I watched over them even during the casualties of Desert Storm and they still loved me. Now they're the fighting forces that you cannot see.

I was on a small hill called Iwo Jima, and I was dirty, battle-worn, tired, but my soldiers and sailors and airmen, Coast Guardsmen and Marines, they all cheered me. And I was so very proud.

I was at Ground Zero in New York City on September the 11th as cowardly fanatics attacked America. But I was raised on the ashes of once proud buildings by brave firefighters. These were heroes who risked their lives to save others, showing all that America, although bloody, would never be beaten because those who would destroy me cannot win for I am the symbol of freedom, of one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on in the streets of my own country. And when it is done by those whom I have served with in battle, it hurts. Hear me today when I say, I will overcome because I am strong. I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth and from my vantage on the moon I stand watch over the uncharted new frontiers of space and I have been that silent witness of all of America's finest hours. But my finest hour comes when my stripes are torn into strips to be used as bandages, to cover the wounds of my fellow comrades on the field of battle.

Also, when I fly at half-mast to honor my soldiers and my sailors, my airmen, my Coast Guardsmen, my Marines and my Space Force guardians, but most importantly, when I'm placed into the trembling arms of a grieving mother, at the gravesite of her fallen son or her fallen daughter, I am so very proud.

My name is Old Glory. Long may I wave, dear God. Long may I wave. Thank you. *(Cheers and Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Vann, that was amazing. Thank you. I would like for you to join your beautiful wife, Rita, and my sergeant-at-arms will escort you to the podium. Maybe we need to get Vann to go up to D.C. and let the Congressmen hear that. Maybe we could get Old Glory protected. First of all, I want to introduce you to our newest American Legion member, Rita Morris, Army. And we will have their three children, members by the end of September. I'll give you a deadline.

But I have a little presentation to give each of you all. One more time, give Vann applause. If that can't get your blood boiling this morning, we might as well go home. That was great. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our Master of Ceremonies for the 2022

National Convention is an inspirational hero. This Marine Corps veteran received a Purple Heart after he was severely wounded in action by an IED while serving in Afghanistan. The blast resulted in an amputation of both legs above the knee. Since recovering from that traumatic experience, he has made it his life's mission to support and help change the narrative of the wounded veteran. A Paralympic bronze medalist on his journey, he has found a way to continue to serve through raising awareness for wounded veterans. In 2017, he made headlines when he completed 31 consecutive marathons in 31 days while raising money for veterans. He is a member of Post 295 in Middleburg, Virginia. Please give a warm welcome to Rob Jones. *(Applause)*

Opening Ceremony

LEGIONNAIRE JONES: Thank you very much. Let me hear my Marines, please. *(Cheering)* I was afraid some of you might still be at PT. *(Laughter)*

On July 22, 2010, in the sweltering hot desert of Sangin, Afghanistan, sleeping on the ground, covered in dirt, bug bites and eating MREs for every meal, I was the happiest and most fulfilled I'd ever been in my entire life.

When I joined the Marine Corps in 2006, I was a failing college student. I was lonely. I was isolated. Directionless. I had no path for my life. But by that morning, in July, all of that had changed. I was a part of the world's greatest brotherhood. Let me hear my Marines one more time. *(Cheering)*

I was with a squad of Marines. They were all willing to die for each other in an instant. I had found courage by volunteering to go to war, and I was living a life of selflessness by taking on one of the most dangerous jobs in the war on terror, finding IEDs.

I finally had a path for my life. But with one, single step along that path, all of that was changed. And as my fellow Marines loaded me up on a stretcher and carried me to a helicopter, even though I was in shock and pumped full of morphine, somehow, I knew that the Marines that supplied my brotherhood and the mission that supplied my courage, and my selflessness were gone now. And I was going back home, alone again, except this time I was physically broken. My path was gone. And I was forced in an instant to start all over again and try and find a new path, starting over from scratch.

And that journey began with a year and a half at Walter Reed, where I learned and gathered up all the tools that I thought I could use, or I thought I might need. Learning how to walk, of course, first. And then how to run and how to ride a bike and how to row and lift weights, among a lot of different skills and sports. And finally, in December of 2011, it came time for me to retire and officially say goodbye to that Marine Corps path that I had been on and go try something new.

And in 2012, like you heard, I won a bronze medal in the Paralympics. Not only that, when I was in London, I met a beautiful girl named Pam, who became my wife. *(Applause)*

Thank you. Not only did I get the medal and get the girl there, but I learned a lot of lessons. And even though I got both those things, I knew deep down that rowing wasn't going to be the activity that brought me back to that path. The whole time I did rowing, I struggled with finding the greater overall purpose, the greater meaning in it besides just winning a race every year and seeking glory mostly for myself.

So, I turned to my bike. And I rode it across the country in 2013 and '14. 5,200 miles, 181 days diagonally across the country. At the end of that epic journey, I still didn't feel like I had found my path again. And this time I was kind of at a loss, I didn't know why something like that didn't feel like it fulfilled me. And I didn't know what to do. So, I figured, stick with what you're good at, I tried to make the Paralympics again in 2016, but this time in the sport of triathlon. And that particular endeavor ended in absolute failure because I spent the better part of two years training, and I didn't even come remotely close to winning a race, let alone making it to the Paralympics and getting a medal.

But there were two bright spots during that time period. The first one was that because I was training in triathlon; I had to train my running. And by doing that, I rediscovered this

natural talent, this passion that I had for running. I was able to get my 5K time down to 18 minutes flat, which the Marines in here will recognize that maxes out the PFT. Because I rediscovered that passion and that talent, I ended up running the Marine Corps marathon for fun. And I loved it. I loved how, at the end of the race, I felt like, if I moved a single muscle, my entire body would lock up and I would die. That's what I liked about it.

And I was thinking about these two bright spots as I kind of gloomily road around on my bike in my neighborhood in Salt Lake City. Just thinking about those bright spots. And thinking about what to do next, when I had this epiphany that send me sprinting back home as fast as I could go. When I got home, I went downstairs, I sat on my couch and I called Pam on Skype, because she was still living in England. Before she really even had a chance to answer, I said, "What if I ran 31 marathons in 31 days in 31 different cities, what about that?" And I poked at her like that.

And she processed that for a second and she said, "Well, I think you can do it. But I'm worried about what it's going to do to you. That sounds like a lot of impact on your body. And your body's already under enough stress as it is just from being an amputee, in your lower back and your hips. It's a lot of stress on it as it is, and I'm worried you'll do permanent damage on your body, and I honestly want to you play with our kids in five years." Which was kind of presumptuous because we were still only dating at the time. But I was a man on a mission. So, I ignored that comment for the time being, and I charged forward. And I said, "You know what, you're right. It is a lot of impact and there is that possibility that I could do permanent damage to my body."

But I finally figured out why the bike ride didn't fulfill me, why it didn't feel fulfilling, is because, with the bike ride, the main purpose behind it was to push myself to see what I could do, what I was capable of. It was still mostly about me. And this time I'm going to be doing this for a purpose that is bigger than myself. I'm going to be doing this in order to create a story about a veteran that went overseas and experienced this trauma and came back and thrived from it and became stronger from it, instead of being destroyed by it. And I'm going to use that story to help a lot of people, civilians, veterans, everybody.

And after she heard that, she said, "All right. But you have to let me help you." And when she said that I felt like Rocky in Rocky II. And spoiler alert, if anybody hasn't seen Rocky II yet, when Adrian wakes up out of her coma and Rocky goes, I don't have to fight Apollo Creed if you don't want me to. What does Adrian say to him, all she says is, "Win." And you see Rocky get filled up with all this energy, and you see the eye of the tiger go right into his eyeballs. And that's how I felt. And I took my cycling legs off and I went and put my running legs on. I went for a run right away. Just like Rocky, my training began in that moment. I spent the next 18 months; all I did was train and eat and sleep and plan. For 18 months. Got myself ready physically. I got myself ready mentally and got myself ready logistically for this challenge.

And so finally, October 11th of 2017, I was in London where I was going to be running my first marathon the next day. I was in this hotel overlooking Hyde Park, which is like Central Park in London. And I was overlooking this park. I received a call from a journalist, my last interview before starting the next day. And he went through his standard questions about the logistics and everything. Finally, he said, "Okay, be honest with me. Can you do it?" And I said, look, man, I don't know. I don't know if I can do this. There's a lot of leaps of faith going to have to take with my body. I could get out there, tomorrow morning, I could fall and break my arm, and it's over day one. There's a lot of leaps of faith. I'm going to take a look at the logistics of this thing; I could get down there tomorrow, run the marathon, and my flight could be canceled. I could miss the day tomorrow and I could be over day one.

Yeah, I don't know if I can do this, but there's one thing I do know: And that is the terrorist that put that land mine in the ground that severed my legs, he wants me to be too scared to even try. Because his goal, it wasn't just to kill me on the battlefield. It was to kill my spirit when I got back home. And he wanted my fellow Marines and my fellow veterans to see my spirit get crushed, and he wanted everybody in America to see our spirits get

crushed, and he wanted that defeat out into our society and our civilization, into our culture. That's what he was trying to do. And yet he failed to kill me on the battlefield. But every single day that goes by, he has another chance to kill my spirit back home; and the only way that I know that I can continue to win is to go out there tomorrow and run a marathon. *(Applause)*

Thank you. So, the next day I went out, I ran loops around Hyde Park until I reached 26.2 miles. We got a ride from Pam's parents to Heathrow Airport; we flew from Heathrow Airport to JFK, where we met my mom who came along as my massage therapist. We got a ride to a nearby rest stop, where we met the RV that we were driving around. We met our driver. We drove that RV down to Philadelphia; next day ran a marathon in Philadelphia. We drove back up to New York and ran a marathon in New York. It was after the marathon in New York that I started to feel the effects of the marathon. My back was sore. My hips were sore. The insides of my elbows were sore. Everything was sore. My earlobes were sore.

And not only that, I was getting these abrasions on the inside of my right thigh from every time I took a step, my socket moves just a little bit, and it started to rub the skin off on the inside of my thigh. And I knew that if any of that stuff got worse, I wouldn't be able to even put my leg on, let alone take a step or run a marathon. Especially my earlobes, I really rely on them for my running. *(Laughter)*

So, I took it a day at a time. I slowed down a little bit. I took longer breaks. I gooped on all this chamois cream on the inside of my thigh. I took it a day at a time. I ran in Boston and Toronto and Detroit. It was after Detroit that something really unexpected happened. I looked at my watch, when I finished the marathon, and Pam said, how long did it take you to run that marathon? I said, well, took me three hours and 59 minutes. Which is actually three minutes faster than my marathon in London. And I realized, I'm adapting to running. I ran six marathons and I'm getting faster. I'm actually adapting to this challenge. I'm getting stronger. And I kept getting faster all the way to Chicago, my tenth marathon. And I felt great all the way out to Seattle and then all the way down to LA. And all the way around to Nashville. Anybody here from Nashville? Tennessee. *(Cheering)*

All right. Well, in Nashville, it had been raining a lot the night before. A deluge that came through. And on my first loop of the day, my first mile of my first loop of the day, I was running across this wooden bridge, and I slipped on this wooden bridge. And I fell hard on my butt. And I stood up and I said something like, who put that there? I said something really funny. And after we all laughed for a while, I got back up and I finished that marathon feeling good. I felt fine. But the next morning I woke up in Atlanta. When I went to sit up, it felt like somebody had stabbed an entire bayonet into my spine. And I laid back down. And it kind of took my breath away. And I sat there, wondering how I was going to run 104 more miles in four days with a back injury. And I started thinking about that original conversation I had with Pam where she said, I'm afraid you're going to do permanent damage and I want you to be able to play with our kids in five years. We were married at this point. And I didn't know what to do. But I was due out in 45 minutes. So, I sat up. I put my legs on. I ate my daily breakfast of a bag of pork rinds. *(Laughter)*

And I walked out of the RV. And when I opened the door to the RV, I came down the stairs, there were 75 people all standing in front of the RV waiting for me to come out. They all started clapping their hands and cheering. And I got down there. And this mom came up to me, and she said, I want to thank you for what you're doing because my son has been following you the whole time, and he begged me to take him out of school today so he could run with you. He's going to run the first mile with you.

And a Marine I never met before, he came up, said, Brother, thank you for doing this and by showing everybody what veterans and Marines are all about. And it was after I had those conversations that I realized I was just going to have to take the risk. I was going to have to take the risk that I was going to do permanent damage, take the risk I wasn't going to be able to play with my kids in five years the way I would want to. And I was simply going to have to endure this shooting pain that went up my back every time I landed on my

right foot.

And I was going to have to do that about 100,000 more times. That's how many more right feet I had to take. I was going to have to do 100,000 on the left foot, too, and those didn't feel so good either. I did it in Atlanta. And in Charlotte. And in Baltimore. And in Washington D.C., running around all the war memorials on Veterans Day. And that day people from throughout my life were there. My grandma was there. My parents. My family. My friends. Brothers that I served with in Afghanistan. My nurse was there. My prosthetist and my physical therapists were there. And the last few steps I took that day coincided perfectly with the last few days I needed to get back on that path I've been seeking since I had stepped on the IED. You'll be happy to know I do have a son now and I can play with him just fine. *(Applause)*

So, if there's one thing that I can say, that if I could sum it up in one sentence that pushed me, that drove me forward to keep pushing myself more and more and more, I would do that by referencing one of the most, one of my favorite phrases of the Marine Corps, one of the most famous that we have, "Once a Marine, always a Marine." And when I first heard that, I was in boot camp, 20 years old. I thought what it meant at the time was, when I earn that Eagle, Globe and Anchor, when I earn the title Marine, at the end of the crucible, in boot camp, I get to call myself a Marine for the rest of life. Nobody can take that away from me. And it's true. It's a fact. But as I got older and had more experiences, I realized that that young kid only had a cursory understanding of what that phrase really meant. Because along with the honor of the title Marine comes responsibility of the title. To act like a Marine for the rest of your life; to never stop fighting for your country and for your fellow veterans, your fellow Marines.

And when I stepped on that IED, I wasn't able to do that in the way I originally intended, by going in direct combat against America's enemies, but the circumstances that were created by that IED that made it so I was no longer suited to go into combat, made me perfectly suited for the fight that happens back home. Because the fight doesn't end on the battlefield. There's a whole new fight back home that we all have to fight for each other. So that's why I fight now. And I'm honored to be here with you because that's why The American Legion exists. Everybody in this room has that attitude, has that mentality that we're not going to be done serving until six of our fellow servicemembers lower us into the ground in a pinewood box. *(Applause)*

I get thanked for my service all the time. I'd like to thank everybody in this room for your service, for your service in the military, and for what you do now and for showing young guys like me a path forward and showing today's youth, too, a way that they can serve their communities. So, I'm honored to be here with you. Thank you all. And semper fidelis to all of you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The 2021 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain hails from Jacksonville, Florida, where he played for American Legion Post 283. Dylan Owens graduated from Englewood High School with a GPA exceeding 4.0. He is a member of the Trinity Baptist College Baseball team and belonged to the National Honor Society while in high school. His goal is to be a Major League baseball player. Please show your appreciation for Dylan Owens.

**The American Legion Youth Champions
2021 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain
Dylan Owens, Jacksonville, Florida**

How are you all doing today? Real quick I have to give a special shout out to Florida. Because I'm from Florida. Florida, how are you all doing? *(Cheers and Applause)*

I want to start off by saying thank you to everybody in this room for your service and for everything that you continue to do for this country. We just really appreciate everything that you have done and continue to give for us. It's been an honor to be here this week and

to speak to every single one of you every time I get a chance. It's taught me a lot just about life and lessons that you've all said, lessons and things that you all taught me. I started playing American Legion when I was 15 years old. But I've been around The American Legion pretty much my whole life. I've been in a military family with my grandfather and my uncle and many of my friends have gone into the service as well. I've made a lot of great memories playing for The American Legion, and I made a lot of great friends as well.

I want to give a thank you to my coaches, Coach Terry Philips and Coach Tom Langford, for shaping me into the person I am today. They're the reason that I started playing outfield and that I'm able to go to college and start on my college team.

I want to give a thank you to Post 88 and Post 283 from Jacksonville, Florida for just helping me and also guiding me through this process as well. Another big thank you to my mom, Donna, who is here today. She shaped me into the person I am. She's been there every step of the way, practice, games, just helping me every single step.

I'm currently a junior at Trinity Baptist College where I'm studying secondary education for history and PE. And once I graduate, I just want to be able to go into coaching and shape young lives. I've had the privilege to actually coach for Post 88 this summer because I aged out, and we finished third in the whole state of Florida. I just hope to continue to shape the youth and just continue to show them what American Legion is all about because it's a big thing. And a lot of people don't know about it. So, I just want to be able to show them and just teach them everything that there is to know about Legion and what y'all do for us.

I want to end it by saying thank you again for everything. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: The 2022 Eagle Scout of the Year is a member of Boy Scout Troop 88 and was nominated by American Legion Post 109 in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. He was awarded this honor for designing and constructing a D-Day Memorial called Liberation Pointe. Because of military commitments at the U.S. Air Force Academy, he could not be here today, but please turn your attention to the video monitors.

2022 Eagle Scout of the Year Christopher T. Adam, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

(Live via video) Good morning, honored guests, and the Sons of The American Legion. My name is Christopher Adam, and I'm a 4th Class Cadet at the United States Air Force Academy and also a member of the Sons of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

So, a little backstory about that. My grandfather served in the Air Force during Korea. Apple didn't fall too far from the tree. Look where I am now. Anyways, I'm very humbled and very honored to have been chosen for this year's Eagle Scout of the Year Award.

I'd like to very much thank the Sons of The American Legion, Woody Hogan from the Department of The American Legion of Pennsylvania, and of course Post 109 from Mechanicsburg for nominating me for this award and all the people who helped support and guide me along the way. I'd also like to acknowledge and thank all the veterans in attendance this morning. This past summer, I really got to understand what you guys went through in your journey to becoming veterans. Really, truly, thank you for that.

So, a little bit about my Eagle Scout project. I was in my eighth-grade honors history class when my teacher walked in and asked how many of us knew what D-Day was. I was very upset and disappointed when I realized I was only one of two people in an honors history class that knew about it. That kind of sparked my Eagle project.

Liberation Point is a full-sized permanent exhibit located at the entrance to the United States Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It was designed to educate, commemorate and inspire young people about D-Day and World War II so we don't repeat the history that happened there. The project contains two full-sized bronze statues surrounded by a granite pentagon. Each side of the pentagon represents one of the five beachheads in Normandy. It also contains educational boards on what took place at

each beach and the different parts of the invasion as a whole. Benches and trees complete the project. Overall, my project took two years, 2,800 volunteer hours and a value of over \$200,000 to complete.

I would never have been able to achieve this project or contribute to my community without the support of many American Legions in the Central Pennsylvania area. I will always be extremely grateful for all of your support.

From this project, I wanted to create a Patriots Club at my high school. The club is a group of educated young Americans who go out and work in their communities to make them better and stronger. We helped support The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion by helping with the flag and wreath distributions during the Christmas, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day times.

I'd like to wrap up and quickly share few things I've learned about leadership from working with the different American Legions. One, commit to something and always make it your best effort. Two, nothing will be achieved unless you use these two letters, hard work. Three, put integrity into everything you do. Four, lead by example. I've also figured out it's not what you're getting, it's what you're giving that matters. Lastly, do the right thing for the right reason, surround yourself with the right people and the right result will always come about. Thank you again for choosing me for this award and enjoy the rest of your day. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next Youth Champion hails from Birmingham, Alabama. She explained the significance and history of executive orders during her prepared oration at The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – A Constitutional Speech Contest. Now a senior at Alabama School of Fine Arts, she was sponsored by American Legion Post 555 in Pelham, Alabama. Speaking to us by video is your American Legion 2022 National Oratorical Contest Champion, Emma Noble.

2022 National Oratorical Contest Champion Emma Nobel, Birmingham, Alabama

(Live via video) Thank you. Now, I'm not one for speeches. *(Laughter)* See, that was funny because I won your oratorical contest. And I did write that into my speech as a joke, but when I was delivering this to the Americanism Commission this morning, I froze up after that line, so it can sometimes be true.

When I was writing my speech for the oratorical contest, I debated whether or not it had been long enough since the death of President William Henry Harrison that it would be okay for me to make a joke about it. When I was writing this speech, I just knew I wanted to open with that line because, frankly, the orator in me finds it rather amusing.

My name is Emma Noble, and I had the opportunity to participate in and the honor of winning the 2022 National American Legion Oratorical Contest with my speech titled "The Power of the Executive Order: Because I Said So." *(Applause)*

Thank you. Winning this contest gave me access to scholarships that has broadened my horizons in my search for affordable college options. It has also opened up other speaking opportunities. For example, I was able to give the keynote speech at the Alabama National Cemetery Memorial Day Service. I was also given the opportunity to attend Alabama Girls State, to throw out the opening pitch for an American Legion Southeast Tournament baseball game and so much more.

But possibly, well, almost certainly, the most valuable experience I have gained from my time working with The American Legion is the connections to the individuals along the way. I would like to give special thanks to the Alabama 2nd Division Commander Richard Caster for coaching me, for supporting me, and for being a friend throughout this entire process. And also special thanks to the Post Triple Nickel in Pelham, Alabama, for being on my team since day one. And now I would like to extend my eternal gratitude to you, the members of The American Legion, for the opportunities you have presented me

with. I will forever be honored and humbled by the experiences I have had working with you all. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER In competition in Colorado Springs a few weeks ago, two youth champions took top prize in the 31st Junior Air Rifle Championships. In the sporter category, our top competitor is a young shooter representing Nation Ford MCJROTC rifle team in Fort Mill, South Carolina. She finished the competition with a final aggregate score of 2,293 out of a possible 2,400. Please welcome our American Legion 2022 Sporter Shooting Champion, Samantha Zermeno.

**2022 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion
Samantha Zermeno, Fort Hill, South Carolina**

"When the opportunity arises, don't be afraid to go after it." This is a quote by Eddie Kennison. And you know what? He is absolutely correct. I have been given the honor and privilege to participate in the Air Rifle National Championships from The American Legion. I'm honored to be given the title of national champion as well as a scholarship that will go towards my future career in cybersecurity. I would just like to thank The American Legion for giving not only me but so many other wonderful and talented athletes the opportunity to succeed. I know this will forge us to be future great leaders of the great United States of America. And so, thank you, American Legion, thank you Sons of The American Legion, thank you American Legion Auxiliary, and most importantly, Post 43 South Carolina American Legion departments. *(Applause)*

Thank you. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my coach, Colonel Mulcahy, and my rifle team at Nation Ford High School for giving me the skills that I needed to get where I am today. I would also like to thank my friends and family for giving me the courage to chase after this opportunity, especially my mother, who is here with us today and has also been with me at the Colorado Springs Air Rifle National Championships. And most of all, I would like to thank the veterans here today, for if it wasn't for your sacrifice, your honor, courage and commitment, we wouldn't have these opportunities here in the first place. Thank you all for everything. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our second Shooting Sports champion, Mikole Hogan, is from Montgomery, Texas. She claimed the precision title with an overall score of 2,486.8. Unfortunately, she is unable to be with us today due to academic commitments but please turn your attention to the video monitors.

**2022 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Champion
Mikole Hogan, Montgomery, Texas**

(Via video) Hello, everyone. I would like to introduce myself. I'm Mikole Hogan from Montgomery, Texas, and I have the honor and privilege of receiving the 2022 American Legion Junior Sport Scholarship in the Precision Rifle category. A huge thank you to my coach, Keith Pruden, and Katy Post 164 for sponsoring me, which enabled me to compete at the 2022 American Legion National Championships. I am truly honored to say that I am the 2022 National Precision Champion.

I may not be there in person, but I am in spirit. The reason for my absence and the video is I started my college journey on August 17th at Texas Christian University. My competitive rifle journey started when I was 13 years old with a gun safety course through my Local 4-H club. Five years later, in many competitions throughout the United States. I am proud to announce that I will be an athlete on the TCU women's rifle team. This would not have been possible without the support of my family and my coach Keith Pruden. This scholarship has impacted me by offsetting the cost of my tuition at Texas Christian University. I cannot express my gratitude enough.

In closing, I would like to thank The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion for this generous scholarship. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our final Youth Champion was elected American Legion Boys Nation president last month in Washington. He hails from Ann Arbor, Michigan, and attends Washtenaw International Academy High School. Sponsored at Michigan Boys State by American Legion Erwin Prieskorn Post 46, he hopes to attend Howard University on an ROTC Scholarship, while majoring in political science. Please welcome your 2022 American Legion Boys Nation president, Tamarus Darby, Junior. (Applause)

2022 Boys Nation President

Tamarus Darby, Jr., Ann Arbor, Michigan

Good morning, everyone. All right. Now, I see they sat Ohio right here in front of me. I'm from the great state of Michigan. So let me hear Michigan. Go Blue! *(Cheering)*

That's what I like to hear. That's what I like to hear. To get started into this speech, I stand before all of you humbled and grateful to represent a brotherhood of young men as the 76th American Legion Boys Nation president. I'd like to add that I was the first president from the state of Michigan since 1976. So, it's been almost 50 years since a president from Michigan has seen a National Convention. I want to thank my parents, Marquis and Tamara Paige. I want to thank my grandparents and the entire Spiritual Reserve Church and its army, and I want to thank the Michigan Boys State and Erwin Prieskorn American Legion Post 46 for all they've done for me thus far.

At the age of six months, I lost my biological father to gun violence. This set me on a lifelong path to make him proud. And today I've made him proud. *(Applause)*

Thank you. The pride that I've earned from this journey is one that we all share with our parents, our mentors, and our loved ones. A pride we display every morning when we wake up, showing the world what we stand for as ambassadors of hope. This message transcends any state, person, or ideology because what we must seek is unity. We must cast aside the shackles of anger and hatred and we must work together through collaboration and through clear minds.

An unequivocal part of us that can't be damaged. And for that we appreciate those who sacrifice for us to sit right here in this room today. This sacrifice is echoed through our veterans who we honor in our memorials as they watch over us. And with the passing of veteran-based legislation honoring our PACT Act of 2022, I assure you their fight was not in vain. But let us make no mistake our work isn't done. *(Applause)*

The fight for our veterans is never over because we have only just begun. We will fight today. We will fight tomorrow. And we will fight forever for our veterans in the United States. *(Applause)*

And as a future serviceman in the United States Army, I promise that if I make it to the White House, I'm sure this is a phrase we have all heard, the phrase no veteran left behind will ring from every corner of this country. *(Applause)*

And in my closing, before I go back and I take a picture with our other wonderful, lovely Youth Champions, I'd like to thank Boys Nations Senators Evan Schotzko, Yusef Kassem, Trex Jones, Matthew Lynard and Xavier Washington. Along with Anne Byars, Christine and Jeff as well as our wonderful National Commander Dillard and the entire Legion for your continued dedication to our veterans, our democracy and our country. May God bless The American Legion, and may God bless the United States of America. It was a pleasure being here. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, your 2022 American Legion Youth Champions! (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Bob, I want to thank you very much, and I have a couple of items here I'd like to give you. First of all, an American Legion diamond lapel

tack. And this American Legion medallion with the Four Pillars. *(Applause)*

Presentation of Spirit of Service Awards
LTG Walter Piatt, Director of Army Staff
CSM Robert M. Patterson, U.S. Army, (Ret.), 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 Dillard in presenting the awards are Lieutenant General Walter E. Piatt and Medal of Honor Recipient Robert M. Patterson. Please rise as the commander leads us in rendering appropriate honors to retired Command Sergeant Major Patterson.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Hand Salute. Two.

ANNOUNCER: Our first Spirit of Service award recipient is the Better Opportunity for Single Service Members representative for the 106th Medical Detachment Veterinary Service Support unit. She coordinated a run to raise awareness about sexual assault and gives time to community programs for children. She recently raised \$500 for two Korean child wellness centers. Representing the United States Army, please welcome Spirit of Service Award recipient, Specialist Deanna Dixon.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DEANNA DIXON: Good morning. Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord, as I would not be here without him. I would like to thank The American Legion for this amazing opportunity. I am honored and humbled to be able to receive this award. I thank my leaders, Sergeant McGee, Sergeant Dyson, Sergeant Cologne and Sergeant Bucana for showing me what it means to be a leader, for always putting up with my endless questions, and for motivating me to be the best that I can be.

As a future leader, I strive to be just as influential to my future soldiers as my leaders are to me. I've come to love the Army and all of its hurry-up-and-wait. Therefore, I strive to be a positive impact at all times. As a future leader, I promise to be present, encouraging and motivated. Lastly, thank you to my family. Both by blood and to the one I have chosen. They say home is where the heart is. Well, mine lies within God, my country, my family, and the Army. Hoah! *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next American Legion 2022 Spirit of Service Award recipient exemplifies the Navy's core value of commitment. A Junior Instructor of the Quarter, and Junior Sailor of the Quarter at the Information Warfare Training Command, Virginia Beach, she volunteered a total of 274.5 hours of community service over one year. Please welcome United States Navy Petty Officer Annie Holder. (Applause)

PETTY OFFICER ANNIE HOLDER: Good morning. First, I want to thank God because without him none of this is possible. Next, I want to thank The American Legion for providing us with this opportunity. I am humbly grateful for winning this award today. Not everyone goes out and volunteers with the intentions of receiving an award. We do it because we truly enjoy it. And just like I love serving the best country in the world, the United States of America, I love serving my community and giving back to them.

Next, I want to thank my command. They helped me with my package. And they led me to be able to be here today. And I also want to thank my family, my mom, Gwendolyn Holder, who because of her I have such a good heart, spirit and soul. My sister, Tianne Johnson; my brother, Jimmie Holder, and my nephew, Avian Holder, for being here today. And thank you for our veterans who paved the way for us to be able to serve our country today. Thank you all. Go Navy! *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: This year's American Legion Marine Corps Spirit of Service recipient volunteered time as her battalion's Combined Federal Campaign coordinator, in addition to collecting and coordinating donations for Toys for Tots and assisting with a Master Chef event for the homeless. She has also worked tirelessly to benefit wounded warriors, the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, Boys & Girls Club, Scouts and the Escondido Sunrise Rotary. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Sergeant Christina M. Gilman, United States Marine Corps. (Applause)

1st SERGEANT CHRISTINA GILMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Sergeant Gilman. I'm stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. I want to thank The American Legion, first off. I'm humbled and honored to be representing the Marine Corps as a Spirit of Service Award recipient this year. I stand here proud of my service and my volunteer work and to be amongst a group such as yourselves who gave so much. I would like to take the time right now, though, to reflect on my volunteer service this year. Yes, it was a lot. The thing that I'm most proud of for this year alone is what I was able to do back in September, and that was to stand for Honors Detail.

I would like to honor the following men and women who not only selflessly served but gave their all: U.S. Marines: Staff Sgt. Hoover; Sgt. Rosario; Sgt. Gee; Cpl. Lopez; Cpl. Paige; Cpl. Sanchez; LCpl. Espinoza; LCpl. Schmidt; LCpl. McCullum; LCpl. Morola; LCpl. McCou. Navy Corpsman Servat and Army Staff Sgt. Nass. Last year, in September, I had the distinct honor to volunteer with the funeral detail to lay our brothers and sisters to rest. The names I called gave the ultimate sacrifice on August 26th of 2021. They paid the ultimate price to defend our nation and to extend freedom beyond our shores. I cherish the legacy these warriors left behind.

I want to commit my award today to them and to vow to live every day with purpose and remembrance of those who gave some and some that gave all. I will never forget them. Never above you. Never below you. Always beside you. For God, country, and Corps. Semper Fidelis. And thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next recipient embodies the volunteer spirit. A member of the Coram, New York, Volunteer Fire Department, he spearheaded a Toys for Tots effort that resulted in the donation of \$1,500 worth of toys. He volunteered with Save the Sound and removed abandoned lobster pots from the Long Island Sound. He also volunteered with the Coram Civic Association and Long Island Cares. Representing the U.S. Coast Guard, please Marine Science Technician Third Class Mason C. Couch. (Applause)

MST3 MASON C. COUCH: Good Morning. It is a privilege and an honor to be accepting this award. I have a lot of people that I would like to thank, and as my hometown back in Georgia knows. *(Cheers)* There you are. They know the order goes Jesus, your mama, and then everybody else.

So, I would first like to thank God for paving the path of which I could try and make a positive impact in the community. I want to thank my mother for always being supportive of my ambitions and never telling me I couldn't accomplish anything that I set my heart on. I want to thank my grandfather, who flew here, who always taught me that you can always do more, help more and be more. My family has always been so supportive, and I thank all of them for everything they've done for me throughout the years. I want to thank the Coast Guard for providing me the tools and opportunities to influence the community, and I plan on continuing to use those tools throughout my career. I would like to thank my command for nominating me for this award. I honestly could not thank them enough because without them I would not be here right now. And I would also like to thank The American Legion for choosing me to be a representative of the Coast Guard in accepting this award and everything you do for servicemembers and their families. This is truly a humbling experience and one I will always look back on one of my fondest memories while serving. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Currently a Human Resources Sergeant with the 211th Military Police Battalion, Massachusetts National Guard, our next award winner served as a lead coach for the Girls on the Run program, inspiring female empowerment and decision-making skills in young girls. She also stocked and maintained a community refrigerator and purchased gifts for local families during the holiday season. Representing the National Guard, please welcome, Sergeant Katherine E. Chousa. (Applause)

SERGEANT KATHERINE CHOUSA: Good morning. I'd like to start off by thanking The American Legion for this award. Recognition for service, coming from an organization that built itself on serving different communities, is truly humbling. I would also like to thank my family who is here today. Your unwavering and endless support has allowed me to continue to serve my community and my country. Also here today are two leaders from my unit, the 211th Military Police Battalion First Corps cadets, Maj. Rob Brandt. Your leadership and support allows me to do the best that I can knowing you always have my back. So, thank you. Finally, Command Sergeant Major Michael Hickey. Your mentorship and encouragement has motivated my career allowing me to represent the Massachusetts Army National Guard Nation's First here today and to always take pride in myself, and for that I'm forever grateful. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our next award winner spent 44 hours preparing 2,000 meals, gathering clothing and building 30 bunk beds for the homeless and families in need. She organized the Laps for Charity event and raised \$19,000 for the Las Vegas Speedway Children's Charity. She also helped raise \$1,500 in support for Airmen equality. Please give a warm round of applause to Senior Airman Ariel Miranda, U.S. Air Force.

SENIOR AIRMAN ARIEL MIRANDA: Good morning, everyone. It's an honor to be here today and receive this award. I want to thank my family and friends for their support. My leadership at Nellis Air Force Base for nominating me. And a huge thank you to The American Legion for giving me this opportunity to be here. This recognition motivates me to keep excelling in my career and serving to my utmost ability. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Our very first U.S. Space Force Spirit of Service Award goes to a gentleman who could not be with us due to military requirements. We wish to acknowledge Specialist Antonio Oros for the hundreds of hours of off-duty time that he volunteered for Operation WARMHEART, local schools and foodbanks. We thank him for his service.

Ladies and gentlemen, again please show your appreciation to the 2022 American Legion Spirit of Service Award winners. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next speaker enlisted in the Army in 1979. Following his enlistment, he attended Lock Haven University and obtained a degree in biology before being commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1987. He also holds master's degrees in military history and military science and an honorary doctorate in public service from Lock Haven. He has served in numerous leadership positions worldwide including Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Korea and Germany. He led the 2018 transition of the Coalition Joint Force Land Component Command to the Iraqi Security Forces. He is currently the director of the Army Staff. Ladies and gentlemen, Lieutenant General Walter Piatt.

**Address: Lieutenant General Walter Piatt, Director
United States Army Staff**

Wow. Good morning, American Legion! Get this, they gave the general a medal, and I didn't even get shot at today. So, this is pretty good. I'm not giving it back, so you know.

Proud to be here this morning. I tell you; you work in the Pentagon, you sometimes forget just how great America really is. I want to, Commander Dillard, sir, thank you for connecting the fabric of our freedom, The American Legion. Thank you, sir. I'm honored to be here with all of you, honored to serve with the awardees that we just honored today.

But I am deeply humbled, deeply humbled to stand next to Command Sergeant Major Patterson. Talk about an American hero and a national treasure. As a young man, he volunteered to serve, became a paratrooper, and they sent him to Vietnam. From the moment he landed, people were trying to kill him. And when his unit was caught in a horrific fight, firefight was high, casualties were increasing, then Specialist Patterson did the unthinkable: Without regard to his own life, he assaulted. When everyone else was pinned down or some move away, he went forward into a very dangerous place and changed the outcome of that battle. Sir, I just want to say to you and to all our Vietnam vets here today, welcome home. And thank you for your service. *(Applause)*

I learned a long time ago, if you do what your sergeant tells you to do, you might just succeed, and you just might make it out alive. And today it was an honor to follow the command sergeant major on stage. I'm truly inspired by the servicemembers we saw today receive these great awards. They did not complain. They didn't file a complaint. They didn't have a grievance. They saw a need and they filled it, with themselves. And maybe they weren't under fire but there was a need nobody else would stand up and do something about, and they did it. They made a difference in their communities and they're inspiring the next generation to serve. America's Armed Forces is in good hands. I think we just saw that. *(Applause)*

It's easy to see that our military is strong. We're not strong because we've got big ships and submarines you can't see and airplanes you can't find or tanks that you can't destroy. We're strong because of our people! Our people. Machines don't win wars. People do. People do incredible things while in the most difficult situations. In Afghanistan, many years ago, I had the honor to serve with the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion 27th Infantry Wolfhounds. I know there's a few of you there. There wasn't a mountain high enough we wouldn't take. But the enemy fought us. On one mission, my vehicle was totally destroyed. Miraculously, none of us were even scratched. And the enemy was proud to announce on the radios, coming from Pakistan, that they destroyed the enemy commander in Paktika Province. We had another plan for them. We went up in the mountains where they were hiding, we took the fight to the enemy, and we were successful. *(Applause)*

Then we got another mission. Another target. And the intelligence was perfect. An encampment again at 11,000 feet in an area the enemy thought no way would American soldiers go. They didn't understand the Wolfhounds. We went up that mountain. We were cleared to destroy by air, but we waved it off. We wanted to capture the enemy and gain the intel, bring this fighting to an end. We got up that mountain, and even in May, it was snowing like crazy. Gave us just the cover we needed to surround the encampment and prepare for the assault. And as security was set, a radio call came in and said we had two men appearing to be guards coming out of the encampment.

And then another radio call came in, and I'll never forget the calmness of this voice of this young specialist. He said, "Sir, I don't see any weapons." And I was certain we had the enemy. We were just close to dropping bombs on them. Now I didn't know what to do. The sergeant leading this scout platoon said, "Sir, I think we can just tackle them." And on we went, tackling these two individuals. We had them down in the snow. We began to restrain their hands, when out from a tent came a rather large and angry woman, wanting to know what we were doing with her men.

We quickly learned this was not an Al-Qaeda or terrorist encampment, but a nomadic tribe that's crossed these mountains for hundreds of years. America brings lethality to wars, but we use it for surgical precision. But we also bring our values that taught that young man that not everything is the enemy. And in a second, by saying we had no weapons, he saved lives. And we learned more. And we were able to deny those mountains to the enemy from that point on. I've witnessed young men do this and young women do this in combat.

I also witnessed, on an Easter Sunday, the same regiment, when I was now a brigade commander on a mission, when we were brutally attacked. And the call came in, the one you hate to hear as a commander, "Man down." We had one wounded minorly, one soldier killed, and one expected. We went ahead with the evacuation, knowing for sure this soldier was not going to make it. And we committed, on that Easter Sunday, we were going to find the people responsible for that attack. I refused to go back to the base. Then I got a call from our division commander. This soldier was still alive. And we were going to get him to Germany for medical care. He lost both his legs and both his arms. And he lived. And our division commander told me that day, God has a purpose for Brendan Marrocco. And he certainly does. He received transplanted arms, and years later, I still stay in touch with Brandon, he continues to inspire veterans every day.

But ask him why he served, it was not for honor or glory or medals. None of that in a firefight. He did it for his fellow Wolfhounds, his friends, his buddies who knows what it's like to be happy laying in the dirt in a foreign land, as Rob told us. I was inspired to serve when I was eight years old growing up in a small western Pennsylvania town.

I was inspired by the statues at our courthouse that had the names of the servicemembers who served in past conflicts of our nation. I was inspired by veterans with funny-looking hats that marched in our hometown parades. I was inspired by my math teacher, although I wasn't very good at math. I was inspired by my football coach. I was inspired by my father. I enlisted at 17, and I've been a soldier my entire adult life. I've witnessed extreme acts of bravery and combat. Young men and women willing to sacrifice all for a friend. Willing to run through fire to save a soldier they don't even know. Run through bullets to get medical attention to a wounded soldier lying there screaming. Yet, when we come home, we often bring with us invisible wounds that are not seen. Just because you redeploy does not mean you come home. We all need to be the one. Be the one, be the fellow soldier, servicemembers that will help those who are suffering. And even the ones we can't see. And save the lives. But it takes more than one. It requires all of us, all of us to surround each other with care and to be there and to love. Not just their service. But what they stand for when they come home.

All of us can do this. We can bring our servicemembers home from conflict, because even though we have redeployed, again, they are not home. It is a tough and difficult process. They may look normal. They may act normal. But the war comes home with you, all of us. We need to be the one that brings our veteran's home. *(Applause)*

Through this community we can all be the one to look out for our fellow veterans as they deal with the invisible wounds of war that often cloud other areas of our lives. I know what it's like to run a Marine Corps marathon. I've done it five times. I will never snivel again after hearing Rob today. But you need to know, the Marine Corps marathon is not just any marathon; 26 miles, pretty much same as any marathon, but only a Marine would make the last .2 up the hill.

And I always have favorite words for Marines as they go up that hill trying to finish that thing. But thank you, Rob, for your inspiring service. Thank you for showing us what it takes to truly come home and inspire others to serve. You're all here as veterans yourself, uniquely positioned to recognize this strain. Furthermore, you're involved in your community, and you know the resources that are needed and where they are to provide to our veterans. You all represent the positives of military service and demonstrate daily in your communities the benefits of cohesiveness, loyalty, leadership, selfless service that can inspire our youth today to want to serve in the military.

And we are taking applications in the United States Army. Recruiting has been low this year, but we just initiated a future soldier preparatory course at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. For some soldiers who may be challenged academically or physically, we give you an opportunity to rise up and meet the tough standards our military demands. We are seeing great results. And we are taking all who want to serve something greater than themselves. Being here is a strong reminder why service is necessary and why we should never forget, never forget those who serve, and why we all need to be the one to help when

others are in need. I am honored to stand with these brave men and women. I am humbled again to stand next to Sergeant Major Patterson and proud to stand with all of you. Let us all commit today to be the one. God bless you and God bless the United States of America. *(Applause) ...At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Ladies and gentlemen, the proper salute for Robert M. Patterson. Two.

A member of American Legion Post 30 in Lincolnton, North Carolina, our next speaker earned the Medal of Honor for his amazing bravery and valor during a 1968 firefight near La Chu, Vietnam. A Specialist 4, at the time, he advanced under a hail of enemy fire as the leading squad from his platoon was pinned down. Despite the extreme danger, he singlehandedly used his rifle and grenades to destroy five enemy bunkers, kill eight enemy soldiers and capture seven weapons. Following his actions, he would be promoted to sergeant and eventually serve in the Gulf War and retire from the Army as a command sergeant major. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a true American hero, Robert M. Patterson. *(Applause)*

**Address: Command Sergeant Major (Ret.) Robert M. Patterson
Medal of Honor Recipient**

By the way, sir, my first assignment as a command sergeant major was sergeant major of the 27th Infantry, Wolfhounds. We had a mascot named Kolchak, Russian wolfhound. When I left he had a body count of 32. In the Army, we have a saying: If you give a sergeant major a microphone and a captive audience, he'll talk for three hours. *(Laughter)*

I am a sergeant major. I have a microphone. In fact, I've got two of them. And you ain't going nowhere. But for your sake, my wife told me keep it simple, stupid. *(Laughter)*

So, I am the Army's proverbial one. She ticked me off on Sunday night. I showed her Monday morning. I dropped out of high school the 12th grade and joined the Army. Really showed her. Got my first Article 15 in basic training. *(Laughter)*

From a full bird colonel. And one of them juniors. Got my second one at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The lieutenant told me I couldn't bring my car on post until I put mufflers on it. Ain't no lieutenant telling me I can't drive my car. Article 15. I got my third one in Vietnam. From a gentleman named Julius Becton. Julius grew up to become the first Black three-star general in the United States Army. And the whole time he was giving me that Article 15, he was laughing. I had figured out by then, keep your mouth shut. But I was wondering, what the heck does he find so funny? Ran into him years later at a parade in Austin. I asked him, Sir, can I ask you a question? He said, Sure. I said, when you gave me that Article 15, what did you find so funny? And he started laughing. And I said, That's what I mean; what was so funny? And he looked at me, and he said, sergeant major, I'm the only commander that can say he recommended a person for Medal of Honor in the morning and gave him an Article 15 in the afternoon. *(Laughter and applause)*

My first one was for being two hours late coming back from a weekend pass. When that colonel got through with me, I was never late again in my 26 years in the Army. My second one was for disobeying an order. My third one should have been a court-martial, sleeping on guard duty. *(Laughter)*

I have enjoyed my time in the military, especially with the soldiers. I do miss them quite a bit. When I retired from the military, I went to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs, giving away their money. I was good at that one, too. So, helping the soldiers. Actually, I still work every once in a while, to help someone.

I live in Pensacola, Florida, outside of Pensacola. *(Cheers and Applause).*

I live in Pace. Go find it. *(Laughter)*

It's like my hometown, where I was born, Carpenter. You know the old saying, if you blink you miss it? Think about blinking, you already missed it. That's the size of Pace. So I do still work with some veterans every once in a while. I've got a gentleman now from

Crestview, I'm working with him. I really don't understand what the VA is doing. But I'll figure it out. I'll get 'em.

God, I miss my soldiers, though. The best job you can have in the Army is as a first sergeant. The worst job you can have in the Army is a command sergeant major. Because you lose all contact with the soldiers. And that's the most important thing out there. I am thrilled to be here with you. And somebody was talking about leadership. And I'm a firm believer that there's no such thing as a natural-born leader. Leaders are developed.

By the way, what I was going to really talk about today, I'm going to talk about, even though I was told not to. I don't pay attention very well. Our country's in trouble. I could honestly look at Washington D.C., the way the politicians and all were talking, when we started moving into Afghanistan, and I knew right then they were going to do the same thing that they did to the Vietnam veterans. They were going to turn their backs on them. And sure enough, they did. We need to get 'em out, send them back and put them in a soup line somewhere. We need leaders that are going to be leaders. Not mouthpieces. *(Applause)*.

I was a cavalry scout, and my most valued asset that I had was my integrity. And if we can't find some people with integrity to put in Washington D.C. that's going to do what they say, regardless of what the results are, then we're going to lose our country. I don't want to. I don't want to pick up a gun again, but that's okay, I've got a few. And I'm willing to pick them up. I've got Baby. Everybody's got something to reach out and touch you. Baby, reach out and slap the living crap out of you. *(Laughter)*

And I'll pick her up. We need to seriously look at who is running for office. Computers are great. Even though I'm an idiot when it comes to a computer, they're great. You can find out anything you want to about a person on the computer. So, we need to get on the computer, find out what that person, who that person is. What do they represent? What do they stand for? And if they don't stand for the United States of America, don't put them up there. *(Applause)*

And I guess I'll shut up with that one. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Robert, don't leave yet. I know that you are already a member of The American Legion. But I have a diamond lapel pin that I would like to give you. I know that I speak for this entire delegation in saying we are proud to serve with you in The American Legion! *(Applause)*

Our next guest focuses on the needs of caregivers. Especially those who assist military veterans. Elected as the president of the nation's largest veteran's auxiliary, she is eligible for membership through the service of her father, Korean War era Army veteran William Kaelin, Junior. She has served at every level of her organization and is a member of Latonia Unit 203 in the Department of Kentucky. She has a bachelor's degree in Information Technology from Northern Kentucky University and retired from a successful 30-year career with a Fortune 500 company. Please welcome American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Daudistel. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Kathy Daudistel, Kentucky
National President, American Legion Auxiliary**

Hi, everybody. Good morning. ...*Chorus of "Good morning."*

Thank you. But that was kind of weak. I want the Auxiliary to hear you say good morning. ...*Chorus of "Good morning!"*

Much better. Thank you so much for allowing me to come over here and speak with you. My vice president thanks you, too, because she's over there handling constitution and bylaw amendments. *(Laughter)*

I just want to thank you again for everything that you all have done this year and in the past. Thank you for your service. You're incredible, amazing people, and your time and

commitment is so much appreciated. I also want to thank you for electing one of the finest commanders I've ever had the pleasure of serving with. It's been a true pleasure to work with him. As you know, every year the national president comes over and says our national commander is the best in the world. We just have to say it because it's true, right? I love all of you past national commanders, but I didn't get to serve with you. So, he is mine. Thank you again. I'm not going to stay here very long because really, I did leave my vice president in a sticky spot. So, I'm going to run back over. But before I go, I have a little gift for Paul. Commander Dillard. If you'll come up. Anyhow, I want to present it to you. You don't have to open it now because I know you're on a crushed time limit now. And this is for Donna. I wanted to make sure you got it. And you guys are all my proof. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: As a member of Squadron 521 in Rio Linda, California, our next guest has been a member of the Sons of The American Legion since the day he was born. That's not surprising since his father was commander of the Detachment of California. They later became the first father-son combination to hold that office. Our speaker is the grandson of a World War II veteran and enjoys visiting the Veterans Home in Yountville, California. Please welcome Sons of The American Legion National Commander Michael Fox. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Michael Fox, California
National Commander, Sons of The American Legion**

I wish you all could see what's going on over here, but there's a snake on the podium. *(Laughter)*

And that has to do with a little bit of the Legacy Ride, which, commander, I was honored and privileged to be with madam president and Commander Dillard. For the first time, all three of us were there, and it was truly an honor and a blessing. *(Applause)*

Commander Dillard, thank you for an excellent year. Thank you for all your support for the Sons of The American Legion. And most importantly, I thank each and all of you for allowing me the opportunity over this past year to lead and guide the Sons of The American Legion to new heights. To touch on some of those new heights, I want to you know what your Sons have done for you this year. Right now currently as of August 25, 37 of your detachments are over 100 percent in membership. With 20 of those detachments being over 105 percent in membership. *(Applause)*

Last year when I spoke, I got your permission to push forward on a special project called Flying Flags For Heroes. That special project was to honor our nation's heroes that are laid to rest, highlighting local cemeteries. The Sons of The American Legion wanted to place 1 million flags in honoring those veterans across this great country. As of yesterday, we are 164,830 flags short of reaching 2 million flags placed this year. *(Applause)*

It was truly an honor to travel myself and place flags in over 40 states across this country. As I told Commander Dillard in the beginning of the year, the Sons of The American Legion would step up for the Veterans & Children Foundation. As of yesterday, cash donations to VCF in the sum of \$531,970. With a total volunteer value, the Sons contributing \$1,414,536 to the Veterans & Children Foundation. *(Applause)*

Children and youth is always big for the Sons, and we always try to do everything we can to help support The American Legion. The total volunteer value for your Sons this year was \$4,394,938. For the children and youth programs that the Sons always across the board step up for, our total volunteer value, \$5,975,819. *(Applause)*

Traditionally your Sons have always been the biggest supporter for the Americanism programs. From top to bottom, the Sons have always stepped up, and this year was no different. Total cash contributed to the Americanism programs for The American Legion were \$2,798,475. Your Sons worked over 2,271,503 hours to support those programs with a total volunteer value to Americanism, \$68,161,515. *(Applause)*

And please when you get home, thank your Sons for what they did this year. Their contributions to The American Legion, their total volunteer value to all of the programs this year, \$98,923,207 (*Applause*)

Your Sons have been amazing. It's been an honor and a privilege to serve all of you this year. Commander, I thank you for everything. And I would like to ask you for one special thing. Being as how we were part of that leadership team, would you sign my helmet, sir? This is for you. This is for Donna, not for you, so don't open this one. But this is for you, commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Henry Repeating Arms is the leading lever action manufacturer and one of the top-five long gun manufacturers in the USA. Their goal is to manufacture a line of classic, well-crafted firearms that every enthusiast can afford. Their employees embody the company's motto, which is "Made in America or Not Made At All." Rest assured, when you read the roll-mark on the barrel of a Henry, it's going to say "Made in the USA." Please welcome Henry's president, Andy Wickstrom. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: Henry Repeating Arms
Andy Wickstrom, President**

Good morning, American Legion. It's an honor to stand before you today, what a pleasure. Thank you to all those who have served or who are serving. Thank you for your sacrifices you have made. We are forever in your debt.

Henry Repeating Arms believes in The American Legion's principles and mission of strengthening America. By upholding American values, fostering patriotism, giving back, honoring and enhancing the well-being of our veterans and those serving, we respect the extraordinary accomplishments of The American Legion. On behalf of the employees of Henry Repeating Arms, in celebration of our silver anniversary, and in memory of those who have sacrificed their lives for our freedoms, I am proud to present The American Legion with a donation in the amount of \$50,000 as part of our Guns for Great Causes program. God bless you and God bless America. (*Applause*)

One little extra thing. Commander? We also have a special presentation for the commander. This is our Henry Golden Boy Military Service Edition.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Next, I would like to call the chairman of the American Legion Riders Committee, Mark Clark, 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 Higuera to assumed the Chair.*

**Presentation: The American Legion Riders
Mark Clark, Chairman, American Legion Riders Advisory Committee**

Good morning, everyone. Give a little shout out to my Department of Missouri out there today. National Commander Dillard, distinguished officers, both past and present, our dedicated headquarters staff, guests, and fellow Legionnaires, I have the privilege and honor of serving as the national chairman of the American Legion National Advisory Committee, and on behalf of our entire committee, I bring you greetings. Also, I have the distinct honor of serving as the chief road captain for the national Legacy Run, which is the largest cross country motorcycle event of its kind. The national Legacy Run is the single largest annual media event for the American Legion Family, and we like to believe that we represent the best of us to the public. The national Legacy Run also serves as the catalyst for department fund-raising efforts and in-state Legacy Runs throughout the year.

This year we also incorporated the Be the One campaign into all of our messaging and all of our activities because we believe, if the American Legion Riders get behind a program, it will gain ground because we're a rolling billboard for The American Legion

and we take a great deal of pride in what we do. *(Applause)*

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the American Legion Riders, and few back then could have imagined what we would become. Today there are approximately 135,000 American Legion Riders and more than 2,300 chapters around the world, and we take a great deal of pride in what we do. This year we lost one of our founding fathers in Bill "Polka" Kaledas, but I know he was proud of us. He was proud of what his idea had become.

This year's national Legacy Run traversed seven states, covered 1,164 miles starting at the park in Mobile, Alabama, ending at Post 434 in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. We left Alabama with 281 motorcycles and 321 riders on board that lined up behind me. We were 3 1/2 miles long when we were formed up. Our daily average was 240 motorcycles with 275 riders and passengers. I get asked that question all the time, so I thought I would answer that now.

For the first time in Legacy Run history, we had all three of our national leaders with us on the Legacy Run. We were privileged to have National Commander Paul Dillard, National Auxiliary President Kathy Daudistel, and Sons of The American Legion commander Michael Fox were with us on the run, with President Daudistel and Commander Fox riding the entire route. For those of you that don't know how dedicated Kathy is, she rode a soft tail with no windshield, that whole route right behind me, and she was rock steady. We rode in rain, some kind of terrible. We've given her the ride name of "Legend" because she has become a legend in our community.

On this year's run we stopped at eight American Legion posts and one department headquarters, where we also enjoyed breakfasts and lunches, sponsored by those department programs of Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin. We're also honored to have five riders from the Royal British Legion Riders from Great Britain join us on this year's Run, and we were greeted by Medal of Honor recipient and fellow Legion Rider Gary Wetzel at Post 434 upon our arrival. We entered this year's Legacy Run with collections so far totaling \$606,839.69. *(Applause)*

And that includes a check for \$100,000 from Indiana Post 64, which is a record for an individual post to donate. *(Applause)*

We'll now show a short video with highlights from this year's Legacy Run and then accept donations from the departments who wish to present their donation to National Commander Paul Dillard. ...*At this time the delegation viewed a video. (Applause)*

Donations to the Legacy Fund

DELEGATE PRESTON (FR): Lee Preston, assistant director Department of France Legion Riders. From the Department of France Legion Riders, \$1,210.

DELEGATE SWEET (MS): Steve Sweet, Department of Mississippi, an additional \$4,330.

DELEGATE ATKINS (FR): Larry Atkins, vice commander of China Post 1. On behalf of China Post 1 members of the Dragon Riders, we are proud to present \$3,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (HI): Aloha, on behalf of the 16 American Legion Riders from Chapter 17, John R. Rowe Post 17 from the Department of Hawaii, I'm proud to present a check to Legacy Scholarship for \$1,200.

DELEGATE MURPHY (PA): Michael Murphy, past department commander of Pennsylvania. On stage with me is current commander, Greg Wilhelm, National Executive Committee Member Michael Stelacio, Alternate National Executive Committee Member Paul Kennedy and Department Adjutant Woody Hogan. It's my honor as past department commander of Pennsylvania to present another \$1,150 to the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

DELEGATE MONEY (MI): Good morning from the great state of Michigan. My name is Larry Money. We are the home of Past National Commander Tom Cadmus and Past National Adjutant Bob Spanogle. We are also the home of the ALR Post 396 of Garden City, Michigan. We recently mourned the loss of one of our members, Bill "Polka"

Kaledas, On behalf of Department Commander Richard Dubay, Past National Vice Commander Jim Wallace, ALR Liaison of Michigan Jim "Big Daddy" Wallace.

DELEGATE WALLACE (MI): From the 2022 Michigan Legacy Ride, we were able to receive donations of \$24,776. In addition to that, my home post Pinckney Memorial 419 family, the SAL donated \$500, the auxiliary unit \$1,000, the Post \$4,000, the Riders Chapter 419, \$5,000, for an additional \$10,500. With a grand total for the 2022 Legacy Ride from Michigan, \$35,276. *(Applause)*

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (WV): On behalf of the American Legion Riders in the department of West Virginia, on our second annual Legacy Run with our partners from neighboring states, we're proud to present a check for \$23,178.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PRICE (SC): I'm Ron Price, chairman of the delegation from South Carolina. With me is our commander, Jim Jarvis, and John Siemers our Riders director. We are proud to present a check for \$97,549.20.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (DE): From the Department of Delaware, we are contributing \$13,704 to the Legacy Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): From the great state of Florida, Chapter 110, \$2,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NC): From the Tar Heel State, North Carolina, on behalf of Department Commander Mike Donnelly and Riders Director Rick Land our Riders, part of the fastest growing program in The American Legion, proudly present \$8,445 to the Legacy Scholarship here in Milwaukee, the home of Harley Davidson.

DELEGATE WILSON (OH): Commander, Jean Wilson, immediate past department commander for the Department of Ohio with me is our first vice, Jason Rue, and Alternate National Executive Committee Member Steve Masowick. The Department of Ohio is proud to say we raised \$74,855 with an additional donation from Ohio Charities Inc. of \$10,000, giving us a total of \$84,855.

DELEGATE SUCEE (WA): Good morning, Rick Soucee of the Department of Washington with me is our Alternate National Executive Committee Member Bob Clark. The Department of Washington gives \$3,236.

DELEGATE PENN (CO): Cornell "Thumper" Penn, On behalf of team Colorado and the Riders from America's mountain, we'd like to present Commander Dillard and the Legacy Fund with a donation of \$28,000.

DELEGATE FISHER (IL): Good morning, my name is Wayne Fisher representing the Department of Illinois. It was truly our honor to have the Legacy Riders stop in Bloomington headquarters so we could feed them lunch. This year, we're right at \$44,000 in donations to the Legacy Fund. I just turned in a check from our Riders chapter, Naperville Post 43. We turned in a check at Bloomington for \$3,000, and our post always matches that amount by 10 percent. So, we had another \$300. Again, thank you all. For the Riders, keep up the good work.

DELEGATE GOMEZ (NM): Hello comrades, my name is Alfredo Gomez I am the post vice commander for Secundino Baldonado American Legion in Belen, New Mexico. I am also the squadron's vice commander and the Legion Riders director. I was proud to escort four checks from our post of \$500 each, from my post, my auxiliary unit, my squadron, and my Legion Riders. I also brought an additional \$1,000 from my Moose Lodge 1680 in Belen, New Mexico, and the Moose Riders. Thank you again.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NM): Good morning. I'm the past department director for New Mexico's Legion Riders. Today we turned in an additional \$2,000 to go with our \$10,000 previously donated. All combined from New Mexico, \$15,000. I'd like to provide thanks to Posts 13, 69, 49, Post 4, chapters 2, Post 70, Unit 70. Chapters 11, 95, Post 95. Several different donations combined, it's a team effort. Thank you, everybody.

DELEGATE CULVER (TN): Lanny Culver, Department of Tennessee. We held our first ever Legacy Scholarship Run with a lot of work and dedication from our Rider director Richard "Top" Wright. We're proud to present \$20,000 to the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NH): From the Department of New Hampshire, the

Live Free or Die State, the 26 members of the charter chapter of Woodsville, New Hampshire, proudly presents a check for \$1,500 to the Legacy Fund. Chapter 70 from Seabrook presents a check for \$500. Chapter 23 from Milford, New Hampshire, presents a check for \$700, for a total of \$2,700. Thank you. Ride on.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KS): From the Department of Kansas, American Legion Family, \$24,109.04.

DELEGATE BARKER (IA): Cliff Barker, Department of Iowa American Legion Riders chair. With me is Commander Randy Johnson, Past Commander Bob Waugh, the best tail gunner ever Sons PNC Mike Deacon, and Gold Star father Jim Carney. \$4,727.20.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MO): On behalf of the American Legion Riders and the entire American Legion Family for the Department of Missouri, we make a donation of \$94,514.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CA): From the Golden State of California, on behalf of our Riders director, Mike Smith and our over 2,000 Legion Riders we present a check to the commander for \$59,030.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HILLYARD (VA): Frank Hillyard, with me Department Adjutant Dave Stein. On behalf of the American Legion Riders from the Department of Virginia, we present a check for \$83,000.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AR): The great Department of Arkansas would like to tender \$6,685 to the Legacy Run.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (PR): From the Riders of Puerto Rico, \$200.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NJ): For the Department of New Jersey, where we're still getting it done for our veterans, \$3,500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): From the great state of Arizona and our 66 ALR chapters and the American Legion Family, an additional \$8,944.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AL): On behalf of Buddy Keen and ALR Director Bill Kilde, from the great Department of Alabama, I present from post 76, \$300; auxiliary 76, \$200; ALR of 76, another \$500; \$3,700 from Post 133; \$700 from Post 99; \$1,000 from ALR 99; \$4,000 from the 33rd district; \$300 from ALR 88, and the Department of Alabama an additional \$1,000. In addition, we were very proud and honored to host the launch of this year's American Legion Legacy Run from the "Mighty A" the USS Alabama. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MD): From the Department of Maryland, Legion Family, thank you guys. During our Legacy Run, the Department of Maryland donated \$141,300.

DELEGATE MUHLE (WI): Wisconsin Commander Julie Muhle, with me today is Department Vice Commander Karl Stuvengen. As host of this National Convention, we're proud the Riders ended at Oak Creek, and we'd like to add an additional \$1,000 to the total.

DELEGATE GOODMAN (GA): On behalf of Team Georgia, I'm Randy Goodman, Alternate National Executive Committee Member and with me is Department Commander Mark Shreve and we are proud to donate to the Legacy Scholarship Fund \$2,500.

DELEGATE FERNLUND (MN): From the Department of Minnesota, home of Past National Commander Dan Ludwig I'm Tom Fernlund, immediate past department commander, and my wife Veronica is here. Also with us is our new commander, Jennifer Havlick, our NEC Bill Barbknecht, Alternate NEC Peggy Moon, Riders Director Ted Berg, SAL Detachment Commander Tim Weaver, and honorary junior president for the Auxiliary Ashley Stai. I'd like to introduce Dr. Jody Hassing, she's our ALR Legacy Scholarship Run chairman for the introduction of our total.

DELEGATE HASSING (MN): From the American Legion Family in the state of Minnesota, we donate \$155,000. *(Applause)*

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MD): The national commander was walking through the convention center outside, and somebody had dropped a \$20 bill. So, he said what better way to put this towards a donation for the Legacy Run. So, I present this \$20 bill to the Legacy Run.

CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, everybody. To all the Riders out there, I appreciate your dedication, commitment, and leadership. We're making a difference in our world, and I'm proud to be one of the guys that gets to put on the vest and ride with you. God bless. Be safe on your way home, and maybe we'll cross each other out on the road.

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you. Whew, a record-setting day. Collected this morning, \$717,688.67. For a total, counting what the Riders turned in, \$606,839.69, because that .69 cents is all I had. The total collected, the total contributions, \$1,324,528.36. Add the \$20, it was \$1,324,548.36. Give them a hand. Thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

Since its founding in 1968 by the late Henry W. Bosworth, Jr., The Quincy Sun has been the essential source for local news in the historic Massachusetts town known as the "City of Presidents." The patriotic editorial content of the weekly newspaper follows the proud legacies of native sons John Adams, John Quincy Adams and John Hancock. Its coverage of veterans, the military and The American Legion has been top-notch and has continued over the years under the leadership of editor Robert Bosworth. The American Legion has long recognized the importance of a free press to our constitutional republic, much like our nation's founders who lived in Quincy. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to present The American Legion 2022 Patriot Award to The Quincy Sun and its editor Robert Bosworth. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Since its founding by the late Henry W. Bosworth Jr., in 1968, The Quincy Sun has been an essential source for local news in the historic Massachusetts town known as the "City of Presidents." The patriotic editorial content of the weekly newspaper follows the proud legacies of native sons John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and John Hancock. Its coverage of veterans, the military, and The American Legion has been top-notch and has continued under the leadership of editor Robert Bosworth. The American Legion has long recognized the importance of a free press to our constitutional republic, The Quincy Sun epitomizes the values of local news in a democratic society. On behalf of The American Legion, thank you for your strong efforts in educating and informing the public, presented this 30th day of August 2022, at the 103rd National Convention.

**Presentation: The American Legion Patriot Award
Robert Bosworth, Editor, The Quincy Sun**

Thank you, Commander Dillard. Thank you to The American Legion for honoring The Quincy Sun with the 2022 Patriot Award. Before I begin my remarks, I'd like to acknowledge some folks for making this recognition possible. First, I'd like to thank my wife, Amy, who's on our stage. Without your love and support I would not be standing here today. Thank you to the staff of The Quincy Sun back in Quincy, Massachusetts. I could not publish the Sun without them. Thank you most sincerely to John "Jake" Comer for nominating The Quincy Sun for the Patriot Award. I don't need to tell everyone that Jake is the heart and soul of all things Legion, and especially veterans affairs in Quincy. Jake and my dad were longtime friends, and Jake has been a big supporter of Sun for many, many years.

The Quincy Sun was founded in September 1968 by my father, Henry Bosworth. A proud World War II Navy veteran, Henry was a signalman on the destroyer USS Cogswell in the South Pacific. Cogswell earned 10 battle stars, was never hit by enemy fire, and was given the honor as the first American warship in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender in 1945. Twenty-three years later, after marrying my mother and starting a family, Henry realized his lifelong dream of starting a weekly newspaper in the city he was raised and educated.

It was a big gamble leaving a stable and good paying job as a respected reporter and

talented columnist for a daily newspaper in Boston. One story that Henry had written about for the Boston Herald Traveler was about an orphaned little boy with muscular dystrophy, living in a sanitarium in Lakeville, Massachusetts. All the boy, named Frances, wanted for his ninth birthday in October 1957, was four or six birthday cards. Well, after Henry's story was printed, Frances got a lot more than four or six cards. He got hundreds of well wishes, gifts, money, birthday cards, all for Frances. The story was picked up by wire services and eventually made its way to Hollywood where Jerry Lewis and some other celebrities put on a closed-circuit television show just for Frances. The show became the forerunner of the Muscular Dystrophy Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon.

Henry didn't have to start a newspaper, but Quincy, he thought, deserved its own weekly newspaper. My father's gamble, with a lot of sweat and support, paid off. For the next 40 years, The Quincy Sun was Henry's labor of love. He was a tireless worker, dedicated publisher and devoted community leader. He was also a proud member of the American Legion post in Quincy, and today I am a member of Squadron 294. Henry treated all with fairness and respect. In February 2009, Henry passed away unexpectedly at the age of 84. I became the publisher and editor, and with the help of two of my sisters who were on the staff, we have continued our father's legacy.

One of the cornerstones of the Sun's coverage has been veterans and The American Legion. Quincy is a very active city when it comes to local veterans. There are parades, memorial observances, ceremonies, and other veteran-related news stories that the Sun has covered since the beginning. So, I want to acknowledge Quincy's veterans, the city of Quincy, and all the veterans groups, including The American Legion, for all they do. Veterans are an important cornerstone of the community and deserve recognition for everything they have done to defend our nation's freedom and to help build and sustain the fabric of cities and towns everywhere.

I began my newspaper career in 1984 while a student at the University of New Hampshire and joined the staff full-time after earning my degree in 1987. As I think back to my career that has spanned almost 40 years, I know there is a correlation between my fondest memories and the newspaper business and The Quincy Sun's coverage of veterans. I think about taking photos at the 100th birthday party for Dean Sheaffer, a local World War II Marine Corps veteran. One photo shows Mr. Schaffer standing in salute as neighbors, local firefighters, and police, Boy Scouts and others marched by his house on Veterans Day 2020, as a bagpiper played the Marines Hymn. Another photo shows Mr. Sheaffer and his wife of 73 years, Evelyn, beaming from ear to ear when he was presented a patriotic birthday cake. It was one of those small-town celebrations that Norman Rockwell could have painted for the cover of the Saturday Evening Post.

Five months after that birthday celebration, Mr. Schaeffer passed away. A short time later I received a letter in the mail from Evelyn thanking The Quincy Sun for being there for Dean's birthday. She wrote, in part, "Thank you again for your wonderful coverage of Dean's 100th birthday last November 11. It was truly a celebration of life. As you know, he went home to the Lord on April 18, but we will always remember that special day when the city showed their appreciation for his war service."

I also think about the trip my wife Amy and I took in 2015 to watch a dear friend, another World War II veteran, place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Bob Noble, an ex-prisoner of war, placed the wreath on April 9, National Former POW Recognition Day, as a hushed crowd looked on, including many family and friends.

At the time of the ceremony, Bob Noble was 89 years old. He had been invited to lay the wreath for his many years of service to veterans causes and being an advocate as an ex-POW. Bob was held captive for 122 days. He nearly died from his ordeal in captivity but always considered himself one of the lucky ones. April 9, 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of his release as a POW.

The solemn ceremony for those of us who witnessed it is something we will never forget. In front of the Tomb was a 30-inch deluxe wreath, adorned with red carnations,

daisies and one single rose. Bob selected a yellow rose in memory of his beloved wife and companion, Gloria Noble, who had passed away 18 months earlier. The late morning and early afternoon at Arlington had been breezeless on a gray but brightening overcast day.

After placing the wreath at the tomb, a bugler sounded Taps. Then a sudden but gentle gust of wind kissed the wreath. A red, white and blue ribbon fluttered momentarily. As the wind stopped, a red carnation near the yellow rose dropped to the cement below. The beloved matriarch of the Noble family had made her presence known. "Gloria's here," Bob said later, recalling the red carnation moment. Everybody in the family said the same thing. There isn't a day that we're not all together still. Bob also said that the wreath honor was not his alone. "I was a symbol for all World War II veterans and ex-POWs. I had all friends in mind and all POWs from all the wars on my mind when I placed the wreath and bowed to meditate before the playing of Taps." Mr. Noble passed away August 7, 2018. He was 93 years old.

The Quincy Sun has been able to share the stories of Bob Noble, Dean Schaeffer and so many other veterans for more than 54 years because of one man's vision, Henry Bosworth. The paper he established was a labor of love. I like to think that Quincy is a better place today because of The Quincy Sun, because of our veterans and because of Henry. He would have greatly appreciated this honor but would have underscored the fact that none of this is possible without the support the paper has received for more than a half century.

Henry liked to say, "The Quincy Sun shines in Quincy," but nobody shined brighter than Henry Bosworth. Thank you again to The American Legion for this tremendous recognition. And thank you to our veterans for everything you have done and continue to do for our country and our communities. Thank you again, most sincerely. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Hold on just a minute, please. We've got a special presentation to be given to you from Past National Commander Jake Comer from the state of Massachusetts.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Henry was at the national commander's reception last evening with us, and he was wearing a red jersey, like many of us wear, and I said, the red is pretty popular. He says, well, it is, but I'd wear a Sons shirt if I had one. So, I got up from the table, without him even watching me, I went over to Dan Wheeler, and the way in which he does it anyway, "Siri, Siri, get me Emblem Sales," and he ordered a shirt and a cap and had it delivered here today. Henry, you now have your Sons cap and Sons shirt. On behalf of Jim Fratolillo, our department sergeant-at-arms with me on the stage, and to all the members from Massachusetts, we proudly salute you. Thank you. *(Applause)* ...*At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our Distinguished recipient this year is a gentleman who has performed outstanding service for our nation and our American Legion. Before retiring from Congress, he was instrumental in the passage of legislation such as the Harry W. Colmery "Forever GI Bill," the MISSION Act and the Blue Water Navy Act.

Born in Clarksville, Tennessee, he graduated from Austin Peay State University and the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. After graduating from medical school, he served in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged as a major in 1974. He went into OB/GYN practice in Johnson City, Tennessee, and delivered 5,000 babies during his 31-year tenure. He is a Paid-Up-For-Life member of Kings Mountain Post 24 in Johnson City. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal to the Honorable David Phillip Roe, M.D. *(Applause)*

By the way, at his retirement, there was a gentleman there working in Congress that he had delivered. One of the 5,000.

**Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal
Honorable David P. 'Phil' Roe, MD**

Thank you very much. I will say that the three most dreaded words that any congressman can say is I'll be brief. Commander, thank you and thank your amazing staff. My fellow Legionnaires and distinguished guests, and on behalf of myself and my wife and family and the dedicated congressional staff and VA staff I had, I tell you, I am overwhelmed. I can't thank you enough. It's a "we," there's no "I" in team, and we did this as a team, and I humbly accept this award, and I'm gratefully and truly overwhelmed. I've told this to Commander Dillard before, but I have to remind him every time I see him. He's a proud Texan. I have met several of my Tennessee colleagues here, and we know from Tennessee that there would not be a Texas had it not been for Tennessee. So, I want to pass that along once again, commander. *(Laughter)*

I want to shout out a couple of folks who are here also, good friends. Bob Hensley and Todd McKinley from Tennessee, they're here representing, and they live in my neck of the woods. Also, I want to thank the Auxiliary. I think you all do an amazing job for veterans around the country, and you're not thanked enough, along with other spouses.

As you can clearly see, I'm not the president of the United States, nor regretfully, I'm not the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, previous recipients of this distinguished award. I am a country doctor from East Tennessee who practiced medicine for 31 years and felt the need to give back to this amazing country called America. It had provided so much for me and my family and the many great families and the millions of people that live around the country.

When I decided to run for Congress, I told the voters three things. I said, there are three things I will never, ever apologize for supporting. Number one, if you're a soldier in the field, I want you to have whatever you need to protect yourself and your comrades. So, I'm always going to support the military. Number two, when you come home, I am going to support veterans because it's your blood, sweat and sacrifice that have allowed me to live and those in this country to live safely. I'm going to support the veterans. Number three, I'm going to support agriculture because I like to eat. So those are the three things I've supported. *(Applause)*

When I was elected, I thought the Veterans' Affairs Committee is a perfect committee for me. I grew up near Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Clarksville, Tennessee, home of the 101st Airborne Division, and served in the 2nd Infantry Division. I did some of my medical training at a VA hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. I treated soldiers. I saw VA patients in Johnson City, where I live, and I thought it's perfect. So, I went to leader Boehner and asked him to put me on the committee, and he did. I remember one of the first committee hearings I went to in 2009, this astonished me, there were 100,000, 100,000 homeless veterans in America in 2009. That's unbelievable for a wealthy country like us. There were over 1 million disability claims that had not been adjudicated. I could not believe this. So, I said, we're going to set about doing something about that. We also in 2014, as you remember very clearly, that there was the Phoenix scandal, where the fake list to get in and veterans died waiting to be seen. Then Chairman Miller started some really late-night hearings and so forth to help clear that up, and I was glad to participate in that.

And in 2017, when I became the chairman, I told my staff, I said, we have no control of what anybody else does. All we have is control over what we do. So, let's get to work, and get to work we did. In the two years I was there with an amazing staff that I was able to work with, I worked with some great people, and those people were ranking member Tim Wallace, who's now the governor of Minnesota; Senator Isakson, who unfortunately has passed, a great man; Senator Jerry Moran; Senator Tester; and my good friend Mark Takano from California. During that two years' time, it's hard to pass one bill. We passed over 50 veterans bills, 25 of which got signed into law by the president. *(Applause)*

One of those, I think President Trump signed into law in front of this group, I believe. That's "The Accountability and Whistleblower and Protection Act," to protect veterans.

The Harry Colmery Forever GI Bill, a bill that I used in 1975 when I got out of the Army, paid me \$300 a month, and I'm grateful to this day for that. But it sunsetted at ten years, now a veteran can use that the rest of their life, and it's fully paid for, as a fiscally conservative congressman would do. The Appeals Modernization Act to help reduce that huge number of disability claims that are out there.

The MISSION Act. I can remember when I went to Oregon to meet a friend out there and go through and meet veterans in his district, Greg Walden. He said, "Phil, my congressional district has more square miles than the state of Tennessee," and he was right. It has 20,000 more square miles, and there were veterans that would drive five hours one way and then have an appointment broken and five hours back, and I thought that's not right for rural America. So, we had to write a bill that was good for rural America and urban America, which we did.

And the second part of that bill, let me tell you who I wanted to put in charge of medical choices, are the patient, the veteran. Not the bureaucracy, not the hospital, but the patient. That's who I wanted in charge of those decisions. You need to be veteran centric. The second part of that bill, which was hugely important to me, and one of your previous recipients of this award was Senator Dole, Bob Dole and Elizabeth Dole, both have received this award. It was the caregiver part, where catastrophically injured veterans could receive care at home, but that only was post-9/11. That now applies to all veterans, proud to say. There were numerous suicide prevention bills, and as you know, and I know, commander, this has been one of your primary goals of the Legion this year is suicide prevention and mental health. The Blue Water Navy, ten years' worth of work on that one. I read, only a nerd would do this, but I read both studies, an Australian study and a Russian study, and I could not decide scientifically whether it was harmful or whatever to the veterans. I said always, when there's that question, decide on the side of the veteran who served this nation, and we did, and we got that passed. *(Applause)*

Now, I was able to travel across America, and one of the trips I made was from Long Island to Los Angeles and many points in between, and one of the trips I made was to Los Angeles. We were going down the 405, and Christine Hill was my staffer. I said, "Christine, what did you do when you were in the service?" She said, "Sir, I was a B-1 Bomber pilot." I said, "Christine, let me explain something to you. We're not in a B-1 Bomber. We're in a rented Chevy Malibu going down the 405. Could you slow up just a little bit, so we get there alive?" And we did, and Christine still serves veterans in Washington, D.C., as a proud veteran.

Matthew 5, chapter 9, has a verse that is very near and dear to my heart. It's "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." I believe that you are and know in my heart that I stand in front of the world's peacemakers. And how can I say that? Let me explain that, in World War II, hundreds of thousands of our young men and women died in that war.

In 2018, the population of Europe was 750 million free people, free people. Why? Because of what you did, the American soldier did. That's why there are 750 million free people. In Japan, 125 million free people. In Korea, where I served at Camp Casey, and many of you have probably been there at Camp Casey, Korea. In 1960, one of the poorest nations on this earth, with a military dictator. When I was there in 1973, there was a military dictator there. Today there's a freely elected prime minister. There are 50 million free people. There are 20,000 churches so you can worship as you please because peacemakers like you made that happen. God bless you and thank you for that. *(Applause)*

We have problems in America. We heard some today. We do have problems in America. We have no problems that Americans can't solve. I led a congressional delegation. My wife Clarinda, who's been an incredible support to be, was able to go with me, and we visited Flanders Field. We visited the battle of Belleau Wood That's where the Marine Corps were named the Devil Dogs. I drank from the Devil Dog Springs at Belleau Wood. Chateau Thierry, I've stood on the cliffs, my wife and I together, looking at Pointe du Hoc, at those cliffs those young rangers climbed. The thousands of crosses, white

crosses that we saw. If that doesn't change you about how you feel about America, nothing will. It forever changed us. The tears I've seen in the eyes of Lithuanian parliament members who were free from the wraths of Russia because of the liberty they currently had. I wish and hope we continue that passion for liberty in this country.

A lot of people say, and we hear it, are America's best days behind us? Emphatically, I will you no. Why is that not true? Because I've traveled this country, I saw on this stage today what people did for their fellow men, hundreds of thousands of dollars of Legion money raised, and I've seen the goodness expressed in a thousand different ways by the people of America.

In conclusion today, I can't express to you how much I appreciate and what this means to me and the people I've worked with on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It was fun doing it. But if you don't remember anything, remember what I've said today, remember these last four things. Put God first in your life. Put your family a very close second. Put your job third. And leave this great country called America a little bit better than you found it, and I know you have. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I salute you. And God bless you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Dr. Roe, I heard you say if it wasn't for Tennessee there wouldn't be a Texas. Well maybe that's why I had to go to Tennessee for a few years after I got out of the service and work up there in Jamestown, Sparta, Sevierville and Celina, Tennessee in the manufacturing business. It's great place.

DR. ROE: This is a great commander. He was kind enough to come, we call it in D.C. a hanging. It's where they put your portrait up. And he was kind enough to come to that. I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you do, and commander, I remember when you testified, and others have, to go out, when we had the joint hearings, look at that huge crowd of people that come from all over America to sit there and advocate not for themselves but for their fellow veterans. And I can't thank you enough.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: We're glad you were there and done what you've done for us. Thank you very much, Dr. Roe. (*Applause*)

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: As horrendous as World War One was, it gave birth to the greatest veterans organization that the world has ever known. Our next guest is dedicated to reminding us about the significance of what at the time was thought to be "the war to end all wars." A 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army, he holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Rhode Island and a master's in European studies from Cornell University. He is a member of American Legion Post 18 in Essex, Connecticut and our national Finance Commission. Please welcome John D. Monahan of the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission. (*Applause*)

**Address: John D. Monahan, Commissioner
U.S. World War I Centennial Commission**

So good morning, distinguished guests and Legionnaires. A little more than a century ago, 4.7 million Americans answered the call of our nation to serve in World War I. To go to a land most had never visited. To join a fight that they didn't start, and to win a peace and freedom for a people whom they did not know.

It was the war that changed the world. And, of course, it dramatically changed those who fought in that war. They had been imbued with a fervor for service toward achieving a public good. The doughboy spirit, you may refer to it as. They sought to harness and channel this energy, enthusiasm and public spirit, in ways that would strengthen the nation both physically and morally. To achieve this end, they created The American Legion. Leaving a lasting legacy of service to community, state and nation for their generation, and a legacy which has now endured and been entrusted to us for our safekeeping.

Until recently, no memorial to the doughboys, Blue Jackets, Devil Dogs existed in our nation's capitol. However, due to the generosity of The American Legion and other like-minded patriotic and civic organizations, as well as that of Americans throughout the country from each corner of this country and across the land, from all walks of life as well, a World War I memorial is now open to the public. Now, we have a place to remember them. *...At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

And indeed, there is more to come. Since this past June, we have been streaming Taps every evening live from the memorial. *(Applause)*

Yes, it's an amazing thing. And indeed, as an aside, each night we dedicate that Taps to an individual, many of whom are Legionnaires. So, it's an amazing thing and will I think become a special event every day in Washington. As part of that, the commission, as I say, is honoring individuals including posts named after World War I veterans. The commission has also developed and deployed cell phone apps for those who visit the memorial site, which can also be used by students have not yet had the opportunity to visit the actual memorial. *...At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

We have partnered, we being the commission, has partnered with Verizon to distribute these materials to 30 million school children over the next few years at no cost to the students. We're putting programs on at the memorial on a regular basis. Last year, Admiral Mike Mullen joined us for the Bells of Peace ceremony at 11:00 a.m. on Veterans Day.

This year, General Barry McCaffrey will officiate. The commission, The Doughboy Foundation, as well as The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary commemorated National Poppy Day last May at the memorial. The U.S. Army band, Pershing's Own, has staged concerts every Thursday evening this summer. And to commemorate Juneteenth this year, the commission sponsored a performance of the 369th Experience recreation of the Harlem Hell Fighters Regimental Band made up of African American and Hispanic students from many historically Black colleges and universities around the country.

More than a million of our countrymen have visited the memorial so far. Though it is not yet complete, the memorial centerpiece and focal point of remembrance, the sculpture A Soldier's Journey, is in the final stages of being sculpted, cast in bronze, and assembled by sculptor Sabin Howard. It is scheduled for delivery and installation in 2024. At nearly 60 feet in length, it will become, once installed, the largest free-standing bronze relief sculpture in the western hemisphere.

The sculpture depicts story of a soldier's journey. His departure from home and family. His transformation from citizen to soldier. The physical and mental travails he endures as he confronts the horror of trench warfare, to the final triumph and return home, symbolically at the end of the sculpture handing his helmet, and thus the burden of the defense of democracy and freedom to his daughter who represents the next generation. It will, I am confident, resonate with anyone who has served and will give ample impulse for solemn reflection to all who visit. The sculpture will be a magnificent example of public art, a fitting tribute to the warriors of the Great War and will surely become a mandatory stop for any visitor to Washington.

In closing, I thank you and the Legion for your support of this effort and for the honor, in particular, as a personal note, of serving as your representative on the commission. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next speaker skipped his senior year of high school and gained early acceptance to the University of Minnesota. He obtained a degree in business and accounting, while working full-time. He later started a small business, with his wife, Jane, producing plastic sheets for packaging and printing. Elected to represent Wisconsin in the United States Senate, he served as the chairman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee from 2015 to 2021. Please welcome the Honorable U.S. Senator Ron Johnson. *(Applause)*

**Welcome: Honorable Ron Johnson
United States Senate**

Thank you, Commander Dillard. And welcome, The American Legion, to Wisconsin, to Milwaukee. I'll never forget, Charles Krauthammer, saw him give a speech and you hear Minnesota Nice. I say Wisconsin is even nicer. That is true. And I'm sure you all will understand that as you enjoy the city here and the state and your visit here.

My main purpose here, it's just to thank you sincerely from the bottom of my heart for your service and sacrifice. I am very mindful that more than a million of what I always referred to as the finest among us paid the ultimate price, sacrificed their lives to defend our nation and preserve liberty and freedom. What's extraordinary about that sacrifice is it not only was given for our freedom, but the United States has sent our sons and daughters around the world, to places afar and foreign, to people's cultures who don't necessarily meld with ours, to also defend their freedom as well.

As Defense Secretary Colin Powell once said, "We don't send our sons and daughters to conquer land. The only land we ever asked for is enough to bury our dead." I think that's an extraordinary contribution of the America that I know. The America that has sacrificed not only for us but for others around the world. We may not be a perfect country, but we're a phenomenal force for good in the world. And so again, I understand the service and sacrifice of all of you. And I want to assure you, on a nonpartisan basis, in Washington D.C., we all understand that, and we support you. I really want to start with a particular piece of legislation that I know is near and dear to your heart, that unfortunately became partisan in nature. That people used it to scare our veterans when there was no need for that whatsoever. Of course, I'm referring to the PACT Act. A lot of us called it the burn pit legislation. Let me assure you, it was never in doubt that Congress was going to pass whatever appropriation was necessary to take care of our veterans that suffered harm from burn pits.

Quite honestly, we were never going to threaten any appropriation that was going to take care of our veterans. That is completely nonpartisan. But there were issues. There were legitimate concerns. And I believe you heard from Secretary of the VA McDonough earlier today. I don't serve on the VA committee. But we were getting regular updates from our ranking member on the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee. And what we were told is there's agreement between the chairman and the ranking member on a piece of legislation regarding injuries due to burn pits. Now, it was a much less expensive piece of legislation. All of a sudden it ballooned into about \$260 billion piece of legislation.

But Secretary McDonough apparently, in testimony, he talked about his concern with that piece of legislation, that the VA system may not be able to handle it. And so at least folks on our side of the aisle certainly took that seriously. And so, what we wanted to make sure is that there is an amendment to allow veterans that couldn't get into the Veterans Affairs hospitals soon enough, to be able to be taken care of by community centers. The private health-care system. But we weren't getting a vote on that amendment. We were also concerned about, for whatever reason, there was no reason for it. A transfer of about \$400 billion from discretionary spending to mandatory spending, with our nation in \$30.8 trillion worth of debt. That concerned us. And all we asked for was votes on the amendment. Now, unfortunately, both those amendments failed. But in the end, as was always going to happen, Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law, the PACT Act.

There never should have been any concern. There never should have been any doubt that Congress, in a nonpartisan way, was going to support our veterans. And that will always be true. Now, the point I want to make in this discussion is the only thing that threatens veterans' benefits, the only thing that threatens the mandatory spending program, Social Security, Medicare, others, is our massive deficit spending and our growing level of debt. Unfortunately, it's very difficult to talk about this. Because if you have the courage to bring up the fact that we are mortgaging our children's future, you get falsely accused of wanting to put things on the chopping block or cutting programs or ending programs. Let

me say, unequivocally, I have never said I wanted to put Social Security, Medicare, veterans' benefits on the chopping block, or cut them or end them. I want to save these programs. I want to stop mortgaging our children's future. (*Applause*)

By the way, I don't believe those millions of our fellow citizens, I don't believe any of you fought and died or served and sacrificed to mortgage our children's future. You are every bit as concerned about that as I am. But I'm also concerned about how much money we have for the top priorities of government. Let's just take a look at defense, for example. Let me give you a little bit of history. I know this is numbers. I know certainly in Washington D.C. people don't want to be talking about numbers. But I think it's important to talk about numbers. Again, \$30.8 trillion in debt. The size of our economy is \$23 trillion. That's a dangerous ratio of 134 percent debt to GDP ratio. How are we going to afford defense spending? Just to give you a little history. In the '60s, we spent about 8.4 percent of our GDP on defense. Of course, we had the Vietnam War. It made sense. But in the '70s and '80s, without war raging, we spent 5.6 and 5.7 percent during those decades.

Starting in the '90s, the 2000s, the 2010s, spending declined from 3.8 down to 3.7 percent of GDP. In 2020, we spent 3.5 percent. In 2021, we spent 3.4 percent. Now, I'm somebody that thinks that defending our nation is the top priority of government. And supporting those who serve and sacrifice is a top priority of government, as is Social Security. As is Medicare. But when we're \$30.8 trillion in debt, and we are right now experiencing historically low interest rates, again, I know I'm talking about a lot of numbers, but in the last three decades of last century, in the '70s, '80s and '90s, our average interest rate, paid interest on the debt, was 5.4 percent. Last year, it was 1.4%. So, we are four percentage points lower than the three-decade average from the last century. What happens if world creditors look at the United States and say, you know, you're a credit risk? Or the U.S. dollar is no longer the world's reserve currency?

What happens is interest rates start increasing. If we were to go and return to that 5.4 percent average interest rate from the last three decades, the last century, that would add another \$1.2 trillion to our nation's spending. And, unfortunately, what is happening in Washington D.C., and, quite honestly, throughout America, is too many members of Congress, too many of our fellow citizens are simply whistling past that debt graveyard. I'm not willing to. So, I talk about it. But, in bringing up these numbers, in talking about the danger to our economy, the danger to our children, our grandchildren, you get vilified. You get lied about. You have your character assassinated. That has to end, if we're going to preserve this nation.

By the way, the number one component of a solution here, what we need do. We need to grow our economy. We've just experienced two quarters of negative growth. Our economy has shrunk. The good news is we know how to grow our economy. You have to have a competitive tax system. You have to have a reasonable regulatory environment. You need the freedom to incentivize entrepreneurs to think about new products, new services, to grow our economy. You can't have big government crushing their hopes and their dreams and, quite honestly, that's what's happening right now. Let me ask you a question. Do you even like, much less love, something that you want to fundamentally transform? It's like I wake up in the morning, look at my wife, say, Jane, I love you but now I want to change everything about you. That wouldn't go over very well.

But unfortunately, we've had President Obama, President Biden, that, as candidates, said they want to fundamentally transform this nation. Now, we have problems that need to be fixed, but fundamental transformation, I'd argue that's not what this country needs. Unfortunately, now we're seeing what fundamental transformation looks like. It's open borders. A flood of illegal immigrants. A flood of deadly drugs. I recently had Mark Morgan, head of CBP under both Obama and President Trump, Brandon Judd, head of the Border Patrol union, come and do an event. Collectively, we figured out that about 3 million illegal immigrants since the start of the Biden Administration have either come in been encountered processed and dispersed or come across as a known or unknown got-away. 3 million people. To put that in perspective, 17 states have less than 3 million in their

population. It's a massive flow. This is not good, because the human depredation, the human trafficking, the sex trafficking, the deadly drugs, we had 107,000 overdoses last year because of the deadly drugs, the easy flow.

So, again, fundamental transformation. Open borders. 40-year high inflation, eight and a half percent. Who does that affect mostly? Retired seniors, people on a fixed income. A dollar held at the start of the Biden Administration is now worth 88.3 cents. Record-high gasoline prices. Rising crime. The indoctrination of our children in our schools.

This is the year 2022 in America. We don't have enough infant formula to feed our babies. Now, again, these things didn't just happen. This isn't an administration that came in and just had some bad luck. These are policies that opened our borders. Out-of-control deficit spending caused the inflation. A war on fossil fuels caused record gas prices. Low bail-no bail policies. Defund the police movement. Abolish ICE. These are things that resulted in rising crime. And just bad government has caused things like a shortage of infant formula. This can't go on.

When I talk to people as I go around Wisconsin, as bad as what I call that List of Horribles, the disastrous results of bad policy, they're generally not talking about that. It's on their mind. They're struggling with the burden of the fundamental transformation of America, which is really fundamentally destroying this country. What they're concerned about, what they're distraught over, is what one speaker that came to our senate once talked about. He made the point that as conservatives, we do a terrible job of defending our values. Then he granted us almost immediate absolution. He said that's because we never thought we'd have to defend the benefit of having a mom and a dad, the nuclear family.

We never thought we'd have to push back on school administrators injecting our children with gender-blocking drugs without telling the parents. We never thought that biological males would be competing with our girls and then expecting to shower in their locker rooms. We never thought we'd have to defend the basic values of this country. But that's what is happening.

Let me conclude by talking about the difference in our political divide. And, by the way, I mourn the divisiveness. I heard President Biden in his inaugural address say eight times his number one goal is to unify and heal this nation. He's done the exact opposite. I want to heal and unify this nation. President Lincoln said that a divided nation cannot stand. A divided nation weakens us and our adversaries are noticing it.

But what divides our parties is just a basic ideological difference. One side believes what made this country great was big government. Remember the president saying, "You didn't build that." Yes, we did. My side knows what made America great. People like you. People who get up every day, go to work, join the military, serve and sacrifice. But you get up every day and go to work and you contribute. You understand that all work has value. There's not a first- or second-class way to realize your full human potential. So, you get up. You go to work. But you use that one essential ingredient, that one thing that more than a million of our fellow citizens, the finest among us, have fought and died for; you use freedom to dream and aspire and build and create this marvel. And it is a marvel that we call America.

So, again, I'm here to thank you for helping build this great land, the shining city on the hill, this indispensable nation that nations around the world depend on to provide the peace and security that is essential for having a strong economy and strong opportunities. This has been true since our founding. It's true today. That we continue to be in a fight for freedom. It's not somebody else's fight. It is our fight, and it is a fight that we absolutely must win. So, God bless you for your service and sacrifice. God bless you. God bless America. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next guest speaker was elected to represent Wisconsin's 4th Congressional District in 2004, making her the first African American elected to Congress from the state of Wisconsin. Raised in Milwaukee, she earned a B.A. in political science at Marquette and was a member of the Wisconsin State

Assembly and Senate before being elected to Congress. A tireless advocate for civil rights, she led the fight against racial profiling, domestic abuse and voting rights violations. Please welcome, the Honorable U.S. Representative Gwen Moore. *(Applause)*

**Welcome: Honorable Gwen Moore
United States House of Representatives**

Wow, American Legion, welcome. Welcome to Milwaukee. As a matter of fact, you are in the Fourth Congressional District of Wisconsin, the district that I so proudly represent in Congress. And I do truly welcome you to our beautiful city and all of the things that we have here. Try out everything. If you leave a couple of pounds heavier, you will have had a good time. That would be proof that you had a good time. Listen, thank you so much.

So, listen, it's a real great honor to be able to address you all, to take care of our veterans. I can remember the very first time that I heard of The American Legion. It was, I'm dating myself now, it was the late '50s. I was in Racine, Wisconsin, where I was born. And my dad and my uncle took me over to The American Legion. And I saw soldiers and people there having a couple of drinks. And I was wondering, I was very confused, is this what people in the service do? Drink? The American Legion, you know, is this a club for soldiers only? And my uncle and my dad explained to me, almost with tears in their eyes, that The American Legion was an organization that took care of veterans and their families.

So, for those of you who are new to our city, I think it's always good when you have visitors to tell them a little bit about your city. So rather than to tell you to focus on the cheese curds and the beer and some of the other goodies that I do encourage you to engage in, I want to talk to you about one of the veterans that still lives here in the city of Milwaukee. I want to tell you about a woman named Ms. Anna Mae Robertson.

Ms. Anna Mae Robertson is an African American woman who served in the groundbreaking Women's Army Corps. She was a WAC, and she served in 6888th Central Postal Battalion. Some of you all know about the 6888th. The 6888th was the only predominantly Black women's Army Corps Battalion to serve overseas during World War II in England and in France. And despite serving in inclement weather, decrepit conditions, rats running all over the place, and enduring enemy fire, they bravely cleared millions of pieces of mail, of backlog mail, with the Central Postal Battalion.

The 6888th's work was deeper than just sorting mail. They helped servicemembers deployed far away from home to get just a little piece of family. There was once 750 Robert Smiths, and they worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week and they found every single Robert Smith and got their mail to them. There were no tweets and Instagram's back in the day. There was no way to text these people and whip out the cell phone. This was a central, key attachment to family. And the 6888th were the backbone of military service. And people like Miss Anna Mae Robertson, who is 98 years young, lives in Milwaukee. She was not known or honored. But this year, she received, along with the other 6888th Battalion members, whether dead or alive, the Gold Medal for their service. *(Applause)*

That's right. Applause for that. And you know, we have a voluntary army now. So those people who come to the table to serve us in this country now are to be revered in a way that we have never revered our veterans before. Let me tell you something. When I went to Congress, there were a few things that shocked me. One, I was shocked that we had no assigned seats. Okay. Two. I was shocked at the high prices of everything in Washington D.C. And thirdly, I was totally shocked at the different appropriations line that we funded the Defense Department and the Veterans Department. People get up and debate for hours and hours about how wonderful defense was. And there was no amount of money that the Defense Department could get, even if the equipment was no longer wanted or needed by the generals. We just fund it anyway. But veterans, we had to spend so much time and energy, always, always, always begging to make sure that y'all are properly resourced. That is why The American Legion, after 100 years, is still necessary. And let

me applaud you for all of your advocacy and work. *(Applause)*

Because when The American Legion says that we need a legislation done, it's about to happen. It's gonna happen. And I want you to know that I'm going to a partner in that effort. When I was first elected to office in 1988, to the state assembly, learning the ropes, learning how to be a politician, the very first bill that I passed with my name on it was a veterans bill. To give educational opportunity benefits to veterans here in the state. And I hope that while you're here, you'll check out one of the community projects that I prioritized funding. It's called Dry Hootch. And it is a facility, a support within the community, a nonprofit, that put their efforts into being an intervention in the lives of veterans who may be at risk of PTSD or, worse, suicides. I'm so glad to partner with you to ensure that the VA is ready to serve the next generation of our increasingly diverse workforce.

I don't know if you know this, but so far, this Congress, we're in August recess now, but so far we have passed 50, that's right, 50, veterans bills and I can assure you that we are not done. I can tell you that in an era where bipartisanship is sought for, I can say, from my own experience, that the best chance you have of getting bipartisan legislation across the finish line is to support our American heroes, our veterans.

I thank you all for your advocacy. I love you all. You know, I am part of a military family. My father, my uncle, my brother, my nephews, all the way from Korea, World War II, Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, on the line. And so, I salute you and your families for all that you do. God bless you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: A retired lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve, our next guest speaker was elected to represent Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District in 2020. He earned a bachelor of science at the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, and lives with his family in rural Clyman, Wisconsin, where they raise horses. In 1990, he purchased and ran the Dodge County Independent News and sold it in 1996 to the Watertown Daily Times, where he continued to work a number of years as an associate publisher. Please welcome, the Honorable U.S. Representative Scott Fitzgerald. *(Applause)*

Welcome: Honorable Scott Fitzgerald United States House of Representatives

Thank you. Thank you. It's good to be with everybody today. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize Post 15 from Juneau, Wisconsin, and all my good friends at Post 420 over in Hustisford. Saw on the way in, a couple of 84th Division alumni, headquarters located on Silver Springs Drive for many years. It's great to be with you this afternoon. Thank you, Commander Dillard, and The American Legion for inviting me to speak today and for your efforts for putting this event together. I think I speak for the rest of the congressional delegation. And just saying how happy we are that you chose Milwaukee for The American Legion convention this summer.

I'm proud to stand here today to address you as a veteran and as a fierce advocate in Wisconsin and as a member of Congress. I did join the U.S. Army Reserves back in '81 and proudly served for 27 years, retiring in 2009, as a lieutenant colonel. In every facet of that service, from my days as a recruit, down at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, to my time as a battalion commander, I was always honored to stand beside the amazing men and women that serve this country so well. The values that I was taught in the Army taught me to serve the greater good. That's what it's all about. And that was a major factor in me deciding to run for office and ultimately to run for Congress. It was truly a privilege. I served in the state senate here in Wisconsin for many years, in which we authored and moved legislation that helped veterans. And now, as a member of Congress, in Wisconsin's Fifth District, continuing to do that.

The mission of The American Legion, since Commander Dillard took over last year, has been, as you know, no veteran left behind. And so, I'd like to take a little bit of time to talk about that theme. As has been mentioned earlier by Senator Johnson and others, first,

I think I would be remiss if I did not address, perhaps, the most important issue to The American Legion this Congress, and that was the passage, the final passage of the PACT Act. Those of you who fought so tirelessly to bring that bill across the finish line deserve a lot of credit and should be very proud. Thanks to your efforts, your long days advocating for veterans in the halls of Congress. I met many members of the Legion and the VFW who came specifically to D.C. just to talk about that issue. And as a result of that persistence, we find ourselves now more than 3.5 million toxic-exposed veterans will finally get the benefits and the health care that they deserve. *(Applause)*

Congratulations. Give yourselves a hand. Congress also passed several other bills to provide much needed support to our veteran community. Bills like the Sergeant Ketchum Rural Veterans Mental Health Act. It will provide more community-based care to veterans diagnosed with mental health issues. And the STRONG Veterans Act. Also, which will increase mental health staffing at both the VA and at the vet centers throughout the nation.

However, no veteran left behind doesn't just start when a veteran leaves the service. It's our duty to ensure our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and guardians are given the capabilities not only to win on the battlefield, but to win at home and to win with their families once they return. And that's why I'm proud that the House continued in a bipartisan tradition to pass this year's fiscal 2023 NDAA. In addition to improving our military readiness, it increased pay for servicemembers. It increased basic needs of housing allowances, and also recognized some of the low-income military families that are currently suffering. But there's more Congress can do to support servicemen and women and the veterans.

When the Department of Defense announced a mandatory COVID-19 vaccine policy, countless servicemembers became at risk of losing the very hard-earned benefits upon discharge from the service. Congress took the first step to address this issue last year by mandating that servicemembers who refused the vaccine cannot be dishonorably discharged. But there are still thousands of active duty and reserve personnel whose education benefits are at risk. I introduced a bill to fix that, along with my colleagues, and would urge the Legion to work with my colleagues in this next Congress to address the disparity and restore the benefits to those who were unfairly stripped of these educational benefits. *(Applause)*

Thank you. Finally, we must do more to address that backlog of service record requests at the National Personnel Record Center as well. There's a lot of things Congress is working on, but we need to be targeted and very specific when we do that. I was proud to support the Access for Veterans to Records Act, and the bill that passed the House was the first step. But veterans and their families should not have to wait weeks, months, years for records that put their medical care, their student loans, or even their death benefits, in jeopardy. No veteran left behind is more than just a campaign; it's our duty as veterans, as public servants, and as community to be there for those veterans that come home. Not only for them, but for their families as well. The American Legion and your tireless advocacy efforts will continue to shape policy on Capitol Hill and in the state legislatures across this nation. I'm confident that you will continue to hold the legislatures accountable to ensure that no veteran is left behind by Congress.

Like I once encouraged myself, you've got to put one foot in front of another during those long rucks. I remind people all the time that you have to keep the faith and be persistent and be consistent if you're going to make things happen in D.C. and in the statehouses. Listen, those who served our country, volunteered themselves in an act of patriotism to the nation, and they served and protected and have been very loyal. It's incumbent upon us to never forget that when facing headwinds and those in Congress that might not be willing to move forward. I'm so glad that you're here in Milwaukee today. And I'm so honored to be able to offer just a few of my thoughts this afternoon. Thank you and God bless The American Legion. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Another proud Legionnaire. A retired

Navy captain, our next guest serves as the chief advocate for the more than 340,000 veterans of Wisconsin. She holds master's degrees in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College, and Adult Education at the University of Rhode Island, in addition to a bachelor's degree in Marketing from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Representing Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, please welcome the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, Mary M. Kolar. *(Applause)*

... At this time National Vice Commander Narvaez assumed the Chair.

Welcome: Honorable Mary M. Kolar
Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Good afternoon. It's such a great honor to be with you to represent Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, and to again welcome you to the great city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As was mentioned, the history of my family is military service. And I want to emphasize that my grandfather was a founding member of the American Legion post in Wilton, Wisconsin. *(Applause)*

Thank you. And it is the inspiration and service of my mother and her years of dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary. *(Applause)*

So, I again extend my appreciation to The American Legion leadership for the privilege of being able to speak here today to you representing the largest veterans service organization in our country. As the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, I'm honored to advocate for Wisconsin's over 340,000 veterans and their families who call the Badger State home. The mission of WDVA is to deliver upon the moral obligation to provide benefits and services to all eligible veterans and their families. To ensure we meet these commitments, maintaining good working relationships and partnerships with The American Legion, her posts and her members is essential as we continue to overcome challenges and meet the evolving needs of veterans.

Going back nearly 145 years, Wisconsin has a strong commitment to our veterans. Since the ending of the Civil War, the Badger State has proudly provided additional benefits and services and extended not only to its veterans but to their spouses and dependents. Today, I'll share with you why Wisconsin is so special and how we uphold our commitment to those who have served. With our Wisconsin GI Bill program, our state provides additional educational benefits to eligible veterans, their spouses, and their children to pursue their educational dreams and vocational needs. The Wisconsin GI program also provides numerous educational grants. There's a vast array of opportunities for those transitioning to civilian life.

Wisconsin also offers a generous property tax credit reimbursement program for veterans and surviving spouses that meet specific service-connected disability requirements, with plans as proposed by Governor Evers, to extend the eligibility in the next budget. For those who are struggling, who need to navigate the VA bureaucracy that sometimes can feel overwhelming, our trained and dedicated benefits and claims staff compassionately deliver federal and Wisconsin VA benefits to all eligible veterans and their families. Right here in Milwaukee, we have a fully accredited claims office to represent veterans when filing a claim with the federal VA.

Thanks to recent legislation, such as the PACT Act, newer veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who were exposed to burn pits can file their claims, receive health care and get the compensation they deserve. Wisconsin is home to three skilled nursing facilities for veterans and their spouses, one of which was just recognized with a national award for quality care. Even though the nationwide staffing shortage and last three years of the upheaval of the pandemic, these homes have maintained a safe and welcoming residence. And don't worry, each home has a special place on game day to watch the Packers. Had to get that in there.

As our state's chief veteran advocate, there's an issue, I'm sure, at the top of mind of all of you, for veterans across the state, from different backgrounds and generations. I hear

a similar sentiment shared again and again. "Of the men and women who I served with, I've lost more to suicide than combat."

In 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers issued his governor's challenge that included more support for veterans. The governor's challenge is to prevent suicide among servicemembers, veterans and their families. It's a national initiative that we've been working on since January of 2020. The challenge is being led by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Over the past two years, WDVA dedicated major resources and funding for mental health care and suicide prevention for our veterans. When I came home from work yesterday and saw that in the mail there was my American Legion member magazine, I was so pleased to see this cover. *(Applause)*

So "Be the One." Working with The American Legion and other veterans service organizations, we recently held six regional suicide prevention forums across our state, focusing on vital mental health resources and support for veterans. We also held a special forum with Wisconsin's 11 federally recognized native tribal nations that focused on specific tribal veteran mental health needs. Every death by suicide is preventable. I commend the many men and women who are on the front lines of this battle.

Our state's Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program, otherwise known as VORP, is a dedicated group of outreach coordinators, many of whom are veterans themselves, working locally in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties, having an actual person reach out and be your advocate is an immensely powerful tool. VORP case managers are the connector between the veteran and the services available from various sources. VORP case managers work with CVSOs, County Veteran Service Officers, Tribal Veteran Service Officers, and the federal VA, veterans services organizations and community providers and programs to connect veterans with the critical services that they need. Our VORP outreach coordinators help veterans struggling with health-care visits, those needing substance abuse and recovery help, being a lifeline for suicide prevention, and mental health resources and more. Our VORP program is a shining example of what can be done to assist at-risk veterans in need when you invest in their well-being. I know that they have saved lives, and I'm grateful for their work every day.

While our VORP efforts continue to flourish, our veterans housing and recovery program is also evolving. A housing crisis is gripping many parts of this country. Through many connections with surrounding communities, our VHRP provides temporary housing, training, supportive services to veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our goal is to help them obtain permanent housing and get them back to a sustainable lifestyle. To better anticipate veterans' needs in a post pandemic world, Governor Evers signed an executive order earlier this year calling for a blue-ribbon commission on veteran opportunity. I have the honor to serve as co-chair of this 23-person commission, which includes representatives from The American Legion, DAV, VFW and other Wisconsin veterans service organizations. The commission is focusing on issues facing Wisconsin veterans today and recommending new initiatives to best meet their future needs. Reflecting on the various experiences and expertise from a diverse group of veterans advocates from across the state.

Together, with The American Legion, support of veterans in Wisconsin and across our country, we are making a difference in the lives of so many veterans. And we look forward to continuing to do more. I know we can always do better to serve our veterans and their families. That's only possible by working together with people like you. I offer my gratitude to the local, state and national leadership of The American Legion for your partnership, your compassion, your steady commitment in serving our nation's veterans. Together, we can achieve our goals. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NARVAEZ: Our next speaker took office as acting mayor of Milwaukee in 2021. He was elected in April 2022 with more than 70 percent of the vote. Growing up in this city, he has seen violence, evictions and food

insecurity – challenges that are common with urban poverty. He has previously served as an alderman and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. *(Applause)*

**Welcome: Honorable Cavalier Johnson
Mayor of the City of Milwaukee**

Good afternoon, Legionnaires! It's my pleasure to be here to welcome everyone here. I know you've had the opportunity to spend some time in Milwaukee. And I'm glad that, in the conversations that I've had with folks throughout the convention hall here, everybody, to a T, has said that they have been enjoying their time in Milwaukee.

So, when I say welcome to Milwaukee, what I really mean is welcome back to Milwaukee, because I was also informed that this is not the first time that The American Legion has hosted its National Convention here in our fair city of Milwaukee, in the state of Wisconsin. It's happened a number of times over the course of the past several decades. And we really, really appreciate being able to play host and a constant host, a continual host to The American Legion and all of the men and women who have served our nation.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join Commander Dillard and other members of The American Legion in the River West neighborhood of Milwaukee as we restored The American Legion monument, which, if you hadn't seen it, I recommend, before you leave town, that you do. Because if you travel due north of here, get to a street called North Avenue, and you hang a left and you head west, you'll see, upon a hill, blazing upon this hill this large emblem that says, "American Legion." And that's there because in Milwaukee we appreciate, we really do, the service and the sacrifice of individuals in this organization. Not just here from Milwaukee or here from Wisconsin, but across the entire United States who have made service and sacrifice a core tenet in their life. We really appreciate that in Milwaukee so much so that it's a monument here in our city. And the city appreciates it, the residents of the city appreciate that. I personally can appreciate it as well.

I can personally appreciate it because I've got a family with a history steeped in service. My stepfather was in the United States Navy and served in the first Gulf War. Got a cousin who, for more than 20 years, has been in the United States Army. I've got my father who was in the Reserves for some time. And although I never made it to the Armed Forces myself, when I was in high school, at Bay View High School on the south side of this city, I got the chance, the opportunity to be a part of Naval Junior ROTC, which is one of the great experiences that I've had in my life. *(Applause)*

So, again, I know that folks have said they've had a tremendous time going across the city, venturing out into our neighborhoods, enjoying our bars and our restaurants. Going along the lakefront, which is spectacular here in the city of Milwaukee. Checking out our expanded riverwalk that we continually improve upon here in Milwaukee. Visiting our museums, diverse neighborhoods, museums like the Milwaukee Public Museum, America's Black Holocaust Museum, so many other great museums in the country. Checking out Fiserv Forum, home of the NBA World Champion Milwaukee Bucks and also home now to the NBA 2K world champions the Bucks Gaming program.

Know that folks have also had the opportunity to visit the Sherman Phoenix Development here in the city of Milwaukee, which is an incubator for jobs and growth and development and restaurants in a neighborhood that needed that sort of investment. And a lot of folks have also commented about the friendliness that they've encountered since they've been back here in Milwaukee. Now, folks, you probably heard a term of "Midwest Nice." I think that in Milwaukee, we put the nice in "Midwest Nice." I think we really do. *(Applause)*

I'm glad to hear that so many folks have had those sort of experiences as you go on out into the public here, whether it's on the street or whether it's into one of our wonderful world-class restaurants or even some of our bars here in Milwaukee, because under my administration, as the new mayor of this city, and in partnership with folks at Visit Milwaukee, we're embarking on creating and developing a stronger, more robust

convention, tourism and hospitality economy right here in Milwaukee. And so, The American Legion's convention plays a huge part in that. So as mayor, I want to thank you for coming to our city, for choosing Milwaukee multiple times over and again. I think that's a testament to the fact that people in this organization enjoy their time in Milwaukee. You enjoy the weather. You enjoy access to the fresh water. You enjoy our businesses. You enjoy our restaurants, our bars, our hospitality, our cultural amenities. And guess what? We enjoy you too. And we so desperately want to see you back.

So, this is not the end. I hope it's not the end. I want to see you back in Milwaukee. I want to be on this stage greeting you again right here in the city of Milwaukee. So, we're leaving the lights on for you. We hope that we see you back in Wisconsin, back in Milwaukee for conventions in the future. Thank you so much. I hope you continue to have a great time in the city of Milwaukee. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NARVAEZ: A 36-year member of The American Legion, our next guest is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and the Army National Guard. He belongs to Post 555 in Sheboygan, Wisconsin and was elected department commander in 2021. Please give a warm welcome to immediate past department commander of Wisconsin, Greg Eirich. (*Applause*)

**Welcome: Greg Eirich, Wisconsin
Immediate Past Department Commander**

Legion Family, welcome to Brew City and the Badger State. Whoa! Again, my name is Greg Eirich, immediate past department commander. On behalf of the American Legion Family of Wisconsin, I welcome all the delegates and guests of The American Legion to Milwaukee for the 2022 American Legion National Convention. It's our pleasure to be the host to the 103rd National Convention.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to make your stay more enjoyable. There are many great eating establishments, like the mayor had just noted to enjoy and beautiful sights to see. The lakefront is home of the War Memorial and the beautiful Lake Michigan. And stop by the American Family Field or tour the Miller Coors Brewery.

National Commander Dillard, this individual has worked tirelessly to make this convention an enjoyable and exceptional one for you and our delegates and guests. Please welcome the president of the American Legion National Convention Corporation of Wisconsin, Past Department Commander Ted Demicchi. (*Applause*)

**Welcome: Ted Demicchi, President
National Convention Corporation of Wisconsin**

Thank you and good afternoon. I've written a five-page welcoming to the state of Wisconsin for you and will only take approximately an hour and a half. But to welcome you back to Wisconsin, that we had our 2010 convention and our 2000 convention here in Milwaukee, to bring you back to us is an honor and a privilege. So, Commander Dillard, national officers, Legionnaires and guests, I would like to welcome you back to the state of Wisconsin for your 103rd National Convention. With that, remember that we are entertaining you here in the evening. We have a great area that you can go see. We have the Harley-Davidson, as the mayor mentioned.

Please go out and see the national Emblem that's sitting on North. It's approximately 50, 60 feet round. And if you are flying out, you'll be able to see it, if you're flying out on the right runway, from the air. You can look down and see the Emblem. So, remember this: If you need any help, please contact anyone from the state of Wisconsin for directions to go to your restaurants, to go to your bars, to just go out and have entertainment in the evening. For all the work that we do during the day, we definitely need a break in the evening. So once again, welcome to Wisconsin, Legionnaires. Thank you. (*Applause*)

...At this time the delegation viewed a video. (Applause)

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NARVAEZ: In defense of our great continent, the United States is blessed to have such great friends in the North. A trusted ally through many of our wars, Canada also believes in serving its veterans, who in turn, continue to serve today. I am a proud member of the U.S. detachment, ANAVICUS, of this great organization. Ladies and gentlemen, the dominion president of the Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada, ANAVETS, Jerome Burke. *(Applause)*

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

Greetings: Jerome Burke
Dominion President, Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada

Good afternoon. National Commander Dillard, National Adjutant Wheeler, special guests, comrades, all. It gives me great pleasure to join you in person. And I bring warm greetings upon the executive and members of the Army Navy Air Force Veterans in Canada.

Certainly, these past couple of years have created their challenges. We have had to adjust the way we communicate, assist and advocate. We have embraced new technologies that have been able to bring us together no matter the distance, to continue our work on behalf of our servicemen and women, our veterans and their families. We have forged partnerships and met colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and places in whom we not otherwise have had an opportunity to connect with, and that has brought about some positive outcomes and opportunities for service organizations like ours that are community hubs for camaraderie, fellowship and related events.

The lockdowns, closures, mask mandates and health-related concerns of the pandemic had devastating outcomes. To be honest, without federal grants from our government, many of our units wouldn't have survived the cost of utilities, mortgage, insurance payments, while having little or no income. It was amazing to see so many innovations and dedication from our members. And I'm sure that down in your local posts you saw much of the same thing. People coming together to make and deliver meals to veterans in their communities; the organization of Buddy Checks to make sure that people who were isolated and alone had someone checking up on them to see how they were doing. Innovative business decisions such as renting out our kitchens to restaurants that were forced to close and were now operating on only a delivery model. Harnessing the power of community support with weekly bottle drops and online fundraising. It has overwhelmed the strength and resolve of our members to come up with new ideas to adapt and transform in order to ensure that they continue to operate and continue to serve the veterans in their communities that need help.

I can see not much is different across the border. Your American Legion's own "Be the One" campaign is encouraging you, its members, to step up, to reach out, to listen to those veterans who are struggling and aid them in getting the help they need, to speak out about your own struggles and in doing so helping to destigmatize mental health. Your help supporting veterans and their families in this way will save lives. It already has. By understanding the effects that moral and post-traumatic stress injuries have on our servicemen and women, the more research that can be done on therapies that may be beneficial in their treatment.

Aiding your brothers and sisters in arms is the heart of what you do best. You are years ahead of Canada in your work in gender-specific healthcare benefits, and we continue to learn from your research and resolve to better support female veterans in treatment and transition and to end the cycle of military sexual trauma within our armed forces.

Back in Canada, we continue to work with our comrades in the Royal Canadian Legion and other veterans service organizations to ensure that our veterans, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their families receive the benefits and services required to

have a smooth transition from service to country in uniform to their life as a civilian. We have struggled with several changes and iterations of our benefit structure over the past decades, trying to balance rehabilitation and reintegration with financial security and the need for better and more accessible mental health supports and treatments.

Research on military and veterans' 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 the health benefits, treatments and supports they require to successfully transition are top of the mind of our association. As is requiring that we have the safety nets in place to assist and safeguard them should they falter. We align with our like-minded comrades. I'll 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 has been accomplished, there's 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 we may also pass the torch to generations of the future. Thank you for having me here this week and for all your wonderful hospitality. And God bless. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 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, the Royal Canadian Legion president, Bruce Julian. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Bruce Julian, President
The Royal Canadian Legion**

Good afternoon. National Commander Dillard, national vice commanders, membership of the leadership team, speakers, delegates, guests. I'm pleased to be here to be part of the 103rd National Convention here in scenic Milwaukee along the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. It is a pleasure to bring greetings and congratulations from the members of the Royal Canadian Legion. Our two organizations have a close connection, and I'm looking forward to updating you and learning more about what you've been doing across your country over the past year. I can tell you our initiatives and programs keep us busy year-round in Canada. I'm going to share an overview of what we've been working on and where we're headed. With our shared history, and our common purpose in serving our veteran comrades, we have similar goals and programs that matter tremendously to those who we help.

For the benefit of those who may not understand our structure, our organization has 10 independently run provincial commands based on geographic regions. We are headquartered in Ottawa, our nation's capital, and have a tremendous footprint of 1,350 branches across our country. Our focus is on serving our veterans, their families, and on promoting remembrance. We also support our country and our communities in many ways. I could talk at length, but I'm going to focus on three things. How we help our veterans on the ground. How we help veterans through our advocacy programs. And how we're modernizing to ensure we can continue to operate and fulfill our mission.

On the ground, we have hundreds of service officers at branches, provincial commands and at our national headquarters. They are the ones who sit down with our veterans, hear their stories, and provide them with immediate help. It might be emergency funding for food, or it might be filling out applications for them so they can receive the government benefits for which they're all entitled. Over the past year, we've helped thousands. We regularly receive heartfelt thanks from our veterans, like a woman who

reached out after being denied benefits due to a sexual assault during her service. We were able to get her both disability and treatment benefits. And she says it literally changed her life. For the past months, we've been able to wade through all the policy changes and new rules at Veterans Affairs Canada and actually reversed the outcomes for individuals whose benefit applications have been denied. It's this feedback and the positive outcomes that keep us energized and going.

On the ground, we oversee initiatives such as our Leave the Streets Behind Program, pioneered over a decade ago in our Ontario command. It has grown to include several other regions. Multidisciplinary teams are engaged to get veterans off the streets. This year, this fantastic program reached an amazing milestone in the province of Ontario alone. Through their endeavors, they've helped their 1,000th veteran. It's a bittersweet kind of victory, though. We've helped out many, but there are so many yet to help. Each year we provide a \$30,000 master scholarship to a student doing medical research that will ultimately help our veterans. Last year, it related to chronic pain profile of Canadian Armed Forces members suffered by traumatic brain injury.

We provide financial support for programs that help veterans' well-being. Such as a fly-fishing program, a concussion awareness program, and a resiliency training program. When it comes to our advocacy work, it is always active in the background. Sometimes it moves to the foreground via media reports and our own communications channels. Here's what we're currently working with. We're pushing hard for actions to help end a massive government backlog in the processing of veteran disability applications. The government did later announce it would be keeping additional temporary staff on board to combat this unacceptable situation. Our work also helped ensure veterans receive more immediate benefits for mental health challenges while they wait.

We urge the federal government to do more to save the lives of Afghans who helped our forces during Canada's mission in that country. That situation currently remains in limbo, which is unacceptable. We pressed for strong action in the wake of revelations about sexual trauma cases within the Canadian Armed Forces. Since that time, our minister of national defense announced that the handling of such cases would be moved to the civilian justice system. And we pushed for recognition and reassessment for veterans deserving of honors such as the Canadian Victoria Cross.

We're also advocating for veterans through our relationships with media promoting good stories and becoming a resource for them. Recently, we spoke to media about our disagreement with plans to build a condo complex on the Juno Beach site in France where Canadians and our allies landed on D-Day and gave their lives. We've publicly shared our views on a range of other topics such as the desecration of our National War Memorial, where protesters and individuals used our national memorial site as a place to take their grievances with government, something we publicly condemned. We're calling for better security at the site where our fallen are honored and remembered.

So how are we modernizing? We all know we must modernize and evolve with the times to attract and maintain members and volunteers, including serving and retired armed forces and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police personnel. Ultimately, our members are the reason we can continue to help our veterans in the ways I've just described. We're modernizing by making it easier to join. We made the process simple, with an online membership portal. Actually, 75 percent of our Legion memberships are now processed this way.

We're modernizing by creating new initiatives for remembrance. Last year, we launched a collectable NFT. It was the beautiful online poppy image known as the Immortal Poppy. We helped drive donations to the Legion National Foundation Charity, the digital poppy, which a donor can personalize. We further developed our touch-free paid tribute donation boxes to give donors another easy way to contribute.

I'm pleased to say our annual poppy campaign now exceeds over 100 corporate partners. And each year, we hold a Virtual Poppy Drop on our Parliament Hill Peace Tower in the Senate building. This year we engaged additional locations such as the Olympic

Caldron in Vancouver, the CN Tower in Toronto, and we turned Niagara Falls poppy red, helping to promote remembrance by lighting up famous locations during the remembrance period.

In the months and years ahead, we'll be focused on both operational and advocacy work. The list is long. But here are a few of some of our targets. We will offer a new digital membership card to members who join or renew online, further reducing our environmental footprint. We will continue to push government for robust homeless veterans strategy. We'll keep a close eye on the development of support initiatives to help survivors of military sexual trauma. We will continue to push for the de-stigmatization of mental illness within the military, for a suicide prevention strategy and for the development of national standards for service and companion dogs for veterans.

We have launched a marketing and communication plan to have us on track to help grow our membership for the first time in 30 years. Our membership currently is 7 percent above last year's total. Already this year as compared to last, with more than 25,000 new members have joined. And we expect this trend to continue. And I'm happy to announce that a third of these new members are under the 40 years of age demographic, which is exceptionally important for anybody wanting to continue a membership program and grow into the future.

Before closing, I'd like to mention the poppy remembrance and how ours is changing this year. We both share this most iconic of symbols. It's time. It's one of the best recognized symbols in Canada, and last year we celebrated its 100th anniversary. As you may know, it was a Canadian, a First World War doctor of Lieutenant General John McCrae who wrote the famous poem *In Flanders Fields*, which eventually inspired the poppy's role in remembrance. This year is his 150th birthday. So perhaps it's fitting that in 2022 we are making a dramatic change in the way we recreate our lapel poppies and wreaths of remembrance. For the first time in nearly 100 years, these symbols will be biodegradable. Our team worked hard to source the most appropriate materials. Our poppy will remain its familiar shape and color. But it will now be made of paper and cotton instead of plastic. We will still have a metal pin on the center that can be recycled. It's a true milestone, and we are thrilled to share this information with you.

Like the rest of the world, we face unprecedented challenges when the pandemic hit. But I have tremendous admiration for our many members and volunteers, 250,000 of them, who continue to put others first. They came up with creative ideas like drive-through donation areas and drive-through meals. They did everything possible to ensure that no one was left behind and that our veterans continued to be served. And they continue to do that every day. COVID regulations are continuing to be relaxed. And it means the majority of our branches are now open again.

I'm truly optimistic about our future. One that includes maintaining close ties with you, The American Legion, our partners, our friends, and our comrades. Friends, it's been a pleasure to be here at your convention. I thank you for the invitation for myself and my wife, Darlene, to be here. Again, thank you for the invitation. May God bless and keep you and please enjoy the rest of your convention. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The website for the Royal British Legion states that the organization supports "serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week." This sounds like another group that we all know. Its national chairman served previously as a Royal British Legion trustee. He has run his own marketing firm and represents the Royal British Legion's interests across the United Kingdom and internationally. Please give a warm welcome to the Royal British Legion national chairman, Jason Coward. (*Applause*)

Greetings: Jason Coward
National Chairman, The Royal British Legion

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm truly delighted to be here and thank National Commander Dillard for his extremely kind and gracious invitation. The Royal British Legion is now 101 years old and stands shoulder to shoulder with you, our American friends, in promoting and supporting the ongoing and ever-changing needs of all those who have served and their families. Support for our cause thankfully continues to grow in the UK, and we continue to constantly update our offering to those with mental health and physical injuries caused by their service. As the UK's largest military charity by far, we increasingly find ourselves supporting smaller organizations, tackling issues such as PTSD, recovery and housing as well as funding and expanding our own program of welfare work, ranging from short term hardship grants to long term care home support for ex-service personnel, and even theater performance programs through our Bravo 21 company.

This last year has seen us rethink some of our welfare priorities, post the COVID-19 lockdown, and following new data we have gathered from a set of service-related questions that now appear in the UK government census form, a major achievement for our Royal British Legion policy team through very, very tough and ongoing lobbying of the UK government.

We have expanded our award-winning Alzheimer's services to start to tackle this ever-growing need amongst our veteran community. And we continue to make provision for any medical needs specifically linked to military service, be that state-of-the-art hearing aids or more bespoke higher-grade prosthetics than state medical provision would otherwise provide. The multiple benefits of physical recovery programs continue to provide significant and encouraging results in improving life outcomes, both physical and mental. Battle Back, our primary facility in this space, offers weeklong residential programs that are bringing a refocusing out of what otherwise can sometimes seem like a directionless future.

And that same belief in the power of physical recovery has seen us to continue to fund both many of our veteran Paralympians, and this year to proudly take over the entire UK funding for the Invictus games, next due to take place in Dusseldorf, Germany, in November 2023. We are continuing to seek new ways to boost our Legion membership by rethinking the way we operate across the country and what we offer without losing the great power of community that brings our Legion branches together to be their very best on behalf of our service community.

We continue to be supported by those who have served and increasingly by those who haven't. Membership last year peaked at 43 percent of members who had never served. Growing and nurturing membership and the support and comradeship it brings is a challenge that is not going away, as I'm sure you all recognize.

My wife Lorraine and I are very much looking forward to learning from your own American Legion experiences and to meeting as many of you as possible on this short trip. Believe me, we will take back all of the good ideas we hear and look forward to continuing to share and learn best practice with you, our American Legion friends.

I close by offering heartfelt and fulsome greetings from the Royal British Legion, from our British military community, and our Legion members across the UK. It's a delight to be here with you. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Taiwan is a nation that is always vigilant. Because of its proximity to an increasingly aggressive 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. Our next speaker was a member of the Second and Third Taiwan National Assembly and was executive secretary of the Taiwan Labor Front. Please welcome the deputy minister of

the Veterans Affairs Council for the Republic of China, Wen-Chung Lee. *(Applause)*

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

National Commander Dillard, distinguished guests, and all the American heroes, good afternoon. First, I want to thank you for inviting president of ROC Ms. Tsai for the video remark at 2019's National Convention. We are proud of that. Furthermore, I appreciate you for passing the support ROC resolution each year.

At the beginning of this month, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's delegation visited Taiwan to honor and reaffirm the U.S. commitment to Taiwan. China conducted a military drill around Taiwan right after she left. After that, another two U.S. congressional delegations visited Taiwan, and China conducted two other military drills without hesitation to disrupt the cross-strait status quo. No democratic country would accept this reckless behavior. I believe you would accept neither. Let me put it this way. Would you get it if The American Legion invited President Tsai to make a video or even an in-person remark, and Peking declare a military drill consequently.

From the lessons of history, we learned that, when both Britain and France compromised Adolf Hitler's aggression caused World War II. NATO compromised Russia, which caused the war between Russia and the Ukraine. The consequence is straightforward if all the democratic allies compromise with Chairman Xi Jinping.

ROC President Tsai has declared that we will fight for our own country and not surrender to China, as Ukraine did to Russia. However, our situation is same as the Ukraine that we are unable to go against China's invasion alone. I sincerely urge The American Legion to continuously pass the resolution to support ROC Taiwan and use your influence to voice for Taiwan. I'm sure you will agree that you are maintaining the cross-strait stability and the freedom of democracy of our living. Thanks again for your continuous support. I wish you a very fruitful and successful National Convention, and every one of you in good spirits and health.

Now, on behalf of Minister and General Feng, I would like to present National Commander Dillard with a Medal of Honor from the Veterans Affairs Council. *(Applause)*

Certificate of award to accompany the presentation of the Medal of Honor of Veterans Affairs Council to Mr. Paul E. Dillard, national commander, American Legion of the United States of America, in recognition of his dedication in upholding international justice and in safeguarding international status of the Republic of China and in improving welfare of the veterans. A Medal of Honor Veterans Affairs Council First Class is hereby awarded on the date of the 30th day of August in the year of 2022. General Kuan Feng, Minister Veterans Affairs Council, Republic of China.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: A scheduling conflict prevents General Kim, the chairman of the Korean Veterans Association, from being with us but he does send his greetings and well-wishes.

A Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 68 in Sullivan, Illinois, our next guest is vice president general of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, a patriotic organization composed entirely of descendants of America's Revolutionary War veterans. He is also the president of the Illinois Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Please welcome, Vice President General Toby Chamberlain. *(Applause)*

**Greetings: Toby Chamberlain, Vice President General
National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution**

Thank you, Commander Dillard, for that introduction. Good afternoon, Legionnaires. On behalf of President General Bruce Pickett and the National Society Sons of the

American Revolution, I want to thank Commander Dillard for his invitation to bring greetings from the Sons of the American Revolution to you. I am honored to do so, and I want to thank all of you for your hospitality.

Our two organizations have a common goal of supporting patriotic education and remembering the sacrifices of our ancestors. We both hold to the principles of liberty, freedom, and our constitutional republic. We both honor and support our veterans from Bunker Hill to Baghdad. There's always been a select group of Americans willing to fight and possibly die for a cause greater than their self-preservation. We endeavor to serve these veterans as well as they served their nation. We endeavor to serve these veterans. Born of their extraordinary accomplishments comes our extraordinary obligations to them. For those accomplishments and for their dedication, we must always be grateful. May God bless The American Legion, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the United States of America. Commander Dillard, would you join with me.

It is my great pleasure to present you with the Sons of the American Revolution Distinguished Patriotic Leadership Award, on behalf of the 37,000 members of the SAR. This is in recognition of your support to veterans and their families. This award is given only by the president general and can only be given once during his term of office. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: A veteran of the U.S. Navy, our next guest served as a submariner and 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 welcome the president and CEO of Student Veterans of America, Jared S. Lyon. *(Applause)*

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

Good afternoon. I bring you greetings from Student Veterans of America's national headquarters in Washington, D.C., and on behalf of our 750,000 student veterans on one of our over 1,500 campus chapters in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and three countries overseas, I say hello, and it's good to be amongst my fellow Legionnaires. In addition, I'd like to thank you all for getting me out of Washington, D.C., for a couple of days. *(Laughter)*

Student Veterans of America is committed to acting as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing the resources, network support, and advocacy to, through and beyond higher education. Believe it or not, SVA is just a little younger than The American Legion, and we'll celebrate our 15th birthday in January at our 15th National Conference. And since our founding in 2008, our success and ability to meet our mission has been compounded by the excellent relationship that we have with all of you in The American Legion.

So backstage a little earlier, I was chatting with Chanin and Joe Sharpe from your D.C. Office. As a Legionnaire, they asked me where my cap was. So, I have to embarrassingly admit to everyone, when I joined the Legion, my hair was a little bit longer, and I may have had a ponytail at the time. So, my cap no longer fits, but I'm going to fix that and make sure that I get a new one.

I've been to this convention quite a few times, and usually when I present to all of you all, I speak of what they're doing to empower our students and family members to, through and beyond higher education. But over this past year as I've come out of the pandemic, I've had a chance to reflect on our partnership with The American Legion and what this community has collectively accomplished. And that's what I'd like to talk to you a little bit about today.

As I mentioned earlier, SVA will turn 15 years old this January, and in that time, over a million veterans have used their GI Bill to pursue higher education. At a foundational level these past 15 years and the veterans who have benefited from the post-9/11 GI Bill

are only possible because of The American Legion. I'm sharing nothing new with this room when I praise the ingenuity of a former American Legion national commander, Harry W. Colmery, in drafting what would become the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944. But I don't know if we collectively have taken a minute to bridge what his work and what it means for The American Legion and for Student Veterans of America today.

At SVA we strive to build on the honor and the legacy of service and commitment to education that Harry W. Colmery established. That's why our partnership means so much to me. We, together, represent what Colmery envisioned when he penned the original GI Bill, a community of veterans empowered and uplifted by higher education, serving our fellow veterans and ensuring a brighter future for all Americans. That almost sounds too lofty to be true, but I promise you it's not. In fact, there are a few people here at this convention today who are tangible representatives of the legacy of Colmery and the bridge between The American Legion and Student Veterans of America.

Those people include Adi Thampi, founder of the Irvine Valley College SVA chapter and former SVA chapter president and now legislative associate for The American Legion advocating for disability and memorial affairs. Matthew Brennan, former SVA chapter president at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and now the education policy associate at The American Legion. Ashley Gorbulja, former SVA chapter member, scholarship awardee, current public affairs specialist with the VA, and current host of the Tango Alpha Lima podcast and all-around veteran rock star storyteller. And lastly, I'd be remiss if I didn't end with sharing the story of a good friend of mine, John Kamin.

Kamin was a chapter leader at American University in Washington, D.C., and actively engaged with SVA headquarters in some of our earliest days. We were lucky to have him join our headquarters staff after serving several roles before he joined The American Legion in the Washington, D.C. Office. Since joining the Legion staff, Kamin has testified before Congress. He's met with leaders across the executive branch and advocated for numerous legislative and regulatory changes that benefit millions of veterans. But his most recent work deserves its own moment of appreciation. As a grassroots coordinator, Kamin built an online campaign that sent 34,000 messages to Congress in support of the Honoring Our PACT Act, 34,000 messages. Can you imagine being on Capitol Hill when tens of thousands of Legionnaires made their voices heard?

The PACT Act is one of the largest expansions of VA benefits to date, is now law. Kamin, your grassroots leadership played not only a small part in making that possible, but I don't think I'm making too big a leap saying that your career with SVA and now with The American Legion laid a strong foundation to make that possible. I'd not only like to thank John, but today is John Kamin's birthday. So, if we could give John Kamin a round of applause. *(Applause)*

Folks like Ashley, Adi, Matthew, and Kamin have contributed to our community in unique ways, but they all shared a few traits. They started their careers in the military, they led their SVA chapters while on campus, and they're now serving veterans as part of our American Legion. Our partnership makes this possible. Our shared commitment to veterans in higher education to seeing veterans as the leadership solution that America needs, and making the careers of Ashley, Adi, Matthew, and Kamin and those former student veterans unnamed here at this convention, as well as those from across the country like them has made it possible.

Beyond the stories of the leaders that I've shared with you today, our collective work of The American Legion, the Student Veterans of America together has advanced conversations and legislation on closing the 90/10 loophole to ensure that student veterans are not the target of predatory schools. A shout out to Will Hubbard, who's also here for that work. Improving the GI Bill benefit eligibility for members of the National Guard and reserve, protecting GI Bill students from losing their housing and tuition payments at the onset of the global pandemic, and improving the post-9/11 GI Bill through the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Act of 2017, or as we like to call it, the Forever GI Bill, which just celebrated its five-year anniversary.

That list is far from comprehensive, but it's an account of what our shared history has led to. But it does illustrate the value of investing our time and our resources to ensure a better present and future for all veterans. Sharing the success and impact of our work is not meant to imply that our job is done, however. In fact, quite the opposite. I share the names of the leaders and a short list of the accomplishments that we've done together to encourage and inspire our work to continue together to address the challenges that all veterans will face moving forward.

The world as we've known it has fundamentally changed over the last few years. Shifts in our economy, global health-care challenges, racial and social justice issues, and a thousand other things that you're all thinking about as I say challenges and complex problems. These problems affect all veterans. They also affect all Americans. And oftentimes, they affect our global community. We, together, must remain committed to cultivating future leaders, like those I have highlighted here today, and the millions more veterans that will serve as leaders to come. Doing this will bring energy and innovation so that we might continue solving these challenges as a collective community. Collectively, we can continue to solve the problems that our future will bring.

I'm physically here to show SVA's commitment towards the promise of our shared work, and I look forward to working alongside all of you here at The American Legion to realize our continued potential. It's an honor to work alongside The American Legion for the last 15 years, and I cannot wait to see what the next 15 years of partnership brings us.

I would like to take a last minute here to ensure that you all receive an invitation and a welcome to attend SVA's 15th National Conference. Held at Disney's Coronado Springs in Florida from January 5th to the 7th, and it's a premier opportunity to engage with student veterans from across the country. We've always appreciated a strong American Legion presence at our national conference, especially from the post level, and I hope to see you all this year. I'd again like to thank The American Legion for welcoming me here to your National Convention and welcoming SVA chapter leaders to your posts across the nation and welcoming the promise of our shared potential. And though I've been a member of The American Legion for some time, I am officially becoming a PUFL, so I just wanted to share that with all of you first. *(Applause)*

Thank you all for your time and thank you for your support of veterans in higher education. Thanks. *(Applause)* ...*At this time the delegation viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 and of veterans from previous generations. The vice president of infrastructure services for USAA is a retired brigadier general of the U.S. Air Force whose career includes two squadron commands, two group commands, a wing command and headquarters staff for the Air Force and secretary of Defense. Please give a warm welcome to Brigadier General Mitchel H. Butikofer. *(Applause)*

Greetings: Brigadier General (Ret.) Mitchel H. Butikofer
Vice President of Infrastructure Services, USAA

Good afternoon. Thank you, Commander Dillard, for your welcome and introduction. Honorable members of The American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion, I am honored to join you here today for your 103rd National Convention and to speak to you on behalf of USAA. I bring you warm greetings from our CEO Wayne Peacock and our 38,000 employees who make up the USAA team and who work tirelessly every day to serve the financial needs of 13 million members of our nation's military and their families.

We thank you. Thank you for your service to our country and for all that you do for our nation's veterans and their families. The impact of your continued leadership and civic

contributions is seen and felt all across the nation. Your motto, "Veterans Strengthening America," is evident in many ways, including the 4.4 million hours of volunteer community service, which you record each year by The American Legion posts across the nation. These hours represent countless examples of selfless service, including most recently right here in Milwaukee, where many of you volunteered your time over the last few days to spruce up the revered War Memorial Center with needed improvements, including touch-up painting, red granite vehicle barriers bearing the service branch logos, and black marble benches, and then pulling weeds, removing weeds from the landscaping, power spraying and removing debris between the bricks of the Vietnam War Memorial.

Your contributions to the Milwaukee War Memorial, a landmark that has stood for 65 years honoring our nation's fallen and serving as a hub for veterans' activity, only scratches the surface of the multitude of ways The American Legion supports causes larger than yourselves and inspires others to serve in our communities and to serve in our country.

Just like The American Legion, USAA is grounded in and committed to serving the military and their families. Having just celebrated USAA's 100th anniversary this past June, just three years after The American Legion's centennial celebration, our organizations share a common history not only in our tenure but in our mission and our legacy. For the past 12 years, USAA and The American Legion has cemented a strong relationship to jointly execute on the shared values of serving our nation's veterans. And like you, we are also looking forward to the next 100 years with focus to sustain the vision of those 25 Army officers who founded USAA in 1922. Our employees give their all to deliver on that vision every day, not only to serve the day-to-day financial needs of military families, but also in initiatives like our recycled rides 100-car giveaway program. That is one of the hallmarks of USAA's centennial celebration.

The National Auto Body Council Recycled Rides allows insurers, collision repair shops, paint suppliers, parts vendors, and other industry partners to repair and donate vehicles to deserving servicemembers and service organizations in local communities throughout the country. Through this program, USAA committed to donate 100 vehicles to 100 active-duty servicemembers and veterans who have fallen on hard times. We believe, having reliable transportation is an important step toward financial security and are proud to be well into the midst of these donations. We will deliver our 100th vehicle before the end of this year.

Another area of shared goals is helping veterans find and transition to meaningful jobs with employers who understand and value the skills of military servicemembers. It's no secret that finding employment for veterans comes with its unique challenges associated with translating military skills and jargon into the private sector lingo. Both The American Legion and USAA have worked with the Hiring Our Heroes program, offering job fairs and numerous other services and initiatives aimed at reducing veteran unemployment and helping veterans transition to civilian life.

Additionally, USAA and the USAA Foundation have contributed more than \$16.6 million since 2018 to national nonprofit organizations that provide fellowships, career training, entrepreneurship support, transition workshops, and mentoring for nearly 1 million transitioning active-duty veterans and military spouses. Through these initiatives we are proud to report that more than 7,000 veterans, military spouses, guardsmen, and reservists are part of the USAA employee family, and we are committed to hiring even more.

In 1945 President Harry S. Truman stated, "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude." President Truman is but one of many leaders throughout history who have proclaimed our nation's obligation to take care of our veterans and chip away at the debt owed for their sacrifices. As a nation, as The American Legion, and as USAA, we must keep veteran care and support at the top of our priorities. You, the members of The American Legion, have consistently done that for more than 100 years, and I am moved and inspired in knowing you will maintain this momentum for now and many years to

come. USAA is honored to support you, veterans who know firsthand the meaning of sacrifice, in setting the example that honors those who have gone above and beyond and in doing so are strengthening America.

Thank you for this great honor to join you today and be part of this conference. May God bless each and every one of you. May God bless our veterans. And most importantly, may God bless the United States of America. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

National Commander's Report to Convention **Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander**

Our next speaker, oh, I don't have to introduce him, do I? You know him after that video. The video you just saw was supposed to be my year in review, but we're not done yet! We're still going to have a lot of excitement over the next two days.

American Legion Family, delegates, and guests: We did it! You did it. The American Legion Auxiliary did it. The Sons of The American Legion did it. Thanks to your congressional visits, letters, phone calls, e-mails and hard work the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act of 2022 is now law! *(Applause)*

It would not have passed Congress without you. As a former vice president once said about another major health care law, "It is a big blankin' deal!" Now, an estimated 3.5 million veterans exposed to burn pits can get the benefits that they deserve. The same goes for those exposed to Agent Orange, radiation and other poisons and toxins. When I ran for national commander, I did so on the platform of "No Veteran Left Behind." The PACT Act will ensure that millions will not be. But there will always be more work to do.

On December 1, 2021, I issued a news release calling for our federal government to remain open. Though a budget agreement was reached, it should not have to come to down to the final days and hours for us to wonder whether the Flag we fought under has a functional government backing it. Congress still has not passed legislation guaranteeing that our Coast Guard will be paid during the government shutdown. During the government shutdown of 2019, the brave men and women of that service continued to defend our shores and perform search and rescues, while their paychecks were unfairly held hostage. It was The American Legion, through what is now the Veterans & Children Foundation, that provided more than \$1 million of temporary financial assistance to Coast Guard families in need during that stressful time. *(Applause)*

Through the assistance is called temporary, these are grants that do not require repayment. This is the type of service your American Legion provides to our country and our communities. This is just another example of how we are Veterans Strengthening America. Even so, Congress should ensure that our troops never again experience pay interruptions and pass legislation to ensure funding for our Coast Guard and all other military branches during these political squabbles.

This was a year in which veterans achieved two significant victories in the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Texas vs. Torres*, the court ruled that a former state trooper had the right to sue his state after it refused to rehire and accommodate him following health conditions that were incurred while he was deployed. The ruling was a perfect response to national Resolution 85, passed at our Reno Convention in 2017, which calls for the strengthening of re-employment rights for Guard and reserve members returning from deployment. It is just another example of our America delegates being ahead of our public policymakers. The other Supreme Court ruling this year that we applaud, protects the right of a high school coach to pray on the football field during games. *(Applause)*

The coach happened to be a veteran, though we support the right of all Americans to practice their faith in a manner that is guaranteed by our First Amendment. When veterans are denied their constitutional rights, it meets my definition of veterans left behind.

During my acceptance remarks a year ago, I pointed out that more than 114,000

veterans have taken their lives since 9/11. Now it is undoubtedly higher. Going forward, you are going to hear a lot about how The American Legion pledges to "Be the One" and how we ask all Americans to "Be the One" to stop veterans' suicide. Jack Power of St. Petersburg, Florida, attempted suicide when he knew he was about to be homeless due to undiagnosed PTSD. In a letter published in the August issue of *The American Legion Magazine*, he wrote, "Most days I am grateful I survived. Thanks to VA treatment, I was able to reconstruct my life."

Ladies and gentlemen, this is why we have Buddy Checks! This is why it is so important that we check on the welfare of our fellow veterans. Very few of us are professional therapists but we do know how to listen and ensure that veterans in crisis get to the VA or other qualified counselors. We do these things because we are committed to the cause of helping veterans.

I own an insurance agency and know that having a good product is not enough. You have to sell it! That means engaging with your customers and potential customers. Signing up a new member is only a band-aid approach if you don't make that member feel welcome. Attend a couple of post meetings with those new members. Sit next to them. Don't just call them when it's time to collect dues. If they feel like family, they will stay in the family! We are still the largest veteran's organization, but we need to be a lot larger.

I have seen the love that the public has for The American Legion. You can see it in the crowds that root for our race team. I attended the dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt Junior Statue of Liberty at Normandy this year. You can see the love the French have for our American Legion founder and our country, as flags were waving everywhere. You can see the love that Americans have for us every time we send our most precious resources, their children, to participate in American Legion programs. You can see the love and gratitude veterans have for our organization every time a service officer helps them successfully obtain the benefits which they earned. We need to do a better job of codifying their love into membership. Even people who are not eligible, are usually close to someone who is. And with the LEGION Act, millions and millions of people are eligible to be members of the American Legion Family.

This year, we have returned to normalcy. I had a few scheduled visits cancelled due to the pandemic, but for the most part Americans are back out in public. All of our national youth programs have returned and meetings are back to being "in-person." The COVID-induced membership slide is over. We cannot use the coronavirus as an excuse to not recruit and renew.

A couple of years ago, our National Executive Committee adopted Veterans Strengthening America as the official marketing motto of The American Legion. In order for the organization to truly strengthen America, it will take many of us. A larger American Legion is a stronger American Legion. And a stronger American Legion means a stronger America. God bless you all, God bless our American Legion Family and I hope you all enjoy the rest of our convention. Thank you. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 103rd Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30-September 1, 2022. The convention business sessions will be held in the Wisconsin Center 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, September 1, 2022, 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 (August 1, 2022) 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 or 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 represented 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 by-laws.

Department Officials

Department officials, unless elected as delegates or alternates to the National Convention, have no privileges in the convention except as guests of their respective 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.
 Signed: Paul E. Dillard, National Commander.
 Attest: Daniel S. Wheeler, National Adjutant.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you very much, Mr. Adjutant. I now declare the 103rd Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened. The chair 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**

Good afternoon, everyone. Commander Dillard and my fellow delegates, there were 35 delegates to the Committee on Credentials and Rules met at 8:30 a.m., August 28, 2022, in the Hilton Milwaukee, Walker Room, Fourth Floor. A quorum was declared. 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 approved revised edition of the May 10-11, 2017, standing rules of the convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for organizing National Conventions of The American Legion, which you will find today printed on page 23 in this year's National Convention Guidebook.

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 August 2nd, 2022, and in accordance with Article V of the national Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 departments is 1,999 plus the National Commander, for a total of 2,000 delegates to the National Convention.

Alabama	25	California	89
Alaska	13	Colorado	27
Arizona	46	Connecticut	23
Arkansas	17	Delaware	16

Proceedings of Tuesday, August 30, 2022

Dist. Of Col.	7	New Jersey	44
Florida	123	New Mexico	16
France	9	New York	94
Georgia	47	North Carolina	45
Hawaii	8	North Dakota	18
Idaho	16	Ohio	89
Illinois	76	Oklahoma	21
Indiana	75	Oregon	23
Iowa	45	Pennsylvania	137
Kansas	28	Philippines	7
Kentucky	24	Puerto Rico	10
Louisiana	23	Rhode Island	11
Maine	23	South Carolina	29
Maryland	52	South Dakota	23
Massachusetts	38	Tennessee	30
Mexico	7	Texas	68
Michigan	68	Utah	13
Minnesota	70	Vermont	15
Mississippi	17	Virginia	53
Missouri	39	Washington	30
Montana	16	West Virginia	21
Nebraska	32	Wisconsin	56
Nevada	14	Wyoming	12
New Hampshire	21		

The Credentials and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action to be taken. 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 Credentials and Rules, to include the aforementioned 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. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and a second to approve the report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Opposed, nays. The report is adopted.

CHAIRMAN WEST: Thank you, commander, for the privilege of making that report and also for a year of professional leadership to us all. Thank you, sir. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I'll now entertain a motion to adopt the Rules of the Convention. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Got a motion and second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nays. Ayes have it. The Rules of Convention are adopted. Thank you, George. The chair recognizes Gaither M. Keener, Jr., 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

Thank you, Commander. Commander, delegates of the convention, thirty-four members met at the Hilton Milwaukee in Wright Ballroom A at 0900 on Sunday, August 28, 2022. Brian Ruiz (Indiana), Corporate Financial Controller, opened the meeting as staff liaison and the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary.

Gaither Keener (North Carolina) was elected chairman, and Carl E. Levi (Tennessee) was elected secretary, by unanimous vote. George Lussier of Virginia made a motion to empower the Secretary to deliver the report if the Chairman was unable. The motion was seconded by Matthew Shuman (Arizona) and passed by unanimous vote.

Reports were received from Paul Evenson (South Dakota) Chairman of the Marketing Commission and David F. Wallace (Virginia) Chairman of the Media and Communications Commission.

Gaither Keener reported that the 2021 consolidated financial statements, which you have copies of, was audited by Crowe, LLP who issued an unqualified opinion, which means a clear, concise, no issue in our audit.

The Chairman introduced the National Treasurer, Shawn Long, CPA (Indiana), who updated the committee on the economy. Treasurer Long completed his report with a recommendation for national per capita to remain \$18.50. Autrey James (California) made a motion to keep dues at \$18.50. The motion was seconded by Tony Betts (Louisiana) and adopted by unanimous vote. Chairman Keener introduced Brian Ruiz (Indiana) to report on the financial position of this organization.

A motion was made by Bob Skinner (Idaho) to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee. It was seconded by Kevin Owens (Oregon) and approved unanimously. George Lussier (Virginia) requested permission to collect donations from the Convention Committee of Finance for American Legion Charities, in which \$1,000 was collected in the room. In other words, you couldn't leave until you left us some money. *(Laughter)*

As being no further business, the meeting recessed subject to the call of the chair at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Commander, as a duly authorized delegate of this convention, I hereby move this report be approved by the delegates. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, please indicate by the usual sign of aye. Opposed nays? The report of Finance is adopted. Next, we will be accepting donations for the Veterans & Children Foundation, American Legion charities, and NEF. Those presenting checks will please proceed to the microphone, announce the amount and donor, and then go to the front on the floor for photographs. First, I authorize Judge Vince Gaughan for remarks. ...*National Vice Commander Michael Mittrione assumed the Chair.*

Collection of Donations

DIRECTOR GAUGHAN: Thank you, National Commander Paul Dillard. What I want to do is introduce you a little bit to what the Veterans & Children Foundation does. First, we were formerly known as the American Legion Endowment Fund, and now we're doing business as the Veterans & Children Foundation. One of our functions is the temporary financial assistance award program. This is an award given to military and veterans' families with minor children living in the home. The grant provides a safety net to our military and veterans' families with minor children who are experiencing financial hardship which threatens the stability of our home. In the last decade, The American Legion has awarded over \$6 million in temporary financial grants to veterans and veterans' families.

As the national commander said earlier, in 2019 alone, over 1,700 E-5 and under members of the Coast Guard who are not deemed necessary employees, who did not receive any salaries, got the temporary financial grant when the federal government shut down, totaling over \$1 million that The American Legion provided to these wonderful people. These grants allowed the active duty servicemembers to feed their family and also provide fuel for their automobiles so they could get to work and maintain their mission of readiness and so much more.

Our other function is the service officers. In 2020, \$14.25 billion was secured for our veterans alone by The American Legion accredited service officers. Disability claims specialists from the Veterans Affairs division at the Legion in 2021 processed over 1,600 disability cases last year with an estimated 70 percent approved on approval, netting \$77 million for our veterans. Now, the other thing that people don't know about, our national organization, The American Legion, hires a law firm in Washington, D.C., and they provide 15 to 16 lawyers that handle these appeals, and this is all funded through the Veterans & Children Foundation. So that's how important this is. Thank you, commander, for allowing me to give a little explanation about what we do. *(Applause)*

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FR): From China Post 1, we're proud to present the national commander for Veterans & Children Foundation a check for \$250 and for the National Emergency Fund, a check for \$5,000.

DELEGATE HUISMAN (AK): Steve Huisman, current president of FODPAL, I'd like to present for the Veterans & Children Foundation \$860.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (RI): Department of Rhode Island donates to the Veterans & Children Foundation \$500.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (RI): Central Falls, Rhode Island, post number 79, \$500 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (GA): Good afternoon. On behalf team Georgia, in honor of Willie Pitts Jr. the most decorated Vietnam veteran from Georgia, past alternate NEC, past department commander of Georgia we proudly donate \$5,000 to the National Emergency Fund and in addition donate \$5,000 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): On behalf of the Department of Ohio Charities, presenting a check for \$10,000 to the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE BRITTEN (MI): Representing the Department of Michigan, we have the outgoing commander, Richard Dubay, past department commander Brett Holt, Department Adjutant Ron Runyan, and I am Department Commander Marilyn Britten and we are donating \$500 to the Veterans & Children Foundation and \$2,000 to NEF. Thank you.

DELEGATE BOWMAN (IN): Lori Bowman, Department of Indiana 10th District. We are donating \$1,600 to the Veterans & Children Foundation. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (OH): The great First District, Department of Ohio contributes \$200 to the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE WOODS (ME): Lloyd Woods, on behalf of the past national vice commanders, we're donating \$500 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATE MURPHY (PA): Michael Murphy, Department of Pennsylvania, with me on stage is Department Commander Craig Wilhelm, National Executive Committee Member Michael Stelacio, Alternate National Executive Committee Member Paul Kennedy and our Department Adjutant Woody Hogan. We are donating \$1,500 to the Veterans & Children Foundation in addition to what we already did, and also to the National Emergency Fund, \$3,050 in addition.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): John Ivens Post 42, Grand Canyon, Arizona, \$1,000 National Emergency Fund.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AZ): On behalf of the Great State of Arizona, Department Commander Michael Simon, and the home of Past National Vice Commander George Cushing Arizona presents \$10,000.

DELEGATE HEIGERT (MO): Rich Heigert, from the great state of Missouri, along with Department Commander Rose Noonan, and our immediate past commander Gary Grigsby, we have \$5,232 for the National Emergency Fund, and to complete our commitment, seven-year commitment for the Veterans & Children Foundation, \$48,788.31.

DELEGATE NAY (MA): On behalf of the Department of Massachusetts, I'm Sally Nay, commander, our immediate past department commander, Anthony Diaz, and Mitchell Keil commander of Post 125 who will make a separate presentation. We would like to

present to the 1919 Society from the past commanders of the Department of Massachusetts a check today for \$10,305.39, bringing our grand total for this year to \$28,900.

DELEGATE KEIL (MA): I had used the 100 Miles for Hope to do my first big fundraising campaign, and we walked from our post in North Adams to a post in Sutton, Massachusetts, exactly 100 miles away. During that weekend for the Veterans & Children Foundation, we raised \$3,000.

DELEGATE HUSSEY (HI): Aloha from Hawaii. Jim Hussey, commander of the Department of Hawaii. I'm joined by NEC Fran Riddell, Adjutant George Lecompte and Sergeant-at-Arms CR Drumheller. The Legion Family of Hawaii would like to present a check for \$2,613.76 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATE WATSON (TX): From the Lone Star State, I'm immediate past department commander, Brett Watson. On behalf of the Department of Texas, so far, we've raised \$11,760 with a big shout out to three of my posts, Post 133 Temple, \$2,500; Post 294 Missouri City, \$2,500; and Post 376 Van Alsteen. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HILLYARD (VA): Frank Hillyard, delegation chairman, with me is Department Adjutant Dave Stein. The Department of Virginia proudly presents a check today for \$16,913.41 from the department Legion Riders, along with other money donated to the VCF brings the total for this year from the Department of Virginia to over \$118,900.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LAMARSH (NY): Frank LaMarsh, chairman of the delegation, with me is our department commander, Dave Riley and our adjutant, Jim Casey. I have a donation to the National Emergency Fund in the amount \$13,596, and I have a check for the Legacy Fund for the amount of \$6,410.

DELEGATE FELTMAN (SD): Doug Feltman, Department of South Dakota, birthplace of American Legion Baseball, with me today is National Executive Committee Member Jim Huls and Alternate National Executive Committee Member Denny Brenden and we have a donation to the Veterans & Children Foundation, \$9,100.

DELEGATE BOLAND (FL): On behalf of my wife Diane and I, \$2,500 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATE FERNLUND (MN): Representing Minnesota, I'm Past Department Commander Tom Fernlund, our new commander, Jennifer Havlick, our NEC Bill Barbknecht, Alternate NEC Peggy Moon, our past department commander and Minnesota American Legion Foundation president, Lloyd Ricker, and providing some additional donations, past national sergeant-at-arms Tom Schottenbauer and Pat Logan. From the Department of Minnesota, we have a donation for the National Emergency Fund for \$8,490, and for the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, \$10,000.

DELEGATE SCHOTTENBAUER (MN): Post 282 in the Department of Minnesota for the Veterans & Children Foundation, \$10,000.

DELEGATE LOGAN (MN): Pat Logan, Post 491, Bayport, Minnesota, and as you may or may not know, Past National Commander Dan Ludwig is a pretty big guy, so we got him a pretty big check for \$25,000 for the Veterans & Children Foundation. In addition, we gave \$10,000 earlier this year.

DELEGATE WEBER (OR): Don Weber, Department of Oregon, proud home of Past National Commander Charlie Schmidt, we present \$16,350 to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATE CULVER (TN): Lanny Culver, commander of the Department of Tennessee, the Volunteer State, we have \$4,000 for the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN PRICE (SC): Ron Price, delegation chairman, with me are Department Commander Jim Jarvis and Department Adjutant Michael Strauss. The Department of South Carolina is proud to present a check for the Veterans & Children Foundation for \$2,612. Thank you.

DELEGATE FISHER (IL): My name is Wayne Fisher, Department of Illinois, with me today are Jan Lipinski, Wayne Erickson, our NEC member and Roy Weber, our alternate. We have two checks. The first one is from Rogers Park Post 108 for \$10,000.

Jan was the district commander, and that post is now closed. But both these checks will go to NEF. The second check is from the Department of Illinois, and that's for \$15,711.50 for a total of \$25,711.50. When Roy started as commander, three years ago, his special project was the Illinois Disaster Relief Fund, and I kept that on as my special project this year. It's a program that's intended to provide small grants to our Auxiliary, our Sons, and our Legionnaires. It's something we did locally and it's a pretty popular program. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SUCEE (WA): Rick Sucee, delegation chair, with me is Department Commander Jim Cook. Department of Washington gives \$750 to NEF.

DELEGATE DUCHARME (TX): I'm Dennis Ducharme and this is Ed Richards and we represent William M. Randolph Post 593 in Converse, Texas. On behalf of our post, we donate \$500 to the National Emergency Fund. Thank you.

DELEGATE PERRA (NH): Wayne Perra, department adjutant from the Live Free or Die State, New Hampshire. On behalf of our membership, Department of New Hampshire, Commander Charlie Arkwell, and Legionnaire of the Year for New Hampshire Bernie Henry, we'd like to donate \$1,000 to the National Emergency Fund. Thank you.

DELEGATE TESTER (VT): From the Green Mountain State, I'm immediate past department commander Catherine Tester, along with me is Department Commander Tom Scanlon. From the Department of Vermont, we'd like to donate \$825 to the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE SCANLON (VT): In addition to being the department commander, I'm also a working Legionnaire, an adjutant at a local post, and on behalf of Middlebury Post 27 we donate \$1,000 to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DUNN (NJ): I'm Delegate Chairman Danny Dunn from the Department of Jersey, with my adjutant, John Baker, we have a \$39,525 donation to the VCF, and \$5,000 to the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE BROWN (ND): Representing legendary North Dakota Nice, I'm Dan Brown, department commander, and on behalf of the Legionnaires of our great state, I'd like to present a check for \$1,000 to the National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE ARROYO(PR): I am Antonio Arroyo, past department commander, and on behalf of Department of Puerto Rico, we are donating \$750 for the Veterans & Children Foundation.

DELEGATE CLINTON (CO): I am Terry Clinton, I am immediate past president for the national American Legion College Alumni Association. This is Dave Wallace who is our newly elected president. On behalf of the alumni association, we'd like to present a donation to VCF in the amount of \$2,500.

DELEGATE CHAPIN (WI): I'm Jim Chapin, past NEC for the great state of Wisconsin. On behalf of my family, we are donating \$10,000 to the Veterans & Children Foundation. Thank you. *...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Wow, that was one line I didn't ever want to go away. I wanted to continue to be standing over there. Because the charity that I set this year for myself was the Veterans & Children Foundation. We're 286,000 away from making the 2 million, 286,000. So, we can continue to give the rest of the week, and it will be fine.

Just today on the NEF fund was given \$84,864, which is a total this year for \$835,673.96 total for this year. American Legion Charities, the stage gave \$3,000. The total so far this year was \$1,714,233.15. And really, we just need 209,000 to get my charity. So, remember that tonight and tomorrow, we can keep giving. The Veterans & Children Foundation on the stage today \$216,514.46, for a total this year, \$1,791,168.78 total for this year. So far this year, \$4,341,075.89 to these three charities this year. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I now call on the national adjutant for any announcements.

Announcements

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: There is a Veterans & Children Foundation booth in the back of the hall. It is an informational booth about the Veterans & Children Foundation's work and about The American Legion 1919 Society. I recommend that you visit the booth when you get a chance. It will be here throughout the convention. You will learn why so many generous donors strongly believe that our VCF is a program worth supporting, and you will also have the opportunity to have your name added to this list that will be shown at our meetings, and you can become a platinum, gold, or silver 1919 Society member, which will entitle you to a beautiful hat pin or lapel pin and a ribbon that you can wear around your neck. Like voting in Chicago, we encourage you to give early and give often. *(Laughter)*

Salute to Colors and Recess

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Legionnaires, please join me in a salute to the Flag of the United States of America. One! Two! The time is now 3:18. The Convention will stand in recess until 8:30 a.m. tomorrow. Have a good evening.

... At 3:18 p.m., Tuesday, August 30, 2022, the 103rd Annual National Convention of The American Legion stood in recess.

PROCEEDINGS
Second Day

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the second day of the 103rd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had.

Call to Order

Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER OXFORD: The Convention will come to order. With the flag of our nation in place, hand salute. Two! Please remain standing while I call on National Chaplain Stan of Colorado for the invocation. Ladies and gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation

Reverend Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado, National Chaplain

Has God been good to you? ...*Chorus of "Yes"* And I pray he'll continue to be good to you. Please pray with me. Dear Heavenly Father, as we reconvene this meeting, we pray that yesterday's session was a benefit to many and that we all have learned something from the speakers that we have had. We pray that we will be able to get something out of all those speakers yesterday, that we may take these back to our department, district, posts, units and squadrons. And my last three words to you. ...*Chorus of "Go to church!"* And all God's children said ... "*Amen.*" Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you, Pastor Stan. Ladies and gentlemen, please remain uncovered as Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Griffith from Texas leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Michael Griffith, Texas National Sergeant-at-Arms

Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country.

...The Convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Convention is now in session. I would like to call our national vice commanders to join me on state for our next presentation which will be given by retired Navy Captain Louis Cavaliere of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Foundation.

Presentation: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion
Capt. Louis Cavaliere, USN (Ret.), Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation

Good morning, everyone. I give you greetings from the Chapel of Four Chaplains at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and also from my Post 405, also in Philadelphia, from the great state of Pennsylvania. I know you're somewhere in the audience here. So, the Chapel of Four Chaplains, in February 2023, we will remember the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the *Dorchester* and the 75th anniversary of the Chapel of Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation.

As I begin my talks, I always begin with two things. Number one, I thank all you veterans for your service; and, number two, for those of you who were in Vietnam, welcome home. And I also ask that you please remember the Veterans Crisis Line, 988

press 1. It just changed. The reason I say that you'll be hearing it in my remarks very shortly. And please, we ask for your support for Resolution 22, which will be coming out of the Department of New Jersey, Resolution 22 to prevent veteran suicides. I am joined up here by my colleague Daniel Dunn, who is the state commander from the Department of New Jersey. *(Applause)*

I knew somebody was out there. So, New Jersey is just a river across from Philadelphia where the chapel is. And there's a bridge that connects Philadelphia with New Jersey and it's called the Walt Whitman Bridge. And if you go up on that bridge, at the very top, in the middle of the span, about 300 feet above the water, there's a sign up there. And it's a sign that says for suicides call this number.

Now, I never saw that sign until one day there was a big commotion at the top of the Walt Whitman Bridge. And somebody was up there who was trying to jump. A motorist stopped, realized what was going on. He saw the sign and called that number. That hotline called the Chapel of Four Chaplains and told us there was a veteran at the top of the bridge who was going to jump. Well, we went up there, and we tried to talk him down. And we did. But we found out that he wasn't a veteran. But he was the father of a veteran who was recently killed in Afghanistan. So, we can see here that these stories affect the family. And if I've learned anything from working at the chapel all these years, it's the effect on the families.

So today I'm here to induct your national committee executive staff into the Legion of Honor of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. And that's for selfless service because everybody here knows that the Four Chaplains gave up their life jackets and went down with the sinking *Dorchester*, a ship that sank in 20 minutes. And there's not a lot of time to think about what you're going to do. I was very impressed with this year's theme of "Be the One" and "No Vet Left Behind." And that's the way we look at it. Because every day at the Chapel of Four Chaplains is Veterans Day and Memorial Day. And we want to be the one to help those veterans who need us. And we extend that to all of you. You all can be the one.

You know, right about the time of the sinking of the *Dorchester*, Winston Churchill said this very famous line to rally his people. And nobody ever remembers this line, but they'll remember the story I'll tell you afterwards. Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get. But we make a life by what we give." We make a life by what we give. Well, Winston Churchill was the prime minister, there was a person in Congress whose name was named Lady Astor. She was the first female member of Parliament. She never agreed with Winston Churchill. They always argued back and forth. And Winston would come back and get her all upset. So, one day, Lady Astor said to Sir Winston, she was so flustered, she said, "Sir Winston, if I were married to you I would put poison in your tea." To which Sir Winston replied, "Lady Astor, if I were married to you, I would drink it." *(Laughter)*

So please, don't remember that story, but please remember the line of what he said was, "We make a life by what we give." And Paul Dillard, from Texas; James Higuera, from California; Jerrold W. Wilson, from Ohio; Angel Narvaez, from Puerto Rico; Cory Bates, from Rhode Island; and Michael Mitrione, from Virginia have done just that. They have made a life by what they have given, not only to the Legion, but also to all of those veterans who are in need. So, I ask you all now to please remember, press 988, press 1 to remember the sacrifice of the Four Chaplains and to remember those Gold Star families, some of whom were standing at the top of the Walt Whitman Bridge, who need our help. I ask you all to please stand.

We all know the legacy of the Four Chaplains, and it's my pleasure to induct the national committee and your commander into the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor, remembering the heroic sacrifice of the Four Chaplains on February 3, 1943. Thank you.

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 Chaplains Foundation Board Chairman Louis Cavaliere. They are being awarded to National Commander Paul E. Dillard, National Vice Commander Jerrold W. Wilson, National Vice Commander Angel O. Narvaez, National Vice Commander James T. Higuera, National Vice Commander Michael F. Mitrione and National Vice Commander Cory D. Bates. (Applause)

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have an announcement to make. You may have noticed in the back of this hall is a booth. It is an informational booth about The American Legion 1919 society. I recommend you visit the booth during breaks and when you get the chance. It will be here throughout the convention. You may see why so many generous donors strongly believe that our Veterans & Children Foundation is a program worth supporting. Remember, we're only, like, \$209,000 from making my goal. So, give often. Thank you. *...At this time the delegation viewed a video. (Applause)*

Our next guest speaker is a senior global security and international affairs executive who specializes in emerging security threats and challenges. He has previously served as the director of Veterans and Military Affairs with the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission. He is a retired U.S. Army officer with a master's in political science and international relations from Northeastern University. He is speaking on behalf of the America250 Foundation. Our nation will be celebrating a very significant birthday in four years. Please welcome, David Hamon. *(Applause)*

**Address: David Hamon, Advisory Council Chief Manager and Veterans Affairs
Advisor, America250 Foundation**

Good morning. Commander Dillard, officers of the Legion, distinguished guests, fellow Legionnaires, ladies and gentlemen. Today I greet you in the name of the national Semiquincentennial Commission and the America250 Foundation. Created by Congress, the commission and the foundation are preparing for 2026. In 2026, and beyond, the commission and foundation, its officials and its members will guide and help all Americans to observe the 250th anniversary of our great country.

Many of you in the audience will recall the 200th anniversary in 1976. The celebration was steeped in the history of our nation's founding. Nearly every American community back then held a local celebration, with fireworks, food and fun for all ages. And who can forget the sight of those magnificent tall ships entering New York Harbor, and the Liberty Train that went from coast to coast with a replica of the Liberty Bell. Well, now it's time to commemorate another historic milestone in our country's history. And I come before you today to ask the Legion to join the America250 movement.

This mission of the 250th Foundation is to join all of those commemorating the independent spirit of our nation in honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence by supporting various programs and partnerships as varied and vibrant as our country and to welcome today's generation to see and celebrate our people and our history and places in new ways. We will endeavor to rise to the calling of our highest democratic ideals. By constructing a legacy of meaningful impact that endures beyond 2026, we will engage as many Americans as possible, reaching across the states, of Native American tribal nations and each U.S. territory to empower all to serve and give back to their communities.

Our stated objectives are to, first, lead the country in celebrating the diversity of American life and our common humanity. Second, to deepen our understanding of American history and striving towards our highest ideals. And lastly, to inspire a new movement of civics and civic education to build a collective future. Our path to 2026 and

beyond follows three complementary phases: Engagement through public outreach to build a crescendo of programs that deepen our understanding of history; celebrate the diversity of American life; inspire civics engagement and build an enduring legacy that lasts beyond 2026.

Through a combination of America250 national signature programs, national partnerships with organizations such as The American Legion, state and local programs led by communities, states and territory partnerships, and, most importantly, at the grassroots level via local affiliates, chapters and posts, associations of all member-based organizations, we will engage millions of Americans. We are counting on local governments and organizational programming to be the primary entry point for many Americans in this engagement and celebration. Planning precedes a pace as we establish national partnerships with a variety of nonprofit, commercial and governmental entities.

You can see by this slide the current status of state and territorial-based partnerships. By year's end we will have over 30 state partnerships with the equivalent organizational offices in the capital cities of the states. As of today, we have held meaningful conversation with each state and territory and continue to guide them on setting up their own offices by providing proclamations and model legislation. The state organizations will be key to planning and execution of many of the collective activities and larger events. It is hoped that the state organizations will develop their own community networks and begin the conversation among their own citizens. Each state will be unique in how it sets up its own programming and milestones.

Through our America250 Veterans, Military & Family Member Advisory Council, in which The American Legion has a standing member, we are the pathfinders in establishing national recognition for service, sacrifice and the role that military service plays in modeling the traits of leadership, citizenship, and the everyday contributions of veterans, military and family members who help build their own local communities. The council is made up of 14 diverse members, representing a cross-section of veterans, military and family-member interests, led by two retired major generals and with the advice of ex-officio from the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration, we're providing the America250 Foundation officers and the semiquincentennial commissioners advice on how our military communities should be recognized by national commission during the commemoration.

It is the stated objective of our advisory council to officially recognize in a material way every living veteran during the commemoration, and further, to create and ensure meaningful special service tribute paid to all active-duty, reserve component, servicemembers and military families everywhere. To accomplish this, we need the advice and the guidance and the contributions of all veteran service and military service organizations. It is our vision that on July 4, 2026, every community across the United States will have a celebration organized and led by veterans and military members. A hometown celebration unlike any other. With the aid of the Department of Defense, every continental U.S. military base, every overseas base, and all the ships at sea, will hold their own celebratory events, 250 years young.

To accomplish these ambitious goals, we need your help. The Legion's storied and cherished place in American history, its unique program on Americanism and the valued and trusted role Legion posts play in every community make you a critical asset as we plan this national commemoration. The Legion's exemplary record of bringing national issues to the attention of the citizenry is needed as we plan for 2026. So please join us in this journey. Reach out to us, to your local and state governments that are organizing their own commemoration activities, to your post leadership. Create planning committees, especially at the grassroots level. Volunteer your time. Involve your local institutions, including your schools. We want to hear from you. Please send us your ideas on how the organization should observe the commemoration. How will you celebrate? You can reach me at this address or via the A250 website or through the national public affairs outreach office here,

also from your Americanism folks that I've met recently, or you can write me at this address: dhamon@America250.org.

And finally, I want to close this morning with a very special thank you, as a former member of staff of the United States World War I Centennial Commission, the Legion public affairs staff provided us tremendous support during our commemoration. More importantly, I enjoyed meeting the many members of the legacy posts named after World War I veterans across the country. Leading up to the year of the commemoration and the opening of the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park in our nation's capital.

As you can see by this photo, every evening a volunteer bugler in a doughboy uniform the organization Taps for Veterans plays "Taps" at the memorial. In 2024, the Bronze Wall of Soldiers journey will complete in magnificent style the long overdue tribute to the nearly 7 million men and women who served and sacrificed on that forgotten war. Please visit the memorial, the newest and one of the most popular memorials in Washington D.C. Thanks to all of you for your support in that endeavor. And thank you for allowing me to speak to you today on the 250th anniversary of our country. *(Applause)*

...National Vice Commander Bates assumed the Chair.

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

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: In addition to saving lives in documented instances as a firefighter with the Clinton Fire Department in Iowa, our next award recipient has volunteered as a first responder and training officer with the Charlotte Volunteer Fire Department in his hometown. An example of his bravery occurred during a house fire on May 23, 2019. Entering the window of a burning home, the fire department lieutenant found an unresponsive resident laying on the floor. Despite significant flames, our award winner and the fellow members of his team were able to rescue the victim, who would be hospitalized and ultimately survive his injuries. He has been a member of the C.F.D. since 2009 and holds an associate degree in fire science from Kirkwood Community College. Please welcome our 2022 National Firefighter of Year, Lt. Ryan Winkler. *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: This is to certify that The American Legion has bestowed the title of National Firefighter of the Year upon Ryan T. Winkler 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 Clinton Fire Department and firefighters everywhere.

2022 National Firefighter of Year

Lt. Ryan T. Winkler, Clinton Fire Department, Charlotte, Iowa

Thank you to The American Legion for honoring me with this award. It is difficult for firefighters to accept awards as individuals. And this is no different, for the two lives that were saved in the nomination letter submitted were not saved by me alone and could not have been saved by me alone.

All my life I have been part of various teams whether it was in football, wrestling, track or Boy Scouts. And when I was a young man, I knew I wanted to be a part of a team, and the fire service is a passionate team to be part of. Credit for this award goes to the teams that I was a part of. And those in particular, on those particular days, the members include Riley Bly, Jordan Moore, Ryan Cryer, Alex Sellnau, Van Johnson and Austen Petersen. Without any of the team members working together to achieve a common goal I would not be standing here to receive this award. And they deserve all the credit.

I would like to thank the Charlotte Fire Department, where I was given the opportunity to start my career in the fire service as a junior member, and currently is where I live in a town of 350 people. When I started 18 years ago, I would never have thought a kid from a small town could win an award like this, the National Firefighter of the Year. Charlotte

Fire Department provided me with a great start in this career and has provided for many others as well.

Next, I'd like to thank the city of Clinton Fire Department. Thirteen years ago, they provided me with an opportunity as a full-time paid firefighter, literally a dream come true. When I started, it was a pretty rough go. It seemed like I failed at every aspect in the job almost every day. Looking back, I like to say, "I don't mind learning things the hard way; I just wish it wasn't every time." But all my failures I've learned from and grew into a better firefighter. The Clinton Fire Department is a great place to work, and I have loved it every day. I would also like to give a shout-out to my shift, the C shift, the Firedogs. It's a privilege and honor to serve you as a lieutenant on the C shift. I know going into any situation with you guys, we will always come out accomplishing the goal because of our teamwork.

The last team I'm honoring to be a part of is a team that's been with me since the beginning and is the team that is here today, my family, out in the front row. To all of my parents, you have been here supporting me, encouraging me to push myself to be the best possible version of myself that I could be. Supporting the decision to enter the fire service. I'm not sure my mother knows what I actually do or how dangerous it is. And I'm not sure she really wants to know. And to my children, Braden, you are a fearless little boy with a huge personality. And no matter how long of a day I had at work, I light up when I hear you yelling "Daddy" as I walk through the door and hear your feet scurrying across the floor to give me a big hug. Ruth, you may only be two weeks old, but your dad loves you more than you could ever imagine. And I can't wait to see the kind of daughter you grow up to be. You may keep us awake at night right now, but I love every minute of it. And thank you for coming into our world. And finally, and most importantly, to my wife, Callie. We have been through a lot in almost 10 years together as a couple, from leukemia, melanoma, infertility and going through a line of duty death.

January 5, 2019 changed our lives forever. We lost Lt. Eric Hosette, one of my close friends, and a member of both the Charlotte and Clinton fire departments. The spouses and the members of both departments didn't receive enough credit for what they went through in 2019. I, myself battled mental health issues, using alcohol as a coping mechanism. And this was post-traumatic stress. Callie was always there supporting me and letting me fight the battle the way I needed to. You could say she was the bumpers on a bowling alley, just keeping me out of the gutter and moving forward. She was there on the other end to help lift me up and transition into post-traumatic growth. I love you very much, and certainly would not be here without your unwavering support. *(Applause)*

I may be the one receiving this award, The American Legion 2022 National Firefighter of the Year, but the award would not be possible without the teams mentioned above. And all the credit goes to every single one of those team members mentioned. Thank you. *(Applause)*

2022 National Law Enforcement Officer of Year
Sheriff David R. Hines, Hanover County Sheriff's Office, Mechanicsville, Virginia

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: Our Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is unavailable to be with us. We'd like to acknowledge his accomplishments. He's a sheriff with more than 35 years' experience, a graduate at the University of Richmond and the FBI's National Academy. He was recognized by Virginia Governors Bob McDonnell and Terry McAuliffe for his service and expertise. He was appointed to the Governor's Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse, as well as the Governor's Board of Juvenile Justice. In 2020, he was selected as The American Legion Department of Virginia Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Our National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is Sheriff David R. Hines, and we thank him for his service. *(Applause)*

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Nominated by President Biden, our next guest was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in as the 11th secretary of Veterans Affairs on February 9, 2021. He previously served as White House chief of staff for President Obama. During confirmation hearings for his current position, he said, "There is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our Veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

His leadership and advocacy were important factors in the passage and enactment of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Pact Act, which will indeed help VA and our country uphold the promises made to our veterans. Please give a warm welcome to the Honorable Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis R. McDonough.

**Address: Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

Good morning, everyone and, what a terrific showing by The American Legion, by Legionnaires. Commander Dillard, Paul, thank you for that kind introduction and, more importantly, for your courageous service in Vietnam and your devotion to veterans and their families in these decades since. Auxiliary President Kathy Daudistel, good morning, and you for lifting up America's hidden heroes, veterans' caregivers. Commander Mike Fox and all the Sons of The American Legion, congratulations on your 50th National Convention and your 90th birthday. And Chanin, good to you. Good to see that you escaped the beltway for a few days. I really appreciate you and your partnership.

There's so many here deserving of recognition, deserving of our deep gratitude. But none more deserving than America's veterans, you, Legionnaires, your families, caregivers and survivors. My deepest thanks to all of you for your service, your selflessness and your courage. *(Applause)*

You are the heart of this country. And you're the heart of everything we do at VA. And it's always, always inspiring to be with you. And it's especially nice to be back up in this neck of the woods, not too far from my old stomping grounds in Stillwater, Minnesota about 250 miles west of here. As a young man, back in 1988, which seems like yesterday, although it doesn't look like yesterday, I played Legion baseball in Bayport, Minnesota for Post 491. And coming to a baseball town like this one so close to home, I'm reminded of the legends of Legion Baseball and what has given this country, like Navy vet Bob Feller and Ted Williams, Navy vet of World War II, Marine vet in Korea. And since we're in Milwaukee we can't forget the 1964 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year, Army vet, Hall of Famer and Brewer alumnus Rollie Fingers. And pitching these days for the Brew Crew is Brandon Woodruff, who played American Legion baseball for Post 49 in Tupelo. Winning pitcher against the Cubs on Saturday, and beating the Cubs is not that big a deal. *(Laughter)*

It's often said that there's nothing more American than baseball, but The American Legion damn sure gives baseball a run for its money. *(Applause)*

My point here is that Legion Baseball is just one of the so many ways that you are part of the very fabric of this country. And the contributions the Legion has made to veterans and this country over the years is incalculable. Planting the seed that grew into the Department of Veterans Affairs that we have today. Giving vets and families the GI Bill of Rights that fueled the Greatest Generation and is still investing our country's future, over \$410 billion in GI Bill education benefits to 27 million vets and their families, and that's just so far. *(Applause)*

And as the past year demonstrates, the Legion is fighting harder and harder for vets, from zeroing out Legions' nearly 5,000 legacy appeals claims to Buddy Checks during the pandemic which touched well over 234,000 vets at a time when they needed that compassion outreach the most, to the nearly 5,000 vets you helped get jobs, to the more than \$700,000 in Legacy Scholarships and nearly \$500,000 in national scholarships for the next generation of great Americans. Now, I could go on and on. And you know. But the

bottom line is this: The American Legion, well, you're awesome. Some of our nation's premier advocates for vets, their families and really for all Americans. So, I thank you for all you've done, for your partnership, and for all I know that you'll keep doing in the future.

Now, I want to talk today about what we've done at VA over the past year, since I saw you last, and what we're going to do over the next year to deliver for vets. I know that it hasn't been an easy year for anyone. But that just means that our shared mission has never been more important than it is right now. And I'm proud to say that together with The American Legion we're stepping up for vets. And we're delivering. Since the president took office, we've delivered more care and more benefits to more veterans than any time in our nation's history. When it comes to delivering the benefits that vets have earned and deserved, we're processing veteran claims faster than ever before. And we've worked together to get the claims backlog down to the lowest total in years.

When it comes to honoring vets with the lasting resting place they deserve, we're now providing almost 94 percent of vets with access to burial sites within 75 miles of their homes. And we've expanded our Veterans Legacy Memorial program, which keeps veterans' stories alive long after they're gone to about 4.5 million vets. When it comes to providing world class health care to veterans and their families, study after study shows that we're delivering better health outcomes for veterans than the private sector, which is why 90% of vets now trust us to deliver their care. And when it comes to advocating for vets with your support, the president's leading the way by making veterans a core part of his unity agenda. Something that we can all agree on, no matter what our party. Including, securing the biggest budget proposal for vets in history. Delivering the first toxic-exposure presumptive for vets who have fought our wars for the past 30 years. And most importantly, signing, with Paul Dillard right there over his shoulder, the historic PACT Act into law. And look, all that work, every bit of it, adds up to the one statistic that will always matter most. Veterans' lives saved, veterans' lives improved by the work that we, VA and American Legion, do together. *(Applause)*

We've made these strides for vets by asking ourselves three core questions every day we come to work, every time we make a decision and every time we set a goal. First, are we putting vets at the center of everything we do? That means making VA easy for vets to use with projects like new VA mobile apps that give vets access their benefits right there on their phones. It means making sure that every pathway into VA is a front door to all VA services, so vets can access all that we have to offer, all that they have earned. And it means making sure that we're delivering for vets on time every time through projects like claims automation, which is cutting claims processing for certain conditions from several months to several days.

The second question we ask ourselves is are we improving outcomes for veterans with everything we do? That means timely access to world class health care, earned benefits and the lasting resting places that vets deserve, no matter what. Because vets, not us, are the ultimate judges of our success.

And the third question we ask ourselves goes back to something that President Biden charged VA to do on the day I was sworn in. He said your job description is simple. You've got to fight like hell for vets, their families, caregivers, and survivors. Fight like hell. So, we use that charge, that question to guide us every day. Are we doing everything we can for those who fought for us? That's our north star. That's how we've gotten where we are, and that's how we'll get where we're going for vets, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Let me give you a couple of examples. First, we're fighting like hell to maximize access to world class care for vets across America. That's why we will stop at nothing to make sure that veterans have the best possible experience, wherever they access VA care, at home, in the community or at the VA. For those getting their care at home, we're meeting vets where they are by doubling down on tele-health and tele-appeals. We're also supporting our caregivers who are critical to helping veterans age at home by expanding the program of comprehensive assistance this October to cover every generation of veteran, and by changing our policies to allow even more veterans and their caregivers into the

program so they get the support they need. The support you've earned. For vets who are getting care in the community, we're making sure that their experiences are as timely and seamless as possible, so they get care they need wherever they live, when they need it. And for those getting their care directly from VA, we're going to modernize our facilities, as we just talked about backstage, because vets in the 21st century should not be forced to receive care in early 20th century buildings. *(Applause)*

Instead, we need to build a VA health-care system with the right facilities, in the right places, to provide the right care in every part of the country, including our rural communities. And that's exactly what we're going to do. And look, the bottom line with access is the same as ever. Vets who receive their care at VA do better. Our VA clinicians know veterans, in many cases are veterans. And there's nobody better at caring for veterans than they are. Just look at the statistics. Vets who come to the VA emergency rooms by ambulance are 20 percent more likely to survive in the following 30 days than those who are transported to private hospitals, 20 percent. So, please, whenever vets come to you asking where they should get their care, send them to us. Because I promise you, we're going to get them the world-class care that they have earned.

Next, we're fighting like hell to end veteran homelessness, a phrase that I believe should not exist in America. Our focus here is on two simple goals. Getting vets into homes and preventing them from falling into homelessness in the first place. And we're making progress, real progress. Last October, for example, we set two ambitious goals to address veteran homelessness in LA, where there are more homeless vets than anywhere else in America. The first goal is to get all of the roughly 40 homeless veterans living on Veterans Row, a homeless encampment outside our hospital in West LA, into housing. The second was to get 500 vets in LA into housing by the end of the year, making sure they're home for the holidays. I'm proud to say that with your help, we not only accomplished those goals, we exceeded them. And that was just the beginning. Nationwide this year we're going to get 38,000 veterans into homes, 38,000 veterans. *(Applause)*

We're not going to try to do it. We're not going to take our best shot at doing it. With your help, we're going to do it. In fact, three-quarters of the way through the year now, we've permanently housed 22,500 homeless vets, on track to meet, if not exceed, that goal. And look, as we continue to get this done, we'll be driving hard on prevention, too, by increasing the housing supply. By making existing housing more affordable. And by getting every veteran the wraparound services, mental health care, health care, substance abuse disorder care, that they need, because no veteran should be homeless in the country they fought to defend. Not one. And we will deliver for them together. *(Applause)*

Third, here we are on the eve, as we just discussed backstage, of National Suicide Prevention Month. And we're fighting like hell to prevent veteran suicide. And I appreciate so deeply the work of the Legion on this issue. And I know that you'll be delving into this topic a little bit later. You've seen VA's most recent report on veteran suicides in 2019. That's the most recent year we have data for. A couple of big things stand out to me from that report. First, more than 6,000 veterans died by suicide in 2019. It's devastating. Unacceptable. And this is why the work that you do, and we do is so critical. But that report also reminded me of something else, which is that suicide prevention is possible. That there is hope because there were 399 fewer veteran suicides in 2019 than there had been in 2018, the biggest decrease in 20 years. That's 399 vets who are alive today getting a second chance at life. Nothing, nothing matters more than that.

So, we're looking to build on that momentum, together by providing first-of-their-kind grants to suicide prevention organizations on the ground, in communities, where communities know their vets and what they need best. By rolling out 988, the new national suicide prevention lifeline, that connects vets quickly and directly to the Veteran Crisis Line by dialing 988 and pressing 1. By continuing to offer tele-mental health sessions to vets who want them, making sure they get their mental health care exactly when they need it, where they want it and not a second later. By ramping up our lethal means safety efforts to prevent warning signs from turning into tragedies, and much, much more, including

supporting the Legion and "Be the One." And let me just say how grateful I am for your "Be the One" campaign. It empowers everyone to save the life of a vet who may be at risk. Because it will make a difference. I know it will make a difference. I have seen it make a difference.

A few weeks ago, I spoke with a veteran named Amanda Barbosa. Amanda's been through a lot. And what she remembers as the lowest point of her life, she came to the VA clinic at Fort Benning. She said, VA saved my life and turned it around completely. Well, today, Amanda is doing great. She's powerful. She's striving. There's nothing more important than that. And what's so incredibly beautiful about Amanda's journey is that she's now devoted to saving other veterans' lives. I'll tell you more about that in a minute. Suicide prevention is the Legion's number one priority. And at VA, we're right there with you. It is our top clinical priority, bar none. And together we'll keep saving vets' lives, help them not only survive but thrive, just like Amanda Barbosa is doing. *(Applause)*

Fourth, we're continuing to fight like hell to make sure that all vets feel welcome and safe at VA. Not some vets. All vets. That means getting women vets, our fastest growing core of vets, the care they've earned and the care they deserve. It means making sure that LGBTQ+ vets feel supported and well-served by every part of VA. It means investigating, identifying and eliminating any racial disparities that exist at VA, setting up processes to them in the future. It means helping noncitizen vets stay in the U.S., where they belong, and making sure that eligible deported vets or vets living overseas have access to VA benefits. And it means delivering care and benefits to those with other-than-honorable discharges too. Because at VA we don't just serve some vets. We serve all vets. And for too long too many vets who fought around the world to protect our rights and freedoms, my rights and freedoms, have had to fight brutal battles here at home for their own rights and freedoms. But at VA those battles are over. They're over. No veteran is going to have to fight to get the quality care and benefits they've earned, no matter where they are, who they are, whether they live in a rural community or in a city, where they're from, or who they love.

And last, but in no way least, we're fighting like hell to deliver for toxic-exposed veterans. You know, Commander Dillard testified to Congress earlier this year that the purpose of The American Legion is to ensure our vets aren't forgotten after the fighting is over. Paul, you're standing by those words. You're living those words. American Legion is standing by those words. And as a result of that commitment and your actions behind it, the actions of everybody in this hall, you helped see to it that the PACT Act made it to the president's desk and became law that will deliver care and benefits to millions of toxic-exposed veterans and their survivors.

Listen, so many of you know from your own firsthand experience that while vets were out fighting for us, many were breathing in toxic fumes from burn pits and other sources. Then months, even years later, developed conditions that followed you home from war, that impacted your lives. In too many cases took the lives of those you served alongside and loved long after the guns fell silent. Now it's our job as a nation to provide you, your families, your survivors with the benefits and care for those conditions.

With The American Legion's enduring strong support that's exactly what we're doing. It's a monumental moment for you, for VA and, most importantly, for all the vets we serve. Because with this new law, VA has recognized that more than 20 new presumptions of service connection for toxic-exposure-related conditions. So, vets living with those conditions will get the care and the benefits they deserve. We'll bring generations of new vets into VA health care and increase the health-care benefits of many more. And that will result in better health outcomes across the board. We'll deliver benefits to more survivors of vets who pass away from toxic exposure. And we'll invest in our workforce and infrastructure to deliver those additional services.

We just talked backstage about a new outpatient clinic in rural Iowa. Well, this new law will help us modernize 31 more VA health-care clinics. All told, this is one of the biggest expansions of VA benefits in history. That's a great thing. A great thing. And it

would not have happened without your hard work, without The American Legion's hard work. But like anything else of this importance and magnitude, implementing it and executing it won't be easy. So, we're going to continue relying on your help, especially in communicating to Legionnaires and all your fellow vets what this new law means for them and their families.

So, please, share these messages with any veteran or survivor you know. First, we at VA want veterans and survivors to apply for their PACT Act benefits right now. Right now. August 11, the day after the PACT Act was signed into law, our all-time high for online compensation claims was met. And we need to build on that momentum. Keep breaking records for vets. Second, and I want to be very clear on this point because it's an important one, the conditions in the PACT Act were supposed to take effect over the next few years. But we're not going to do that. Veterans have waited too long for this care and these benefits already. And we're not going to make them wait any longer. (*Applause*)

So instead of phasing in the conditions over the coming years, we're making all conditions outlined in the PACT Act presumptive August 10, the day Paul Dillard stood on the riser with the president in the State Dining Room, and he signed the bill. All presumptive operative as of August 10. (*Applause*)

VA will begin processing PACT Act benefits on January 1, which is the earliest possible date. Third, any veteran, family member or survivor can learn about the PACT Act at va.gov/pact or calling 1-800-MYVA411. That's va.gov/pact and 1-800-MYVA411, 1-800-698-2411. So that's exactly what every veteran needs to know about the PACT Act. And we will really need your help communicating it because we want every veteran, every single veteran, to get the care they need and the benefits they deserve, the benefits they have earned. And we will not rest until they do.

So, from access to ending homelessness, to suicide prevention, to the PACT Act, that's where we're going. That's how we're going to fight like hell for vets, their families, caregivers and survivors. And remember Amanda Barbosa, whom I mentioned a minute ago? One of the millions of vets we're all fighting for. I'll close by sharing the rest of her story.

Today, Amanda's well, healthy, strong. And she's fighting like hell for her husband, Rafael, and for millions of vets like him. You see, Rafael's a Marine vet and an Army vet. He's one of the vets exposed to toxins when he was deployed to Afghanistan, to Iraq and Kuwait. Just two years after he was honorably discharged, Rafael and his family were hit with some devastating news. Rafael got a cancer diagnosis. Well, Amanda started caring for Rafael, filed his VA claim, and three weeks later they had a decision. 100 percent service connection. But for Amanda, her fight didn't end there. She saw other battles ahead, battles for millions of vets like Rafael who may have been exposed to toxins. She'll tell you that that's what she learned advocating for Rafael. And that's made her a stronger, better advocate for vets. And with her strength, her fortitude, her unyielding devotion to vets, she's done amazing work. In fact, I first met Amanda at the U.S. Capitol earlier this month. She's one of those tough-as-nails vets who spent nights on the steps of Congress, enduring the oppressive heat, humidity and pounding thunderstorms until the PACT Act passed the Senate. I saw her again at the White House when President Biden signed the PACT Act. Met her and Rafael's 13-year-old son, Walker, who was as excited about the PACT Act as just about anybody, because of what it means for vets' kids. And as Amanda sees it, it's her great privilege to stand with vets and their families to help save lives just like you do at The American Legion every single day. It's my privilege to know Amanda, to have met her. And it's my privilege and my honor to know you. To stand with all of you. And to fight for you. And to fight for our vets.

Commander Dillard, thanks for the kind invitation. And from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of every vet we serve, my thanks for all you do for helping make sure that vets like Amanda and Rafael receive the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. Because together it's our job to serve vets every bit as well as they've served us. God bless

you all. God bless our nation's servicemembers, our veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. Thank you. (*Applause*)

...At this time the delegation viewed a video. (*Applause*)

Fireside Chat with Ganassi Racing

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Since The American Legion is the biggest, and in my opinion, best veterans organization in the country, it only makes sense we are represented by the biggest names and best team in the INDYCAR Series. Team owner Chip Ganassi is himself a former racer and a member of the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America. He is the first team owner in history to have won the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the Brickyard 400, the Rolex 24 at Daytona, the 12 Hours of Sebring and the 24 Hours of Le Mans. On August 7, the Chip Ganassi Race Team picked up its 122nd INDYCAR Series victory and 243rd overall race win. (*Applause*)

Driving The American Legion Honda in many of the races this season is a man who is a racing legend. Jimmie Johnson is a seven-time NASCAR Cup Series Champion. He is tied with Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt for most Cup Series Championships of all time. He also happens to be the 2022 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year. (*Applause*)

Our other driver, Tony Kanaan, is the 2004 INDYCAR Series Champ. He won the 2013 Indianapolis 500 and in 2015 won the 24 Hours of Daytona for Chip Ganassi Racing. During this year's Indianapolis 500, Tony drove the No. 1 "Be the One" American Legion Honda, to a third-place finish. (*Applause*)

We are fortunate to have this trio with us today for a fireside chat. Moderating their discussion is Past Department of California Commander Autrey James. Autrey retired as a senior assistant deputy district attorney in Alameda County. He also spent 20 years as a police officer with the San Leandro Police Department. Ladies and gentlemen, let's welcome The American Legion/Chip Ganassi race team, Chip Ganassi, Jimmie Johnson, Tony Kanaan and moderator Autrey James. (*Applause*)

AUTREY JAMES (CA): So good morning, everyone. First of all, thank you all for being here today. I know that this is a very busy time of the year. We've got two races left in INDYCAR. We're in the mix for the Astor Cup. So, tell me, what's it like to have three racers from your team, Chip, legitimately ready to take the Astor Cup this year?

CHIP GANASSI: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for having me. What an enviable position to be in, Autrey, with three cars able to win the championship. We have two races left, this coming weekend in Portland, Oregon, next weekend in Monterey, California. If I'm going to have this American Legion sponsorship, I've got to maintain that No. 1 plate, okay?

AUTREY JAMES: We're all going to be rooting for that.

CHIP GANASSI: That's what I want. I want that No. 1 plate. So, the way to do that is to win the championship. I've got three shots at it, and we're pretty excited. Thank you.

AUTREY JAMES: So, tell me, now, this "Be the One" campaign, which started since Chip Ganassi Racing has been involved with The American Legion, what does that mean to the three of you. Let me start with Tony.

TONY KANAAN: First of all, good morning, everyone. To me, obviously, it's had a special meaning to what we do already. Chip has an organization that's been winning for a long time, and our biggest race is the Indy 500 on Memorial Day Weekend. Then the Legion came aboard with the "Be the One" campaign for us, for me especially, it was something extra, an extra motivation to win the race again, especially when you know you're doing something good, trying to save lives of veterans that were out there protecting us in the past. So, I left it all this year trying to win it, to keep the No. 1 for Chip for the 500, but we came really close. Obviously, I can't thank the Legion enough and all the veterans for the support they give to our team and let us represent them at the racetrack.

AUTREY JAMES: And we thank you for all that you've done in helping us move forward on that "Be the One" campaign. Jimmie, same question for you.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: For me, just to expand on what Tony said, I was shocked to hear the numbers when this program first came about and to learn and understand how many veterans are taking their life each and every day. It's a staggering number, a number that must change, and I'm just honored that I'm able to be a part of it, this team's been able to be a part of making change. It's an honor to represent the Legion. It's an honor to be part of something so meaningful. We're doing the best we can each and every day to represent the Legion and help move this car forward. Excited to know that we are making progress. The word is getting out, and excited to know that Chip Ganassi Racing has that kind of reach that we can help The American Legion.

AUTREY JAMES: Thank you. Chip.

CHIP GANASSI: Thanks, Autrey. For me, it's a little special. My father was in World War II, drove a tank, I think, in the 4th Infantry. He never, my father never spoke about the war to me. One day I asked him about it, very, very late in his life. He passed away about seven years ago. Very late in his life, I asked him, I said, Dad, why have you never talked to me about that? He got a completely different look on his face that I've never seen before, and he just said to me, oh, I don't want to talk about that. I remember thinking to myself then, this is before the "Be the One" campaign ever existed, he was carrying something with him that he didn't want, it was inside him, but he didn't want to let it out or didn't want to talk about it. Obviously when I heard about the "Be the One" campaign, I was all in. That's the reason I'm here today.

AUTREY JAMES: I've got to tell you, we really appreciate the efforts of the three of you advancing this campaign. Chip, what you said makes a lot of sense. I can tell you there's a number of people out here in our audience today who feel the same way. They don't want to talk about it with their families, and we as Legionnaires run into a number of people who have been in the same situations and don't want to talk about it. So, the idea of destigmatizing, asking for help is so important, and the three of you have been such great spokespersons for us and giving us such great opportunity to advance "Be the One." So, again, thank you that. Now, let me ask, Tony, there's something else going on with you I hear.

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, Chip gave me the opportunity with the Legion, and Jimmie over the last couple years, we shared a car. So, I had a little bit more time on my hands not doing the full season in INDYCAR, so I picked up a little challenge. I'm doing an Ironman triathlon race in Hawaii six weeks from now, which is a long race.

CHIP GANASSI: That's the Ironman, ladies and gentlemen. He skipped over that a little quickly, the Ironman. Why don't you tell them about the distances involved. You will not believe this.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: In miles, it's a 2 1/2 mile swim.

TONY KANAAN: 112-mile bike ride and a marathon in the same day.

CHIP GANASSI: 26 miles.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: 26 miles on these short legs.

TONY KANAAN: Right, right. It's a short stride. We picked a challenge; we're going to be actually carrying the Legion and the "Be the One" logo in our bib. *(Applause)*

And actually, I'm doing that to try to also inspire some people because I think doing this mental health issue, you know, keep your body healthy helps a lot, having something, some goal to try to follow. Basically, I'm doing that for the veterans. It's a huge challenge. I mean, it's not easy. I mean, I'm an athlete, but I'm not a triathlete. Been training during the season.

CHIP GANASSI: Tell them when it is and how they can follow you along the way. You can follow him during the race on your computer. You can get on, and you can follow his performance while he's doing it.

TONY KANAAN: You guys can follow how much I'm going to suffer. It's October 8. Obviously, we're going to be posting on the Legion social media, on the Chip Ganassi Racing, and mine. So, you guys are going to have a little link. We're going to be posting throughout that first week of October my whole journey from here to Hawaii, the end of

the training block, and how it's going to be my day. I have a goal. I think we can do it in under 12 hours, which is slow but steady. But hopefully that will inspire people as well that exercising will keep your mind healthy as well. Hopefully, all will be with me through my suffering. Yeah, I'm pretty excited about that.

AUTREY JAMES: Hopefully we'll get the information out on our website so all of those Legionnaires can follow along. Looking forward to that. You were mentioning goals. Jimmie, you've got two races left this year. You've had a pretty good season, learned a lot, driven quite a few laps this year, and ovals for the first time in the INDYCAR. What are your goals for the next two races?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: The next couple of races, I feel like being able to qualify a little further up the grid will then put me in a better position come race time. I'm still adapting to these cars and learning the tracks. My qualifying performance has been kind of the weak spot for the weekend for me. I always race a lot better than I qualify. So, if I can push my way up into grid, I really feel like I can race higher. I think that a top 15, top 10 is realistic for me in Portland and in Laguna. I had good performances at both of those races last year, and now with another year of experience under my belt, hope to improve on those.

AUTREY JAMES: So now since you've come over from NASCAR to INDYCAR, you've had the opportunity to work with some legends of the sport. I've seen Scott Pruett in your ear, I've seen Dario Franchitti in your ear, I've seen this guy in your ear. How has that been helpful to you as you made the transition.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Without a doubt, it's been extremely helpful and also meaningful. To add to that, to drive for Chip in the amazing operation that exists in Indiana where the team is housed and all the key people that work throughout that company, and then you add in my layers and my relationship and friendship with Dario, with T.K., with Dixon, with Scott Pruett stepping in to be in my ear and help bridge the gap in this world that I've entered into, it's just been incredible. It's been literally the greatest two years of racing that I've had. It's been so meaningful, so fun, and to have this opportunity to chase my original dream, which was being an INDYCAR driver. I had 20-something years at NASCAR, but when I was a young man growing up in Southern California, all my heroes were INDYCAR drivers. I kind of felt like that opportunity had passed me by, and with Chip, the support of The American Legion and other partners, it's become a reality.

AUTREY JAMES: That's cool. So, I've had the opportunity to be at Long Beach. I've been in Laguna Seca a couple times. One of the things, hanging around and being around the team, the access that you have allowed American Legion members, I've picked up is throughout your organization, from the top, talking to people like Mike Hall, all the way down to the bottom level of the organization, teamwork. That is so ingrained in the culture there. So, Chip, how did you go about building that your organization?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, it's a good question, Autrey. I always say there's a lot of speed in teamwork. All of our drivers, we have four cars on the team, and they're all four open book. Everyone sits in the same room when it comes to a debrief or after a session when we're talking, hey, how's your car handling? How's mine. Everybody's book is wide open about what they're running in their car, what springs, what shocks, what aerodynamic configuration are they running. You can get an honest answer from your teammate. You can't get an honest answer from someone you're competing with across the way, another team, and we preach that because it never comes down to our cars at the end for a particular position. Very rarely does that happen. So, we're all open book, and we find a lot of speed, and we've had a lot of success. That's why we have three of the cars able to win the championship here in the next two weeks.

AUTREY JAMES: That's pretty incredible. I think there's a lot of lessons and a lot of similarities between the idea of teamwork in your organization and teamwork that's needed at the post, the district, and even the department levels and national levels within The American Legion. So, I just picked up on that being around you guys. It's incredible how ingrained that is. Now, I was in the back there, and somebody said I should ask you how you got your start in motorsports.

CHIP GANASSI: How I got my start in motorsports. It's a cute story. My father and my uncle had a business. They were in the asphalt paving business. They were paving sort of gas stations and people's driveways and what have you, and they paved a go kart track. All of a sudden one day, we had three go karts in our garage. I go, what happened? Where did we get those? What happened was the man that owned the go kart track, I guess didn't pay for the paving job. So, my father and my uncle took three go karts. Next thing you know, they're in our garage. Literally the steering wheel was this big, and I couldn't reach the pedals. That tells you how small I was. So that was arguably my start to my motorsports career.

AUTREY JAMES: And it's led all the way up to team ownership at this point.

CHIP GANASSI: Yes, and I've been fortunate the whole way.

AUTREY JAMES: What's it like to be a team owner? You were a driver before, had some successes there, and now an owner.

CHIP GANASSI: I would have been perfectly happy being a great driver, but I wasn't a great driver. I was just okay. So, since driving didn't work out for me, the only thing left was team ownership because I'm not a very good mechanic.

AUTREY JAMES: So, have either of you two thought about going the ownership route at some point.

TONY KANAAN: I don't know. I've been with Chip for a long time, and it takes a lot to be a team owner. So, I'm not sure. No offense to Chip, he just said I think he's a better race car driver than he was, but I think he's a much better team owner. So, I'll stick to my day job.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Something very similar, I grew up wanting to drive any car, anywhere, and I had this idea in my mind that I'd take my helmet and drive for anyone. It wasn't this idea of owning and operating and really working. This guy's got to really work. We get to sit down for several hours on a weekend and call it a job. I'm not sure I really want to work.

AUTREY JAMES: You talk about driving anywhere. Being from California, ever drive the dirt track in Antioch.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I have not been on that track.

AUTREY JAMES: You missed out on my hometown.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I did drive plenty on the dirt, but it was either the Mexico desert, the Arizona/Nevada deserts with the off-road truck racing I did, and I competed in some stadium off-road events that moved around the country as well.

AUTREY JAMES: Now, T.K., we talked about you and the upcoming Ironman, but you actually have a race this weekend too, don't you.

TONY KANAAN: Right. Obviously, I was sharing the car with Jimmie last year. This year Chip gave me the No. 1 position to do the 500, but doing the partial season in INDYCAR, I picked up this challenge. It's called the stockcar, V8 super car down in Brazil where I was born, and I'm doing 12 races there this year between the INDYCAR and the championship. So, I'm leaving the stage straight to the airport because I'm actually racing in Brazil this weekend.

AUTREY JAMES: We wish you success there.

TONY KANAAN: Thank you.

AUTREY JAMES: Have you driven NASCAR style cars here in the U.S.?

TONY KANAAN: No, I have not. Chip used to own a team, and I missed my opportunity to do that. Jimmie doesn't own any, so I have not. But I can only imagine how difficult it is. I really envy and actually admire what Jimmie did, the crossover after being so successful in NASCAR. Although they are race cars, they're completely different animals. So, I have not tested yet.

AUTREY JAMES: You haven't even tested a NASCAR?

TONY KANAAN: Not here in the States, no, I have not.

AUTREY JAMES: So, let me ask you this. I know the two of you are very competitive individuals. You don't get to rise to the top of your sport without being competitive. If the

roles were reversed and you had been in NASCAR and Jimmie had been in INDYCAR his entire career, which one of you would have been better. (*Laughter*)

TONY KANAAN: I can't compete with a seven time. I'll take that. I'm humble enough to say I would put my money on Jimmie.

AUTREY JAMES: Okay. Fair enough. Now, we provided an opportunity for some folks in the social media to ask some questions. Here are some questions from our social media folks. From INDYCAR Twins, and this one's for Chip. What's the hardest thing about owning a race team?

CHIP GANASSI: The hardest thing about owning a race team is actually, it's when you see all this work gone into a car and all this time and effort and money, and then it crashes. That's the hardest thing for a team owner to see, I'll tell you.

AUTREY JAMES: Into the barricades does not feel good, huh?

CHIP GANASSI: It's the hardest part.

AUTREY JAMES: Okay. Now, Jimmie, Leonard wants to know when are you going to race in Brazilian stock cars with Tony?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: My schedule's a little full.

TONY KANAAN: I never invited him. I don't know why you guys say that. I don't want to get beat.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I do feel like I'm somewhat represented down there because he's using the 48 number, like I'm there in spirit.

TONY KANAAN: I asked permission, by the way. Last year when we start this partnership with Chip, I said, Jimmie, I'm doing stock cars in Brazil. Can I borrow the 48 so we can keep the same number?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: So, I'm there in spirit.

AUTREY JAMES: Let me see here. What's the most memorable interaction with a veteran or Legionnaire since teaming up with The American Legion? For any one of you.

TONY KANAAN: I have one. We represented last year before the 500. I got a letter, I don't remember the name of the veteran, but we had his name on our car actually. His mother sent me a letter with his coin. The kid actually got killed in combat. So, it was really, really, emotional for me, and it was something that it brought a lot of meaning to, like I said, since we started this partnership with the Legion. It gave me an extra purpose, and I remember talking to his mom after the race too, that we finished actually in the top ten last year, and how touched I was. Actually, I kept his coin. Right now, it sits in my house right beside my Borg-Warner, my trophy I won in the 500. I was hoping to win this year to add to that, but that's something that touched me quite a bit.

AUTREY JAMES: That's a great story. The idea of hoping to win another Borg-Warner, that's a tough trophy to get. What was it like winning that first one.

TONY KANAAN: I started, like all of us here, racing started because of my dad. My dad introduced me to racing, and unfortunately when I was 13 years old, he passed. He was pretty ill. He had cancer for a few years, and he passed. One thing that we used to do all the time on Memorial Day Weekend was sit down in Brazil and watch the Indy 500. Right before he passed, he actually made me promise him that I was going to take care of my family, which was my mom and my sister, and that one day I was going to win the 500 for him. So it took me 12 tries by the time I did it, but it's one of those things that, if you guys ever watched that race when I crossed the start/finish line, I was actually pointing up saying, Dad, I finally did it. For me, it was very special.

AUTREY JAMES: This year you had an incredible May this year, right?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, Chip gave me a rocket ship. I was convinced on the last three laps, especially I'm very well-known for good restarts, that I was going to get it. But it was such a close fuel that, as a team, it was huge. We had five cars to start the race, and at some point, we had five cars in the top ten. We still won as a team. Our teammate won the race. Yeah, I was so close that it's making me want to do it again.

AUTREY JAMES: Good, good, like to see you out there again. Chip, you've got now five Indy 500 wins as a team. Is that right? How's that feel?

CHIP GANASSI: It's special. It dovetails into the earlier question you asked Tony, which of these guys would be better if they switched roles in INDYCAR or stock cars? It's what sport is all about. It's that question that no one will ever know the answer to. Would Tony be good in a stock car? If Jimmie started in INDY cars, where would he be? That's like, if Babe Ruth hit against Nolan Ryan, would he have had home runs like he did? These are all unanswerable questions that we want to sit around and talk about and ask and say, what do you think? No, no, I think this. What do you think? I think that. That's the great thing about sport. Sports, whether it's football, baseball, auto racing, you name it, it's the only thing on television really that we don't know the outcome of. It's the only entertainment on television we don't know the outcome of, and that's why it's kind of must-see television. Everybody wants to know what's the first thing they ask you after a race on Sunday. Who won? They all say who won? That's the question. So, I love the interaction of questions like that.

We'll never know the answer to what if Tony started in stock cars, and what if Jimmie started in INDYCAR? No one will ever know the answer to that, but we can sure think about it and talk about it and say, well, what about this? What about that? That's the great thing about sports. When you ask what's it like to win the Indianapolis 500 five times, for me personally, it's something more than I ever possibly dreamed of when I was a kid. I just wanted to be there, let alone be in it and win it five times as a team owner. I just wanted to be there. So, I out kicked my coverage, as they say. But that's the great thing about sport.

And your question about what was your interaction with The American Legion and with veterans? Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, what my interaction is. Mine is when each and every one of you that have attended races come up and introduce yourselves. I want all of you that have not been to the races to understand the people that are there, how well they represent you, and I encourage each and every one of you to be there because they're some of the most cordial, down to earth people I've ever met in my life, and they're in this room right now. I want to thank each and every one of you for being there for the team. If you get a chance, come see us. (*Applause*)

AUTREY JAMES: It really is a great experience to be there at the track, and what your team provides those of us who have been there at the track, not just the tickets, but the hospitality, the access, it's really incredible. I'm so grateful for the opportunities I've had. I really must thank you. I'm a kid who grew up watching the Indianapolis 500 on a 13-inch black and white TV, always wanting to be that guy in the car. Well, I don't think that's ever going to happen at this point but working with you folks has been outstanding. So, Jimmie, I've got to ask you this. I was doing a little bit of research, and I ran across this story about a warehouse you have.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yes, my man cave.

AUTREY JAMES: Some of us have an area in our house as a man cave. Some of us have a room. You have an entire warehouse.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I did have some of my stuff in my house, and then my wife started pushing it out in the garage. Then I accumulated enough stuff I thought, well, if it's going to be in the garage, I may as well make my own garage somewhere that's cool. So, I have a pretty neat man cave that I've set up over the years.

My parents kept and collected everything from my first motorcycle that's a 1979 Suzuki Little 50 dirt bike. Many things that happened through my teen years and on, and that kind of put it in my mindset, how much that meant to me to be able to see it, touch it and have it, and I have since accumulated a lot of stuff. So, I don't take many people there because it's just a big hooray me, and it's just all my stuff. But I do have a great man cave and a small car collection and a fun little area to hang out and spend some time.

AUTREY JAMES: The story is you also have a bar in that man cave.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: That would be that fun little area to hang out.

AUTREY JAMES: I think Legionnaires have been known to hang out in a bar occasionally. It's usually after the end of the workday.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Work can end early sometimes too. I've got a great bar set up. I found a company that specializes in vintage bars, and there was a hotel shutting down, in Pittsburgh of all places, and they had an original bar that was put in and installed in like 1900s, like early 1900s, solid cherry wood bar. I was able to acquire it. Restored it. It took a forklift to move this thing around because it's three pieces and a big bar, but I have a great centerpiece there with this bar.

AUTREY JAMES: Now, you also have something else that the rest of us Legionnaires don't have. You've got barstools that are motorized, right?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, those are a great idea.

AUTREY JAMES: Sounds like a fantastic idea.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: They are, motorized barstools. My very first Brickyard 400 I was competing in, I was driving to the track, and I was so amazed that the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is essentially in a neighborhood. Television cameras never really represented that to my knowledge. So, I was very surprised. And as I was coming close to the speedway, I looked to my left, and there was this tented village area where they're selling merchandise and such, and I saw motorized barstools. So, I made a U-turn, went back, investigated, felt like I should have a couple of them. They ended up at my house. We have had some crashes on them. They are top heavy.

AUTREY JAMES: High center of gravity, I would imagine.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, center of gravity is a problem on them. But what's wild is they did inspire. I came out with a video game in the mid-2000s called Jimmie Johnson's Anything With An Engine, and they were the inspiration for this video game that came out. You could race the motorized barstool and motorized bathtub and all these wild little characters inside the video game.

AUTREY JAMES: I've got to ask. Any chance that me and a few hundred of my closest friends can get a ride on these barstools.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: As soon as you sign the release waiver, no problem. It's all yours.

AUTREY JAMES: You guys heard it. We're going to Jimmie's. I just had to ask about that one.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I appreciate that.

AUTREY JAMES: One of the last things I wanted to kind of end up with here is, Chip, one of the things, not just the teamwork issue with your team, but I've had the opportunity to see that within your team and many of the teams in INDYCAR, a lot of veterans, a lot of veterans are hired. Why is that?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, I can tell you why I hire them. I don't know about other teams. I like what they represent. They represent, I think, what's great about our country. They understand things that are values that today we don't talk about enough, like hard work and wanting to do better, wanting to win, wanting to be the best, not afraid to put a little elbow grease in when you need it. To me, the veterans that we have, you don't have to explain much to them. They get it if you will. They get it. They get what it takes, and it's part of being a team. You don't have to talk much about, hey, this is a team. It's not about individuals. These guys will tell you. They drive the car and they get all the accolades, but there's a big team behind them. So, for me, that's what it's all about. We're all in this together. *(Applause)*

AUTREY JAMES: Well, I've talked your guys' ears off. I think the commander probably wants his stage back, and I don't want to upset the commander. So, I want to once again, thank you for making an inner-city kid's dream come true, giving me an opportunity to sit here with you all. Thank you on behalf of the members of The American Legion who have been out there and the way that you've treated us. We truly, truly appreciate and thank you, really thank you for all of the work that you're doing with "Be the One." Chip Ganassi Racing, ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you, Autrey. Let's give another round of applause for our panelists. (*Applause*)

Don't you all run off. I now call on Sons of The American Legion Commander Michael Fox to join me at the lectern so he can make a special presentation. And would Chip Ganassi and Jimmie Johnson please join us at the podium, please.

SONS NATIONAL COMMANDER FOX: Chip, it's an honor and a privilege. As many just heard, you're eligible to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion. It's my distinct honor and privilege to welcome you into this family. (*Applause*)

Would you like to say anything?

CHIP GANASSI: I wasn't ready for this. All I can say is thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for letting me be a part of your organization. (*Applause*)

SONS NATIONAL COMMANDER FOX: Jimmie, as we spoke, as we spoke about a year ago now and found out you were eligible to be a member of the Sons, I want to welcome you to the family. (*Applause*)

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Thank you. This is a huge honor. With two grandfathers that served and a brother-in-law, being in a military family was always something I'm very familiar with and used to. My grandfather on my father's side drove a tank in World War II, and on my mother's, side was a naval captain. It's been a part of our family, and it's such an honor this year to represent my family members at the Indianapolis 500. Some of you may have seen a few minutes ago up on the board, I did a collaboration with Blake Shelton. On one side of the helmet had my two grandfathers. On the other side of the helmet, had his brother and his father. It's a huge honor to wear The American Legion helmet representing the people closest to us in the Indianapolis 500. This is a huge honor. I've been handed the coupon to sign a few different times the last two years, and I've always lost it in a fire suit, or it's gone through the wash. So now to officially be in is very special to me.

Since I do have everyone's attention, I'm here at the mic, I just want to share something else with everybody here in the crowd. The Legion and being able to work with the Legion over the last two years, meet everybody at the racetrack, the honor it's been, the meaning that's been behind it, my wife Chandra and I have felt very compelled and moved to have a further involvement with the Legion. I'm up here today to proudly announce that we want to pledge \$1.5 million to The American Legion. (*Standing applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: What a pleasant surprise. Anybody else want to do that? The chair recognizes Reverend Daniel J. Seehafer from Wisconsin, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation Reverend Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin, Chairman

Commander, I have to say, first of all, wow. What a tremendous blessing to be in partnership with a powerhouse in racing such as the Ganassi family, and of course a powerhouse such as us, the American Legion Family, us, as we then address together that veteran suicide issue together. Be the one. Be the one.

Good morning, Commander Dillard, Adjutant Wheeler, distinguished guests, fellow Legionnaires, and friends. I am truly honored to stand before you today on the stage of our 103rd National Convention.

The National Convention Committee on Legislation met on Sunday, August 28, 2022, at the Wisconsin Center, Room 103, Section C, First Floor. There were 41 delegates to the Committee present and three guests in attendance. Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, Chairman Seehafer, a delegate from the Department of Wisconsin, was elected Chairman following a motion from Robert Liebenow, a delegate from the Department of Oregon. Bernard Stegmüller, a delegate from Illinois, was elected Secretary following a motion from Michael Taylor, a delegate from the Department of Oklahoma.

The Legislation Convention Committee received no resolutions for consideration. And no new business was discussed. A motion by Joe Gugliuzza, a delegate from the Department of New Jersey, was initiated to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the Committee Report, as necessary 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, of course for your service to this great nation, and more importantly, for your continued service through The American Legion, The American Legion auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders. Thank you for this incredible honor.

National Commander Dillard, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Wisconsin, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I've had a motion. I've had a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor so indicate by aye. Opposed nay. Approved. The Report of Legislation is adopted.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: It is now time for the membership awards. The departments and individuals who will be joining me on stage are being recognized today for their outstanding membership efforts for the 2022 membership year. As we all know, membership is the lifeblood of our great organization. Our members define who we are and what we stand for to ensure no veteran is left behind. We are The American Legion, made up of veterans, by veterans and for veterans. We have a solemn responsibility to extend a helping hand and embrace our fellow veterans. Through our comradeship and devotion to mutual helpfulness, they will become aware of who we are and what we do.

This past year things have returned to more of the pre-pandemic normalcy. The American Legion adapted to the virtual necessities and in many ways have benefited from increased reliance on technology. But now we are back to meeting in person. We can once again visit bases and build relationships with our active-duty, reserve and National Guard units. Through our Reconnect efforts, Operation Comfort Warriors, the Family Support Network, and the Veterans & Children Foundation, we have an opportunity to engage communities and fulfill the promises of our Four Pillars.

Since December 7, 1941, all veterans who served at least one day of federal active duty and did so honorably can call The American Legion home because of the LEGION Act. We have an opportunity to reach out and bring in new members because of this. Recruiting brings in fresh talent with bold ideas and a fun spirit. It is about growing the organization that we all love. When we recruit new members, we are communicating the organization's promise of what we can do for them. At this time, I would like for all the Gold and Silver Brigade recruiters to please stand up. These men and women recruited over 5,000 members into our organization. (*Applause*)

Thank you on a job well done. Now retention is every bit as important as recruiting. When we retain new and existing members, we are delivering on the promise we made when we recruited them. Retaining members is easy when we regularly engage and show them the value of their membership. Retention is a measure of effective leadership. When we are visible in the communities we serve. When we showcase our great programs under our Four Pillars and fulfill our promise of taking care of veterans, our Legionnaires will stay, and veterans will join us. This is why personal contact is critical. We have a great message, and it must be communicated! That's why it is so important to conduct Buddy Checks. We need to reach out to every member to see how they are doing and if there is anything we can do to help.

It is our sacred duty to take care of our fellow veterans. Posts with active Buddy Check programs experience growth. Just ask the Department of Puerto Rico. They grew their

department by more than six percent by conducting Buddy Checks with all of their members. Our members need to know The American Legion has their back and we care. This is my call to action to each one of you, let's grow our membership so we can continue to strengthen America! Now let's recognize all the departments on stage and a few individuals for their outstanding efforts in membership this year.

...National Vice Commander Wilson assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILSON: The first award being presented for the 2022 membership year is the 100 Percent Membership Award for Exceeding the Membership Goal. Seven departments exceeded their membership goal for the 2022 membership year. A shadow box is being presented to the following departments: Department of Puerto Rico. It is worth noting that Puerto Rico also met Commander Dillard's incentive of attaining 103 percent of their membership goal and at least 90 percent retention. They are well over 106 percent of their membership goal!

Would the following departments please come forward. Department of Alaska, Department of District of Columbia, Department of Idaho, Department of Mexico, Department of O-H. *...Chorus of "I-O,"* Department of Rhode Island. Congratulations to these departments on exceeding their membership goal. This is a great accomplishment. And thank you, Jimmie and Chip, for making the day extra special for our award winners.

The next award being presented is the Culture of Growth Award. This award recognizes departments for their hard work and dedication to growing their departments over the previous year. 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 Culture of Growth plaque. These awards are being awarded to: Department of Puerto Rico, Department of Alaska, Department of District of Columbia, Department of Idaho, Department of Mexico, my own department, O-H. *Chorus of "I-O,"* Department of Rhode Island. Congratulations, commanders. Your members should take pride in knowing their hard work paid off this year.

The General Henri Gouraud Trophy is awarded to those departments who are the first to exceed their national membership goal in their respective Big Twelve categories. This year there are two winners, and they are: Category 2; Department of O-H. *...Chorus of "I-O."* I will say as a personal privilege, Ohio won that award because of a gentleman named Brad Teis who passed away a month after he was installed as commander. This is for you, Brad. *(Applause)*

In Category 6, the Department of Puerto Rico. Please join me in congratulating these two departments. *(Applause)*

The next award being presented is the Department Commander of the Year Award. This award is given to any department commander who meets or exceeds their 100 percent goal by the May target date. This award is being presented to the following department commanders: Antonio Arroyo, Department of Puerto Rico; Michael E. Downs, Department of Alaska; David G. Singleton, Department of Rhode Island. Our final one is being given posthumously to Milo Vukovich, Department of Mexico. *(Applause)*

In 2019, the Membership & Post Activities Committee created the Second Century All-Time High Award. This award established a new baseline on membership in our second century of existence. This is the first time we had a winner. This plaque is being presented to the Department of Mexico. Congratulations on a job well done. *(Applause)*

The All-Target Date Award is given to those departments who meet every target date throughout the year. This year the Department of Puerto Rico met every single target date, and a plaque is being presented to them. They also received a \$1,000 check for a job well done. *(Applause)*

The O.L. Bodenhamer Trophy is presented to the department who led The American Legion in traditional membership for the Flag Day report of June 14 and is limited to the

52 departments within the United States, including the Departments of D.C. and Puerto Rico. This plaque is being presented to the Department of Puerto Rico. (*Applause*)

The next presentation is The American Legion Race-to-the-Top Award. It is given to the district commanders who attain at least 100 percent of the district's assigned membership, objective by March 31. This is the most prestigious award a district commander can earn. And as always, this contest is very competitive. The separation between qualifying for the award and the first, second and third place winners at times comes down to just a one-hundredth of a percentage point in some categories. This year's district commanders are receiving a new cap, polo shirt and a shadowbox plaque for their efforts. And the winners are: Category 1, District 1, Kenneth Simon, Montana; Category 2, District 9, John T. Bettencourt, Massachusetts. The next three are from the great state of O-H. ...*Chorus of "I-O."* Category 3, District 9, William Richard Dittebrand; Category 4, District 3 of Ohio, Betsy A. Law; Category 5, District 4, Steven N. Ervin of Ohio. Commanders, thank you for your leadership and dedication in motivating your districts in achieving this goal. (*Applause*)

Presentation: National Membership Recruiter of the Year

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILSON: Now 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. This year we have an individual who has won this award twice before. This is her third time earning the title of Recruiter of the Year. From the Department of Georgia, recruiting 346 members, please join me in recognizing this dedicated Legionnaire and the 2022 National Membership Recruiter of the Year, from Eddie L. Roberts American Legion Post 333, Patricia E. Liddell. (*Applause*)

Patricia, this is but a small token of our appreciation for the job you have done. She is receiving a new cap, polo shirt, shadowbox plaque, and a \$1,000 check. Without a doubt you are one outstanding recruiter, who shares a passion for serving veterans. Congratulations on a job well done! Tell them how easy that was.

DELEGATE LIDDELL (GA): My family, Legionnaires, I could not have done it, first, without my Lord and savior Jesus Christ and my post, Triple Threat, from Columbus Georgia. My commander had to leave. She's not here. But my adjutant is still here Hazel Taylor and my running buddies, Louise Grenich and Sara Anderson. Without them, I couldn't do it. But, yes, I'll talk to anybody who will talk to me. And once you ask me about my hat, because I do wear it everywhere, I'm going to get you. You know, and that's just a fact. Last night I wasn't wearing my hat at the banquet, but I did get a member, Mr. Joseph Kennedy. Because he's going to get an award later this afternoon. But he said, "I've been trying to join." I said, "Uh-huh, you haven't been trying. I got you now." He joined last night. And I thank you all for all that you do because this is my family. Thank you. And I salute you. (*Applause*) ...*National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.*

Presentation: Consolidated Post Reporting

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 I testified before Congress, only 7,740 posts had submitted their report. In order to increase our response rate, I challenged all departments to improve responses from their posts. Our response rate increased to 65.2 percent with 8,003 posts reporting out of 12,267. Good news, but as you can see, there is still plenty of room for improvement. Those department commanders that met my challenge of 70 percent response rate were Alaska, Oklahoma, Wisconsin,

Tennessee, Maine, Ohio, Washington, and North Dakota. I think they all deserve a round of applause. (*Applause*)

Now, I have asked to join me on stage today for special recognition, those departments that exceeded my challenge and had a response rate of 100 percent or better. At this time, we will present their plaques to the department commanders.

...National Vice Commander Narvaez assumed the Chair.

VICE NATIONAL COMMANDER NARVAEZ: This year the winners are: Barry L. Sauers, Department of Delaware; Jerry J. Brandt, Department of Florida; Jinny L. Cash, Department of Idaho; Mark A. Gullion, Department of Indiana; William L. Trotter, Department of Maryland; Glen A. Sharbono, Department of Montana; Daniel Benes, Department of Nebraska; Robert B. Rodriguez, Department of New Mexico; Franklin L. Hillyard, Department of Virginia. Once again, congratulations to these nine 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. Thank you. *...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next guest joined the Army in 1992 and attended the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course to become a Green Beret in 1997. In 2013, he was medically retired due to numerous combat injuries. In August 2021, he directly assisted in evacuating U.S. allied personnel and their families from Afghanistan and continues to provide support for their resettlement. His involvement with the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation began while he served on the board in 2016. He is currently the president and CEO of this much-needed memorial. Please welcome, Michael Rodriguez. (*Applause*)

**Address: Michael Rodriguez, President and CEO
Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation**

Buenos Dias. Good morning. I hope the talk-to-text can come up with my accent, but I see my hermano from Puerto Rico preceded me, so I think we'll be able to keep up. My name is Michael Rodriguez. Most people just call me Rod. I was blessed to serve this nation for 21 years, and I've had the undeserved honor to lead the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation. God has been good to me. I pray he continues to do so. And, yes, I will go to church. (*Laughter*)

It's okay, if a lot of you have never heard of what we've been doing. This is an effort that started back in 2015, with some like-minded veterans. And family members came together and realized, look, we need to start the process, which is a 24-step process to build a national war memorial in our nation's capital to honor all those who served in our longest war, a war that continues today. So, we were blessed, we submitted a piece of legislation in 2017, got an authorization. But then, The American Legion were pivotal in that. We would not be here without them. And then The American Legion stepped forward again to help us build this memorial, where it belongs, on our nation's front lawn, within the National Mall.

If I was to define The American Legion, I would use three words: purpose, direction and motivation. It's what those of us in the Army define as leadership. I got here on Thursday. Got to hang out with a lot of you, for those who made it over to the booth we had. I think I might have had a fourth word to that, is inspiration. Many of you might be longer in the tooth than I, but some of you are younger than I. So, it's good to see The American Legion continue to grow and be as welcoming as you are.

Never have we existed as a nation, for our sons and daughters have watched their mothers and fathers go off to fight in a war only to serve in that same war. I cannot imagine what it would have been like for my father, who served in Vietnam, during Tet, to hug me after basic training and Airborne school and my training, and then watch me go fight the Viet Cong. I cannot imagine what it would have been like for my grandfather, who served

during World War II, to hug my father after graduation from basic training, completes his artillery training, and then goes to fight the Nazis or serve in the Pacific.

That's our reality today. For those of you that did come over to see our booth, there was a young man with me, Sergeant Antonio Rodriguez, my son. He's just been home about a month ago from his recent deployment, and he's on leave. I said, *mijo*, why don't you come with me. like you to join me at The American Legion and see what it's about. You got to meet that man, that warrior, my son, who has served on the same battlefields that I have served. That son was four years old when the towers fell. That's all he knows is a nation at war. Not only did I serve 21 years and deploy 10 times, but that young man's mother served for 21 years and deployed five times. Yet he still chose to take the mantle of service, much like many of you have done. *(Applause)*

And I thank you for that for none of us would be here without you. There are four tenets that guide the construction of this national war memorial. It makes sense. And these are the four tenets that guide us.

Honor. We're going to honor everyone's service. We're over 7,000 KIAs of those in uniform. We are over 3,400 non-uniformed servicemembers that served on the battlefield that have lost their lives. 3,400 non-uniformed servicemembers have lost their lives in service. I know this. I served alongside my Special Forces detachment for those that weren't in uniform, but they were carrying a gun, running in harm's way. Their service and sacrifice in this war and how this nation fights wars deserves to be honored for honoring their service. Our most sacred stakeholders are those who have never had the opportunity to come home.

We're extending it further, as I mentioned, service for me took on a completely different level when I'm standing at Green Ramp at Fort Bragg and I'm hugging my 19-year-old, 82nd Airborne paratrooper son who is heading to the Helmand Province of Afghanistan, which is one of the most inhospitable places on the planet to perform a very similar mission that I had done and his mother had done some years prior. I hugged this much taller, stronger, better-looking, smarter version of me. Turns around picks up his machine gun, backpack, walks towards the back of the bird right there on Green Ramp, for those of you familiar, all I see is a toddler walking away. That was the most challenging deployment of my life, not those 10. We're recognizing the family service. And we'll honor their sacrifices as I'm sure of the Auxiliary members here can attest to.

Heal, our second tenet. For anyone who has stepped foot in the battle space or on the battlefield knows it's going to come home with you. It will be with you for the rest of your life. And many of you have been dealing with it a lot longer than me, and your bravery and strength inspires me. Healing as a nation is necessary. Healing as a community is necessary.

Empower, our third tenet. Provide the opportunity. You heard a little bit about my story, but there are millions of stories like mine. Each one of you has a story. A veteran is a veteran is a veteran. The only thing that differentiates me from many of you who preceded me is our time in service. You guys are my familia, my family, and I love every one of you. We need to provide an opportunity for the current generations that are fighting in a war, a war with no end in sight, the opportunity to tell their stories, and we will do that. Empower.

Our fourth tenet is unite. We unite as a nation. There's this term that's tossed around quite freely, and I don't even like to use it. But I'm going to use it here to kind of deliver a message. There's a sentence, there's something called the civilian/military divide. I can tell you right now that does not exist because of many of you. My father's generation, the Vietnam generation swore what happened to them would never happen again. And I thank you for it. And I love you for it. Unite. There's no such thing as a civilian/military divide. That died in the '70s, thanks to you.

What we have today is a civilian/military misunderstanding. When you look at those that wear the uniform today, if you look at World War II, 11 percent of the population served, Korea was 7 percent, Vietnam was 4 percent. At any given time, right now, actually, less than 1 percent of our nation is serving. They're not any less great. But they're

carrying a lot of weight. But they're no different. They're everyday Americans placed in extreme circumstances, performing extraordinary feats. But they're no different.

We will remind this nation and this world what this nation really is, particularly on September 12. We will unite. We will come together and remind ourselves whatever bucket or demographic or wherever you think you belong in society, you're an American. Americans only think like Americans and many of you that have traveled can attest to that. We will unite.

I hope, we hope as a foundation to point to a spot on the ground in 2023 to tell you where this is going to be built. I hope to start showing you by 2025 what this memorial will look like. And start digging in the dirt. Start digging. And this is an open invitation to every single one of you. By 2027 I want to see you there when we cut the ribbon on this thing. I got to watch the groundbreaking ceremony of the Desert Storm last month as well as the unveiling of the Wall of Remembrance at the Korean War Memorial. I wish I was a poet or could sing, that's the only way I could describe what that emotion is. I look forward to sharing that with each and every one of you.

So, one thing I will ask each of you to do is to tell this story. Those younger veterans in your posts, or if they're not in your posts, share it. They are the future. That young man that I just referenced, Sergeant Antonio Rodriguez, is the newest member of The American Legion. While he was here, he joined. *(Applause)*

That is the future of the Legion. And I'm sure you're going to stand right alongside me to ensure its future successes as the nation does continue to provide purpose, direction and motivation. Thank you all very much and Godspeed. *(Applause)*

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

Fireside Chat on Veteran Suicide

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Nothing is more important to The American Legion than preventing veteran suicide. We are not only to "Be the One," but it is the one, the number one issue for us. I am excited about this next panel because this is a discussion that we need to have. We need to hear ideas. We need to always listen.

One of our panelists, Dr. Thomas Joiner, is the director of the Florida State University Psychology Clinic. He has researched the topic for the laboratory for the Study and Prevention of Suicide-Related Conditions and Behavior at Florida State University. He is joined by Ganassi Team Manager for the Extreme E program, Dave Berkenfield. Dave is a veteran of the Navy SEALs, with more than 25 years serving in the U.S. military special operations community. The discussion will be moderated by Waco Hoover, the CEO of VET TV. Waco is a Marine veteran, who serves on the board of Irreverent Warriors, a non-profit dedicated to veteran suicide prevention. Ladies and gentlemen let's give a warm welcome to Dr. Joiner, Dave Berkenfield and Waco Hoover. *(Applause)*

WACO HOOVER: Thank you very much. First of all, it's my honor to be here today to speak to you to about an incredibly important topic. Before we jump in with our panelists, I want to throw out a couple of numbers that frames things and puts it in perspective. Since 2001, just about 7,000 U.S. servicemembers have died in combat doing their jobs in the service of their country. Since 2001, over 120,000 veterans have taken their own lives. So let that number sink in for a minute, and just think about that.

This is one of the greatest crises facing our military community, and it's amazing that what the Legion is doing with respect to "Be the One," you can go to the theone.org to learn more about resources available. And with that, we'll jump in with the panelists. We're incredibly fortunate to be joined by Dr. Joiner and Dave. Not only is suicide a focus for Dr. Joiner professionally, but also, they're kind enough to share their own stories around the topic with us. Dave, I'm going to start off with you. If you wouldn't mind leaning in just share a little bit about your background, your story, and your journey and experience with military suicide.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: For sure. Thank you. And thank you for this whole group and your effort as an organization and honesty and forthrightness about getting in front of this with the "Be the One." Thank you for all The American Legion members.

Like you mentioned, my name is Dave Berkenfield. I'm one of the team managers for Chip Ganassi racing. I run one of his competition arms, if you will. Prior to that I was in the Navy for 25 years. I was a SEAL that whole time. So, I am an American Legion member. Thank you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

And so, I think my story with this really starts with my older brother. And my older brother lost his life to suicide. For me, it was an incredibly challenging time. It was coming back from an incredibly kinetic deployment in 2008 where my team lost three of our team members. That's an 18-man team. We lost three of our friends and teammates, right into getting a phone call from the Las Vegas police department talking about my brother.

So, where this goes whole circle with the race team is the chief marketing officer of the race team wanted to have this conversation and wanted me to speak to the Legion. And at the time, this is two years ago, at the time I was not ready to do that. I was not ready. I was just getting out of the military, just retiring. I'm a firm believer, and like I mentioned to you prior, what you do here, what you see here, let it stay here when you leave here. And so, I wasn't ready to even talk about my experience. I wasn't ready to talk about my background, my brother.

But through those discussions in realizing what this was about, in realizing the reach that the Legion had, realizing the reach that the race team had, and those joint goals, the support that Chip Ganassi has for the veterans, and what we're trying to accomplish here, which is to change the dialogue, I said, hey, we're all in here. So, whatever we can do, whatever I can do, I'm willing to do it and I'm happy to be here speaking to you.

WACO HOOVER: Thank you. Dr. Joiner if you would like to share a little bit. Let's start with your personal story and what brought you to researching the subject matter of veteran suicide.

DR. THOMAS JOINER: Happy to do that, Waco. And happy to be here with you all this morning. It's deeply personal to me. It runs in my family, suicide does. I lost my dad, for example. He was a veteran. He served as a Marine. There have been other deaths, too. So, it's profoundly personal to me. In addition to that, though, I've specialized in it professionally. I'm a scientist trying to figure out why this happens and what to do about it. I'm a clinician, a mental health professional, in my case a clinical psychologist. I see patients, mostly who are suicidal, trying to mitigate, intervene, prevent. And so, from all those angles, I have a perspective on this tragedy. And as it has been mentioned, it is a tragedy, to be sure. And that's the bad news. The good news is that there's hope. There's prevention. There are ways forward that we may be able to turn this really tragic phenomenon around and do better on it.

WACO HOOVER: So, to start us off, you talked about your theory of suicidal behavior, if I got that right. If you could maybe just kind of set the stage for that, I think that would be a great way to dive into the conversation.

DR. THOMAS JOINER: Happy to do that. It's a pretty simple idea, really. It's a three-pronged idea. One idea is if you feel like you don't belong, that hurts. That's painful to humans. We need each other. And if you feel like you don't belong, it really hurts. As does the feeling of there's no point to you. If you feel like you don't contribute, you don't have a purpose, those two things are painful. And when they combine in the same person, deeply painful. And people who experience that think about suicide pretty regularly. But the third aspect of the bottle is important to understand. It asks the question, okay, of all the people who have ideas about suicide, why do only some of them act on those ideas?

And the model's answer is because suicide is hard. It's scary. It's fearsome. And it scares a lot of people off, even deeply suicidal people. So that third variable is the wherewithal, so to speak, the capacity to die by suicide. And so, when those three things come together, capacity, or wherewithal, you might call it. Feeling like you're a burden and

feeling like you don't belong, that's the danger zone where we get really worried, clinically, and we do what we can to intervene.

WACO HOOVER: Thank you. Dave, could you talk a little bit about some of your experiences with team members that were on the precipice, and some of the things that you and your team, your community did to intervene at some level.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: Yes, for sure. I think that for me, this conversation started in about 2003. And we had come home from a deployment. We had one of my teammates, one of my friends, actually, honestly, he got in some trouble. Speaking about that loss of community. He was looking at being kicked out of the teams. The embarrassment there. The trouble. And he ended up taking his life in a really pretty heinous scenario.

So, at his memorial, a group of teammates that were friends with him sat around and really just had this sort of fireside chat about, hey, how do we as a group of friends that just sat through one of our best friend's memorial, take action, if you will. And it was nothing official, right? Like what it was at that time it was, hey, we're going to do something. I don't know what that is. But if this presents itself, we're going to do something.

And where this goes, maybe 10 years later, I get a phone call from another teammate. Hey, I'm worried about somebody; remember, we talked about this, and it connected back there. And do you know where he works now? I ran into him at a foundation event. And it happened to be, you know what, he works for me. And so, I had to have that sort of interesting moment of being like, hey, something that I remember being part of at a memorial 10 years ago has now come full circle.

So, I reached out to one of our team psychologists that I was very close with and talked through what the right way to approach this was, knowing that it was pretty ugly. I just reached out to him and said, hey, let's go out to dinner, go out to lunch. And we sat there and talked for a while. And we got through that moment. And at the end of that he said, "You know, I'm not sure I was there, but I really appreciate this conversation. I really appreciate the fact that I have teammates that are looking out for me."

And I think that that's a good example of what a first step is, is it's being open to have that hard conversation with somebody. And I think it really speaks to part of what "Be the One" is. So, I think, for me, that promulgated for many years to being part of a leader and part of my leadership mantra with the people that worked for me or that I worked with was just making sure that they had my number. They have my number. They know I'm interested in them. I want to talk to them.

And for me, uniquely, I think, maybe they believed it. Maybe because it is, I really feel that way. Maybe it's the story of losing my brother. Maybe it's the feeling of putting my foot forward into saying I want to make a difference. I've received a lot of those calls. And more calls than I think sometimes I'd like to deal with. But I'm there, and I'm dealing with them. And I deal with them probably once a year. And I feel like just making sure that people know you're there, is a critical part of this.

WACO HOOVER: You mentioned "Be the One," why this program is so powerful, because you and your community proactively reached out to the individual you just mentioned in 2013. It was a decade later where could have saved that individual's life. But if it wasn't for that proactive nature of it, it could have had a very different outcome.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: Yeah, for sure. That's always the question is, you know, you can't get in everyone's head, right? And the point is you're not necessarily talking them off the ledge. I think the whole idea is that we need to get ahead of that conversation. It's a conversation about trust. It's a conversation about trust. And then also knowing that people care. Like, you mentioned being alone. Right? Feeling like you're on that island is not where we want people to be. That is the problem. Being on the island is the first thing you say.

WACO HOOVER: And it's in someone's head. Unless you ask, there's no way to identify that. Dr. Joiner, you talked about different resources available to, not just active duty servicemembers, but friends, family, so that all of us, most of us in this room fall

under that category now in terms of looking out for our respective loved ones. And, so, could you talk a little bit about some of those things?

DR. THOMAS JOINER: Most of it, luckily, fortunately it's pretty simple. Simple things make a huge difference. In this domain, treatment works, for instance, for things like depression, anxiety, PTSD. They're hard to deal with, for sure, no question, but the treatments generally work. So, I'm encouraging people to access treatment. A good route to do that are resources like 988, if you're a veteran hit 1. 988, it's a simple thing to remember, a good access point.

Another access point is your primary care physician. They see a lot of this. They know how to manage it. They know what to do. Another idea, if you're a religious person, is a clergy person. They see a lot of this and know what to do. The key is to access that touch point, so that the people in the touch point can send you on to get high-quality treatment.

But things like being safe with dangerous things. If somebody is at risk for death, and there's a dangerous object in their hand or right nearby, it makes sense to put some distance between that at-risk person and the dangerous object. That's called lethal means safety. The secretary mentioned it. It's a really important idea and it's not real hard to do. It's simple.

Caring connection, reaching out to people, friends, loved ones. Being the one for a fellow veteran, being the one for a friend, being the one for a family member. But also, here's an interesting take on that. We need to do a better job of being the one for ourselves.

Because sometimes you're the only one who knows that there's anything the matter. You're a human. You have inherent worth and dignity and uniqueness and individuality. You deserve to be rescued too. Self-rescue is an interesting frontier that we need to think about and make progress on. It's a huge challenge, but I think there's potential there.

WACO HOOVER: Well, you talked about, most of us think of valor and heroism, down range and combat, but once you transition and get out, for everybody in this room, depending on where you're at, the most heroic thing you ever do for your family is to actually raise your hand and say, I need help. I wanted to chat about the stigma associated with asking for help. Everybody in this room, you know, you serve and, you know, showing weakness is not something that the military reinforces. It's suck it up and get the mission done. And being tough and hard. What was it like in the teams culturally? I would just love to hear you guys expand on that.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I think culturally we're still challenged with this. I think there's not a switch. The SEAL teams culturally are a very hard culture to live in. We expect a lot out of people. Signs of weakness are not something that are looked at favorably. I think that there's a way to bridge that with being passionate about your teammates. And knowing the level of expectation that you need to do professionally, the work you need to do professionally. But also knowing the toll that that job has. And I say blanketly for the whole military. Everyone's military experience is different. And mine is different than yours. I think that culturally asking for help, we have a lot of work to do there.

WACO HOOVER: Dr. Joiner, from your standpoint, when people transition out, what are you seeing in terms of the research and what that's looking like.

DR. THOMAS JOINER: For the vast majority of people, we talked about this a little bit last night, Waco, for the vast majority they thrive. They do great. But there is a percentage who don't. And it's that group where that transition process can be very challenging. And it's at a very time when resources are shifting. That's not a great combination of high-risk window where resources are shifting from the active-duty environment elsewhere, the VA, for instance. And reconnecting, getting that transition window smoothed over and reconnected to care as needed, is key. It's lifesaving. I think an important point, though, is so many people thrive and do great, great things. But there is that percentage that don't. And we need to look out for them, too.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I would also add on to that, that the transition from the military into civilian life, incredibly hard, well-documented, incredibly hard. But I would also say there are there are other transitions that are similar, whether that's from good health to poor health. Whether it's from regionally, you're moving. Whether it's financial

transition. Whether it's lifestyle transition. Divorce. All those are critically moments where you need to weigh in a little bit.

WACO HOOVER: Dovetailing off that, Dave, you talked about, I think it was the Virginia Performance Institute and just kind of that holistic approach to mental health, there's many aspects that contribute to mental health. Could you just share a little bit about that, that approach? I think that's such an important thing for us to be cognizant of.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I think for me, I got hurt in 2008, in a chewed-up body, broken backs, like, all of it. But you're honestly hiding that a little bit. Through the end of your career, you're hiding it, even though your back is not. And so, for me, when I decided to make the decision to retire and said, hey, I'm not going to keep going, it was, I had the opportunity to go through a program like you mentioned called the Return to Service Program run by Virginia High Performance in Virginia.

WACO HOOVER: I really butchered that one, huh?

DAVE BERKENFIELD: No, it's good. It's good. And it is a holistic health program. Like, it's run by an X Team guy, a good friend of mine. And it's a pause. For me it was a pause, a five-week pause to just say, hey, mind, body, spirit, every piece of it, let's just take a moment and look at it. And during the transition period for me, it was pretty centering. Like it was speech pathologists and nutritionists and trainers. It was, based on my experience, really, really good. And I think that that sort of checking out from all the other craziness you got going on in saying I'm going to focus on myself for a little bit, it resonated with me for sure.

WACO HOOVER: Speaking of that, Dr. Joiner, from a research standpoint, it's such a fascinating area that you're leaning into, what are you seeing in terms of things that dovetail off of those experiences that Dave went through. Again, like I said, in the academic research world that really drives so many new things, we're talking about "Be the One," what are new things we can do to help solve this problem?

DR. THOMAS JOINER: I must say, there's not all that much new that's breaking currently. I wish there were. There are some possibilities, some medications, some new kinds of psychoactive agents that are promising, but that's not quite clear yet. That's kind of the bad news. The good news is that simple things that we've known for a while work. I've mentioned lethal means safety, caring contacts, going to your primary care physician. Very down-to-earth things, those are the things that work. And if we can facilitate people actually doing those things, that will drive suicide rates down. Currently they don't do those things. So that's a real important frontier is encouraging people to actually do those rather simple things that can make all the difference.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I would say, just to pivot on that a little bit, something that's incredibly natural that I think people are not doing now is just being present. Everybody is just living in this super busy world, super digitized world, through social media, through the news, the 24-hour news cycle. And I think that just being present is maybe something we all could do a little bit better. And some self-reflection there.

WACO HOOVER: Social connections save lives. That's one of the extraordinary things about the Legion and this initiative. You were a part of kind of how the genesis for the "Be the One" idea. Would you mind just talking a little bit more about kind of exactly what that means, "Be the One." I think we all get it, but it's a very simple, which is that's part of the elegance of it, but it's also really a powerful thing if we all kind of embrace that mentality.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: Yeah. So, once I sort of made the decision here that I'm going to get behind this effort, right. We need to start making a difference. We need to look at this. One of the very first things you're looking at is the metrics. Like, how do we actually make a difference.

What is success? How do you measure success? Everyone has heard the number 22. We've all heard it. Let's let that go. I think that where this really stemmed is I had the opportunity to sit with Dean, the chief marketing officer of The American Legion, at one

of the INDYCAR hospitality events, and we were just talking through this and spit-balling stuff and looking at a few decks that Dean and his great team had put together.

And I'm looking at them. And we're trying to identify what this is, right? But in the back of my head, the whole time we're having this conversation, I'm thinking about my brother. I'm thinking about my buddy, Chad. I'm thinking about my buddy, John. And their faces are just like pounding into me. And as good as all these products were, and they were professionally done, I put them together and sort of slid it over to Dean and said, this is not what we're hunting. Like what we are hunting right now is one of my friends or my brother still being here. If we save one life, we have won. Let's be okay with that. Let's be okay with that.

And I think that has obviously grown. Like as we've had more of these discussions, it's grown, as anything grows. And I think that that was the first baby breath, if you will. And I really feel like I'm proud of that conversation. It means a lot to me. But I feel like there's a lot more to offer. The things that you just mentioned. Being the one to reach out. Being the one to ask for help. It's not all about saving one life, but that's where it started. And then we're going to grow it. And we're going to continue to grow it.

DR. THOMAS JOINER: I just feel the same way about my family members. And this is for them, in a way, but in a way it's not because they're gone. And there's nothing I can do about it. There's nothing I can do for them. I can save a life tomorrow, though. I can save a life next week. And I'm convinced that we actually do that at clinics like what I run through 988, through primary care. That's what my focus is. He's always on my mind in this regard. It's true. But he's gone. I can't do anything about that. I can do something about a vulnerable person tomorrow. And I take solace in this.

WACO HOOVER: So, we talked about the stigma associated with asking for help. We talked about culturally, and in the media, outside the military, you've seen countless professional athletes start to raise their hand and be more vocal about their struggles with mental health. Dave, question for you, do you think that's something that the military, outside teams, generally speaking, what are some ways we can do better with that? The people you look up to, that you serve with, if they're willing to kind of raise their hand, you mentioned we're kind of far away from that. Are there some things you can think that we could do to support each other without having that perception of weakness?

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I think it's interpersonal connectivity. Like, yeah, you might be a senior leader, enlisted leader, officer corps, whatever it is. That can take a pause and you can still be a person. And you can sort of put that stuff aside. I think that if I was going to say one thing that maybe the military could do better there is it's those relationships. Outside of the chain of command. And I've seen success there. I've seen success and it does work. But to do that you need to be able to separate the two, professionally separate the two and be able to have an "A" conversation and then similarly have a "B" conversation. And so, I think that that would be one of the things that I would say is interpersonal communications need to grow there a little bit.

WACO HOOVER: I remember when I was an NCO, there was no training or course I ever got about interpersonal communications or even relationships or anything like that. The emotional intelligence aspect of it.

DAVE BERKENFIELD: Yep.

WACO HOOVER: And Thomas, one last question I have for you. So, you mentioned obviously losing your father. And along the way, we talked about kind of signals that you can see. Was there anything there that you could identify? I know you've written books on this and everything, but that's just something that all of us can learn along the way.

DR. THOMAS JOINER: In retrospect, clearly. So, I was a very young man at the time. I didn't really know anything. And so, looking back, he had bipolar disorder, mostly untreated for all of his life. He was really depressed in the weeks leading up to his death. That was very apparent. But I didn't know at the time what that was. And so, if somebody had said to me, you know, he should go see his doctor about this. He was a very religious person, my dad. He should talk to his clergy person about this. I would have definitely

gotten on that and that could have made all the difference. I just didn't know anything back then.

And so that's one thing I'm encouraged about with events like this, is building person by person, through grassroots, the understanding that this happens to people. Happens to a lot of people. Nothing to do be ashamed of. And there's something that we can do in response to prevent it and to take the edge off of it so that, yeah, maybe it's a bad time, a crisis, but it doesn't end up being deadly. That's my goal is to take crises from lethal levels down a notch or two so it can still be kind of bad and a difficult time. But if you're dead, we don't get a chance to work on that together. If we can take that lethality down a couple of notches, then we can figure the rest of it out.

WACO HOOVER: We only have a couple of minutes left, but in the spirit of "Be the One," I'd like to ask the audience to indulge us into an exercise. We'd like everybody to, if you know somebody, a friend, family member, who has struggled with mental health or suicide, to please stand up. Now, look around to your left, to your right. Don't be afraid to go over and have a conversation because there's a good chance that somebody who you're seeing, who shares that experience with you may be a resource, may have some help for you. Just like these two gentlemen were talking about, it starts with each and every one of us and not being afraid to have the conversation. Dave?

DAVE BERKENFIELD: I would just like to sort of close this with something that I had a very close teammate of mine, a slogan. And it was: At what level are you willing to participate? And it was how we lived our life, right? We need to participate at the highest level. Everyone in this room is somehow or another associated with the service. At one point you joined the military for a higher calling, a higher purpose. You found that camaraderie. I would ask you, as a veteran now, and as part of The American Legion, in part of this "Be the One" campaign, at what level are you willing to participate? And I would just say each one of you has the opportunity to be that one. So, let's start it right here. Appreciate it.

WACO HOOVER: Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Pastor Stan, if I could, could I have you join me up on stage for just a moment, please. The man who has served as our national chaplain the last year has been both a spiritual and inspirational leader. He keeps telling us to "Go to church!" A veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard, he first entered the ministry 20 years ago, after a 40-year career as an accountant. He has served as a post, district and department chaplain in Colorado and has been a member of The American Legion for 29 years. It is an honor for me to present a certificate of appreciation marking his service as national chaplain to Reverend Stanley K. Hamamoto, "Pastor Stan." *(Applause)*

ANNOUNCER: Certificate of Appreciation, presented to Stanley K. Hamamoto, national chaplain of The American Legion, 2021-2022. Given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion. Signed Daniel S. Wheeler, national adjutant. Paul E. Dillard, national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next guest is a graduate of South Dakota State University and the FBI National Academy. He worked as a correctional officer with the South Dakota Department of Corrections before becoming a state trooper for the South Dakota Highway Patrol. In 2011, the state's governor appointed him the 13th superintendent of the Highway Patrol. In 2020, U.S. Attorney General William Barr appointed our speaker to the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. He is currently the cabinet secretary for the South Dakota Department of Public Safety, a position he has held since 2019. Please extend a warm welcome to DPS Secretary Craig L. Price. *(Applause)*

**Address: Craig L. Price, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Public Safety**

Good morning. Thank you, Commander Dillard, for inviting me to speak at our National Convention. Your hospitality over the past couple days has been exceptional. Commander Dillard and I first met a few months ago in peer at our law enforcement academy in South Dakota. During our meeting, Commander Dillard asked me how fast he could "really" drive in South Dakota. I told him he could drive as fast as his Texas checkbook could afford. (*Laughter*)

I would also like to thank South Dakota Department Commander Doug Feltman for his unwavering support of law enforcement. The military and The American Legion have been a big part of my family for decades. I joined the South Dakota National Guard in 1991, when I was 17 years old. I also attended Boys State in 1991 and first joined The American Legion nearly 30 years ago. More than that, I come from a family of veterans. My dad, who many of you probably know, Larry Price, is a veteran and has been an American Legion member for over 50 years. He has held many leadership positions. My father-in-law is a Vietnam veteran. Both of my grandfathers are veterans, as well as many of my uncles, cousins and a nephew. Commander Dillard invited me here today to speak about law enforcement in the United States.

I began my career as a state trooper just over 25 years ago. But much more important than that, I'm the husband of Kami of 25 years and the father of Lavin and Remington, a junior and senior in high school. I currently serve on Governor Kristi Noem's cabinet as her secretary of Public Safety. Prior to this appointment, as stated, I served as a colonel of the South Dakota Highway Patrol for about 8 years. And I am also a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Governor Noem is a strong supporter of our military, our veterans and our law enforcement. The governor and I meet regularly, and she sends her greetings and her deep gratitude for your service.

Like the military, law enforcement is a noble profession. We are arguably in one of the most difficult times for police officers and police leaders that our country has ever seen. Law enforcement agencies across our country are facing severe staffing shortages as they struggle to recruit and retain officers. Many departments, like mine, have been forced to find new ways to fill the gaps. These shortages have coincided with a spike in crime across our country.

For example, and according to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, murder rates in our country are up about 30 percent in 2020. That was the largest increase since the early 1960s. The homicide rate in Portland, Oregon has surged 207 percent since 2019. In Portland they are operating while trying to fill about 100 officer positions. The Dallas, Texas, police department is short about 550 officers. Los Angeles, operating with more than 650 fewer officers than before the pandemic, has downsized human trafficking, narcotics and gun details.

Universally, police agencies are operating short staffed, and officers are asked to do more, which is eventually leading to burnout. It takes a toll on the officers, and it takes a toll on their families. Without question, law enforcement is a demanding and dangerous career. And we have fewer young people that are wanting to join our ranks. This work not only puts our officers at risk for experiencing harm, serious injury and acute and cumulative trauma, but they are also up to 25 times higher risk to develop PTSD when compared to individuals without such experiences.

To highlight the dangers of the career, the most recent FBI data shows that 129 law enforcement officers lost their lives in the line of duty in 2021. According to that data, the average age of the officers killed was 39 years old and had an average of 12 years of experience. In addition to PTSD, officers are at an increased risk for suicide, a big topic this week. According to Blue Help, 136 officers died by suicide in 2021. This year alone, that number is at just over 80. And these are the numbers of those that have just been reported.

Additionally, calls for police reform and defund the police movements cause low morale in our departments. We need to invest in our police agencies. But even during these challenging times it doesn't take away from the fact that law enforcement is a noble career. Like our military soldiers and you guys, United States veterans, our law enforcement officers are some of the best people society has to offer. Like any profession, there are outliers. Unfortunately, there are police officers who do not adhere to the standards that we expect of ourselves and more importantly, that our communities expect of us. We've all seen it on TV, and they must be held accountable.

But these instances do not represent the great majority of the men and women in our profession. We must resist the urge to paint all law enforcement with a broad brush. True law enforcement professionals are committed to excellence. They demonstrate bravery when faced with danger and they will not abuse their oath, their badge, or their honor. I was visiting with a member from Virginia last night at the commander's banquet, and he was talking about how he respects state troopers. And he said, "I've never met a state trooper that I didn't like, even if I was getting a ticket." I'm not sure if he was completely forward on that. (*Laughter*)

Just a few weeks ago, a few of our state troopers were involved in a critical incident where they were in pursuit of a criminal on one of our interstate highway systems in South Dakota. As the troopers pursued the subject, they were being fired upon. The pursuit eventually ended in a small community where the subjects and troopers exchanged in a gun battle. Thankfully, the subjects were taken into custody, and no one was injured. I was visiting with one of our troopers after the incident to see how he was doing and to thank him for his service. He told me that while he was being shot at as he was driving on the interstate, the thought crossed his mind as to whether or not he should just terminate the pursuit, which would guarantee a return trip home for him to his wife and two small boys. But he didn't. The trooper continued and performed his duties while being faced with the ultimate sacrifice. That is service and that is commitment to his oath and his badge.

While we have high standards, law enforcement officers are also human, and we do not expect them to be perfect. They are going to make mistakes. But when they do, they must acknowledge those mistakes, be honest about them, learn from them, and move forward. That's a fair expectation from the public that we serve. As difficult as recruiting is during these challenging times, the future of our country lies in the hands of our youth. There's no organization that recognizes that more than you, The American Legion.

I'm very proud of a program that we started in South Dakota in 2012. The South Dakota Youth Academy Trooper Cadet program is a cooperative effort between the South Dakota Highway Patrol and the American Legion of South Dakota. Our mission is to recruit young men and women from across our state and provide them with an opportunity to increase their understanding of law enforcement and more importantly, what it means to be a good citizen.

The Youth Trooper Academy is not a summer camp and it's not designed for troubled teenagers. The program is mentally and physically demanding. We utilize a paramilitary approach to training, and discipline is strict. Candidates are highly motivated, of good moral and ethical character. And some of them have an interest in law enforcement or the military. Experienced state troopers and South Dakota Legion members serve as mentors and chaperones during the week. In fact, I'm told that week is just as much fun or more fun for the mentors as it is for the recruits. I'm proud to say that our department commander, Doug Feltman, who I know is in the room today, has been a mentor at our youth program for several years. Recruits receive hands-on training in topics such as military customs, firearms safety, defensive driving, crash investigation, leadership and citizenship, to name a few.

Recruits who graduate from the program are proud of their accomplishments and the lessons they learned, which serve them for years to come. Since the inception of our program in 2012, nearly 30 graduates have become certified law enforcement officers in our state. Many more have joined the military or are currently serving as law enforcement

officers in other states. The American Legion and the South Dakota Highway Patrol Youth Cadet Trooper Academy is an outstanding example of the investment in our youth. And I'm very proud to be a small part of it. If you do not have a program in your state, you should consider it because that investment is money well spent.

I want to leave you with just a couple thoughts. As stated by prior FBI Director James Comey, "Policing is frustrating, it's exhausting, it's dangerous. And it's a thoroughly wonderful career." Amid the danger, this career is extremely rewarding and I'm proud to have been a part of it for over 25 years. When our citizens need help, they don't care the uniform we wear, or which badge we have on our chest. They just want help in what might be the worst time of their life. The work of a law enforcement officer is meaningful. It's important and it's impactful. Safeguarding rights while enforcing the law is at the core of what we do and who we are as a country. This is a great and honorable responsibility to carry.

Commander Dillard, I would again like to thank you for having me. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice and your commitment to the greatest country on earth, the United States of America. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Presentation: Plaque to the City of Phoenix
James W. "Bill" Oxford, North Carolina, Past National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I call on Past National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford to present the plaque of appreciation to National Convention Corporation President of Arizona Kenneth R. Queen, for the outstanding job that Arizona did in hosting the 2021 Convention in Phoenix.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER OXFORD: Thank you, commander. I hope everyone is happy to be back to a normal convention. Unfortunately, last year's convention was a restart, I think, we went from pre-COVID to post-COVID, but I would like to congratulate the Department of Arizona, Phoenix, and their team for creating the convention that they did last year. I'd like to say thank you and congratulations on a job well done. And it gives me great honor to present this plaque to the chairman of their convention corporation, Ken Queen. *(Applause)*

DELEGATE QUEEN (AZ): Good afternoon, Legionnaires, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I know this is the lunch hour, so I won't take very long. But it's an honor and a pleasure to be here this afternoon to accept this plaque for the Department of Arizona. The 102nd National Convention in Phoenix was quite successful, especially when one considers it was the first post-COVID-19 convention. I want to thank the Arizona committee chairs and the army of volunteers from The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion who contributed thousands of hours as well as behind-the-scenes work of our commission secretary. They did a marvelous job. But we couldn't do it by ourselves I want to thank Michael Walton, the chairman of the National Convention Commission, and all of his commission members for all they do before, during and after the convention. I also want to thank Bridget Robinson, director of Conventions and Meetings Planning, and her staff for their planning, coordination, and their efforts in preparing our volunteers to do the job they volunteered to do. We truly would not have been successful without their tremendous support. Thank you, Commander Oxford. I appreciate the honor of having the plaque. *(Applause)*

...At this time the delegation viewed a video

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next guest is an Army infantry veteran with the coveted Ranger Tab. He is also the vice president and a founder of Save Our Allies, an effort that rescued 12,000 Afghanistan refugees during the final days of our withdrawal. He went to Kabul to assist with the evacuation. He is a West Point graduate with an MBA from Duke University and he's also a Legionnaire from North Carolina. Due to his extensive combat experience, he has special insight on powering through obstacles

with reckless abandon. We will also hear about his affection for a cartoon character. Please welcome, Nick Palmisciano. (*Applause*)

**Address: Nick Palmisciano, Founder
Save Our Allies**

Thank you so much for having me. You know, the fall of Kabul was an incredibly emotional event. And I was completely unqualified to be there. I was not that cool when I was in the military. I was an infantry officer. I'm decidedly less cool now that I am a middle-aged guy that spends more time behind a keyboard than doing anything else. But I want to talk to you a little bit about how I ended up there. But first, I want to tell you that my principal reason for being here is to get Mark Seavey fired. He's the guy that kind of vouched for me and said, hey, you should bring Nick out to this event and talk to these incredible leaders. And I said, how do I have to dress. He said, unfortunately you're going to have to wear a suit and tie. But he didn't say anything about shoes. And so, I'm wearing Charlie Brown sneakers right now. The reason I'm wearing Charlie Brown sneakers, I'm going to Columbo this a little bit because the audience actually understands that reference. The point of this speech is Charlie Brown is my hero because he keeps trying to kick that football. No matter how many things go wrong, no matter how times he misses, no matter how times he fails, he gets up and he keeps trying to kick that football with the same reckless abandon as he has so many other times. So why is that important to this audience?

Originally, I was going to get up here kind of talk about things I've gone through in my life. But looking out on all of you, I just had to change this. Because you've all been successful. You're all leaders. You've all been through trials and tribulations. You've all figured it out. But we need something different from you. We need you. We need this group of people, and not in the way that we typically think about how we need you. When people get out of the military, they immediately lose tribe, and they lose purpose. The Legion provides that tribe. The Legion brings a group of people around that understand veterans that help. That part you guys have on lock. But sometimes people have a lot of trouble finding purpose. And for this I want to just talk about my life.

When I got out, I went to Duke University. No one should feel bad for me. Like, that's not a sob story. I then got a corporate gig with a Fortune 100 company, John Deere. Tremendous company. Great people. I was making a fortune. My family does not come from money. And I was like a 30-year-old making a quarter million dollars a year and life should be good. And I have never been so unhappy in my entire life. There was no meaning. Nothing felt good. I felt like I was marking time.

And so, on a Friday, my boss came in and said, "Great news, you're getting a promotion and a big raise." And I went home that weekend, and I came in on Monday and I said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but I quit." And he was like, "Did I do something? Is something wrong? Is everything fine? Did you find another job?" I said, "You know what? I have this little hobby that I started on the side called Ranger Up. It's an apparel brand focused on the military. And I just need to do something that I believe in." And so, I quit this job. And things got really, really hard. I ended up getting divorced, which is the worst thing you can go through. I almost bankrupted myself. I was a single dad with a one-year-old and a three-year-old. I had \$1,300 in the bank and I had \$57,000 in credit card debt all for that business.

It was a low point for literally anyone else, but I felt alive because I had found purpose in my life. And that purpose eventually turned into success. So that part isn't really important. That success led to other things. I started helping other veterans. I met Tim Kennedy, who was in that video, and Chad Robichaux in that video because Ranger Up had gotten to the point where it was starting to have some success. And we decided, hey, we're going to start supporting military athletes. At the time they were both military athletes, Tim in the UFC and Chad in Strike Force. And I helped them with the advice that

I had through life, in business, in relationships, things that I had messed up, things I didn't want them to mess up.

I met Sarah Verardo, who was in that video, because I was at an event that veterans were throwing that went completely south. There were tons of celebrities there and there was a bunch of work that wasn't done. I was actually there as a speaker, but things were so upside down that I said, hey, I'm taking this jacket off and I'm going to work. And for two days, we just worked on saving this thing. And Sarah saw, hey, this guy actually wants to be helpful. And so, we became friends and had a relationship. And fast forward to this moment in time. Suddenly, there is a preposterous situation where we are desperately trying, if you were a veteran, you were trying to figure out how to help Afghans. You were trying to figure out, like, what can we do? And everyone kind of took a step forward and said, well I can make this list. Well, I can do this. I can do that. And we ended up with 12 people that all felt like they could kind of fit one piece of the puzzle together.

And so, when Sarah had the opportunity, because of eight other things, to give me a phone call and say, can you help, she was not basing her belief that I could help on my military background. I hadn't been in uniform for over a decade. And, again, I wasn't that cool. There are tier 1 guys that were lined up ready to do this. Her belief was completely based on the fact that she knows that I had been helping the veteran community for almost two decades. And she knew that I would be willing to help.

And Chad did the same thing with his network. And he found a guy that had a business in UAE. And that guy rode motorcycles with another veteran that grew up in UAE and happened to know the royal family. And he asked the royal family, could we possibly land an airplane here? And the royal family said, we'll do you one better. We'll give you two C-17s. Two other guys were able to get to the ground in Kabul, but they had no place to bring people. So, we got connected. Next thing you know, you have 12 veterans, most of which did not know each other, but all had the same mentality. I'm going to keep trying to do something and I will eventually succeed.

And so, 12 people arrived in UAE and then Kabul, Afghanistan, truly not knowing what we were going to do. We had an idea. Fast forward ten days. C Spray, Sean, G, Tim, we have our own hangar in Kabul. We're running thousands of people out a day. Not only do we have two C-17s, but we have three 737s that veterans have paid for. We ended up saving 11.5 percent of everyone that got saved in Kabul. (*Applause*)

Thank you, as 12 middle-aged veterans and one really bad-ass lady. I'm telling you this, not because of this story, this story is obviously important right now, but this replicates over and over and over again. And there is a generation of veterans that's just a little younger than me that grew up in the age of social media. They grew up at a time where everything that they do is judged, but they don't necessarily look to personal relationships as much as they look out to the voices in the ether.

And that is when I think people get into trouble. They leave the military. They don't have tribe. They don't have purpose. And suddenly they don't have a pathway. Suddenly life doesn't look that interesting. Maybe they consider suicide. Maybe they're just unhappy. When I quit my Fortune 100 gig, I was not a member of The American Legion. I did not have this tribe. I did not have guidance. I did not have purpose. What I did have was a Vietnam veteran dad that said, I think you can do it. It's crazy. I wouldn't do it. I think this is a crazy decision. But I think that you can go succeed pedaling T-shirts on the Internet instead of keeping this amazing job that I would have killed for. He gave me that support, even though my dream at the time was pretty dumb. Let's be honest. It's a pretty dumb dream. Every single person in here can be that for somebody. As these veterans are getting out of the military, as they are looking to the future, even if their dream is dumb, even if their purpose isn't your purpose, guidance, encouragement, helping them find the way because when people are unhappy, that is when they get themselves in bad situations. That is when everything gets very dark.

So, coming back from that mission, and I class myself as being a very small part of that mission, there were four guys that were like the stuff of legends. And if there's a movie

that's ever made about this, you know, they are the heroes of this film, with the sun in the background and the cool guns and everything. I partially tore my labrum carrying people up a staircase because the Afghan amputees couldn't walk up the stairs. There was no ground crew. So, I'm like, holding guys with fluids and colostomy bags hanging over my shoulder. I tore my labrum like that. There's no cool-guy story about me. It's just, like, sad, middle-aged-guy story. But the 12 of us working together, doing our part, putting ego aside, putting pride aside, not worrying about potential failure but just desperately trying to kick that football, made a huge impact on over 12,000 lives.

And Save Our Allies, the organization we founded in the aftermath of that, has continued to help people in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine. We fail most of the time. When we left, we had 12,000 Afghans saved. We had 19,000 names on our list, vetted, ready to go. We ran out of time. Colossal failure. But trying to kick the football over and over again made an incredible difference. And there is a whole generation of veterans coming right now that needs you to tell them it is okay to keep trying. They look up to you. You guys are legends. You have done things the rest of us can't imagine. And I'm here asking you to lean forward and help them be the next generation of winning veterans.

In World War II we had 11.5 percent of the population serve. In Vietnam we had 4.3 percent of the population served. Over the last 20 years of war, it's been less than 1 percent. That means that this community has to be more successful, more impactful, has to lean forward more, has to take bigger chances in order to have the same impact on our country, on our businesses, on our nation, that the Vietnam generation has. So, we have to be better. And we can't be better without you. So, bringing it back around, Charlie Brown, nonstop, passion, aggression, desire to do the right thing, to win, to kick the football no matter what. Please help this next generation of veterans get there. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

...National Vice Commander Bates assumed the Chair.

Presentation: Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: 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 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Paul E. Dillard, national commander, Richard W. Anderson, chairman, American Legion Americanism Commission.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: The Chair recognizes Richard Anderson of Connecticut, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Americanism Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

At 8:30 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, the Convention Committee on Americanism, consisting of the two subcommittees of Americanism and Children & Youth, met in the Wisconsin Center, Ballroom, Section A, First Floor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the purpose of a chairman and secretary for Americanism. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. 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 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 and seconded that the chairman of the Americanism Convention Committee be authorized to accept the actions of the two subcommittees assigned to Americanism 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 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 28, 2022, 48 delegates assigned to the Convention Subcommittee on Children & Youth met in the Wisconsin Center, Room 103, Section B, First Floor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Herbert Petit (LA) was elected chairman and Michael Westergren (AR) was elected secretary. The Subcommittee on Children & Youth had no resolutions assigned.

Americanism
Richard Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

At 9:00 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, 48 delegates assigned to the Convention Subcommittee on Americanism met in the Wisconsin Center, Ballroom, Section A, First Floor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Richard Anderson (CT) was elected chairman and Mark Avis (MA) was elected secretary. The committee considered a total of 10 resolutions with disposition as follows:

Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism

Resolution No. 47 (SD): American Legion Baseball Region 6 Tournament Site for 2025

Resolution No. 53 (OH): Revise the 21st Century Policy on Education

Resolution No. 56 (WV): Addition to the Four Chaplains Ceremony

Resolution No. 57 (IL): Gold Star Families Day Be Established as a National Holiday

Resolution No. 58 (IL): Patriotic Education

Rejected

Resolution No. 55 (WV): Patriotism in School Curriculum

Four resolutions previously approved that are to be retained as part of the legislative program are included on Addendum A. Without objection the resolutions on Addendum A will not be read.

Addendum A
Resolutions to Remain Part of the Legislative Program
Convention Committee on Americanism

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 118th Congress.

No.	Year	Meeting	Title	Convention Cmte/Subcmte
301	2016	Convention	Eliminate Damages and Attorney Fees in Establishment Clause Lawsuits	AMER/AMER
303	2016	Convention	Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States	AMER/AMER
19	2016	Fall	Flag Code Amendment	N/A
111	2018	Convention	English Language Be Declared as the Official United States Language	AMER/AMER

On behalf of the Americanism Commission on Children and Youth, I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you in this room, and to your respective departments for the support, dedication, and commitment that you have given to our programs this year that has led to the great success that we have realized. As a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Connecticut, I move for the adoption of this report.*Second.*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: Motion is made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor. Opposed? The report of Americanism is adopted.

Presentation: Frank N. Belgrano, Jr., Trophy

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: Having completed the adoption of the Americanism Report, it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. 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 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 Missouri.

Presentation: Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: It is 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 South Carolina. (*Applause*)

Presentation: Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: 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 \$19 million has been awarded to nonprofit 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 the first of these two awards to the Department of Pennsylvania.

ANNOUNCER: The Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award is presented by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the American Legion Department of Pennsylvania for the program year 2021-2022. 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.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: The second Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award goes to the American Legion Riders, Department of Florida.

Presentation: U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: It is now time for me to present the U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Awards. 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 Awards recognize the collective efforts of the American Legion Family, the CWF and affiliated Eight & Forty in a department or American Legion Riders group. It goes to the departments that collectively raise the most money for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. The first winner of this prestigious award is the Department of Pennsylvania.

ANNOUNCER: The U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award, presented by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Pennsylvania for the program year 2021-2022, in recognition of outstanding support for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. We thank you.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: Our next U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award goes to the Department of Pennsylvania American Legion Riders.

Presentation: Child Welfare Foundation Meritorious Achievement Award

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: Next, we are presenting the Child Welfare Foundation Meritorious Achievement Award for the highest increase in per capita giving for the past program year. And the winner is the Department of Alaska.

ANNOUNCER: Meritorious Achievement Award – Achieving the highest increase in per capita giving for 2021-2022. The American Legion Department of Alaska. 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 VICE COMMANDER BATES: We just recognized the department that had the highest increase in per capita giving for the Child Welfare Foundation. Now it's time for the CWF Excellence Award, given to the Department which has the highest per capita giving to the CWF during the past program year. Again, the winner is the Department of Alaska.

ANNOUNCER: Excellence Award. Achieving the highest in per capita giving for 2021-2022. The American Legion Department of Alaska. 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.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BATES: I now call upon the president of the Child Welfare Foundation, Dennis R. Boland of Florida, for the purpose of a presentation.

Presentation: Child Welfare Foundation Presentation to the National Commander

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT BOLAND (FL): Commander Dillard, it's an honor on behalf of the board of directors of the Child Welfare Foundation that I present to you a five-diamond lapel pin from the Child Welfare Foundation, sir.

Donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation

DELEGATE MURPHY (PA): Good afternoon, I'm Michael Murphy, past department commander of the Pennsylvania American Legion. Joining me on stage is our current department commander, Craig Wilhelm, our National Executive Committee member Michael Stelacio, our alternate National Executive Committee member Paul Kennedy, and our department adjutant, Woody Hogan. Along with the other moneys we have given to the Child Welfare Foundation, we'd like to add \$4,758.65.

DELEGATE ATKINS (FR): Good afternoon, I'm Larry Atkins, vice commander of China Post 1. Along with me is first vice commander Hans Stockenberger. On behalf of the worldwide members of China Post 1, still operating in exile, we are proud to present \$250 for the Child Welfare Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (MI): Good afternoon, I'm Marilyn Britten, commander of the Department of Michigan. I have with me the outgoing commander, Richard Dubay. I also have Past Department Commander Brett Holt, and one of assistant membership directors, Randy Gilbert. We have \$2,000.

DELEGATE DAVIS (MA): From the Department of Massachusetts, I'm Sandra Davis, Child Welfare Foundation chairman for the department. Along with me is immediate Past Department Commander Tony Dias and current Department Commander Sally Nay. Today we're handing in \$974 for a grand total of just over \$1,200. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SUCEE (WA): I'm Rick Sucee, Department of Washington delegation chair. With me is Commander Jim Cook, our Alternate National Executive Committee Member Bob Clark, and Third District Commander Bob Theal. The Department of Washington gives \$2,045, and there's an additional \$500 has to do with something about theft and recovery of the big stick.

DELEGATE BROWN (ND): Dan Brown, commander, legendary North Dakota, home of the future Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. On behalf of our membership, we'd like to donate a check for \$1,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation. Thank you.

DELEGATE RUE (OH): Department First Vice Commander Jason Rue. On behalf of Charities Inc. of the department of O-H ...*Chorus of "I-O."* We are donating \$10,000 today.

DELEGATE HAFNER (TX): Good afternoon, I'm John Hafner of the great, great Department of Texas. With me is our 20th District Chaplain Tony Vega, 20th District Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Richards, and Post 593 Commander Dennis Ducharme. The 20th District home of joint base San Antonio and more importantly, the home of the Alamo, donates \$1,702.75 to the Child Welfare Foundation. Thank you.

DELEGATE PERRA (NH): Wayne Perra, department adjutant along with Department Commander Charlie Arkwell, from the Live Free or Die State, New Hampshire, \$2,000.

DELEGATE CONNER (MA): Good afternoon, I'm Scott Conner with my fellow Vice Commander Lisa McPhee. We are from the great state of Jake, Department of Massachusetts. Today we would like to make a contribution on behalf of the members of the 4th District, Department of Massachusetts in our Shake the Pig campaign for \$3,012.43.

DELEGATE TESTER (VT): Good Afternoon I'm Catherine Tester, past department commander for the great state of Vermont, the Green Mountain State. On behalf of all of our members, we are donating \$1,000. Also with me is our senior vice commander, Mark Cloutier.

DELEGATE MILLER (AZ): Scott Miller, John Ivens Post 42, Grand Canyon, Arizona, \$500 Child Welfare Foundation.

DELEGATE COSTELLO (NE): Good afternoon. From the great state of Nebraska, go Cornhuskers, I'm Alternate NEC Member Jim Costello, with past Commander Dan Benes, and NEC Member Fred Craigie. We're donating \$3,041.46.

DELEGATE BOLAND (FL): On behalf of my wife Dianne and myself, donating \$2,500 to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Thank you all for your donations that you have made today. Making us a better program for The American Legion and the children of our nation. God bless you. God bless America.

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: For the Child Welfare Foundation just collected on stage was \$29,742.83. So far, the total for 2022 is \$875,171.74. This morning at the southern block NEF, they collected \$8,500 for NEF. And for Veterans & Children Foundation, \$2,134. *(Applause)*

Ladies and gentlemen, three years ago The American Legion prevailed in one of the most important First Amendment cases in Supreme Court history. Thanks to our friends at First Liberty Institute, veterans can enjoy their First Amendment freedom as they memorialize their fallen comrades. First Liberty is also largely responsible for the Supreme Court victories that I mentioned in my report to you yesterday. The award that they're about to present is named in honor of our dearly departed friend, The American Legion's longtime national judge advocate, Philip Onderdonk. With us today to present that award is a brilliant legal mind and the president and CEO of First Liberty Institute, Kelly Shackelford.

**Presentation: Philip Onderdonk Religious Liberty Award
Kelly Shackelford, Esq., President and CEO, First Liberty Institute**

This is, I think, one of the coolest awards you can receive, and when we show the video, everyone is going to be a little envious and will want to get this award in the future. First Liberty is the largest legal nonprofit in the country. All we do is First Amendment liberty cases. Really our history goes back with The American Legion almost 15 to 20 years ago when we realized that were attacks beginning on monuments and memorials.

So, we have a lot of veterans on our staff, and so we reached out to The American Legion, and it was at that point we reached Phil Onderdonk, who was the judge advocate, and when we did that, we got a friend because we knew this was coming to veterans' memorials and monuments in the future. Before we knew it, very quickly, we were in court

with The American Legion defending attacks on the Pledge of Allegiance. We won those cases. Those were victories. But after that, there were attacks on our national motto in court, and I'm proud to say that, along with The American Legion, we won those cases as well and really quelled those attacks on our national motto.

But then came the attacks on the monuments and memorials, our veterans memorials across the country. The Mt. Soledad Memorial, one of the most beautiful memorials in the country. I can't encourage you enough, if you've never been out to the San Diego area in La Jolla to go and see that incredible monument and all the plaques around it and all the people who served. And the ACLU brought a lawsuit, and they had some favorable courts that were ready to tear that monument down, but fortunately there was actually a purchase of the property to save that memorial so that that did not happen, and that memorial, you can still go to Mt. Soledad and see that memorial today. But that obviously wasn't a legal opinion that was going to help in the future with regard to monuments and memorials.

So, then the Mojave Desert Cross case occurred. That memorial was put up in 1934 by World War I veterans in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Really it was there to honor those who had given their lives and those that they had seen lose their lives in World War I. Again, the ACLU had come into court, tried to tear that down. We ended up going all the way to the United States Supreme Court and won the case, but it was on a technicality, so it didn't solve the issue for the future.

Of course, then came the Bladensburg Cross outside of Washington, D.C. This memorial that was put up almost 100 years ago by mothers who lost their sons in World War I and by The American Legion that put that on American Legion land. But years later a group came along and filed a lawsuit and said, you can't have this memorial, this cross, because it's a cross and it's now on government property because the government has taken it over because of the roads that are nearby. And believe it or not, at the court of appeals, the federal court of appeals, during the oral argument, one of the judges said, why don't we just cut the arms off the cross? That way no one will be offended, and we won't have to tear it down.

That ruling in that court ended up being 2-1 that this memorial after almost 100 years was unconstitutional. We went to the United States Supreme Court, and I think we have a picture even of us and The American Legion standing outside after the arguments, and we won a victory at the United States Supreme Court, 7-2, and that decision is entitled *The American Legion versus the American Humanist Association*. A very important victory, setting the precedent that these attacks on these memorials are not supported by the law.

Last year we came to you in giving out this award, and we gave the award to a group, the Northeast POW/MIA Network because they had put a Missing Man Table in the VA hospital, and in this Missing Man Table, and I think we have a picture of this. They had what you usually see, but part of that was, you'd have to see it kind of close, but there's a little bible on the table with the guy's name Herk on it. Herk was in a German prisoner of war camp for almost a year, and he donated this because that was what got him through that prisoner of war experience, and he wanted that on the Missing Man Table.

But a group connected with a guy by the name of Mikey Weinstein decided they wanted to file a lawsuit and force the Northeast POW/MIA to take down the display or remove the bible that Herk had provided for this Missing Man Table. We gave the award last year, the Philip B. Onderdonk Jr. Award, to the Northeast POW/MIA Network. I've got some good news. In February of this year, the federal judge dismissed and threw out of court this attack on this Missing Man Table, and we now have a victory for the Northeast POW/MIA Network. *(Applause)*

So, if you want to follow any of these, because I obviously can't talk about all the cases and everything that's going on. I think we have a slide that gives the website. You can go to firstliberty.org, and you can put your e-mail in, and we'll send you an e-mail every week, and you can watch the cases and all these battles that are happening. This year's award goes to really somebody really special, and I want to play just a couple of

minute video about the award so you can see what we're going to give out, and then I'll announce who the award winner is and why we're doing it.

...At this time the delegation viewed a video

So, you might have heard, there was a pretty major decision two months ago in the United States Supreme Court. In fact, it's considered the biggest landmark decision in the area of the First Amendment and religious freedom in over 50 years. What a lot of people don't know is the individual who brought this suit is a Marine. As a guy who started years ago, and really the story starts, after he got out of the Marines serving almost 20 years, he became a football coach, and as he was coaching, one of the things he did is he made a promise to God. He said, after all the games are over, after the game, when everybody's milling around the field and they're picking up their phone and making dinner reservations, the first thing I'm going to do is go to a knee, and I'm going to thank God for the privilege of coaching these young men, and that's what he did for seven years. Until the school district told him, if you go to a knee again, we're going to fire you.

As a Marine, he said, what did I fight for if I'm going to give away these freedoms the first time I come under attack? And what kind of example am I going to set for these young men when I tell them, when they break an arm, to rub some dirt on it and go back in there? So, he stood his ground, and he was fired, and it went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. And Coach Joe Kennedy won in a case that, kind of like The American Legion case that is in the name of The American Legion, that was a great victory just a few years ago, this case will always bear the name of Joe Kennedy versus Bremerton School District, and it is an incredible victory not only for every coach and not only for every teacher but every person who works for the government in any way and their rights to their First Amendment right to free speech and to the free exercise of religion without the government telling them they can't express themselves. A huge victory. So, it's only appropriate that this year's Philip B. Onderdonk Jr. Award go to a Marine by the name of Coach Joe Kennedy. *(Applause)*

JOE KENNEDY: Thank you very much. Thank you. I just want to say it has been an honor. It's been a blessing to be able to serve with my brothers and sisters my entire life. And to see all of you still here serving after their time in the service is over, family members, I see everybody out here. This is the largest group of people that have just made me smile for the last few days. God bless you all, semper fi. Washington State, I'll see you guys soon. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Education is of vital importance to The American Legion for a number of reasons. The youth of our nation, one of our pillars, depend on it. It also goes to reason that a well-educated youth is a stronger military. The National Guard's Youth Challenge program invests in education, discipline, values and skills training for at risk youth, ages 16-18. Originally Major General Eric Little was to accept the award, but a scheduling conflict prevents him from being here. We're pleased to have Wisconsin's adjutant general, Major General Paul E. Knapp with us instead. General Knapp has a master's degree in technology management from the University of Maryland and a bachelor's degree in political science from the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has piloted the C-130 Hercules and flown more than 3,000 flight hours including 681 combats with sorties supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, allied forces and many other missions. It is my pleasure to present the National Education Award to the National Guard Youth Challenge Program and Major General Paul E. Knapp.

ANNOUNCER: *The American Legion National Education Award is presented To National Guard Youth Challenge Program, in recognition and appreciation of your impactful commitment To giving the youth of our great nation the opportunity to pursue their education, while instilling in them a sense of discipline and patriotism by The American Legion, 103rd National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Paul E. Dillard,*

national commander, Daniel S. Wheeler, national adjutant, Richard Anderson, chairman, Americanism Commission.

**Presentation: National Education Award
National Guard Bureau, Maj. Gen. Paul E. Knapp, Adjutant General of Wisconsin**

Thank you very much, good afternoon. Thank you, Commander Dillard, distinguished guests, and members of The American Legion. As you mentioned, I was the last-minute pinch hitter here, as the adjutant general for the National Guard Bureau, but I really want to thank you because normally I commute about an hour and 15 minutes to Madison here from Milwaukee, but today my commute was about 12 minutes. So, thank you for that as well. It really is an honor and a privilege to be here today and accept this award on behalf of General Hokanson, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the entire National Guard, particularly those states that host the Youth Challenge Programs.

If I could, I'd like to just take a couple minutes to familiarize you with what the Youth Challenge Programs are. The NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act, authorized them in 1993, and legislation allowed the National Guard Bureau to enter into agreements with the state to do a cost share and conduct programs targeting at-risk youth. And nearly 30 years later, the program is stronger than ever. So why the National Guard, you might ask? Well, the youth programs are consistent with our community support role, our domestic support role, and state mission of the National Guard. And we already had that required infrastructure in place to support a program, like availability of trained personnel, areas of organization, planning, execution, discipline, and leadership.

In terms of general information about the program, there are over 40 Youth Challenge Academies and seven Job Challenge programs in 31 states and territories, employing over 2,400 employees. Speaking of those states, I am proud to say that we are one of them here in Wisconsin, and I would like to at this time point out our Wisconsin Challenge Academy director. I think you're over here somewhere. Joni Matthews back here. I don't know if we can see her very well, but she retired recently as my deputy adjutant general for Army, and I couldn't be luckier, and our state couldn't be more fortunate to have her leading our Youth Challenge Program.

So as was mentioned earlier, it's for 15 1/2-year-old to 18-year-old high school dropouts, and basically these are kids that really have challenges and really need help. This program is a by application program through the high schools directly to the Challenge Academies, and the Challenge Academies then vet these kids and get anywhere from 70 to 150 kids per program into this program each semester. It's a 5 1/2-month in-residence program, and it couldn't be better for these youth. So far, since 1993, there have been over 272,000 enrollments and 200,000 graduates. *(Applause)*

Thank you. You know, it really is huge. When I first became the adjutant general here in Wisconsin, it was one of the biggest surprises to me that we oversaw the Challenge Academy. In fact, after spending over almost 30 years in the military, I had not heard of the Challenge Academy, and it really is one of the programs I'm most proud of. I've been able to participate in the graduations, and if you could see the look on these kids' faces and the pride that they have in graduating and receiving a diploma or a GED and a way forward in life, it really is priceless. I can't tell you how much I appreciate everyone who participates in it.

So, without further ado, in closing, one of the things that I was asked before we come up here is how can The American Legion assist going forward with this program? I'm guessing many of you have never heard of it. Well, as I mentioned, in over 31 states the Youth Challenge Program exists, and after that 5 1/2 month in residency portion of the program, what we do then is every single cadet graduate is set up with a mentor, and that mentor is trained and does a structured mentoring program with that young man or woman for 12 months, for an entire year after they complete the program.

And this is critical because, if you take a young person out of an environment that isn't conducive to success in society, and we give them 5 1/2 months of life skills, and then just to put them back in that same environment, I can only imagine that the rate of kids that would fall back into those old habits would be much higher without this mentorship program. So how can you help?

Well, look in your state, reach out, and see if you have a Youth Challenge Program in your state through the National Guard and help us find mentors. Many of you may be mentors. As a life member of The American Legion myself, I know that this audience is filled with great Americans and great people, and if you're looking for an additional way to help, being a mentor or helping us find mentors for the Challenge Academy would be hugely beneficial.

The other way is, any chance you get, I know you get a lot of chances to get out and talk to the youth at the high schools and such, just spread the word about the program. The more we can get the program advertised out there and the more kids that we can get into the program, the better we can serve the youth of this country and put us on a continued path to success as a nation. So again, I'd like to thank you for this great honor of being here. It's been a privilege to accept on behalf of the entire National Guard here in my home state of Wisconsin. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The chair recognizes Steven A. Brennan of Maryland, chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security, for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on National Security
Steven Brennan, Maryland, Chairman**

At 9:00 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, 257 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security initially met in the Wisconsin Center, Ballroom, Section C, First Floor, and elected Steven Brennan (Maryland) as Chairman and as Secretary Kenneth Trumbull (Illinois).

After the initial meeting, the following convention sub-committees met, held elections, and dealt with the resolutions assigned to them:

Aerospace	Rick Oertel (VA), Chairman Ted DeMicchi (WI), Secretary
Conventional Armed Forces	Thomas Schottenbauer (MN), Chairman Bruce Donegan (SC), Secretary
Foreign Relations	Joseph Glazier (PA), Chairman John Lenotte (MA), Secretary
Law and Order & Homeland Security	George Wehrli (FL), Chairman Richard Keiser (NY), Secretary
Military Benefits & Quality of Life	William Flanagan (IL), Chairman James Holland (SC), Secretary
National Guard & Reserve Forces	William Goede (MN), Chairman Wayne Schorr (FL), Secretary
Unconventional Forces & Intelligence	Doug Haggan (FR.) Chairman Dan Watrous (OH), Secretary

At 9:30 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, 257 delegates and alternates assigned to the seven sub-committees attended breakout sessions in The Wisconsin Center room 101, sections A-C, room 102, section E, and room 103, sections A, D & E. The convention committee reconvened in The Wisconsin Center Ballroom, Section C, First Floor. Reports of all Convention Sub-Committees were read, and their recommended actions on resolutions were considered. A total of 18 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security or prepared by the Committee to meet issues that concern the American Legion and its principles and objectives. The Convention Committee authorized the Chairman to sign the Convention Committee on National Security report on behalf of its delegates and make technical and administrative corrections to the resolutions reported by the Committee.

At 12:00 PM on Monday, August 29, 2022, 32 delegates assigned to the Military Benefits and Quality of Life Subcommittee reconvened in The Wisconsin Center, room 102, section A-C. The Subcommittee met to discuss one resolution and after discussions, voted to amend Resolution No. 14, Correction of Military Records, and also referred it to the Standing Commission.

Aerospace

Rick Oertel (VA), Chairman

No Resolutions

Conventional Armed Forces

Thomas Schottenbauer (MN), Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 65: All Americans to be Registered for Selective Service

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The Selective Service System is an independent agency of the United States of America that maintains a list of information on American citizens potentially subject to military conscription and, during times of great need, performs work to ensure there is a ready force for draft into military service; and

WHEREAS, While the draft has not been used for an extended period of time, The American Legion believes that unless it is abolished, it must be maintained and must continue to adapt to the current state of affairs in our nation in order to provide the highest level of readiness, in case of future crisis or disaster that would call for the draft to be reinstated; and

WHEREAS, The United States military, for the majority of American history, excluded women from being allowed to serve in the U.S. military and therefore did not allow or require women or any other person that identified with a gender aside from male to be required or allowed to register with the Selective Service System; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. military proudly includes individuals identifying with any gender, including those that identify as being agendered, into service in the defense of our nation, and whereby The American Legion believes that service is both an obligation of citizenship and a privilege; and

WHEREAS, The United States would be well-served in any future conflict that would require military conscription to have a full and complete roster of Americans, regardless of gender, that are able to fight and to bring their valuable skills and perspectives in service of the nation; and

WHEREAS, There has been a long-standing sentiment of fairness that if any American should be subject to the draft, then all Americans should be subject to the draft

in order to embody the trust and unity that this nation belongs to and must be defended by, all Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Congress to revise the Selective Service System to require all Americans 18-25 to be registered for service in the case of military conscription.

Rejected

Resolution No. 5 (MT): National Defense Budget Review

Received And Recorded

Resolution No. 38 (NY): Repeal Legislation Requiring The Renaming Of Military Installations

Foreign Relations

Joseph Glazier (PA), Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 39: Prohibit Import of Petroleum Products from Iran

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to our veterans and current servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, Iran is known to have manufactured explosives and bombs used to kill American servicemembers during the Iraq War; and

WHEREAS, Any purchase of petroleum products enhances the financial well-being of Iran, and

WHEREAS, Putting money in Iran's coffers is disrespectful to the memories of those killed by Iranian-made explosives and bombs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion supports United States actions to prohibit the importation of petroleum products from Iran.

Resolution No. 51: Fully Fund the International Affairs Budget

Origin: Arizona

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, American national security and economic interests must be protected; and

WHEREAS, The threats facing the United States cannot be solved by military power alone; and

WHEREAS, The instruments of national power are diplomacy, information, military and economics, represented by the acronym D.I.M.E.; and

WHEREAS, Diplomacy and development, alongside a strong defense, help keep America and Americans safe and secure in a rapidly changing world; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of State carries out America's diplomacy and development missions, and

WHEREAS, The mission of the U.S. Department of State is "to protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive"; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of State and American diplomacy and development programs work to ensure that international crises are prevented as often as

possible rather than allowed to escalate to hostilities requiring military action, among other missions; and

WHEREAS, The International Affairs Budget, passed by Congress each fiscal year as a part of the national budget, is the budget that funds the U.S. Department of State, America's embassies, consulates, and diplomacy and development missions, such as the United States Agency for International Development, the Development Finance Corporation, Peace Corps, and other programs; and

WHEREAS, The International Affairs Budget typically only represents approximately 1 percent of each fiscal year's budget overall; and

WHEREAS, The International Affairs Budget creates a significant return on investment for American taxpayers as a key to advancing American economic prosperity, American national security interests and demonstrating American values worldwide alongside defense; and

WHEREAS, The goals of America's diplomacy and development missions cannot be fully carried out in the best interest of the American people without proper funding; and

WHEREAS, The National Security pillar of The American Legion aligns with the purpose of the International Affairs Budget, the mission of the U.S. Department of State, and the various programs which support America's diplomatic and development programs; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion "encourages increased federal funding for foreign relations and international affairs, and for the Department of State's continuing efforts to seek peaceful and diplomatic solutions to world conflicts"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges Congress to fully resource and fund the International Affairs Budget each year, as requested by the administration, in support of America's national security, democracy and economic interests.

**Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security
Resolution No. 2 (AK): Subject: Policy On Taiwan**

**Law And Order & Homeland Security
George Wehrli (F.L.), Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 4: Energy Independence

Origin: Montana

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The United States has fossil fuel (coal and oil) energy sources capable of sustaining a growing economy for at least 200 years; and

WHEREAS, Status of energy independence was recently achieved; and

WHEREAS, Our national energy capability exceeded the combined capability of the Middle East and Russia combined; and

WHEREAS, National policies were established to protect the world climate against climate change; and

WHEREAS, The climate change concerns resulted in actions to modify our national energy independence; and

WHEREAS, The surrender of national energy independence has resulted in our energy needs for both civil and military purposes dependent upon foreign, often unfriendly, sources; and

WHEREAS, Energy resources are a key component of our economy which in turn is directly related to military capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That, The American Legion immediately contact the House and Senate Committees for National Defense, Energy, and Homeland Security to advocate for renewal of efforts to attain and retain energy independence; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee instruct the National Security Commission to call for immediate advocacy efforts at the department level seeking support from elected officials, in a manner similar to the previous efforts to encourage protection of our Flag.

Resolution No. 44: Oppose Government Benefits for Illegal Immigrants

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has addressed immigration from the beginning of its existence; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes in a legal mechanism of immigration encouraging assimilation to the American way of life and education of the Constitution and the government established therein; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Homeland Security, there are 11.8 million illegal immigrants in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many sources estimate the number of illegal immigrants is more than twice the official estimate; and

WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of illegal immigrants are entering the country every month; and

WHEREAS, Immigrants entering the United States legally are required to have a sponsor and a method of supporting themselves, where illegal immigrants receive benefits such as monthly compensation, food, medical care, unemployment, subsidized housing, and free cell phones at great expense to the American taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, People do what they are incentivized to do; and

WHEREAS, To incentivize the flood of illegal immigrants is not compassionate, but subjecting them and our country to human trafficking, drug trafficking, crime, and the enriching of drug cartels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That all illegal immigrants be ineligible for any type of government benefits; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That it is compassionate to return them across the border.

Rejected

Resolution No. 8 (NH): Law Enforcement Officer of The Year Eligibility Criteria

Resolution No. 34 (MN): Law Enforcement Officer of The Year Eligibility Criteria

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 45 (SD): Establish Separate Paramedic/Emergency Medical Technician Award

**Military Benefits & Quality of Life
William Flanagan (IL.) Chairman**

Approved

Resolution No. 13: Repeal The Rescission Act Of 1946

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, From July 26, 1941, to December 31, 1946, Filipino U.S. Army soldiers and guerrillas fought and defended a sovereign territory of the United States as part of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East and defeated the Japanese Imperial Forces in October 1944 and liberated the Philippines in August 1945; and

WHEREAS, The Rescission Act of 1946 provided that "service in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines should not be deemed to have been service in the military or naval forces of the United States," therefore, post-WWII benefits for Filipino veterans of the U.S. Army were no longer the problem of the U.S. government; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi stated, "I consider the Rescission Act of 1946 to be a scar on the historical record of the United States," and this injustice to Filipino WWII veterans remains a dark chapter in U.S. history for as long as the 1946 Rescission Act remains in the books; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges Congress to act and repeal the Rescission Act of 1946 in order to correct the injustice that these veterans have suffered and to heal the indignation and sorrow they have endured.

Resolution No. 23: Implementing an Appeals Process for Medical Malpractice Claims

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The S.F.C. Richard Stayskal Military Medical Accountability Act of 2019 (HR 2422, S. 2451), was designed to allow active-duty members in the armed forces to file medical malpractice claims against the Department of Defense (DoD) for injuries and deaths caused by medical malpractice at DoD hospitals; and

WHEREAS, The bill was named after Sergeant First Class Richard Stayskal, who was suffering from terminal lung cancer because military doctors twice failed to inform him of his cancer and Stayskal was unable to file a lawsuit against the military due to a 70-year-old Supreme Court ruling called the Feres Doctrine; and

WHEREAS, The act authorized the DoD to promulgate rules for the implementation of the Stayskal Act; and

WHEREAS, The act in its current form in certain sections of the rules promulgated by the DoD are in conflict with the stated intent of the Stayskal Act; and

WHEREAS, The act provides little to no real avenue of appeal for the servicemembers and their families; and

WHEREAS, The rules promulgated by the DoD specify what claims are permitted under the act based on the DoD's narrow definition of what constitutes a military treatment facility to be any DoD medical center, inpatient hospital, or ambulatory care center; and

WHEREAS, This narrow definition overlooks other areas where a servicemember may be treated by a military health-care provider in a non-combat scenario such as during a training exercise or event in which a medical staff administers care to servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, All situations in which medical care is administered in a non-combat scenario should be considered under the act to ensure just compensation for those members who are subjected to medical malpractice while in service, to include U.S. military treatment facilities overseas in non-combat environments and U.S. Navy vessels not

directly involved in active military combat missions, and military correctional facilities housing U.S. servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, There are countless instances of medical malpractice that occur in non-combat situations where a DoD health-care provider administers medical attention to a servicemember outside of a military treatment facility (MTF) as it is currently defined in the rule; and

WHEREAS, The DoD needs to reconsider expanding the definition of an MTF to include all of these situations as to limit certain cases of medical malpractice would be unfair to the countless servicemen and women that have lost their lives or been catastrophically injured due to malpractice that has occurred in non-combat situations outside of a MTF as it is currently defined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion support legislation that would allow an appeal process in accordance with federal regulations which are consistent with other federal processes including access to federal courts.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 14 (CA): Correction of Military Records

Resolution No. 22 (CA): Clarifying Definition of Incident to Service

Rejected

Resolution No. 21 (CA): Delayed Entry Program and Recruit Training Benefits

Received And Recorded

Resolution No. 40 (NY): Support Establishment Of 24-Hour Child Development Centers On All Military Installations

National Guard & Reserve Forces

William Goede (MN), Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 52: National Guard Operating Funds Reimbursement

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

(As Amended)

WHEREAS, When the federal government calls up the respective National Guard of any state territory for any service in any region of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The federal government ensures that the National Guard unit receives compensation for their service when called up into service of the federal government as far as pay per member called into service; and

WHEREAS, When a state governor calls up the National Guard, the funds to support the members of their unit come directly from the allocated funds for the National Guard operating expenses; and

WHEREAS, Once funds are exhausted from the National Guard for any state or another, state or territory calling for the assistance of a state, their operations suffer from a lack of funds for taking care of its members and operations; and

WHEREAS, Our national security is at stake as our National Guard is not able to be prepared when their allocated operating expenses are used, whether it be within the state or in use assisting another state or territory; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion

urges that each respective governor of each state or territory ensure that their respective National Guard be reimbursed; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, Whether the call up is within the said state or another emergency or another states request for assistance that the governor of the state or requesting state or territory ensure that the National Guard be reimbursed for expenses to ensure that their operating funds have been replenished for use in their day-to-day operations.

**Unconventional Forces & Intelligence
Doug Haggan (F.R.), Chairman**

No Resolutions

Mr. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am pleased to announce the National Blood Donor Awards winners this past year.

Category I - Departments with 100,000 or more members

Post Participation: Pennsylvania

Individual Participation: Pennsylvania

Category II - 70,000 to 99,999 members

Post Participation: California

Individual Participation: Ohio

Category III - 40,000 to 69,999 members

Post Participation: Wisconsin

Individual Participation: Minnesota

Category IV - 25,000 to 39,999 members

Post Participation: Iowa

Individual Participation: Iowa

Category V - 10,000 to 24,999 members

Post Participation: Nebraska

Individual Participation: Nebraska

Category VI - less than 10,000 members

Post Participation: Montana

Individual Participation: Vermont

Many of our Departments participated in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Awards Program this year. 6,015 medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The Winning Departments for 2022 were Florida, Texas, and Minnesota. On behalf of The American Legion and its nearly 2 million members, job well done to the Departments and our youth of America enrolled in the ROTC programs.

Resolutions previously approved that are to be retained as part of the legislative program are included on Addendum A. Without objection the resolutions on Addendum A will not be read.

**Addendum A
Resolutions to Remain Part of the Legislative Program
Convention Committee on National Security**

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 118TH Congress.

Proceedings of Wednesday, August 31, 2022

No.	Year	Meeting	Title
23	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND COAST GUARD
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
102	2016	Convention	OPPOSE TRICARE FEE INCREASES
107	2016	Convention	SUPPORT ARMED SERVICES RETIREMENT HOMES
173	2016	Convention	SECURE NATIONAL BORDERS AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS
200	2016	Convention	EXTENDED CARE HEALTH OPTION (ECHO)
219	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY BUDGET
225	2016	Convention	FULLY FUND NASA
98	2018	Convention	CONTINUATION OF MILITARY DEATH BENEFITS DURING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN
117	2018	Convention	JAPAN ARMS SALES
15	2018	Fall	EXPEDITED CITIZENSHIP THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE
10	2018	Spring	EXPEDITED CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR DEPORTED VETERANS
41	2019	Convention	PROTECTION OF THE POW/MIA FLAG
18	2019	Fall	FUNDING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STARBASE PROGRAM

Mr. Commander, as a delegate to this Convention from the Department of Maryland, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and a second. Any questions? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Opposed nays. Motion carried. The report has been adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Chair recognizes James A. Lacoursiere, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education
James A. LaCoursiere, Connecticut, Chairman**

On Sunday, August 28, 2022, seventy-seven (77) members of your Committees on Employment and Veterans' Preference and on Veterans' Education, Other Benefits &

Homelessness met at 9:00 am at the Hilton Milwaukee, Regency Ballroom, Fifth Floor 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), Director appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Adam Treece and Quandra Patterson (DC), Employment & Education Policy Analysts for the National Veterans' Employment & Education Commission, acted as staff liaison and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received and elected:

Convention Committee

James A. LaCoursiere (CT), Chairman
Eric Measles (CA), Secretary

After the opening business, the following convention committees received nominations and elected:

Employment and Veterans Preference

James C. Fratolillo (MA), Chairman
Eugene J. O'Grady (NJ), Secretary

**Veterans Education, Other Benefits
& Homelessness**

Eric Measles (CA), Chairman
Geraldine Hines (TX), Secretary

A Veterans' Employment & Education Resolutions Screening Committee met on Friday, August 26, 2022. 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 James LaCoursiere, Chairman of the National Veterans' Employment & Education Commission and was composed of the following persons:

James Fratolillo (MA)
 Geraldine Hince (TX)
 Eric W. Measles (CA)
 Lloyd H. Woods (ME)
 Eugene O'Grady (NJ)

There were seven (7) resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention. The following actions on the resolution was taken by the Convention Committees:

Approved	6
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	0
Referred to the Standing Commission	0
Received and Recorded	0
Rejected	1

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 resolution referred to the Standing National Veterans Employment & Education Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness Committee**Approved Resolutions****Resolution No. 15: Supportive Services Funding for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans
Origin: California****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education**

WHEREAS, Veterans represent approximately 11% of the general homeless population, and 3.7% of veterans become homeless in the first five years after service; and

WHEREAS, Isolation and lack of social support systems are major risk factors among United States veterans leading to one out of five veterans living alone with an increased risk of going homeless if proper social support is not in place after discharge; and

WHEREAS, The fiscal year 2021 Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) report that consistent with 2020 data and with the previous 20 years of data, unmet needs of veterans are primarily services that VA cannot provide directly; and

WHEREAS, CHALENG sites eight of the ten unmet needs continue to be housing for veterans who need to register as sex offenders, and legal assistance in the areas of court fees/court fines, credit issues/debt collection, expunging criminal records, child support, family law, discharge upgrade appeals, and tax issues and sites six of the ten met needs continue to be medical services, mental health services, case management, food, TB testing, and substance abuse treatment; and

WHEREAS, Several studies have identified unemployment as one of the factors that greatly contribute to homelessness among veterans due to a combination of factors that may or may not include mental or physical problems and substance abuse; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion renew its commitment to assisting homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to support the efforts of the public and private sector agencies and organizations with resources necessary to aid homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek and support any legislative or administrative proposal that will provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion expresses strong support in the importance of collaboration among agencies and sectors to meet the needs of veterans and put an end to homelessness and at risk homelessness among veterans.

**Resolution No. 16: Abating the Negative Impact of Category Management
Procurement Practices for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses****Origin: California****Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education**

WHEREAS, The Category Management initiative implemented by the federal government in 2016 sought to streamline federal procurement and minimize costs to taxpayers through buying common goods and services via government-wide best in class (BIC) contract vehicles; and

WHEREAS, By consolidating smaller contracts and incentivizing preference for larger firms that have the resources to provide a broader range of government services, the Category Management initiative has led to the deterioration of the small business federal supplier base by establishing cumbersome barriers to entry for emerging firms; and

WHEREAS, The number of small businesses doing work with the federal government fell by 38% between 2009 and 2018 according to the Government Accountability Office; and

WHEREAS, Many federal agencies continue to meet their 3% contracting goal threshold for service disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs) only by virtue of providing larger contracts to fewer SDVOSBs with extensive past performance records; and

WHEREAS, The precipitous decline of new entrants into the government marketplace threatens economic resilience and the ability of the government to source new and innovative solutions to address societal challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion favors legislative action that protects veteran-owned small businesses from the negative consequences of the Category Management procurement initiative; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress provides the necessary resources and funding for the Small Business Administration to train veteran small businesses without past performance records about current Category Management practices to ensure they are provided the opportunity to compete in the government marketplace.

Resolution No. 17: Protecting Veteran-Owned Small Business Subcontractors

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education

WHEREAS, Service-disabled veteran-owned subcontractors provide critical goods and services for federal government contracts, accounting for \$5.5 billion in 2020 according to the Small Business Administration; and

WHEREAS, Some prime contractors have engaged in malicious practices with their veteran business subcontractors, including shortchanging the business by refusing to pay a budgeted sum for their work on a contract or altering the terms and conditions of the contract unilaterally; and

WHEREAS, Subcontractors who have experienced refusal of payment have little ability to seek redress from the federal government, and the consequences for non-payment are generally left to the discretion of the agency's contracting officer; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring that the provisions of a contract are mutually agreed-upon and effectively executed by both the prime contractor and subcontractor is critical for guaranteeing proper use of American taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, Business practices that harm veteran-owned small business subcontractors represent an inexcusable abuse of power and dereliction of duty by prime contractors and the federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion condemns nonpayment, delay of payment, contract manipulation, and other malicious business practices that adversely impact veteran-owned business subcontractors; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports legislative action to protect and support veteran owned small businesses that experience these and similar forms of malpractice.

Resolution No. 18: Quality Education for GI Bill Beneficiaries

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education

WHEREAS, Millions of veterans have pursued higher education through various GI Bill programs since the enactment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Veterans utilize their hard-earned benefits to successfully transition from military service to gainful employment through acquiring necessary skills and education obtained through postsecondary institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Amongst the top ten institutions of higher education receiving GI Bill payments, only three spent more than one-third of student veterans gross tuition on their instruction from 2009-2017, according to Veterans Education Success (VES); and

WHEREAS, Expenditures on instruction include costs that directly contribute to student learning outcomes as determined by the U.S. Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, The amount of tuition and fees spent on instruction is highly formative of whether an institution of higher education can provide its students with gainful employment upon graduation; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Education categorizes, tracks, and reports academic instruction expenditures for U.S. institutions of higher learning; and

WHEREAS, Many institutions of higher education receiving the largest share of GI Bill funding report a completion rate of less than fifty percent, leaving veterans without their sought-after credentials or degree and depleting their valuable educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, Institutions of higher education utilizing the highest percentage of GI Bill funding in their budgets consistently allocate GI Bill funds away from the delivery of education and towards unrelated discretionary spending that has a negligible impact on student learning outcomes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion supports legislation encouraging all institutions of higher education eligible for GI Bill benefit utilization to spend at least 50 percent of their gross tuition and fees on instruction expenditures.

Resolution No. 19: Resource and System Provisions for Food Insecurity Among Veterans

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports that 1.5 million veterans live in poverty, and their poverty rates are rising, leading to increased risks of food insecurity and decreased ability to maintain healthy living; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, 17.4 million veterans lived in the United States, of whom three-fourths were of working age due to the fact that one of the fastest growing and youngest groups of veterans are those who served after September 11, 2001, and are more likely to have a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, A report summary from the Economic Research Service (ERS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that in 2015-2019, 11.1 percent of working-age veterans lived in food insecure households, and 5.3 percent lived in households with very low food security causing disruptions in normal eating patterns; and

WHEREAS, ERS also found that food insecure households among working-aged veterans differed by periods of service, length of service, educational attainment, metropolitan status, labor for participation, household composition and disability status; and

WHEREAS, Food insecurity was higher among working-aged veterans who were disabled (33.6 percent), unemployed (20.0 percent) and female (13.5 percent), but declined with the number of active duty periods and educational attainment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion support legislation that facilitates solutions that effectively addresses the unique circumstances that lead to food insecurity among veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports legislation that secures the availability of food resources and systems that serve as a pipeline in getting nutrition to veterans who are experiencing or at risk of food insecurity.

Resolution No. 20: Tax Relief for Veterans and Military Families

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education

WHEREAS, The American Legion supports veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small business development, growth, entrepreneurship, and preference in government contracting; and

WHEREAS, The federal government has the obligation to minimize tax burdens for veterans, active-duty military personnel, and their families; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has historically supported enhancements to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program that would increase incentives for businesses to hire veterans, service-disabled veterans, and active-duty military spouses; and

WHEREAS, Tax relief is an important policy mechanism for ensuring a conducive economy that allows for veteran-owned small businesses and military families to achieve their financial goals; and

WHEREAS, Tax reform provides a unique opportunity to provide financial support to military families and ensure that they have flexibility when filing their taxes; and

WHEREAS, Fiscal policy encompasses a wide variety of issues that have the potential to impact the lives of veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion broadly supports tax policies that benefit veterans, veteran small businesses, active-duty servicemembers, and military families.

Rejected

Resolution No. 46 (SD): Establish Health-Care Employer Award

Resolutions previously approved that are to be retained as part of the legislative program are included on Addendum A. Without objection the resolutions on Addendum A will not be read.

Addendum A

**Resolutions to Remain Part of the Legislative Program
Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education**

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 118th Congress.

No.	Year	Meeting	Title
58	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VETERANS IN FEDERAL CONTRACTS
60	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FULL FUNDING OF LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERS) AND DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST (DVOPS) POSITIONS

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68	2016	Convention	SUPPORT THE INCREASED FUNDING OF DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAMS
70	2016	Convention	IMPROVE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
71	2016	Convention	OPPOSE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE HIRING OF NON-VETERANS
73	2016	Convention	OPPOSE THE TRANSFER OF VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
75	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ENSURES THAT ALL AGENCIES THAT RECEIVE FUNDING FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OR THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT MEET THE MANDATORY COMPLIANCE STANDARDS FOR VETERANS' PREFERENCE
76	2016	Convention	SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE REPORTING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO AND ADMINISTERED BY VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE
77	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY TRANSITION PROGRAM
80	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RETURN DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE FUNDING TO A STAFFING GRANT
81	2016	Convention	TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS FOR NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MEMBERS
149	2016	Convention	SUPPORT "BUY AMERICAN" POLICY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO CREATE JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS
150	2016	Convention	EXPANDING POST-9/11 GI BILL FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP
151	2016	Convention	STATUS OF SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE VETERAN OWNER
153	2016	Convention	SUPPORT EFFORT OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S (SBA) OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
155	2016	Convention	SUPPORT VERIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERANS' BUSINESS
156	2016	Convention	VETERANS ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING PROGRAM

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170	2016	Convention	OPPOSE THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S RESTRUCTURING OF DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE ROLES
254	2016	Convention	RAISE CEILING ON VA HOME LOANS FOR TWO LEGALLY MARRIED ELIGIBLE VETERANS
274	2016	Convention	SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY
311	2016	Convention	FEDERAL AND STATE INCENTIVE FOR EMPLOYERS TO USE VETERANS' PREFERENCE
313	2016	Convention	SUPPORT ELIMINATION FUNDING FEES FOR GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED LOANS
316	2016	Convention	SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT OF VETERANS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WORKFORCE
317	2016	Convention	ENFORCING VETERANS' PREFERENCE HIRING PRACTICES IN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE
318	2016	Convention	ENSURING THE QUALITY OF SERVICEMEMBER AND VETERAN STUDENT'S EDUCATION AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
319	2016	Convention	EXPANDING VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND HOMELESS SERVICES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
327	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FURTHER ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO ENABLE VETERANS TO MAKE INFORMED EDUCATION CHOICES
328	2016	Convention	GI BILL MEDICAL TRANSFERABILITY RIGHTS
329	2016	Convention	SUPPORT HOME LOAN GUARANTY PROGRAM
330	2016	Convention	HOMELESS VETERANS ASSISTANCE
331	2016	Convention	SUPPORT HOUSING PREFERENCE FOR LOW-INCOME VETERANS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
332	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) AND VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (HUD-VASH) HOMELESS PROGRAM
333	2016	Convention	SUPPORT INCREASE IN REPORTING FEES FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
334	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE TELEWORK (TELECOMMUTING) OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES
335	2016	Convention	SUPPORT MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL

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336	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CHANGE THE 12-YEAR DELIMITING DATE FOR ELIGIBILITY TO CHAPTER 31 BENEFITS (VA's VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM)
339	2016	Convention	SUPPORT THE ROLLOVER OF IRA ACCOUNT PENALTY OF TAX LIABILITY OF A PERMANENT AND TOTAL 100 PERCENT SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN WITH INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY
340	2016	Convention	SUPPORT PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES (SSVF) PROGRAM
341	2016	Convention	SUPPORT RECOGNITION OF MILITARY AND PAY WHEN CALCULATING STARTING FEDERAL CIVILIAN SALARIES
344	2016	Convention	SUPPORT FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT PROTECTS THE EMPLOYMENT OF VETERANS IN THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL PROCESSING FACILITIES THAT ARE SLATED FOR CLOSURE
346	2016	Convention	SUPPORT AN INVESTIGATION OF HIRING PRACTICES IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
348	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT BOLSTERS THE HIRING OF VETERANS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
349	2016	Convention	SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE POST-9/11 GI BILL
351	2016	Convention	SUPPORT TAX CREDIT FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYERS
352	2016	Convention	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING ALLOTMENTS FOR RETURNING COMBAT VETERANS
353	2016	Convention	SUPPORT A VETERAN-CENTRIC WEBSITE FOR EMPLOYMENT
354	2016	Convention	WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT PROGRAM
355	2016	Convention	VETERANS EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE
356	2016	Convention	VETERANS HOME LOANS
357	2016	Convention	SUPPORT VETERANS HOUSING REPAIR AND MODIFICATION FOR PILOT PROGRAM
358	2016	Convention	SUPPORT VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
20	2016	Fall	OPPOSE EFFORTS TO DOWNGRADE LOW-LEVEL WAGE POSITIONS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
26	2017	Convention	SUPPORT EFFORT OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND VETERAN BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS
81	2017	Convention	MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

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82	2017	Convention	PRESERVE VETERAN AND SERVICEMEMBER RIGHTS TO GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND BORROWER DEFENSE PROTECTIONS
83	2017	Convention	PROTECT VETERAN AND SERVICEMEMBER RIGHTS TO FAIR CONSUMER ARBITRATION
84	2017	Convention	SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT (SCRA)
85	2017	Convention	SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS RETURNING FROM DEPLOYMENT
20	2017	Fall	SUPPORT OF AN ACTING OPERATOR FOR DEPLOYED SERVICEMEMBER'S SMALL BUSINESS
100	2018	Convention	ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)
101	2018	Convention	SUPPORT FOR CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM
102	2018	Convention	EXPANSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) TO INCLUDE ANCILLARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
103	2018	Convention	SUPPORT AND EXPAND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM
104	2018	Convention	GI BILL FAIRNESS FOR ACTIVATED NATIONAL GUARD SERVICEMEMBERS
105	2018	Convention	SUPPORT AND EXPAND WARRIOR TRANSITION ADVANCEMENT COURSE (WARTAC)
21	2018	Fall	SUPPORT REASONABLE SET-ASIDE OF FEDERAL PROCUREMENTS AND CONTRACTS
22	2018	Fall	EXPANDING POST-9/11 GI BILL FOR STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS
23	2018	Fall	CLOSE THE GI BILL FLIGHT SCHOOL LOOPHOLE
24	2018	Fall	SUPPORT FUNDING AND CHANGES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS GRANT AND PER DIEM PROGRAM
26	2018	Fall	ELIMINATE GI BILL TRANSFERABILITY MAXIMUM YEAR CAPS
11	2018	Spring	SUPPORT VETERAN AND RESERVE SERVICEMEMBER FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS
12	2018	Spring	ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENHANCEMENTS OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; OUTCOMES AND DELIVERY FOR TODAY'S DIGITAL TRANSITIONING SERVICEMEMBERS
54	2019	Convention	GI BILL ELIGIBILITY FOR RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD SERVICE
55	2019	Convention	MANDATORY USE OF THE VETERANS FIRST CONTRACTING PROGRAM

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13	2019	Fall	TRACKING OF VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT IN ALL U.S. TERRITORIES
14	2019	Fall	REAUTHORIZE AND FUND THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S PATRIOT EXPRESS LOAN
15	2019	Fall	SUPPORT GREATER GI BILL OUTCOMES BY CLOSING 90-10 LOOPHOLE
13	2019	Spring	SUPPORT ROBUST ENFORCEMENT OF THE MILITARY LENDING ACT
13	2020	Fall	SUPPORT "BUY AMERICAN" POLICY WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS
14	2020	Fall	POST 9/11 TRANSFER OF EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS
12	2021	Fall	CYBERSECURITY PROTECTIONS FOR VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES
13	2021	Fall	MANDATORY USE OF THE VETERANS FIRST CONTRACTING PROGRAM BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
19	2022	Spring	ENHANCING THE WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT (WOTC) FOR VETERAN WORKERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES
20	2022	Spring	AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO PROVIDE GI BILL EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR VETERANS RECEIVING A GENERAL DISCHARGE UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS
22	2022	Spring	FEDERAL PROCUREMENTS AND CONTRACTS FOR VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign and deliver the report of the convention committee's behalf. As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Connecticut I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, call for the question. All in favor sign of aye. Opposed nay. Carried. The report of Veterans Employment & Education is adopted.

**Presentation: Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans, Large Category
Berry Aviation, Inc., San Marcos, Texas**

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 one company for its outstanding record of hiring veterans in the large business category of 200 or more employees, Berry Aviation, Inc., of San Marcos, Texas. Accepting the award is Berry Aviation's Chief Operating Officer Sean Iverson. (*Applause*)

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Large Employer of Veterans 2021. Presented To Berry Aviation, Inc., San Marcos, Texas, for an

exceptional record in the employment of veterans presented at the 103rd Annual National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, 2022.

SEAN IVERSON: Appreciate it very much. Just we really appreciate being here. I'm going to have to check the agenda and really get after someone who didn't say there was going to be a speech. But for that, I mean, hiring veterans is something we're really proud of at Berry. For everyone who doesn't know what Berry does, we fly for the government on contract aircraft overseas as a passenger, cargo and PR/CASEVAC. And we do that when we go places where the military can't go or needs someone else to go right away. We love our job. The veterans love doing it. Most of the folks we have are obviously veterans, which is why we're here. They get out and get to keep on doing it and supporting the country. Thank you very much, and fly Navy. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year Award
Geraldine Perry, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The American Legion is 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 Specialist of the Year Award to Veterans Representative Geraldine Perry of Milwaukee.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist 2021 Presented to Geraldine Perry, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Wisconsin. Presented at the 103rd National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 31, 2022.

GERALDINE PERRY: There is nothing more honorable than a grateful heart. And so, this morning, it is my distinct honor and privilege to say thank you. Thank you to The American Legion for all that you do to support veterans. I'm very thankful because I have with me today leadership from the Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training, Mr. Phil Koenig. And I also have the state of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, our administrator, Michele Carter. I'm thankful because I'm part of the office of Veteran Employment Services. My director is Gary Meyer, who challenges his staff, my colleagues, to daily work hard to help and to improve the quality of life for all veterans, disabled or not. I'm thankful because my collaborative partner here in the city of Milwaukee is the Center for Veteran Issues. They're located here and serve some 15 counties. It is through this agency, its programs and services that I'm better able to help the special populations that I work with, Native Americans, justice-involved veterans and the homeless. And so, I'm thankful today. I really appreciate also the Business and Professional Women Federation of Milwaukee because we donated over 2,000 pairs of socks. And though you don't think socks are very much, socks are the one item that homeless veterans need. And so, we're thankful. I'm grateful today. I cannot tell you how much. My husband told me to make sure I say, JFK Post No. 479. And so today, Legionnaires, see you on the high ground. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Robert Newman of Indiana, chairman of the National 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 28, 2022, the Convention Committee of Internal Affairs, consisting of the two Subcommittees of Other Internal Matters and Membership met in the

Walker Room, Fourth Floor at the Hilton Milwaukee for the purpose of electing a Chairman and Secretary for Internal Affairs. Robert E. Newman (IN) was elected Chairman and John W. Bowen (CO) 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 resolutions.

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 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 John W. Bowen, Colorado, Chairman

At 10:00 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, 45 delegates attended the Convention Subcommittee on Membership met in the MacArthur Room, Fourth Floor of the Hilton Milwaukee. A quorum was declared. John W. Bowen (CO) was elected Chairman and Jim Jarvis (SC) was elected Secretary.

There were no resolutions to come before the Membership Convention Subcommittee. Program updates that were provided include report of 2021-2022 membership year, Personify and myLegion database, 2022 59th National Membership Workshop, post development/district revitalization and training updates.

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

At 10:00 am, Sunday, August 28, 2022, 36 delegates attended the Convention Subcommittee on Other Internal Matters met in Walker Room, Fourth Floor at the Hilton Milwaukee. A quorum was declared. Robert E. Newman (IN) was elected Chairman and John F. Debisschop, III (CT) was elected Secretary. The committee considered 14 resolutions and their dispositions are as follows:

Approved

Resolution No. 3: Designate U.S. Highway 20 as the National Medal of Honor Highway Origin: Nebraska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor award was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861 and 1862; and

WHEREAS, 3,511 members of the armed forces of the United States have been awarded the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest award for valor for acting with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of one's life during wars against enemies of the United States; and

WHEREAS, During 2017-2018, the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation managed creation of the 451-mile border-to-border Oregon Medal of Honor Highway across Oregon on U.S. Highway 20 honoring all of Oregon's 29 Medal of Honor recipients of all wars and was the first state in our nation to do such; and

WHEREAS, During the 5-year period 2018-2022, Bend Heroes Foundation managed creation of the Medal of Honor Highway Across America through 12-states located along the 3,565-mile coast-to-coast U.S. Highway 20, the longest highway in our nation; and

WHEREAS, Numerous American Legion posts and departments across our nation have supported or led designations of the 12-state Medal of Honor Highways which complement one of the purposes stated in the American Legion's Preamble: "To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars"; and

WHEREAS, Each of the 12-state Medal of Honor Highways honors the state's Medal of Honor recipients and recipients from any state who travel on it; and

WHEREAS, The 12-state Medal of Honor Highways along U.S. Highway 20 collectively honor about two-thirds of our nation's 3,511 Medal of Honor recipients with the remaining thirty-eight states accounting for about one- third of all awardees; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress designated the coast-to-coast Lincoln and Eisenhower Highways honoring two former commanders-in-chief who either created or presented Medal of Honor awards during war; and

WHEREAS, Not a single highway across the United States has been designated by the United States Congress to honor all of our nation's Medal of Honor recipients since the Medal of Honor award was created 161 years ago; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That the American Legion national organization encourage the United States Congress to designate the coast-to-coast U.S. Highway 20 as the "National Medal of Honor Highway" and require appropriate highway signage including display of the three versions of the Medal of Honor medal on all signs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a National Medal of Honor Highway will raise public awareness of the Medal of Honor award and the bravery of our nation's war heroes, an objective of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society chartered by Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That designating the Newport, Oregon to Boston, Massachusetts coast-to-coast U.S. Highway 20 as the National Medal of Honor Highway by the United States Congress would honor all of our nation's current and future Medal of Honor recipients and promote education of the traveling public on the "bravest of the brave" American war veterans.

Resolution No. 62: Award for Service in Support of the Kabul Airlift

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs

WHEREAS, In August 2021 and the preceding months, the order was given for troops to begin returning home from Afghanistan and for Operation Enduring Freedom to come to a close; and

WHEREAS, Intelligence analysts predicted that the U.S.-Allied Afghan government would have been more resilient to takeover, instead we witnessed a swift collapse of Kabul, the regional government, and a near complete takeover of the country by the Taliban; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of American forces, diplomats, State Department staff, American citizens, our coalition allies, special immigrant visa recipients, interpreters, and their families, and many other vulnerable Afghans who supported our efforts in the war, were left in a precarious situation with much fear about how they would be able to escape the totalitarian grasp of the Taliban under these circumstances; and

WHEREAS, In response to the fall of Kabul, the United States and her allies committed to the rescue of thousands of individuals from Afghanistan by completing one

of the largest airlifts in history, known today as the Kabul Airlift; and

WHEREAS, During this operation, between August 14, 2021 and August 25, 2021, U.S. forces evacuated over 82,300 individuals from an incredibly dangerous situation and all while under duress stemming from enemy action and bombing attacks at the Hamid Karzai International Airport; and

WHEREAS, American Legionnaires and veterans from all generations, and especially those who served during Operation Enduring Freedom watched with both dismay and horror at the fall of the country of Afghanistan, but have been given some sense of solace that our forces were able to protect such a large number of Americans, our allies and their families with the highest level of professionalism, competence, and skill, and desire for their contributions to be specially recognized; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That we formally request that those who served directly in support of the Kabul Airlift (August/September 2021) be specially recognized through the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal, or the Medal for Humane Action (historically awarded only once, during the Berlin Airlift), or a similarly prestigious award to recognize their incredible contribution to the defense of our nation and allies and for recognition of their incredible aerial achievement in a humanitarian cause.

Referred to the Standing Internal Affairs Commission

Resolution No: 36 (NY): Paid Up For Life Membership For Medal Of Honor Recipients

Resolution No: 37 (NY): Past National Commander's Aide's Association

Received And Recorded

Resolution No: 7 (IA): Endorsement of Victor J. Desloover for National Chaplain

Resolution No: 10 (VA): Endorsement of Linden B. Dixon, Jr. for National Commander

Resolution No: 25 (CA): Endorsement of Autrey B. James, Jr. for National Commander

Resolution No: 28 (WY): Endorsement of Douglas R. Uhrig for National Vice Commander

Resolution No: 48 (WA): Endorsement of Robert "Bob" Clark for National Commander

Resolution No: 59 (IL): Endorsement of Terry Abdelnour for National Historian

Resolution No: 60 (IL): Endorsement of Tom Marciciak for National Vice Commander

Rejected

Resolution No: 50 (DC): Suicide Awareness and Recognition (SAR) Flag

Resolution No: 61 (IL): Application of Article IV Section 1 of the National By-Laws

Resolution No: 63 (IL): Training and Education of Future Leaders

Resolutions previously approved that are to be retained as part of the legislative program are included in Addendum A. Without objection the resolutions in Addendum A will not be read.

Addendum A

**Resolutions to Remain Part of the Legislative Program
Convention Committee on Internal Affairs**

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 117th Congress.

No.	Year	Meeting	Title
11	2016	Fall	SUPPORT AND DEFEND VETERAN AND MILITARY MEMORIALS
50	2018	Convention	INCREASE INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR VOLUNTEER MILEAGE
110	2018	Convention	SUPPORT FOR CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR SIGNAL CORPS FEMALE TELEPHONE OPERATORS OF WWI
17	2020	Fall	SUPPORT FOR REVIEW OF MINORITY AWARDS OF MEDAL OF HONOR WWI AND SUBSEQUENT WARS/CONFLICTS

Commander, thank you for allowing me the time to make this report and as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Indiana, I move for the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Hearing none. All in favor sign of aye. Opposed nays. The report of Internal Affairs is adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Collection of Donations

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: If anyone has donations for Operation Comfort Warriors or any other charities, I will now accept those on stage.

...*National Vice Commander Mitrione assumed the Chair.*

DELEGATE STOCKENBERGER (FR): Good afternoon, I'm Vice Commander Hans Stockenberger, with me is Vice Commander Larry Atkins, China Post 1, still operating in exile. The post and our member are proud to present a check for \$3,500 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE STENNIS (OH): Good afternoon, my name is Charles Stennis, and I am commander of the Department of Ohio. With me I have NEC Member Steve Masowick and 14th District Commander John Life. From the Department of Ohio, American Legion charities, we are donating \$10,000 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE MASOWICK (OH): I am Steve Masowick and I have two donations, one from my home post in Streetsboro, Ohio, for \$400, and one from immediate Past Department Commander Jean Wilson.

DELEGATE LIFE (OH): John Life, 14th District commander for the Department of Ohio, we donated out of the 14th District \$100 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE CULVER (TN): Lanny Culver, commander, Department of Tennessee. I have with me Department Adjutant Dean Tuttle. We're donating \$1,000 to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LAMARSH (NY): Frank LaMarsh, chairman of the delegation from the great state of New York. With me is Department Commander Dave Riley, Department Adjutant Jim Casey, and Department Secretary Barbara Corker. My project last year was Operation Comfort Warriors, and I'm proud to present donations in the amount of \$19,035.

BARBARA CORKER (NY): American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New York, we sent in a donation of \$5,000, and I'm happy to say I have another \$2,000 in memory of my husband James Corker.

DELEGATE NAY (MA): On behalf of the Department of Massachusetts, home of Past National Commanders Jake Comer and Paul Morin. I'm Sally Nay, department commander with our immediate Past Commander Tony Dias. We'd like to present today \$5,000 for a grand total of \$8,960 this year.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IN): On behalf of Past National Commander Jim Koutz from the great state of Indiana. We're here to present the latest efforts of this staunch advocate and tireless fundraiser. Post 351, Post 197, John Van Natta, Scott Johnson, Richard and Andrea Woodke, Ron and Brenda Byrley for a total of \$1,542 from the last 30 days. Thank you.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FERNLUND (MN): From the Department of Minnesota, I'm Tom Fernlund, delegation chair. With me is my wife Veronica and fellow Air Force veteran. We also have our new Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, our NEC Bill Barbknecht, and Alternate NEC Peggy Moon, with \$1,000 for Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE FISCHER (IL): Good afternoon, Wayne Fischer from the Department of Illinois and Jan Lepinski our District 7 commander. We're here to donate a couple checks. The first one, from my post, Naperville Post 43. We use our poppy campaign program, and we've been doing it for several years now, with all the proceeds go to Operation Comfort Warriors. I just turned in a check for \$2,740.

DELEGATE LEPINSKI (IL): I am blessed and proud to present the fourth check from Post 108, this time to Operation Comfort Warriors for \$10,000.

DELEGATE PYTKA (RI): Department Adjutant of Rhode Island, Gene Pytko, donates \$500 from the Department of Rhode Island to Operation Comfort Warriors.

DELEGATE MURPHY (PA): Michael Murphy, past department commander of Pennsylvania. With me is Department Commander Craig Wilhelm, Alternate NEC Member Paul Kennedy, and Department Adjutant Woody Hogan. We have a check to be added, \$6,900.

DELEGATE CLINTON (CO): Good afternoon, my name is Terri Clinton, and I am the immediate past president of the National American Legion College Alumni Association. With me is Dave Wallace, he is the current president. On behalf of the alumni association, we'd like to make a donation to OCW of \$3,217.50.

DELEGATE CRAGG (CA): My name is Jim Cragg, I am post commander of the Ronald Reagan Palisades Post 283 in Los Angeles, California. We were inspired by the hard work of our comrades in the state of California and the inspired leadership of Autrey James and Jere Romano to give another \$10,000 to the 1919 Foundation.

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: On stage for Comfort Warriors today has been \$63,817. Since September 1, through today, there has been \$371,536.05. *(Applause)*

Today, we got \$10,000 for Veterans & Children Foundation from California. So that brings us under 200,000, we still have a little more time to get that 199,000, unless I can get some of Jimmie Johnson's \$1.5 million to put in there. So, help me out, folks. 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

To the 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, August 31, and September 1, 2022.

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 28, 2022, in the Wright Ballroom, Section B, Fourth Floor at the Hilton Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mark Seavey (VA), National Judge Advocate, called the roll and announced that 40 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 Mark Seavey (VA), National Judge Advocate, 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.

PNC Anthony Jordan (ME) moved, seconded by Thomas Dresdner (NJ) to elect Hon. Vincent M. Gaughan (IL) as Chair. PNC Anthony Jordan (ME) moved, seconded by Frank Porter (MD) to elect Cathy J. Gorst (WI) as recording Secretary. Thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of the Resolution, 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 at the meeting.

A motion was made by Terri Clinton (CO) and seconded by Robert Rodriguez (NM) 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 Mark C. Seavey (VA), National Judge Advocate, to give a summary background report on the resolution assigned to the Committee which was done. The Chair ruled Resolution No. 1 (NEC) in order. Motion made by Robert Clark (WA) and seconded by Dave Warnken (KS) to affirm the chair's ruling that Resolution No. 1 (NEC) was in order. Motion carried.

A motion was made to accept the resolution as amended was made by Dennis St. Pierre (MA) and seconded by Jeff Joyner (NC). Following the discussion of Resolution No. 1 (NEC) a motion to move the question was made by PNC Anthony Jordan (ME) and seconded by Terri Clinton (CO). The motion carried.

Brothers and sister Legionnaires, I'm just going to go a little bit out of order so you can get the context of this amendment. The last resolved clause reads, "The passage of the recommended amendments to the National Constitution and national bylaws by the National Convention committee shall not create either multiyear and/or rolling membership until they are enacted through the normal resolution process."

Again, I have to emphasize this. Shall not create these two subject matters. I've been on this committee for decades. I'm not going to go back into the exact numbers because then I feel old about that. But this is one of the longest discussions we've ever had and one of the most thorough discussions we've ever had.

To the Adjutants at the post level, at the district level, and also at the division and department, you had friends there. I guarantee you had friends. And everybody was talking about the load that might be put on you with this new proposal to give our National Executive Committee the authorization to look into this. And then what happened was then we realized that, first of all, our National Executive Committee is the legislative body of The American Legion.

These wonderful people, these men and women, have been with us through their committees for 103 years. And we have to have faith in their judgment. What's going to happen if this resolution is passed, and I have a good feeling it will be, is that the amendment is passed, our National Executive Committee, which is again the legislative committee of The American Legion, will have, first of all, they'll have studies performed. They'll have research done. They'll have committee meetings, and I guarantee you, they will have input from the whole American Legion organization concerning how we can best implement this. The other thing is if, after all of this preparation by our National Executive Committee, they might find that it's not feasible. And that's the end of it. But so, Resolution No. (NEC) was approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution No. 1: Amend American Legion Constitution and By-Laws to Allow Multi-Year and Rolling Memberships**Origin: Resolution No. 1 (NEC) May 2022****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 recent ad hoc Committee to Study Membership Processing for the 2022-23 Year found that there was a strong desire to allow for multi-year memberships of three or five years; and

WHEREAS, That same committee found that the current practice of having all memberships run concurrently regardless of when an individual joined The American Legion is cumbersome and confusing; and

WHEREAS, This often resulted in members receiving a renewal notice within days or weeks of having initially joined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That the National Constitution and By-laws of The American Legion be amended to allow for multi-year and rolling renewal dates for individual memberships; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion Constitution Article IV, "Eligibility," Section 2, currently codified as "There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life," be amended to state that, "There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually, for multiple years, or for life."; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That there be added to the American Legion Constitution Article X, "Finance," Section 2.1 to state that, "Dues paid for multiple years, but for less than life, shall all be paid at the rate of the annual dues for the first year of that term."; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion Constitution Article X, "Finance," Section 4, currently codified as "Annual dues shall be payable October 20 of each year, for the succeeding calendar year." be amended to state that, "Upon expiration, annual dues shall be immediately payable for the succeeding year."; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion By-laws, Article IV, Section 4, "Discipline of Post and Post Members" be amended to read as follows:

Section 4. A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid on the member's renewal date by January first shall be classed as delinquent. If their dues are paid within 30 days of expiration, on or before February first, the member shall be automatically reinstated. If the member is still delinquent 30 days after expiration after February first, the member shall be suspended from all privileges. If the member is still under such suspension 120 days following expiration on June first of such year, their membership in 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; however, 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.; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That passage of these recommended amendments to the National Constitution and National By-Laws by the National Convention shall not create either multi-year and/or rolling memberships but permits the National Executive Committee to investigate and implement any changes through the normal legislative process.

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. Jeff Joyner (NC) made the motion, and it was seconded by Buddy Keen (AL). The motion carried unanimously.

Angela Gomon (LA) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chair. The motion was seconded by Douglas Reighard (PA). 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. Mr. Commander, as a delegate to the 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, I move the adoption of this report. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion. I have a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, the sign of aye. Opposed no. The report of the Constitutional Amendment is adopted. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Ralph Bozella of Colorado, chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation for the purpose of making a report.

**Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman**

On August 28, 2022, 114 members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. in the Wisconsin Center, Ballroom, Section B, First Floor. This report is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order and Ralph P. Bozella (CO) was elected as Chairman. Deanna Hurlless (WY) was elected as Committee Secretary.

During the breakout sessions the subcommittees elected William J. Smith (PA) as Chairman, and K. Robert Lewis (CT) as Secretary of the Veterans Benefits Subcommittee; James Stanko (CO) as Chairman and Kenneth Christian (WA) as Secretary of the Health Administration Subcommittee; Richard Neville (NC) as Chairman and Jan Lepinski (IL) as Secretary of the National Cemetery Subcommittee.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Katie Purswell (MD), Director, VA&R Division to the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; Marty Callaghan (MD) the Deputy Director for Claims to the Veterans Benefits Subcommittee; Tiffany Ellett (VA) the Deputy Director for Health Policy to the Health Administration Subcommittee; and Melvin Brown (VA) the Veterans Program Manager to the National Cemetery Subcommittee.

A committee comprised of Department Service Officers and Commission members in a pre-convention meeting on August 26, 2022, 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 (CO), the Chairman of the VA&R Commission, and was composed of the following Department Service Officers and Commission members:

James Stanko (CO)
William J. Smith (PA)
Courtney Steffen (SD)

James Fialkowski (WI)
Shane Pankonen (IA)

The 19 Veterans Affairs & 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	9
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	0
Referred to the Standing Commission	4
Received and Recorded	4
Rejected	2

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 four (4) resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Approved Resolutions

Resolution No. 6: Increase Cancer Screenings by the Department of Veterans Affairs Origin: Montana

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, Early detection of cancer improves the likelihood of surviving it; and
WHEREAS, Virtually 50,000 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) enrolled veterans are diagnosed with cancer each year; and

WHEREAS, If VA enrolled veterans were a state in the U.S. it would rank 10th in the nation for cancer diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, Eight cancers were the most frequent among veterans in 2010: prostate, lung, colorectal, melanoma, kidney, bladder, liver and intrahepatic bile duct; and

WHEREAS, All veterans have a 40 percent increased rate of breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, "Beating cancer starts with knowing you have it" and "71% of cancer deaths are caused by cancers not commonly screened for"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase cancer screenings including novel screenings; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to add liquid biopsies for cancer screening to annual physicals for all veterans with a preference on those with Food and Drug Administration approval.

Resolution No. 9: Burial Allowance Following Hospice Care

Origin: Michigan

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs provides allowance for burial expenses for veterans under their care while in a veteran home or veteran hospital; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs does provide hospice care to this same veteran when they go to their home or place of their choice to receive hospice care; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs does not, however, provide the burial allowance benefit to veterans who have chosen to leave the veteran home or a veteran hospital; and

WHEREAS, Burial allowance for certain veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care, furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, will be eligible for burial allowance under H.R. 7176; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges legislation in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to amend Title 38, United States Code, to provide burial allowance for eligible veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 11: Value of Lay Evidence

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, 38 CFR § 3.159(a)(2) defines competent lay evidence as any evidence not requiring that the proponent have specialized education, training, or experience if it is provided by a person who has knowledge of facts or circumstances and conveys matters that can be observed and described by a lay person; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations are no less binding on rating personnel at VA regional offices than they are on veterans law judges at the Board of Veterans' Appeals; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Veterans' Appeals frequently relies on lay evidence to support continuity of symptoms after active service or otherwise support the veteran's contentions pertaining to the origin of a claimed condition or aggravation of a preexisting claimed condition during military service; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, the Board of Veterans' Appeals granted at least one issue on appeal in 28.7% of American Legion-represented cases sent to the Board and remanded 45.8% for additional evidence, decisions that often included lay evidence; and

WHEREAS, VA regional office rating specialists often disregard lay evidence in determining whether claimed conditions are service connected; and

WHEREAS, Failure to give appropriate probative value to lay evidence in accordance with 38 CFR § 3.159(a)(2) can lead to unfair denials of VA benefits or create unnecessary delays in reaching a favorable decision; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure that VA rating specialists, supervisors and managers involved in the preparation of rating decisions at VA regional offices receive appropriate directives and training so that lay evidence is accorded the same probative value when being considered at the VA regional office level that it is accorded in cases decided at the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Resolution No. 31: Care in the Community Eligibility for Cancelled Appointments

Origin: Minnesota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched its new and improved Veterans Community Care Program on June 6, 2019, implementing portions of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (MISSION Act); and

WHEREAS, Under the new Veterans Community Care Program, veterans can work with their VA health-care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on VA's new access standards criteria which includes wait times; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are only considered for wait time eligible if the create date and the clinically indicated date the provider wants the veteran to be seen are outside the 20/28 days and VA has no availability to see the veteran; and

WHEREAS, Twenty days from the date of request for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health-care provider; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are not wait-time eligible based on access standard criteria when VA cancels/reschedules including any return to clinic order/follow-up that is greater than 20/28 from the date it is entered; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That when the Department of Veterans Affairs cancels a veteran's appointment and the next availability to be seen is outside the wait time access standard, the veteran becomes eligible for care in the community.

Resolution No. 32: Behavioral Health Autopsy Program Updates

Origin: Minnesota

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Behavioral Health Autopsy Program (BHAP) is a program managed by VA's VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention initiated in November 2012 VHA Memorandum, 2012-12-11, Behavioral Autopsy Program Implementation; and

WHEREAS, It is used to systematically collect both quantitative and qualitative information related to all veteran deaths by suicide reported to VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, This includes the deaths of veterans who were not registered in, enrolled in, or otherwise receiving VA care, so long as they are suspected to have died by suicide within a VA facility's catchment area; and

WHEREAS, BHAP uses a three-pronged system to increase VA's knowledge of the characteristics and contexts of suicide on the national level, and

WHEREAS, BHAP Chart Analysis Tool (BHAP form) is a comprehensive review of a veteran's Electronic Health Record (EHR) to identify contributory factors to suicide, such as psychosocial stressors and diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, BHAP Family Interview Program conducted by BHAP team members using the Family Interview Tool-Contact Form (FIT-C form) with bereaved family members to introduce and explain the formal interview program and request their participation to understand the circumstances impacting the veteran's life in the time before the death; and

WHEREAS, Reviews of care by Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC's), consist of interviews by a BHAP team member discussing a SPC's perspective of suicide prevention initiatives and possible areas for improvement, including a veteran's death by suicide, identified difficulties, problems or barriers the veteran may have experienced in his/her care, suggested actions that may have helped prevent the veteran's suicide, and any direct action the SPC might have taken because of the care review; and

WHEREAS, SPCs are responsible for completing the BHAP Chart Analysis Tool (BHAP form) within 30 days of becoming aware of a veteran suicide or suspected Veteran suicide; and

WHEREAS, All information collected for BHAP is considered privileged and confidential under the provisions of 38 U.S. Code § 5705 Confidentiality of Medical Quality-Assurance Records; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion

urges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to amend the current Behavioral Health Autopsy Program (BHAP) form to include a section for veterans that only received primary care service that includes questions on diagnosis, symptoms, pain management and last clinic seen at VA health care systems; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA enter into an agreement with local state Department of Health for sharing of all state BHAP reports without charges and trends or patterns obtained by the BHAP; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this report, minus personally identifiable information (PII), be made available to organizations conducting suicide prevention research, to further reduce veteran suicides.

Resolution No. 33: Disability Rating Criteria

Origin: Minnesota

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) rating schedule is primarily a guide in the evaluation of disabilities resulting from all types of diseases and injuries encountered because of an incident in military service, and the percentage of ratings represent as far as can practicably be determined the average impairment in earning capacity, resulting from such diseases and injuries and their residual conditions in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, The degrees of disability specified are considered adequate to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses proportionate to the severity of the several grades of disability; and

WHEREAS, In September 2017, VA proposed rule changes for the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities for the first time since 1945, which are the federal regulations used by claims processors to determine the severity of disabilities related to military service and decide claims; and

WHEREAS, On February 15, 2022, VA proposed rule changes for the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) specifically pertaining to the respiratory/auditory conditions and mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, On February 15, 2022, VA proposed rule changes for sleep apnea rating criteria that only consider the effectiveness of the treatment rather than basing it on severity of symptoms and the effects of using equipment like C-PAP machines for the rest of their lives; and

WHEREAS, On February 15, 2022, VA proposed rule changes for its regulation to remove tinnitus as a stand-alone condition and only award a 10 percent evaluation for tinnitus when a non-compensable hearing loss evaluation is awarded; and

WHEREAS, On February 15, 2022, VA updated its disability rating criteria for mental disorders, placing greater emphasis on a disabled veteran's ability to function in a work setting, rather than focusing on symptoms, like frequency, intensity, and duration alone; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That disability ratings should not be based on the effects of treatment, regardless of whether such treatment results in improved earning capacity and that many veterans can only obtain gainful, substantial employment because their symptoms are mitigated through treatment and continuing oversight, but the condition is not cured; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That tinnitus diagnostic code 6260 be retained in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD), representing a stand-alone condition that is consistent with several court decisions that recognize tinnitus as a stand-alone condition; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That disability ratings for mental health disorders should continue to be based on the frequency, severity, and duration of symptoms, which can have serious effects on a veteran's quality of life; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA justify in detail the appropriateness of VA rating the disabilities of U.S. veterans using the World Health Organization's criteria, based on the entire world population rather than veterans who have experienced traumas and disabilities from military service.

Resolution No. 43: Expedite Burial Eligibility Verification

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide burial benefits to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense form DD-214 is used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that deceased veterans are eligible to receive burial benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense that upon discharge, a copy of the veteran's DD-214 be transmitted to the Veterans Benefits Administration for the purpose of expeditious burial eligibility verification.

Resolution No. 54: Expansion of Eligibility for Pension Benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs

Origin: Ohio

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a benefit of monthly payments for wartime veterans and survivors with limited or no income; and

WHEREAS, To be eligible for this benefit the veteran must meet certain criteria regarding service time and discharge status, family income and net worth, and age or disability status; and

WHEREAS, Under current law, the VA recognizes the following wartime periods to determine eligibility for VA pension benefits:

- Mexican Border period (May 9, 1916, to April 5, 1917, for veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders or in adjacent waters)
- World War I (April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918)
- World War II (December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946)
- Korean Conflict (June 27, 1950, to January 31, 1955)
- Vietnam War era (November 1, 1955, to May 7, 1975, for veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. August 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975, for veterans who served outside the Republic of Vietnam)
- Gulf War (August 2, 1990, through a future date to be set by law or presidential proclamation); and

WHEREAS, The current dates deny eligibility for veterans who served between January 1, 1947, and June 26, 1950, between February 1, 1955, and October 31, 1955, and between May 8, 1975, and August 1, 1990; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, a congressionally chartered veterans service organization, whose membership eligibility is determined by Congress, had similar wartime service requirements, changed its wartime requirements to read: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and December 7, 1941, to a time later to be determined by the federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion

urges Congress to expand the eligibility for wartime service for Department of Veterans Affairs pension benefits to read: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and December 7, 1941, to a time later to be determined by the federal government.

Resolution No. 64: Codification of the Department of Veterans Affairs Solid Start Program

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (As Amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has, as one of its core pillars, veterans affairs and rehabilitation and our community understands that the transition from service in the armed forces back into civilian life remains one of the greatest challenges for our veterans returning home after years of service abroad in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and many others; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently has several programs that fall under the "Solid Start" program that endeavor to ease the transition for veterans into civilian life by ensuring they receive information about how to access VA health care, submit disability claims, apply for education benefits such as the G.I. Bill, and access suicide prevention resources, among other services; and

WHEREAS, Legislation such as the Solid Start Act of 2021, a bi-partisan piece of legislation aimed at serving veterans, would codify the "Solid Start" program and make it a permanent resource for veterans, including a provision that would allow for veteran service organizations and associations, such as The American Legion, to become authorized as alternate points of contact to reach out to veterans who are otherwise unable to be reached directly by the VA, thus allowing the Legion to use our spaces and resources to connect with veterans on a veteran-to-veteran level to educate them about resources and support networks; and

WHEREAS, Programs such as this will help veterans from this generation and future generations to access the resources, health care, and communities they need to integrate back into civilian life and will help us ensure our warriors are able to lead full, happy, and healthy lives in the country they fought to defend; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs "Solid Start" program be codified into law as a permanent program for U.S. military veterans to ensure they have a successful transition back to civilian life.

There were four (4) resolutions referred to the Standing Commission for Staff Study or Appropriate Administrative Disposition.

Referred to the Standing Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Resolution No. 29 (MN): Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training

Resolution No. 41 (NY): Repeal the Asset and Infrastructure Review Act

Resolution No. 49 (DC): Mental Health Services for Servicemembers, Veterans and Dependents

Resolution No. 66 (IL): Separate the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget from the Non-Defense Spending Budget

Received And Recorded

Resolution No 12 (CA): Expansion of Interment Eligibility in National Cemeteries

Resolution No. 30 (MN): Abolish the 10 Year Limitation Rule on Presumptive Conditions

Resolution No. 35 (PA): Foreign Medical Program Eligibility

Resolution No. 42 (TX): Unclaimed Veterans Remains

Rejected**Resolution No. 26 (MI): Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy****Resolution No. 27 (WY): Amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act****Addendum A****Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

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 118th Congress.

No.	Year	Meeting	Title
22	2016	FALL (2016N276)	SURVIVING FAMILIES BENEFITS
23	2016	FALL (2016N256)	ADD AGENT ORANGE COMPONENT TO CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS 4.16
1	2016	CONVENTION (AK)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS QUADRENNIAL PLAN FOR BUDGET
2	2016	CONVENTION (AK)	REINSTATE ENROLLMENT OF PRIORITY GROUP 8G VETERANS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' PATIENT ENROLLMENT SYSTEM
6	2016	CONVENTION (AK)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS
8	2016	CONVENTION (SD)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL HISTORIC PROPERTIES
11	2016	CONVENTION (LA)	MEDICAL MARIJUANA RESEARCH
35	2016	CONVENTION (MI)	AGENT ORANGE
41	2016	CONVENTION (MI)	STATE VETERANS HOME FUNDING FOR CONSTRUCTION GRANTS
43	2016	CONVENTION (KY)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CHILD CARE PROGRAM
51	2016	CONVENTION (CO)	WWII VETERANS HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL ENTITLEMENTS
52	2016	CONVENTION (CO)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEANS TEST
53	2016	CONVENTION (CO)	VETERANS DISCOUNTS ON FEDERALLY FUNDED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
54	2016	CONVENTION (CO)	DESIGNATE WALDENSTROM'S MACROGLOBULINEMIA AS A PRESUMPTIVE CONDITION FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN COMBAT THEATERS
55	2016	CONVENTION (CO)	RADIATION EXPOSURE
62	2016	CONVENTION (NV)	VETERANS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND BENEFITS TRAVEL
64	2016	CONVENTION (NV)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFICIARY TRAVEL PROGRAM

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83	2016	CONVENTION (DE)	VIRTUAL LIFETIME ELECTRONIC RECORD
117	2016	CONVENTION (MD)	DISABILITY AND DEATH PENSION PROGRAM
131	2016	CONVENTION (MD)	RECOGNIZE OPERATIONS IN LEBANON (1958), GRENADA (1983), AND PANAMA (1989-1990) AS PERIODS OF WAR FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PENSION PURPOSES
163	2016	CONVENTION (PA)	LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE REPORTING, TRACKING, AND ACTIONS DEALING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULTS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES
181	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION
182	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY CARE
183	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR
185	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	STATE VETERAN HOME PER DIEM REIMBURSEMENT
186	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DENTAL CARE
187	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION
188	2016	CONVENTION (GA)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' ROLE IN NATIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
238	2016	CONVENTION (NY)	SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT
245	2016	CONVENTION (IL)	EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION MEDALLION
255	2016	CONVENTION (IL)	REDUCING ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPENDENCY INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC) PAYMENTS FOR 100% DISABLED VETERANS FROM 10 YEARS TO 5 YEARS
268	2016	CONVENTION (IL)	URN MARKERS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION
362	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE SCORING ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LEASING
363	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	CONSOLIDATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CARE IN THE COMMUNITY PROGRAM
367	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	INCLUDE KOREAN WAR VETERANS IN PRIORITY GROUP 6 FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE
372	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	OPPOSE CLOSING OR PRIVATIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
375	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	PROSECUTION OF VA EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN FRAUDULENT PRACTICES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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377	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	SUPPORT FOR VETERAN QUALITY OF LIFE
380	2016	CONVENTION (VA&R)	EXEMPT FUNDS RELATED TO INTERMENT SERVICES AT CEMETERIES FROM ANY FUTURE SEQUESTRATION
27	2017	SPRING (VA&R)	AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO CLARIFY THE TREATMENT OF A VETERAN AS ADJUDICATED MENTALLY INCOMPETENT FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES
14	2017	CONVENTION (MN)	EXTEND ALLOTTED TIME FOR CLAIMS REVIEW BY SERVICE OFFICERS
16	2017	CONVENTION (PA)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE PROGRAM
47	2017	CONVENTION (IL)	RESEARCH INTO HEARING LOSS DUE TO LOUD OR CONSTANT NOISE EXPOSURE IN THE MILITARY
75	2017	CONVENTION (VA&R)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM
76	2017	CONVENTION (VA&R)	VETERANS EMERGENCY ROOM OR URGENT CARE FACILITY RELIEF
11	2018	CONVENTION (CO)	AGENT ORANGE AND KIDNEY DISEASE
49	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	EXEMPT CERTAIN INCOME FROM VA PENSION RATE DETERMINATION
53	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	MEANS TEST FOR MARRIED VETERANS
58	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS REQUIRING HEARING AIDS FOR SERVICE CONNECTED HEARING LOSS
59	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	AUTOMATIC WAIVER FOR OVER-PAYMENT OF \$300 OR LESS
64	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DENTAL CARE FOR RATINGS OF 50% OR MORE
74	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	AMEND THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND EXTEND THE ELIGIBILITY TIME PERIOD FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE
79	2018	CONVENTION (IL)	IMPROVE SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION (K) AWARD
85	2018	CONVENTION (NY)	DESIGNATE PRISONER OF WAR, PURPLE HEART AND MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS AS PRIORITY GROUP 1 VETERANS
93	2018	CONVENTION (WI)	AGENT ORANGE
115	2018	CONVENTION (VA&R)	OUTDOOR AND ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS
18	2018	SPRING (VA&R)	FURNISH HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES TO VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WERE STATIONED AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AT WHICH THE VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS WERE EXPOSED TO PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

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19	2018	SPRING (VA&R)	BURN PITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES
11	2019	CONVENTION (KS)	ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES AT FORT MCCLELLAN
32	2019	CONVENTION (IL)	VETERANS BURIAL/PLOT ALLOWANCE PAYMENT
52	2019	CONVENTION (MI)	ANTIDEPRESSANT HARMS ANALYSIS
58	2019	CONVENTION (VA&R)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCREDITATION OF INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS AGENTS
59	2019	CONVENTION (VA&R)	ESTABLISH GREEN ALERT SYSTEM/ INTERAGENCY GROUP OR COMMITTEE FOR VETERANS IN CRISIS
11	2019	FALL (2019N038) (FL)	ABOLISH PREMIUM PENALTY FOR DELAYED ENROLLMENT IN MEDICARE PART B FOR VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAL BENEFITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
18	2019	CONVENTION (MN)	PAYMENT FOR EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION TO A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITY
3	2020	FALL (REG RES NO. 2788) (NY)	ACCURACY IN REPORTING SURVIVOR BENEFITS AND COVID-19
14	2021	SPRING (VA&R)	QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) CONTRACTED COMPENSATION AND PENSION (C&P) EXAMINATIONS
16	2021	SPRING (VA&R)	REPRODUCTIVE ASSISTANCE AND PREGNANCY COUNSELING
18	2021	SPRING (VA&R)	VETERAN MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST) CLAIMS TRAINING
38	2021	CONVENTION (VA&R)	PREDATORY CLAIMS COMPANIES
19	2021	FALL (VA&R)	IMPROVING TELEHEALTH ACCESS
20	2021	FALL (VA&R)	HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AND VETERAN CHOICE TO AGE IN PLACE
21	2021	FALL (VA&R)	EXPANDING CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (CHAMPVA) COVERAGE
10	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	CARE FOR THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, + (LGBTQ+) VETERAN COMMUNITY
11	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT INTO VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
13	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS
14	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS
15	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROSTHETIC PROGRAM

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16	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS
17	2022	SPRING (VA&R)	CONTINUUM OF CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

This concludes the VA&R Convention Committee Report. As a duly registered delegate of this Convention I move for its acceptance. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, sound of aye. Opposed, nays. Ayes have it. The report is adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 2021-2022 program year the trophy is awarded to the Department of Oregon. (*Applause*)

Salute to Colors and Recess

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Legionnaires, please join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. On the numbers. One. Two. The time is 2:41. 14:41. The convention will stand in recess until 8:30 a.m. tomorrow. Thank you.

...At 2:41 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, September 1, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
Third Day

Thursday, September 1, 2022

...At 8:30 a.m., the members assembled for the 103rd Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had.

Call to Order

Paul E. Dillard, Texas, National Commander

The Convention will come to order. With the colors of our nation in place, hand salute. Two! For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain Pastor Stan of Colorado. Please uncover.

Invocation

Reverend Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado, National Chaplain

Has God been good to you? ...*Chorus of "Yes!"* And I pray he'll continue to be good and watch over you. Please pray with me.

Dear Heavenly Father, as we reconvene this session again, I pray that we all were able to get something out of the great speakers that we have heard. As we get close to the end of the 103rd Convention, we ask that all of those that attended this convention receive something that they will take back to their departments, district, posts, units or squadrons. And now I leave you with my last three words. ...*Chorus of "Go to church."* And all God's children said? ...*Chorus of "Amen."* Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Ladies and gentlemen, please remain uncovered as National Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Griffith, Department of Texas, leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Michael Griffith, Texas National Sergeant-at-Arms

Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country.
... *The Convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The convention is now in session.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: We begin this morning by recognizing outstanding achievement in journalism that had a positive impact on a community. The American Legion Fourth Estate Award is difficult to earn. It is a testament to the demanding nature of the competition and the quality of entries. Not only do the reports have to be informative and entertaining, they also have to provide a tangible benefit to society.

The winner of our broadcast award is KHON2-TV in Honolulu. The award-winning journalist expressed her excitement about the honor as soon as she learned of the selection. Flying in from Hawaii, she contacted our staff last night from the Denver airport. Her flight had already been delayed three times. She is unable to be here and said, "I am heartbroken. Please convey my regrets to everyone."

Broadcast Category
KHON-2, Honolulu, Hawaii

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: We're still going to acknowledge her great work. In the nine-part series, "The Forgotten," past Fourth Estate Award winner Pamela Young highlighted the significant contributions made by Chinese-American and Asian American veterans during World War II. It culminated in the awarding of Congressional Gold Medals to hundreds of World War II veterans and surviving family members at a Washington gala. ... *At this time the delegation viewed a video. (Applause)*

Ladies and gentlemen, though she can't be with us, let's give another round of applause to reporter Pamela Young. We will see that she still receives her award. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Fourth Estate Online Award goes to the Associated Press. Reporters Kristin M. Hall, James LaPorta and Justin Pritchard investigated firearms and explosives that have gone missing from military inventories since 2010. The series, "AWOL Weapons" led to congressional reforms and a new accountability system by the United States Army. General Mark Milley called the investigation, "Another example of free press shining a light on the important subjects we need to get right." Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome James LaPorta and Kristin Hall. ... *The Convention viewed a video.*

Online Category
Associated Press, Washington, D.C.

KRISTIN HALL: Hi, my name is Kristin Hall, reporter with Associated Press, and this my colleague James LaPorta. I want to tell you a little about our series "AWOL Weapons." This started with an idea I had about 10 years ago when I was a military reporter for the AP covering Fort Campbell. I noticed that there were cases of soldiers taking weapons off post and getting caught with them. And so, it just sparked this idea of how many times does this happen? And how are they getting away with it? These are supposed to be very secure weapons. Locked up really tight. What we found in our investigation was that a lot of times these guns go missing and they're not recorded. They're not logged. They'll go missing in transit.

We found one gun, a military Beretta that was used in four different shootings in Albany, New York. And the Army never knew it was missing from Fort Bragg. So, I think our investigation took years because we had so much trouble getting information out of the Army and the other services. They stonewalled us and refused to give us information.

We basically had to kind of create a database of these weapons and incidents. Some of the things that we found, you know, these lost weapons of war were ending up in people's backyards. These grenades were ending up alongside train tracks. Children were even finding some of these weapons. There was one example of a man who was injured and another man who was killed when a military explosive went off at a scrap yard. So, this is really important information that we were able to discover.

Once we put our story out, the reaction was immediate. Congress, as you can see, talked to the highest-ranking military officials. And now there is a law that requires the DoD to report weapons losses to Congress. And the Army created a whole new accountability system for their weapons. I want to say this could not have been completed without the help of our editors, Justin Pritchard, Ron Nixon, my colleague Justin Meyers, and Jason Deering and Jeannie Ohm. And I'll introduce you to James LaPorta.

JAMES LAPORTA: Good morning. I want to talk about the role of journalism. It really is an honor to be here and to receive this prestigious award from The American Legion. I used to have this quote that I would keep at the bottom of my e-mail, that I always thought of journalism as an extension of my military service. And the quote was, "Journalism is just as vital to the survival of democracy as the armies that guard its

borders." Journalism gives a voice to the voiceless. It exposes injustices and holds leaders accountable. That's what good journalism does. Imagine a world without the practitioners of journalism. Imagine a world without Ernie Pyle. We wouldn't have that iconic photograph at Mount Suribachi or a world without a Joe Galloway, the first major engagement between American soldiers and soldiers from North Vietnam would not have been covered.

My friend Kathy Gannon just retired from the Associated Press after 35 years of covering Afghanistan. She covered Afghanistan so long that she covered me as a Marine when I was there in 2009. So, I really just appreciate The American Legion and honoring outstanding journalism out there. Like Kristin said, this project would not have been completed without our editors and the entire platoon of reporters that came together at the Associated Press. On a personal note, I'm a combat infantry Marine. I've lost 23 friends in combat. Probably another nine to suicide. So, anything post-2009 that happens to me that is good, I do it in their memory. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Membership recruitment never stops. We just got a brand-new member to The American Legion. *(Applause)*

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, which in recent years has won three previous Fourth Estate Awards, is being recognized in the print category for its piece, "Military Suicides Take Toll on Wisconsin National Guard." Journalists Katelyn Ferral and Natalie Brophy chronicled the cases of four Wisconsin veterans who took their own lives just months after they served in Afghanistan together. Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin pressed Guard leaders for more transparency and data on suicides. ...*The Convention viewed a video.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Accepting the award is Katelyn Ferral.

Print Category Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

KATELYN FERRAL: Hi, good morning. On behalf of myself and my reporting partner Natalie Brophy, thank you so much for the recognition of this important work. I want to thank all the editors at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that continues to allow us and me to do really important investigative work that takes a lot of time. Especially my editor, Sam Rowe. I especially want to thank the families that were so selfless and wonderful in sharing the stories of their sons.

The video you saw was actually not particularly related to this piece of journalism I did but a different series I had done on the National Guard. This series cataloged the lives and stories of four quite young Wisconsin Army National Guardsmen, James, Eric, Evan and Logan. They all were deployed to Afghanistan together. They all came home together. And they all, unfortunately, took their lives within six to eight months of each other.

It was a privilege and also really difficult to tell their stories, but I just want to thank their families because I and the rest of my fellow reporters can't do journalism unless people are willing to share and talk and spend time with us. And often that can be really difficult for those families.

So, thank you again so much for your support and recognition. My intention in working on stories like this and writing this piece is that it can really help change the awful statistics we know about suicide in the military and highlight the important contributions of the National Guard, which I think serves a huge and important role especially during the pandemic and I think often is somewhat misunderstood by the general public. So, thank you so much again. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Our next guest served 37 years in the Army as a military intelligence voice intercept operator. She is a registered nurse with two master's and two bachelor's degrees. She retired from the Army as a chief warrant officer 5 and is president of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation,

the only major national memorial honoring the three million women who have served since the Revolution. A Legionnaire, she was a Power Player of the Week on Fox News Sunday in 2020. Please welcome the president of the Military Women's Memorial, Phyllis J. Wilson. *(Applause)*

**Address: CW5 Phyllis J. Wilson, USA (Ret.)
President, Military Women's Memorial**

Good morning, everyone. I'm so honored as a fellow Legionnaire to stand in front of you today to tell you a little bit about the Military Women's Memorial. And I can tell you over the last couple of days that I've been here at the convention, there are people that know about it, and as soon as they realize where I work, they have to tell me they're a charter member. They were there the day the doors opened. And there are others that say: When are you building it? When will it happen? Well, we're about to celebrate our 25th anniversary.

I'd like to start with just a short video that gives you a feel, a taste of what it was like almost 25 years ago when we opened our doors. Women and men came from across the country, nearly 40,000 were there. And please listen closely, near the beginning. We had two women that were alive in 1997 over 100 years of age from World War I. One of them spoke, and she said, "When I served in the Navy, women..." Let's play the video.

... *The Convention viewed a video. (Applause)*

So, as you can see, I have an amazing job. How much fun do I have every day? And I was doing great, but I was watching some of the ladies here in the front row getting a little choked up at seeing this story. But it's a happy choked up. It's getting the recognition that many times we don't. And let me tell you quickly, I was not going to apply to become the president of the memorial and the foundation because I was a soldier, and I didn't feel like I needed a place for women only. But I was wrong.

Just before I applied, I parked in a veteran parking spot outside of a grocery store and a gentleman said to me, "Excuse me, that's veteran parking." I know. I served. So, we had a conversation, and it crossed my mind that had I been a man, served in the military or not, and parked in that veterans space, that gentleman likely would have not said anything to me. And it made me realize that America still does not quite get there are 3 million women that have defended this nation since the Revolutionary War until today. And we get to tell their stories, individually and collectively.

So, every one of you that knows a woman in the military, yourself, a family member, a friend, we have a national database which has 303,000 incredible stories in there. But that's 10 percent of the stories that should be in that database. Each and every one of our stories needs to be told, because some day, if you don't claim that rightful place in history, it will fall to the wayside and people will never know, not just your own individual story, but how, as a team, collectively, we stand on the shoulders of that lady who said, when I served in the Navy, women are not allowed to vote; and now women can serve in every career field and every MOS, in every branch of service, as long as they meet the qualifications. In 100 years, that's what's happened. But when researchers go in to find the stories, we have to tell the more current, contemporary stories as well as those that are so richly told from World War I and II. But from the Gulf War to today, people will say I just this, or I didn't do anything that special. Yes, you did. You raised your hand. That's enough.

So, we'll tell you that a lot of people also forget, or they think because we're located at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery that we are fully funded by the United States government. We are not. I'm the president of the foundation, and every day I'm out there raising the money to make sure not only do we tell the stories of them on our database, but when you come to visit us, we're like a museum. From the Revolutionary War until today, we're the largest holder of artifacts, uniforms, photos, all that headgear, all those boots, all those boots, my God, do we have boots.

We could probably outfit a whole army with boots. They might not be comfortable

because many of them are from World War I and II and they did not make shoes that were meant for comfort for us. But I would tell you that The American Legion and the Auxiliary have been fantastic supporters and friends to us, having shared, over the last 30 years, more than \$650,000 to the memorial. You guys are one of our best supporters, and that's why I'm so proud to be a member. *(Applause)*

So, as I get ready to close, there's a one-minute video that will sort of share with you what our future looks like. We have all the designs completed. We've spent two and a half years and about \$6 million. Now we're ready, once we have all the funding, to change what the inside of that memorial looks like. New technology. New storytelling.

So, when our young men and women, our boys and girls come to visit that memorial, they'll stop, and they'll pay attention, and they'll learn in a way that a flat story panel just does not engage our young Americans anymore. But I need help from every one of you and anybody that you know whether financially or just get the word out, that people, women must claim their rightful place in history at our memorial. It's your memorial. Claim it. Take care of it. And support us. Thank you very much. I've got a short one-minute video. ... *The Convention viewed a video. (Applause)*

Special Presentations

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Now I would like to call a very special person to join me here at the lectern. My best friend. *(Applause)*

She allowed me to make this journey. First of all, the forever candidate. You know, seemed like I wasn't going to get here. And then this year. She's helped me make the journey. And without her, I couldn't be here today. For more reasons than you can ever dream of. I love you. *(Applause)*

FIRST LADY DONNA DILLARD: Well, I wasn't planning on saying anything, but I want to thank you all for taking care of him for a year, getting him back to me, I think. I'll let you know next week if that still holds true. But I also want to let you know that he did have a big support system behind him in his family. His boys are eagerly awaiting for him to come home. And we've got some grandbaby time and, yes, a little time on the golf course. So, thank you all for the journey. It's been wonderful. And we are very happy to hand it over to the next person to enjoy the journey as well. Thank you so much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: You know, if anybody needs a person to mow the lawns, I will hire her out. *(Laughter)*

It's the first time in, how long we've been married, 69 years, that you've ever got to mow. No, I forget, it's 39. But sometimes it seems like nine. But she wouldn't let me hire somebody. We did hire someone while we were in Europe. If not, we would have been in trouble, by the time we got home with all the rain. We haven't had rain in so long. Don't weed eat, or edge, she just mows. But she does a good job. I've got two fine boys. You all met them last year. They weren't in the military. But you would never know it. Got three good grandsons now. One four and a half months old. That's the reason they couldn't come. The other two are in school. And I would like to report many of you know my second grandson, the middle one now, he was diagnosed with leukemia, about the time we got to Hawaii. But he's doing good! In fact, the drop date where he's supposed to be completely recovered will be February of 2024. *(Applause)*

So, he's doing good. Everybody is positive. I want to thank each and every one of you because I know there's many prayers. So, I want to thank you all for that. That's what the Legion Family does. Right now, I would like to ask my national vice commanders to please come forward. All of my vice commanders have represented me well during the past 12 months. I appreciate your devotion and sacrifice for this great organization.

You know, when we put out the call last December, working on toxic exposure, I got together with legislative to give them a piece to talk about, and they all carried the message well. I know a lot of times you read that, from Georgia to Alaska, I feel like a Baptist preacher, thumping the bible, but these five guys did the same thing. That way we had six

of us out there trying to spread the word and evidently it worked because all of y'all responded.

We just need to make sure we continue to do that. And three of these national vice commanders, their department went over goal. One of them grew by over 6 percent. And the other two worked just as hard and got some departments up there in their areas. But they did spend some great time and they represented not only myself but The American Legion very well and I do appreciate them. As a token of my appreciation, I'd like to present each of you with a gift. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WILSON: Mr. Commander, as spokesman for your five national vice commanders, we talked to your wife, and she informed us that she's a much better golfer than you. *(Laughter)*

And that you can't make as many birdies as she can. She also said that you don't like to ride in a cart, but we want to help you, in that we've got for you here a new golf bag, a new golf cart. And if you look inside that golf bag, Mr. Commander, there's an extra iron, which may help you not make more birdies, but it may help you shoot more birdies. So, you might want to open that up. For everybody's information, that happens to be a nine-millimeter Glock. And you may be able to shoot some birdies even though you can't make them with a golf club. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Let me tell you about her golf game. She talks about Tiger Woods and the rest of them going out there and taking five and a half to six hours to shoot a 68 or a 64. She said she didn't know why they waste that much time because she can go out there in two hours and 15 minutes and shoot a 68 on the front nine and go home. *(Laughter)*

I've started taking her to the gun range a lot. Before that she would need a shotgun to hit a birdie if it's sitting still. But I still love you and we're going to go play some golf. She said she couldn't hit me on the stage. Nothing stopped her before. Why do you want to stop now? *(Laughter)*

I now call on the national historian, sergeant-at-arms, chaplain and my aide to come forward. You each played important roles in the success of our organization during the past year. I salute you for your service. Now I have some gifts I'd like to give you as a token of my appreciation.

AIDE TO THE NATIONAL COMMANDER IVIE: I've got a gift here for you, commander, and I started to make a comment about your skills that I observed over the year. But rather than be facetious, I say they're actually pretty good. So, we got together, the four of us, and got you a gift here. The people in the state of Texas would like you to fill out some paperwork before you actually take possession of it. But I think this will help your marksmanship skills a little bit. And it will be a lot of fun also.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Oh, wow. Golden Boy! *(Applause)*

I don't know if you've all been talking to Donna, but we live in a gated golf course community, really, it's not that dangerous down there. *(Laughter)*

But with all these rifles and guns and even on the road, Greater Arms out of Connecticut gave me a .44. In North Carolina, I got a 6.5 Patriot. With a scope. Shoot, man, this is a good year. *(Laughter)*

I forgot about that Henry I got the day before yesterday. I can't hardly wait to get all of these. I don't know if I'll have time to play golf. *(Laughter)*

Donna and I, I never did try to teach her to play golf. My son got his PGA card, and I went all those years with him with Hank Haney and all that stuff. She wouldn't listen to me, but she would listen to him. He would say, "Dad knows what he's talking about." But she keeps saying I keep repeating it and William doesn't. I said, "Just remember what I said, I wouldn't have to repeat it." *(Laughter)*

But we did go to the gun range because there's no way I was going to try to teach her. Another gentleman over there does an outstanding job. She started liking it. So, I've got to go get her skills tuned up when we get home. So, we'll have plenty of time to do that. Next, we have a few words from our national adjutant, Dan Wheeler. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Like everything, I have a script. And like usual it's not adequate for what we feel. I'd like my management team to join us up here. Senior management team.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: First of all, I want to tell you, we keep track of how much money is raised during each national commander's year of stewardship. We have a new record here, especially for an old guy. He has raised \$12,895,889 for American Legion programs. You are the \$12 million-man. *(Applause)*

Commander, you came to us as the forever candidate. And you're leaving us as our forever friend, Paul Dillard, because we all love you and admire you. You're always upbeat. Always smiling. Always dispensing words of advice, as if they were old adages and not something directly directed to each of us. You've just done a fabulous job, and we count you as a dear friend. And we know you'll be around for a long time. And we are just so happy that we had the opportunity to serve with you. So, we've got a few gifts for you.

We understand that you are a collector. And we've got you a case to keep your collection in. I don't think it will be big enough, but it will be a starter for you. And we put some of the hotel silverware in there just to help you out.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Left-handed or right-handed?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: I think you can use it either way.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Either hand. *(Laughter)*

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: That's just a little thing to help you out. And also, we saw that you got a new golf bag, new golf cart, so we wanted to give you something to fill it with. So, we got you a set of golf clubs.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Is that for my new grandson?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: They're golf clubs in there. There you go. Pretty nice set, too. *(Laughter)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: That's getting you close to your work.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Yep. Seriously, we know that you're a great golfer, and we were thinking of something we could give you that you perhaps do not already have. And what we have got for you is a bunch of money for you to get your own custom-made set of golf clubs from your choice of manufacturers and we hope that you shoot all those birdies with these. And think of us. *(Applause)*

And finally, Bill West, we've enjoyed having him but now he's yours. *(Laughter)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Now, six months ago he wouldn't have said those words about me. No, I'll tell you what, just like the money that we've raised this year, that they talked about, that wasn't me. It was all of y'all, your members in the posts throughout this nation. What a great bunch of folks we've got. You all raised that money for this organization. It was hard to stumble when you have a great staff, like The American Legion has not only in Indianapolis but also in Washington D.C. That's the reason why we get a lot of our bills passed is just tireless work they do up there. And we do have a great staff in both offices. And so, it makes it easy for me to run around and get the ink on the paper and get to enjoy our success, because each and every one of you, you all did it. We did it. And we're going to continue to do it. And we will be the largest, best, greatest organization in the world. And we will always get 'er done for our veterans. *(Applause)*

...National Vice Commander Higuera assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER HIGUERA: After serving as a 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 we present to our national commander, Paul E. Dillard, the colors of his term in office and a plaque. At this time, I call on Past National Commander David K. Rehbein to present the colors.

**Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
David K. Rehbein, Iowa, Past National Commander (Colors)
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Past National Commander (Plaque)**

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REHBEIN: Will the delegates to this National Convention please rise. I ask Newport Harbor American Legion Post 291, Department of California, to bring the colors of the national commander to center stage. Hand Salute. Two. Commander, would you join me at the podium.

Commander Dillard, as we stand here and gaze upon those two beautiful flags, the Stars and Stripes of the United States and the red banner of The American Legion, we reflect upon our service. We have all given years of service under that U.S. flag, but today we reflect on the year of service that we have all given under that red banner. A year of service in which you have led us to new accomplishments. We particularly reflect on the passage of the PACT Act under your leadership. As you take these flags home, each time you look at them, remember the accomplishments of this year. Remember the pride we feel in your year of leadership. And remember all of those experiences that you enjoyed and those many thousands of Legionnaires that you met as you led us through this last year. Thank you for that year of service. Post these flags at home with the same pride that we feel in presenting them to you. Thank you, commander, and know that you have left no veteran behind. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Color Guard, retire my colors. Hand Salute. Two. Thank you, Commander Rehbein. You have been a close friend. Not only has The American Legion been very fortunate to have you as a mentor and an example to our Legion college students, but your wisdom and experience are tools that can benefit future national commanders just as it has helped me. There are far too many people who helped me throughout my Legion career for me to start naming them here. But rest assured that you are one whose counsel I value highly.

...National Vice Commander Mitrione assumed the Chair.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MITRIONE: I now call on Past National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger to present the plaque to our outgoing national commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DELLINGER: Thank you, National Vice Commander Mitrione. Commander Dillard, will you please join me at the podium. Nine years ago, I stood on a stage similar to this, and I witnessed a Legionnaire from Texas take the oath as national vice commander. In that year I watched his dedication and his leadership as he served as my national vice commander. It was truly an honor to have served with him, just as I saw that year, you see today, and you've seen this entire year, his leadership ability and his dedication to our great organization.

This year he put us over the goal line, as Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act gets most of its attention because of the benefits it provides to veterans exposed to burn pits. But that's just part of it. It also provides care and benefits for many exposed to Agent Orange and radiation. You have kept the faith with your fellow Vietnam veterans. There is no underestimating the impact of this legislation. It has been called the most comprehensive veterans health-care legislation ever. It did not happen on its own. It was truly a group effort by everyone, led by this great Legionnaire. He's done an outstanding job. And we thank you for that.

You've also kicked off "Be the One" to help in our fight against veteran suicides. And you kept your promise to the veterans that no veteran would be left behind. You have been an outstanding commander this year. And I'm happy to present the plaque to you which attests to your election to the high office of national commander of The American Legion. It's given in appreciation to your dedicated leadership and in recognition of your devotion to the four principles of our great organization in service to God and country, and in token of the high esteem of your fellow Legionnaires.

The plaque reads, "Paul E. Dillard, 2021-2022, given the first day of September 2022, before the delegates assembled at the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin." You will go down in history as one of the greatest national commanders of our time. God bless you, my friend. (*Applause*)

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: It's people just like that, like the two past national commanders that just spoke, that this organization remains strong. And I've got to mention one name, John D. Morris. My father-in-law from Texas. (*Applause*)

Thank you, Past National Commander Dellinger. There are many things that I will remember about this past year but passing the PACT Act truly was a group effort. So many people in this convention hall, and in Legion posts around the world, wrote, called and contacted their senators and representatives. They also wrote letters to the media. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion for helping us get this passed. Our programs are solid, and I do believe that if we can continue to practice Buddy Checks and regularly initiate personal contact, we can see membership grow. In other words, no veteran left behind! And above all, "Be the One." "Be the One" to make that phone call. "Be the One" to save that life. "Be the One" to talk to your veterans, your brothers and your sisters. We all recall the great advocacy and media attention that you brought during your year as national commander and how you were able to help turn VA around making it truly a system worth saving and preserving. And I want to thank you personally for your leadership, friendship and support.

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: We have come now to a special order of business, the election of national officers. National Judge Advocate Mark Seavey will read the Rules of Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE SEAVEY: 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 his 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 vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified; except should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

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 concludes the rules of elections.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you, judge. As chairman of this convention, I now appoint as judge of the election, William West, adjutant of the Department of Texas; and as tellers of the election James W. Casey, adjutant, Department of New York; Nathan Gear, adjutant, Department of Wisconsin and Harry R. "Butch" Hansen, Jr., adjutant, Department of Connecticut. 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.]*

DELEGATE BUSH (AL): Mr. Commander, Tina Bush, delegate from Alabama. Mr. Commander, Alabama yields to New York.

DELEGATE MARSH (NY): Mr. Commander, Michael Marsh, delegate of New York. I ask the Chair recognize Past National Commander Fang A. Wong for the purpose of a nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander Fang Wong of the Department of New York.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER WONG: Thank you, Mr. Commander. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is my honor and privilege to stand here today to place in nomination the name of an outstanding Legionnaire and a good friend of mine to lead us through the year 2022-2023, Vincent James "Jim" Troiola. My friendship with Jim goes back over 20 years, back to the days when we were both serving, learning our way through the Department of New York under another great Legionnaire, Richard M. Pedro. Rest in peace. Throughout the years, Jim and I have remained close, and our paths crossed by the various assignments we served within the department. Especially the year I was the department membership consultant and Jim was the department membership chairman.

We traveled together all over the great Department of New York to conduct membership workshops. During those weekend trips, we always shared our views and our expectations of the department and The American Legion. Now, there are a couple of secrets that you need to learn about Jim before you choose to vote for him today. Those are the things that uniquely qualify him to be the leader of the greatest veteran's organization in the world.

Number one, now, this is important is Jim's leadership. It is no secret Jim is tall. He's very tall. So, he can look far ahead into our future. Because he's tall, he automatically commands respect from most people because we all have to look up to him. Especially those little children riding his bus to and from school every day. Jim's leadership abilities not only make him very successful in his civilian career, but it allows him to perform outstanding service at every level of this great organization.

Number two, Jim's insight. Recently I came across a letter, and I would like to read a portion of the letter to you. "Sir, I am Matt Flynn. In 1997, you helped me go to Boys State, which was a prerequisite for Congressmen Ben Gilman to nominate me for the U.S. Air Force Academy. Going to the U.S. Air Force Academy was a lifelong dream of mine. I graduated in 2002 and now a lieutenant colonel. I went to pilot training just after graduation and flew KC-135s in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan and many other places around the world.

"I volunteered for MQ-1s (drones as we all know) in 2010, and flew remotely in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf. I planned and liaised the first MQ-1 missions in the Arabian Gulf to provide overwatch of aircraft carriers transiting the Strait of Hormuz during a time when Iran was verbally aggressive. I instructed MQ-1s pilots at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. I spent time on staff with the U.S. Air Force in Europe and planned MQ-9 flights in European airspace, in addition to new capabilities in theater that are being used to counter Putin, co-wrote the USAF's portion of the secretary of Defense and the president's response to Poland when they offered \$2 billion for the strategic basing of U.S. forces there, and sat with the Polish delegation across the table discussing the particulars in Warsaw.

"I am now in Boston leading 300 software engineers building command and control software. I didn't write everything up there to brag about me. On the contrary, it felt right to ponder and describe the vast areas of amazing opportunities I have had over the course of my Air Force career because I could never have done these things elsewhere and it was my dream come true. It is my honor and my privilege to have taken each step along the way. You made this life experience possible. I deeply appreciate who you are as a person and specifically what you did to help me. I can never say it enough. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Please stay in touch and let me know if there's ever anything I can do for you. Eternally grateful, Lt. Col. Matthew T. Flynn."

By now, you probably already guessed it, this letter was addressed to Jim from a seed he planted over 25 years ago. Ladies and gentlemen, that's what I call insight. If Jim sees a potential out there, he will waste no time to support or mentor that individual to ensure his or her dreams will be reached, to say the least.

Number three is Jim's attitude. He is a true believer of the Legion's Four Pillars of services to our nation, our communities, our children and our veterans. He always walks the talk by supporting Legion programs that affects our veterans on a daily basis. When he travels these days, you will hear Jim talk about "Be the One." That is, be the one to ask veterans in your life how they're doing. Be the one to listen when veterans need to talk. Be the one to reach out when a veteran is struggling and so on.

Mr. Commander, and fellow Legionnaires, whereas, I, Fang A. Wong, a duly elected delegate to this convention from the great Department of New York, and, whereas, I would like to place a strong and resounding nomination for Vincent James "Jim" Troiola for the high office of national commander of The American Legion; now, therefore, be it resolved, that each delegate of this convention be the one to support Jim's candidacy; and be it finally resolved that the national adjutant, right here, be the one to cast that one vote for our next national commander, Vincent James "Jim" Troiola. Thank you. *(Applause)*

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE DOWNS (AK): Mr. Commander, Mike Downs, delegate from Alaska. Mr. Commander, Alaska yields to Kansas.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (KS): Mr. Commander, Marri Krupco, delegate from Kansas. Mr. Commander, I request that the Chair recognize Dan Wiley for the purpose of seconding the nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The chair recognizes Dan Wiley.

DELEGATE WILEY (KS): Good morning. National Commander Dillard, National Adjutant Wheeler, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests to the 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, I am Dan Wiley, a delegate from the state of Kansas, and it is my distinct honor and privilege to second the nomination of Vincent James "Jim" Troiola, representing the Empire State of New York to the high office of national commander of The American Legion.

A Paid-Up-For-Life Legion member and a member of the Sons of The American Legion at the William E. DuBois Jr. Post 1682 in New City, New York, Jim has served in numerous leadership positions at all levels of The American Legion. At the post level, Jim served as membership chairman, oratorical chairman, vice commander, and commander. He held these same positions at the county level, and during his time as Rockland County commander, he served on the Military Academy Review Board and the Veterans Advisory Committee for United States Congressman Benjamin Gilman. He served the 9th District of New York as oratorical chair, adjutant, legislative chair, vice commander, and commander.

For the Department of New York, Jim served on the faculty of the New York American Legion College, as the department membership chairman, chairman of the Centennial Task Force for the Future, a consultant to the Americanism Committee and as department commander in 2010-2011. At the national level, Jim has been a member of the Membership & Post Activities Committee, the Committee on Children & Youth, the Citizens Flag Alliance, and the National Security Commission. He has served as chairman of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission, and most recently, the Legislative Commission. Jim served as national vice commander in 2016-2017.

Jim credits much of his success in The American Legion to those in his post who mentored and sponsored him. Jim has an even greater lifelong commitment in his wife of 48 years, Saveria, with whom he has two wonderful daughters and three awesome grandchildren. All of whom are members of the American Legion Family.

Jim has served his family, is country, and The American Legion with honor. And now he will admirably serve as your national commander with his theme of "Be the One." As a duly registered delegate, I proudly second the nomination of Vincent James "Jim" Troiola to be your next national commander. *(Applause)*

DELEGATE HAYDEN (AZ): Mr. Commander, Ben Hayden, delegate from Arizona. Mr. Commander, Arizona yields to California.

DELEGATE ROMANA (CA): Mr. Commander, Jerry Romano, delegate from California. Mr. Commander, I request that the Chair recognize Autrey James for the purpose of seconding the nomination for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Autrey James for the purpose of seconding.

DELEGATE JAMES (CA): Good morning, everyone. National Commander Dillard, National Adjutant Wheeler, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, members of the American Legion Family, and guests to the 103rd National Convention. I'm Autrey James from the Department of California, and it is my honor and privilege to stand before you and second the nomination of Vincent James "Jim" Troiola from the great state of New York, for the high office of national commander of The American Legion.

A year after graduating from high school in 1968, Jim followed his father's example of service and joined the United States Navy. Jim's father was a member of our greatest generation, serving in the military intelligence while in Germany during World War II. While in the Navy, Jim chose one of the oldest professions of the sea service, and he became a bosun's mate. Jim served onboard the USS Nitro, an auxiliary ammunition ship and part of the United States Navy's 6th Fleet from 1970 to 1971. As a bosun's mate, Jim was one of the crew members at the operational core of the ship, ensuring the ship was ready to carry out all of its missions, whether it was relocating ammunition from one station to another or the underway replenishment of other ships in the fleet.

Jim left active service but continued to serve the nation as a Naval Reservist until 1974, when he was honorably discharged as a bosun's mate 3rd class and began his post career service. Jim proudly served this nation with honor and will proudly serve The American Legion as its next national commander. As a duly registered delegate to this 103rd National Convention, I proudly second the nomination of Vincent "Jim" Troiola to be our next national commander. *(Applause)*

..At this time, a demonstration of support ensued.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The convention will come to order. All delegation chairs, please proceed to a floor microphone. The adjutant will continue the roll call until completed.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (AR): Mr. Chair, the great state of Arkansas delegation casts all of its delegate votes in seconding the nomination.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CO): Mr. Chairman, Colorado casts all of its delegate votes to Jim Troiola.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (CT): Mr. Chairman, delegation for the Department of Connecticut is honored to second the nomination for Jim "I got a guy" Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LACY (DE): Dwight Lacy, Delaware delegation chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Delaware seconds the nomination of Vincent J. Troiola from the Department of New York for national commander of The American Legion.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (FL): Mr. Chairman, as a registered delegate for this convention, Florida casts 123 votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE STEINLICHT (FR): Mr. Adjutant, Joshua Steinlicht, Department of France, the birthplace of The American Legion, seconds the nomination to elect the leading candidate Jim Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATE GOODMAN (GA): This is Georgia. This is Randy Goodman, Alternate NEC with the Department of Georgia, casts all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE RIDDELL (HI): Fran Riddell, NEC Department of Hawaii. Hawaii proudly casts all its votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CASH (ID): Jinny Cash, delegate chairman for the state of Idaho. We cast all our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN (IL): On behalf of the Department of Illinois, as delegate chairman, we proudly support Jim Troiola as our incoming national commander, and we proudly second that nomination also. Thank you.

DELEGATE DAUBE (IN): James Daube, Indiana delegation, seconds the nomination for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WAUGH (IA): Bob Waugh, delegation chairman for Iowa. Iowa proudly seconds the motion for James Troiola.

DELEGATE KING (KY): David King, authorized delegate, Department of Kentucky, seconds the nomination for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE AUCOIN (LA): Charlie Aucoin, NEC from Louisiana, delegate to this convention, proudly seconds the nomination of Jim Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATE WOODS (ME): Lloyd Woods, NEC, duly registered delegate for the Department of Maine. Maine casts all 23 votes for James Troiola.

DELEGATE HOLCOMB (MD): Ronald Holcomb from the great state of Maryland. We're casting our votes for Mr. Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN NAY (MA): Sally Nay, department commander, delegate chairman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, home of Past National Commanders John P. Jake Comer and Paul A. Morin, second the nomination of Vincent James Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATE WOOD (MX): Mike Wood, Mexico, casts all its votes for Vincent Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DUBAY (MI): Richard Dubay, delegation chairman. Michigan supports the nomination for Jim.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN FERNLUND (MN): Tom Fernlund, delegation chair for the Department of Minnesota. Minnesota proudly seconds the nomination for Vincent Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATE SWEET (MI): Steve Sweet, delegate from the Department of Mississippi, seconds the vote for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GRIGSBY (MO): Mr. Chairman, Gary Grigsby, the delegation chairman of the great state of Missouri, the home of the 33rd president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, casts all its votes for James Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SHARBONO (MT): Glen Sharbono, delegate chairman from the big sky state of Montana, casts all votes for Vincent James Troiola.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NE): From the great state of Nebraska, we cast unanimously all our ballots for James Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN EBERLY (NV): Mr. Chairman, Richard Eberly, chair, casts all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE ARKWELL (NH): Mr. Chairman, department commander Charlie Arkwell from the great live free or die state New Hampshire, we cast 21 votes for Vincent "Jim" Troiola.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (NJ): Mr. Chairman, the Department delegate for New Jersey seconds the nomination for Vincent Troiola.

DELEGATE CHEATHAM (NM): Ed Cheatham, NEC Department of New Mexico, casts all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN QUINLAN (NC): Jim Quinlan, delegation chairman from North Carolina and proud home of the American Legion World Series, seconds the nomination of Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE ANDERSON (ND): Mr. Chairman, Steve Anderson, North Dakota. We cast all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILSON (OH): Adjutant Wheeler, Jean Wilson, delegation chairman for Ohio. We proudly cast all our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE O'LEARY (OK): Mr. Chairman, Charles O'Leary from the Department of Oklahoma. We proudly cast all of our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WEBER (OR): Mr. Chairman, Don Weber, delegate chair for the Department of Oregon proud home of Past National Commander Charles Schmidt. We cast all of our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILHELM (PA): Greg Wilhelm, delegation chairman from the great state of Pennsylvania, casts all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN NAPSEY (PI): Mike Napsey, NEC and chairman. We cast all votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROSARIO (PR): Mr. Commander, Carmen Rosario, chairman for the delegation of Puerto Rico. We cast all votes for Vincent "Jim" Troiola for the highest office of national commander.

DELEGATE SINGLETON (RI): Commander, Dave Singleton, commander, Department of Rhode Island, seconds the nomination of Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE PRICE (SC): Mr. Chairman, Ron Price, department delegate for the Department of South Carolina. We second the nomination for Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN NELSON (SD): Fred Nelson, department chairman from South Dakota, home of Mt. Rushmore and the birthplace of American Legion Baseball, proudly seconds the nomination of Jim Troiola to the high office of national commander.

DELEGATE CULVER (TN): Mr. Chairman, Lanny Culver, commander, Department of Tennessee, seconds the nomination for Jim Troiola for national commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WATSON (TX): Mr. Commander, Bret Watson, delegate chairman from the Lone Star State, where we know a guy, and we support and cast all of our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE CASE (UT): Mr. Chairman, Doug Case, great state of Utah, proudly casts all our votes for the one and only Jim "Be the One" Troiola.

DELEGATE TESTER (VT): Mr. Chairman, Katherine Tester from the great state of Vermont, casts all our votes for Jim Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN HILLIARD (VA): Frank Hilliard, delegation chairman, seconds the nomination.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SUCEE (WA): Rick Sucee, delegation chair from the Evergreen State, Washington, seconds the nomination of Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE HICKS (WV): Mr. Chairman, Tom Hicks from the great state of West "by God" Virginia proudly casts all our votes to Jim Troiola.

DELEGATE MUHLE (WI): Department Commander Julie Muhle, authorized delegate from Wisconsin, casts all votes for national commander for James Troiola.

DELEGATE JOHNSON (WY): Doug Johnson, duly authorized delegate from the great state of Wyoming, support and second the nomination of Vincent James "Mr. Midge" Troiola.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CAUTHEN (DC): Tweila-Rochelle Cauthen, commander and delegation chair. We support Vincent "Jim" Troiola.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Mr. Commander, there are no further nominations for the high office of national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I now recognize from the floor, microphone one.

DELEGATE WILSON (OH): Mr. Commander, Jean Wilson, delegate from Ohio. Mr. Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of 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 DILLARD: 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. Is there a second? ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 nay? The ayes carry. I now recognize from the floor, microphone two.

DELEGATE FISH-FERGUSON (OR): Mr. Commander, Betty Fish-Ferguson, a delegate from the great state of Oregon. Mr. Commander, I move that the nominations for the office of national commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 aye. Opposed nay? Carried. I now recognize from the floor, microphone one.

DELEGATE KRILL (MN): Mr. Commander, Pam Krill, delegate from Minnesota. Mr. Commander, I move that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire strength of this Convention and that Vincent J. Troiola be elected national commander by acclamation. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Hearing a second. There is motion before us that the national adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention and Vincent J. Troiola be elected national commander by acclamation. All those in favor of the motion signifying by saying aye. Those opposed by saying nay. 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 Vincent James Troiola as the national commander of The American Legion. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 Department of New York NEC Member W. Michael Bowen and New York Master-at-Arms Richard Calbo. Leading the way is the Clarkstown, New York Police Honor Guard. (*Applause*)

The Chair recognizes Past National Commander Jake Comer for the purposes of administering the oath of office to the new national commander of The American Legion.

Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Mr. Commander, what an honor to be here at this time to present your oath of office. Raise your right hand and repeat after me. I, Vincent J. Troiola, do solemnly pledge myself, to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of the national commander of The American Legion. I further pledge that I will support and defend the Constitution of The United States of America and the Constitution and Bylaws 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 DILLARD: Ladies and gentlemen, the 2022-2023 national commander of The American Legion, Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola. (*Applause*)

...*The Convention viewed a video.*

**Acceptance Speech: Newly Elected National Commander
Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, New York**

Good morning, American Legion Family! Thank you so much for putting me here. It's been a long journey. I can't wait to get to work and hit the road. Delegates and alternates, thank you for entrusting me for the high office of national commander of The American Legion. I look forward to serving together as part of the American Legion Family. Before I begin my remarks, I would like to make some introductions to all of you. First, my family.

My wife Saveria, please stand, Saveria, an American Legion Auxiliary member, who picked up the nickname from a friend of mine in Delaware of Saint Savy. Hanging out with me is a bad thing. She has been by my side during my entire Legion career, supporting me, providing advice, and putting up with times away from home. I love you. *(Applause)*

My youngest daughter, Jeanette, also here today, please stand, Jeanette, also an American Legion Auxiliary member, who also is a staunch supporter of what I do for The American Legion and in my professional career. I thank you so much for being here. And then there's the little one, Abigail, who put my cap on today, also an American Legion Auxiliary junior, who I enjoy so much. Watching her grow to where she is today is so special to me. She was so proud when she found out she would be coming here to place the red cap on my head. She told all her friends she was going to be famous, and she is. *(Applause)*

My daughter, Laura, who is home, is Abby's mom, was unable to attend today. A last-minute schedule change of the caregiver who was going to stay with my grandson Alex, my youngest granddaughter, Natalia, 2 years old, jealous sister of Abby, who jumps on my lap when Abby is with me and yells "Pop, Pop, mine." She owns me. And my brother Raymond who was supposed to come today is unable to be with us. He's got some medical issues with A-fib. My sister Debbie, who passed away in the early days of the pandemic, I wish you were here to celebrate.

Also, with us today, standing behind me are the Clarkstown Police Honor Guard from the home of my post town, New City, New York. They are led by the police of chief, Jeff Wanamaker. Thank you so much. It's an honor to have you here. *(Applause)*

This is the second time they have led me up the aisle and took the stage. They were present during my election as New York Department Commander. Thanks to all of you for attending and being part of this momentous part of my life.

My campaign committee: I want to mention a few by name. If I miss anybody, I am so sorry. Where is Jim Eurmis and Don Zurecky? You've all gone to those hospitality rooms in the fall and spring meetings. Those are the two that got that thing going. They did a fantastic job. I'm so proud of them. *(Applause)*

My campaign committee, who worked tirelessly to get me here on stage. The committee did such a great job of working together as a cohesive unit, regardless of what the task was. I will never forget any of you. Can the campaign committee please stand and be recognized. *(Applause)*

In particular, Rene Vanmulem, who kicked off my campaign in its early stages, and did a magnificent job. Mike Byrnes, who stepped in voluntarily as the campaign chair and has worked tirelessly with all of the moving parts. Both of them deserve a heartfelt thank you. *(Applause)*

And as a side note, Mike Byrnes will be my national Sergeant-at-Arms. Gary Schacher, who is my aide, acted out his new position during the whole campaign. There are many things I could not have accomplished without his help and friendship. Gary, thank you so much. *(Applause)*

And if I could get the past national commanders to please stand and be recognized. It is all of you that have given me advice and support during the past two years, and I thank you so much. And also to the past national commander spouses, please stand and be recognized. *(Applause)*

I want to thank you so much for offering advice and support to me wife, who desperately needed that help. Thank you. The entire New York delegation, led by Past Department Commander and Delegation Chairman Frank LaMarsh and current Department Commander David Riley, please stand and be recognized. *(Applause)*

This outstanding group of people, including the New York American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, the American Legion Riders, left me quite emotional during the year with their unwavering support. For those who nominated me, Past National Commander Fang Wong, Dan Wiley, and Autrey James, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Thank you to Past National Commander Comer for installing me. The oath of this office is solemn to me, and I will commit myself to live up to it every day. I am grateful for National Commander Paul Dillard's strong leadership and advocacy for veterans during this past year. National Adjutant Dan Wheeler, thank you for all the orientation, training, and guidance you have provided in order to prepare me for this honor. I would be in deep trouble if I didn't recognize this next individual. He is a longtime friend, confidant, and ear to listen to me on rants, requests for advice, mentor, and just a good guy, is Department of New York Adjutant Jim Casey. *(Applause)*

And then there is my post, those members who saw something in me 30 years ago. I was recruited to join the Sons of The American Legion squadron 30 years ago by a very good friend of mine, William McLaughlin. I met him through the school where my oldest daughter attended with his daughter. He convinced me to join and showed me how the squadron was a viable member of the community. I am forever grateful to him for starting me on this journey to the top. Then there was Anthony LaMagna, who at the time was the post commander, who heard that I was a veteran and recruited me into the Legion.

It was there where I realized what The American Legion stood for, and I started to get involved. There were so many Legionnaires during the early days, through today, that took me under their wings and guided me through the programs. Just to name a few, Dennis Kelemen, William T. Mahan, who is very sick at home, David Elmedorf, Paul Wilkins, Ed Dougherty, and Ed Hughes. They will always remain near and dear to my heart when I reminisce about my Legion career.

Our family members in the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion just elected to highly capable leaders in President Vickie Koutz and Commander Chris Carlton. I congratulate both of them and look forward to working with them in the year ahead. I especially want to offer my deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends, and American Legion Family of the Department of Kentucky for the loss of a friend and candidate for national commander, Randall Fisher. I know that all of you in the audience that knew Randy miss him dearly. Thanks to all the departments, whether I visited you or not, for supporting me.

We are witnessing a movement in The American Legion. All of you are part of the exciting times now and will ride into the future. I am highly encouraged to see signs of growth in The American Legion. We did lose some members compared to the previous year but significantly lower. This is a direct result of Commander Dillard's membership plan. I know that encouragement will continue as I continue the membership plan that Commander Dillard engineered. The momentum from his plan shows in the numbers, and I truly believe, based on what I see in the numbers, what I hear in the departments, and what I witness in the posts that I visit, that this could be the year we end this slide.

Posts that achieve 90 percent retention in this membership year will receive a special national commander's pin with my theme V.E.T.S. engraved. Posts with 95 percent will receive a V.E.T.S. coin. You will see the V.E.T.S. acronym a lot this year. It stands for Veterans, Education, Teamwork, and Sponsor. It's how we build a stronger and larger American Legion. Membership excellence pins with V.E.T.S. will go to posts that recruit five members from the expired rosters. If post excellence is achieved, the post will also receive an autographed national commander's license plate. All of these awards are in addition to Commander Dillard's program. I don't want it to get mixed up with the other

ones. All departments will receive an additional numbered V.E.T.S. coin to be given to a Legionnaire of their choice who has gone above and beyond for membership.

The American Legion is asking you to "Be the One," and by "you," I include every one of us, military and civilian alike. We all need to "Be the One," to begin thinking, talking, and acting to save just one life. The "Be the One" campaign will destigmatize asking for mental health support; provide peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities; create safe places for veterans to be open about their struggles. Encourage every American, veteran and civilians alike, to take the pledge to be the one to help end veteran suicide.

As the military changes and as military issues change, so does The American Legion. While the Legion continues to celebrate its past, it does so while also marching towards an evolving future, discovering ways to stay relevant and add even greater value to the lives of younger veterans. One thing that hasn't changed is the Legion's dedication to addressing the toughest challenges facing veterans and their families. Veteran suicide may be the biggest challenge yet. But anyone can be the one to save just one veteran.

We have just come out of an unprecedented time in our lives. We had our lives completely turned upside down during the pandemic. We were forced to lockdown in our homes because of the uncertainty of medical experts on the expected outcome of this devastating pandemic. The pandemic also created different ways of living our lives, keeping our health in mind. Schools and public facilities were and still are in lockdown to visitors. That change affected the Legion Family in a big way. Many Legion posts throughout the country were forced to close their post homes and had no access to their meeting places. Many of our Legion posts that were able adapted and found ways to support their communities who needed help to get through the issues that arose from the pandemic. We may have survived the coronavirus, but many of our youth programs have suffered in diminishing numbers for a variety of reasons.

School shootings and increased security have given authorities good reason to restrict some of the access. Change will be a big part of our lives, but healthy organizations adapt to the times and move forward. Through innovative strategies and greater flexibility, we can grow the numbers to pre-pandemic levels. It is up to all of us to find ways to contact school officials and let them know about our programs.

The best advertisement for our programs is through the students that have attended; but with the pandemic, that method of communication has diminished. One thing is for sure, Zoom and Teams has not gone away and is being utilized all over the country. I know the school district that I work in meets virtually still to today. PTOs, PTA organizations, school board meetings, most of them take place virtually. That sounds like the communication place to start right now.

I would like to also recognize Commander Dillard for launching our legislative advocacy to new heights at a time when our veterans need it the most. This spring he toured seven states from Alaska to Georgia urging Legionnaires to join in the fight for passage of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our PACT Act. And Legionnaires responded in kind. When it seemed the PACT Act was going to fall victim to partisan discord just a few weeks ago, Legionnaires sent over 34,000 members to Senators calling on them to cut through the nonsense and pass the bill. It had the intended effect, and a few weeks later, Commander Dillard was at the White House for the signing of the PACT Act.

For some members of Congress, this may have been the first time seeing the full effect and unity of our voices, but this will not be the last. We must take the spirit and message of the "Be the One" campaign and pass comprehensive mental health-care legislation for veterans, including establishing a National Buddy Check Week. To do this requires modernizing VA facilities that are more than 50 years old on average. We must never forget that suicide continues to be a problem in the active duty ranks as well. Every Legion post located near a military base should provide a welcoming environment to those still serving.

While we will always stand strong against illegal immigration, we must honor immigrants who have worn the uniform of the United States military. They took an oath to die for this country if called upon. Those who serve honorably should receive their citizenship before leaving active duty. Veterans and spouses who have not committed serious felonies should not be deported. Finally, with the recent one-year anniversary of our withdrawal from Afghanistan, we must remind Congress that America always stands by its allies for freedom. Bipartisan support exists today to codify the safety of our evacuated Afghan allies. It is imperative that we offer them immediate passage to the United States.

On these issues and more, we must carry the burden of leadership, as America's largest veterans organization and most powerful voice for veterans, national security and 100 percent Americanism, I ask that you join me in this fight.

In closing, I look forward to visiting The American Legion Family throughout the year in my travels. I will hit the ground running to work with you to having a productive, successful and fun-filled year. Remember, we are The American Legion, the voice of the veteran since 1919. As long as America has veterans, there will always be an American Legion. May God continue to bless all of you, our servicemembers, and the American Legion Family. Thank you. *(Applause)*

First Lady Presentation

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Ladies and gentlemen, as a point of personal privilege, I would like to call on Barbara Wong, wife of Past National Commander Fang Wong, for a presentation by the first spouses to the new first lady of The American Legion.

BARBARA WONG: Saveria, please come forward to the lectern. On behalf of all the former first ladies and the former first gentleman, I welcome you to be the newest first lady of The American Legion and present you with this pin to wish you and Commander Jim a very successful year and very healthy life always.

SAVERIA TROIOLA: Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

Election of National Vice Commanders

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Thank you, Barbara. I now recognize microphone two.

DELEGATE STEFFEN (SD): Mr. Commander, Courtney Steffen, delegate from South Dakota. Mr. Commander, since the rules of this Convention have been suspended, I move that nominations for the office of national vice commander be made from the floor of this Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: There is a motion before us that nominations for the office of national vice commander be made from the floor. Is there a second? ...*Second.*

Hearing a second, the motion is nondebatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. Ayes have it. We will now entertain nominations for the office of national vice commander from the floor. I now recognize microphone one.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DAUBE (IN): Mr. Commander, James Daube, delegate and chairman from the delegation from Indiana, home of the American Legion National Headquarters; the new national Auxiliary president, Vickie Koutz; the new national Sons of The American Legion commander, Chris Carlton. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Past National Commander James Koutz for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander James Koutz.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER KOUTZ: National Commander Dillard, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates, guests to this 103rd National Convention, it is a privilege for me to rise in support of the election of Indiana's own Kenneth Hylton for the high office of national vice commander. The office of national vice commander is not an afterthought or a consolation prize. It is a key position to the organization's operation and structure, and it takes a special Legionnaire to fill that role. I am confident that Ken Hylton will bring to the office of vice commander the experience, the knowledge and the commitment required for success in this office.

I know that because Ken Hylton and the more than 400,000 veterans of Indiana and the millions who call Indiana home, following his 33-year career in the United States postal service, he became a county service officer, a role which he's fulfilled with distinction for more than a decade. And most recently was appointed by the governor of Indiana to serve as a member of the Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission.

After serving our country in the United States Army from 1970 to 1973, Ken began his American Legion career where all successful Legionnaires do, at the post level, where he served and continues to serve in a variety of offices. As a member of St. Joseph American Legion Post 464 at Brookville, Indiana, Ken remains a part of the post leadership team that helped lead his post to 73 continuous years all-time memberships, a record still unbeaten in Indiana. He went on to serve his district as commander, followed by a variety of offices, supporting those who came after him. He was well prepared then to serve as department commander and did so in 2014-15, after serving as the department's southern vice commander and chairing all four major commissions. With the wealth of experience behind him, he brought his knowledge and wisdom to bear on the department commander by serving as a member of the Strategic Planning Commission.

My fellow Legionnaires, I'm confident that The American Legion will likewise benefit from the knowledge and experience that Ken Hylton will bring to bear on his new responsibilities. The Department of Indiana is proud to add his name to the long list of Hoosier American Legion family members who have been entrusted with national leadership, both past and future. I, James E. Koutz, a delegate of the National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for this 103rd National Convention, place the nomination of Ken Hylton as national vice commander for the years of 22-23. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I recognize microphone two.

DELEGATE SHORE (NC): Mr. Commander, David Shore, delegate from North Carolina. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Richard Neville for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Chair recognizes Richard Neville.

...National Vice Commander Higuera assumed the Chair.

DELEGATE NEVILLE (NC): Patricia Harris followed in her father's footsteps, a U.S. Army Corporal, John L. Ellison Jr., a World War II veteran. She joined the United States Army. She served with her late husband Walter Harris at Ft. Hood, Texas, attached to the 57th Signal Brigade, 3rd Corps. Both were deployed to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq.

It has been my pleasure to witness a young veteran become involved in The American Legion. Patricia has been second vice commander, first vice commander and then commander of her home post, 157 in Raleigh, North Carolina. I've always been impressed with her winning smile, her ability to encourage others to become involved in The American Legion. She got involved at the district level, became a chaplain, vice commander and then district commander. She was elected department vice commander and

then was the first Afro-American and the first woman to ever be elected department commander for the Department of North Carolina.

She has served on many committees at the post level, district and department level. At the department level, she has served on Resolutions, Membership, Legislative, Leadership and Development, Constitution and By-laws, and Internal Affairs, and has been serving as chairman of Internal Affairs since 2017 through the present. At the national level

she has served on VA&R, Children & Youth, Legislative Council, national Internal Affairs, and she is also a National Legion College graduate from the year 2007.

Patricia is also involved with her community. She started a women's veterans support corporation and has served as CEO from 2007 to the present. She serves on North Carolina Military Affairs Commission, is a member of VFW Post 1088, DAV Chapter 1, 20 and 4, Kappa Epsilon Psi Military Sorority, Inc., and she was awarded the order of Long Leaf Pine awarded by Governor Pat McCrory. This is the highest civilian honor given to a resident who's provided exemplary service to the state of North Carolina.

As you've just heard, she's well qualified for the position I'm about to nominate her for. I, Richard Neville, a duly elected delegate to this 103rd American Legion National Convention, have the honor and pleasure of placing the nomination for the high office of national vice commander for the years 2022-2023, Patricia A. Harris. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER HIGUERA: The chair now recognizes microphone one.

DELEGATE ANDERSON (ND): Mr. Commander, Steve Anderson, delegate of the great state of North Dakota. Commander, I request that you recognize Past National Vice Commander Wayne Satrom for the purpose of nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER HIGUERA: The chair recognizes Past National Vice Commander Wayne Satrom.

...National Commander Dillard resumed the Chair.

DELEGATE SATROM (ND): I'm Wayne D. Satrom, past national vice commander for The American Legion and delegate from North Dakota. First, before I start this, I want to welcome Glenn Wahus' wife, Tina; his son, Zach, two of his sisters and his brother-in-law here to the 103rd Convention. Welcome. It is truly an honor for me to nominate Glenn Wahus for national vice commander of The American Legion for 2022-2023.

Glenn Wahus is a 32-year member of the American Legion Carl E. Rogen Post 29 in Watford City, North Dakota. Wahus served in the United States Navy as a hull maintenance technician from 1983 to 1987, reaching the rank of petty officer second class, and was honorably discharged in 1987. Wahus served as Department of North Dakota commander, 2018-2019.

He has served on several post, department and national committees. Most recently he has served as chairman of the North Dakota VA&R. He has been instrumental in bringing back the Courage Carries On program to the North Dakota department and community to bring about suicide prevention awareness to veterans, children and youth. He has served on a VA&R national committee and commission from 2015 to 2022. Wahus was picked by Governor Doug Burgum to serve on North Dakota's Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. He is a 2015 graduate of the National American Legion College. Glenn has been instrumental in forming the North Dakota American Legion College.

He has been married to Tina for 29 years. Together they have two sons, James and Zach. Wahus is retired from the oil fields and keeps himself busy gardening, wood working and helping others through The American Legion. Like I said, it's my honor to nominate Glenn Wahus for national vice commander. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I recognize microphone two.

DELEGATE WILHELM (PA): Mr. Commander, Frank Wilhelm, delegate from Pennsylvania. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Michael Murphy for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Michael Murphy for the purpose of a nomination of national vice commander.

DELEGATE MURPHY (PA): Commander Dillard, my fellow delegates of this 103rd National Convention of our American Legion, my name is Michael Murphy, and I'm the past department commander of Pennsylvania, the largest department in our American

Legion. I'm here today to nominate a man who has given so much to our country and to The American Legion.

He joined the United States Army in March of 1968 and served four years. He was sent to Okinawa, where he took ARVN training, and then was sent into Vietnam where he served for the next 18 months. He was honorably discharged from the Army in June of 1972. He then joined the Pennsylvania National Guard, and for the next 26 years he served with honor and distinction, winning the coveted Combat Rifle Governor's 20 Award and the Bronze Order of Mercury.

He retired from the National Guard in 1998. He also served on the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Network Commission. After retiring from the National Guard, he still wasn't satisfied. So, he joined the Army Reserve. He was then called to active duty to serve in Iraq in 2002-2003 and again 2006-2007, and a third time in 2008. He was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, a Joint Task Force Award with V-device, and was discharged from the Army Reserve in September of 2008 with a total of 40 years of active military service as a chief warrant officer 4.

While doing all of this military service, he also found time to serve the Pennsylvania American Legion. He served as post commander of his in Pittsburgh, Post No. 80, senior/junior vice commander, of course, finance officer, post adjutant and service officer, and the membership chairman. In Pennsylvania's 32nd District, he served as the district commander 2010 to 2012, the district adjutant, district SA chairman, district membership chairman, and he continued his dedication to The American Legion, serving as our Western Section adjutant in 2012-2013. The Western vice commander, he was elected in 2013-2014. Not only did he serve our department as a commander in 2017 and '18, he also served on many committees as chairman of Resolution Committee, Essay Committee, Community Service, Membership Committee, and is currently our alternate National Executive Committee member. Nationally he served on the Magazine Commission and the VA&R Committee.

Not only is he a life member of The American Legion, he is also a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, the VFW, the Warrant Officers Association, Military Officers Association and a member of the Society of Forty and Eight. He is married to his loving wife Mary for the past 45 years. They have three children, Tracy, Michael and Melinda. They also have three granddaughters, Kayla, Krista and Cassidy. As a duly elected delegate of this convention, my fellow Legionnaires, I have the distinct honor and privilege to place into nomination the name of Paul M. Kennedy from the Department of Pennsylvania as a candidate for national vice commander of The American Legion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I call on microphone one.

DELEGATE HOBBS (WY): Mr. Commander, Mike Hobbs, delegate from Wyoming. Mr. Commander, I request that you recognize Keith Davidson for the purpose of the nomination for the office of national vice commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The Chair recognizes Keith Davidson for the purpose of nomination for national vice commander.

DELEGATE DAVIDSON (WY): Good morning, everyone. My name is Keith Davidson. I'm the NEC from Wyoming. On behalf of the great state of Wyoming, it's my privilege to nominate Doug Uhrig for the high office of national vice commander.

While still in high school, Doug enlisted in the U.S. Army on the delayed enlistment program. Soon after graduation in 1971 he found himself in Fort Lewis for basic training, then on to Fort Knox for recon training, advanced individual training next. Next was airborne school at Fort Benning and off to Germany to the 8th ID, where he became the RTO for anti-tank platoon, 101st Battalion, 509th Airborne Infantry. There for 18 months, along with all required training, Doug was one of the selected few to attend German airborne school and the mountaineer school. He also trained with the British and was one of a handful chosen to parachute into Eindhoven, Holland to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the 101st Parachute Assault during World War II.

In 1973 Doug was selected to the new unique 1,000-man Rapid Response Unit, the 509th Airborne Battalion Command Team staged in Northern Italy. He spent a year with the unit until ending his service with the military in 1974. Following regular service, he was a South Dakota Air National Guard for four years.

Doug comes from a family rich in military service. His great-grandfather was a Civil War veteran. His grandfather was a World War I veteran. Doug's dad and four of his uncles and two on his dad's side and two of his uncles on his mother's side also served in World War II. Doug, along with several of his cousins, served during the Vietnam era.

Doug has been a member of the Rock Springs Post 24 since 1986. Shortly after joining the post, he became a Paid Up for Life member. In addition, Doug, his wife, his sons and daughters, granddaughters and grandsons are also members of the Legion Family at Post 24. By 2005, he had served twice as post commander, district commander in 2007, and department commander in 2013-14.

Doug has served on all department committees over the years. At the national level of The American Legion, Doug has served on Americanism Commission from 2013 to 2020, alternate National Executive Committee member '18 to '20, National Executive Committee 2021. He was the VA&R NEC liaison for the 2021 year and is now on the VA&R Council for 21-22.

Doug was appointed by Governor Matt Mead in 2013 to be the representative for the 3rd Judicial District serving six years, three years as a parliamentarian. Doug was in the chairs to become the chairman of the Wyoming Veterans Commission. He chose not to reapply for a second appointment and turned all of his attention to The American Legion. Doug has received many honors over the years, but one of the highest honors any Legionnaire could receive is to be selected by your peers as the Department Legionnaire of the Year, which Doug was selected in 2017 as well as Department Legionnaire of the Year. As a duly elected delegate to the 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, I nominate Doug Uhrig for the high office of national vice commander. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I now recognize microphone two.

DELEGATE MUSE (IA): Mr. Commander, Amy Muse, delegate from Iowa. Mr. Commander, I move that nominations for the office of national vice commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: We have a motion that nominations for the office of national vice commander be closed. Is there a second?*Second*.

Hearing a second, the motion is nondebatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye. Carried. The chair recognizes microphone one.

DELEGATE WEBER (IL): Mr. Commander, Roy Weber, delegate, Department of Illinois. 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 five candidates, Ken Hylton, Patricia Harris, Glenn Wahus, Paul Kennedy and Doug Uhrig, be elected national vice commanders by acclamation.*Second*.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 nominated five candidates, Kenneth C. Hylton, Patricia A. Harris, Glenn Wahus, Paul M. Kennedy and Douglas Uhrig, be elected national vice commanders by acclamation.*Second*.

I heard a second. Hearing a second, the motion is nondebatable and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. Ayes have it. I now call on the national adjutant.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Mr. Commander, As national adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote five times with each representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention for Kenneth C. Hylton, Patricia A. Harris, Glenn Wahus, Paul M. Kennedy and Douglas R. Uhrig for the offices of national vice commander of The American Legion. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I declare Kenneth C. Hylton, Patricia A. Harris, Glenn Wahus, Paul M. Kennedy and Douglas R. Uhrig as elected national vice

commanders of The American Legion. Would the new national vice commanders come to the platform to be introduced and sworn in. *(Applause)*

Installation of National Vice Commanders

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: 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 The American Legion was founded. 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 that you meet as you travel. Help them to know the Legion's purposes and policies. Remember the Four Pillars that motivate us as members to serve this nation.

As you serve, always remember there is no rank, 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 are now suffering from wounds, disease and want to include the care of their family members. The education of our children. Educating citizens on the ideals of true Americanism. 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 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. Congratulations, national vice commanders. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you your newly elected five national vice commanders, and I declare Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola elected national commander of The American Legion. *(Applause)*

Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I now call on Past National Commander Jimmie Foster to present the colors to our incoming national commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FOSTER: Thank you, Mr. Commander. Commander Troiola, please join me at the lectern. Ladies, gentlemen, Legionnaires and distinguished guests, please rise for the presentation of our national colors by the Newport Harbor Post 291, Department of California to the new national commander. Color Guard, present the colors of the national commander of The American Legion.

National Commander Vincent J. James "Jim" Troiola, you are the second of my 55 department commanders become national commander. You stand before this convention having received a unanimous vote of confidence in your ability to represent not only Legionnaires, but also all veterans in the coming months. As a veteran, I know that you are up to the challenge. You have served The American Legion in numerous capacities over many years. You have the experience and knowledge of The American Legion. I know, and the delegates here in attendance know, you are the right leader to carry our organization forward in the coming year. You served the country as a Navy veteran and you served your community, which entrusted you with the safety of their children as you drove their school bus. Now you get to serve 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 Troiola, God bless you and our American Legion as you lead all of us in this coming year. Congratulations. (*Applause*)

Hand salute. Color guard, retire the colors of the national commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: This is an exciting time for any National Convention. We have elected a new national commander and look forward to a new chapter and historic time as our leader commits to "Be the One."

This is also the time when the American Legion Auxiliary elects a new president. 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 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 200 in Boonville, Indiana. Eligible for Auxiliary membership through her Vietnam veteran husband, Past National Commander Jim Koutz, she has worked as a legal assistant for Fox & Lutz, Attorneys-at-Law. She has served in numerous offices at the unit, district, department and national levels. She was a gracious American Legion First Lady and will be an outstanding national president. Please give a warm welcome to the national president of The American Legion Auxiliary, Vickie Koutz. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: Newly Elected National President, American Legion Auxiliary
Vickie Koutz, Indiana**

Thank you. National Commander Jim, that kind of has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Before I met you, I had envisioned this very quiet, subdued gentleman, but now that I've been around you more, was I ever wrong. (*Laughter*)

You are funny and witty, and really not quite sure how Saveria keeps up with your antics. I feel so blessed to be working together with you as a team at all levels, as we travel all over this nation meeting our American Legion Family members from all walks of life. I know you will lead this organization with pride, and you will stand very tall when advocating for our veterans, military and their families. I wish you great success and pray for your health and safety on your travels. Congratulations and good luck. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: The man chosen to lead the Sons of The American Legion is eligible through his grandfather's World War II service and the service of his Vietnam-era father. A journeyman sheet metal worker, he is a mechanical team lead and certified welding inspector with Altec Industries. He is a member of Leo F. Welch, Jr., Squadron 495 in Indianapolis, and has served in offices at every level of the Sons of The American Legion. His wife is a 35-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and is a registered nurse at Roudebush VA Hospital in Indianapolis. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the national commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Christopher Carlton. (*Applause*)

**Presentation: Newly Elected National Commander, Sons of The American Legion
Christopher Carlton, Indiana**

National Commander, national adjutant, national vice commanders, past national commanders, delegates, distinguished guests and all the members of The American Legion Family, on behalf of the 361,000-plus members of the Sons of The American Legion, I bring you greetings and congratulations, Commander Troiola. This will be an exciting year, as at the end of our preamble, we state to adopt in letter and spirit all the great principles for which The American Legion stands and to assist in carrying on for God and country. Purpose is why we journey, and passion, passion is the fire that lights the way. This year, Commander Troiola, the Sons of The American Legion are on board with you, and we are

going to "Be the One" with passion and purpose. I look forward to joining you and madam president throughout the year doing great things. With that, thank you. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Commander Carlton, please remain with us for a few moments. Also, National Commander Troiola and National President Koutz. Ladies and gentlemen, National Commander Troiola, National President Koutz and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Carlton, our dynamic leadership team for the upcoming year. Your American Legion leaders! *(Applause)*

I now call upon Parliamentarian Vincent Gaughan of Illinois for the purpose of a technical motion.

PARLIAMENTARIAN GAUGHAN: National Commander Paul Dillard, at this time I would like to make a technical motion and move that the national adjutant be instructed to review the minutes of all conventions and make all necessary corrections without changing the intent and to proceed and to distribute these minutes. Basically, this motion will codify our common law procedures since 1919. As a delegate to the 103rd National American Legion Convention, I move that this motion be adopted. ...*Second.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: I've had a motion and a second for the adjutant to be instructed to review the minutes of the convention and make any necessary technical corrections without changing intent and to proceed to distribute those minutes. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, sound of aye. Opposed, nay. Carried. National Adjutant, have you any announcements?

Announcements

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Yes, Mr. Commander. Immediately following the adjournment of this convention, the National Executive Committee will meet in the Wisconsin Center, Rooms 102, A through C, first floor of this building for the post-NEC meeting. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Please uncover as National Chaplain Pastor Stan offers the benediction.

Benediction

Reverend Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado, National Chaplain

You know, when I first became a minister, they told me that when you have the pulpit and the mic, you are in charge. So, I am in charge now. *(Laughter)*

With that being said, has God been good to you? ...*Chorus of "Yes!"* Please pray with me. Dear Heavenly Father, as we close out this 103rd American Legion Convention, we again thank You for watching over all of our national officers. But most importantly, we thank You for watching over and guarding our national commander, Paul Dillard. For without Your guidance and Your blessing over him, he would not have been able to accomplish all that he has done this past year. We're thankful for You to watch over and guide all of our American Legion leaders, for without Your guidance, they too would not be able to accomplish all that they did.

We all know that this is not a one-man organization and that without Your guidance they would not have been able to do all that they have done. We ask that You watch over all of those that have to travel to their final destinations. Let their journeys be safe and without any complication. And it truly has been a great year, and we all know that it was because of You that this has been done. So, as you leave this place, I ask that you all go with God's peace, go with God's grace, but most of all, please, please go with God's love and pass His love onto others that you meet during the coming time. And my last three words for you for the last time ...*Chorus of "Go to church."* And all God's children said? ...*Chorus of "Amen."* Amen. Thank you.

Retirement of Colors and Adjournment

NATIONAL COMMANDER DILLARD: Sergeant-at-Arms, retire the POW/MIA Flag. Please recover. The Color Guard will retire the flag of the United States. The delegates will stand and hand salute on my command. Hand salute! Two! The time is 11:50. I now declare this 103rd National Convention of The American Legion adjourned. Remember travel safe, be safe, because your membership counts.

...At 11:50 a.m., Thursday, September 1, 2022, the 103rd Annual National Convention of The American Legion was adjourned.

**2022 OFFICIAL AWARDS
ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL RECIPIENTS**

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: The Honorable David P. “Phil” Roe, M.D.

American Legion Baseball Graduate of The Year Award: Presented to the major league baseball player who played American Legion Baseball as a teenager and best exemplifies the principles and purposes of the program in sportsmanship, citizenship, general good conduct, integrity and playing ability.

RECIPIENT: Brandon Woodruff, Milwaukee Brewers

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: Merit Jones, Idaho Falls Post 56, ID

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion because of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: Troy Post 70, AL

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: Albert Garza and Kyeler Thompson, League City Post 554, TX
Nick Valentine, Chesapeake Post 280, VA

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: Idaho Falls Post 56, ID

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 Missouri

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: Brooks Bryan, Troy Post 70, AL

The Howard P. Savage, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having the baseball team which becomes the Champion because of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: Troy Post 70, AL

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): Troy Post 70, AL, ID coaching staff

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: Deezil Luce, Idaho Falls Post 56, ID

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Air Rifle National Championship Award: Presented annually to the national tournament champions of the individual and team categories in Sporter and Precision disciplines of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program. (Originally named the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Trophy)

RECIPIENT(s):	Precision Team:	Houston Hotshots (TX)
	Precision Individual:	Mikole Hogan
	Sporter Team:	Nation Ford Rifle Team JROTC (SC)
	Sporter Individual:	Samantha Zermeno

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: Travis Bragg, League City Post 554, TX

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 South Carolina

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: Elliot Jones, Idaho Falls Post 56, ID and Travis Bragg, League City Post 554, TX

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 Alabama

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: Braden Peiser, Texas
Texas Hill Country Shooting Team, Post 583

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): Randolph S. Young (VA), Bradford P. Adams (AZ), Jerrell R. Messenger (AL)

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: National Guard Youth Challenge Program

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 – Terry Law, Roy Maynard, Buck Robinson, Brad Adams, Don Purington, Jamie Vigliarolo, Joseph (Wally) Wareham, Peter Reiss, Edward Buchan, Rosemary Towers, Patrick Durocher, Adele Mathews, Frank May, Michael MacDonald, Robert Kruk, Nicholas Newell, Gary Vance, Gerald Crawford.

INDIVIDUAL – None Awarded for 2022

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: 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	5x5 Brewing Co., Mission, TX
2021	Category II	ShurMed EMS, San Antonio, TX
Winners	Category III	Berry Aviation, Inc, San Marcos, TX

Note: The 2022 National Employer of Veterans Award Recipient(s) will not be announced until 2023 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:	Christopher Garza, San Antonio, TX
2021	DVOP of the Year:	Geraldine Perry, Milwaukee, WI
Winners	ES Office of the Year:	Workforce Solutions Permian Basin, Odessa, TX

Note: The 2022 National Employment Service Award Recipient(s) will not be announced until 2023 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 disabled persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.

RECIPIENT(s): Grace After Fire, Houston, TX
2021 Winner

Note: The 2022 Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award Recipient will not be announced until 2023 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): Morris-Baker Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Johnson
2021 Winner City, TN

Note: The 2022 National Employer of Older Worker Award Recipient will not be announced until 2023 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): Narrative – Indiana
 Yearbook - Missouri

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): Narrative - Augustus Ruser Jr., Post 273, Madeira Beach, FL
 Yearbook - Julius L. Shryer, Post No. 430, Durant, IA

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s): None Awarded for 2022

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): Senator Joni Ernst, Iowa

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I – 200-1,000 members; II - 1,001-3,000 members; III - 3,001-6000 members; IV – 6001-12,000 members; V – 12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s):	Category I	Detachment of South Dakota
2022	Category II	Detachment of Washington
Winners	Category III	Detachment of Massachusetts
	Category IV	Detachment of New Hampshire
	Category V	Detachment of Michigan

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 Ohio
	Category III	None qualified
	Category IV	None qualified
	Category V	None qualified
	Category VI	Department of Puerto Rico

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 France

Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.

RECIPIENT: None Awarded for 2022

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: Patricia E. Liddell, Department of Georgia

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 2022

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 Puerto Rico

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 M. Samuels

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 Paul Detwiler

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 Amanda Year

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 Makenzie Curtin

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 Jackson R., Kaiser

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 85,000 or more members:

Post Participation: Department of Pennsylvania

Individual Participation: Department of Pennsylvania

Category II

Departments with 65,000 to 84,999 members:

Post Participation: Department of California

Individual Participation: Department of Ohio

Category III

Departments with 40,000 to 64,999 members:

Post Participation: Department of Wisconsin

Individual Participation: Department of Minnesota

Category IV

Departments with 25,000 to 39,999 members:

Post Participation: Department of Iowa

Individual Participation: Department of Iowa

RECIPIENT(s): **Category V**
Departments with 10,000 to 24,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Nebraska
Individual Participation: Department of Nebraska

Category VI
Departments with less than 10,000 members:
Post Participation: Department of Montana
Individual Participation: Department of Vermont

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: Col. David R. Hines, Mechanicsville, VA

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: Lt. Ryan Winkler, Charlotte, IA

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): Department of Florida
 Department of Texas
 Department of Minnesota

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: KHON2-TV, Honolulu/Pamela Young
 Print: *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*/Katelyn Ferral and Natalie Brophy
 Internet: Associated Press/Kristin M. Hall, James LaPorta and Justin Pritchard

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): Quincy (MA) Sun

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:	PFC Dianna Dixon
	Navy:	IT2 Annie Holder
	Marine Corps:	Sgt Christina M. Gilman
	Coast Guard:	MST3 Mason C. Couch
	Air Force:	SrA Ariel L Miranda
	Space Force:	Spec4 Antonio A. Oros
	Air National Guard:	Sgt. Katherine E. Chousa

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: Newport Harbor, Newport Beach, California

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: Newport Harbor Post 291, Newport Beach CA

The Lemuel Bolles Trophy: Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.

RECIPIENT: Joliet American Legion Band, Joliet IL

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 Oregon

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 Kim Stewart, MSN, RN Sebring, FL
Sebring VA Community Based Outpatient Center (CBOC)

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. Joel N. Syvrud
St. Cloud VA Health Care System, St Cloud MN

The American Legion 103rd Annual Report

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Paul E. Dillard, Texas. Membership was strong with nearly 2 million veterans in more than 12,000 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, D.C., 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 American Legion; no members shall be addressed by their military or naval title in any convention or meeting of The American 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 with a minimum of one thousand members and these in turn in Posts. There may be one Department in each state, the District of Columbia, and 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, for multiple years, 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 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, 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 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 one's Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates, except that of voting. A registered delegate is a person who has received one's credentials after 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, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy; however, 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 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 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 Committee Member.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive Committee Member and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive 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 their capacity as chair of the National Convention.

Past National Commanders

John P. Comer, Massachusetts
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Bruce Thiesen, California
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
Hon. 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
 Brett P. Reistad, Virginia
 James W. Oxford, North Carolina

National Executive Committee Members

Hardwick O. Hall, Sr., Alabama
 James E. Pisa, Alaska
 Judith S. Beischel, Arizona
 Mary V. Erdman, Arkansas
 Mark A. Foxworthy, California
 Thomas J. Florez, Colorado
 D. Joseph Jackson, Connecticut
 Jeffrey K. Crouser, Delaware
 Carlton T. Durham, D.C.
 Dennis R. Bolland, Florida
 James M. Settle, France
 Phil Youngblood, Georgia
 Francis E. Riddel, Jr., Hawaii
 Robert L. Skinner, Idaho
 Willard W. Erickson, Sr., Illinois
 Edward J. Trice, Indiana
 Dennis J. Soppe, Iowa
 Dan K. Wiley, Kansas
 William O. Moore, Jr., Kentucky
 Charles D. Aucoin, Louisiana
 Lloyd H. Woods, Maine
 David J. Johnson, Maryland
 Michael P. Davis, Massachusetts
 Michael D. Wood, Mexico
 Jerry D. Lynch, Michigan
 William C. Barbknecht, Minnesota
 Steve Sweet, Mississippi
 Thomas K. Goodin, Missouri

Peter H. Rice, Montana
 Frederick C. Craigie Nebraska
 Jeanette R. Evans, Nevada
 Kenneth B. Maynard, New Hampshire
 Berley Hanna, Jr., New Jersey
 Edward Cheatham, Jr., New Mexico
 W. Michael Bowen, New York
 David S. Shore Carolina
 Dean Overby, North Dakota
 Robert M. Klostermeier, Ohio
 Timothy W. Smith, Oklahoma
 Kevin John Owens, Oregon
 E. Michael Stelacio, Pennsylvania
 Lawrence E. Wade, Philippines
 Isaac Rodriguez, Puerto Rico
 David A. Williams, Rhode Island
 Joe A. Lysaght, South Carolina
 James Huls, South Dakota
 Robert W. Hensley, Tennessee
 C. W. Sparks, Jr., Texas
 Terry D. Schow, Utah
 Ronald L. Larose, Vermont
 Lindon B. Dixon, Jr., Virginia
 David Hodgeboom, Washington
 William W. Kile, West Virginia
 Robert L. Shappell, Wisconsin
 Keith R. Davidson, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committee Members

Ronald F. Bradstreet, Alabama
 Steven L. Huisman, Alaska
 Andres Jaime, Jr., Arizona
 C. Jacob Greeling, Arkansas
 Harley T. Santos, California
 Terri L. Clinton, Colorado
 Robert S. Murray, Connecticut
 Michael A. Havel, Delaware
 Christopher V. Herndon, D.C.
 Arthur J. Schwabe, Florida
 Hans J. Stockenberger, France
 Randy Goodman, Georgia
 David R. Carlson, Hawaii

Eugene D. Brown, Idaho
 Roy Weber, Illinois
 Kenneth R. Cooper, Indiana
 Kenneth R. Rochholz, Iowa
 Raymond L. Vail, Kansas
 Michael W. Moses, Sr., Kentucky
 Rudolph A. Bourg, Sr., Louisiana
 Matthew D. Jabaut, Maine
 Melvin G. Smullen, Maryland
 Jodie L. Pajak, Massachusetts
 Mark A. Walker, Mexico
 Larry C. Money, Michigan
 Peggy Moon, Minnesota

Murry Q. Toney, Jr., Mississippi
George E. Scarborough, Missouri
Larry G. Dobb, Montana
James A. Costello, Nebraska
Jack L. Ford, Nevada
Robert E. Dionne, Sr., New Hampshire
Eugene J. O'Grady, Jr., New Jersey
David T. Stevens, New Mexico
Timothy S. Vanpatten, New York
Jerry L. McClough, North Carolina
Roger C. Sateren, North Dakota
Stephen M. Masowick, Ohio
John L. Bloxom, Oklahoma
Eugene G. Hellickson, Oregon
Paul M. Kennedy, Pennsylvania

Michael S. Napsey, Philippines
Ramon L. Rivera, Puerto Rico
Neil M. Tack, Rhode, Island
James H. Holland, South Carolina
Dennis O. Brenden, South Dakota
Nancy B. Harper, Tennessee
Kenneth W. Mueller, Texas
Richard G. Fisher, Utah
David Woodward, Vermont
Leslie J. Clevinger, Virginia
Robert A. Clark, Washington
Frank L. Cooley, West Virginia
Frank J. Kostka, Wisconsin
Mike Cooke, 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 and 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 THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER James T. Higuera, California

On September 2, 2021, the American Legion's 102nd National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona concluded with election of our National Commander Mr. Paul Dillard from the department of Texas, and included the election of 5 National Vice Commanders, representing 55 departments, of which 4 departments are located in foreign countries.

The foregoing is a summary of my activities during my term of office, representing the "Western Region". Comprised of the following 15 departments, and their respective Commanders:

Alaska, Commander Mike Downs; Arizona, Commander Ben Headen; California, Commander Autrey James; Colorado, Commander Chip Kossow; Hawaii, Commander James Hussey; Idaho, Commander Jenney Cash; Mexico, Commander Milo Vukovich; Montana, Commander Glen Sharboro; Nevada, Commander Michael Eberly; New Mexico, Commander Richard Rodriguez; Oregon, Commander Don Weber; Philippines, Commander Mark Frease; Utah, Commander Gary McKay; Washington, Commander Richard Sucee; and Wyoming, Commander Jerry Clark.

Prior to the 102nd National Convention, all the endorsed candidates for national office were called in for an orientation. During this time an intense weeklong briefing was given to each of us by our headquarter directors, and supporting staff, representing our four pillars, Americanism, National Security, Veterans Rehabilitation, and Children and Youth. We studied our impromptu reactions on questions which may be posed by the news media. With our marching instructions, leading candidate Mr. Paul Dillard announced his "No Veteran Left Behind" theme for the 2021-2022 year.

With the election of the new corps of national officers, invitations to regional departments were now in progress.

Following the national fall meetings and national executive committee meeting in Indianapolis, IN, we were honored to attend the National President Kathy Daudistal's Homecoming in Kentucky. Here, we once again got to experience some of the unique opportunities our great country has to offer.

During our tour of office, we had the opportunity to meet quarterly with all 15 of our Department officers, and membership chairmen, via zoom meetings. Each in turn reported on their membership efforts, programs completed, and those in the planning stages, to include our efforts in national legislative call to action issues.

Our first visitation was to the Department of Montana headquartered on the grounds of Fort Harrison. We had the honor of addressing department officers, to include district and post commanders as well. During this time, we assisted in the department membership efforts, stressing “Buddy Checks” which included visitations to member posts. At each visit we reassured our members that they were not forgotten, telling them that they were valued and appreciated members. Highlight of our visit came on October 31st Halloween afternoon, with the passing out of treats to the children of active-duty personnel. The event included our entire American Legion Family.

Our next visit was to the Department of Colorado. We had the opportunity to once again share Commander Dillard’s special fund-raising campaign “Veterans and Children’s Foundation”. A second visit was also made to assist the department’s membership efforts; “Buddy Checks” were the order of the day. We also participated in the Homecoming of Department Chip Kossow.

During our time in our home state of California, we took the opportunity to visit several Posts, from San Diego to Sacramento, participating in our Department Executive Committee meetings, Installations, Veterans Day, Four Chaplains, Independence Day, Patriots Day, Memorial Day, and Armed Forces Day observances. In addition, we hosted National Commander Dillard on his official visit to our department, to include two golfing days at Pebble Beach, and the Rivera Golf courses. We were also honored to attend the Homecoming of the National Sons of the Legion Commander, native Californian Michael Fox. What a great opportunity to participate in his special project, “Flying Flags for Heroes”. The goal was to place 1 million flags on Veterans graves prior to National Convention in Milwaukee. The official total was almost 2 million!

Sadly during the year, we attended 15 internments of Legionnaires, to include that of Ohio Department Commander Brad Teis, and in memory of Commander Milo Vukovich department of Mexico, who passed during his term of office.

We participated in two visits to Arizona. We met with all the Department Committees/Commissions at the fall Conference, held in Tempe. The second visit focused on “Buddy Checks” reaching out to delinquent members, assisting in the retention and recruitment of new members. The second visit focused on personal contact with blue cap legionnaires in the northern part of the state.

Revitalization, Retention, and Recruitment was of primary concern on our visit to the Department of Oregon, several home visits were made to disabled veterans in need of assistance, noting several elderly veterans needing repairs to the homes. We understand Ramps, porches and minor repairs were assigned to work crews, and completed in a timely manner.

We had the privilege of visiting the Department of Washington on two occasions. The first focused on Revitalization, Recruitment and Retention of membership. The second was to participate in their annual department convention. Here we had the honor of installing their 2022-2023 department officers.

Albuquerque, New Mexico hosted our visit to their mid-year conference. Here we addressed their combined assembly, composed of American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the American Legion Riders. We extended the well wishes for a successful year, to include Commander Dillard’s “No Veteran Left Behind” theme, and charitable contributions to our American Legion Programs.

Las Vegas Nevada was the last official visit, where we participated in the Department Annual Convention. The session ended with my addressing the delegates and participation as installing officer for the 2022-2023 Officers.

Additional official visitations were made to the United State Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, Colorado, The United States Merchant Marine Academy in Flushing,

New York, for the presentation of awards to outstanding cadets and Mid-shipmen. We also had the honor of attending The Daughters of the American Revolution National Defense Night, held in Constitution Hall, Washington D.C., and finally the Long Beach Grand Prix, in Long Beach, California.

In conclusion, we believe that by our efforts our organization The American Legion, has withstood the challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are stronger than ever, reinforcing our belief that “No Veteran is Left Behind”. Special thanks to the Western Region for making this a memorable year. It was an Honor and a Privilege to be counted on to serve as a National Vice Commander for the Western Region 2021-2022.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER **Jerold W. Wilson, Ohio**

My Departments as National Vice Commander were the Departments of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and West Virginia. My first visit was to the Department was to the Department of Michigan to attend their Fall Conference at Shady Creek Resort. Commander Richard Dubay held a great Conference and we discussed how to improve Retention and Recruitment of members.

On October 9th, 2021, I attended the National President Kathy Daudistel Homecoming in Covington, Kentucky.

From the 27th to 30th of October 2021 I attended the Fall Conference of the Department of Indiana. We discussed membership and the litigation pending on the burn pits for our Veterans.

November 3, 2021, I traveled to Grafton Wisconsin to work with Commander Elrich and his team to work on membership. We did over six hundred Buddy Check calls that week.

On November 15, 2021 I went to the Department of Illinois and traveled with Commander Wayne Fisher. We visited some Memorials and met with many Posts and members to discuss retention of our members.

Between January 13-23, 2022 I traveled with Commander Wayne Fisher of Illinois. For ten days we went to Posts in his Department to discuss the many programs of the American Legion.

From January 27, 2022 to January 31st, 2022, I traveled with Commander Mark Gullion of the Department of Indiana to visit numerous Posts in his Department to help with getting membership up.

February 11th, 2022, and February 12th, 2022, I visited the Department of West Virginia to speak at Commander Vaught's Mid-Winter Conference.

From May 11th to May 15th, 2022, I attended the West Virginia Boys State Program. There were over two hundred young men in attendance. It was an outstanding program that was very well done.

May 17th and May 18th, 2022, I attended the Kentucky Summer Convention and was their guest speaker. Commander Costigan did an outstanding job.

I finally was able to attend the Department of Ohio's Summer Convention June 30 to July 3, 2022. Commander Jean Wilson did a great job. I was honored to install their new officers.

The highlight of my year was traveling to the Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut and the Air Force in Colorado Springs to present plaques to Honor graduates.

My year ended by attending the National Convention in Milwaukee Wisconsin.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER **Angel O. Narvaez, Puerto Rico**

In Phoenix, Arizona, at the 102nd Annual Convention of The American Legion on September 2, 2021, I was honored by being elected National Vice Commander, to serve

under the leadership of National Commander Paul E. Dillard. My area of responsibility was seven states and a territory, consisting of the Departments of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Puerto Rico. My primary job was to represent the National Commander when he was not available and membership. I must report that the Mid Western Region did not reach all the expectations of our National Membership Division. Membership from all the Mid-Western Region Departments, even though did not reach their respective goals, did better than the previous year, except for Puerto Rico which made one hundred and six percent.

I am humble for the opportunity to report to you about my travels as the National Vice Commander in the Midwest Region for 2021 to 2022. This has been a great learning experience to say the least, I thought I had an idea what this assignment would be, but I was pleasantly surprised as I embarked in this wonderful experience.

I have learned that even though membership is an integral part of our DNA and as important it is to all of us, this is not what makes the Legion ticks. We all do membership, but our main DNA is service to our fellow veterans at all levels.

Its traveling about 1,500 miles to help a fellow veteran struggling with suicidal thoughts and his compensation (IA); its creating an equine program to help veterans dealing with PTSD with the healing process (SD) with no help from the government; it's a small community (about 500) raising about \$500,000 in eighteen months to build a home post that is the center of activities for the community and local government; it's the collaboration with DAV, VFW to share their facility for the common good for all veterans.

It is the oratorical contest, baseball, scouting, it is a young boy cutting grass to raise money for his local post building project. Its involvement with the local and state government to advance legislation in support of our veterans.

Its participation of our color guards in paying the final respect to our veterans and their families. It is a deposit of our national colors given to the next of kin and displayed on Memorial Day to remember them by our local post.

It is a local museum run by the local post "to preserve the memories and incidents of our association in all wars" second to none. It is our participation and volunteering with our local VA clinics and hospitals and veterans state homes.

It is a strong involvement of our Legion Raiders, the Sons of the American Legion, and the American Legion Auxiliaries at all levels in our organization. Its local monuments to celebrate our fallen heroes run and maintain by our local posts.

All these activities are repeated throughout our region (departments) and is a testament to our service and compromise with our veterans and their families. We continue to be as relevant as ever and continue to be for the next one hundred years.

The "red carpet treatment" afforded me during my visits around the Mid-Western Region is appreciated and your efforts have made my job a great deal easier. The following is a list of my authorized travels:

October 5-7, 2021, NEC Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana
 November 14-20, 2021, Iowa Membership Tour, Iowa
 November 28 – 2 December 2021, Kansas Mid-Winter Conference, Kansas
 December 3 – 5 2021, Minnesota Membership tour, Minnesota
 January 20 – 24 2022, Nebraska Mid-Year Conference, Nebraska
 January 28 -30 2022, Kansas Mid-Winter Conference, Kansas
 February 18 – 21 2022, South Dakota Mid-Winter Conference, South Dakota
 March 9 -13 2022, Missouri Mid-Winter Conference, Missouri
 April 30- May 2, 2022, Birmingham Gran Prix, Birmingham, Alabama
 May 3 - 5 2022, NEC Spring Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana
 May 6 – 8 2022, Truman Day, Kansas, Missouri
 May 25 – 27 2022, Navy Academy Graduation, Annapolis, Maryland
 June 23 – 26 2022, North Dakota Department Convention, North Dakota
 July 8 -10 2022, Iowa Department Convention, Iowa
 July 13 – 15 2022, Minnesota Department Convention, Minnesota

July 28 – 30 2022, Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, Indiana

August 25 – September 1, 2022, National Convention The American Legion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

My sincere thanks to all the National staff, at Indianapolis. Without their guidance and support, the work would not get done. Special thanks to Jennifer Norton, Joyce Hamilton and the Membership group. My Commander, Paul E. Dillard, has proven to be an outstanding National Commander. I feel honored and privileged to have had the opportunity to serve with him.

God bless the American Legion, our Nation and each one of all. Thanks for the opportunity to serve with you.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER Cory D. Bates, Rhode Island

Good morning, it has been quite a year so far with much more to come and it has been my privilege and honor to represent the American Legion and Commander Dillard on all of the following department and national visits.

September

My first official visit was with the department of New Hampshire from September 10th thru the 12th where we visited several posts, had a membership revitalization and phone tree and was the guest number caller at the Baseball fundraiser at post 2.

First monthly zoom meeting with the Northeast Region September 18th

October

I attended the Fall Conference in Indianapolis from Oct 2nd thru the 7th which included the Eastern Region breakfast and NEC Committee meeting.

Monthly zoom meeting with the Northeast Region October 21st.

I Attended the Department of Vermont's fall conference as well as several post visits from the 22nd to the 24th

November

Attended the Department Commanders Testimonial dinner and Department visits for Rhode Island from the 5th thru the 7th.

I was given the high honor of representing the American Legion on Veterans Day, November 11th at the 100TH year anniversary at the tomb of the unknown soldier and to lay the American Legion wreath with the American Legion Auxiliary President.

Attended the Department of Connecticut Commanders Testimonial dinner and post visits from the 12 thru the 14th.

Attended a Membership round up and post visits with the Department of Delaware from the 18th thru the 21st.

Attended the Department of Massachusetts Commanders Testimonial dinner on the 27th and 28th.

December

I attended a Hockey game and hosted a Legion information table with members of the Department of Massachusetts and gave a Home Town Hero award from the American Legion Department of Massachusetts on December 11th.

Monthly zoom meeting with the Northeast region December 16.

Attended the Department of RI Christmas party and attended the Auxiliary events with the Auxiliary National President to include the Gold Star mother luncheon on December 17th and 18th.

January

Attended the Department of Pennsylvania's winter conference and Homeless dinner from January 14th thru the 16th.

Monthly zoom meeting with the North East Region January 20th.

Attended the Department of Vermont's winter conference and membership revitalization from January 21st thru the 23rd.

February

Attended the Department of Rhode Island Oratorical contest and presented the award to the Department winner.

Monthly Northeast region zoom meeting February 17th.

March

Tues March 8th Zoom meeting of Commanders report to Congress

Monthly Northeast Region Zoom Meeting March 17th.

April

I had the honor of representing the American Legion at the LSU Memorial Tower dedication from April 6th thru the 8th. Also had luncheon with post and department officers from Louisiana.

Monthly Northeast region zoom meeting on April 21st.

May

From the 12th to the 15th, I attended and participated in the annual department of New Hampshire convention.

On the 18th to the 20th, I had the honor of presenting awards at the US Military Academy graduation.

From the 20th to the 31st I represented the Nation commander and place a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.

June

From the 3rd-5th I attended the Department of District of Columbia convention and commander's luncheon.

From the 8th to the 12th, I attended the Department of New Jersey's convention and the buddy check walk. Also placed flags at veterans' grave sites and conducted a buddy check on local post commander.

From the 23rd to the 26th, I attended and participated in the Department of Massachusetts annual convention.

July

From the 3rd to the 5th, I attended a membership workshop and the 4th of July parade on Staten Island New York.

From the 7th to the 10th, I attended and participated in the Department of Delaware annual convention.

From the 14th to the 17th, I attended and participated in the Department of Pennsylvania annual convention.

Monthly zoom meeting of the North East Region was held.

August

From the 26th to Sept 1st, I attended and participated in the National Convention in Milwaukee Wisconsin.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER

Michael F. Mitrione, Virginia

The mission of the National Vice-Commander is to support the objectives of the National Commander, which this year was support of state membership activities and veteran suicide prevention. areas of responsibility included the southeast region states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. During the year, I was able to visit all state departments except, Texas and South Carolina. However, I did connect with all 12 departments via monthly virtual zoom meetings.

My overriding message in each case was the importance of reaching out and connecting with each member of his or her organization, a total population exceeding 383,000. For my part, I asked the national organization to produce a list of all members of the southeast region who had been members three years or less. This list totaled approximately 45,000 members. To make the list more manageable, it was sorted by birthdate. My objective was to reach out to each member on their birthdate to wish them a happy birthday. I also used this opportunity to thank them for their service, thank them for their service and for being a member of the American legion. In addition, citing the impact of COVID, I inquired into the health and welfare of the member and his or her family. Unfortunately, I was only able to connect with approximately 8000 members. Estimates time expended for these endeavors was 670 hours. During the year I visited 11 states, the primary purpose was to carry the National Commander's message. Total time spent was 42 days, an estimated seven hour per day doing "buddy checks" to ascertain the health and welfare of members.

I have been completely satisfied with the results of my efforts. In his acceptance speech, Commander Dillard asked each member of the organization to "be the one" who prevents one veteran from committing suicide. I am confident that I far exceeded this goal. Although I cannot say with certainty that my discussions turned the tide on multiple potential suicides, I firmly believe I did. The overwhelming majority were pleased to have someone from the national organization remember them on their special day. However, there were numerous who were happy to have someone to talk to that might be able to address problems they were having. In each case, I was able to provide them a point of contact within their organization that could assist. Some were financially stressed and needed assistance to pay overdue bills. Others needed work, while others were depressed and did not know where to turn for assistance. To ensure these concerns did not "fall through the cracks" I also called the state commander and/or adjutant to follow up with the member. In some cases, I received a call back from the member, thanking me for helping them out. In other cases, I was able to establish a running dialog until I knew they had been in contact with a local veteran service officer.

I do not wish to bore the reader with mundane aspects of the position, such as visits to VA care centers, visits with state and local leaders, participation in roundtable discussions, and working to solve problems with membership reporting/recording. Bottom line – I believe I left the organization in better condition than when I took office.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Rev. Stanley K. Hamamoto, Colorado

I was appointed National Chaplain for the coming year at the close of the 101st National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona from August 26, 2021 to September 1, 2021. I am a Korean War Veteran and served from July 23, 1952 to July 23, 1960. I was honorable discharged. I was an accountant for 40 plus years and became a Minister in 2000 and I have been a minister since. I have served many small churches in rural areas and am now serving a small church located in Manzanola, Colorado. It is a small town that is losing its members in the community and we are trying to stay open as long as we can. I am also a life member

of the Korean War Veterans Association, chapter 7 located in Colorado Springs. We are the only surviving chapter in the State of Colorado. I am past president and also serve currently as Vice President.

My duties as the National Chaplain started with our Fall Meeting from November 3rd to November 7th. During this session, I gave the Invocation and Benediction at the Commanders Home coming Dinner, the Americanism breakfast meal, the adjutant's dinner, and at the NEC meeting. All of these were held at the Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. I participated in the Veterans Day parade on November 6th in the Colorado Springs area.

January 22nd, I attended the American Legion Department (State) Executive Meeting and did the Invocation and Benediction. May 3rd to May 5th attended the Spring Executive meeting and did the Invocation and Benediction. July 1st to the 3rd, attended the American Legion Department of Colorado Convention and offered the invocation and Benediction. Also did a workshop for Chaplains and did the Sunday Memorial Service.

Then on July 23rd to July 25th I attended American Legion boys Nation session. Assisted with the Memorial service on July 24th. The National Commander and I, along with two Boys Nation members, laid a wreath at the Unknown Soldiers Tomb on the morning of July 25th.

On August 26th to September 1st attended the 103rd annual National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I did the Chaplain's Breakfast August 28th at 7:00 AM. Then at 11:00 AM I did the Memorial Service, which was a Post everlasting service for all of the Veterans who passed away.

On August 30th I opened the Annual National Convention with an Invocation and sat on stage for the entire session. Then on August 31st I opened the session with an invocation, and again on September 1st. I did close the 101st Convention with a farewell Benediction. And that concluded my term of office.

During the course of the year, I sent to many National Officers who passed away during the year, a card to their spouse or family and that would be around 150 to 160 cards sent. I have made many post visits in the State of Colorado and attended all of the Department meeting and Executive Meetings in Colorado.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN **Robert B. Gilmore, Arizona**

It has been an honor to serve as the National Historian for National Commander Paul Dillard. I am the second National Historian from Arizona, the first being Neil Sundeen at the 63rd National Convention in 1981.

The annual History Book judging prior to the Fall Meetings was different than previous years. It was the first time that the judges actually met after our shutdown from COVID-19, and there were two years' worth of books. Some of the books were from the 2019-2020 year, some from the 2020-2021 year and some were a combination of both years. This made the judging a bit different, and we all came up with a solution that worked for everyone. The major problem that we had was the number of books that were entered. It was lower than expected based on previous years, hopefully, it was the from the shutdowns from COVID-19 and not the ability of historians to accomplish their duties. I know personally, we had difficulties with my local Post and Department with this shutdown. The deadlines for getting the material certified and sent to National to be placed in the competition was extended to allow entries to be included in the judging. The judging was successful, and a report was made to the National Executive Meeting at the fall meetings.

There were many questions that were sent to me about what a Historian should do. I think that Department Historians need more help from the Departments and from the National organization about how and why we do things. There should be a supplement that explains all of this for them and more explanation about NADHAL, The National

Association of Departments of The American Legion. There are good training material and if possible, include a digital copy of the winners of the previous year's winners so that they can see what a good book looks like and make theirs in a similar fashion to make the judging more competitive and accurate.

I was looking to attend the Washington Conference but was not able to attend as most veterans from the different Veteran Organizations were also not allowed to attend. Hopefully this will never happen again and all the National Officers and National Executive members from The American Legion will be able to attend.

The Spring meetings that were held at headquarters of The American Legion were a success as most of us were getting ready to attend the National Convention in Milwaukee.

I was invited to attend the home of the Commandant of The United States Marine Corps and attend one of the parades they perform with the Silent Drill team. The history of these buildings goes back to 1801 and was the first barracks that were in use by the Marines. There were several people there on staff to explain what each room was used for and the various significant events that happened in the rooms.

On August 27th, 2022, I held the annual National Historian Luncheon at the Empire Ballroom of the Hilton Milwaukee City Center Hotel. I had the privilege to introduce Carol Campbell, The Auxiliary National Historian and William Towns, The Sons of The American Legion National Historian. This has been the first time that all three Historians were together and each of them talked about the way that their respective organizations collect and store the history for the year. I think that the people in attendance were amazed as to how different the three organizations accomplish their historical programs.

The library staff along with Howard Trace work hard to keep the National Historian up to date and up to speed as to what is happening and what a person in that position needs to do during the term of office. I could not have done all this without them. Many thanks.

In the future, I feel that it is necessary to work with these other organizations in creating a historical document that will be worked on, and shared by all three groups, to reflect a document that can be looked at, and considered a collection of events, that can be considered an American Legion Family Yearbook. This document is one that can be admired by any Legion, Auxiliary or SAL member.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE **Mark C. Seavey, J.D., Virginia**

I am thankful to serve as your national judge advocate. Our team of Julie Campbell and myself have had a busy year, with a learning curve that was pretty steep. As always, anything good we do was probably Miss Julie, and all mistakes were my own.

The Legal office has managed a large number of legal proceedings and lawsuits throughout the country. All matters being handled as required and in conjunction with co-counsel as needed. Our litigation docket has remained fairly stable, with two cases having been closed wherein there was no liability on our part and having new one case. We continue to monitor all cases, but the court slowdowns because of Covid have also slowed down action on our filings.

Of special note this past year was the Supreme Court victory in Kennedy v. Bremerton school district. You will recall that in that case we filed an amicus brief on behalf of the petitioner who was fired from his job as a football coach for silently praying on the field after games. Judge Gorsuch noted in that 6-3 opinion "We are aware of no historically sound understanding of the Establishment Clause that begins to (make) it necessary for government to be hostile to religion" in this way." Coach Kennedy was awarded the Phil Onderdonk religious liberty award at this year's convention.

Bergmann and Moore MOU

As you are aware we have signed a memorandum of understanding with Bergmann and Moore in response to the Camp Lejeune Justice Act. We remain committed to helping

Legionnaires get the best advice they can receive on the class action and any attendant implications for VA benefits.

Florida and Vermont investigations

During the past year we have also completed Department Investigations into two Departments in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure for the revocation cancellation or suspension of Department Charters. Neither of our investigations required a status change for Charters, and both Departments are back to being solely responsible for any actions.

Department visits

During the past year, the National Judge Advocate visited the following Departments:
Alabama – Department Mid-Winter conference. I addressed both the Department at large, and the Department Executive Committee.

Florida – Department Convention. With the investigation of the Department of Florida coming to an end, I attended the Department Convention to monitor passage of revisions to the Department Constitution and By-laws.

North Carolina – Department Convention. At the invitation of National Finance Chairman and Department Judge Advocate Gaither Keener, I attended the Department of North Carolina Department Convention.

Virginia – Department Convention, addressed convention as keynote speaker during their banquet.

California – Attended the Department Convention and briefed Department on legal issues.

Have planned visits to New Hampshire, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Arkansas for early next year.

For the period 10/15/21 – 10/11/22, the Legal office has:

- Issued 30 Indemnity Agreements between The American Legion, American Legion Charities, and subordinate organizations
- Prepared 113 tax inclusion (or determination letters) for subordinate organizations
- Processed 102 IRS Inclusion Letters from subordinate organizations
- Have added, or working on adding, 119 subordinate organizations to the Legion's group exemption
- NJA has reviewed 195 contracts or agreements

Please complete the conflict-of-interest forms that have been provided to you. We need a form from each of the National Officers, Past National Commanders, NECmen, ANEC, and National Commission Chairmen. Please print legibly as this is an IRS-requested form that our auditors make copies of for our yearly financial report. Mr. Commander this concludes my report.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Chanin Nuntavong, California
Executive Director

James Baca, New Mexico
Executive Director

MAIL
JUNE 1, 2021 - MAY 31, 2022

Incoming Letters.....	655,737
Incoming Parcels	2,200
Outgoing Letters and Parcels (Excl. Emblem Sales)	5,556,300

FREIGHT & EXPRESS
JUNE 1, 2021 - MAY 31, 2022

UPS/FedEx - Out – Cartons.....	1,084
UPS/FedEx - Out – Pounds	36,472
UPS/FedEx - In – Packages.....	1,400
UPS/FedEx - Out – Packages	2,757

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Howard Trace, Indiana (SAL), 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 provide access to historic material and work has begun on a new version that is set to launch by the end of 2022. The new Digital Archive will allow for viewing of material without the need to download a local copy. A virtual exhibit of national officers from 1919-1969 was created. Work continues to reorganize the museum and archives storage as material is reorganized and deaccessioned as needed. Reorganization of the photo collection also continues as nearly half of the prominent Legionnaire photos have been rehoused and 60 percent of the cataloged photos have been reorganized by subject. Over 7,500 digital photos this year have been reviewed with roughly 10 percent selected for description and inclusion in the collection. Updates to the cataloging of the poster collection continues at a steady pace of five drawers annually.

The archival management system is fully operational with many of the archival collections included. Other collection databases are being prepped for migration to new systems in the coming years. The software that has housed these databases since the late 1990s is being retired and more appropriate systems for these databases are being identified and tested.

There continue to be no in-person researchers with restrictions placed on building visitors because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have continued to field research and reference requests and many requests that might have required a visit to the building in the past can now be handled with material provided publicly on the Digital Archive.

Books and Pamphlets cataloged	1,412
Museum Collection Items Added or Assessed	613
Items added to Digital Archive.....	379
Pages Digitized.....	3,056
Boxes received for Archiving.....	77
Digital Files received for Archiving	12,010

Correspondence Answered by Staff	706
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Sent.....	271
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Received.....	128

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Library and Museum

Donated by Paris Post No. 1 (Paris, France): post newsletters 2020-2021.

Donated by PNC Brett Reistad: American Legion memorabilia, postcards, photographs, and pamphlets dated 1919-1940s.

Donated by PNVC Doug Haggan: Department of France newsletters, minutes, and photographs; FODPAL minutes; Normandy Anniversary cup; and Overseas Graves Decoration Trust memos.

Donated by James Chaney: memorabilia from the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Donated by Jerome L. Goolsby: two Department of Missouri History yearbooks.

Donated by John F. Gillen (author): "I did it all and had fun doing it: a memoir of John F. Gillen, Sr., 1946-1953" (book).

Donated by Kyle D. and Tammy M. Mullen (authors): "With our Boys Honor Roll, 2018" (book, Parma, NY).

Donated by Michael D. Strauss: compiled historical data on Department of South Carolina NEC, commanders, and adjutants.

Donated by Michael Walker: four sets of a handmade souvenir containing three bottles of sand collected at Omaha Beach, Utah Beach, and Pointe du Hoc to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, June 9, 2019.

Donated by Roy R. Manstan (author): "The Listeners: U-boat hunters during the Great War, 2018" (book).

Donated by Ruth Rankin Keller: National Vice Commander pin and 100 Miles for Hope medal.

Donated by Thomas A. Summers: biography of Thomas Raysor Summers, namesake of South Carolina Post No. 4 (unpublished pamphlet).

Donated by Wayne Cox: set of four scrapbooks containing newspaper articles from the tenure of Edward A. Hayes, Illinois.

Donated by Dr. Greg and Pam Gibbs: 1945 American Legion School Award medal.

Donated by Ernest Edward Laberge: a collection of Sons of The American Legion National Convention badges.

Donated by Charles Yunker: PNC Harry Colmery's 1975 Distinguished Service Award plaque.

AMERICANISM COMMISSION

Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

Ronald E. Neff, Indiana, 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 a democratic government, and bringing more citizens to think seriously about the duties of citizenship;
- Give sound, practical service in our communities, and working to make 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 youth 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.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued attentiveness in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among legislative initiatives of The American Legion are: (1) continuing efforts to effect a constitutional amendment which would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws; (2) coordinating a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment Clause lawsuits; (3) establishing English as the official language of the United States; and (4) amending the U.S. Flag Code in order to clarify the intent of some stated display procedures and to include contemporary, accepted patriotic practices.

This commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of four standing committees: American Legion 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 2021-2022 American Legion program year.

American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation Jeff Bennett, Program Manager

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 89 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. The young men are chosen are the brightest within their communities, gathering to form fictitious political parties. Within these parties their political 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.

In a typical year 18,000 young Americans take part in American Legion Boys State programs across the nation, and throughout its over eight decades of history, the program has graduated well over 2,000,000 young men. From each of the 50 American Legion Boys State programs, a rigorous selection process produces two outstanding graduates from each program who go on to represent their state as an American Legion Boys Nation “senator” during the week-long program in Washington D.C. The 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 opportunity 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. The entire process occurs over the time span of one week, accomplished through the 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. Tamarus Darby Jr of Michigan was elected President and Kshirai Talati of South Carolina was elected Vice President during the 2022 session of American Legion Boys Nation.

The volunteers who staff this program are comprised primarily of former Boys State/Boys Nation participants. Most specifically, junior counselors are program alumni, who during their tenure as a delegate at American Legion Boys Nation, were unknowingly evaluated for their leadership abilities, understanding of government, and grasp of legislative processes. Those who surpass their peers in these areas receive the honor of an invitation to return as program staff. Boys Nation senior counselors and administrative staff are primarily comprised of Boys State directors and staff chosen for their technical abilities and unwavering faith in the American Legion Boys Nation program.

Boy Scouts of America **Jeff Bennett, Program Manager**

In calendar year 2022 The American Legion chartered 2,238 Scout units in local communities across the nation which involved nearly 44,687 young people and 19,634 adult leaders. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dating back to the Legion’s first National Convention in 1919. The American Legion supports 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.

Also in calendar year 2022, a total of 1,259 youth were recognized by The American Legion with a certificate issued from the national level for achievements in Scouting programs (986 Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout awards; 23 Boy Scouts of America Venturing Summit awards; 17 Boy Scouts of America Sea Scouts Quartermaster awards; 233 Girl Scouts USA Gold Awards).

The American Legion selected Christopher Adam from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, as its 2022 Eagle Scout of the Year. Selection is based upon a Scout’s outstanding religious, school, community, and scouting program achievements. Christopher will receive a \$10,000 scholarship from The American Legion. The three runners-up are Jackson Mills of Mt Vernon Illinois; Matthew Korf of Woodbury

Minnesota; and Charlotte Beatson of Littleton Colorado. Each runner-up received a \$2,500 scholarship.

Since its inception in 2003, there have been 686 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 **Ann Byars, Program Manager**

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 (USCIS) to help newly arriving legal immigrants and legal residents become assimilated and seek citizenship. Future goal is assisting soldiers ready for release to become legal and permanent citizens; this process would begin with post level volunteers reaching out to nearby military bases.

Flag Education **Ann Byars, Program Manager**

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority regarding proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, thousands of letters, phone calls and electronic mail messages are routinely answered pertaining to the proper display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

The American Legion is updating and selling copies 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.

In calendar year 2021 over 50,000 individuals and organizations received email notification each time the flag of the United States was to be displayed throughout the entire nation at half-staff. Subscribership to The American Legion’s flag alert notification service continues to grow every year.

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. Legislation was again introduced in the 117th Congress.

About 1,200 flag etiquette and flag related questions were answered via email or phone in 2022. Americanism also branched in flag education sessions via Zoom, Teams and podcasts, and serves as a credible flag etiquette for several news outlets, including Fox Online.

American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest **Kim Shriver, Program Manager**

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 to the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant, taking no less than eight minutes, nor more than ten, for delivery. Each contestant must also give an assigned topic presentation on a constitutional topic that is randomly selected during the contest from the four topics having been identified for each contest year. Assigned topic orations must take no less than three minutes, nor more than five, for delivery.

In 2022, fifty contestants competed in Indianapolis for scholarship money in this capstone event. Coming in first place was Emma Noble of Alabama, winning \$25,000. Ashley Tuell, of Tennessee won \$22,500 for second place. In third place, Jackson Boone of Kentucky, won \$20,000. All contestants who compete at the national contest go home with scholarship funds made possible through a grant provided by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and The American Legion. The American Legion continues to enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship with the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA).

Junior Shooting Sports Program **Kim Shriver, Program Manager**

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national Americanism program administered through American Legion 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. Competition is divided into two disciplines: the precision three position air rifle and the sporter three position air rifle.

In 2021-2022 there were 1,045 individual athletes and 161 shooting clubs who entered the postal match competition rounds of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Tournament, wherein competition is conducted remotely at the local level. The 31st Junior Shooting Three Position Air Rifle National Championship was successfully conducted in July 2022 at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The national championship climaxed the two rounds of postal matches which began the previous September. At the national championship medals were awarded to the top scorers in each discipline, and to top scorers in the prone, kneeling and standing positions. The two marksmen winning national titles at The American Legion's 2022 Junior Shooting Three Position Air Rifle National Championship were Mikole Hogan of Texas, in the precision discipline; and Samantha Zermeno of South Carolina, in the sporter discipline. Each champion received scholarships totaling \$5,000 sponsored by 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 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 nation's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, and 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 community level.

BASEBALL COMMITTEE
Gary Stone, Missouri, Chairman
Steve Cloud, Indiana, Program Manager

The 2022 season of American Legion Baseball registered 2,958 teams to play American Legion Baseball. This encompassed 49,087 players representing 50 states and Canada.

In 2022 the team sponsored by American Legion Post No. 70 in Troy, Alabama emerged as national champion at the 95th American Legion World Series. This is Troy's first national championship in team history and the first championship for Alabama since 1967. The 2022 runner-up team was from Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The 2022 George W. Rulon American Legion Baseball Player of the Year is Brooks Bryan, a player of the 2022 American Legion Mid-South Regional championship team, sponsored by American Legion Post 70, Troy, Alabama.

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-three Hall of Fame members played American Legion Baseball, including 2022 inductee Gil Hodges. Other American Legion Baseball 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 Safe Sport youth baseball program, following an initiative supported by USA Baseball in accordance with the U.S. Center for Safe Sports. Baseball Athlete Safety Education (BASE) features mandatory guidelines in accordance with Public Law 115-126 Child Sports Act of 2017 to monitor, educate and train parents, players and coaches in abuse awareness and foster long healthy playing careers for young athletes.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Louisiana, Chairman
Stacy 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 following our founding, The American Legion has become 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, the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Riders, as well as other 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.

At its 33rd annual convention in 1951 The American Legion adopted a resolution which for a third time re-emphasized the three major principles of its child welfare programs, with those principles remaining as a firm foundation yet today:

1. Maintaining the integrity of the American family home;
2. Utilizing and cooperating with existing sound facilities for children instead of attempting to establish competitive and duplicating resources; and
3. Maintaining a whole child program designed to meet the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs of children.

While these principles represent the heart of a whole child program, its action is rooted in:

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.

For its over 100-year history, The American Legion's Children & Youth Programs have contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. 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, as well as the members of its affiliated and supporting organizations, for their efforts 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.

2021-2022 Children & Youth Programs

The American Legion has long demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people. Legion volunteers regularly disseminate child safety information to parents, children, and community leaders. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to ensure that they have an opportunity to play and grow into responsible 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.

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth according to a 2018 article in the New England Journal of Medicine. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 12,000 children and young adults, ages 1 to 19 years, die from unintentional injuries each year. Stanford Children's Health states that falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injury for children, with children ages 19 and under accounting for about 8,000 fall-related visits to hospital emergency rooms every day. In homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present. To help educate the public, the Committee on Children & Youth

produces “Play it Safe”, an electronic brochure to inform parents about the six most common causes of death among children and prevention strategies.

The American Legion is very concerned about youth suicide as a major threat to the welfare of our nation’s youth. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second largest cause of death among 10 to 24-year-olds. In 2019 the Journal of American Medical Association reported that the suicide rate among adolescents appears to be the highest since the government started collecting such statistics in 1960. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that in 2017 there were more than 6,200 suicide deaths among adolescents and young adults ages 15-24. Suicide is a senseless tragedy but may possibly be preventable. The Committee on Children & Youth produces an electronic 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 an electronic brochure titled “Gateway Drugs...Choose not to Use”. This tool can equip parents and children with the facts about 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. Rent may possibly be overdue, or veterans’ children are hungry because a parent is sick, disabled, deceased, or left the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion, and the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grant program is a 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 the children of veterans, Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) remains unique in the social-work field even today and is still a very active program. Made possible by The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, the TFA grant program assists the households of qualifying veterans and military servicemembers meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities, and medical needs for their minor child(ren) when they are unable to do so. Through TFA, a Legion post may call upon the national level of The American Legion for cash grant assistance to help meet the basic needs of qualifying veterans’ child(ren). Funds may be granted when it has been validated through assessment and investigation that the minor child(ren) are in need and that no other sources are available or those available are insufficient.

The minor child(ren) may not be older than 17, or 20 if still enrolled in high school or is physically handicapped. The minor child(ren) must be the biological child(ren), stepchild(ren), 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 TFA grant of up to \$1,500 is permitted for the minor child(ren) of a qualifying veteran. During the calendar year 2021 there were 16 minor children of 6 Legionnaires and service members throughout 5 states who received \$8,035.69* in non-repayable cash grant assistance from the national level. (*subject to final audit)

Children & Youth Expenditures

The Committee on Children & Youth annually records children and youth activities of The American Legion Family, which includes posts of The American Legion, squadrons of The Sons of The American Legion, and units of the American Legion Auxiliary. Additionally, activities of salons of Eight and Forty are recorded as well. The contributions and expenditures of departments (states) and of the National Organization of The American Legion were obtained for the 12-month reporting period of June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022 (see Table No. 1). Table 2 illustrates a historical record of expenditures from national temporary aid funds by American Legion departments (state) according to years.

During the same reporting period the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation recorded \$570,870.84* (* subject to final audit) in donations from members of the American Legion Family and individuals from across the country. Also, during the same reporting period of June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022, the American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance program disbursed \$5,089.17* in grants to 8 children of 4 veterans. Table 1 shows that for the June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022, reporting period, The American Legion and its affiliated and supporting organizations reported a combined grand total of \$16,471,659.01* in expenditures and contributions to benefit over six hundred thousand children throughout America.

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH EDUCATION

Michael Westergren, Arkansas, Chairman

Ann Byars, 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 a combined total disability rating of 50% or more assigned by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Children of fallen Post-9/11 service members remain our highest priority in awarding this scholarship.

For 2022 there was \$795,000 awarded in American Legion Legacy scholarships awarded to a total of 71 applicants, exhausting the total amount available to award. These awards may be used for undergraduate or graduate-level education at a nonprofit and regionally accredited institution of higher learning, including trade schools. Recently approved resolutions dictate that for the 2023 awards and moving forward, all funds raised from The Legacy Run will go directly to scholarships that are equitably distributed to all students showing a need.

In addition to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, our scholarship programs include American Legion National Oratorical scholarships, American Legion Boys Nation scholarships, American Legion Junior Shooting Sports scholarships, American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year scholarships, 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 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 \$6,501,500 Samsung American Legion scholarships have been awarded. This is achieved by annually awarding scholarships to (10) \$10,000 national scholars, (10) \$5,000 runners-up, and (80) \$1,250 department (state) finalists in conjunction with the American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs. Regrettably, Samsung American Legion scholarships were not awarded in 2020 due to the vast majority of American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs throughout the nation having canceled due to health and safety concerns associated with the unprecedented coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that gripped the globe. In 2021, however, a majority of Boys and Girls State programs were able to rebound from the pandemic to conduct a

program, and as a result 86 Samsung American Legion scholarships were awarded totaling \$232,500.

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 Bennett, Indiana 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 our local communities, states, and nation should be regarded with respect and appreciation. The YCLE program serves as an influential steppingstone 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. Electronic 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 EXECUTIVE SECTION

Richard W. Anderson, Cromwell, CT – Chairman

Mark A. Avis, Palmer, MA – Vice-Chairman

Douglas Boldt, Callaway, NE – National Commander's Representative

Georgiann Callaway, Plainfield, IL – Consultant

David L. King, Winchester, KY – Consultant

Steve M. Tatro, Dunkirk, MD – Consultant

Gary Stone, Independence, MO – Chairman, American Legion Baseball Committee

Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Metairie, LA – Chairman, Committee on Children & Youth

Michael Westergren, Beebe, AR – Chairman, Committee on Youth Education

Larry L. Price, Redfield, SD – Chairman, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee

Table No. 1 Children & Youth Expenditures and Number of Children Served

Region and Department	Legion Posts Reporting	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	65%	\$0.00	\$1,206.67	\$7,075.00	\$4,570.00	\$36,101.00	\$10,202.16	2,147	\$62,154
Maine	96%	\$0.00	\$70.00	\$15,106.00	\$109,179.00	\$59,725.00	\$6,140.39	2,402	\$266,000
Massachusetts	53%	\$0.00	\$3,699.00	\$26,159.00	\$19,261.00	\$227,737.00	\$10,490.00	2,864	\$287,316
New Hampshire	47%	\$0.00	\$1,875.00	\$20,736.00	\$11,614.00	\$130,844.00	\$3,361.00	4,805	\$168,430
Rhode Island	43%	\$0.00	\$123.00	\$4,759.00	\$1,975.00	\$29,362.00	\$1,530.00	1,069	\$37,749
Vermont	45%	\$0.00	\$3,394.25	\$18,960.00	\$17,028.00	\$31,172.00	\$2,425.00	1,599	\$72,699
TOTAL:	62%	\$0.00	\$10,366.92	\$92,425.00	\$253,627.00	\$497,941.00	\$34,118.55	14,886	\$888,478
REGION 2									
Delaware	100%	\$0.00	\$70.00	\$40,210.00	\$4,570.00	\$53,967.00	\$2,015.00	1,489	\$100,822
D.C.	17%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,883.00	\$625.56	13	\$3,909
Maryland	100%	\$0.00	\$2,317.00	\$160,342.00	\$69,855.00	\$328,030.00	\$23,046.00	15,727	\$583,590
New Jersey	48%	\$0.00	\$1,679.00	\$40,110.75	\$27,486.25	\$208,793.00	\$47,729.00	6,336	\$325,798
New York	46%	\$0.00	\$2,975.75	\$125,085.00	\$99,640.00	\$342,702.00	\$162,401.00	25,061	\$733,964
Pennsylvania	56%	\$0.00	\$16,121.00	\$114,119.00	\$44,502.00	\$262,595.18	\$99,844.00	18,547	\$537,181
Virginia	100%	\$0.00	\$6,815.16	\$64,666.85	\$93,763.85	\$114,530.00	\$280,878.38	10,424	\$560,653
West Virginia	64%	\$0.00	\$785.17	\$26,044.00	\$21,702.00	\$61,237.18	\$3,520.00	1,643	\$113,268
TOTAL:	58%	\$0.00	\$30,743.98	\$571,837.69	\$362,618.10	\$1,373,826.36	\$620,668.94	79,240	\$2,993,086
REGION 3									
Alabama	47%	\$0.00	\$2,182.00	\$23,735.00	\$9,217.00	\$43,300.00	\$23,610.17	775	\$111,044
Florida	100%	\$0.00	\$25,494.00	\$157,275.00	\$202,525.00	\$772,601.00	\$43,574.00	63,964	\$1,201,469
Georgia	54%	\$0.00	\$910.00	\$46,848.00	\$15,281.00	\$222,044.00	\$16,212.00	4,936	\$309,495
Kentucky	62%	\$0.00	\$6,020.00	\$23,564.00	\$25,400.00	\$121,699.00	\$9,175.00	3,648	\$188,858
North Carolina	54%	\$0.00	\$1,221.88	\$37,473.02	\$36,024.50	\$100,221.00	\$55,613.00	5,956	\$230,553
South Carolina	50%	\$0.00	\$5,514.86	\$23,554.00	\$29,616.00	\$114,329.00	\$53,053.00	5,362	\$226,067
Tennessee	60%	\$0.00	\$1,277.35	\$33,731.00	\$25,941.00	\$100,941.00	\$24,656.00	7,885	\$186,466
TOTAL:	66%	\$0.00	\$42,620.19	\$347,080.02	\$345,004.50	\$1,475,135.00	\$324,893.17	92,396	\$2,444,733
REGION 4									
Arkansas	43%	\$0.00	\$350.00	\$6,404.00	\$4,898.00	\$36,095.00	\$4,485.00	662	\$54,232
Louisiana	25%	\$0.00	\$260.00	\$16,647.00	\$1,870.00	\$33,248.00	\$15,383.00	569	\$67,388
Mississippi	32%	\$0.00	\$2,423.26	\$7,516.00	\$11,048.00	\$89,157.00	\$5,063.81	4,150	\$115,208
Oklahoma	89%	\$0.00	\$1,433.06	\$26,913.30	\$11,226.00	\$131,506.00	\$38,795.00	6,879	\$206,873
Texas	65%	\$699.00	\$4,442.30	\$150,782.00	\$126,738.00	\$357,929.00	\$53,366.22	25,888	\$694,267
TOTAL:	63%	\$699.00	\$9,908.62	\$208,262.30	\$155,780.00	\$649,935.00	\$117,073.03	38,148	\$1,140,958
REGION 5									
Illinois	72%	\$0.00	\$2,408.50	\$68,963.00	\$38,928.00	\$175,652.00	\$60,478.00	9,788	\$378,460
Indiana	100%	\$0.00	\$2,496.00	\$169,130.00	\$94,853.00	\$601,876.00	\$52,312.00	4,890	\$910,629
Michigan	63%	\$0.00	\$2,609.00	\$40,573.00	\$37,053.00	\$207,788.98	\$1,874.00	8,209	\$289,896
Missouri	66%	\$0.00	\$667.00	\$45,424.00	\$18,404.00	\$104,990.00	\$18,334.00	6,827	\$187,819
Ohio	86%	\$0.00	\$13,895.90	\$255,163.00	\$141,783.00	\$691,098.00	\$12,214.39	46,495	\$1,159,406
Wisconsin	83%	\$0.00	\$3,232.00	\$317,750.00	\$70,115.00	\$183,346.75	\$55,472.00	17,263	\$629,918
TOTAL:	78%	\$0.00	\$26,286.40	\$930,386.00	\$391,135.00	\$1,965,655.73	\$160,684.39	93,462	\$3,553,130
REGION 6									
Iowa	61%	\$0.00	\$540.00	\$68,422.00	\$34,659.00	\$93,627.50	\$8,983.00	9,889	\$208,232
Kansas	55%	\$0.00	\$751.00	\$58,563.00	\$29,815.00	\$73,267.00	\$2,885.00	43,532	\$165,301
Minnesota	75%	\$0.00	\$7,643.49	\$354,139.43	\$198,690.00	\$283,036.14	\$67,330.00	21,236	\$910,859
Nebraska	100%	\$0.00	\$3,179.87	\$440,257.00	\$15,709.00	\$246,806.00	\$12,675.00	13,307	\$718,627
North Dakota	71%	\$0.00	\$514.00	\$219,859.00	\$97,987.00	\$110,050.00	\$11,566.00	8,223	\$420,086
South Dakota	61%	\$0.00	\$2,166.82	\$16,733.00	\$9,495.00	\$87,167.00	\$47,162.00	32,407	\$162,724
TOTAL:	71%	\$0.00	\$14,785.18	\$1,167,973.43	\$376,455.00	\$893,983.64	\$160,621.00	128,594	\$2,692,828
REGION 7									
Arizona	64%	\$0.00	\$2,351.00	\$360,211.30	\$90,740.30	\$729,996.00	\$49,502.85	117,423	\$1,232,801
California	63%	\$0.00	\$4,916.00	\$115,652.00	\$51,379.00	\$418,007.05	\$48,724.00	4,649	\$638,678
Colorado	59%	\$0.00	\$45.00	\$44,645.00	\$11,987.00	\$68,354.00	\$6,216.00	3,362	\$131,237
Hawaii	24%	\$0.00	\$375.00	\$300.00	\$1,972.00	\$40.00	\$0.00	0	\$2,697
Nevada	70%	\$1,500.00	\$530.00	\$7,099.00	\$7,180.00	\$17,211.00	\$11,730.00	446	\$45,250
New Mexico	100%	\$0.00	\$1,341.37	\$11,163.00	\$26,930.00	\$49,314.00	\$8,350.00	2,737	\$97,098
Utah	34%	\$0.00	\$85.00	\$6,750.00	\$1,085.00	\$95,652.00	\$2,764.48	1,236	\$107,336
TOTAL:	63%	\$1,500.00	\$9,643.37	\$545,620.30	\$191,253.30	\$1,379,584.05	\$127,287.33	129,883	\$2,265,098
REGION 8									
Alaska	91%	\$0.00	\$2,805.71	\$24,521.00	\$46,835.00	\$82,223.00	\$3,875.00	2,825	\$160,260
Idaho	100%	\$0.00	\$1,088.00	\$6,100.00	\$1,301.00	\$6,026.00	\$12,898.00	257	\$31,373
Montana	100%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40,958.00	\$24,505.00	\$27,723.00	\$9,348.00	4,232	\$102,534
Oregon	100%	\$1,090.17	\$682.00	\$44,023.00	\$18,774.94	\$45,198.25	\$7,533.69	2,650	\$117,302
Washington	78%	\$0.00	\$3,230.50	\$23,712.00	\$11,502.00	\$42,640.66	\$30,975.00	6,128	\$112,060
Wyoming	63%	\$0.00	\$2,917.59	\$7,096.00	\$5,143.00	\$45,750.00	\$2,991.00	6,551	\$93,900
TOTAL:	90%	\$1,090.17	\$10,723.80	\$148,410.00	\$108,060.94	\$251,652.91	\$67,580.69	22,743	\$587,429
REGION TOTALS:	68%	\$3,589.17	\$155,069.56	\$4,002,194.65	\$2,182,934.84	\$8,487,623.69	\$1,592,317.10	599,352	\$16,421,729
FOREIGN									
France	36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$250.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	200	\$48,650
Mexico	4%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.00	\$100.00	0	\$16,023
Philippines	56%	\$0.00	\$45.00	\$650.00	\$6,323.00	\$6,395.00	\$2,715.00	451	\$6,130
Puerto Rico	61%	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,862.00	\$6,573.00	\$11,600.00	\$2,915.00	651	\$76,341
TOTAL:	44%	\$1,500.00	\$45.00	\$6,612.00	\$13,146.00	\$22,997.00	\$5,730.00	1,302	\$149,144
GRAND TOTALS:	67%	\$5,089.17	\$153,114.56	\$4,008,706.65	\$2,196,080.84	\$8,510,620.69	\$1,598,047.10	600,654	\$16,471,659.01

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2021 - MAY 31, 2022

Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	\$94,597.84
Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	\$64,728.05
Child Welfare Foundation by B40	\$11,541.60
Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals	\$43,359.44
Requests to Child Welfare Foundation	\$5,005.95
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	\$340,789.25
CFC/United Way	\$1,858.71
Total	\$670,670.84

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-1945	1946-1965	1966-1985	1986-1995	1996-2005	2006-2015	2016-May 2022	Grand Total
Alabama	\$28,181.33	\$51,167.06	\$76,790.45	\$152,617.32	\$137,824.69	\$110,931.35	\$53,046.36	\$611,558.56
Alaska	\$0.00	\$1,627.56	\$1,550.00	\$0.00	\$3,500.00	\$2,165.98	\$11,200.00	\$20,043.54
Arizona	\$26,061.70	\$8,752.00	\$21,380.31	\$192,630.21	\$289,526.72	\$492,329.53	\$112,919.78	\$1,143,200.23
Arkansas	\$33,873.20	\$25,962.22	\$2,881.07	\$55,004.98	\$16,181.61	\$26,950.04	\$0.00	\$160,862.12
California	\$30,106.15	\$16,026.45	\$1,550.00	\$7,559.00	\$30,034.44	\$194,533.72	\$118,498.06	\$398,307.82
Colorado	\$41,621.11	\$22,618.11	\$1,395.00	\$12,205.83	\$17,692.15	\$172,131.92	\$98,436.01	\$364,000.13
Connecticut	\$440.00	\$440.00	\$440.00	\$1,192.00	\$0.00	\$32,258.56	\$21,915.35	\$65,761.56
Delaware	\$2,035.00	\$1,000.00	\$475.00	\$2,635.00	\$8,497.40	\$12,491.00	\$13,350.94	\$40,484.68
DC	\$2,570.00	\$1,203.50	\$600.00	\$26,136.75	\$2,319.00	\$6,375.63	\$600.00	\$39,804.88
Florida	\$33,341.29	\$25,520.50	\$2,530.00	\$27,060.88	\$64,469.81	\$457,310.37	\$269,462.62	\$879,685.66
Georgia	\$69,894.07	\$86,084.42	\$4,865.00	\$8,498.51	\$12,961.80	\$64,941.92	\$26,922.14	\$273,787.86
Hawaii	\$870.00	\$0.00	\$900.00	\$0.00	\$6,168.40	\$2,787.97	\$27,000.00	\$37,706.37
Idaho	\$7,593.50	\$5,771.85	\$7,398.39	\$20,228.20	\$195,485.15	\$244,319.48	\$16,219.88	\$496,984.43
Illinois	\$30,220.79	\$4,343.53	\$10,525.73	\$92,126.56	\$276,545.19	\$294,619.85	\$142,533.31	\$850,916.56
Indiana	\$31,850.08	\$9,066.40	\$2,920.00	\$126,545.18	\$173,400.66	\$511,401.98	\$190,951.90	\$1,046,136.20
Iowa	\$17,493.08	\$597.00	\$3,928.45	\$13,782.47	\$227,865.82	\$166,627.05	\$42,073.56	\$472,367.43
Kansas	\$20,786.80	\$42,094.35	\$9,923.00	\$9,241.54	\$16,291.00	\$81,187.11	\$11,353.25	\$169,827.65
Kentucky	\$23,843.50	\$45,527.90	\$64,854.96	\$44,238.68	\$12,445.22	\$163,862.00	\$45,082.69	\$399,854.93
Louisiana	\$23,400.50	\$38,454.30	\$3,395.00	\$7,340.45	\$33,897.24	\$15,051.72	\$55,768.28	\$177,307.49
Maine	\$3,618.94	\$1,910.26	\$2,676.55	\$15,912.00	\$22,305.05	\$16,627.29	\$11,100.00	\$73,150.06
Maryland	\$5,987.00	\$3,390.57	\$3,383.00	\$4,770.00	\$31,620.94	\$50,096.67	\$32,816.56	\$117,766.74
Massachusetts	\$2,754.50	\$455.00	\$150.00	\$4,650.00	\$18,888.67	\$22,670.48	\$60,800.91	\$110,368.84
Michigan	\$23,895.33	\$33,281.24	\$15,346.82	\$14,012.24	\$62,676.66	\$80,139.96	\$76,613.12	\$295,965.41
Minnesota	\$8,610.77	\$23,322.79	\$11,840.33	\$137,579.21	\$89,538.19	\$41,094.06	\$12,870.82	\$324,855.87
Mississippi	\$40,260.63	\$63,294.14	\$177,892.56	\$51,214.88	\$84,261.79	\$50,465.39	\$14,504.63	\$450,887.01
Missouri	\$53,073.08	\$47,799.64	\$11,056.00	\$17,969.51	\$38,984.13	\$149,530.46	\$3,673.54	\$322,086.36
Montana	\$5,414.25	\$1,688.85	\$1,575.30	\$38,571.40	\$57,913.91	\$97,516.22	\$19,481.65	\$222,141.58
Nebraska	\$16,470.10	\$17,795.68	\$17,531.06	\$3,373.25	\$759.49	\$19,801.41	\$7,214.11	\$64,945.10
Nevada	\$585.00	\$766.00	\$7,272.00	\$995.00	\$16,818.94	\$81,164.84	\$28,439.66	\$136,041.24
New Hampshire	\$4,250.50	\$4,941.50	\$0.00	\$53,557.79	\$12,610.00	\$323,124.23	\$5,867.74	\$104,351.76
New Jersey	\$9,995.53	\$1,946.00	\$7,800.00	\$55,576.20	\$45,576.20	\$48,721.98	\$49,683.69	\$221,585.80
New Mexico	\$20,074.30	\$53,098.74	\$58,723.89	\$111,071.87	\$49,262.39	\$40,257.73	\$5,539.00	\$338,427.92
New York	\$7,887.54	\$1,150.00	\$3,784.24	\$83,432.27	\$47,376.53	\$40,485.29	\$21,918.87	\$188,547.84
North Carolina	\$46,597.50	\$81,019.60	\$9,740.00	\$20,750.18	\$68,774.55	\$276,311.40	\$199,304.55	\$704,487.84
North Dakota	\$26,017.48	\$11,788.21	\$5,711.32	\$6,490.40	\$11,426.94	\$13,983.32	\$611.00	\$76,097.64
Ohio	\$23,930.43	\$5,116.25	\$11,613.89	\$11,357.65	\$13,289.44	\$108,007.84	\$31,557.82	\$204,873.32
Oklahoma	\$40,458.05	\$65,406.47	\$89,996.03	\$156,914.96	\$203,764.51	\$483,787.24	\$37,873.18	\$1,077,140.44
Oregon	\$1,250.50	\$2,459.56	\$2,459.56	\$42,469.56	\$17,790.00	\$252,933.02	\$121,766.72	\$471,558.17
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	\$20,380.12	\$160,089.68	\$11,198.61	\$290,555.04
Puerto Rico	\$17,057.00	\$57,754.00	\$55,499.50	\$43,420.00	\$11,100.00	\$16,844.84	\$24,394.46	\$226,069.60
Rhode Island	\$1,562.00	\$1,641.00	\$1,060.00	\$18,499.38	\$16,182.72	\$5,049.92	\$7,200.00	\$41,295.00
South Carolina	\$68,453.05	\$28,693.34	\$5,339.00	\$500.00	\$13,610.16	\$86,964.71	\$51,302.68	\$282,862.94
South Dakota	\$42,430.27	\$16,362.05	\$725.00	\$30,696.38	\$5,358.30	\$1,000.00	\$7,009.49	\$103,571.49
Tennessee	\$561,144.77	\$56,613.20	\$56,068.79	\$56,068.79	\$56,068.79	\$94,070.66	\$56,068.79	\$386,193.24
Texas	\$35,373.50	\$47,392.43	\$26,714.50	\$7,684.74	\$31,484.75	\$236,342.07	\$137,808.14	\$623,000.13
Utah	\$11,125.48	\$3,248.00	\$3,396.00	\$12,014.42	\$14,034.34	\$31,707.70	\$12,359.42	\$87,885.36
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	\$31,630.40	\$66,609.94	\$377,640.08	\$183,049.02	\$780,313.53
Washington	\$3,378.00	\$427.50	\$625.00	\$66,884.89	\$511,131.69	\$742,910.02	\$137,539.32	\$1,462,896.42
West Virginia	\$27,829.98	\$11,395.94	\$3,460.00	\$17,750.68	\$40,828.59	\$113,016.71	\$49,239.04	\$263,120.94
Wisconsin	\$15,891.98	\$0,067.25	\$9,976.00	\$16,242.76	\$74,527.21	\$35,855.32	\$12,315.00	\$225,688.74
Wyoming	\$8,180.00	\$1,995.00	\$1,350.00	\$979.00	\$13,746.91	\$34,232.42	\$5,459.65	\$65,940.98
Other Deps	\$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	\$1,826,240.98	\$3,327,257.51	\$6,958,291.54	\$2,737,634.95	\$17,938,299.87

AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.

Dennis R. Boland, Florida, President
Stacy Cope, 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 \$19 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 its annual meeting in October 2021, the board of directors approved a total of \$639,328 in 17 grants awarded to 14 nonprofit organizations for projects to be completed during the 2022 calendar year. These grants have been awarded to support youth-serving projects that seek to enhance the lives of children by addressing their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. The following is a brief summary of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants awarded for 2022:

Adoption Exchange Association of Linthicum, Md., was awarded \$22,780 for their project, “Every Child Deserves a Family.” This grant will provide a website to share useful information with other agencies to facilitate adoptions.

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded \$45,500 for their project, “American Legion Auxiliary National Youth Programs Scholarships.” This grant will provide academic scholarships in the following areas: American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program, the Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship, the Spirit of Youth Scholarship, the Honorary National Junior

Division Vice President Scholarship, and the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship. The American Legion Auxiliary and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded \$3,390 for their project, "American Legion Children and Youth Project." This grant will instill American Legion Family values in youth while teaching them about the poppy program and being safe. The American Legion Auxiliary and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

Childhood Leukemia Foundation of Brick, N.J., was awarded \$29,700 for their project, "Hope Binders." This project will offer 12 sections of templates and resources to help families begin to feel a degree of control over their circumstances. The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion support this grant.

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation of Pittsburgh was awarded \$30,000 for their project, "Teach Higher for the Starz(l): Next Gen Online Resources for Child Liver Transplant Patients and their Families." This grant seeks to create more patient and family toolkits, transplant care guides and educational videos for pediatric transplant patients that will help guide and support the patient and their family through their transplant journey. The Eight and Forty support this grant.

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome of Avon, Conn., was awarded \$26,500 for its project, "Reaching out: Resources for Parents with Children with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome." This project seeks to print and distribute valuable resources and information that is relevant to those parents and caregivers who have children with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Chicago was awarded \$25,000 for their project, "Mood Crew-Clinician Outreach." This project seeks to create and distribute materials that will help parents, caregivers and health care professionals recognize the signs when their loved one is experiencing mental health issues.

First Candle of New Canaan, Conn., was awarded \$34,965 for their project, "Education Campaign to Increase Safe Infant Sleep Practices." This project seeks to create an educational campaign with downloadable resources that teach parents and caregivers the dangers of infants sleeping in adult beds.

Kids in Danger of Chicago was awarded \$5,000 for their project, "Safe from the Start." This project seeks to create printed materials with information and resources for parents and caregivers about items that are potential dangers in a home.

National Braille Press of Boston was awarded \$19,000 for their project, "ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters." This grant will fund the creation of a U.S. tactile map so that visually impaired children can learn about geography and the United States. It will fund a braille book for a visually impaired child. The Eight and Forty support this grant.

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky of Lexington, Ky., was awarded \$3,193 for their project, "Project Outreach: Supporting Military Families." This project will fund the printing and distribution of materials regarding child sexual abuse prevention.

Songs of Love Foundation of Forest Hills, N.Y., was awarded \$25,000 for their project, "Songs of Love Outreach." This grant will fund the printing and distribution of profile forms and song request forms that will help create personalized songs for seriously ill children up to the age of 21 with no charge to them. This grant will also update and maintain the website which provides detailed information on how to request a song.

The National Children's Cancer Society of Saint Louis was awarded \$25,000 for their project, "Transportation Assistance Fund." This project will update and disseminate promotional materials promoting the Transportation Assistance Fund, ensuring children with cancer have access to life-saving treatment. The Sons of The American Legion supports this grant.

Tourette Association of America of Bayside, N.Y., was awarded \$11,300 for their project, "Newly Diagnosed Backpack Program." This grant will provide newly diagnosed children with Tourette Syndrome a backpack containing vital information and resources guide for children and parents so that they can better understand their diagnosis.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded \$54,500 for their project “2022 American Legion National Youth Programs Scholarships.” This grant will provide academic scholarships to the following youth programs of The American Legion: Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Baseball and Eagle Scout of the Year. The Sons of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Eight and Forty support this grant.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded \$203,500 for their project “The American Legion National Oratorical Contest-2022.” This grant will provide scholarships for youth competing in the 2022 American Legion National Oratorical Contest. The American Legion Auxiliary supports this grant.

The American Legion National Headquarters of Indianapolis was awarded \$75,000 for their project “The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program-2022.” This grant will provide temporary financial assistance to the minor child(ren) in the home of an eligible veteran or military service member maintain shelter, food, utilities, and clothing. The American Legion Auxiliary support this grant.

The American Legion Child Welfare board of directors meeting on May 1, 2022, following members were elected to board positions until Spring 2023: Dennis R. Boland of Florida, president; Peggy Moon of Minnesota, vice president; George C. Lussier, Jr. of Virginia, secretary; and Robert Morrill of New York, treasurer. Administrative personnel appointed by the board were Shawn Long, assistant treasurer; and Stacy Cope, 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 CORPORATION
(dba The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation)
Vincent M. Gaughan, Illinois, President**

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. Gifts and donations are added to the endowment trust, which 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), which include funding for the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program, Department Service Officer school and Board of Veterans Appeals training.

During calendar year 2021, the American Legion Endowment Fund transferred trust earnings of \$215,637 to The American Legion to support the Children Youth and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation programs. Donations to the American Legion Endowment during this time totaled \$4,136,800*. (*subject to final audit) 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 approved a media toolkit for use by Legion Family members within their departments. The toolkits provide

vital information on the Foundation's mission, statistics, as well as success stories from those veterans and their families that have been helped. Contributions to the 1919 Society, an elevated group of donors who have majorly contributed to the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation have started to gain momentum. The 100 Miles for Hope fundraiser campaign continues to be a huge success for the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation in its second year, exceeding goals, and expectations. The third annual 100 Miles for Hope is set to kick off in April 2022.

The increased visibility of the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation has prompted an increase in media coverage promoting awareness of the TFA grant program offered through the Americanism Commission's Committee on Children and Youth and Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation programs, which includes department service officer training. The American Legion provides these services to the veteran and their family free of charge. Service officers work on an estimated 750,000 claims worldwide from U.S. military veterans at any one time. The TFA grant program is able to provide financial grants to qualified veterans with minor child(ren) in the home to cover the child(ren) basic needs.

At the board of directors meeting on May 3, 2022, 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 Shawn Long, assistant treasurer, and Stacy Cope, 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.

CONVENTION COMMISSION

Michael E. Walton, Illinois, Chairman

Bridget A. Robinson, CMP, CMM, Georgia, Director

The 102nd annual National Convention of The American Legion convened in Phoenix, Arizona, August 27-September. 2, 2021. National Commander, James W. "Bill" Oxford of North Carolina, called the National Convention to order at 8:30AM on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, welcoming Legionnaires to Phoenix and thanking them for their continuing service to our Country and to our veterans. The 102nd National Convention began with the Opening Ceremony, which included Craig Morgan, Country Music Artist, and Army Veteran, who addressed nearly 6,000 American Legion Family members on Tuesday morning. Other guest speakers addressing the 102nd National Convention of The American Legion were the Vice Admiral Yancy Lindsey, Commander Navy Installations Command; The Honorable Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Doug Ducey, Governor of the State of Arizona; The Honorable Kate Gallego, Mayor of the City of Phoenix. Also, Chip Ganassi, Jimmie Johnson and Tony Kanaan were in attendance.

There were many highlights during the 2021 National Convention, but three events conducted at the National Convention deserve special mention. On Friday, August 27, the Color Guard Contest took place. Contestants and observers well attended the Color Guard contests. Four color guards competed in three categories with Newport Harbor Post 291 of Newport Beach, California, being awarded the National Commander Color Guard. There was no Band Contest. The Patriotic Memorial Service, featuring the Phoenix Boys Choir, was attended by approximately 2,000 American Legion Family members. On Tuesday, August 31, the National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests was held at the

Phoenix Convention Center. The banquet featured Craig Morgan as the entertainment and was attended by over 2,300 Legionnaires and guests.

Convention Commission Activities

The Convention Commission conducted two regular meetings during the year. The 2021 Washington Conference and Spring Meetings were both virtual and Fall Meetings held in person. Revisions of our request for proposal (RFP) continued in 2021. This process is extremely important as it provides an equal opportunity for all cities to be evaluated the same way during the site visit process. It is the commission's desire to continue to attract new cities that desire to host an American Legion National Convention, providing "blue cap" Legionnaires and their families with varied and enjoyable conventions on an annual basis.

For the 2027 National Convention, the Convention Commission received two Departments of The American Legion that submitted the proper resolution expressing their interest in bidding on the 2027 National Convention. The two cities supported by the appropriate resolution were Kansas City, Missouri and Columbus, Ohio. Site visits were conducted after the first of the year. Following site visits and after listening to formal presentations from each city, the Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that Kansas City, Missouri, be awarded the 2027 National Convention for the dates of August 27 – September 2. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation.

Future conventions and dates:

Milwaukee, Wisconsin	August 26 – September 1, 2022
Charlotte, North Carolina	August 25 – 31, 2023
New Orleans, Louisiana	August 23 – 29, 2024
Tampa Bay, Florida	August 22 - 28, 2025
Louisville, Kentucky	August 28 – September 3, 2026
Kansas City, Missouri	August 27 – September 2, 2027

FINANCE COMMISSION

Gaither M. Keener, Jr., North Carolina, Chairman
Shawn T. Long, CPA, Indiana, National Treasurer
Brian Ruiz, Indiana, Corporate Controller

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 a change in net assets of \$11,625,885 for 2021. 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 2021 Annual Report.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman
Matthew E. Herndon, Indiana, 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 four standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination: American Legion Riders Advisory Committee, National Convention Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws, and Membership & Post Activities.

The Internal Affairs Commission also provides guidance for the following programs: **Sons of The American Legion** -- The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) membership is currently more than 367,000 members worldwide. 37 of the 55 detachments (states) finished at 100 percent at or above their annual membership goals. The SAL continues with the "Buddy Check" initiative that reaches out to squadron members and veterans in their communities to check on their health and well-being. It is the SAL a program of The American Legion who fund raising and volunteer efforts support programs such as the Veteran Children and Youth Foundation (VCF), Veteran Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS), National Emergency Fund (NEF), the Legacy Scholarship Fund (LSF), Operation Comfort Warrior (OCW) and Child Welfare Foundation (CWF), to name a few. According to the activity reported through the SALs Consolidated Squadron Reports (CSR), SAL squadrons collectively donated cash and volunteered hours to the following:

- **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation** – volunteered over 21,378,168 hours equaling over \$543,646,812 in direct labor and over \$921,216 in donations.
 - **Veterans Education and Employment** - volunteered over 30,666 hours equaling over \$77,983,638 in direct labor and over \$315,678 in donations.
 - **Americanism** - volunteered over 183,379 hours equaling over \$4,663,327 in direct labor and over \$346,561 in donations.
 - **Child Welfare Foundation** - volunteered over 16,978 hours equaling over \$431,750 in labor directly and over \$239,342 in donations.
- Across all SAL programs, they volunteered 24,271,083 hours equaling over \$617,213,641 in direct labor based on \$25.43 per volunteer hour and donated over \$7,614,253 that went directly to their communities and supported our veterans and their families.

Since 1932, the Sons of The American Legion have continued to be an integral component of The American Legion Family and to our local communities.

The American Legion Riders -- The American Legion Riders (ALR) has organized chapters in over 2,200 American Legion posts and an estimated 122,000 members in 54 departments within 50 states, two U.S. territories, and two foreign countries.

Members of the American Legion Riders are comprised of members from the Legion Family, The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion, and The American Legion Auxiliary. The ALR is organized into chapters sponsored by individual American

Legion posts. ALR members are motorcycle enthusiasts who promote motorcycle safety, volunteer their time by supporting their communities, and participate in organized rides that bring awareness to The American Legion and various veteran causes.

Annually, the national organization and the ALR advisory committee plan and execute one of the country's largest organized motorcycle runs, The American Legion Legacy Run, held the week before the national convention. Riders from all over the country and overseas participate in this five-day, 1,100-mile ride that treks across many states.

During the multiple stops along the way, donors present donations to The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. This fund provides needs-based scholarships to children of 9/11 veterans who were either killed in action or assessed with a 50% or higher service-connected disability rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since 2006, the annual Legacy Run has conducted 16 consecutive Legacy Runs, traveled over 22,000 miles and raised more than \$16.4 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship fund.

National Emergency Fund -- Since 1989 the National Emergency Fund has provided nearly \$10 million in grant assistance to American Legion and Sons of the American Legion (SAL) members and American Legion posts across the Nation. From January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, The American Legion provided \$203,240 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 \$580,000. 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 American 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 (CPR) was developed in 1975 to document the various activities a specific post has accomplished during the twelve-month reporting period, June 1st through May 31st. The CPR may be the most important post document submitted each year. The combined information is referenced when the National Commander and others speak to our representatives and validates our ability to testify on behalf of all veterans. An individual post story and impact is amplified when we speak with a collective voice. During the 2021-2022 reporting year, 67.4% of posts submitted a CPR.

Throughout the reporting year, American Legion post members provided:

- 409,891 volunteer hours provided to our communities
- 96,162 pints of blood donated by 56,103 American Legion members
- 13,775,339 community service hours at a cost of \$1,008,653,137
- 154,117 funeral honors performed at a cost of \$3,283,662
- 1,545 American Legion baseball teams sponsored at a cost of \$4,513,208
- 1,776 Scout Units sponsored representing 33,179 Scouts at a cost of \$1,836,415
- \$4,708,481 donated to school assisted programs and scholarships
- 4,917 Local Oratorical contestants sponsored at a cost of \$271,129
- 14,871 Boys State Sponsored at a cost of \$3,407,743
- \$623,249 donated to the Temporary Financial Assistance
- \$1,000,428,444 donated to the National Emergency Fund

- \$3,620,015 in total donations to Children and Youth activities

The National American Legion College -- National American Legion College (NALC) annually hosts many talented, ambitious Legionnaires at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis for a week of intensive training. They are taught the core values and contributions of the organization and are challenged to think critically and creatively, working as a team in confronting issues and challenges within communities and The American Legion. Upon graduation, the students return to their departments with enhanced knowledge and appreciation for The American Legion. Graduates also stay in contact with each other through social media and networking at National American Legion meetings and events.

Candidates for the NALC are veterans who demonstrate the potential or demonstrate their ability to take on higher leadership roles and responsibilities. Applicants are nominated by their respective departments and ranked by a four-person selection committee comprised of a past national commander who chairs the committee and three NALC graduates, one from the last three graduating classes. Annually the committee reviews and ranks more than 75 applications. The highest scoring applicants fill the 55 seats available. The remaining applicants are placed on an alternate list based on their overall score and are used to fill vacancies in the event a student cannot attend.

In 2021, due to the pandemic, The National American Legion College conducted two classes back-to-back in November (2020 class) and December (2021 class). Both classes combined graduated 87 students. To date, over 875 active graduates are making a difference in leadership and membership across the country. Many graduates continue to take on various roles by either teaching, training, or mentoring their fellow Legionnaires. They serve in various leadership roles and accept appointments to serve on one of our many commissions & committees at the national and department levels. Graduates are encouraged to utilize their skills and knowledge by coordinating with their fellow graduates to develop training platforms that will benefit and enhance their American Legion knowledge and the issues that impact our veterans.

American Legion Training -- American Legion members have access to many training events and materials, both online and in person. Encouraging training at all levels is vital to yield a better-informed membership base who understand the organization and the importance of their participation. The training area of the webpage offers materials to download for use in local training at the district and post level.

Basic Training is The American Legion's on-line, self-paced training program free to American Legion Family members. It is a ready resource 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.

Training Tuesdays are live webinar events offered on the last Tuesday of each month. These one-hour sessions are open to all and cover a wide variety of topics of interest to post and district leadership.

Live training sessions are conducted each year during the national convention to engage attendees and encourage members to continue sharing the American Legion's mission and message.

Operation Comfort Warrior (OCW) -- In 2021, Operation Comfort Warriors approved 69 grant requests totaling \$270,839.40 for veterans and organizations serving veterans' needs in 22 different states providing everything from entertainment access and essential mobility devices to critical personal care needs. In 2022 through September 23rd, Operation Comfort Warriors has approved 33 grants totaling over \$175,000.

Every dollar contributed to the fund is used to:

- Demonstrate to wounded warriors that those who have come before them will continue to stand by them in their service to our great nation.
- Support individuals and programs that help wounded warriors wherever they are and in whatever stages of recovery they are in.

- Provide items and events that empower wounded warriors and their families to face their difficulties and come out stronger on the other side. Few programs illustrate The American Legion's commitment to wounded, injured or ill military service members and veterans more than Operation Comfort Warriors. OCW defines a "wounded warrior" as those veterans who have or those service members who are still serving honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces and who have become wounded, injured, or ill. OCW supplements the high-quality care provided at military and Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and transition units throughout the United States and abroad. OCW was established to provide those "non-essential" items not typically found as a budget line on government spreadsheets.

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

John "Jay" Bowen, Colorado, Chairman

Membership and programs go hand in hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide people and resources to serve the needs of veterans and their families.

The Committee has oversight of the implementation of the recommendations of the 21st Century Relook Committee whose charge was to update the original 21st Century report and chart the path for membership operations over the next 10 to 15 years.

Membership:

Final 2020 membership – 1,762,061

Final 2021 membership – 1,694,048

2022 membership projection – 1,640,000

59th Annual National Membership Workshop -- During the first in-person membership workshop held in Indianapolis since 2019 (July 29-30, 2022) there were approximately 350 attendees from 53 departments that were assigned to four different groups: Programs and Membership, Member Engagement, Recruitment and Retention, and District Commander. The workshop was a great success, with those telling us via our survey they enjoyed training pertaining to growing and retaining membership at the post level featuring American Legion programs.

The goal of the workshop remained the same as in the past and that is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge, and the desire to conduct an effective American Legion membership program. Whether they are involved in membership recruitment or program implementation, the workshop teaches Legionnaires to help veterans and provide communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

When the workshop concluded, the attendees were prepared to face day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of The American Legion as it relates to matters involving the ability to recruit new members and retain the ones who are already members.

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 many post and district revitalizations and new posts developed in the past 25 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. All departments are encouraged to participate in this program. However, success requires a commitment from every level of leadership.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
Daniel Seehafer, Wisconsin, Chairman
Lawrence Montreuil, Virginia, Director

This report covers the activities of the Legislative Commission from August 26, 2021, through August 26, 2022. During this period, the Commission met one time 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 a legislative coordinator. 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.

117th Congress, 2nd Session

The Second Session of the 117th Congress began on January 3, 2022. In November, Congress passed the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (H.R.3684). Although it was much smaller than the original \$3.5 trillion framework, it retained a key provision that allocated \$65 billion to expand broadband access throughout the country. The expansion of broadband services has been essential to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is able to leverage telehealth and other broadband-dependent healthcare modalities to ensure veterans, especially those located in rural communities, have increased access to care.

On March 15, President Biden enacted Public Law (P.L.) 117-35, the omnibus spending measure for fiscal year (FY) 2022. The overall bill contains \$1.5 trillion to fund the operations of the federal government until September 30, 2022. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) received a total of \$112.2 billion in discretionary funding for the remainder of FY22, in addition, to advance appropriations of \$111 billion (discretionary) and \$161 billion (mandatory) for FY23, which begins on October 1.

The package includes \$882 million for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program and \$4.9 billion for VA Community Care. It also includes the *VA Nurse and Physician Assistant RAISE Act*, which was introduced by Representative Underwood (IL) and will allow advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants an increase in salary to combat record-high turnover rates among VA healthcare workers.

On March 28, President Biden released the FY23 budget request. The requested budget calls for \$5.8 trillion and significantly increases nondefense spending. It includes \$1.6 trillion in discretionary funding, nearly a 9 percent increase from FY22. \$135 billion of this discretionary funding is for VA, 20 percent more than the previous year's funding.

In July, the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It includes a number of Legion legislative priorities elaborated upon in the National Security section of this report below. The full Senate has not yet considered its version of the FY23 NDAA bill; it is likely to do so in November.

On August 8, President Biden signed the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act* into law. The Senate first passed the PACT Act in June but unfortunately, a technical error with the workforce provisions created a delay that forced Congress to vote on the bill again. When the Senate had the opportunity to allow cloture to be invoked, which would end debate over the legislation, 25 Senators who previously supported the bill voted to continue debate over the bill, thus delaying final passage. A deal was made to allow Senators to vote on amendments thus clearing the way for the PACT Act to pass the Senate 86 to 11. This historic and bipartisan legislation creates a scientific framework for future presumptive conditions, a concession of exposure, and service presumptions for toxic exposures across the last five decades, increasing access for an estimated 3.5 million veterans to receive care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On August 9, President Biden signed the *CHIPS and Science Act*, which seeks to increase the supply of semiconductors and promote research and development of advanced technologies in the United States.

On August 16, President Biden signed the *Inflation Reduction Act*. The Inflation Reduction Act works to reduce the deficit by reforming the corporate tax and increasing funding to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It also reforms prescription drug pricing and increases environmental protections.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

The American Legion has provided input on 143 pieces of veteran healthcare legislation and testified seven times before the Senate and the House of Representatives on topics surrounding veterans' healthcare. Specifically, The Legislative Division has focused on issues related to toxic exposure, mental health, suicide prevention, and women veterans. However, the Legislative Division monitors many other topics including the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, VA's Community Care Program, caregivers, long-term care, VA sexual harassment, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, minority veterans, and a variety of other issues.

The American Legion has testified and submitted statements for the record (SFR) several times before the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on a variety of veteran healthcare subtopics. On October 13th, 2021, The American Legion submitted an SFR for HVAC's Health Subcommittee hearing on pending legislation. Topics included VA's Solid Start Program, VA's Governor's Challenge, and the Veterans Justice Outreach Program to name a few. Later the next month on November 17th, 2021, VA&R Director Katie Purswell testified before HVAC's DAMA Subcommittee on military sexual trauma.

On March 30th, 2022, Deputy Health Policy Director Tiffany Ellett testified before HVAC's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee on pending legislation related to VA supply chain management, minority veterans, VA inclusion and diversity efforts, and community care oversight. Later in 2022, on September 29th, VA&R Health Policy Analyst Kenneth Harman submitted an SFR to HVAC's Health Subcommittee for their suicide prevention hearing. The American Legion was also invited to join several roundtable discussions with other large VSOs hosted by HVAC's Women Veterans Task Force.

Given the comprehensive nature of previous legislation signed into law, The American Legion continually monitors its implementation to ensure veterans receive their congressionally mandated and earned care. These bills include P.L. 116-171 – *the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act*, P.L. 116-315 – *the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act*, P.L. 117-21 – *the Sgt. Ketchum Rural Veterans Mental Health Act*, P.L. 117-37 – *the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act*, and P.L. 117-135 – *the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act*.

Mental health and suicide prevention continue to be a priority for both The American Legion and Congress in this space. To this end, The American Legion has focused these efforts on advocating for alternative therapies, peer support, and timely access to traditional care. Most importantly, The American Legion has vociferously lobbied in support of H.R. 6411 – *the STRONG Veterans Act*, a veteran mental health omnibus package containing dozens of provisions from standalone pieces of legislation that The American Legion has supported. These provisions include authorizing VA to create an annual VA Buddy Check Week, ensuring VA medical centers have at least one full-time minority veteran coordinator, updating the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and expanding specific scholarships and loan repayment programs for VA mental health providers among many other provisions.

In the alternative therapy space, The American Legion has supported increasing access to hyperbaric oxygen therapy and medicinal cannabis through legislation such as H.R. 2916 – *the VA Medical Cannabis Research Act*, H.R. 5977 – *the States Reform Act*, and H.R. 6991, which would establish a VA policy on medicinal cannabis. To improve VA peer support services, The American Legion has supported H.R. 4575 – *the Veteran Peer Specialist Act*, which would demand VA make permanent the program that establishes at least two peer specialists in patient-aligned care teams at VA medical centers to promote the use and integration of mental health services. In addition, The American Legion continues to advocate for S.544 – a bill requiring VA to incorporate an annual Buddy Check Week as a standalone. In October 2021, it passed through the Senate and is awaiting action in the House. Additionally, The American Legion has supported H.R. 5073 – *the*

Revising and Expediting Actions for the Crisis Hotline for Veterans Act, H.R. 6273 – *the VA Zero Suicide Demonstration Project Act*, and H.R. 7116 – *the 9-8-8 Implementation Act*.

Expanding VA healthcare eligibility for WWII veterans continues to be a priority for The American Legion. Two bills to achieve this goal have been introduced – H.R. 5562 and S.1040. Since the last National Convention, H.R. 5562 was included in an HVAC hearing and markup where, in November 2021, it was ordered to be reported by voice vote favorably. Since then, The Legislative Division has actively worked to get this legislative text included in the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act language.

Improving dental healthcare services to veterans at VA is a goal of The American Legion. This is why The American Legion has supported H.R. 914 – *the Dental Care for Veterans Act* and S.3017 – *the Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act*. Both pieces of legislation seek to expand eligibility for veterans for VA dental care based on factors such as service-connected disability, prisoner of war status, financial need, or VA healthcare eligibility.

Increasing access to care for rural veterans continues to be a priority. The American Legion has supported H.R. 3730, *a bill to establish a VA Advisory Committee on U.S. Outlying Areas*, H.R. 5941, *the Fairness for Rural Veterans Act*, and H.R. 7414, *the RURAL Veterans Act*. These pieces of legislation aim to require VA to establish an Office of Rural Recruitment to improve healthcare professional recruitment at VA, provide priority consideration for the granting of state home facility grants to nursing homes located at least 100 miles away from an existing facility, and establish a committee which gives guidance to VA on matters relating to veterans in U.S. territories.

The American Legion has also lobbied to expand VA Vet Center services as well. As a part of this effort, The American Legion has endorsed H.R. 3674 – *the Vet Center Support Act*, H.R. 5543 – *the Vet CENTERS for Mental Health Act*, and S.2924 – *the Vet Center Outreach Act of 2021*. These pieces of legislation seek to require VA to report on VA mental healthcare furnished to veterans in states that have a ratio of one Vet Center per 100,000 veterans, mandate VA ensure the number of Vet Centers in certain states is increased by at least one additional one if VA determines the state meets specified requirements, and have VA take specific action to provide information on Vet Centers to servicemembers who are transitioning to civilian life.

Women veterans issues remain a top priority for the Legislative Division. To this end, The American Legion has supported legislation such as H.R. 4218 – *the Women Veterans Report Act*, H.R. 5212 – *the Improving Oversight of Women Veterans' Care Act*, and H.R. 7508 – *the Improving Specialty Care for Women Veterans Act*. These legislative efforts seek to require VA's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans to report annually on VA's women veterans' programs and activities, mandate VA submit an annual report to Congress on women veterans' access to gender-specific services under arrangements entered into by VA with non-VA providers, and authorize VA to implement a recruitment, retention, and training program for women veteran specialty care providers.

The American Legion has remained active in participating in conversations within the VSO community regarding VA's Federal Supremacy Project, which is currently in the process of implementing a National Standards of Practice (NSP) for VA physicians and healthcare professionals. In October 2021, The American Legion sent a letter to HVAC's Health Subcommittee leadership requesting a hearing on VA's implementation of NSP and concerns regarding the impact these standards would have on veterans' quality of care and inadequate VSO and stakeholder inclusion in VA rulemaking. Since then, the Legislative Division has met with the office staff of Rep. Greg Murphy and Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, both of whom are physicians who serve on HVAC, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, to discuss the issue.

The American Legion has provided input on 86 pieces of legislation under the HVAC DAMA subcommittee's jurisdiction and testified three times before the Senate and the House of Representatives on topics surrounding veterans' benefits and healthcare.

The issue of concurrent receipt has imposed an unjust offset upon disabled veterans. Currently, over 50,000 medically retired veterans are denied their full retirement pay and disability compensation. *The Major Richard Star Act* (H.R. 1282/S. 344) would repeal this offset, allowing these combat-injured disabled Veterans to receive both their retirement pay and their disability compensation. Cosponsors for this legislation have grown to 299 co-sponsors in the House and 63 in the Senate. These widespread bipartisan and bicameral cosponsors are a direct result of our Legionnaires' engagement with members of Congress on this issue. The Senate will look to vote on this legislation by including it in the NDAA through the amendment process.

The 117th Congress demonstrated its ability to work together in a bipartisan and bicameral manner by passing the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act* (S. 3373). The PACT Act creates concessions of exposure, a scientific framework, and establishes presumptive conditions for a wide range of toxic exposures from the Vietnam War to the present, making it easier for veterans to obtain care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard advocated relentlessly for the bill traveling across the country and speaking about the effects of burn pits and Agent Orange on sick veterans and their families. Our digital grassroots campaign for the PACT Act was the most successful digital campaign for The American Legion. National Commander Dillard was on hand at the White House for the bill signing and thanked all the 1.6 million Legionnaires that stepped up and advocated for our sick veterans.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Since September 2021, The American Legion has testified four times before the House of Representatives on veterans employment and education and submitted one statement for the record. The National Legislative Division has broadened American Legion advocacy for veterans employment into six separate areas: improving the transition assistance program, improving the VA Home Loan program, addressing veteran homelessness, financial protections against predatory lenders, prioritizing veterans in federal contracting, and improving the GI Bill.

The American Legion continued to monitor the extension of emergency protections for GI Bill housing payments in connection with the COVID pandemic. With many schools announcing plans to continue virtual learning for Spring 2022, semester, many veterans were at risk of losing their in-person housing allowances unless their COVID emergency protections were extended beyond December 21st. Less than 48 hours from the deadline with pressure from The American Legion, Congress passed the Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions Act (REMOTE Act), which extended housing allowances for virtual learning to June 2022.

While this legislation protected thousands of veterans whose schools returned to virtual environments for the Spring 2022 semester, a long-term answer must still be established for unforeseen contingencies. To prevent any future pandemics or national emergencies from affecting veterans education benefits, The American Legion continues to advocate for passage of H.R.7939, the Student Veteran Emergency Relief Act of 2022. This legislation would extend the technical language specified in the REMOTE Act protections for all cases when the President declares a state of emergency, or when the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines there is an emergency for purposes of the laws administered by the Secretary.

The American Legion's advocacy for veterans-owned small businesses has continued to encourage Congress to compel federal agencies to prioritize veterans in federal contracting. While all federal agencies are required to comply with prime and subcontracting quotas to SDVOSBs as mandated by Public Law 106-50, the VA's has consistently exceeded its quota. Many attribute this to its employment of the Vets First Contracting Program, which streamlines procurement preference for Service-Disabled Veteran (SDVOSB) and Veteran (VOSB) Owned Small Businesses. To protect this best-

practice as the VA moves to migrate from its own acquisition program Med/Surg Prime Vendor (MSPV 2.0) to the Department of Defense Logistics Agency's (DLA) MSPV program, the National Legislative Division is working with Congressional offices to draft legislation making Veterans First Contracting Program a requirement for the Department of Defense (DOD) to allow for competition restricted to Service-Disabled Veteran (SDVOSB) and Veteran (VOSB) Owned Small Businesses.

NATIONAL SECURITY

In the time period between the 2021 and 2022 National Conventions, the Legislative Division's National Security team has focused on legislation to assist Afghans with temporary status to apply for permanent legal residency and to improve and update the Special Immigrant Visa process for Afghans who served alongside U.S. servicemembers; legislation that would improve naturalization procedures for non-citizens in the Armed Forces and provide protections from deportation for non-citizen veterans; the Legion reaction the Russian invasion of Ukraine; legislation that repeals outdated Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs); legislation to improve military quality of life for U.S. servicemembers; and the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act as a vehicle for Legion legislative priorities. Each of the above is addressed in more detail below. Eleven bill reviews were completed of legislation that falls within the purview of the National Security Commission.

Through Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), as of the end of December 2021, the United States welcomed more than 76,000 Afghans in the aftermath of the ending of the war in Afghanistan. They were flown to the U.S. and assigned to a U.S. military base where they went through medical screening, received vaccinations, and awaited word on where they would be resettled. As per the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) December 2021 Report on OAW, DHS estimates that 36,433 of those 76,000 Afghan evacuees remain in legal limbo because they do not have a clear path to green card status (such as a pending SIV application).

In the wake of the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the surge of applications for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, The American Legion tapped into its grassroots network to engage Congress on providing staff support. On August 25, the National Legislative Division sent a message to all members of the National Legislative Council urging Congressional offices to establish SIV pipelines with the State Department to help fleeing refugees. On September 30, 2021, President Biden signed a continuing resolution (CR) that included the Legion-supported *Welcoming Evacuees Coming from Overseas to Mitigate Effects of Displacement Act of 2021*, also known as the *WELCOMED Act* into law. The CR included \$1.68 billion for Afghan resettlement. Because Afghan refugees had to be resettled so quickly into the U.S. under humanitarian parole, many were not eligible for the government benefits America provides refugees entering through traditional processes like the SIV program. The *WELCOMED Act* provides Afghan refugees on humanitarian parole with the benefits they need to start a life in the U.S.

On March 15, 2022, the Biden administration announced new immigration protections for individuals from Afghanistan, including the 76,000 Afghan refugees who have come to the U.S. since last summer's military withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Department of Homeland Security granted temporary protected status (TPS) to certain Afghans for 18 months. To qualify, individuals must have lived in the United States since March 15, 2022. TPS will provide additional protections and assurances to trusted partners and vulnerable Afghans who supported the U.S. military, diplomatic, and humanitarian missions in Afghanistan over the last 20 years. While TPS offers temporary protection from deportation for Afghans already in the U.S., it is not a durable solution. TPS is a temporary benefit that does not lead to lawful permanent residency or provide access to any other immigration status. As of April 2022, The American Legion is working with members of Congress on the introduction and passage of legislation that will allow Afghans paroled

into the United States as part of Operation Allies Welcome to apply for a green card one year after arrival and provide them with a path to citizenship.

The American Legion has been working with members of Congress on the introduction and passage of legislation that will allow Afghans paroled into the United States as part of Operation Allies Welcome to apply for a green card one year after arrival to provide them with a path to citizenship and improve and update the Special Immigrant Visa process. These efforts came to fruition with the introduction on August 9, 2022, of H.R. 8685, *the Afghan Adjustment Act* and S. 4787. Modeled after bipartisan bills that Congress has passed in the wake of other humanitarian crises, including the Vietnam War, the Afghan Adjustment Act would:

- Allow Afghans on humanitarian status who submit to additional vetting to apply for permanent legal status. For these Afghans, the primary options under current law to gain permanent status are through our asylum system or the burdensome SIV process;
- Expand the SIV program to include four previously omitted groups, including the Female Tactical Teams of Afghanistan, the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command, the Afghan Air Force, and the Special Mission Wing of Afghanistan;
- Establish a task force to develop and implement a strategy for supporting Afghans outside of the United States who are eligible for SIV status and require the Department of State to respond to congressional inquiries about SIV applications.

On August 10, 2022, The American Legion and other advocates gathered in Washington, DC, for a press conference to urge Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act. Legion staff delivered remarks emphasizing The American Legion's strong support for this legislation, saying that not only is it the right thing to do, but it is also a matter of national security.

Regarding non-citizen immigrant servicemembers and veterans, The American Legion believes all non-citizen immigrant veterans should be afforded every opportunity to complete the process toward citizenship before exiting the military and that civilian opportunities should also be bolstered for veterans and their family members. The American Legion has testified on this issue several times earlier in the 117th Congress, once in a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing and once in a House Veterans' Affairs hearing. The American Legion again advocated for these veterans and servicemembers in a statement for the record submitted to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship for a June 29, 2022, hearing on the oversight of immigrant military members and veterans. In the Statement, The American Legion support expressed support for two bills to address the issues.

In the House, we support H.R. 7946, *the Veteran Service Recognition Act of 2022*. This legislation would prevent the deportation of veterans by making the naturalization process easier for active duty servicemembers, establishing a review process for non-citizen veterans, servicemembers, and their families, and creating an opportunity for deported veterans to obtain legal permanent resident status. In the Senate, we support S.2265, *the Veterans Visa and Protection Act of 2021*. Among other things, it would prohibit the deportation of certain noncitizen veterans, establish a visa program through which deported veterans may enter the United States as legal permanent residents and allows noncitizen veterans in the U.S. who are ordered for removal to adjust their immigration status to that of a legal permanent resident, enable legal permanent residents to obtain naturalization through military service, and extend military and veterans benefits to those who were deported who would otherwise be eligible for those benefits.

The National Legislative Division has continued its advocacy to address the end of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan by replacing outdated Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and urging Congress to reestablish its oversight of foreign policy decision-making. In the House, The American Legion supports H.R.3261, which would

repeal the 1991 AUMF for military action against Iraq, and H.R.256, which repeals the AUMF for military action against Iraq in 2002. In the Senate, The American Legion supports S.J.Res.10, which would repeal both the 1991 and 2002 AUMFs against Iraq. The American Legion also supports broader bipartisan legislation which aims to restore the balance of power between the president and congress by reclaiming Congressional oversight of arms sales, emergency declarations, and the use of military force. In the House, The American Legion is working on passage of H.R. 5410; the *National Security Reforms and Accountability Act* and in the Senate, S. 2391; the *National Security Powers Act of 2021*.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, prompted enormous attention on Capitol Hill. On February 28, 2022, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed an emergency resolution calling for "peaceful conflict resolution in Ukraine" and opposing combat operations for U.S. troops unless certain conditions are fulfilled. According to Resolution 1: *Statement on Ukraine*, The American Legion will not support related U.S. combat operations unless the president clearly explains why such operations are in "our vital national interests" and mission guidelines are established to include a clear exit strategy. The resolution also states that the organization's support for such a mission is contingent on congressional authorization for the use of military force and that American forces be commanded only by U.S. officers. The resolution also makes clear that the organization would not support combat deployments of U.S. troops "in defense of non-NATO member countries," because of Russia's actions.

The Statement was shared with every congressional office that day.

In Congress, a broad, bipartisan coalition of lawmakers urged the president to not send U.S. troops into Ukraine, or declare war, before receiving authorization from Congress. President Biden has not dispatched troops to Ukraine following Russia's invasion and has said he does not intend to do so, but announced sanctions on Russia, as well the delivery of lethal and non-lethal aid to Ukraine.

On April 28, 2022, the House of Representatives passed S.3522: *Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022*, Legion-supported legislation establishing a lend-lease program to make it easier for the U.S. to send military aid to Ukraine. It would make it easier to provide support to Ukraine as it defends itself against Russia's invasion, which has entered its third month. The Senate passed the legislation by voice vote earlier in April as part of a deal to end permanent normal trade relations with Russia and Belarus, as well as a bill to ban Russian oil imports.

The National Legislative Division has increased its focus on improving military quality of life for U.S. servicemembers. Over the last several months, Legislative staff have had meetings with the offices of Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Representative Nikema Williams (D-GA) regarding efforts to reduce housing costs for active-duty servicemembers and their families. Legislative solutions to this issue include increasing the housing supply, on-base and off-base, and modifying the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to reflect the regions that servicemembers reside in more adequately. The American Legion is also beginning to engage with staff and other organizations on food insecurity within the military by improving the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA).

In July 2022, the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which essentially authorizes all Pentagon and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) weapons, salaries and support, and outlines the U.S. national security strategy for the year ahead. This year's House-passed version of the bill was more than 1,300 pages long and authorizes more than \$850 billion for spending on defense programs at the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and other defense-related programs, including about \$50 billion for nuclear weapons. A total of 1,220 amendments were offered to the bill. In the end, the House Rules Committee permitted votes on 650 amendments, most of them in en bloc groups of amendments adopted by voice votes. Among the Legion-supported amendments adopted were ones that:

- Expands eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care to include veterans of World War II who are not already covered.
- Require the Department of Defense to annually report to the House Armed Services Committee the numbers of noncitizen servicemembers, their immigration status, and the annual naturalization numbers of those serving.
- Authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to E. Royce Williams for acts of valor beyond the call of duty during the Korean War on November 18, 1952, while a member of the US Navy.
- Repeals the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq.
- Repeals the 1991 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution.
- Repeals the 1957 Authorization for Use of Military Force in the Middle East.
- Expresses the Sense of Congress that Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs) should include a sunset provision. Specifically: (1) the inclusion of a sunset provision or reauthorization requirement in authorizations for use of military force is critical to ensuring Congress's exercise of its constitutional duty to declare war; and (2) any joint resolution enacted to authorize the introduction of United States forces into hostilities or into situations where there is a serious risk of hostilities should include a sunset provision setting forth a date certain for the termination of the authorization for the use of such forces absent the enactment of a subsequent specific statutory authorization for such use of the United States forces.
- Requires the State Department to surge capacity to process Afghan special immigrant visas and P1, P2 visa applications. "Surge capacity" can include sending additional consular personnel to embassies and consulates in the region processing Afghan visas.

As of September 2022, the full Senate has not yet considered its version of the FY23 NDAA bill; it may do so in September. The National Legislative Division is working with Senate offices to offer the above Legion-supported amendments as part of the Senate version with the aim of keeping as many of them as possible in the final version of the bill that passes Congress and reaches the president's desk.

AMERICANISM

During the second session of the 117th Congress, The American Legion continues looking for additional co-sponsors for H.R.4212, *the Flag Code Modernization Act of 2021*, which would amend the United States Flag Code to reflect current, accepted patriotic practices. The American Legion passed Resolution No. 19: Flag Code Amendment in 2016 to codify these patriotic practices.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The American Legion has worked with Senator Joni Ernst (IA) and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18) to introduce legislation requiring VA to establish a "Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans. As part of Buddy Check Week, VA would be mandated to publish an online script for veterans to use to conduct peer wellness checks, conduct online and in-person training, and increase staffing on the Veterans Crisis Line.

H.R. 3405 is the House version, has 35 bipartisan cosponsors, and was referred to the HVAC Health Subcommittee on August 2nd, 2021. S. 544 is the Senate version, has 23 bipartisan cosponsors, and passed the Senate on October 7th, 2021. It is now awaiting action in the House. Additionally, it has been included as a provision in H.R. 6411 – *the STRONG Veterans Act* which is a veteran mental health omnibus bill. H.R. 6411 passed the House on June 23rd, 2022, and is now awaiting action in the Senate.

Since then, the Legislative Division has sent out several email blasts and action alerts to Capitol Hill veterans policy staffers through Congressional Quarterly and Voter Voice in support of S. 544 and H.R. 6411. Furthermore, on September 29th, 2022 during an HVAC Health Subcommittee hearing on suicide prevention The American Legion submitted a statement for the record where we discussed the need for a VA Buddy Check Week.

MARKETING COMMISSION

Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota, Chairman
Dean Kessel, North Carolina, Executive Director
Kimberly Meesters, North Carolina, Director

2022 Marketing Priorities

- Attract & Retain New Members
- Drive Revenue
- Improve Brand Perception



This is a building year for the Marketing Division. We are adding staff, auditing budgets, researching, and optimizing all processes and procedures. We are scrutinizing every aspect of our division to ensure we are operating efficiently and are focused on the right priorities. We need these fundamentals in place now so that we can focus on growing the organization in 2023. Despite a disproportionate amount of time spent on foundational and operational items, we have made some headway on each of our seven marketing priorities for the year and expect even more progress the second half of the year.

Year-to-Date Highlights

Rollout New Brand: New brand marks have officially launched for the Auxiliary, Sons, Riders and Baseball. We also developed a new set of brand guidelines that should clarify much of the confusion around use of Brand Marks vs. Emblems. We expect to disseminate these widely starting in September.

Reimagine Membership: In July, we began promoting auto renew through our print and digital media channels and on all renewal notices. We are seeing an increase in members selecting to auto renew. This is important because we spend \$1.3M a year on renewal notices. More people on auto renew means less renewal notices in the mail. In addition to auto renew, we began to look at the first-year member experience. We know that almost 50% of first-year members choose not to renew. We have redirected a large portion of our agency resources to building out a first-year



member journey that will include a new welcome kit, frequent communications, and other offerings to help with member satisfaction. We expect this work to be completed later this year and launch in early 2023.

Launch Be The One Campaign: We started promoting BeTheOne.org in April with the goal of simply getting people's attention about the need to save one veteran. The landing page also has an option to sign up for future notifications about campaign updates. The most prominent marketing has been through our INDYCAR assets, which are explained later in this update. Additionally, at the National Convention, subject matter experts will participate in a panel discussion on the topic, talking points will be distributed during several events and meetings, and merchandise will be available through Emblem Sales. The next step is to build a cross-functional working group to determine ways we can grow the initiative beyond messaging/marketing with a focus on destigmatizing veterans asking for help and educating our membership about resources available to them at a state and local level.

**BE
=THE=
ONE**

Grow corporate alliance by \$2.5M: We have commitments for 64% of this goal and have several large companies in the pipeline. Corporate partnership discussions take many months, but we are hopeful that we can close a few of the larger opportunities before the end of the year. It is worth noting that our trial promotion with Hotel Tango far exceeded their expectations. According to Hotel Tango leaders, it was the highest grossing promotion since they formed the company. We are waiting for the final donation total but expect it to be around \$30k, which is a positive number for a brief regional promotion. Most importantly, they would like to start conversations about a larger partnership with us in the future. We believe this will serve as a strong case study for larger brands.

Restructure Marketing Department & Agencies: Hiring marketing staff has taken much longer than anticipated. We have only successfully filled 1 of the 5 approved open headcount. As such, we have not been able to scale back on our agency support as quickly as planned. We were able to reduce some of the Moore Group retainer for Q3 & Q4 but believe we can scale back even more after we have a full team in place. Most importantly, Moore Group is working on a completely new scope and contract structure to serve our needs more efficiently for next year and beyond.

Maximize & Localize INDYCAR Official Status: Our new Official partnership with INDYCAR allowed for us to activate in the midway of each race without paying track fees. This season our mobile marketing truck has been on site in 8 different states and open a total of 34 event days. In that time, we have gained 180 new members (avg. 6 per day) representing 29 different Departments. We have also captured more than 1,000 email addresses from people wanting to learn more. Also, a Veteran Service Officer is now attending each event; we will start to track how many veterans receive on-site assistance. The INDYCAR Official partnership runs through the 2024 race season, and the Chip Ganassi Racing partnership is up for renewal at the end of this season. We have had many productive conversations with CGR and are close to finalizing a recommended approach for the future. At October meetings, we plan to present this group with the detailed results of this year's activation plus the recommended plan for renewal.

Increase Direct Mail Fundraising 4X: During the 2021 fall business meetings, leadership approved a strategic plan to invest heavily over 6 years (2022-2027) to primarily increase our active donor file. The goal is to grow from 400k to ~1.9M active donors by the end of year 6. This larger active donor file could lead to more than \$68M in annual gross revenue vs. the 2021 number of \$16M in annual gross revenue. We are just beginning this 6-year plan, but we are already noticing some headwinds, including the economic climate, postal service delays, supply chain delays/extended production timelines and

postage increases. Despite less than expected gross revenue at this point, the average gift is better than expected and new donors have already exceeded all of 2021.

This is a long-term commitment to effectively grow the donor file to maximize future revenues, and we recommend we stay committed to growing our donor file. However, it is critical that we be good stewards of the investment and monitor performance frequently and course correct as needed. To maximize net revenue in the second half of the year, we will:

- Reduce acquisition mailings by AT LEAST 50% for the second part of 2022
- Shift our active donor campaigns to focus on the newest members of our active file
- Focus on higher average gift instead of higher response rate
- Test new paper and envelope sizes (packages) for cost savings
- Adjust creative and messaging to emphasize the impact their donation has on helping veterans versus our current patriotic and community service themes.

With these adjustments, we expect year-end gross revenue of \$17M (vs. \$33M) and year-end cash (after expenses & deferrals) of \$1.7M (vs. \$4.7M)

EMBLEM COMMITTEE

Robert "Bob" K. Burke, Massachusetts, Chairman
Mitchell E. Reed, Indiana (SAL), 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 2021 and for the first six months of 2022.

January 1 to December 31, 2021

(12 months)

Gross Sales	\$12,277,595
Cost of Goods Sold	6,496,795
Overhead	4,189,960
Operating Profit	\$1,590,840

Total number of 2021 orders processed was 106,300.

January 1 to June 30, 2022

(6 months)

Gross Sales	\$7,793,783
Cost of Goods Sold	4,418,692
Overhead	2,106,729
Operating Profit	\$1,268,361

Total orders processed for first 6 months of 2022 was 63,964.

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

David F. Wallace, Virginia, Chairman

R. Jeffrey Stoffer, Montana (SAL), Director

Henry Howard, Indiana, Deputy Director

The American Legion Media & Communications Commission oversees the majority of print and digital media products and services delivered from National Headquarters, including the monthly magazine, website, podcast, social media channels, e-newsletters, documents, physical displays and more. The commission also supervises portions of the organization's media outreach program, including news releases, press conferences, speeches, appearances in external media and more. Division staff members are also called upon to assist leadership in specific special projects.

In addition to fulfilling obligations for dozens of print and digital media products as well as media queries, Media & Communications staff members are called upon by the commission to promote initiatives of the national commander, volunteer leadership, American Legion departments and other national headquarters areas. Resolutions passed by the American Legion's National Executive Committee and National Convention are also converted into media elements to inform the organization's various audiences. The Media & Communications Commission also supports and helps coordinate marketing initiatives, charitable giving outreach 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 about 1.6 million households and a monthly readership exceeding 3 million, *The American Legion Magazine* ranks No. 1 in readership frequency, according to independent 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 program draws most of its revenue from advertising sales into the magazine while additional revenue comes from the website, e-newsletters, the monthly *Dispatch* leadership publication and other media products. A \$3 per-member allocation also offsets a portion of the magazine's production and distribution.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of effects have presented challenges for *The American Legion Magazine* in particular, along with opportunities to grow in other media developments. Supply-chain breakdowns have affected the magazine's production costs and shifted the advertising mix. The cost of paper for the magazine has risen by 30% over the last year, and the cost of postage has increased 18%. Also, many advertisers that had previously marketed mail-order products have drawn back since the pandemic began, largely due to inability to fulfill orders, caused by labor shortages and supply-chain breakdowns. The magazine, the website, social media channels and other platforms, meanwhile, have continued to deliver the message of the organization's advocacy, youth support, community service and patriotic activities and more through the pandemic and economic uncertainty of the time.

The American Legion Media & Communications Commission's primary responsibilities 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. Additionally, the division fulfills editing and design needs of more than 200 brochures and documents.
- **Web.** The American Legion national website at www.legion.org is the nation's most-visited veterans service organization website and serves as a gateway to

virtually all American Legion media products and channels, receiving more than 1.5 million page views per month, and growing. The website offers news, videos and photography; entry points for transactional engagement through donations, membership and merchandising; entrance to special-interest microsites such as Legiontown USA, where veterans and family members are invited to create and share their own content; and the American Legion Basic Training module. Legion.org is also the gateway to the organization's interactive and transactional platform supporting American Legion Baseball. The American Legion's video portfolio, called LegionTV, houses the organization's current video content in one microsite.

- **E-mail.** The commission oversees delivery of a portfolio of popular e-newsletters, led by the weekly American Legion Online Update, which reaches nearly 800,000 subscribers every Thursday with links to the top stories of the week on the Legion.org platform. In 2022, the national e-newsletter frequency increased, adding a Monday Briefing (nearly 770,000 distribution) and a Wednesday Briefing (more than 790,000 distribution). The increased frequency has improved open rates, click-through rates and website visitation, all of which exceed industry standards. Other e-newsletters include Dispatch, Flag Alerts, The American Legion Riders, The American Legion Baseball Dugout and Tango Alpha Lima.
- **Social.** The American Legion has a fast-growing network of social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram. The American Legion's Facebook community is a little over 173,000 followers, and the national Twitter following has more than 114,000 followers. The Legion's Instagram following has grown to more than 15,000, and LinkedIn followers number more than 34,000.
- **Podcast.** The American Legion's Tango Alpha Lima podcast surged in popularity in August and September 2021 through a special series of firsthand accounts from the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath. Back-to-back record-breaking download months in August and September led to a total of more than 100,000 downloads by January 2022. The podcast features hosts who are American Legion members and post 9/11 veterans. Weekly episodes typically alternate between a roundtable discussion covering issues of interest to the military community by the co-hosts to interviews with featured guests, along with scheduled special episodes addressing timely topics, such as career transitions or veteran suicide prevention.
- **Smartphone apps:** The American Legion Media & Communications Division has produced and developed a portfolio of smartphone mobile apps, including a general American Legion app introduced in 2014 that has generated more than 66,000 downloads; an American Legion World Series app, which has been downloaded more than 15,000 times; along with an annual National Convention app and a Sons of The American Legion app.
- **Media outreach.** The commission oversees Media & Communications staff support for promoting the organization's programs, messages and priorities to outside media and key stakeholders. This includes the writing, editing 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 measurement.
- **Training:** Staff members provide media training to volunteer leadership as well as post members in support of the American Legion Media Alliance (TALMA). Each year, the national volunteer leadership team is also briefed on media engagement. The media team also conducts regular training sessions and

workshops. The commission chairman also appoints three members of the commission or council to guide TALMA members and programs so they can efficiently and effectively promote the Legion in their communities. Membership in TALMA now exceeds 300.

- **Supporting posts, departments:** The commission directs staff members to work with American Legion departments and posts to promote various events, especially those that connect with a national priority, such as veteran suicide prevention. For example, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, the commission reworked the Buddy Check kit to make it relevant and timely for the circumstances at hand. American Legion posts embraced the change and used the kit as a resource to reach out to veterans in need in their communities. Other media kits, resource information, videos, posters, flyers, press releases and additional materials have been designed and distributed for departments, districts and posts to use in order to generate awareness of programs like the American Legion Legacy Scholarship.
- **Physical.** The American Legion Media & Communications Commission directs staff to produce 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.

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
Steven A. Brennan, Maryland, Chairman
Mario Marquez, Philippines, Director

From October of 2021 through September of 2022, the National Security Commission, its seven Committees and Council participated in a myriad of activities involving defense, foreign relations, homeland security and military quality of life-related matters. Focusing on the American Legion's priorities, the National Security Commission continues to improve and expand its influence across a multitude of portfolios that contribute to America maintaining a strong national security posture.

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 6-7, 2021

The National Security Commission (and our seven committees) continued reviewing all active resolutions from 1941 until 2021 and are pleased to report we submitted a resolution to rescind another 37 resolutions that are either superseded, accomplished or obsolete. This totals 136 resolutions this year the NEC rescinded – allowing us to focus on current and pertinent resolutions. The follow-on goal is to accomplish what these resolutions specify – and to work on new resolutions to better align with our ever-changing National Security environment.

National Security Chairman (Brennan) met with Committee Chairmen on Thursday September 16th and Thursday September 30th, 2021, via teleconference, for the purpose

of considering those matters that had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a range of other current matters.

Reviewed were four (4) resolutions: Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness; Support Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and the Hatch Act of 1939; Support for First Responders and Law Enforcement Agencies; and Rescinding 37 resolutions. Three (3) of these were submitted to the Resolution Subcommittee of the NEC for consideration. One (1) was added to Addendum A as Receive and Record. Chairman Brennan is coordinating with the specific Department that wrote the resolution we listed as Receive and Record – to assist in writing a resolution that is not already covered by current resolutions.

Over the next few months, the Commission (specifically the National Security Division in the Washington DC Office) will work with Departments on their nominating packets for the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award and the National Fire Fighter of the Year Award; deadline is February 1st (so the Law-and-Order Committee can review packets at the Washington Conference). The first week of January – the Division will send information on the Spirit of Service Award to all branches of our Armed Forces (to include our newest service – the Space Force) with a deadline from the services to our Commission by June 1st.

POW/MIA UPDATE

Total funding of the 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 to end their mission and return stateside short of mission dates. Mission planning is impacted as well. The problematic mountains of Vietnam can only be excavated during the warm months, and without guaranteed funding, opportunities may be missed. Since 2019, the DPAA has not been successful in its talks with North Korea and the extraction of our missing in action service members. Up until that time they had made more recoveries than previously ever before in recent history.

Unaccounted for from past conflicts:

WWII	Korean War	Vietnam War	Cold War	Iraq & Other Conflicts
72,399	7,555	1584	126	6

This concludes the American Legion National Security Commission's report to the National Executive Committee. We would like to thank National Commander Paul Dillard, our NEC Liaison Committee, and the distinguished members of the NEC for their continuing support for Commission.

ADVANCE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION TO THE

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARCH 5, 2022

Steven A. Brennan (Maryland), Chairman

The National Security Commission (including our seven committees and council) convened via Zoom Webinar on March 5, 2022, during the 62nd Annual Washington Conference. National Security Commission Chairman Steven Brennan of Maryland opened by introducing and thanking the various Chairmen of the National Security Committees and Division staff. Chairman Brennan discussed the American Legion's National Security-related legislative agenda for the second half of the 117th Congress. Agenda items included: military quality of life; addressing the forever wars and restoring Congressional war powers; citizenship for military service; and paying the Coast Guard

during government shutdowns. Chairman Brennan commended the Commission's work over the past year, which included the NEC rescinding 120 resolutions and sending a resolution on Ukraine to the NEC that was approved unanimously. Additionally, Chairman Brennan briefed the Commission on recommendations given to National Leadership for improving the National Security Commission and Division.

Chairman Brennan explained that the focus of our commission meeting, as part of the Washington Conference, would be a review of the American Legion's posture and official policy on Illegal Immigration and to update the Commission on related matters. Chairman Brennan stressed our Commission is responsible for Illegal Immigration, whereas the Americanism Commission is responsible for Legal Immigration. The program proceeded as follows:

Morning:

- Opening remarks and roll call (virtual)
- Chief Alfredo Lozano, Acting Deputy Chief, U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Daniel Bible, Acting Deputy Executive Associate Director Enforcement and Removal, U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE)
- Jessica M. Vaughan, Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)

Afternoon:

- Chairman Brennan led a discussion on Illegal Immigration.
- The Commission reviewed nine existing resolutions related to illegal immigration and citizenship for military service.
- Business for the good of The American Legion

The Chairman thanked the more than 224 Legionnaires for attending the Washington Conference and discussed upcoming Commission activities that were scheduled prior to the Spring NEC meetings.

I. Chief Alfredo Lozano, Acting Deputy Chief, U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

The current situation at the United States' southwest border is unprecedented. Over 800,000 migrants have been encountered at the border during this fiscal year. U.S. CBP encounters around 8,000 individuals every week. Seventy-five percent of the migrants encountered are single adults, the demographic that poses the greatest threat to border patrol agents and the security of the U.S. The other 25% are families or unaccompanied children, with approximately 400 unaccompanied children being encountered every day.

CBP agents oversee the apprehension of individuals who attempt to cross the border, vetting them for entry and providing food, medical attention, and also may include detention. Duties related to patrolling and securing our borders require a significant number of personnel to accomplish it in a competent manner. Still, CBP only has around 19,000 agents working along a 2,000-mile border. To complicate matters, CBP Agents process the mass number of migrants while also trying to prevent the trafficking of drugs, weapons, money, and people into and out of the United States. The U.S. CBP needs more personnel, facilities, technology, and resources to deal with its assigned mission and associated responsibilities effectively.

II. Daniel Bible, Acting Deputy Executive Associate Director Enforcement and Removal, U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE)

The Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Branch of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) works to identify, arrest, detain, and remove non-citizens who threaten national security, public safety, and border security. Currently, ICE has 25 domestic field offices overseeing more than 200 domestic locations employing 8,000 law enforcement and non-law enforcement personnel. ERO uses intelligence-driven leads to identify non-citizen targets, and they work with CBP and local and state law enforcement agencies to identify individuals. When working with local law enforcement, ERO will issue

detainers to gain custody of non-citizens who have been arrested by local law enforcement. This is the safest and easiest way for ERO to bring individuals into their custody. Sanctuary cities do not comply with detainer requests thereby forcing ERO to use more resources to arrest and detain non-citizens.

ERO will also arrest non-citizens, with 90% of those arrested having previous criminal convictions or pending criminal charges. ERO primarily conducts administrative arrests of non-citizens who it has probable cause to believe are removable from the U.S. Once individuals have been arrested, they are then detained at ICE facilities. ERO only detains individuals for processing and removal. Because of limited resources, ERO cannot detain everyone they have arrested, so alternatives to detention are used; this includes telephonic reporting and GPS monitoring. Once non-citizens are issued a final removal order, ICE works with their home country and the State Department to organize removal proceedings. In FY 2020, 185,884 individuals were removed from the U.S.

Mr. Bible explained that USCIS, ICE, and CBP are working to identify and halt removal proceedings for those veterans and their family members facing removal.

III. Jessica M. Vaughan, Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)

According to CIS, the federal government needs to do a better job of enforcing current immigration laws to prevent mass influxes of illegal immigrants. Many migrants CBP encounters at the border have criminal records or backgrounds. Still, CBP does not have enough resources to screen everyone attempting to enter the country legally at the Ports of Entry. There has also been an increase in minors entering into indentured labor, people who are victims of human trafficking. Even with increases in illegal immigration, there has been a decrease in deportations under the current administration, especially deporting those that overstayed their visa.

To fix the illegal immigration problem in the U.S., Congress, who has the authority to create immigration laws and decide who gets to come into the country, needs to fix the asylum system, strengthen visa security and the visa vetting process, and have better management of visa programs. The federal government also needs to reform interior enforcement of illegal immigration to deport criminals; this includes penalizing sanctuary cities for not cooperating with ICE and federal law enforcement. Ms. Vaughan stated that if the federal government does decide to enact an amnesty program, they should first fix the problems with border security and immigration enforcement so that the amnesty program does not incentivize more migrants to enter the country illegally. Those amnesty programs should also only be given to specific subgroups of people, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

IV. Illegal Immigration and Citizenship for Military Service Resolutions Review & Discussion

The National Security Commission reviewed and unanimously agreed to continue to support the following resolutions as written: Resolution No. 19: Oppose Deportation of Non-Citizen Immigrant Veterans, Resolution No. 20: Oppose Deportation of Immediate Family Members of Non-Citizen Immigrant Veterans, Resolution No. 20: Fully Enforce Immigration Laws, Resolution No. 27: Sanctuary Cities, Resolution No. 29: Commend Border Patrol, Resolution 10: Expedited Citizenship Applications for Deported Veterans, and Resolution No. 15: Expedited Citizenship Through Military Service.

Separately, the Commission voted to rescind Resolution No. 24: Illegal Immigration Policy and Resolution No. 38: Support the Pentagon Program to Recruit Temporary, Legal Immigrants in the U.S.

Closing Remarks:

National Security Commission Chairman thanked the distinguished guests for their pertinent and interesting information – and reminded Commission members to push this information down to their departments.

Emergency National Security Commission Meeting

On February 25, 2022, at 2:00 p.m., the National Security Commission virtually convened for an emergency meeting to review, discuss, and vote on Resolution No.1: Statement on Ukraine, submitted by the Department of North Carolina - Register Resolution No. 2816 (N.C.) DEC supported a peaceful resolution in Ukraine in conjunction with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russian Federation. The Commission unanimously recommended the NEC approve this resolution (with a quorum of 26 eligible voting commission members present virtually). Having the approval of the National Security Commission, it was forwarded and approved by the National Executive Committee on March 1, 2022.

Update on the Regional and National Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards

On March 10th, 2022, at 3:00 p.m., the Law and Order & Homeland Security Committee virtually convened to vote on the annual Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards, where it selected the regional winners. The Committee, chaired by Chairman George Wehrli (FL), selected five recipients for each category as follows:

Regional Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Winners for 2022:

- New England Region - Adam Anderson of New Hampshire
- Southern Region - Jesse Madsen of Florida
- Central Region - David Hines of Virginia
- Western Region - Michael Day of Oregon
- Midwest Region - Garrett Mastin of South Dakota

Regional Firefighter of the Year Winners for 2022:

- New England – Herb Slack of Pennsylvania
- Southern Region - Robert Jordan of Tennessee
- Central Region - Richard Duncan of Indiana
- Western Region - Bert Wellington of Oregon
- Midwest Region - Ryan Winkler of Iowa

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY 4-5, 2022

The 62nd Annual Washington Conference was addressed in our Advanced Report (along with announcing the five Regional Law Enforcement Officers of the Year and the five Regional Firefighters of the Year). Upon completion of the Washington Conference, the National Security Commission, its seven committees and council continued to keep abreast of several matters in the national security portfolio. The National Security Commission met by conference call on Thursday, April 13th to review new resolutions and met again by conference call on April 18th to discuss and vote on five new resolutions, and rescind two obsolete resolutions.

Presiding both meetings was Chairman Steven Brennan (MD)

Attendees include:

Vice-Chairman: Kenneth Trumbull (IL)

Present Committee Chairmen included: Rick Oertel (VA), Thomas Schottenbauer (MN), William Flanagan (IL), George Wehrli (FL), Doug Haggan (FR), and 17 Commission members.

RESOLUTIONS

Commission Chairman Steven A. Brennan (MD) led a discussion on the following resolutions to make recommendations to Spring 2022 National Executive Committee:

Title: Filling of Vacant Ambassadorships

Origin: National Security Commission

National Security Commission Recommendation: The Commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Title: Revocation of U.S. Military Awards to Russian Military Personnel

Origin: National Security Commission

National Security Commission Recommendation: The Commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Title: Immigration Reform

Origin: National Security Commission

National Security Commission Recommendation: The Commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Title: Support Availability of TRICARE Prime to all Eligible Veterans Residing in All United States Territories

Origin: Register Resolution No. 2819 (PR) DEC

National Security Commission Recommendation: The Commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Title: Support the Establishment of 24-Hour Child Development Centers on all Military Installations

Origin: Register Resolution No. 2820 (FR) DEC

National Security Commission Recommendation: The Commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Key Commission Updates:

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

On the 21st and 25th of April, The National Security Division hosted two roundtable sessions aimed at gathering updated information involving current military quality of life matters. Attendees for the round table included military spouses, veterans who retired from the military in the past 24 months, and people working in the military service organization community. Director Marquez led the discussion with three questions as the focus:

1. What is the military doing well in how they maintain or improve quality of life?
2. What issues are considered major degraders to quality of life for service members and their families?
3. What can The American Legion do to facilitate improved quality of life conditions for active-duty service members and their families?

Several problem areas identified during the round table and included:

- Transition assistance programs (information overload, received too close to be exiting the military)
- Lack of overseas-focused transition assistance programs (families exiting from overseas)
- Lack of adequate transition assistance programs for spouses and children

- Lack of available and/or affordable childcare
- Lack of spouse employment assistance programs
- Significant issues with privatized housing continue to be a problem
- Lack of DoD contact with recently retired/departed servicemembers
- Service members married to foreign spouses continue to have problems with immigration policies
- Access to VA-granted medical benefits at overseas locations continues to be difficult or unavailable
- Overseas Cost of Living Allowances are insufficient to offset expenses
- Degradation of infrastructure continues to be a safety issue and health hazard at many installations

The National Security Commission and Division will continue research to capture the impact that quality of life issues have on the readiness and combat effectiveness of the American Military. National Security staff will continue building the military quality of life portfolio with the intent of testifying on appropriate matters when the opportunity arises.

IMMIGRATION POLICY REFORM REVIEW

The American Legion National Security Commission continued its work on reviewing immigration policy issues. Due to their unavailability during the Washington Conference discussions on illegal immigration-related policy, a follow-on Commission meeting was held on March 18, 2022, with the purpose of hosting a panel of Immigration Experts. The panel included:

- Mr. Alex Nowrasteh, Director of Economic and Social Policy Studies CATO Institute

(His presentation was focused on immigration as it relates to NS)

- Ms. Theresa Brown, Director of Immigration and Cross Border Policy Bipartisan Policy Center

On Thursday, April 7, 2022, the National Security Commission met to review recommended resolutions and to discuss and make final edits for the new recommended Immigration Reform Policy Resolution.

On Wednesday, April 13, 2022, the National Security Commission met to discuss and vote on several resolutions. Specifically, the Replacement Resolution titled “Immigration Reform” (replacement for Resolution No. 24, 2016, Illegal Immigration Policy) passed by the commission vote unanimously with a recommendation for approval by the NEC.

Since Washington Conference, Chairman Brennan also engaged in several actions in support of the Immigration Policy reform to include:

- Spoke with Americanism Commission Chairman Anderson involving Americanism resolutions related to legal immigration (as they conflict or apply to the issue of illegal Immigration).
- Engaged with American Legion members and officials in various southern border states concerning their experiences on the border.
- Chairman Brennan met with various experts regarding legal specifics of sanctuary cities as they apply to the issue of illegal Immigration.
- Chairman Brennan met with a variety of Legionnaires regarding immigration reform topics and issues.
- National Security Division staff conducted follow-up discussions and fact-checking with the think tanks who briefed during the commission meetings.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

One of the essential parts of the work of the National Security Division is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony, bill analysis, and letters of support on issues of national security and the quality of life of service members. The following is a synopsis of the congressional hearings and correspondence:

- On March 29th, Director Marquez testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability & Memorials Affairs with a focus on Citizenship for Honorable Service and Increasing Accessibility, Automation, and Financial Services for veterans. Through his testimony, Director Marquez stressed the importance of fixing a broken citizenship and naturalization process for members of the military, veterans and their families. Additionally, he pressed for implementation of a special military family immigration committee that could advocate on behalf of veterans and their families to help reduce or prevent future deportations.

The National Security Commission provided two letters of support:

1. The Honorable Jack Reed, Chairman and The Honorable Adam Smith in appreciation to the work of the Senate and House Armed Service Committee in its continued efforts to maintain a strong national defense as it begins consideration of the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA, we take this opportunity to respectfully request the inclusion of S.1040/H.R.5562, Expedited Citizenship for Military Service, Afghan Adjustment Act, S.J. Res.10/H.R.3261, and Justice For Servicemembers Act.
2. The Honorable Darrell Issa, we are pleased to express support of H.R. 5909, which would authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to Captain E. Royce William, USN (Ret) for acts of valor during the Korean War.

Completed Comprehensive Bill Analysis: October 2021 – August 2022	
No.	Title
H.R. 467	Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act
S. 4049	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021
H.R. 567	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2021
H.R. 923	Georgia Support Act
H.R. 1182	Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 1182	Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 1119	Stopping Chinese Communist Involvement in the Power Grid Act
H.R. 1186	Supply Chain Security and Pharmaceutical Authentication Act of 2021
H.J. Res. 29	War Power Amendment of 2021
S. 1147	Retired Pay Restoration Act
H.R. 3261	To Repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution
S.J. Res. 10	A Joint Resolution to Repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq
H.R. 4382	Repatriate Our Patriots Act (ROPA)
S. 1488	Military hunger Prevention Act
H.R. 2326	Veterans Cyber Risk Awareness Act
H.R. 2339	Military Hunger Prevention Act
S.J. Res. XXX	National Security Powers Act of 2021
S. 1970	Clean Water for Military Families Act
H.R. XXX	Afghan Adjustment Act
H.R. 6876	Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022
H.R. 1938	National Guard Housing Equity Act
H.R. 5748	Childcare Expansion for Military Families Act of 2021
H.R. 8081	Wounded Warrior Bill of rights Act
S. 4561	Agreement to conduct a study and produce a report on barriers to home ownership for members of the Armed Forces
H.R. 475	Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021

S. 4360	Military Housing Affordability Act of 2021
S. 2922	Afghanistan War Commission Act of 2021
S. 1474	Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2019
	Save our Servicemembers Act of 2021

Resolutions Approved: October 2021 – August 2022	
Res. No.	Title
3	Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness
4	Support Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and the Hatch Act of 1939
1	Statement on Ukraine
23	Immigration Reform
27	Support Establishment of 24-Hour Child Development Centers on all Military Installations
25	Filling of Vacant U.S Ambassadorships
26	Support Availability of TRICARE Prime to all Eligible Veterans Residing in all United States Territories
23	Implementing an Appeals Process for Medical Malpractice Claims
13	Repeal the Rescission Act of 1946
51	Fully Fund the International Affairs Budget
39	Prohibit Import of Petroleum Products from Iran
65	All Americans to be Registered for Selective service
44	Oppose Government Benefits for Illegal Immigrants
52	National Guard Operating Funds Reimbursement
4	Energy Independence

National Security Summit: November 5-6, 2021

The Chairman of the National Security Commission and the seven subcommittee Chairmen participated in a National Security Summit. The Chairmen met with the Executive Director of Government Affairs, the Legislative Director, and National Security Division staff on November 5-6, 2021, to conduct an assessment of how the American Legion's National Security portfolio and programs were performing. The summit was conducted in four phases:

- Phase 1: Assessment of Staff's roles and responsibilities per the outline of authorization.
- Phase 2: Discussion and assessment of the Commission and Committee's roles
- Phase 3: Legislative briefing regarding national security matters in Congress and the White House
- Phase 4: Performance assessment of the Commission and Committee's performance as compared to the outline of Authorization

Recommendations from the summit body included:

- Ensure key relations with leaders in the departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security are maintained.
- Increase partnerships with key think-tanks and other organizations that contribute to the American Legion's advocacy efforts.
- Continue to engage consultants who are current in all matters of national security.
- Increase engagement with members of the House and Senate Armed Forces Committees and Subcommittees
- Continue to provide testimony on important national security matters for the American Legion.

- Bring on additional staff to support the increase in national security advocacy efforts.
- Develop a quality-of-life assessment program in partnership with the Department of Defense that will help increase awareness and advocacy for issues that impact servicemembers and military families.

Veterans Naturalization Panel (Webinar): August 19, 2022

On August 19, 2022, National Security Director Mario Marquez participated in an online seminar titled “Veterans Naturalization Panel” to discuss the difficulties faced by active-duty service members and veterans as they go through the naturalization process. Other panelists included Saif Khan, Special Attorney, Office of General Counsel for Veterans Affairs and Nicqelle Fleming, Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Veterans Consortium who managed the Veterans Naturalization Assistance Program. The online seminar was attended by 110 people from various professions and resulted in positive feedback from many of the participants. The Webinar was shared with members of Congress and other pertinent organizations involved with citizenship and naturalization issues.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION COMMISSION

Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman

Katie Purswell, Maryland, 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, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Resolutions

The 102nd Annual National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 meetings of the National Executive Committee in Indianapolis, Indiana, approved positions expressed in resolutions submitted to those bodies through the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, and the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, respectively. The approved resolutions are as follows:

2021 National Convention

Phoenix, Arizona

August 31, September 1, 2, 2021

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
8	Child Care at Vet Centers	CA
20	Veterans Health Administration Include Medical Emergency Transportation to the Episode of Care	MN
21	Extend the Presumptive Period For Service Connection For Gulf War Veterans with Undiagnosed Illnesses	MN
22	Department of Veterans Affairs Update Locator Tool to Include In-Network Community Emergency Care Providers	MN
24	Awarding the Purple Heart for Traumatic Brain Injury	NY
25	Reconciliation of Traumatic Memories Protocol for Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	NY
31	Expansion of the Central Missouri National Cemetery	MO

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
34	Department of Veterans Affairs Generate Reminder Letters for Expiring Claims Submissions	IL
36	Prevent Gold Star Spouses Loss of Benefits	IL
38	Predatory Claims Companies	VA&R

2021 National Executive Committee Meeting
Indianapolis, Indiana
October 6-7, 2021

Resolution Number	Title	Origin
10	Care for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, + (LGBTQ+) Veteran Community	VA&R
11	Automatic Enrollment into Veterans Health Care System	VA&R
12	Appointment of Judges with Veterans Law Expertise to the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Court	VA&R
13	Standards and Training for Community Care Providers	VA&R
14	Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Programs	VA&R
15	Department of Veterans Affairs Prosthetic Program	VA&R
16	Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protections	VA&R
17	Continuum of Care and Mental Health Supports	VA&R
18	Comprehensive Supports for Caregiver Support Program	VA&R

Commission/Committee Meetings

VA&R Commission Meetings

The VA&R Commission met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 27, 2021, during the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The second meeting took place virtually in conjunction with the 62nd Annual Washington Conference on March 5th, 2022.

The first meeting was held in the Phoenix Convention Center, South Building, Ballroom on Saturday, August 28, 2021. The following officials addressed the Commission's morning session: Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, Assistant Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Michael J. Frueh, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Matthew T. Quinn, Major General, USA, Retired, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The second meeting was held virtually on Monday, March 5, 2022. The following officials addressed the Commission: The Honorable Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Michael Frueh, VA's

Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, and The Honorable Matthew Quinn, VA's Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Department of Veterans Affairs.

Health Administration Committee Meetings

Members of the Health Administration Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 28, 2021, during the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the virtual 62nd Annual Washington Conference on March 5, 2022.

The first annual meeting was held in the Phoenix Convention Center, South Building, room 160-167 on Saturday August 28, 2021. The following official addressed the Committee: Dr. Ronald Rutherford, Lead for Whole Health Outreach, Veteran Affairs Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, Department of Veteran Affairs.

The second annual meeting was held virtually, hosted by the American Legion Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, March 5, 2022 via Zoom platform. The following officials addressed the Committee: Mr. Daniel Abrahamson & Mr. Kaufman, Mobile Prosthetics and Orthotics Care unit, Veteran Affairs Office of Rural Health, Department of Veteran Affairs.

National Cemetery Committee Meetings

Members of the National Cemetery Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 28, 2021, during the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 62nd Annual Washington Conference on March 5, 2022.

The first meeting was held in the Phoenix Convention Center, South Building, 150-159, on Saturday, August 28, 2021. Mr. Glenn Powers, the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, addressed the committee.

The second meeting was held virtually, via Zoom teleconferencing, on Saturday, March 5, 2022. The following officials addressed the Committee: Mr. James LaPaglia, Digital Services Chief, National Cemetery Administration, and Mr. Gerardo Avila, Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

TBI/PTSD/Suicide Prevention Committee Meetings

Members of the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)/Suicide Prevention Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held on August 27, 2021, during the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the virtual 62nd Annual Washington Conference on March 5, 2022.

The first annual meeting was held in the Phoenix Convention Center, North Building, Second Floor, room 225 on Friday, August 27, 2021. The following official addressed the Committee: Dr. David Rudd, President of the University of Memphis, Distinguished University Professor of Psychology; Dean Kessel, Chief Marketing Officer, The American Legion; Dr. Jeanne Stellman, Professor Emerita and Special Lecturer, Department of Health Policy & Management, School of Public Health, Columbia University.

The second annual meeting was held virtually, hosted by the American Legion Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, March 5, 2022. The following officials addressed the Committee: Scott Wert, Military Program Manager, Concussion Legacy Foundation; Dr. Christopher Nowinski, Co-Founder, and Chief Executive Officer, Concussion Legacy Foundation.

Veterans Benefits Committee Meetings

Members of the Veterans Benefits Committee met twice during this program year. The first meeting was held in August 2021 during the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The second meeting took place in conjunction with the 62nd Annual Washington Conference in March 2022.

The first annual meeting was held in the Phoenix Convention Center, South Building, Ballroom on Saturday, August 28. The guest speaker was Ms. Julie Lawrence, chief of operations for the Treasury, Education and External Relations Division at VA's Debt Management Center. She provided detailed information on the resumption in October of VA-related debt collection from veterans, which had been suspended in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic.

The second annual meeting was held virtually as part of this year's Washington Conference on March 5. The guest speaker was Mr. Paul Sullivan, director of veterans outreach for the law firm Bergmann & Moore, LLC. He explained to committee members the rising threat of predatory claims companies to our country's veteran's community and provided updates on our semi-annual Department Service Officer School and a new Department Service Officer Symposium planned for October 2024.

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 presented annually to a department of The American Legion that excelled in the welfare and rehabilitation work for war veterans and their dependents. At the 102nd National Convention, in Phoenix, Arizona, the Department of Pennsylvania received the award for 2021.

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 awards presented by The American Legion. These awards recognize the contributions that VA health-care providers and physicians have made to the veterans they serve.

At the 2022 Washington Conference, Registered Nurse Kim Stewart of the Sebring, Florida, VA Community Based Outpatient Center and Dr. Joel N. Syvrud of the St. Cloud, Minnesota, VA Medical Center received these awards, respectively, for 2021.

VA Voluntary Service Award

National Executive Committee 2015, Resolution No. 21, *Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Award*, established the award presented by the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission. This award is presented annually to the outstanding volunteer hospital worker from the department of the National Commander at the Washington Conference. The in-person 2022 Washington Conference was cancelled by the National Commander due to COVID-19 considerations and the limited number of VA facilities that allowed volunteers to return to their sites. Therefore, no award was presented for 2021.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

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 and representatives
- Assisting with representation before Veterans Law Judges, Veterans Law Courts, and 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 burial benefits and services provided by VA's National Cemetery Administration
- On-site 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 veterans' law; attendance at professional briefings, seminars, workgroups, and similar types of sessions at both the national and local levels.

We conduct regular visits to Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities and Regional Offices to analyze their strengths and weaknesses. We also host two resident service officer training courses annually that teach and refresh a range of advanced skills for claims processors.

The Division director oversees and manages a contractual relationship with the law firm Bergmann & Moore, LLC, one of the nation's foremost authorities on veterans' law. 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.

Personnel and Organization

National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Director	1
Deputy Director for Claims Services	1
Deputy Director for Health Policy	1
Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist	2
TBI & PTSD Programs Coordinator	1
Veterans Benefits Coordinator	2
Health Policy Coordinator	3
Administrative Assistant	1
American Legion Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) Unit	
Team Leader	2
Team Trainer	4
Veterans Disability Claims Specialist	16
Administrative Staff	2

American Legion Pension Management Center

Team Leader	1
Veterans Benefits Specialist	2
Total VA&R Division Staff	39

Informational Services and Distribution

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 Saving Annual Report*
- *Agent Orange Benefits & Programs*
- *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 assist veterans, servicemembers, and their families on issues pertaining to the filing of disability and pension claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the appeal of denied claims to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), the Department of Defense (DoD) Medical Evaluation Process, military discharge upgrades and the correction of military records.

Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) Unit

Veterans Disability Claims Specialists represent veterans and surviving spouses before the BVA. They review VA electronic claims files, interview appellants in preparation for in-person or virtual Board hearings before veterans' law judges, write informal hearing presentations (IHPs), and act as counsel on behalf of appellants at their hearings.

During this program year, The American Legion's Board (BVA) Unit prepared more than 16,000 IHPs for a monthly average of about 1,365. In addition, Veterans Disability Claims Specialists assisted appellants with a total of 84 hearings. For the 12,424 appeals that received BVA dispositions, over 31 percent were granted, 46 percent were remanded to the agency of original jurisdiction for further development, and less than 18 percent were denied. For BVA appeals decided during the program year – that resulted in favorable decisions following our submission of IHPs – the efforts of our Board Unit helped in the granting of retroactive benefits that totaled nearly \$83,000,000.

As of June 30, 2022, there were 1,036 legacy cases and 778 AMA cases assigned to the Legion's Board Unit (20 claims specialists, 2 team leaders and 2 administrative staff).

The American Legion continues to find that some claims adjudicators at VA Regional Offices fail to develop veterans' claims adequately and deny them without good cause. We note that at BVA, lay evidence is routinely given appropriate consideration, often leading to a favorable decision. The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has held in several decisions that lay statements must be properly considered when determining service connection for injuries and illnesses.

However, many VA medical examiners and claims adjudicators fail to adequately consider lay evidence when rendering medical opinions or rating decisions. The lack of proper claim development and failure to give probative value to lay evidence results in unfair denials that must be addressed with appeals, thus extending the time veterans must wait before final decisions are made.

Through continuous professional training and thorough knowledge of VA laws and regulations, American Legion staff achieve more favorable outcomes in their advocacy efforts. The Legion's legal and training partner, Bergmann & Moore, LLC, provides critical training to new claims specialists so they may successfully represent appellants. Additionally, Bergmann & Moore's legal team provides unit and individual training that covers significant changes to federal law or regulations, and recent Court decisions that affect veterans' law as well as refresher training on key topics.

Memorial Affairs

Claims Services staff ensure that veterans and dependents are honored at their final resting places in VA national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, state, tribal or private cemeteries. They provide assistance on National Cemetery Administration (NCA) burial benefits, including headstones, markers, medallions, Presidential Memorial Certificates, military honors, burial flags, burial allowances and survivor benefits.

Discharge Upgrades 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 since then has represented veterans who petition them for relief.

Assistance is provided by representing applicants before such boards, educating veterans on their due process and how to apply, review and submit applications, and conducting outreach to veterans with "bad paper" discharges. The American Legion is the only major veterans service organization that still helps veterans with their applications for discharge upgrades.

Such applications involve a 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 decorations, requests for military personnel files and service medical records, and administrative corrections to official military records.

Claims Services has two Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialists (SVDCSs) in its Washington, D.C. office who help veterans with discharge upgrades, disability claims, appeals, and other matters related to veterans' benefits. From July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, these veterans' service officers helped 1,156 veterans or dependents with filing for VA benefits, including 825 with disability claims. The Legion also helped veterans with applying for burial benefits, GI Bill benefits and enrolling in VA healthcare.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many VA Regional Offices (VAROs) remained closed to the public through June 2022. As most of The American Legion's department service officers (DSOs) are co-located at VAROs, their offices were closed as well. Subsequently, many veterans who contacted our SVDCSs in Washington were calling from all parts of the country, seeking assistance when they were unable to reach their Legion DSOs.

Health Policy

The Health Policy staff ensures that VA remains the healthcare system of choice for veterans. The Health Policy portfolio includes: Hospitals, Clinics and Vet Centers, Caregivers, Telehealth Services, 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, 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 truly worth saving.

The following year, The American Legion passed a resolution making System Worth Saving (SWS) 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, its territories, and the Philippines.

The American Legion remains true to its original charter of 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 VA continues as an intact and properly funded entity to care for veterans and their families. The American Legion believes in the quality of care at VA facilities, and we stand behind our commitment to a "System Worth Saving."

Health Policy Coordinators conduct SWS site visits to VA medical centers managed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The purpose of SWS site visits is to identify best practices 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 via 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 VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) 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 veterans town hall meeting, a visit to the local VA medical center, and a meeting with the facility's executive leadership. At the end of each SWS site visit, a report is issued that is shared with the medical center, VA's secretary and under secretary of health, members of Congress and the President of the United States.

An SWS site visit usually lasts two and a half days, beginning with a veterans town hall meeting on the evening of the first day. The second and third days consist of visits to the local VA healthcare facility, and meetings with the executive leadership and departmental staff to discuss challenges and best practices.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued restrictions, the first SWS site visit since 2019 will be conducted on July 11-13th, 2022. Though COVID restrictions in VA

facilities continue to fluctuate, SWS site visits have resumed and will continue as long as permitted in regards to medical safety.

TBI and PTSD Programs

In 2019, 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 and PTSD. In order to reduce veterans' suicide, this committee seeks to influence legislation and operational policies that can facilitate quality healthcare for veterans -- regardless of their era of wartime service.

To stay informed on TBI, PTSD, and suicide prevention issues, the assigned Health Policy Analyst attended in person meetings, webinars, and round table discussions on improved and new research approaches, treatment protocols, and prevention programs for TBI, PTSD, and suicide prevention. Connections were made between The American Legion and other organizations specializing in brain donation, alternative medicine research, and mitigation programs surrounding veteran suicide and the effects on families.

Additionally, the TBI/PTSD/Suicide prevention staff is working to produce user friendly products such as a tri-fold pamphlet and other digital resources to increase the connection between veterans and mental health resources.

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 the past program year, Legionnaires volunteered at 195 VA facilities, which included VA medical centers, community clinics, Vet Centers, Fisher Houses, state Veteran's Homes and national cemeteries.

A total of 2,487 regularly scheduled volunteers contributed 297,631.50 hours, and 4,474 occasional visits contributed an additional 22,185.50 hours, for a grand total of 319,817 hours volunteered by Legionnaires – saving VA more than \$9.5 million in 2021.

Veterans Benefits

The Veterans Benefits staff improves the quality of veterans' lives by developing policy and activities relative to the VA's benefits programs, as well as providing input to VA's Debt Management Center, Pension Management Center, and the Life Insurance program.

During the program year, the Veterans Benefits team certified the applications of 450 Legion-accredited representatives and forwarded them to VA's Office of General Counsel for approval.

Regional Office Action Review (ROAR)

ROAR site visits were not scheduled during the program year because of the continuing pandemic, which included the spread of a new, more contagious variant: Omicron.

The original Omicron strain (BA.1) was first identified in Botswana and South Africa in late November 2021, and cases quickly began to surface and multiply in other countries. By December, Omicron was causing daily case numbers in the U.S. to skyrocket to over a million. However, plans are underway to resume the ROAR program this year, sometime after July 1.

Department Service Officers (DSO) School

Since 1985, The American Legion has authorized the VA&R Commission to conduct Department Service Officer (DSO) schools twice a year for accredited representatives of

The American Legion. This semi-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 dependents.

The purpose of the DSO school is to provide current information about changes in veterans law, VA regulations and VA adjudication policies. The DSO school enables American Legion service officers and other accredited representatives to improve their advocacy skills.

The program of instruction includes training on issues relating to claims processing, disability ratings, development of appeals, representing appellants at BVA hearings, and the interpretation and application of precedential 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 sessions of DSO School during this program year:

- September 7-24, 2021: An online DSO School was conducted that included lessons on 27 topics, plus a course evaluation and final exam. A total of 248 students were registered, with 205 completing the course successfully.
- March 7-27, 2022: A second online DSO School was conducted with a total of 225 students registering; 198 of them completed the course successfully.

Thus, a grand total of 473 Legion-accredited representatives registered for DSO School during the program year, with 403 successfully completing the course (85.2 percent).

Pension Management Center (PMC)

The American Legion's Pension Management Center processes adjustments of benefits for individuals in receipt of nonservice-connected disability pension, death pension and dependency indemnity compensation. Nonservice-connected pension is a need-based benefit available for "most at need" wartime service veterans and their dependents. The American Legion's Veterans Benefits Specialists are located in St. Paul, Minnesota and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 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 that supporting material is included, acting as the counsel and presenting verbal arguments on behalf of a claimant before VA, and preparing claimants for their hearings. This program year, the following activities were reported: 2,080 new pension claims and 191 appeals.

Debt Management Center (DMC)

The VA DMC assists veterans and dependents facing collection actions or garnishment of VA benefits for debts owed to the VA. Assistance is provided by acting as the point of contact between the beneficiary and DMC, submitting documentation to stop garnishment of funds, establishing payment plans when appropriate, requesting waivers of debt, reviewing all casework presented to DMC to ensure accuracy and completeness. The St. Paul office assisted in 665 cases where waiver grants were approved.

Restricted Access Claim Center (RACC)

Sensitive files belonging to current and former senior government officials, VA employees and Veterans Service Organization representatives are handled at the St. Paul Restricted Access Claim Center. This program year, 222 restricted access compensation claims were processed.

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, Pennsylvania. The American Legion's Veterans Benefits Specialist assigned there assists surviving beneficiaries to file

for disbursement of policy at the time of need and ensures that veterans are aware of eligibility windows for enrollment. This program year, the Legion assisted 1,669 insurance beneficiaries.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

James A. LaCoursiere, Connecticut, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., District of Columbia, 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, 2021 through June 30, 2022. 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 is chaired by James A. LaCoursiere (CT). The division consists of Director Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Employment & Transition Policy Associate, Quandrea Patterson, Employment & Education Policy Analyst, Jacob Brostuen, Employment & Education Policy Analyst, Matthew Brennan, Employment & Education Policy Analyst, Adam B. Treece, Employment & Education Policy Analyst, 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
- Employment Innovation Task Force Advisory Board
- Credentialing Executive Task Force Advisory Board
- Small Business Task Force Advisory Board
- Homeless Veteran Task Force Advisory Board

2021-2022 Meetings

During the period this report covers, the commission met for three regularly scheduled executive sessions. A list of those meetings follows:

- (1) The chairman of the commission addressed the National Executive Committee, held at The American National Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, and virtually on October 6-7, 2021. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, October 6-7, 2021.
- (2) At the 62nd Washington Conference, held virtually on March 5, 2022, commission members and guests met to hear the latest on subjects of concern to them.
- (3) The chairman of the commission met May 4-5, 2022, in the headquarters office of The American Legion, in Indianapolis, Indiana. A complete report of that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, May 2022.

Legislative Appearances

A vital part of the work of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony as well as letters of support 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 July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, on matters about the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission:

- On November 17, 2021, VE&E Staff signed on a joint letter of support for H.R. 2196 – Justice for Servicemembers Act, which aims to prohibit and nullify arbitration agreements made prior to disputes from preventing servicemembers and veterans from filing claims under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA); including joint, class action, or collective action contestations.
- On December 7, 2021, Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment & Education, testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding “Removing Barriers to Veteran Home Ownership”
- On January 19, 2022, VE&E Staff delivered a public comment before the Department of Education’s Higher Education Negotiated Rulemaking Institutional and Programmatic Eligibility Committee.
- On February 2, 2022, Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment & Education, testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Committee on Veteran Affairs, discussing the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Veterans Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) and Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP).
- On February 11, 2022, VE&E Staff met with staff from Congresswoman, Mazie Hirono’s office (D-HI) to provide an overview of the Vets First expansion to DoD proposal and requested the member's support upon further review.
- On March 8, 2022, VE&E Chairman LaCoursiere testified alongside National Commander Dillard regarding matters concerning Employment and Education.
- On March 30, 2022, VE&E Staff submitted a letter of support for H.R. 7074, Quality Education for Veterans Act of 2022. The legislation offers the opportunity to make critical improvements to education course approvals by requiring uniform applications from higher learning institutions and establishments. Additionally, the bill delineates notice requirements to educational institutions for risk-based and compliance surveys.
- On May 16, 2022, VE&E staff submitted a letter of support for H.R. 3469, Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021, a bill providing statutory authority for the Boots to Business Program, which provides entrepreneurship training to individuals including veterans and active members of the Armed Forces, to be administered by the Small Business Administration.
- On May 18, 2022, VE&E Staff submitted a statement for the record to the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding "Pending Legislation"
- On June 8, 2022, VE&E Staff attended a congressional hearing, “Military to Main Street: Serving Veteran Entrepreneurship,” held by the House Committee on Small Business.
- On June 14, 2022, VE&E Staff attended a congressional hearing, “Are Governmentwide Contracts Helping or Hurting Small Contractors,” held by the House Committee on Small Business
- On April 19, 2022, VE&E Staff met with the department of Education to brief members on updated information regarding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.
- On June 14, 2022, VE&E Staff signed on a joint letter of support for H.R. 2196 – Justice for Servicemembers Act, which aims to prohibit and nullify

arbitration agreements made prior to disputes from preventing servicemembers and veterans from filing claims under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA); including joint, class action, or collective action contestations.

- On July 20, 2022, Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment & Education, testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity's hearing to testify on student veteran related issues and the ongoing implementation of the digital GI Bill.

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 that 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 have 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, James A. LaCoursiere (CT), appointed a seven-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 2021 in the Employer of Veterans Awards Program.

The Commission's Awards Subcommittee met to select the following National winners:

- **Large Employer:** Berry Aviation, San Marcos, Texas
- **Medium Size Employer:** Shurmed EMS, San Antonio, Texas
- **Small Employer:** 5x5 Brewing Company, Mission, Texas

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:** Christopher Garza, San Antonio, Texas
- **DVOP of the Year:** Geraldine Perry, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- **Employment Local Office:** Workforce Solutions Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas

Other Awards:

- **Employer of Older Workers:** Morris-Baker Funeral Home & Cremation Services Johnson City, Tennessee
- **Michael Guty's Homeless Veterans Outreach Award:** Department of New Jersey – Housing Our Heroes, Trenton, New Jersey
- **Enhance the Lives of Disabled Person Award:** Grace After Fire, Houston, Texas

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. The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission addresses employment, education, homeless & housing, and small business concerns regarding veterans and their families. A synopsis of the meetings (and events preceding) follows:

Education, Licensing, & Credentialing

The Veterans Employment and Education Division is devoted to ensuring that all veterans have the opportunity to utilize their earned education benefits to acquire the skills, experience, and connections needed to pursue gainful employment. With the federal government spending \$12 billion a year on education benefits for veterans and their families, it is paramount to ensure proper oversight and administration of these vital programs. In addition to producing quality first-party research on the subject, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division routinely engages with subject-matter

experts, policymakers, government agencies, and other stakeholders to comprehensively examine and respond to veteran needs.

Since 2019, the National Employment and Education Division has continued to utilize grant funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation to produce content highlighting critical developments in veterans' higher education. Products from this grant include two published major reports detailing developments in expanding online education for veterans and an analysis of the novel Risk-Based Survey Model (RBS) for GI Bill risk assessment in higher education.

In recent decades, the proliferation of online education has presented immense opportunities for veterans seeking to pursue a non-traditional path to achieving their academic goals. More than ever before, veterans utilize today's virtual environment to acquire the skills and credentials needed to gain workforce opportunities. The implications of this phenomenon and recommendations for reducing barriers to access to online education among veterans are detailed in the American Legion report *Opening Doors Online: Access, Accountability, and Excellence in Veterans Distance Learning*. This report is publicly available and can be downloaded in its entirety off of The American Legion website.

Recent high-profile school closures and scandals have wasted taxpayer dollars and left veterans without reputable programs to seek employment. To remedy this, the Veterans Employment and Education Division has worked to advance the Risk-Based Survey Model to ensure that only institutions of higher learning with reputable programs receive GI Bill funding. An overview of this innovative model and evaluation of the program's pilot efforts can be read in the American Legion report titled *Lessons for a Risk-Based Oversight Model Designed to Protect Students and Taxpayers*. These findings can also be accessed free-of-charge from The American Legion website.

Each of these articles will receive accompanying op-eds introducing the reports and their main findings. Furthermore, each report will have a long-form article geared toward a public audience and published this summer on the American Legion website. The National Veterans Employment and Education Division will utilize the remaining funds from the Arnold Foundation grant to promote both landmark reports and hold a multi-day licensing and credentialing event at the 2022 American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Veterans Employment and Education Division will also be promoting a resolution providing GI Bill education benefits to veterans who have received a discharge characterized as general under honorable conditions. The American Legion's National Veterans Employment and Education Division and Commission believe that this extension of benefits is aligned with the original purpose and intent of the GI Bill and will help veterans separating from military service achieve gainful employment. Since between 7 and 8% of all discharges have fallen under this category in recent years, according to data provided to the Division by the U.S. Department of Defense, this large group of servicemembers must receive the education benefits that they are rightfully owed.

Additionally, the Veterans Employment and Education Division took a proactive approach to addressing the student veteran crisis that unfolded at the University of Arizona's Global Campus after the entity temporarily lost its GI Bill eligibility due to its acquisition of the embattled for-profit Ashford University in early April 2022. As a development that had the potential to impact approximately 5,000 student veterans within UAGC programs, the Veterans Employment and Education Division quickly coordinated with other veteran service organizations and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to reinstate the institution's GI Bill eligibility. As of late April 2022, the University of Arizona's Global Campus is once again a qualified institution for GI Bill funding.

Held on March 5, 2022, over The American Legion's Washington Conference, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted an education panel discussion focused on new initiatives and opportunities to ensure veteran success in education and training. Participants included Nathan Arnold, Senior Policy Advisor,

Education Counsel, LLC; Lauren Runco, Director of Strategy, Solution for Information Design, LLC; Elizabeth Belcaster, Consultant, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Steve Gonzales, Senior Vice President of Government, Military, and Veteran Relations, Career Education Colleges and Universities; Christopher Madaio, Vice President for Legal Affairs, Veterans Education Success; Esmeralda Silva, President, Council of College and Military Educators. Panelists discussed new initiatives and opportunities available to veterans and resources that they provide to veterans and their families to ensure their success. Commission members engaged with the leaders during the question-and-answer period and highlighted their concerns that all schools focus on providing quality programs that lead to gainful employment opportunities.

During The American Legion's 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, the Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted speakers to inform attendees on new developments and current issues on Veteran Education.

Steve Gonzalez, Senior Vice President of Government Relations at Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU), briefed commission members on CECU's innovation of skills training. The presentation focused on the Aviation Institute of Maintenance (AIM). In July, AIM purchased a new facility in Chicago's McKinley Park neighborhood. This facility is anticipated to be the organization's 14th and largest aviation maintenance campus with 137,00 square feet.

Dr. Joseph Wescott, National Higher Education Consultant for The American Legion and National Legislative Liaison of the National Association of State Approving Agencies. (NASAA) discussed a new model for higher education quality assurance; the risk-based survey. He stated the current VA "compliance survey" does not prioritize state approving agencies (SSA)/VA resources on the institutions at risk for noncompliance or take a comprehensive consider the risk to student and program of education. The VA "compliance survey" lacks emphasis on program of education quality and student outcomes while concentrating primarily on payment accuracy. Dr. Wescott explained that the purpose of a risk-based approach is fivefold: to consider the probability and impact of potential risks, acknowledge that some schools pose less risk than others, review recruiting tactics and student concerns, review the institutions' financial stability, and create incentives to improve and address identified risks.

John Decoteau, the Vice President of Military and Campus Admission at Universal Technical Institute (UTI), discussed his organization's success with the Department of Defense (DOD) Skill Bridge Program, which allows transitioning servicemembers an opportunity to participate in employment skills training, on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship, and internships.

Last year, we stated in our report that the American Legion would use the \$500,000 grant from the Arnold Ventures Foundation to better engage in higher education policy, host more conferences for veterans' organizations and media on higher education, write more letters to policymakers, and better ensure that military and veteran interests are represented in civilian higher education discussions.

Though COVID has certainly impacted our ability to travel and most significant conferences have either been canceled or moved online, we have succeeded in engaging with relevant policy actors and stakeholders in higher education policy in DC and across the nation. We hired a nationally respected higher education consultant, Dr. Joseph Wescott, who has worked alongside Mr. John Kamin to fulfill our goal of expanding the influence and footprint of the American Legion in the areas of education and gainful employment. We attended and presented at the NAVPA Conference, the Student Veterans of America Conference, and attended virtually and presented at the NASAA Conference in Washington DC. Dr. Wescott serves as the Co-Chair of the Nation Risk-Based Advisory Council, upon which Mr. Joseph Sharpe sits as a member. He also is a member of the VA Veterans Committee on Education and is the Policy Group Chair on the George W. Bush Institutes Veterans Education Task Force.

The American Legion VE&E staff have played a key role in drafting critical educational bills, including the Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021, the Fly Vets Act, HR 5025, and other draft legislation written to assist veterans negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic. Realizing that veterans were forced to take their education programs online, the Legion worked with HVAC, SVAC, and Student Veterans of America, to encourage and craft legislation allowing veteran students to continue drawing their total housing allowance, even when forced to study online from home.

VE&E staff continues to play a vital role in the continued oversight of education institutions enrolling veterans using educational entitlements. The Harry W. Colmery Act of 2017, named after former American Legion National Commander and architect of the GI Bill, included provisions that required the establishment and implementation of risk-based surveys (RBS) in order to evaluate the quality of education at schools enrolling veterans and determine if taxpayers were getting a good return on their investment. This year, in the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Section 1013), Congress specified the minimum requirements for risk-based surveys and further determined that these types of reviews will begin in October 2022. It also mandates the establishment of a new national database to house RBS findings and other data. It provides the necessary financial support for the SAAs (State Approving Agencies) to perform these surveys. The surveys themselves shall follow a national model developed by the RBS Advisory Committee that Director Sharpe and Dr. Wescott sit on.

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION

During The American Legion's 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, the Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted speakers to inform attendees on new developments and current issues on Employment matters.

Adam Rocke, a retired Army colonel and Senior Director of External Engagements of Hiring Our Heroes, addressed the VE&E Commission. Mr. Rocke discussed the Veteran landscape, looking at the state of transition from employment and education; he noted that hiring events, Bridge Programs, and increasing diversity, equality, and inclusion for veterans and military spouses were opportune areas to focus efforts on. Mentorship is essential for veterans and transitioning service members, as they have difficulty communicating their skills and background. Career connectors can provide prospective job seekers employment preparation, screening, and coaching. Additionally, connecting to fellowship programs and receiving education and training to upskill is essential. The fellowship programs and digital tools referenced were: Corporate Fellowship Program, Military Spouse Fellowship Program, Veteran Employment Transition (VET) Roadmap, MilSpouse Roadmap.

Noel Gonzalez, a retired Navy Captain, and CEO of SkillMil, discussed the challenges veterans and transitioning servicemembers face due to how confusing the lifecycle of a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) can be to mismatching skills due to improper MOS translations. To rectify the issue of changing "military speak" to business jargon, SkillMil integrates Military data and resumes with semantic matching algorithms to calculate the percentage match to the job description.

The National Veterans Employment & Education Division established the Employment Innovation Taskforce to bring together the public sector, private industry, and non-profit organizations to advance solutions for The American Legion to champion improved and quality employment with its federal agency partners. Likewise, the taskforce examines all aspects of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and credentialing in order to optimize TAP to ensure that servicemembers receive a seamless translation from military service to the private sector.

During the February 23, 2022, Employer Innovation Taskforce Roundtable, private industry stakeholders highlighted a disconnect in base access between employers and transitioning servicemembers, with variability in Transition Service Program (TAP) officer support for employers making some installations more accessible than others. As a result,

some servicemembers are not made aware of the different job opportunities out there for them. The private industry recommended that a standard practice come from the VA to ensure employers are equipped with best practices to maintain steady contact with transitioning servicemembers (TSMs). In the interim, private sector taskforce members suggested that The American Legion hold events at posts adjacent to military bases to allow employers to connect with TSMs. Following the roundtable, The Veterans Employment & Education Division has worked to convene a Crisis Action Team with private sector taskforce members and TAP officials to develop a national platform for defining how the TAP program should work for TSMs.

On March 5, 2022, during Washington Conference, VE&E hosted an employment panel titled 'Bolstering Veteran Federal Labor Market Competitvity: How to Increase Veteran Hiring in the Federal Workforce Panel' moderated by Linda Rix, CO-CEO of Avue Technologies Corporation. The Panelists included were Darrett Lomax, HR Specialist/Selective Placement Program Manager, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and Saundre Easton-Fletcher, Program Specialist, United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The panel evaluated hiring system gaps that Federal Executive Branch Agencies face and explored best practices to bolster veteran employment. Initiatives that panelists addressed included: initiatives their agencies are undertaking to become more attractive to veterans, programs to train human resource staff on military experience translation, efforts to grant security clearance reciprocity, and credentialing programs to assist veterans in gaining access to career ladders and jobs.

CAREER FAIRS

The American Legion has been hosting and participating in Job Fairs since 2005, with the primary purpose of educating veterans about their benefits, providing veterans avenues for employment, promoting The American Legion's mission "to enhance the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

The American Legion has been invited to participate in over 12 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) events. On August 14, 2021, The National Veterans Employment & Education Division attended a YRRP event in Arlington, Virginia, with the Air National Guard Component. Over 135 Air National Guard servicemembers were present, 40 of whom engaged with The American Legion booth, and 12 applied for membership with The American Legion. The American Legion's Post 290 from Stafford, Virginia, provided an Honor Guard for the opening ceremonies. The YRRP is a Department of Defense (DoD) initiative to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve servicemembers, their families, and communities by connecting them with resources throughout a deployment cycle.

On Wednesday, September 22, 2021, The National Veterans Employment & Education Division collaborated with The Texas Veterans and Workforce Commissions to host a hybrid career event. The in-person component attracted 37 employers and 115 jobseekers; 25 of whom were members of Fort Hood's Soldier Recovery Unit. 23 interviews were scheduled between employers and jobseekers after the event. The virtual fair attracted 249 employers and 258 jobseekers. 7 employers confirmed interviews with candidates.

The National Veterans Employment & Education Division of The American Legion once again collaborated with the Texas Veterans and Workforce Commissions to host a virtual hiring event on Wednesday, March 9, 2022, through Premier Virtual. National Commander Dillard provided video welcoming remarks to employers and job seekers as they entered the event. There were 240 employers from various industries and 315 registered job seekers that participated in the Career Fair. Jobseekers consisted of active duty servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and family members from across the nation. Almost 1700 unique conversations between organizations and candidates were exchanged, with 11366 messages sent. There was one immediate hire at the event. The employers and

participants at this event were pleased with the outcome. The employers stated that the participants were professional and qualified. The participants liked that the employers were from different industries and were willing to hire veterans. Surveys to industry and attendees were sent out to assess further ways to improve future events. Two Job Seeker Prep workshops were conducted on February 17 and March 3, with 38 individuals registering for the first workshop and 65 participants for the second. The workshops assisted job seekers in using the Premier Virtual Platform, preparing for interviews, and tailoring and updating their resumes.

On June 13, 2022, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division and the Department of Texas hosted a series of workshops at Fort Hood for its Soldier Recovery Unit, transitioning servicemembers and military spouses. The 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. The following day, members from the National Veterans Employment and Education Division and the Department of Texas were present at Fort Hood's Mega Career Fair as a resource booth to educate servicemembers about their benefits. These Legionnaires discussed how The American Legion assists veterans with reintegrating back to their local communities. Additionally, they answered service members/veterans questions about benefits and described the Legion's programs as well as explained how to become a member. 72 transitioning servicemembers, active-duty personnel, and military spouses attended the workshops and American Legion booth.

On June 24, 2022, The Department of Puerto Rico held an in-person career fair at Fort Buchanan. To initiate discussions on job opportunities for the event, the Veterans Employment & Education Division collaborated with US Chamber of Commerce (USSC) Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) held a Networking Reception the day before on June 23 by providing an engagement reception between jobseekers and select employers. In conjunction with the career fair, The Veterans Employment & Education Division hosted resume, financial literacy, and social media branding workshops. The workshops assisted jobseekers in tailoring their civilian and federal resumes, gaining comprehensive financial planning knowledge, and achieving greater visibility to hiring managers through a well-formulated LinkedIn profile.

This event started with an opening ceremony, which included speakers Colonel Tomika M. Seaberry, Garrison Commander of Fort Buchanan; Samuel Garcia Melendez, JVSG Veteran Program Coordinator for Puerto Rico's Department of Labor and Human Resources; Noel Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of SkillMil; Juan Abreu, Deputy Director of Events and Engagements for Hiring Our Heroes; and Carmen I. Rosario Diaz, Commander for The American Legion Department of Puerto Rico.

There were 45 employers from various industries and 106 preregistered attendees, consisting of active duty servicemembers, veterans, guard and reserve members, and military spouses that participated in the Career Fair. The employers and participants at this event were pleased with the outcome. The employers stated that the participants were professional and qualified. The participants liked that employers were from different industries and willing to hire veterans.

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Veterans Employment and Education Division seeks to foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem that allows veteran-owned small businesses to thrive in an ever-evolving economic landscape. The issues impacting veteran-owned small businesses are vast and complicated, so the National Veterans Employment and Education Division facilitates the American Legion National Veterans Small Business Task Force to define and execute best practices in developing small businesses and government procurement policies.

On September 17, 2021, the Veterans Employment and Education Division convened a Veterans Small Business Taskforce Roundtable focused on addressing veteran-owned small businesses' emerging challenges. The 25-member roundtable reviewed current

legislative priorities based on Legion resolutions on the small business policy before engaging in a dialogue on new issues of consideration. Members delineated five major issue areas to pursue via the formation of Task Force subcommittees: Cybersecurity, Access to Capital, Taxes, Verifications, and VETs First Expansion. Each Subcommittee will research and deliberate their respective issues to guide the Task Force about appropriate action steps to address the issue. Discussion surrounding the Work Opportunity Tax Credit also led to a proposed resolution advocating for an expansion in tax credits for private companies that hire or are looking to hire veterans.

The VA recently announced the Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) DMLSS integration as a stop-gap measure to extend the runway for modernizing the medical-surgical supply chain under the large Medical Surgical Prime Vendor 2.0 (MSPV). This is causing much consternation within the veteran small business community because the announcement coincided with the cancellation of small business contract solicitations under MSPV 2.0. Although DLA has assured VA and Congress that integration with DMLSS will comply with all VA procurement laws, the incentive to follow through does not exist. As a result, veteran small businesses will suffer, and VA's ability to effectively and legally modernize their medical supply chain will falter. The onus is currently on the VA and DLA to develop a policy statement and implementable plan to adhere to VA's procurement laws.

During The American Legion's 102nd National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, the Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted speakers to inform attendees on new developments and current issues on Veterans Small Business matters. The meeting was attended by The American Legion's Small Business Taskforce members, VE&E commission and committee members, representatives from the US Small Business Administration, and other guests.

Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator in the Office of Veterans Business Development at the SBA, opened up the discussion. Mr. Stubblefield began his presentation by quoting Isabella Guzman, the SBA administrator, "Small businesses are the giants of our economy." Small businesses create Two-thirds of all new jobs. Around 2.5 million veteran-owned businesses generate over \$1 trillion in sales regarding small businesses owned by veterans. SBA mentioned some COVID relief programs to support small businesses: The Paycheck Protection Program, The Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). "We're looking to help small businesses recover and rebuild through the pandemic," he said, emphasizing those owned by minorities and located in rural areas. "Small businesses have had to pivot, and we at SBA have had to do the same thing."

Charles Fowler from GPS Global Inc. briefed the attendees on some issues related to the Vets First program. The Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006 gave the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) authority to allow verified veteran-owned businesses to compete for VA set-asides. However, \$800 million was awarded incorrectly to non-eligible companies, according to the 2020 Department of Defense inspector general's report. Mr. Fowler is pushing to pass legislation strengthening the ability for veterans to receive priority to seek and win these set-asides. The idea is to give the certification from VA to DoD to ensure the good companies are getting the procurement contracts. "That's what we're trying to get rid of," he said, referring to noneligibles, "and open it up the veterans who are doing the work and are the ones who are competing. And they are not competing against others who are not veterans and just got a pass-through."

Margaret Evangelista, Director of the Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC) in Arizona, informed the attendees that there are 22 VBOCs nationwide funded by grants from the Small Business Administration (SBA). The program is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling, mentorship, and resource partner referrals to transitioning servicemembers, veterans, and spouses interested in starting or growing a small business.

Lastly, The National Veterans Employment and Education staff continues its relationship with the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development to increase participation in the Boots to Business entrepreneurial education and training program. VE&E is also promoting the establishment of at least two new Veteran Business Opportunity Centers to expand access to business training and counseling for veteran-owned small businesses. The VE&E collaborates with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a procurement advisory board in order to: provide feedback on current VA procurement policies, procedures, and practices, encourage competition at the VA, and ensure VA procurement officials are using best practices to maximize competition. Furthermore, VE&E is in the process of addressing small business development in rural areas. VE&E is currently identifying Federal, State, and local resources throughout the United States that veterans can access, such as business loan guarantees and counseling services.

On February 18, 2022, the National Veterans Small Business Task Force met virtually with 25 members in attendance to discuss policy recommendations from the Task Force's five subcommittees (cybersecurity, access to capital, veterans preference, verification/certification, and taxes). Members of the Task Force then presented their findings to the National Veterans Employment and Education Commission Meeting at the 2022 Washington Conference on March 5.

Based on Task Force recommendations, the Veterans Employment and Education Division has submitted resolutions for consideration that would (1) promote increasing the veteran small business procurement goals for federal agencies from 3 to 5% of total government spending, (2) formally endorse the transfer of the duties and responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Verification and Evaluation to the U.S. Small Business Administration to ensure efficient verification of veteran-owned small businesses, and (3) advocate expansion of Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) eligibility to include active-duty military spouses.

Under the guidelines established under the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, all federal agencies must set a goal of spending at least 3% of their annual budget on contract opportunities (both prime and subcontracting opportunities) for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). However, these goals have often been challenging for agencies to achieve and veteran businesses are routinely underutilized within federal procurement contracting. Analysis conducted by the Veterans Employment and Education Division of data provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration provides the following critical insights:

Only 4 government agencies of the 24 examined (17%) met both their prime and subcontracting goals in FY 2020 (Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, National Science Foundation and Social Security Administration).

- All other agencies (83%) either failed to meet their prime contracting goal, subcontracting goal, or both.
- While 16 agencies (66%) did meet their prime goal of 3% of total spending, only 8 (33%) met their subcontracting goal in FY 2020.
- Four agencies (17%), including the Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services failed to meet both their prime and subcontracting goal in FY 2020.

While there is still work to be done to ensure that agencies meet the current 3% threshold spending goal as mandated by law, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division believes that it is critical to ensure parity with other set-aside groups that have a 5% goal within the current federal acquisition structure. On April 1, 2022, staff met with Republican House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee Staff Director John Clark to discuss the ongoing issue of federal agencies routinely underperforming in

meeting their contracting goals. Staff expressed a desire to hold a hearing highlighting the issue in the forthcoming months to illuminate the problem and develop solutions.

The Veterans Employment and Education Division also supports the transfer of the duties and responsibilities of the Center for Verification and Evaluation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Currently, both agencies use their own independent programs to determine whether a small business is eligible to be classified as a Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) or a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB). This has led to redundancies, overlapping claims of jurisdiction, frustration among business owners, and in some cases lost opportunities for veteran small business owners. This attempt to streamline the classification process will still allow the VA to reserve the right to determine eligibility while utilizing the SBA's experience and existing infrastructure to administer the program more effectively.

Additionally, the Veterans Employment and Education Division is supporting legislative initiatives to expand Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) eligibility to active-duty military spouses. Given the frequent travel associated with military life, many military spouses find difficulties in achieving meaningful employment. Some estimates indicate that as many as 24% of military spouses may be unemployed. To remedy this issue, The VE & E believes that expanding the WOTC program to cover military spouses would incentivize employers to find the benefit in hiring military spouses. Given the WOTC program already includes veterans as a target group, this expansion represents a natural extension of the current program.

The Veterans Employment and Education Division has also been diligently advocating on behalf of issues facing veteran business owners and entrepreneurs to lawmakers and government agencies. On March 18, 2022, staff met with staff from Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jack Reed's (D-RI) office to advocate for the inclusion of draft statutory language in the forthcoming 2023 National Defense Authorization Act that would expand the adoption of the Vets First contracting program to the United States Department of Defense. If implemented, this policy would provide untold opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses to work with the federal government in the years ahead while protecting the Vets First program at the VA from efforts to undermine it.

Furthermore, the Veterans Employment and Education Division is engaging with the U.S. Small Business Administration and stakeholder groups to discuss the non-payment of subcontractors after receiving reports from veteran-owned small businesses that they have not been receiving the agreed-upon amount that they negotiated with the prime contractor. The Veterans Employment and Education Division will continue to engage with the U.S. Small Business Administration to address this issue and explore potential legislative options to protect subcontracting veteran-owned small businesses from being taken advantage of.

The Veterans Employment and Education Division is also working with veteran-owned small businesses that have lost their contract extensions to larger suppliers due to a negative trend that category management has had on the federal small business supplier base. The Division staff connects these individuals with appropriate personnel within their customer's relevant Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization to assist the business owner in seeking a bid protest or other forms of redress. As an expanding practice, category management has dramatically reduced the number of new opportunities for small businesses by normalizing "bundling" as a standard operating procedure; wherein numerous contracts are consolidated into a large, exclusionary bid that poses significant barriers to entry for most small businesses.

Additionally, the Division staff is also collaborating with other advocacy organizations to evaluate tax reform proposals that would expand opportunities for military

spouses to contribute to retirement savings plans immediately without a required waiting period. Given the frequent relocation required for military families, many military spouses struggle to reach the necessary tenure to contribute to 401(k) and other retirement benefits as established under their employer's policies. This effort seeks to improve the quality of life for veteran spouses and provide economic stability for veterans once they reach the eligible retirement age.

The American Legion is concerned with the ongoing deterioration of the federal small business supplier base due to category management. Category management is a government-wide procurement framework that has the explicit objective of reducing the number of government contracts to improve efficiency in federal acquisition through agencies purchasing goods and services as a single enterprise. Consequentially, the number of small businesses doing work with the federal government has shrunk by 40% over the past decade. Category management attempts to drive down prices and establish a set of requirements that small businesses cannot feasibly compete with. This issue was highlighted in a congressional hearing titled "Growing the Small Business Supplier Base in Government Contracting". The exclusion of small businesses, reduced competition in the federal marketplace, and fewer opportunities to perform option years are all adverse consequences of the category management framework.

The American Legion has received numerous reports from veteran small business owners that prime contractors have been shortchanging subcontractors. Through either altering contract requirements after an agreement was already made or simply paying less than the agreed-upon sum, prime contractors are taking advantage of veteran businesses for their own profit margins. Unfortunately, subcontractors who have faced these issues have little ability to seek redress from the federal government, and the consequences for non-payment are generally left to the discretion of the agency's Contracting Officer. The American Legion's National Employment and Education Division will be proposing a resolution condemning these morally reprehensible practices and will continue to support veteran-owned small businesses that experience this malpractice.

The American Legion continues to take a vested interest in ensuring that federal agencies meet their contracting goals for both prime and subcontracts in accordance with the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999. Currently, all federal agencies must aim to contract 3% of their total spending dollars to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). Today, many agencies continue to fail in meeting this goal, with notable delinquency in subcontracting compliance among federal agencies.

As indicated through an analysis of the U.S. Small Business Administration's annual procurement scorecard, only 4 government agencies of the 24 examined met both their prime and subcontracting goals in FY 2020 (Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, National Science Foundation and Social Security Administration). All other agencies either failed to meet their prime contracting goal, subcontracting goal, or both. While 16 agencies did meet their prime goal of 3%, only 8 met their subcontracting goal in FY 2020. Several agencies, including the Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services failed to meet both their prime and subcontracting goal in FY 2020.

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness and Housing Portfolio maintained a small role in this year's Washington Convention. The focus for now is ensuring the Homeless Task Force Chairperson spreadsheet is updated with accurate names and phone numbers. Another goal is to ensure that pending appointments are filled so that the work of collaboration with Task Force Chairpersons, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of the American Legion can continue. The VE&E Division has an immediate goal to streamline processes and facilitate resources that bridge the gap in services to homeless and at-risk veterans in each state. By

responding to data and forging relationships with major stakeholders, the VE&E Division is laying the groundwork for a robust Homeless Veteran Taskforce that will be instrumental in the work of eradicating homelessness among veterans. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Secretary of Veteran Affairs have both committed to making ending homelessness among veterans a priority.

On April 12, 2021, a joint statement was issued by United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Marcia Fudge, and United States Secretary of Veteran Affairs (VA) Denis McDonough affirming their commitment to end Veteran Homelessness. The statement was a call to end homelessness with a commitment to five key areas:

- Make ending homelessness a top priority
- Lead with an evidenced-based housing first approach
- Reach underserved Veterans
- Ensure the delivery of quality supportive services
- Increase the supply of and access to affordable housing

Since the Washington Convention, VE&E Division has begun to work at supporting this goal by attending two Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) meetings. The first meeting was the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB), FAC meeting. In this meeting, Keith Harris, the Senior Executive Homeless agent for Greater L.A., spoke about the West Los Angeles project and progress in housing homeless veterans. He also spoke about Secretary McDonough's ongoing goal to house 38,000 veterans in permanent housing by the end of this calendar year. Dr. Steve Braverman, Director VAMC Los Angeles, spoke about updates and successes of the project starting with the opening of Care, Treatment & Rehabilitative Services (CTRS) initiative in April 2020. This project started with a few tents in a parking lot and has now expanded to 120 tiny home shelters. Robert McKenrick, Deputy Director, VAMC spoke about the North Campus budget and its approval for 2021/2022 and the preparation of the 2023 budget. All funding requested has been approved and the funding has caught up to where there are no funding challenges. Although there are no funding challenges, there were public recommendations to ensure that veterans remained the top priority. The VCOEB's final recommendation was that the Secretary of VA instruct the leadership of the Greater Los Angeles Veteran Affairs Administration to create a web-based dashboard available to the public that reports on progress in providing permanent housing for veterans experiencing homelessness in the Greater LA Area. The American Legion Resolution No. 141 of 2016 recommends placing more focus on restricting the Enhanced-Use Leasing capabilities to a priority list of services that will meet the needs of the veteran community. It further states that outside organizations should follow the same reporting procedures as the government to ensure proper oversight and accountability in assuring that the needs of homeless veterans are met. This advocacy continues as the meeting revealed that there is an ongoing concern in these areas as approval of the Master Plan 2022 Draft moves forward.

The second FAC meeting was with the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans. The purpose of the Committee is to provide the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the policies, organizational structure, and services of VA in assisting Veterans at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Secretary McDonough made a video appearance and spoke about his commitment to ensuring top-quality care for veterans, their families, and their loved ones. He further explained how VA is committed to living up to the fundamental principle of advocacy by providing world-class resources to end homelessness and suicides. He adamantly stated that "VA will lead in advocating for veterans" by seeking new ways to ensure most vulnerable veterans have access to care. He explained how the success of the programs will be determined by veterans because they are the judges of the quality of care they receive. After attending this

FAC meeting the VE&E Division joined American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) on a site visit to the Southeast Veteran's Center in Washington DC to hear from veterans who receive services at that facility.

The site visit was arranged by ALA on a day when the Chief of Staff of the Department of Veteran Affairs, Tanya Bradsher was visiting. This center is one of the facilities that has a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) on site. The visit highlighted some concerns that veterans have about their convenience to care through CBOC's. If clinics were to close it would create a barrier for veterans to receive healthcare due to transportation issues. The Chief of Staff stated during the visit that VA's focus continues to be the care of all veterans. The VE&E Division will continue to monitor this concern to ensure that any changes made provide an increase to the care and support of veterans.

While some CBOC's may be closing, there is some good news surrounding funding for HUD-VASH. In December 2021, \$18 million was awarded to 33 states towards vouchers and housing assistance for veterans. In addition, there are increases for the program identified in the FY 2023 White House budget. The legislative movement in support of homeless prevention among veterans is gaining traction. The VE&E Division looks forward to advancing resolutions and advocating to Congress concerning homelessness among veterans in future conventions.

During this period, VE&E has reviewed the following legislation: Housing Our Veterans Act (H.R. 6810), Helping Unleash Benefits and Services (HUBS) Act (H.R. 6671), the extension of VA Assistance for individuals residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member (2021a Ext), a food bill to establish a VA office for food insecurity, a pilot program for tiny homes for veterans (H6307), and an extension of certain VA programs for homeless veterans. The hearing is scheduled for May 18, 2022, on all but the first two bills mentioned in this paragraph. In addition to these legislative items, VE&E Division has answered the call of more than forty veterans during this period and connected them with resources and assistance to help meet their needs. The Homeless Veteran Task Force has made this work possible and will only get better as the work continues going forward.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Kathy Daudistel, Kentucky

What a year! I am so thankful for all of the mission-in-action moments I was able to be a part of during the 2021-2022 administrative year. One thing is certain: Our members are incredible and continue to focus on veterans, military, and their families. With an extra emphasis on caregivers, the *Caring for Those Who Care for Others* theme truly hit home for many. I appreciate everyone who steps up and cares for their loved ones. I understand how hard of a task it can be at times. Just remember: You are appreciated, and I hope that by bringing a focus to caregiving this year, you realize how much.

I heard countless caregiver stories during my travels, and each of them was inspiring. I really wish I could talk about every single one! I do, however, want to mention one caregiver who continually inspires me. ALA member Janine DeGusto Dougherty is a caregiver for her veteran husband, Kevin, as well as for her mother, Pauline. She does so much for both and has found that taking time for herself—whether it's five minutes, half an hour, or a weekend—is crucial because caregiving can be such an emotionally and mentally draining role. "It takes a strong person to do it," she said. Yes, Janine, it sure does. Thank you for doing what you do so selflessly.

In addition to meeting caregivers, I loved being part of the grassroots projects that are serving our mission at the local level throughout the country. Keep doing what you are doing! You are amazing and making a difference.

I am grateful for the time I had as your 2021–2022 national president. You taught me so much and continuously reiterated why we do what we do as members. Continue to give our caregivers love and support beyond this administrative year, and keep focused on serving our veterans, military, and their families.

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
Vickie Koutz, Indiana

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as national vice president of this amazing organization.

This Auxiliary year has been different than the two years before, as we've had the opportunity to have more face-to-face meetings again. Mission Trainings, National Chairmen's Meeting, and Department Leadership National Conference were all held in person this year.

Planning for the upcoming year began in September 2021. Once I shared my ideas on speakers and content, our National Headquarters staff played an integral part in assuring all of the meetings went well. It also gave me a chance to meet the upcoming department leadership.

Even though we lost an abundance of members due to death this past year, we have several 100% departments. This shows the ones who work the hardest, reap the rewards. Congratulations!

We were blessed once again to be a co-presenter of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival that was held in the spring for the first time, instead of the fall. The federal VA still had lots of COVID-19 restrictions in place, so the event was not open to the public, but the performance on Sunday afternoon was livestreamed so everyone at home could enjoy the entertainment.

As this American Legion Auxiliary year comes to an end, it has been such a pleasure working alongside National President Kathy as she shared her love for our veterans, caregivers, and their families. I wish her the very best in the future!

NATIONAL SECRETARY
Dr. Coral May Grout, Massachusetts

Throughout the American Legion Auxiliary's history, the position of national secretary was an administrative component of the national organization's leadership. However, as nonprofits have modernized, conflicts of interest can arise when an individual is both a member of the governing board and a paid employee. The decision was made in 2019 to transition the national secretary and national treasurer positions into purely volunteer positions—reasons all pointed to better meeting the needs of the organization, as well as supporting the Internal Revenue Service 990 reporting requirements. Both are positions appointed by the national president and approved by the National Executive Committee.

During this past year, I worked with the executive director and national officers to build this volunteer position. We held several Zoom and Executive Committee sessions where the normal process of paying a professional notetaker (as is done at our in-person meetings and conferences/conventions) was not used. The national secretary took the minutes instead.

Other responsibilities included leadership with relation to the national division vice presidents' visitations and required paperwork upon completion of each visit. The national secretary has oversight over contracts, agreements, and memorandums of understanding executed by the executive director, as well as to sign checks.

The importance of recognizing our wonderful national staff is something that applies to all of us. I have implemented a recognition program that includes a card and message to each employee as he or she reaches an anniversary with the ALA, as well as remembering their efforts at Christmas.

The national secretary is a corporate officer and part of the leadership team accountable for steering the organization to stay aligned with its tax-exempt mission.

NATIONAL TREASURER

Marybeth Revoir, Illinois

It is with pleasure I report to my fellow members as national treasurer at the conclusion of my second term. There will always be new things to learn and challenges to face, but I have gained confidence in this role and the responsibilities it requires. My collaboration with the national Finance Committee and Finance Division at National Headquarters continues to be a positive and fruitful partnership. All participants are ever mindful of our responsibilities and the need to work in harmony.

Our great organization has now entered its second century. This milestone comes with great responsibility. We have been given a phenomenal legacy to uphold. How do we lay the foundation to make it last another 100 years?

As we try to put the pandemic years behind, new societal realities show us that change is needed. How can we learn from what we were forced to endure these past several months and make the American Legion Auxiliary stronger?

Our fiscal stability is directly tied to our income from membership dues. All operations, including management of mission initiatives, communications, training, compliance, and numerous other functions, are funded solely through the membership dues each of us pays annually. In 2017, we identified the need for an adequate dues structure to fund operations at the current levels. A plan to avoid future shortfalls was not adopted, and we are again faced with deficit budget projections.

Considerable effort has been expended on how we can learn to work smarter and streamline processes. Technology can be a great building block on which we must depend. Staffing needs and operational expenses are consistently reviewed to identify where we can reduce costs. We can never become complacent.

The Auxiliary's future is now in our hands. Let's think about what each of us can do to guarantee its continued success.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Carol T. Robinson, Ohio

God commands us to love others. One of the most straightforward ways to love is by helping when we see someone in need, whether it is our time, money, or prayer, each in our own faith. Hebrews 13:16 says, "And do not forget to do good and share with others, for God is pleased with such sacrifices."

Reviewing the department chaplains' reports, I learned how the units showed love, kindness, and *Service Not Self* to their members. The units were busy this year with invocations and benedictions at meetings, and incorporating music in their programs. They participated in holiday memorial services and POW-MIA ceremonies, draping charters, Four Chaplains services, preparing food or food baskets for those less fortunate or shut-ins, flag raisings and disposals, 9/11 remembrances, and cemetery dedication ceremonies. They also sent get-well, thinking-of-you, and sympathy cards, praying for and assisting caregivers, and sending boxes to troops overseas.

Here are a few highlights of sharing the love:

Delaware: Ms. Lee McClain of Unit 6 was nominated Chaplain of the Year.

Georgia: Northeast Georgia presented 163 Quilts of Valor to veterans this past year.

Iowa: One unit held a Gold Star Mothers program.

New Mexico: Unit 95 members joined forces to clean the local cemetery.

New York: Jefferson County American Legion Family hosted the burial of Lyle Savage, 80 years after his death in Pearl Harbor on the USS Oklahoma.

Reports received: 32

Volunteer senior hours: 97,451

Volunteer Junior hours: 232

Condolence cards: 2,606

Get-well/thinking-of-you cards: 4,856

Monetary donations: \$96,104

It was my pleasure to serve as chaplain this year. God's blessings and grace be with all of you.

NATIONAL HISTORIAN Carol G. Campbell, Virginia

The American Legion Auxiliary's first national president, Edith Hobart of the Department of Ohio, in the October 1922 Fourth Annual Convention report, said, "It is our pride to call ourselves the American Legion Auxiliary, and to renew to you here the pledge to serve you which we made a year ago."

As the celebration of the ALA's 100th anniversary ended in August 2021 at the 100th National Convention in Phoenix, members felt that same pride and sense of renewed spirit going into our second century of service. Members selflessly looked forward to more mission moments during the 2021–2022 administrative year, especially with National

President Kathy Daudistel's focus on caregivers and her visits to departments.

Ten years ago, ALA members were tasked by the late National Historian Diane Harley, Department of South Carolina, to "make footprints for those who will follow by striving to fulfill the mission of serving veterans, military members, and their families." One of the definitions of a "footprint" is the impact that a particular activity, person, or group has on the environment. Footprints during 2021–2022 were most definitely caring hearts!

This year was still hard for many units due to COVID-19, especially with the variants that surfaced around the holidays, but it did not slow down the support our members gave to veterans, military, and their families, and communities. And to highlight these phenomenal efforts, historians passed along information at department conferences, through social media, newsletters, and in-person and Zoom meetings on how to capture these efforts. Members participated in the Veterans History Project through the Library of Congress and "members remember" history project. Members also participated in Women's History Month activities, especially honoring military women.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (INTERIM) Sara Riegel, Indiana

If there's one thing the pandemic and the new normal taught us about ALA National Headquarters staff, it's that we're quite resilient and diligent. Over the past few years, we had become accustomed to doing more with less, but COVID and other disruptors really put things into perspective.

National Headquarters certainly isn't immune to the global "Great Resignation" problem, as we learned over the past year. Several vital positions were vacated—with some open for months despite our attempts to fill them in the changing and competitive environment—thus adding multiple job duties to everyone's to-do lists while the positions remain open.

One of those openings is the executive director. Since taking on an interim role, I've learned a lot about what each and every staff member does at National Headquarters. I'm honored to work with a team that is willing to keep their heads held high during this time of change. All of our staff members continue to keep the ALA mission in focus by stepping

up and taking on extra roles to make sure no veterans, military servicemembers, or their families are left behind.

We've also done an excellent job adapting to the changes, with an average ALA-member-to-staff ratio of 15,900 to 1. That's a lot of people! Many divisions are having to step back and take a new approach of cross-training in an effort to incorporate the extra duties to develop a more seamless service. I am a big proponent of everyone working as a team too vs. in silos, as it promotes a more efficient environment. When we're all on the same page, we get more done and in a smoother fashion.

RISK & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Jeri Greenwell, Maine, Chairman

The five-member Risk & Compliance Committee serves in a risk aversion and oversight role for both the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, offering advice and recommendations to the NEC. Its main responsibility is to oversee the validity of financial statements, including related disclosures, and to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements; to maintain overall integrity of internal control processes, procedures, and regulations; and to substantiate our financial credibility and long-term viability to our members, donors, and the public.

Kudos to our National Headquarters staff whose continued adherence to ethical standards and execution, once again, resulted in a stellar audit!

The committee confirmed Alerding CPA Group as the external audit firm and Gregory and Appel for business insurance coverage, as well as the remuneration and terms of their engagements.

Self-assessments and brainstorming sessions were conducted in helping to identify potential exposure to financial, operational, organizational, and reputational risks within our organization, and recommendations were made on policy and procedural updates.

The committee met periodically with management and the auditors to gain a greater understanding of potential risks facing our organization and to propose necessary controls to reduce exposure and to ensure that recommendations made in the auditor's letter to management were implemented. We are pleased to report that there have been no findings or concerns about financial mismanagement or improprieties raised, as of this report!

We acknowledge that appropriate internal controls serve as our first line of defense in safeguarding assets and detecting and preventing errors, fraud, and impropriety, allowing us the ability to identify areas of weakness and to respond accordingly.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Sharon Conatser, Illinois, Chairman

The national Finance Committee continues to tackle the challenges of good fiscal planning to meet today's needs, as well as future fiduciary requirements. Your Finance Committee is represented on the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board of Directors and the Risk & Compliance Committee.

The last two years have been challenging for everyone. We need to remember the why of our mission and purpose, and get back to supporting the ALA programs we love. Remember that no donation given is too small. What is your why for joining our ALA?

The Finance Committee reviews the draft budget, makes any adjustments that may be necessary to reflect new or changing goals, and recommends a budget for the National Executive Committee (NEC) consideration and adoption. Also, in carrying out the role as fiduciary stewards, the ALA national Finance Committee is responsible for investment planning, reviewing financial statements, monitoring member benefits and fundraising campaigns, overseeing the financial policies of the organization, and making fiscal policy recommendations for NEC action to ensure that the ALA national organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and governmental requirements.

We feel that ALA Mission Trainings and the ALA national Junior meetings are very important to the education and support of our unit members. The reviews of the first year back in person were phenomenal, and members appreciated the investment made by our national ALA.

In order to continue to fulfill our future obligations to our members and to our veterans, action is needed to address the declining operating revenue from dues. In the last two years, we have lost over \$500,000 in revenue alone in membership dues. Members need to step up their responsibility and help retain and recruit members. Another way to help is supporting the fundraisers sent to your mailbox.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION

Cathleen MacInnes, New York, ALA Foundation Board of Directors President

The value of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation was clearly demonstrated during the 2021–2022 administration year. The ALA Foundation supported the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, ALA Girls Nation, caregiver initiatives, and 30 grants to support needs at the unit and department levels.

None of this would have been possible without our donors. The more than 9,000 donations made have provided \$417,153 in needed support to veterans, military, and their families. That impact will be felt for years to come.

Veteran Projects Fund grants have provided nearly \$23,000 to replace diminished siding at a veteran's home; to provide a bingo machine for the community living center at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and outdoor furniture for a state veterans home; to establish a veterans food pantry; and to install a sanitary, hands-free water fountain at a homeless center for veterans.

Three Veterans Creative Arts Festival grants have been awarded to support local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals at the VA Western New York Health Care System, the VA Finger Lakes Health Care System, and the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center. Mission in Action grants helped 15 ALA units and departments become recognized for their good works by awarding more than \$28,000 for branded table runners, pop-up tents, banners, storage containers, and more.

Finally, subgrants provided over \$72,000 to support Purple Up! Day activities, ALA Girls State programs, and other unit and department initiatives.

The ALA Foundation is proud to serve our nation's heroes. We are grateful to those who live out the American Legion Auxiliary's promise of *Service Not Self* by applying for ALA Foundation grants or by donating to make all the Foundation does possible.

AMERICANISM COMMITTEE

Norma Tramm, Minnesota, Chairman

Star Spangled Kids was created in 2015–2016 when Diane Duschek was the Children & Youth Committee national chairman. Back then, Diane said it was a great way for kids to embrace Americanism. Star Spangled Kids teaches kids about the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It is important to have children become more interested in our founding documents. In 2017–2018, a patch was created for Juniors.

In 2019, it was decided to move Star Spangled Kids to the Americanism program and to focus on Star Spangled Kids as part of the Americanism program. We offered a challenge to units—they were to share how they promoted Star Spangled Kids and would have an opportunity to receive a box of Americanism items in a random drawing.

Winners of the drawing were Hayes-Velhage Unit 96, West Hartford, Conn.; Durkee-Seager Unit 550, Cement City, Mich.; and Unit 360, Weatherly, Pa. Units were reminded to use the items in the box and share with others if they could not use everything. Georgeann Herling of Unit 360 did just that and at their spring executive meeting. Karen

Livengood of Unit 445 was the winner of the DVD *For Which It Stands*, as Unit 360 already had one. What a wonderful way to share the wealth and knowledge!

Units reached out to elementary students, sharing the U.S. Constitution with patriotic coloring books, activity books, and distributing U.S. Constitutions. Facts about the U.S. Constitution were placed in weekly newspapers. A great way to share the Constitution is as an introduction to The American Legion Oratorical Contest, which the Legion Family supports.

Through the Americanism program, the American Legion Auxiliary continues to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMITTEE **Trish Ward, Kansas, Chairman**

The Children & Youth Committee works collaboratively with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.

Florida's Old Glory Unit 183 got creative with their "Tushies and Toes" event, which was targeted to raise awareness of the need for socks and shoes for schools in a high poverty zone. Together, they collected 539 pairs of socks, along with additional garments and cash to support needy children in their community.

Spearfish Unit 164 in South Dakota made the initiatives of the Children & Youth program a priority for their members. The unit started a program called Operation Gold Angels to support a child suffering from a rare form of brain cancer and support his family. They raised money, donated gift cards, and surprised the family with generous donations.

The Department of Minnesota's Children & Youth project was to create children's pillowcases loaded with care items for donation to the Eagle's Healing Nest, where they are distributed to children of servicemembers who suffer from the invisible wounds of war. Across the wider landscape, units and members proudly wore purple to create awareness of military children in April and participated in activities that communicated the unique challenges often faced by these children.

Recognizing young caregivers was a special focus, and the Children & Youth program's Youth Caregiver Award enabled units to honor young people who made caregiving to others a priority.

As we look forward to our next century of service, our focus on the care and welfare of America's children creates a brighter future on behalf of those we serve.

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE **Denise Conrad, California, Chairman**

As the effects of the pandemic are still being felt across the world, American Legion Auxiliary members are caring for others in our communities because this is who we are and what we do. Being visible in our communities through community projects helps to let people know why we matter.

Many of our units chose to have food drives for their food pantries. Events in Nebraska included a "Stuff the Truck" with food for the local pantry, and, of course, they didn't forget the pets. In New Hampshire, they displayed a "Memory Tree" at local funeral homes and around the community. The tree is lit with colored lights, and anyone can honor a loved one with the purchase of a light for \$1. The colored light is then changed to a white light, and the money is donated to the local food pantry. Units also reported assisting family members with funeral arrangements and celebration of life ceremonies.

Units posted colors at local sporting events, and some provided meals for athletes before or after the events. Meals were also made for first responders during an emergency event or as a thank-you for all they do for the community. In Tennessee, they have "Coffee for Cops," where they invite the community to meet and greet local law enforcement

officers. They also invite all veterans and have an American Legion service officer on hand to answer questions.

South Dakota partnered with the Northern Hills Training Center Residential Services to help mentally, or health-challenged community members find a place to live that best fits their needs. Ohio chose to focus on the caregivers of the mentally ill as a department project.

Our members always wear their American Legion Auxiliary apparel with pride, letting our communities know we are here to help.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE **Melanie Taylor, California, Chairman**

Elizabeth Warren once said, “A good education is a foundation for a better future.” The American Legion Auxiliary believes education is vital, and by investing our time and money in the students and schools in our communities, especially the children of our military and veterans, we are investing in America’s future.

American Legion Auxiliary departments continued to be tested this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite this, the Give 10 to Education program was very successful. Many departments reported creative ways of collecting and delivering these items to schools.

Fifteen Children of Warriors National Presidents’ scholarships, five Spirit of Youth scholarships, five Non-Traditional Student scholarships, and eight Junior Member Loyalty scholarships were awarded this year, totaling \$130,000!

Notably, the Department of Illinois reported 104 scholarships were awarded, totaling \$56,033.75.

Unit 360 in Weatherly, Pa., took part in the Dr. Seuss Read Across America Day by providing books to their schools and reading to the classrooms. They and the school staff dressed up as the Cat in The Hat, Thing One, and Thing Two to some very excited students.

Twelve units in the 18th district Department of California came together to collect books for the Lewis Elementary School Library at Fort Irwin, located in Southern California. A total of 1,013 books were delivered to the Fort Irwin PTA.

In observance of Teacher Appreciation Week, General Daniel “Chappie” James Unit 776, Department of Ohio, showed their appreciation to the teachers and staff of Beverly Gardens Elementary School by providing doughnuts, coffee, and orange juice.

American Legion Auxiliary units continue to improve the lives of our children by their generous donations of time and money. All of our members can be proud.

ALA GIRLS NATION COMMITTEE **Nancy Magginnis, Indiana, Chairman**

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs have experienced a few challenges after going through two years of various COVID-related circumstances, from canceling sessions to converting to virtual programs, and now transitioning in 2022 back to in-person sessions. However, the ALA Girls State directors and their committees found ways to meet and overcome every obstacle thrown their way.

Post-COVID found departments looking to fundraising efforts and/or increased fees to help with the financial burdens they faced due to lower delegate numbers. A few departments moved their site locations. Most departments dealt with increased insurance costs. The Department of Wisconsin, which canceled ALA Badger Girls State the previous two years, looked to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation for assistance. Knowing their attendance numbers would be down, they requested funds to help promote their program and the ALA to the delegates who attended. The Foundation also provided funding for a new flag, flag holders, badge holders, gavels, totes, tablecloths, banners, and

a tent with the ALA emblem on it. All materials granted were branded items that will be reused every year.

A number of ALA Girls State sessions added or enhanced social media through their programs. Several departments now livestream sessions for family members, friends, and unit members — giving others the opportunity to learn more about ALA Girls State. They also added virtual opportunities in other significant ways to strengthen their programs. The Department of Minnesota chose to eliminate paper and marker campaign signs. Citizens were given a website where they edited a page for their political campaign.

Since going through the challenges COVID presented, most departments can echo what the Department of Utah stated: “Being forced to go virtual forced us to evolve.”

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Debra Albers, Nebraska, Chairman

Department Junior Activities Chairman Starr Purnell of Maryland said it best: “We focus on the reasons we joined. Zoom, conference calls, and social media are ways to keep Juniors participating.” The Departments of Maryland, New York, Virginia, Alaska, and Arizona hosted virtual meetings. The Department of Illinois had three Junior meetings across the state. Making cards, gifts, treat bags, and singing Christmas carols in front of veteran homes were popular activities.

Florida and Iowa’s Juniors participated in camps designed to learn about the ALA; the Departments of Alabama and Georgia held leadership camps for Juniors, Kansas hosted a Junior lockdown, and Texas had a pool and pizza party. In nearly every department, Juniors worked on the Patch Program, packed boxes for troops, held poppy distributions, conducted flag ceremonies, placed flags on Memorial Day, held flag disposal ceremonies, and participated in parades. Unit 321 North Carolina Juniors identified Blue Star families and presented them with banners. Juniors in Maryland raised over \$3,700 for Our Military Kids and donated over \$2,500 to purchase homeless care bags.

Juniors from Michigan recognized National President Kathy Daudistel’s project by helping caregivers. Juniors helped elderly neighbors with pets, yard work, and helped with hair while others volunteered at veterans homes and assisted living facilities. Juniors earned caregiver patches and certificates. Ohio Juniors raised \$5,600 for “caring bags” for veterans and senior citizens.

Community Service activities included Halloween Trunk-or-Treat events, Christmas and Valentine parties, and Easter egg hunts. They helped with filling food pantries and backpacks for school supplies. Kansas and Delaware Juniors packed diaper bags to donate to veterans and Nevada Juniors engaged in activities to help new mothers.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Beth McGinn, Delaware, Chairman

Successes were many this year for The American Legion Legislative Division. These wins were due in part to the involvement of the American Legion Auxiliary grassroots members who signed up and responded to Action Alerts issued throughout the year for support of major bills that impacted veterans and military. The Department of Arizona members did not let a pandemic stop them from sharing legislative information with their units. Many attended the Washington Conference virtually, as did many other Auxiliary members, and contacted their legislators through phone calls, letters, emails, and Zoom 574 times!

There were significant wins for the nation’s women veterans. Two of the gains were The Protecting Moms Who Served Act that will improve mental health care for veterans and The Deborah Sampson Act which established an office of women’s health within the VHA to oversee women’s health programs and ensure standards of care for women veterans.

To share the importance of voting, many units held Get Out the Vote events at their post homes, Meet the Candidates nights, and Town Hall meetings. California Alpine Unit 258 held a free breakfast where they invited the county mayor who is a veteran and a member of an American Legion post in Chicago. They reported that the mayor's wife signed up as an Auxiliary member after the event.

A major initiative for 2021-2022 was passing the Honoring Our PACT Act that would ensure veterans who were exposed to toxic airborne hazards are taken care of in a proactive manner. Over 18,000 communications were sent to Congress by members of The American Legion Family urging the passing of this bill. American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard traveled to seven states to build grassroots support for this act.

Don't stop now! There is still work to be done.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE **Diana Sirovina, Wisconsin, Chairman**

The National Security program maintains and promotes a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military servicemembers and their families. Our members were there with caring hearts and helping hands whenever and wherever they were needed.

Virginia's Unit 1 was contacted on behalf of the Blue Star Families organization to assist with Christmas gift purchases for families of five active-duty airmen who were geographically separated from family readiness groups and military bases where they could have otherwise received assistance. Unit 1 collaborated with other members of The American Legion Family, and the project came together in just six days. Each household received a patriotic quilt, gifts from the children's wish lists, and \$150 gift card.

Members of a Washington, D.C. unit adopted an active-duty family who was sent on medical emergency to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The family had just reunited with the servicemember in Germany when he was taken seriously ill. The whole family returned to the U.S., and this unit provided clothing, toiletries, and household goods for their temporary living situation. They even provided babysitting and meals for the family. Unit 1 supported this family for six months until the servicemember was cleared for duty and returned to Germany.

Units also actively participated in the many other phases of the ALA National Security program. They organized blood drives and sponsored Community Emergency Response Trainings (CERT). They held recognition events for first responders and donated blankets, comfort items, and toys to local police and fire departments.

Many units distributed Blue Star Banners and participated in Gold Star remembrance ceremonies. Units participated in POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremonies, Silent Marches, and POW/MIA Remembrance Day in September.

POPPY COMMITTEE **Sallie Rossman, Virginia, Chairman**

The American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program continued to grow with members working with our youth and schools to expand the poppy story and *In Flanders Field*. This knowledge allowed the poppy mission to go beyond the youth and out into our communities. Units worked in schools to produce poppies from paper to ceramic, displaying the poppies on walls, windows, and lawns. Students created motivating poppy posters displayed in their schools and the community to expand the Auxiliary's presence from schools to businesses. At a Georgia high school, the agricultural teacher was presented with poppy seeds, which the students planted in areas around the school. All are great ways to show the Auxiliary's mission.

Poppy painting in the Department of Colorado combined learning with fundraising. Through HEAL HER Art, an Arizona program that provides an avenue for women veterans

to express themselves, members had the experience of poppy painting. Their artwork was donated to assist in fundraising for Colorado's Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Poppy distributions begin on National Poppy Day® with poppy distributions held throughout the year, allowing members to collaborate with organizations and businesses to share the ALA's mission of the red poppy supporting our veterans, military, and their families. Members reported accomplishing their mission with 10,197 members volunteering 20,988 hours, distributing 414,287 poppies for a total donation of \$1,792,288. Units ordered 786,251 red poppies for distribution in 2021–2022.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Lisa Williamson, Alaska, Chairman

The mission of our Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program is to enhance the lives of veterans, military, and their families.

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) and Service to Veterans are significant parts of our VA&R program. Generally, any service for a veteran done inside a VA facility would fall under VAVS; anything else would be Service to Veterans.

Recognition of the time an ALA member has is in the form of a Service to Veterans pin and associated hour bars. Hour bars are for all volunteers whose hours are attributed to VA&R, both inside and outside of a VA facility.

As you can surmise, with access to VA facilities limited the past couple of years, ALA volunteers weren't able to spend much time inside the VA facilities, but they made up ground outside. ALA National Headquarters is seeing a trend of more requests for hour bars, with some departments requesting them that haven't done so in several years.

National President Kathy Daudistel's focus—*Caring For Those Who Care For Others*—also allowed us to adjust those who can earn pins and bars. Caregivers are now being awarded Service to Veterans pins and hour bars for time spent providing care and assistance to veterans within their families if they do not receive monetary compensation for doing so. If the caregiver lives with the veteran, they were awarded 10 hours a week; if they didn't live with the veteran, they earned five hours a week.

Upcoming national ALA leadership has vowed to continue honoring caregivers with hour bars, so keep track of your hours and make sure to report them in the future to earn your Service to Veterans hour bars.

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND COMMITTEE

Pamela Bates, Ohio, Chairman

The mission of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is to educate members about the two grants available should members need disaster or temporary assistance, and encourage donations to the fund through holding fundraisers at all levels.

This administrative year, the AEF has currently provided 184 grants for a total of \$119,842.14. There were wildfires, tornadoes, flooding, snowstorms, hurricanes, and more.

When the division chairmen heard of a disaster, they contacted the AEF department chairmen to offer assistance if needed. The AEF Facebook group had weekly information posts from the national and division chairmen. The division chairmen wrote a weekly bulletin to their departments, who shared that information with their members. The number of weekly grants per department and the amount awarded was posted in the AEF Facebook group.

Members who received grants for either disaster relief or temporary relief felt the full measure of what the AEF is all about. Members who participated in the fundraisers understood the meaning of helping each other in a time of need, and they understood how their efforts were not unnoticed by those receiving grants and those participating in donating to the AEF.

Since the AEF solely relies on its members for donations, fundraising ideas were shared in our quarterly Zoom meetings and division bulletins to departments. The creative and sometimes unconventional fundraising ideas ranged from department challenges with other departments, department/unit chairmen challenging other American Legion Family members, fill the bottles and piggy banks with coins, a silly tax on members' household items, dinners, a Motown show, bake sales, raffles, food fairs, auctions, and individual/unit memorial donations.

Members exemplified the AEF motto of "Members Helping Members" and the ALA promise of *Service Not Self*.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Pam Ray, Illinois, Chairman

What a year of learning it was, not only for units and departments, but for this national chairman as well. Governing documents are necessary for a consistent, smooth-running unit, department, or national organization. With questions we received, it was clear that big things are in the bylaws, but many situations are not addressed in the bylaws or the standing rules.

If there is something you do each year, make it a standing rule. If you have expectations of your officers and chairmen, make them part of your bylaws and/or standing rules. You can't expect members to know traditions.

All reports stated that units and departments were reviewing their governing documents. Indiana reported that 80 units made major revisions in their C&B and standing rules this year. Kansas held two interactive presentations at their Fall Conference and Mid-Winter in-person meeting. They planned a brown bag event at their department convention. Minnesota worked with Professional Parliamentarian Chris Dickey to improve and clarify their standing rules. Mississippi reported that units and members were more aware and excited about their governing documents. They had no idea how many conflicts and situations could and should be handled via their documents. The C&B is a ray of HOPE: H for harmony, O for opportunity, P for people's participation, and E for equality. Thank you, Mississippi!

Several departments reported working on wording to address the pandemic and/or a catastrophic event. Nebraska won the services of Chris Dickey in an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation auction. They took full advantage of that privilege—they will be considering a full revision of their bylaws at their convention.

Departments are sending newsletters monthly with information and training.

I leave you with a question that I learned is always the first thing to say: "What do your governing documents say?"

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Brenda Collins, South Carolina, Chairman

Divisions worked with departments, districts, and units to promote the Leadership program.

Indiana concentrated on three areas: nurturing a culture of goodwill, mentoring, and the ALA Academy, and they had a successful year.

New York recognized members who took the leadership test, and several leadership workshops were held at their Fall Conference.

Colorado prepared leaders by educating, engaging, and empowering members.

Numerous department leadership chairmen put together leadership survival kits. South

Carolina also put one together for the Juniors, replacing the rubber band with a stress ball, to hopefully reduce accidents. Items in the leadership survival kit:

A rubber band to always remind you to be flexible.

A paperclip to hold reports and volunteer hours together.

An eraser to remind you that mistakes are not permanent.
 Bubblegum to remind you that the child within you is important.
 Crayons to inspire you to go out and color the world.
 Smarties to remind you that you are smart and to make good decisions.
 Post-it notes to keep communications flowing.
 Quotes to inspire the leader within.
 Snickers bars to keep you laughing.
 Pencils to write down those good ideas.
 A Band-Aid to remind you to heal problems and hard feelings.
 Stars to remind you what you are reaching for.

Idaho reported their department leadership training at their department convention had several topics, some of which were *Planning for Success and Setting an Example*.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE **Michele DeGennaro, Florida, Chairman**

I am so proud of all the hard work each and every one of you has done this year! In reading your reports, there were so many “aha! moments.” And now, to highlight just a few...

The Department of Michigan’s membership theme was “Bee-lieve”—the more they believed, the more aha! moments they had. With a few emails, calls, and visits by other members, struggling units reached record highs—some units doubling membership to over 200%. They played membership games, held pay-it-forward challenges, and then it happened! In the words of Department Membership Chairman Connie Kovacs: “The ultimate *AHA! MOMENT*—Michigan made goal!”

The Pennsylvania department Membership chairman had her own aha! moment. While talking to a new employee at work, she quickly realized the new employee’s father was a past state commander. In speaking with her further, she also found out her membership had expired. Not only was the Membership chairman able to present the new hire with a picture of her father in his American Legion uniform, but she also supplied her with two applications for her and her mother.

Department of Arizona was reaching for the goal as their Membership team contacted units in their district to see if they could assist them with renewing, recruiting, and rejoining members. They posted kudos and congratulations to units reaching 100% and cheered on the awesome job members did with membership.

Unit 13 Canon City in the Department of Colorado made themselves visible to the community. They were in constant contact with membership for meetings and events. They mentored new members and reached their 100% goal before the first department goal in November 2021.

It has been an amazing year. I am honored and humbled to have served as your national Membership Committee chairman.

PUBLIC RELATIONS **Joyce Cooper, Maryland, Chairman**

In a world of technology, public relations is like an artist’s dream. We have a slew of canvases to work and choose from. Webster B. Harrison Unit 26 in Maryland has a project where they take donated wedding dresses, sew them into gowns, and take them to local hospitals where they donate them to parents who recently lost an infant or child. The gowns are presented to grieving families so they can bury their loved ones in them. Webster B. Harrison Unit 26 calls this their angel gowns. A story ran in the May 2022 issue of *Auxiliary* magazine.

Another canvas: The Department of Hawaii Honorary National Junior Division Vice President hosted students from a variety of NYC schools around the Pearl Harbor military

sites in an effort to spread aloha, awareness of military service, and to honor Pearl Harbor. Also in Hawaii, the Junior department president earned the third highest rank in the state for their JROTC program at the nationally ranked Punahou School.

There are unlimited ways we can promote our program, such as social media—like Facebook, Instagram, and more—by using and creating flyers or posters, and sending thank-you cards. Branding and wearing our logo when you go out or when making those flyers or posters is important.

Don't forget: You can go to www.ALAforVeterans.org where there is a fount of information you can use.

Report of Independent Auditors



Crowe LLP
Independent Member Crowe Global

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of The American Legion National Headquarters ("Legion"), which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of December 31, 2021 and 2020, 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.

In our opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Legion as of December 31, 2021 and 2020, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Legion and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for 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.

In preparing the consolidated financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Legion's ability to continue as a going concern for one year from the date the consolidated financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the consolidated financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Legion's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Legion's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Supplementary Information

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 other 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
July 5, 2022

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,222,988	\$ 2,357,289
Accounts receivable	5,427,680	4,458,259
Interest receivable	912,364	1,029,840
Prepaid expenses and deposits	3,329,898	3,566,909
Deferred membership expense	3,944,234	3,675,147
Inventory	3,186,910	3,847,011
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	<u>42,794</u>	<u>42,097</u>
	20,066,868	18,976,552
Investments		
General	27,956,201	32,042,798
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved Funds	40,226,047	39,527,477
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	28,880,686	26,327,303
Samsung scholarship fund	7,557,844	7,894,494
Building funds	8,276,568	8,004,132
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	17,608,335	16,701,655
Special account – Endowment Fund	2,086,596	2,181,347
General account – Endowment Fund	12,839,954	9,997,425
National Emergency Fund	6,829,609	7,374,556
American Legion Charities	5,666,741	5,627,624
Other	<u>4,548,286</u>	<u>4,611,388</u>
	162,476,867	160,290,199
Property, plant and equipment, net	<u>5,545,580</u>	<u>4,599,235</u>
	<u>\$ 188,089,315</u>	<u>\$ 183,865,986</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 4,627,024	\$ 1,324,285
Scholarships payable	1,971,760	717,297
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	617,497	487,635
Deferred income	1,289,797	1,848,229
Deferred dues income	22,512,681	23,838,285
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	2,803,706	3,282,655
Accrued vacation benefits	842,333	829,099
Accrued pension expense	18,999,412	24,539,006
Other liabilities	212,159	1,991,018
Notes payable	-	3,824,000
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life membership	23,294,215	24,482,851
Life memberships due to state and local posts	<u>26,575,652</u>	<u>27,853,299</u>
	103,746,236	115,017,659
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restriction	31,119,272	19,388,183
With donor restriction	<u>53,223,807</u>	<u>49,460,144</u>
Total net assets	<u>84,343,079</u>	<u>68,848,327</u>
	<u>\$ 188,089,315</u>	<u>\$ 183,865,986</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended December 31, 2021

	Without Donor <u>Restriction</u>	With Donor <u>Restriction</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support			
National member dues	\$ 27,407,718	\$ -	\$ 27,407,718
Direct membership solicitations	5,596,968	-	5,596,968
Member service fees income	496,828	-	496,828
Affinity income	4,000,000	-	4,000,000
Sales of emblem items	12,247,254	-	12,247,254
Advertising	7,024,231	-	7,024,231
Contributions	19,914,839	5,936,506	25,851,345
Label and printing fees	213,045	-	213,045
Interest and dividends, net of fees	1,471,532	1,109,657	2,581,189
Net realized gains - investments	168,749	125,780	294,529
Other	<u>5,272,025</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,272,025</u>
	83,813,189	7,171,943	90,985,132
Net assets released from restriction	<u>2,334,665</u>	<u>(2,334,665)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenues, gains, and other support	86,147,854	4,837,278	90,985,132
Expenses			
Salaries	15,313,002	-	15,313,002
Employee benefits	5,482,466	-	5,482,466
Cost of sales - Legion	6,556,637	-	6,556,637
Department and magazine costs	1,221,645	-	1,221,645
Direct publications	9,299,355	-	9,299,355
Executive, staff and program travel	2,443,211	-	2,443,211
Commission and committee	954,309	-	954,309
Printing and postage	16,591,875	-	16,591,875
Scholarships, grants and awards	3,108,864	-	3,108,864
Office and other operating	18,115,264	-	18,115,264
Occupancy and usage	1,801,006	-	1,801,006
Special projects and programs	<u>4,130,849</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,130,849</u>
	85,018,483	-	85,018,483
Change in net assets from operations	1,129,371	4,837,278	5,966,649
Net unrealized loss - investments	(301,977)	(1,073,615)	(1,375,592)
Net change in PUFL	1,704,384	-	1,704,384
Amortization of pension loss	(2,698,665)	-	(2,698,665)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	8,073,976	-	8,073,976
Gain on forgiveness of PPP loan payable	<u>3,824,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,824,000</u>
Change in net assets	11,731,089	3,763,663	15,494,752
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>19,388,183</u>	<u>49,460,144</u>	<u>68,848,327</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 31,119,272</u>	<u>\$ 53,223,807</u>	<u>\$ 84,343,079</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Revenue, gains and other support			
National member dues	\$ 28,411,650	\$ -	\$ 28,411,650
Direct membership solicitations	5,985,220	-	5,985,220
Member service fees income	389,317	-	389,317
Affinity income	4,000,000	-	4,000,000
Sales of emblem items	9,372,107	-	9,372,107
Advertising	6,913,995	-	6,913,995
Contributions	16,826,216	1,876,745	18,702,961
Label and printing fees	292,176	-	292,176
Interest and dividends, net of fees	1,724,952	1,222,686	2,947,638
Net realized gains (losses) - investments	112,431	(12,146)	100,285
Other	<u>2,353,911</u>	<u>5,292</u>	<u>2,359,203</u>
	76,381,975	3,092,577	79,474,552
Net assets released from restriction	<u>3,668,476</u>	<u>(3,668,476)</u>	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support	80,050,451	(575,899)	79,474,552
Expenses			
Salaries	15,142,083	-	15,142,083
Employee benefits	5,792,389	-	5,792,389
Cost of sales - Legion	5,210,529	-	5,210,529
Department and magazine costs	1,121,962	-	1,121,962
Direct publications	9,601,714	-	9,601,714
Executive, staff and program travel	518,865	-	518,865
Commission and committee	425,732	-	425,732
Printing and postage	14,827,089	-	14,827,089
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,918,996	-	1,918,996
Office and other operating	11,865,810	-	11,865,810
Occupancy and usage	2,209,718	-	2,209,718
Special projects and programs	<u>2,848,469</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,848,469</u>
	<u>71,483,356</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>71,483,356</u>
Change in net assets from operations	8,567,095	(575,899)	7,991,196
Net unrealized gain - investments	2,292,488	1,856,609	4,149,097
Net change in PUFL	959,270	-	959,270
Amortization of pension loss	(2,224,672)	-	(2,224,672)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	<u>(1,192,424)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,192,424)</u>
Change in net assets	8,401,757	1,280,710	9,682,467
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>10,986,426</u>	<u>48,179,434</u>	<u>59,165,860</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 19,388,183</u>	<u>\$ 49,460,144</u>	<u>\$ 68,848,327</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

	Program Services		Supporting Services			2021 Total
	Veterans Programs Services	Americanism and Children and Youth Activities	Management and General	Member Development	Fundraising	
<u>2021</u>						
Salaries	\$ 6,185,628	\$ 552,537	\$ 7,727,984	\$ 806,515	\$ 40,338	\$ 15,313,002
Employee benefits	652,109	56,464	4,688,710	82,223	2,960	5,482,466
Cost of sales - Legion	6,556,637	-	-	-	-	6,556,637
Department and magazine costs	1,175,561	-	2,214	-	43,870	1,221,645
Direct publications	9,299,355	-	-	-	-	9,299,355
Executive, staff and program travel	603,415	1,217,975	601,450	19,907	464	2,443,211
Commission and committee	651,671	56,704	231,192	14,742	-	954,309
Printing and postage	2,029,405	1,792	110,563	2,635,324	11,814,791	16,591,875
Scholarships, grants, and awards	2,025,277	912,009	-	171,578	-	3,108,864
Office and other operating	2,521,391	227,813	8,290,827	6,445,642	629,591	18,115,264
Occupancy and usage	22,205	1,418	1,232,809	544,574	-	1,801,006
Special project programs	2,112,042	556,279	1,462,225	303	-	4,130,849
Total	<u>\$ 33,834,696</u>	<u>\$ 3,582,991</u>	<u>\$ 24,347,974</u>	<u>\$ 10,720,808</u>	<u>\$ 12,532,014</u>	<u>\$ 85,018,483</u>
	Program Services		Supporting Services			2020 Total
	Veterans Programs Services	Americanism and Children and Youth Activities	Management and General	Member Development	Fundraising	
<u>2020</u>						
Salaries	\$ 6,400,098	\$ 533,307	\$ 7,360,577	\$ 848,101	\$ -	\$ 15,142,083
Employee benefits	657,568	54,967	4,993,365	86,489	-	5,792,389
Cost of sales - Legion	5,210,529	-	-	-	-	5,210,529
Department and magazine costs	1,057,416	-	1,367	-	63,179	1,121,962
Direct publications	9,601,714	-	-	-	-	9,601,714
Executive, staff and program travel	279,410	24,896	200,692	13,867	-	518,865
Commission and committee	344,403	4,384	75,592	1,353	-	425,732
Printing and postage	1,440,775	5,492	58,436	2,792,547	10,529,839	14,827,089
Scholarships, grants, and awards	962,284	772,212	217	184,283	-	1,918,996
Office and other operating	2,385,094	109,378	2,044,383	6,797,112	529,843	11,865,810
Occupancy and usage	24,422	1,264	1,657,309	526,723	-	2,209,718
Special project programs	1,993,031	186,804	668,634	-	-	2,848,469
Total	<u>\$ 30,356,744</u>	<u>\$ 1,692,704</u>	<u>\$ 17,060,572</u>	<u>\$ 11,250,475</u>	<u>\$ 11,122,861</u>	<u>\$ 71,483,356</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$ 15,494,752	\$ 9,682,467
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to		
net cash from operating activities		
Depreciation expense	496,914	590,089
Realized gain on sale of investments	(294,529)	(100,285)
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	1,375,592	(4,149,097)
Net change in Paid-Up-For-Life annuity	1,704,384	959,270
Amortization of pension loss	2,698,665	2,224,672
Pension-related changes other than		
net periodic pension cost	(8,073,976)	1,192,424
Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness	(3,824,000)	-
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	(4,144,096)	(709,567)
Bad debt expense	(31,506)	-
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(937,915)	2,665,318
Interest receivable	117,476	(21,075)
Prepaid expenses and deposits	237,011	(1,163,674)
Deferred membership expense	(269,087)	508,008
Inventories	660,101	(338,089)
Beneficial interest in trust	-	36,264
Accounts and scholarships payable	4,557,202	(4,325,789)
Deferred income	(6,403,790)	632,971
Accrued pension expense	(164,383)	412,110
Other accrued liabilities	<u>(1,765,625)</u>	<u>694,286</u>
Net cash from operating activities	1,433,190	8,790,303
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(1,436,912)	(1,353,874)
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	-	226,628
Purchase of investments	(114,231,869)	(93,285,016)
Sales and maturities of investments	110,957,891	81,353,000
Investments in affiliate (CFA)	<u>(697)</u>	<u>(4,790)</u>
Net cash from investing activities	(4,711,587)	(13,064,052)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	4,144,096	709,567
Paycheck Protection Program loan proceeds	-	3,824,000
Repayment on notes payable	<u>-</u>	<u>(215,148)</u>
Net cash from financing activities	<u>4,144,096</u>	<u>4,318,419</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	865,699	44,670
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>2,357,289</u>	<u>2,312,619</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 3,222,988</u>	<u>\$ 2,357,289</u>
Supplemental cash flows information		
Interest paid	\$ -	\$ 30,786
Investment maturities	1,775,000	-
Forgiveness of PPP loan	3,824,000	-

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2021 and 2020

**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). Contributions generate an additional 18 - 22% of revenue. Advertising for the American Legion Magazine derives approximately 10% of income. 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. There are \$1,597,351 and \$1,496,506 of board designated net assets included in the net assets without donor restrictions as of December 31, 2021 and 2020, respectively. These funds have been designated by the American Legion Charities Board for quasi endowment.

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.

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

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, 2021 and 2020.

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, 2021 and 2020.

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, Plant, and Equipment: Expenditures for property, plant, 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 30- 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, 2021 and 2020.

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. 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.

Revenue Recognition: The Legion recognizes revenue either as performance obligations are materially satisfied, contracts expire or are invalidated, and/or as applicable terms warrant. This includes affinity income, sales of emblems, advertising and other revenue streams not specifically outlined in note 1.

Member Dues Income and Expense: Member 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 2021 and 2020, 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, 2021 and 2020, 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, 2021 and 2020.

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.

Subsequent Events: Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to December 31, 2021, to determine the need for any adjustments or disclosures to the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2021. Management has performed their analysis through July 5, 2022, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2021 and 2020

NOTE 2 – PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP) LOAN

In December 2019, a novel strain of coronavirus surfaced and has spread around the world, with resulting business and social disruption. The coronavirus was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020. As a result of the economic uncertainty stemming from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in May 2020, the Legion received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan for \$3,824,000 from the United States Small Business Administration (SBA). The Legion accounted for the PPP Loan as debt under ASC 470 and therefore, recognized the \$3,824,000 of revenue when the loan was forgiven in June 2021. Further disclosure of the loan is included within notes payable in note 7 of the financial statements.

NOTE 3 – 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	(unaudited) 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 4 – 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 \$697 and \$4,790 in 2021 and 2020, 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 2021 and 2020.

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.

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, 2021 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Assets:			
Money market accounts	\$ 33,851,525	\$ -	\$ -
U.S. Government obligations	-	15,022,272	-
State and municipal bonds	-	46,768,542	-
Corporate bonds	-	38,922,956	-
Common Stock	27,911,572	-	-
	<u>\$ 61,763,097</u>	<u>\$ 100,713,770</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

NOTE 5 – FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS
(continued)

The tables below present 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, 2021 and 2020:

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2020 using			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)	
Assets:				
Money market accounts	\$ 26,245,946	\$ -	\$ -	
U.S. Government obligations		19,325,615	-	
State and municipal bonds	-	66,198,886	-	
Corporate bonds	-	47,994,252	-	
Common Stock	525,500			
	<u>\$ 26,771,446</u>	<u>\$ 133,518,753</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	

NOTE 6 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The Legion's property and equipment, and the related accumulated depreciation at December 31, 2021 and 2020 are as follows:

	2021	2020
Washington, D.C., real estate		
Land	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
Building	5,765,411	5,692,323
Indianapolis real estate		
Land	389,264	389,264
Building	4,230,713	4,230,713
Furniture, fixtures and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis	7,823,580	7,013,456
Washington, D.C.	707,829	714,532
Construction in progress	769,563	1,924,939
	19,766,360	20,045,227
	(14,220,780)	(15,445,992)
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>\$ 5,545,580</u>	<u>\$ 4,599,235</u>

Depreciation expense for the years ended, December 31, 2021, and 2020 was \$496,914 and \$590,089, respectively.

NOTE 7 – NOTES PAYABLE

In May 2020, The Legion obtained a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan under a program offered by the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) in the amount of \$3,824,000. The Legion accounted for the PPP loan as debt under ASC 470. The Legion received notice of formal forgiveness of the loan in June 2021 and recorded a gain on forgiveness of debt for the year ended December 31, 2021.

NOTE 8 – LEASES

The Legion has several non-cancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, and copiers that expire at various dates through 2023. Rent expense under these leases for the years ended December 31, 2021, and 2020 was \$335,731 and \$349,105, respectively.

Minimum lease commitments are as follows:

2022	\$ 170,038
2023	38,568
2024	30,641
2025	7,389
	<u>\$ 246,636</u>

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 under the same terms as the original lease agreement. 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 2021 and 2020 was \$756,400 and \$753,348, 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

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NOTE 10 – RESTRICTED AND RESERVE DESIGNATED FUNDS
(continued)

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 2021 and 2020. As of December 31, 2021 and 2020, the restricted fund had an investment balance of \$38,037,073 and \$37,247,800, 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, 2021 and 2020, the reserve fund had an investment balance of \$2,188,974 and \$2,279,677, 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 veteran affairs and rehabilitation and children and youth activities of the Legion.

At December 31, 2021 and 2020, net assets with donor restriction by specific purpose and in perpetuity are as follows:

	2021	2020
<u>With specific purpose</u>		
Overseas graves decoration fund	\$ 974,799	\$ 1,002,680
Samsung scholarship	2,099,786	2,428,886
American Legacy Fund	16,968,558	16,161,942
National Emergency Fund	7,209,654	7,514,002
Boy Scouts	467,899	467,899
Operation Comfort Warrior	3,821,756	3,921,651
John DeVore	362,390	364,508
Edwin J. Dentz VA Boy's State	683,438	710,152
Samsung American Legion Alumni Association	281,703	316,668
Others	223,966	546,515
Total with specific purpose	33,093,949	33,434,903
<u>In perpetuity</u>		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	15,129,858	11,025,241
Total in perpetuity	20,129,858	16,025,241
Total assets with donor restriction	<u>\$ 53,223,807</u>	<u>\$ 49,460,144</u>

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.

	2021	2020
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Overseas graves decoration	\$ 20,976	\$ 10,592
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	895,854	1,276,396
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth programs	1,417,835	2,381,488
	<u>\$ 2,334,665</u>	<u>\$ 3,668,476</u>

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

NOTE 13 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (continued)

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2021:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Donor restricted endowment funds	\$ 87,526	\$ 22,434,861	\$ 22,522,387
Total Funds	\$ 87,526	\$ 22,434,861	\$ 22,522,387

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2020:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Donor restricted endowment funds	\$ 122,078	\$ 18,387,512	\$ 18,509,590
Total Funds	\$ 122,078	\$ 18,387,512	\$ 18,509,590

Changes in endowment net assets for the year ended December 31, 2021:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 122,078	\$ 18,387,512	\$ 18,509,590
Investment gain:			
Investment income, net of fees	46,897	449,648	496,545
Net depreciation (realized and unrealized)	(30,788)	(299,219)	(330,007)
Total investment gain	16,109	150,429	166,538
New gifts	-	4,144,096	4,144,096
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(50,661)	(247,176)	(297,837)
Net assets, end of year	\$ 87,526	\$ 22,434,861	\$ 22,522,387

Changes in endowment net assets for the year ended December 31, 2020:

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 56,600	\$ 16,929,275	\$ 16,985,875
Investment gain:			
Investment income, net of fees	51,080	415,525	466,605
Net depreciation (realized and unrealized)	76,473	628,320	704,793
Total investment gain	127,553	1,043,845	1,171,398
New gifts	-	709,567	709,567
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	(62,075)	(295,175)	(357,250)
Net assets, end of year	\$ 122,078	\$ 18,387,512	\$ 18,509,590

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.

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, 2021 and 2020, 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 \$387,388 and \$367,225 in 2021 and 2020, 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.

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NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (continued)

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, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Benefit obligation	\$ (59,742,581)	\$ (64,148,563)
Fair value of plan assets	47,761,757	46,182,398
Funded status	<u>\$ (11,980,824)</u>	<u>\$ (17,966,165)</u>
Interest cost	\$ 1,298,207	\$ 1,705,130
Actual return on assets	(4,790,075)	(5,342,125)
Amortization of prior service costs	442,267	442,267
Amortization of loss	2,382,858	2,075,549
Difference between expected and actual return on assets	1,699,643	2,372,988
Net periodic pension cost	<u>\$ 1,032,900</u>	<u>\$ 1,253,809</u>
Net gain/(loss)	\$ (6,575,974)	\$ 1,573,247
Prior service cost	(442,267)	(442,267)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	<u>\$ (7,018,241)</u>	<u>\$ 1,130,980</u>
Prepaid benefit cost	\$ 3,279,325	\$ 3,912,225
Accumulated benefit obligation	59,742,581	64,148,563
Vested benefit obligation	59,156,360	64,148,563
Net periodic pension cost	1,032,900	1,253,809
Benefits paid	3,610,716	3,549,689
Measurement date	12/31/2021	12/31/2020

Estimated future benefit payments:

2022	\$ 3,812,220
2023	3,824,752
2024	3,780,940
2025	3,732,665
2026	3,691,662
Years 2027-2031	17,339,761

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, 2021 and 2020 are as follows. See Note 6 for descriptions of inputs for each type of asset.

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2021, using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued interest	\$ 172,591	\$ -	\$ -
Money market accounts	2,048,265	-	-
U.S. Government and agency obligations	-	4,403,059	-
Municipal bonds	-	3,708,931	-
Corporate bonds	-	13,236,949	-
Common stock:			
Materials	1,611,126	-	-
Industrials	1,359,790	-	-
Consumer discretionary	2,155,802	-	-
Consumer staples	1,992,629	-	-
Health care	3,679,700	-	-
Financials	4,967,177	-	-
Telecommunication	1,612,359	-	-
Technology	5,773,231	-	-
Utilities	1,040,148	-	-
	<u>\$ 26,412,818</u>	<u>\$ 21,348,939</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2019, using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued interest	\$ 200,659	\$ -	\$ -
Money market accounts	2,028,625	-	-
U.S. Government and agency obligations	-	5,248,648	-
Municipal bonds	-	3,479,407	-
Corporate bonds	-	16,225,676	-
Common stock:			
Materials	1,326,313	-	-
Industrials	1,203,820	-	-
Consumer discretionary	2,290,126	-	-
Consumer staples	1,499,687	-	-
Energy	264,680	-	-
Health care	2,758,026	-	-
Financials	3,644,941	-	-
Telecommunication	1,004,952	-	-
Technology	4,463,473	-	-
Utilities	543,365	-	-
	<u>\$ 21,228,667</u>	<u>\$ 24,953,731</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (continued)

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	2021	2020
Discount rate	2.52%	2.09%
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, 2021 are \$ 2,382,858 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, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Benefit obligation	\$ (12,067,267)	\$ (10,261,920)
Fair value of plan assets	5,048,679	3,689,079
Funded status	<u>\$ (7,018,588)</u>	<u>\$ (6,572,841)</u>
Service cost	\$ 864,650	\$ 809,893
Interest cost	252,924	239,107
Actual return on assets	(417,696)	(324,245)
Amortization of prior service costs	370,027	370,027
Amortization of loss	315,807	149,123
Difference between expected and actual return on assets	115,770	139,068
Net periodic pension cost	<u>\$ 1,501,482</u>	<u>\$ 1,382,973</u>
Net loss	\$ (685,708)	\$ 431,471
Prior service cost	(370,027)	(370,027)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	<u>\$ (1,055,735)</u>	<u>\$ 61,444</u>
Prepaid benefit cost	\$ (1,623,713)	\$ (1,149,353)
Accumulated benefit obligation	8,608,011	6,116,637
Vested benefit obligation	7,533,403	7,069,775
Net periodic pension cost	1,501,482	1,382,973
Benefits paid	85,218	69,646
Measurement date	12/31/2021	12/31/2020

Estimated future benefit payments:

2022	\$ 156,043
2023	201,790
2024	239,608
2025	279,740
2026	343,272
Years 2027-2031	2,665,832

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 B assets at December 31, 2021 and 2020 are as follows. See Note 6 for descriptions of inputs for each type of asset.

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2021 using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
Accrued interest	\$ 16,158	\$ -	\$ -
Money market accounts	1,309,928	-	-
U.S. government and agency obligations	-	-	-
Municipal bonds	-	636,749	-
Corporate bonds	-	1,046,763	-
Common stock:	-	-	-
Materials	153,965	-	-
Industrials	123,704	-	-
Consumer discretionary	173,575	-	-
Consumer staples	170,411	-	-
Health care	288,755	-	-
Financials	274,404	-	-
Telecommunication	47,901	-	-
Technology	719,432	-	-
Utilities	86,934	-	-
	<u>\$ 3,365,167</u>	<u>\$ 1,683,512</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

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NOTE 14 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (continued)

	Fair Value Measurements at Dec. 31, 2020 using			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)	
Accrued interest	\$ 15,609	\$ -	\$ -	
Money market accounts	31,639	-	-	
U.S. government and agency obligations	-	116,558	-	
Municipal bonds	-	1,004,149	-	
Corporate bonds	-	926,724	-	
Common stock:				
Materials	110,858	-	-	
Industrials	102,754	-	-	
Consumer discretionary	194,065	-	-	
Consumer staples	124,464	-	-	
Health care	230,684	-	-	
Financials	211,267	-	-	
Telecommunication	84,963	-	-	
Technology	467,453	-	-	
Utilities	67,892	-	-	
	<u>\$ 1,641,648</u>	<u>\$ 2,047,431</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	

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	2021	2020
Discount rate	2.79%	2.48%
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, 2021 are \$315,807 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:

	2021	2020
Financial assets at year-end:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,222,988	\$ 2,357,289
Accounts receivable, net	5,427,680	4,458,259
Interest receivable	912,364	1,029,840
Investments	162,476,867	160,290,199
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 172,039,899</u>	<u>\$ 168,135,587</u>
Less amounts not available for general expenditure within one year:		
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ (20,129,858)	\$ (16,025,241)
Financial assets not available to be used within one year	<u>\$ (20,129,858)</u>	<u>\$ (16,025,241)</u>
Financial assets available to meet general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 151,910,041</u>	<u>\$ 152,110,346</u>

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.

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	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,503,739	\$ 991,878	\$ 540,607	\$ 186,764	\$ -	\$ 3,222,988
Accounts receivable	3,857,112	-	1,668,912	133,659	(232,003)	5,427,680
Interest receivable	734,249	37,178	81,315	59,622	-	912,364
Prepaid expenses and deposits	3,146,780	183,118	-	-	-	3,329,898
Deferred membership expense	3,944,234	-	-	-	-	3,944,234
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	3,186,910	-	-	-	-	3,186,910
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	42,794	-	-	-	-	42,794
	<u>18,415,818</u>	<u>1,212,174</u>	<u>2,290,834</u>	<u>380,045</u>	<u>(2,232,003)</u>	<u>20,066,868</u>
Investments						
General	27,956,201	-	-	-	-	27,956,201
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	40,226,047	-	-	-	-	40,226,047
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	28,880,686	-	-	-	-	28,880,686
Samsung scholarship fund	7,557,844	-	-	-	-	7,557,844
Building funds	8,276,568	-	-	-	-	8,276,568
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	17,608,335	-	-	-	-	17,608,335
Special account – Endowment Fund	-	-	2,086,596	-	-	2,086,596
General account – Endowment Fund	-	-	12,839,954	-	-	12,839,954
National Emergency Fund	-	-	-	6,829,609	-	6,829,609
American Legion Charities	-	5,666,741	-	-	-	5,666,741
Other	<u>4,548,286</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,548,286</u>
	<u>135,053,967</u>	<u>5,666,741</u>	<u>14,926,550</u>	<u>6,829,609</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>162,476,867</u>
Property, plant and equipment, net	<u>5,545,580</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,545,580</u>
	<u>\$ 159,015,365</u>	<u>\$ 6,878,915</u>	<u>\$ 17,217,384</u>	<u>\$ 7,209,654</u>	<u>\$ (2,232,003)</u>	<u>\$ 188,089,315</u>
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	\$ 4,498,583	\$ 360,444	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (232,003)	\$ 4,627,024
Scholarships payable	1,971,760	-	-	-	-	1,971,760
Due to American Legion National Headquarters	-	-	2,000,000	-	(2,000,000)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	617,497	-	-	-	-	617,497
Deferred income	1,289,797	-	-	-	-	1,289,797
Deferred dues income	22,512,681	-	-	-	-	22,512,681
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	2,803,706	-	-	-	-	2,803,706
Accrued vacation benefits	842,333	-	-	-	-	842,333
Accrued pension expense	18,999,412	-	-	-	-	18,999,412
Other liabilities	212,159	-	-	-	-	212,159
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	23,294,215	-	-	-	-	23,294,215
Life memberships due to state and local posts	<u>26,575,652</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,575,652</u>
	<u>103,617,795</u>	<u>360,444</u>	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,232,003)</u>	<u>103,746,236</u>
NET ASSETS						
Without donor restriction	28,365,259	2,666,487	87,526	-	-	31,119,272
With donor restriction	<u>27,032,311</u>	<u>3,851,984</u>	<u>15,129,858</u>	<u>7,209,654</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,223,807</u>
Total net assets	<u>55,397,570</u>	<u>6,518,471</u>	<u>15,217,384</u>	<u>7,209,654</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>84,343,079</u>
	<u>\$ 159,015,365</u>	<u>\$ 6,878,915</u>	<u>\$ 17,217,384</u>	<u>\$ 7,209,654</u>	<u>\$ (2,232,003)</u>	<u>\$ 188,089,315</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2020

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 913,560	\$ 308,576	\$ 895,686	\$ 239,467	\$ -	\$ 2,357,289
Accounts receivable	4,581,279	432,872	50,000	-	(605,892)	4,458,259
Interest receivable	827,220	47,119	91,208	64,293	-	1,029,840
Prepaid expenses and deposits	3,566,909	-	-	-	-	3,566,909
Deferred membership expense	3,675,147	-	-	-	-	3,675,147
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventory	3,847,011	-	-	-	-	3,847,011
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	42,097	-	-	-	-	42,097
	<u>19,453,223</u>	<u>788,567</u>	<u>1,036,894</u>	<u>303,760</u>	<u>(2,605,892)</u>	<u>18,976,552</u>
Investments						
General	32,042,798	-	-	-	-	32,042,798
Segregated for Restricted and Reserved funds	39,527,477	-	-	-	-	39,527,477
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership fund	26,327,303	-	-	-	-	26,327,303
Samsung scholarship fund	7,894,494	-	-	-	-	7,894,494
Building funds	8,004,132	-	-	-	-	8,004,132
Sept. 11 Memorial scholarship fund	16,701,655	-	-	-	-	16,701,655
Special account – Endowment Fund	-	-	2,181,347	-	-	2,181,347
General account – Endowment Fund	-	-	9,997,425	-	-	9,997,425
National Emergency Fund	-	-	-	7,374,556	-	7,374,556
American Legion Charities	-	5,627,624	-	-	-	5,627,624
Other	<u>4,611,388</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,611,388</u>
	135,109,247	5,627,624	12,178,772	7,374,556	-	160,290,199
Property, plant and equipment, net	<u>4,599,235</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,599,235</u>
	<u>\$ 159,161,705</u>	<u>\$ 6,416,191</u>	<u>\$ 13,215,666</u>	<u>\$ 7,678,316</u>	<u>\$ (2,605,892)</u>	<u>\$ 183,865,986</u>
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	\$ 1,708,286	\$ 870	\$ 68,347	\$ 154,674	\$ (605,892)	\$ 1,324,285
Scholarships payable	717,297	-	-	-	-	717,297
Due to American Legion National Headquarters	-	-	2,000,000	-	(2,000,000)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	487,635	-	-	-	-	487,635
Deferred income	1,848,229	-	-	-	-	1,848,229
Deferred dues income	23,838,285	-	-	-	-	23,838,285
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	3,282,655	-	-	-	-	3,282,655
Accrued vacation benefits	829,099	-	-	-	-	829,099
Accrued pension expense	24,539,006	-	-	-	-	24,539,006
Other liabilities	1,961,378	-	-	9,640	-	1,991,018
Notes payable	3,824,000	-	-	-	-	3,824,000
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life Membership	24,482,851	-	-	-	-	24,482,851
Life memberships due to state and local posts	<u>27,853,299</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27,853,299</u>
	115,390,020	870	2,068,347	164,314	(2,605,892)	115,017,659
NET ASSETS						
Without donor restriction	16,956,722	2,309,382	122,079	-	-	19,388,183
With donor restriction	<u>26,614,963</u>	<u>4,105,939</u>	<u>11,025,240</u>	<u>7,514,002</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>49,460,144</u>
Total net assets	<u>43,771,685</u>	<u>6,415,321</u>	<u>11,147,319</u>	<u>7,514,002</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>68,848,327</u>
	<u>\$ 159,161,705</u>	<u>\$ 6,416,191</u>	<u>\$ 13,215,666</u>	<u>\$ 7,678,316</u>	<u>\$ (2,605,892)</u>	<u>\$ 183,865,986</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	\$ 27,407,718	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,407,718
Direct membership solicitation	5,596,968	-	-	-	-	5,596,968
Member service fees - income	496,828	-	-	-	-	496,828
Affinity income	4,000,000	-	-	-	-	4,000,000
Sales of emblem items	12,247,254	-	-	-	-	12,247,254
Advertising	7,024,231	-	-	-	-	7,024,231
Contributions	20,092,690	2,071,685	4,144,096	580,119	(1,037,245)	25,851,345
Label and printing fees	213,045	-	-	-	-	213,045
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,024,656	110,575	251,786	185,687	8,485	2,581,189
Net realized gains - investments	246,593	22,204	6,130	19,602	-	294,529
American Legion Endowment Fund income	215,637	-	-	-	(215,637)	-
Other	5,280,510	-	-	-	(8,485)	5,272,025
	<u>84,846,130</u>	<u>2,204,464</u>	<u>4,402,012</u>	<u>785,408</u>	<u>(1,252,882)</u>	<u>90,985,132</u>
Expenses						
Salaries	15,313,002	-	-	-	-	15,313,002
Employee benefits	5,482,466	-	-	-	-	5,482,466
Cost of sales - Legion Department and - magazine costs	6,556,637	-	-	-	-	6,556,637
Direct publications	1,221,645	-	-	-	-	1,221,645
Executive, staff and program travel	9,299,355	-	-	-	-	9,299,355
Commission and committee	2,441,713	-	1,498	-	-	2,443,211
Printing and postage	954,309	-	-	-	-	954,309
Scholarships, grants and awards	16,591,875	-	-	-	-	16,591,875
Office and other operating	1,683,103	1,631,099	215,638	831,906	(1,252,882)	3,108,864
Occupancy and usage	18,032,823	41,084	38,413	2,944	-	18,115,264
Special projects and programs	1,801,006	-	-	-	-	1,801,006
	<u>3,811,569</u>	<u>319,280</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,130,849</u>
	<u>83,189,503</u>	<u>1,991,463</u>	<u>255,549</u>	<u>834,850</u>	<u>(1,252,882)</u>	<u>85,018,483</u>
Change in net assets from operations	1,656,627	213,001	4,146,463	(49,442)	-	5,966,649
Net unrealized loss - investments	(934,437)	(109,851)	(76,398)	(254,906)	-	(1,375,592)
Net change in PUFL	1,704,384	-	-	-	-	1,704,384
Amortization of pension loss	(2,698,665)	-	-	-	-	(2,698,665)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	8,073,976	-	-	-	-	8,073,976
Gain on forgiveness of PPP loan payable	3,824,000	-	-	-	-	3,824,000
Change in net assets	11,625,885	103,150	4,070,065	(304,348)	-	15,494,752
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>43,771,685</u>	<u>6,415,321</u>	<u>11,147,319</u>	<u>7,514,002</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>68,848,327</u>
Net assets, end of year	\$ 55,397,570	\$ 6,518,471	\$ 15,217,384	\$ 7,209,654	\$ -	\$ 84,343,079

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Charities	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	\$ 28,411,650	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,411,650
Direct membership solicitation	5,985,220	-	-	-	-	5,985,220
Member service fees income	389,317	-	-	-	-	389,317
Affinity income	4,000,000	-	-	-	-	4,000,000
Sales of emblem items	9,372,107	-	-	-	-	9,372,107
Advertising	6,913,995	-	-	-	-	6,913,995
Contributions	16,701,584	1,070,607	709,564	236,206	(15,000)	18,702,961
Label and printing fees	292,176	-	-	-	-	292,176
Interest and dividends, net of fees	2,343,987	132,867	263,458	199,646	7,680	2,947,638
Net realized losses – investments	113,220	(2,138)	(9,951)	(846)	-	100,285
American Legion Endowment Fund income	242,649	-	-	-	(242,649)	-
Other	2,366,883	-	-	-	(7,680)	2,359,203
	<u>77,132,788</u>	<u>1,201,336</u>	<u>963,071</u>	<u>435,006</u>	<u>(257,649)</u>	<u>79,474,552</u>
Expenses						
Salaries	15,142,083	-	-	-	-	15,142,083
Employee benefits	5,792,389	-	-	-	-	5,792,389
Cost of sales – Legion	5,210,529	-	-	-	-	5,210,529
Department and magazine costs	1,121,962	-	-	-	-	1,121,962
Direct publications	9,601,714	-	-	-	-	9,601,714
Executive, staff and program travel	518,865	-	-	-	-	518,865
Commission and committee	425,732	-	-	-	-	425,732
Printing and postage	14,827,089	-	-	-	-	14,827,089
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,129,407	492,667	242,648	311,923	(257,649)	1,918,996
Office and other operating	11,830,014	20,606	10,858	4,332	-	11,865,810
Occupancy and usage	2,209,718	-	-	-	-	2,209,718
Special projects and programs	2,710,910	137,559	-	-	-	2,848,469
	<u>70,520,412</u>	<u>650,832</u>	<u>253,506</u>	<u>316,255</u>	<u>(257,649)</u>	<u>71,483,356</u>
Change in net assets from operations	6,612,376	550,504	709,565	118,751	-	7,991,196
Net unrealized gains – investments	3,160,430	245,374	423,307	319,986	-	4,149,097
Net change in PUFL	959,270	-	-	-	-	959,270
Amortization of pension loss	(2,224,672)	-	-	-	-	(2,224,672)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost	(1,192,424)	-	-	-	-	(1,192,424)
Change in net assets	7,314,980	795,878	1,132,872	438,737	-	9,682,467
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>36,456,705</u>	<u>5,619,443</u>	<u>10,014,447</u>	<u>7,075,265</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>59,165,860</u>
Net assets, end of year	\$ 43,771,685	\$ 6,415,321	\$ 11,147,319	\$ 7,514,002	\$ -	\$ 68,848,327