106th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 106–187

PROCEEDINGS OF 81*st* NATIONAL CONVENTION *of the*

AMERICAN LEGION

Anaheim, California

September 7–9, 1999

106th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 106–187

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION, THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 81ST NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, FROM SEPTEMBER 7, 8, AND 9, 1999, AS WELL AS A REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49

FEBRUARY 1, 2000.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

62–291 WASHINGTON : 2000

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, February 1, 2000.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In compliance with current public law we herewith transmit for printing as a House document a financial statement and independent audit of the American Legion, proceedings of our 81st annual National Convention held in Anaheim, California, from September 7, 8, and 9, 1999, and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

Sincerely,

STEVE A. ROBERTSON,
Director, National Legislative Commission.

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	*ix*
Tuesday, September 7, 1999	
Invocation	1
Post Everlasting Ceremony and Lighting of the Peace Candle	2
POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony	2
Presentation: Representation of The American Legion Youth Programs	3
Address: The Honorable Edward Royce	5
Address: The Honorable Shirley McCracken	7
David L. Eby, 1998–99 Department Commander	7
Bruce Thiesen	8
Call for Convention	9
Report: Section on Credentials & Other Internal Matters	11
Address: The Honorable Togo D. West Jr.	13
Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Award	17
Special Report: Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.	18
Address: The Honorable John McCain, Senator	23
Address: The Honorable Robert C. Smith, Senator	28
Mrs. Virginia Hobbs, Kentucky, National President, The American Legion Auxiliary	34
Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation to the National Chaplain	34
Presentation: Plaque of Appreciation to New Orleans, Louisiana	35
Report: National Commander's Report to the convention	36
Tribute to American Legion Founders	41
Address: Bert Pritchard, Dominion President, ANIVICUS	44
Address: Mary Ann Burdett, Dominion Vice President, Royal Canadian legion	45
Address: Lt. General Wu, Chi-liang, Secretary General, Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China	47
Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules	48
Report: Convention Committee on Finance	49
Rick Cook, Oklahoma, National Commander	51
Wednesday, September 8, 1999	
Invocation	55
Address: The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.	55
Address: The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch	60
Address: The Honorable Alan Cranston	67
Address: The Honorable Robert Mallett	70
Address: The Honorable Tomas Alvarado, Secretary	72
Address: Brig. General Wilma L. Vaught, USAF (Ret.)	75
Presentation: 1999 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year	77
Report Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters	78
Resolution No. 16: Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998	79
Resolution No. 18: DVETS Residency Requirement Reaffirmed	80
Resolution No. 30: Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force	80
Resolution No. 51: Disabled Veterans as Priority Under Americans with Disabilities Act	81
Resolution No. 54: Hire A Veteran Week	82
Resolution No. 79: Recognition Of Military Service And Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries	82
Resolution No. 84: Tax Credits For Certain Employers	83
Resolution No. 86: Support Revision Of VETS Performance Standards	84
Resolution No. 123: Job Protection For Service Connected Veterans Requiring Visits At VA Facilities	84

Page

Report Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters—Continued
Resolution No. 133: Change The Date Of Employ The Older Worker Week 85
Resolution No. 134: Support Of America's Older Workers 85
Resolution No. 7: VA Home Warranty Rules 87
Resolution No. 83: Support Improved Services For America's Veteran-Entrepreneurs 88
Resolution No. 135: Homeless Veterans 89
Resolution No. 184: Reaffirm Support For Department Of Veterans' Affairs Loan Guaranty Program 89
Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans 90
Presentation: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion 92
Presentation: The American Legion Employment Center Award 94
Report: Convention Committee on Americanism 98
Resolution No. 1: Reaffirms Determination of The American Legion to Secure Constitutional Protection for the Flag of the United States 98
Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy 100
Report: Section on Membership 102
Presentation: Department Membership Awards 103
Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation 105
Resolution No. 6: Special Pension for World War I Veterans 106
Resolution No. 29: VA Provide Appropriate Care For Gulf War Related Illnesses 107
Resolution No. 58: Protect Disability Rating after Ten Years 107
Resolution No. 62: Urge Congress to Provide Adequate Current and Future Financial Assistance for Veterans Health Care and Oppose Further Reductions in VA Health Care Personnel 107
Resolution No. 87: Support Increase in Claims Personnel for VA 108
Resolution No. 88: Eliminate All Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records 109
Resolution No. 89: The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation 110
Resolution No. 90: Maintain Adequate VA Hospital Bed Capacity And Staffing Levels 111
Resolution No. 95: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange 111
Resolution No. 97: Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits to Those Who Served in Israel and Turkey 112
Resolution No. 98: Gulf War Veterans Illnesses 113
Resolution No. 106: Urge VA To Make Organization-Specific Information Available To Veterans Service Organizations 114
Resolution No. 118: The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones 115
Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill Of Health 115
Resolution No. 153: Request DVA Establish Policy Of Enrollment In DVA Health Care System At The Time Of Separation From Active Military Service 116
Resolution No. 171: Support Improved Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling Services 117
Resolution No. 179: Support the Consolidation of VA Home Loan Guaranty Program for the Southwest Region in California 118
Resolution No. 181: Indirect Cost Reimbursement to VA by Non-VA and Collaborative Studies Research 118
Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy 120
Address: Major General John P. Herrling, USA (Ret.), Secretary 120
Report: Section on Credentials and Other Internal Matters 125
Resolution No. 151: Include Funeral Honors Activity in Consolidated Post Report 126
Resolution No. 183: Appreciation to Host City 126
Resolution No. 109: Postage Stamp Commemorating the Purple Heart Medal 127
Resolution No. 149: Support the National Veterans Hall Of Honors 127
Resolution No. 158: United States Flag Postage Stamp 127
Resolution No. 157: Audie Murphy Postal Stamp 128
Report: Convention Committee on Children & Youth 131
Presentation: Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award 132
Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendment 133

Thursday, September 9, 1999

Invocation 137

Page

Address: Lt. General Bruce Knutson, Jr. 137
Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award 141
Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations 141
Resolution No. 76: America's Future 142
Resolution No. 77: Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy 143
Resolution No. 154: Support for U.S. Steel Industry 144
Resolution No. 159: House Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs 144
Resolution No. 2: Policy on Support to The Republic of Korea 145
Resolution No. 3: China and Taiwan 146
Resolution No. 21: Trade with The People's Republic of China 146
Resolution No. 78: Chinese Espionage in the United States 147
Report: Convention Committee on National Security Committee 148
Resolution No. 17: Nuclear Security 149
Resolution No. 42: Status of Forces Agreements and Military Retiree Use of Overseas Military Facilities 149
Resolution No. 68: Military Funeral Honors for Veterans 150
Resolution No. 69: Proposals to Ensure A Strong National Defense 151
Resolution No. 94: Support for Aeronautical Research 153
Resolution No. 107: Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws 155
Resolution No. 60: Using Military Personnel for Experimentation Purposes 157
Resolution No. 70: The Armed Forces Retirement Homes 157
Resolution No. 75: American Battle Monuments Commission Funding 158
Resolution No. 92: Reserve and National Guard Force Levels 159
Resolution No. 137: Military Preparedness 159
Resolution No. 185: Contingency Planning For Military Conscription 160
Resolution No. 186: Support Expansion of Arlington National Cemetery 161
Resolution No. 187: Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program 162
Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander 168
Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers 169
Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander 177
Acceptance Speech by Newly Elected National Commander Alan Lance 177
Election of National Officers 183
Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander 188
Presentation of Newly Elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary 188
Benediction 189
Retirement of Colors 189
Announcement of Annual Awards 191
Abbreviations 197

The American Legion 81st Annual Report

Foreword, National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle 200
Excerpts from the Constitution of the American Legion 201
National Executive Committee 203
Reports of National Vice Commanders
Leo P. Burke, California 205
Fernando 'Fred' M. Goulart 207
James W. 'Jim' Gravenstein, Kansas 209
John D. Morris, Texas 210
Roger L. Tingler, Georgia 211
Reports:
National Chaplain 212
National Historian 213
National Judge Advocate 215
Administrative Services 226
Library, Museum and Internet Operations 229
Management Information Services 230
Americanism Commission 237
Counter-Subversive Activities Committee 235
Education Committee 235
Children & Youth Commission 237
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. 246
Convention Commission 252
Economic Commission 253
Employment Committee 256

Page

Reports—Continued
Economic Commission —Continued
Veterans Preference Committee 257
Finance Commission 259
Emblem Committee 260
American Legion Life Insurance Committee 261
Foreign Relations Commission 263
Internal Affairs Commission 268
Constitution and By-Laws Committee 270
Resolutions Assignment Committee 271
Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee 271
Membership and Post Activities Committee .....
The Sons of the American Legion 276
Legislative Commission 277
National Security Commission 298
Aerospace Committee 305
Defense Civil Preparedness 306
Law and Order Committee 307
Merchant Marine Committee 307
Military Affairs Committee 308
National Security Council 308
Naval Affairs Committee 309
Public Relations Commission 309
American Legion Magazine Commission 310
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission 311
Report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary 334
Consolidated Financial Statements with Supplementary Information 339

FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive resumé, in as small space as possible, of what took place at the Eighty-First Annual National Convention in Anaheim, California, September 7-9, 1999.

The final report of the National Organization for the period ending December 31, 1998, and Balance sheet as of December 31, 1998 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998 are included in the Summary.

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

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

Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutant

Note: At various times, the National Vice Commanders, as follows, presided over the Convention sessions, when called upon by presiding officer, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure as shown in the verbatim proceedings: Leo P. Burke, California; Roger L. Tingler, Georgia; James W. Gravenstein, Kansas; Fernando M. Goulart, Rhode Island; and John D. Morris, Texas.

XI

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

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

* indicates deceased

HONORARY COMMANDERS

General John J. Pershing*
Marshall Ferdinand Foch*

PARIS CAUCUS

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

ST. LOUIS CAUCUS

St. Louis, Missouri, May 8 to 10, 1919
Temporary Chairman: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. *, New York (Voted title of Past National Commander at 1949 National Convention)
Permanent Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas
Vice Chairmen: John J. Sullivan*, Washington; Fred Humphrey*, New Mexico; P.C. Calhoun*, Connecticut (Voted titles of Past National Vice Commanders at 1933 National Convention)
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1921 National Convention)

1st NATIONAL CONVENTION

Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10 to 12, 1919
Chairman: Henry D. Lindsley*, Texas (Voted title of Past National Commander at the 1919 National Convention)
Vice Chairman: Bennett C. Clark*, Missouri
Secretary: Eric Fisher Wood*, Pennsylvania
Treasurer: Gasper G. Bacon*, Massachusetts
Chaplain: Thomas H. Wiles*, Colorado

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

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

4th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16 to 20, 1922
Commander: Hanford MacNider*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: H. Nelson Jackson*, Vermont; George L. Berry*, Tennessee; Raymond O. Brackett*, Massachusetts; Charles H. Kendrick, California; John A. McCormack*, Colorado
Adjutant: Lemuel Bolles*, Washington
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Earl A. Blackman*, Kansas
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

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

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

7th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Omaha, Nebraska, October 5 to 9, 1925
Commander: James A. Drain*, Washington
Vice Commanders: Frank H. McFarland*, Kansas; Eugene P. Armstrong*, Connecticut; A.L. Perry, Panama; Peyton H. Hoge, Jr*, Kentucky; William Stern*, North Dakota
Adjutant: Russell G. Creviston*, Indiana , Resigned—Succeeded by James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Joseph M. Lonergan*, Illinois
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

8th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 11 to 15, 1926
Commander: John R. McQuigg*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Joseph Y. Cheney*, Florida; Hughes B. Davis*, Oklahoma; Vincent A. Carroll*, Pennsylvania; Raymond B. Littlefield*, Rhode Island; Judge James A. Howell*, Utah
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Treasurer: Robert H. Tyndall*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. William E. Patrick*, California
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Robert A. Adams*, Indiana

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

10th NATIONAL CONVENTION
San Antonio, Texas, October 8 to 11, 1928
Commander: Edward E. Spafford*, New York
Vice Commanders: John T. Raftis*, Washington; Ralph T. O'Neil*, Kansas; Paul R. Younts*, North Carolina; Dan Spurlock*, Louisiana; John M. Henry*, Minnesota.
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. Gill Robb Wilson*, New Jersey
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

11th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky, September 30 to October 2, 1929
Commander: Paul V. McNutt*, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Lawrence E. McGann, Jr. *, Illinois; George W. Malone*, Nevada; Edward L. White*, Connecticut; Miller C. Foster, South Carolina; Walton D. Hood*, Texas
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rabbi Lee J. Levinger*, Delaware
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

12th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, October 6 to 9, 1930
Commander: O.L. Bodenhamer*, Arkansas
Vice Commanders: Milt D. Campbell*, Ohio; John J. Dugan*, Delaware; Morton M. David*, Colorado; Frank Schoble, Jr. *, Pennsylvania; Willis M. Brewer*, Michigan.
Adjutant: James F. Barton*, Iowa
Chaplain: Rev. George F. Kettell, D.D. *, New York
Treasurer: Bowman Elder*, Indiana
Historian: Eben Putnam*, Massachusetts
Judge Advocate: Scott W. Lucas*, Illinois

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

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

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

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 22 to 25, 1934
Commander: Edward A. Hayes*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Charles R. Mabey*, Utah: Robert L. Gordon, Arkansas; Miguel Munoz*, Puerto Rico; Ed W. Carruth*, Kansas; Charles L. Woolley*, Rhode Island.
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. White*, Massachusetts
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham*, Indiana

17th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Louis, Missouri, September 23 to 26, 1935
Commander: Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. *, California
Vice Commanders: Daniel J. Doherty*, Massachusetts; Harold J. Warner*, Oregon; John K. Kennelly*, North Dakota; Milo J. Warner*, Ohio; Quimby Melton*, Georgia
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Park W. Huntington*, Delaware
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: James A. Drain*, Washington
Judge Advocate: James A. Drain*, Washington

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

19th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, September 20 to 23, 1937
Commander: Harry W. Colmery*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: Salvatore A.Capodice*, California; Leo A. Temmey*, South Dakota; Leonard Sisk*, Tennessee; J. Fred Johnson, Jr. *, Alabama; Jack Crowley*, Vermont
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Bryan H. Keathley, D.D.*, Texas
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, November 18 to 21, 1945
Commander: Edward N. Scheiberling*, New York
Vice Commanders: Bascom F. Jones*, Tennessee; Frank E. McCaffrey, Rhode Island; Dan M. McDade*, Oregon; Ray S. Pierson*, Kansas; William P. Shadoan*, Kentucky.
Adjutant: Donald G. Glascoff*, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. DeWitt C. Mallory*, Florida
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

31st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 1, 1949
Commander: S. Perry Brown*, Texas
Vice Commanders: James Lane, Alabama; Leonard W. Moody*, Arkansas; James Annin*, Montana; Walter E. Alessandroni*, Pennsylvania; Edward J. Kelly*, Connecticut
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska.
Chaplain: Rev. Thomas Grice*, California
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

32nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Los Angeles, California, October 9 to 12, 1950
Commander: George N. Craig*, Indiana
Vice Commanders: Milton G. Boock*, Minnesota; David H. Fleisher*, Missouri; Frank E. Lowe*, Maine; J. E. Martie*, Nevada,: Dr. D. R. Perry*, North Carolina
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. Edward J. Carney*, O.S.A., Massachusetts
Historian: Monte C. Sandlin*, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

36th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 2, 1954
Commander: Arthur J. Connell*, Connecticut
Vice Commanders: John A. High*, New Hampshire; Dr. Deward H. Reed*, New Mexico; Truman C. Wold, North Dakota; Thomas W. Bird*, North Carolina, Herbert M. Walker*, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Dr. Tom B. Clark*, Oklahoma
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

37th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 10 to 13, 1955
Commander: Seaborn P. Collins*, New Mexico
Vice Commanders: Leonard L. Jackson*, Louisiana; Patrick H. Mangan*, Jr., Vermont; Howard C. Kingdom*, Ohio; Dr. Carl J. Rees*, Delaware; Robert L. Shelby*, Utah.
Adjutant: Henry H. Dudley*, Nebraska
Chaplain: Rev. Albert J. Hoffman*, Iowa
Historian: Robert T. Fairey*, South Carolina
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

41st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24 to 27, 1959
Commander: Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma
Vice Commanders: C. D. DeLoach, District of Columbia; John W. Collins*, Pennsylvania; James B. Kerrigan*, Missouri; Robert Charles Smith*, Louisiana; James C. Bangs*, Idaho
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Twiss*, Massachusetts
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

42nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Florida, October 15 to 20, 1960
Commander: Martin B. McKneally*, New York
Vice Commanders: William A. Brennan, Jr., Indiana; A. Layman Harman*, South Carolina: Nate V. Keller*, Minnesota; Irven Frank Gianotti*, Minnesota (appointed September 14, 1960, to fill vacancy created July 25 by the death of Nate V. Keller); Willard W. Brandt, North Dakota; Charles McGonegal*, California; Corydon T. Hill*, California (appointed May 4, 1960, to fill vacancy created January 27 by the death of Charles McGonegal)
Adjutant: E.A. Blackmore*, Wyoming
Chaplain: Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, D.H.L., Texas
Historian: Mrs. Charles A. (Emily) Herbert*, New Jersey
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

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

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

48th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Washington, D.C., August 30 to September 1, 1966
Commander: L. Eldon James*, Virginia
Vice Commanders: Dr. A.R. Choppin*, Louisiana; William E. Galbraith, Nebraska; Robert O. Phillips*, Philippines; William J. Rogers, Maine; Soleng Tom, Arizona.
Adjutant: E. A. Blackmore*, Wyoming (died 4-21-67)—Succeeded by Ernest N. Schmid 5-4-67 to 8-31-67
Chaplain: Rev. Alfred C. Thompson, New York
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

49th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, August 25 to 31, 1967
Commander: John E. Davis*, North Dakota
Vice Commanders: Robert M. Fritz*, Indiana; Lewis W. Emerich, Texas; Harry V. Klein*, Pennsylvania; Frank L. Orfanello*, Massachusetts; James A. Tadlock*, New Mexico
Adjutant: William F. Hauck, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Anthony J. O'Driscoll*, New York
Historian: Harold A. Shindler*, Indiana
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

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

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

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

56th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami Beach, Florida, August 16 to 22, 1974
Commander: Robert E. L. Eaton*, Maryland
Vice Commanders: John N. Roberto, Connecticut; Frank C. Brooks*, Washington; Gilbert E. Sheeks, Indiana; Merrick W. Swords Jr. *, Louisiana; N.E. Brown*, South Carolina
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry, Missouri
Historian: R. Robert Filter*, Wisconsin
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

58th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Seattle, Washington, August 20 to 26, 1976
Commander: Harry G. Wiles*, Kansas
Vice Commanders: John W. Adams, Jr., Kentucky; Fred W. Anderson, Jr., Nevada; Leo F. Malloy, Massachusetts; Thomas W. Miller, Arkansas; James F. Walker*, Minnesota.
Adjutant: William F. Hauck*, Indiana
Chaplain: Rev. Claude E. Smithmier, Georgia
Historian: Mrs. Dorothy Grimes, Colorado
Treasurer: William Francis Polen*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

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

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

62nd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, Massachusetts, August 15 to 21, 1980
Commander: Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana
Vice Commanders: G.Y. Fails*, New Mexico; Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin; Bob Legan, Arkansas; Max E. Robinson, North Carolina; Lawrence R. Spaulding*, New Hampshire.
Adjutant: Frank C. Momsen*, Minnesota
Chaplain: Rev. Karl E. Kniseley, California
Historian: Phillip Haddad, Oklahoma
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

63rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Honolulu, Hawaii, August 28 to September 3, 1981
Commander: Michael J. Kogutek, New York
Vice Commanders: Ralph M. Godwin*, Mississippi; Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah; Matthew W. Jamieson*, Michigan; Robert W. Lowry, Nebraska; Dr. Almo J. Sebastianelli, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. George S. Macres*, Minnesota
Historian: Neal S. Sundeen, Arizona
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

64th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, August 20 to 26, 1982
Commander: Jack W. Flynt*, Texas
Vice Commanders: Frank T. Markovich*, Missouri; Dan C. McDonough*, Alaska; Percy C. Miller, Tennessee; Melvin 'Doc' Simon, Vermont; David A. Wade*, Maryland.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. George R. M. Rumney, Virginia
Historian: Bernard J. Chisholm*, Minnesota
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

65th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Seattle, Washington, August 19 to 25, 1983
Commander: Al Keller, Jr.*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota; Margaret M. Malone, New Jersey; H. Melvin Napier, Indiana; Jack C. Plato*, Oregon; Leo O. Walker*, Oklahoma.
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Fr. John D. Kempf*, Ohio
Historian: James W. Conway, Massachusetts
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Bertram G. Davis*, New York

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

67th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, Louisiana, August 23 to 28, 1985
Commander: Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
Vice Commanders: Robert S. Turner, Georgia; Harold E. Collett*, Idaho; Ronald D. Birk, Kansas; Stewart Kunde*, Minnesota; Stephen J. Mikosky*, Pennsylvania
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Charles G. Rice, Jr.*, New York
Historian: Roy B. Mahoney, Florida
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

68th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cincinnati, Ohio, August 29 to September 4, 1986
Commander: Dale L. Renaud*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: Bernard Black, South Carolina; Norman Conn*, California; Vito M. DeFilipp, Maine; Miles S. Epling, West Virginia, H. F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Dr. Gordon L. Patterson, Nebraska
Historian: Ethel M. Matuschka, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

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

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

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

73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Phoenix, Arizona, September 3 to 5, 1991
Commander: Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Vice Commanders: Lewis Adams, Nebraska; James T. Anderson, Wyoming; Fred M. Ingellis, Mississippi; Harry F. McDowell, Florida; George E. Sampson, New Jersey
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Michas M. Ohnstad, Minnesota
Historian: Harold Matthew Branton, Texas
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

74th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois, August 25 to 27, 1992
Commander: Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: James 'Jim' G. Brouillette, Vermont; Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan; Ronald C. Murphy, Arizona; Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma; Lee R. Stolfus, Kansas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Donal M. 'Jack' Squires, West Virginia
Historian: Bettie M. Canon, Montana
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr, Maryland

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

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

77th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Indianapolis, Indiana, September 4 to 6, 1995
Commander : William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Vice Commanders: Joseph T. Craig, Alaska; Silas M. Noel, Kentucky; Calvin E. Patton, Maryland; H. Gordon Burleigh, New York; Vernon K. Grosenick*, Wisconsin
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Roy L. Pryor, South Carolina
Historian: M. LaReine Maxey*, Nevada, (died 10-7-94)—Appointed at 1994 Fall Meetings, Carl S. Wipperman, Washington
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

78th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30 to September 5, 1996
Commander: Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Vice Commanders: Keith Baker, Iowa; William L. Ciciotte, Maine; Robert D. Scott, Oregon; C. Darrel Haskell, South Dakota; Ralph J. Reel, Tennessee
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Joseph E. Reynolds, Texas
Historian: R. Paul Tenney, Vermont
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

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

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

81st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Anaheim, California, September 3 to 9, 1999
Commander: Butch L. Miller, Virginia

XXXII

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
Historian: Robert L. Klipstine
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Jr.
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

PROCEEDINGS

of the

81ST ANNUAL CONVENTION

of

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Tuesday, September 7, 1999

...At 8:30 a.m., the Delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole, our organist.

...At 9:00 a.m., the Delegates assembled for the 81st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted:

NATIONAL COMMANDER BUTCH MILLER: Before we begin our program, join me in a round of applause for Peter Ole and the wonderful job he has done for so many years here. It is with great pride that I now call this 1999 81st National Convention of The American Legion to order. Please rise as Speedway Color Guard of American Legion Post 500 in Speedway, Indiana presents our Colors. Remain standing for the singing of the National Anthem by the Junior Vice Commander of the Department of New Jersey, Mr. David Squibb. Color Guard, please post the Colors. Right hand salute. One. Two.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Let's give those gentlemen a round of applause from Post 500. For our Convention Invocation, I call on our National Chaplain, Father Robert J. Sweeney of Arthur Finnigan Post 1443 near his home in Greenwood Lake, New York.

Invocation
Rev. Robert J. Sweeney, New York, National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, words of truth, presence among us, the beginning and the end of our road, everything is wrought by Your love and grace. We give You thanks for the countless times You have protected our National Commander, Butch Miller, as he traveled this country, spreading the message of The American Legion. You have shielded him under Your outstretched wing. We pray, stir up our hearts, oh Lord. Let us neither be deaf nor lazy, but fill us with the active readiness of those who are truly faithful. In the darkness of this present time, may the purpose of The American Legion be fulfilled in us that we may continue to serve God and Country. Light up our lives as we begin this 81st Annual Convention of The American Legion. As we fought for liberty in foreign lands, give us the strength to advocate moral principles, respect for our flag and care of all veterans in this present age. This we ask in Your Holy Name. Amen.

Post Everlasting Ceremony and Lighting of the Peace Candle

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I now call on National Chaplain Father Sweeney for the Post Everlasting Ceremony and the Lighting of the Peace Candle.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SWEENEY: As we gather in National Convention, we once again pause to remember two distinguished men who guided our great organization for a year. First, Jack Flynt, Department of Texas, National Commander 1981-1982, a World War II Army Veteran and a member of Post 445 in Dimmitt, who passed away January 2, 1999. Second, Donald E. Johnson, Department of Iowa, National Commander 1964-1965, a World War II Army veteran and a member of Post 514 in West Branch, who passed away August 10, 1999. There passing brings to mind our short time of life and helps us to remember always to strive as others did. For it is in serving others that we influence the future. I ask now, National Sergeant-at-Arms, George C. Lussier of Virginia to light the Peace Candle.

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

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Now we pause to remember those who are listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. This morning, a special honor detail will place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair. The members of this detail are from John Armitage Post and Unit 684 in Ridge Crest, California. We are thankful that three Americans captured in Kosovo early this year were released unharmed. Yet, this morning, we reaffirm that The American Legion's resolve will never waver in determining the fate of those thousands of our comrades still listed as Missing in Action.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER: Legionnaires, please join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principals and ideas on which our great American Legion was founded by reciting with me, in unison, the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

...At this time, the Delegation recited the Preamble.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Good morning everyone. Morale is definitely high as we begin the 81st National Convention of The American Legion. I cannot help but reflect on the past and dream of our future. Each of us in our own way wants to make a difference, a difference in our family, a difference in our community, a difference for those who came who came before us and those who came after us. That translates into a legacy, our legacy. This morning, I'd like to ask you a question, and that is simply this: what is the legacy of The American Legion?

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

Presentation: Representation of The American Legion Youth Programs

1999 1st Place Winner National Oratorical Contest
Kevin Sladek, San Marcos, Texas

This is my country and I'm proud of it. Good morning. I'm Kevin Sladek of San Marcos, Texas, your 1999 National High School Oratorical Champion. With me this morning are champions from other American Legion programs. We want to say thank you to you and to the men and women you represent for making our future possible.

1998 Baseball Player of the Year
Chad Opel, Edwardsville, Illinois

I'm Chad Opel from Edwardsville, Illinois, the 1998 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year. Through my involvement with this great program, my immediate future has headed me toward Southern Illinois University where I will be studying for a degree in medicine. Yet for me, the lessons on sportsmanship, fair game and citizenship that are part of every American Legion baseball game will remain with me long after my playing days are over. I thank each of you for the impact that you've had on my life and for helping me build my foundation for the future.

1999 Gold Medalist, Precision Category
Junior Shooting Sports Program
Crystal Dove, Comer, Georgia

Good morning. I'm Crystal Dove of Comer, Georgia. I'm here today because just six weeks ago I became the 1999 Junior Shooting Sports Champion in the precision class. You might remember my sister Kelly. She was the champion last year. I know this competition is your newest youth program. You might even wonder about the benefits of such activities. Let me assure you, the competitors in this competition learn much more than just gun safety. Taking part in organized shooting competition has taught me three important life skills: discipline, the ability to mentally focus on a path and the need to set and achieve goals.

1999 Boys Nation President
Ryan Rippel, Columbia, Missouri

"My fellow Americans, lend me your ear." Sorry, Kevin, sometimes I get so carried away with this stuff. Commander Miller, distinguished guests, and delegates to the 81st National Convention of The American Legion, my name is Ryan Rippel and I'm from Columbia, Missouri and this past July I was elected President of The American Legion Boys Nation program. When I attended Missouri Boys State this past June, I dreamed of becoming Secretary of State. When that dream was realized, I began thinking about Boys Nation and the position that I would seek in Washington, DC. Becoming President was a difficult challenge, but a challenge that now has me looking toward my future with a stronger resolve than ever. I doubt that when Legionnaires in Illinois began developing the program that would become Boys State they dreamed of the great heights they would inspire

young men to achieve. Today, I stand with the youth champions of 1999, confident that our future will be bright and aware that each of you has made it all possible

KEVIN SLADEK: We are simply four young Americans, proud to be standing here and humble in the knowledge that each of you has sacrificed so much to make it possible for use to continue to dream. We do represent the majority of young citizens. We are proud of our nation, our states and our cities. And we are proud of the American flag.

But right now, we think it's time for you to get your toes tapping to some of the best patriotic music of the 20th Century. What do you say, guys? These young men, who are here today learning that you are the reason that they're future is possible, would like to say thank you in their own special way. Please welcome the 1999 All-American Boys Chorus.

CHORUS MEMBER: Our music is the America's music. We want to preserve the best of the light-hearted songs that have made America happy. This song has done the job since 1911. The man who wrote it knew how to make us cry with songs like "White Christmas". He could stir our American patriotism with songs like *God Bless America*. But Mr. Irving Berlin also knew how to have an all American good time with songs like *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.

...At this time, the Delegates listened to the choir.

CHORUS DIRECTOR: One of the hallmarks of the All American Boys Chorus is to attempt to instill in our youngsters a sense of determination, a sense of resolve, a sense of real leadership and what the boys like to call stout-heartedness. One of our fine young men steps forward now to sing about what it takes to be stout-hearted men.

...At this time, the Delegates listened to the choir.

CHORUS DIRECTOR: Our thoughts now go to the men and women who can still hear the echo of recent battles and to the memory of all of those who have given their lives for God and country. The young men of the All American Boys Chorus proudly raise their voices now in grateful song as they pay tribute to you, the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

...At this time, the Delegates listened to the choir.

CHORUS MEMBER: We extend a salute to The American Legion, to your life efforts and to your successes. You should know that it is the leadership and encouragement of people like yourselves that inspire us to look toward the future and reach for the stars. As the leaders of tomorrow, we the young men of the All American Boys Chorus sincerely and proudly salute you with the march music of American composer John Philip Sousa.

...At this time, the Delegates listened to the choir.

CHORUS DIRECTOR: We have been moved by all of the wonderful events that occurred here this morning and the short time that we've spent with you the All American Boys Chorus has had an incredible experience of The American Legion. The year 2000 will mark the 30th anniversary of this musical organization, the All American Boys Chorus. The boys have done so many incredible things through these decades. We do invite you to visit our booth at the far end of your trade show after the meeting has concluded today and find out more about the All American Boys Chorus, peruse the information and take some of their music home with you on CD or cassette tape. You're all very lucky because we just happen to have a few hundred of them here today and you will find them over in the trade show in our booth. Two albums of holiday music and two albums that we like to call Americana, the music of this great land of ours. In closing our part of this morning's program, we invite you to join us in singing about this great land, from New York to L.A. and all across the fruited plane, may God bless us all. May God bless America.

...At this time, the Delegates listened to the choir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Let's show the All American Boys Choir how much we appreciate it.

As we begin our 81st National Convention here in California, we are honored to have several individuals who have stopped by this morning to give us some greetings. Our first guest is the United States Representative for the 39th District of California, which includes the area of Anaheim that we are in right now. He's served in Congress since 1992 and is best known for his efforts to eliminate wasteful government spending, provide tax relief and streamline our regulations. It is with great pride that I ask you to join with me to welcome to the Honorable Ed Royce.

Address: The Honorable Edward Royce
United States House of Representatives

The American Legion is a truly outstanding organization because it understands two things. It understands the importance of veterans, and it understands the needs of its members. I am honored to be standing here today with you who have so selflessly given so that others may experience the freedom that we all cherish.

It states on the Korean War Memorial that freedom is not free. No one understands this better than you. This country owes its life's blood to its veterans. We look at you and we see loyalty, faith, devotion to America, and we take our cues from you. We and future generations are indebted to you, and especially we are indebted to that generation that Tom Brokaw calls our greatest generation. We are indebted for the service you rendered, but we're also indebted for the example that you set in defending liberty for all.

Your service to our country continues today. Through your efforts with our nation's youth, and programs like the scholastic competitions help our young people; they help them learn more about the United States; they help them learn self-government, and in the end the real winner is the United States, as tomorrow's leaders are learning to lead us today.

The American Legion understands something else. It understands America owes a debt of gratitude to her veterans, and we must not forget those veterans during their time of need. I want to acknowledge personally the effect that The American Legion has. When The VA Healthcare Spending Appropriations Bill came from the Administration, it showed the VA budget was short. The leadership of the VA went to work, and when that bill comes before Congress when we return, there will be 1.7 billion in additional spending so that we avoid the needless closure of veterans programs and facilities. It should enable us to meet the challenge of hepatitis C among veterans, and to increase spending on long-term care.

When the VA leadership speaks and when you speak, it is with a certain authority. I remember the vote in June on the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act. That provided for the cost of living increase for disability compensation and pensions, and it also accelerated construction of the National World War II Memorial. It also directed the VA Secretary to start planning four new National veteran cemeteries. That vote was four hundred twenty-four to zero. So as I say, veterans speak with a certain authority.

I briefly wanted to address one issue with you here today that many veterans have approached me about at town meetings and in speeches across the state. Veterans make the following point. They say the world today is a dangerous place. Americans depend on our armed services to protect our families at home, and our interests overseas. They say over the past several decades that our military has risen to the challenge, that we've preserved peace

through strength and through readiness. But they raise this concern: Veterans say as we approach this new century, that our national security is again impaired. They say over the past decade excessive deployments and inadequate funding have reduced American military strength to levels that they consider dangerously low. Foreign powers have penetrated our most vital research facilities and have obtained our deepest nuclear secrets, even as the world's most dangerous nations build these weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them, nations such as North Korea. American cities remain unprotected by any national missile defense.

People tell me that we as a nation learned these lessons the hard way. We learned peace through strength the hard way. We cannot continue to ask our military to do more with less. We know that America's enemies are imbolded by any weakness and deterred when we demonstrate strength, and when we demonstrate resolve. When veterans raise these points at town meetings and in letters that they send us in Congress, they're right. Excessive deployments and inadequate funding have reduced our military readiness, I believe, to dangerously low levels.

Since the end of the Cold War we have asked our military to do three times more with over one third less. By sending our forces on more missions with less support, our capacity to defend ourselves has eroded and created a true national security challenge. During the height of the Cold War, from 1960 to 1991, American troops were deployed 10 times. But post-Cold War, they have been deployed 26 times. There are now 265,000 American troops in 135 countries. And these deployments can dangerously erode our fighting capacity.

The U.S. came close to running out of air launch cruise missiles. More than half of the B-1 bombers at Elsworth Air Force Base lack critical spare parts. They are not mission capable.

A peace dividend is one thing, but America spends the least percentage of its gross national product on defense today than at any point since Pearl Harbor. Since 1989 the Army and Air Force have been reduced by 45 percent; the Navy by 36 percent; Marine Corps by 12 percent. In Congressional testimony late in April, the Air Force reported the worst situation: parts and equipment shortages of 18 billion; the Navy, 3.8 billion; the Army 3.7 billion and the Marines 3.2 billion. Now that's 28.7 billion in shortfall. And while we won the Gulf War in 1990 with eight of our 18 Army divisions, we have only 10 total divisions today, but need to be ready to fight two Gulf War size conflicts at once. And that's why our forces lack sufficient funds to do their job. And that is the reason why in the last few sessions Congress has beefed up inadequate requests for military authorizations by a full 29.5 billion dollars. This is being done because of the deterioration in readiness resulting from deployments. On May 20th, Congress put national security first by passing a bill to make deployment of a missile defense our national policy. In this authorization bill this year, 852 million to national missile defense will be spent to protect our cities and our families.

These are the new efforts being undertaken now to restore American security. And these efforts are being undertaken partly because of the leadership of The American Legion. Again, I thank everyone here for letting us live free. You are an inspiration to every American, and I'm honored to have had the chance to address you here today.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you Congressman Royce. It is indeed nice to know that we have friends in places who can help us.

Our next guest is a former educator. Yet, in reading her biography I was somewhat struck by her leadership involvement with countless non-profit organizations in the local Anaheim area. To say that in her 25 years of living in Anaheim she has made a difference

to both young and old would truly be an understatement. Please join me and welcome the Mayor Pro-Tem of Anaheim, Shirley McCracken.

Address: The Honorable Shirley McCracken
Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Anaheim

I consider it a privilege to be here today. I come from a family of veterans. They have served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Somalia, and have served in every branch of the armed forces except for the Coast Guard, so I will have to work on my son to consider the Coast Guard so we'll make sure we get them all.

Welcome to Anaheim to the members of The American Legion, from the mayor, from the members of the city council, and from the people of Anaheim. For it is the people of Anaheim that The American Legion plays a very special role in our community. We are fortunate to have them work in our community for veterans issues. For one special role, along with other veterans organizations, we will dedicate a monument to American veterans opposite our city hall on November 11th of this year due to the concerns of The American Legion.

Members of The American Legion work in community service and they work with our youth. We are very fortunate to have them involved. I would like to share with you some of the concerns we have for the veterans, many of whom we find homeless on our streets. Within the next 18 months, Anaheim will have a combined veterans home and veterans shelter to serve the needs of those men and women.

American Legion Conventions are places where you work for veterans issues and where you plan for your various community projects. I know that sometimes you spend a great deal of time and energy getting ready for the kinds of service you are going to do back home, but remember veterans, do take some time for R & R.

Welcome to Anaheim. Have a great time here. We feel privileged that you are with us and that you will share your time with us for the next few days. Remember that we treasure you so you can treasure all of those who have served ahead of you, and those who are still serving a very small number in all of the various branches of the united armed forces. Thank you for coming.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Shirley. You certainly have a beautiful city here and we appreciate being here.

Talking about being here, without the host department within the various states that we visit, having a National Convention would be almost impossible. In the past program year, California's Department Commander has led the effort to assemble all of the volunteers and other workers necessary to put on this National Convention for our successful gathering here. He is rightfully proud to have us in his home state, and I would add that we are proud to be here. Please give a warm greeting to the Immediate Past Department Commander of the Department of California, Dave Eby.

David L. Eby, 1998-99 Department Commander
The American Legion of California

It is indeed an honor to welcome you to California. On behalf of the 140,000 plus members in the Department of California, it is great to have you here. I want to direct your

attention over to the California banner to this year's Department Commander, Willie Wilkin, and the California delegation.

We have traveled many hours to get here; some several minutes; some several hours from just minutes away. But we have traveled from the great redwoods in the north; from the mountains of the northeast; from the high deserts in the south, to the sandy beaches of San Diego. And we invite you to visit each of our posts, and you will find why 10 percent of the veteran population in this great nation have chosen California as their home.

We worked hard this past year to organize one of the best conventions that California has ever known. You will see some individuals coming up behind me that made it possible. For the past year as Commander, it has been indeed a pleasure. And Commander Miller, we did lose your luggage, but we did find something. If you could come up here for a moment. I know this is very small but this is something that's very big in California. I present you with a Membership 2000 pin.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER EBY: We welcome you to California and wish you God speed, have a great convention, and may you have a safe visit and transportation back home.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Rounding out our greetings this morning is a man who is well known to all of us. He is a deputy in the California Department of Veterans Affairs, President of the California American Legion National Convention Corporation, and a member of an illustrious group that I am looking forward to joining in a few days, that is he is a Past National Commander.

Please welcome Past National Commander Bruce Thiesen.

Bruce Thiesen, President
The American Legion National Convention Corporation of California

I think we'll keep this convention going for another week. He's enjoying his position as National Commander so well.

Welcome to California. It's all that we said it would be and then some. I didn't know it would be so good for you in California this time of the year, so it has been an enjoyable opportunity and a pleasure to bring what I consider some of the best weather that California has to offer to Anaheim in '99 so that you can enjoy all the amenities that this great state has to offer.

I would like to say that as the National Commander did state, that I am the Deputy Secretary now of the Department of Veterans Affairs, appointed by Governor Gray Davis when he took office in January. Governor Davis has a busy schedule. Of course, he is a decorated Vietnam veteran, and extends his regrets that he cannot make it. As of last Thursday he had 1200 bills to sign by the close of work on Friday, September the 10th, which at that time our legislative body goes on recess until January. So their work is cut out for them. And today, being the first day of school starts up in California for many schools, and his involvement in education programs around the state, he had a couple commitments. The book is still open and we are looking forward to a possibility of having him with us. So again, he did extend his welcome to each and every one of you as I came before you this morning.

We have had joint cooperation with many, many Legionnaires and Auxiliary members throughout of State of California. Let me assure you throughout this nation, because it takes

a lot of effort and information, a lot of give and take from those departments who have hosted a convention such as this magnitude before. We have had some experience. We have with us in the audience Past National Commander Bill Burke, and of course Past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary Josie Melgard, both from California who offered some insight to our labors here. We have also had the help of one who has served this organization well this year, not past yet, but National Vice Commander Leo Burke. So Leo, thanks for your help and your input as well.

Putting together a convention of this magnitude is more than I ever envisioned. They elected me to serve as president of this corporation, and in turn I had to look for someone to carry the ball and move it forward who lived in the immediate area. Well, the person who was chosen early on in this endeavor was Joe Early, a Past Department Commander of the Department of California. Joe, please come forward. Get a good look at him, because all the good things that you've got to say about this convention, direct them to Joe Early because he has done one heck of a job to bring this convention to you this time. Joe, thank you. If you've got any problems, you come and see me. I'll keep the heat off of Joe because he's done a lot for you. But I don't anticipate any problems. Everything is moving swell, especially working with the National Staff as they move in.

Thanks for the support. Enjoy the State of California. Enjoy all that we have here. It has been a pleasure to serve you.

Commander Miller, I say as a Past National Commander to you and to all the Legionnaires throughout this great nation, thanks for the splendid job that you have done serving this organization and bringing The American Legion and the issues of the veterans not only to this great nation, but to the world in your travels.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thanks for all of your hard work, Joe and Bruce.

I now call on our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle, with the Department of Michigan to issue the Call for Convention.

Call for Convention
Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutant

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The call for the 81st Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 81st Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Anaheim, California, September 7th through the 9th, 1999. The convention business sessions will be held in the Anaheim Convention Center, Hall B, first level.

PURPOSE

The Annual National Convention is the legislative body of the American Legion. The convention is called for the purpose of setting the program of The American Legion for the ensuing year amending the National Constitution and By-Laws and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it. At 12:00 noon of the final session or at the conclusion of all business of the National Convention, which ever first occurs on Thursday, September 9th, 1999, officers for the ensuing year will be elected. These being the National Commander and the five National Vice Commanders in that sequence.

REPRESENTATION

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

VOTE

"...Each department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said convention August 9th and whose registration fees as fixed by the National Executive Committee for its total authorized delegate strength have been paid and one alternate for each delegate." (Section 3, Article V)

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

"Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote." (Section 4, Article V)

Delegates to the National Convention shall be accredited in writing to the National Adjutant in the number and manner prescribed by Article V of the National Constitution. The rights of departments to make accredited substitutes for absentee delegates or alternate delegates shall be recognized by the National Adjutant provided it says substitution shall be officially certified by the Department Commander and Department Adjutant at the time of the certification required by the National Convention or at any time prior to the adjournment of the first session of the National Convention.

ALTERNATES

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

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

The department official, unless elected as delegates or alternates to the National Convention, have no privilege in the Convention except as a guest of their respective delegates.

CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Convention Committee	No. of Members to which each Dept. is entitled:
Americanism	One Delegate
Children & Youth	One Delegate
Constitutional Amendments	One Delegate
Credentials and Internal Affairs	

Credentials and Other Internal Matters, (Sections I & II)	One Delegate
Membership (Sec. III)	One Delegate
Economic	
Employment & Veteran Preference	One Delegate
Other Economic Matters	One Delegate
Finance	One Delegate
Foreign Relations	One Delegate
Legislation & Rules	One Delegate
National Security Committee; Joint Meeting (Includes Aerospace, Defense, Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs)	One Delegate
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	
Claims Rating	One Delegate
Hospital and Medical Services	One Delegate

Mr. Commander, that completes the call for the 81st Annual National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I declare the 1999 81st National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened.

[National Vice Commander Tingler now assumes the Chair.]

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER TINGLER: The Chair recognizes Mr. Herm Harrington of New York, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs, for the purpose of making a report.

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

Forty-six members and guests of the section on Credentials and Other Internal Matters met at 9:00 a.m., September 5, 1999, in Malibu, Room #11 on the Concourse Level of the Anaheim Hilton Hotel, Anaheim, California.

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

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried to accept the Delegate Strength Report as reported by the National Adjutant certifying membership 30 days prior to the National Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the report be based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution: Five delegates for each Department, plus one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the National Convention (August 9, 1999); and one alternate for each delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in the capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) national Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention.

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

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

In accordance with the membership report certified to the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on August 9, 1999, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 3,120 allocated as follows:

Alabama	30	Montana	18
Alaska	15	Nebraska	65
Arizona	44	Nevada	13
Arkansas	28	New Hampshire	30
California	150	New Jersey	85
Colorado	30	New Mexico	20
Connecticut	37	New York	202
Delaware	16	North Carolina	53
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	31
Florida	126	Ohio	162
France	8	Oklahoma	37
Georgia	53	Oregon	33
Hawaii	9	Pennsylvania	255
Idaho	17	Philippines	8
Illinois	153	Puerto Rico	15
Indiana	138	Rhode Island	17
Iowa	79	South Carolina	32
Kansas	57	South Dakota	33
Kentucky	39	Tennessee	40
Louisiana	44	Texas	96
Maine	34	Utah	15
Maryland	86	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	73	Virginia	57
Mexico	8	Washington	44
Michigan	100	West Virginia	34
Minnesota	128	Wisconsin	82
Mississippi	26	Wyoming	14
Missouri	69		

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Do I hear a second?

...The report was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion, signify by the usual manner. Opposed? Motion's carried.

In early July a few major newspapers reported that our next guest had resigned. Well, I think it's rather obvious from the fact that he's here with us today that you just can't

believe everything you read in the newspapers nowadays. In the light of those reports, he said simply, "I accepted the job as Secretary of Veterans Affairs with a strong sense of the needs of the American citizen soldier. Those needs remain, and my job is not finished." Please welcome to our convention a friend of The American Legion, my former boss at the Department of Veterans Affairs. He is a member of American Legion Post 113 in Idaho, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Togo West, Jr.

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

Thank you all for your reception of me and your invitation to me to join you at this, our 81st National Convention. My wife, Gail West, who is behind me here, and I are pleased to be part of this annual gathering of The America's Legion, those who have served this nation proudly in the uniform of this country, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and who continue to serve under the banner of this great organization.

You meet, we meet, in this our 81st Convention at a time of extraordinary national achievement, not just on the North American continent but around the world. Across the globe the American banner signifies the highest aspirations and ideals of free people everywhere. America's ideals on principles of values as set out in our formal documents, our Constitution, our Declaration of Independence, but also as exemplified in our daily life, outline the aspirations of free people everywhere. America's power, military, and by the force of our ideals is unrivaled. We are referred to as the sole remaining superpower. And there are even those in Europe who have been heard to refer to America as the hydropower, presumably something beyond a superpower. America's Armed Forces, always the first and best, are unrivaled in their supremacy. And this year the Executive Branch of our government and the Congress have agreed to add expanded funding to our defense budget so that America's youth in uniform can be trained, equipped, and led in order to continue to do their very best.

But here at home, we live in a land in which many of our economic and financial leaders boast of unrivaled economic success now and in the foreseeable future. Though, yes, you and I agree that every day of life in this marvelous country is a gift from God, the fact is that this strength in America, in her economy, in her forces and in her principles, is a gift from those who have fought for two-and-a-quarter centuries to preserve this nation, America's veterans. A gift from them to the American people.

I pause for a moment to acknowledge that loss to our Legion some three months ago of George Washington Bentley, who had been to that point the sole living member of the Legion who had attended the 1919 Paris Caucus at which this Legion was envisioned and was founded. It was there at that caucus that the Preamble to the Constitution of the Legion where we associate ourselves for God and country was written. That bond, that bond of association for God and country, continues to hold this Legion together even today in the service of America.

Indeed, it was just a few months ago at Veterans Day in November that President Clinton observed that the successes of this nation in peace are due to the sacrifices of America's veterans in war. The veterans of The American Legion have served some three times over for this nation. First, by their willingness to put on the uniform of this nation, to put their patriotism on display for the world to see. Second, by their willingness to go into

harm's way for this nation, to absorb with their bodies the blows intended by America's foes for the body of the American politic, to accept with their spirits the wounds, physical and mental, intended to be inflicted upon the American people. And thirdly, they have served by returning to their societies, to their communities, and even as America's veterans have taken off their uniforms, not taken off their concern for this nation for her security, for her survival, and for her prosperity.

The American Legion in its 80 years of existence has exemplified this triple commitment of America's veterans through your support of our youth, teaching them about life, about patriotism, about love of country, about democracy and its workings, in your support of Boys State and Boys Nation, your support of the Boy Scouts of America. As I have expressed to you before, as a Boy Scout myself, that support on your part is immensely important to me because of what I know it does to develop America's future leaders.

You have demonstrated it in American Legion baseball. As much a tradition of this nation, as much woven into the life of this nation as baseball itself, and producing some notable graduates including your Graduate of the Year, the home run leader whom I note is once again Mark McGwire, along with Sammy Sosa, again providing us somewhat unparalleled excitement.

You have shown your support of America's veterans as well. Your Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, through your commitment to advocate for veterans and their families in the Congress and the state houses of America and before the executive branch.

As I have said to you now in three previous discussions with you, twice now this convention, this is the fourth, twice in your midwinter meetings, you have earned my personal thanks as a son of North Carolina where I was born and grew up, who was given opportunity by this nation as the father, with Gail West, of two daughters who have grown to adulthood, secure in the land of opportunity. You earned my personal thanks because of your support of the banner of this nation, the flag, which has assured their freedom, their opportunity. So I say to you again as I have said to you before, it is a personal commitment of mine I will never oppose, never criticize, never disagree with any organization, including this one, which advocates the protection of the banner of this nation, the American flag. Now, of course, it may put me at odds with some members of the administration. I may have to explain myself, but that is my position. I am happy to hold to it.

In so many ways, America's veterans through this great organization, through their service, through their continued belief in this nation, have earned the respect, have earned the support, have earned the gratitude of America and of America's people. Now, you and I know that gratitude can be demonstrated in any number of ways. First, we can simply have the courtesy, the politeness, to say thank you. Thank you to the veterans that America's people meet on the streets every day. Thank you to the men and women in uniform. Thank you to The American Legion, which is one of my reasons for being here today. Secondly, a nation can express our gratitude by remembering. Remembering the sacrifice of her veterans. Remembering the loss of her military families. Remembering the times of trial as we do at Veterans Day, on Memorial Day, on Independence Day. And I believe as so many Americans do on every single day of our national life. But I think you and I also know that the most solid demonstration of gratitude is to put our words into action, to show as a nation, as a people, and as a government our gratitude by what we do. It is for that reason that I was proud to stand some four weeks ago on the tarmac at the airport in Nashville with Vice President Gore, from whom you will hear tomorrow, as he announced this administration's

commitment to add an additional $1 billion plus to a veterans health care budget for the coming year 2000. I was equally as proud when just a few hours later a committee of the Congress indicated, voted, to add an additional $700 million to that for a total of $1.7 billion for the veterans budget. I am proud that this debate is not over yet, that when the Congress returns in a few days this week, that they will be taking up measures designed to add increased funding to the veterans budget for the FY 2000.

First of all, that extra amount of money will go for a number of things that I will discuss in a few seconds. But remember, we won't know the exact amount until much later this month. Perhaps near the end of the month, beginning of October, because the VA, HUD, Health Care Appropriations bill is traditionally the last one the Congress acts on. I am willing, however, to make a prediction. Now my staff says be careful about predictions on budgets, but I am willing to make that prediction anyway; that is, that by the time the smoke has cleared we will see in the VA budget for the coming year an increase of at least $1 billion, $1.7 billion, I believe. And that is money that we can put to good use for veterans in the coming year.

A second thing about the significance of that development is this: We are already in the process in this department in working with the leadership of the VA, The American Legion, and other VSOs to put together the beginnings of the budget for fiscal year 2001. As you and our leadership in The American Legion know, the 2001 budget will be based as a beginning point on the budget for the year 2000. So every dollar of increase in FY 2000 signals our ability to have increases in FY 2001 as well. It's very important that these increases not be just a one-time thing but signal a continuing commitment to the improvement of health care benefits and delivery for our veterans in this nation.

Finally, budgets are not just about rearranging sources of revenue or the utilization of our nation's assets. Budgets are about a nation's priority. So the third significance of these increases is that they make clear this nation's priorities, that this nation places among her leading priorities living up to our commitment to our veterans and to their families for their service to this nation.

As a result, in the coming fiscal year, we will go forward with our plan to open 89 new community-based health care centers, outpatient clinics. We will go forward with our plans to add more than 400 additional personnel into the processing of claims for veterans benefits. All too often over the past year, as I and my deputy, Hershel Gober, have traveled across this nation, we have heard time and time again that our veterans are having to wait too long for the processing of their claims, for the making of their appointments for health care. We expect to use these additional resources both to shorten the time in which veterans have to wait for their health care appointments, the Veterans Health Administration, and to improve the processing of claims in the Veterans Benefits Administration. And finally, in the coming year, in the coming 12 months, we will open the largest number of national cemeteries opened at any one time in the history of this nation, some four. One of them already opened. We already had the opening in Saratoga, New York. And there are three more to come in Ohio, Illinois, and Texas, in this year.

We can talk about who gets credit for these increases. We can lay it at the feet of members of Congress, the administration. We can place it wherever we choose. But I remind you of one old, battle wounded veteran three times wounded in the Civil War said on one occasion to his fellow veterans, Justice Holmes. He said, "I learned in the regiment and in the classroom what I considered to be the best we can do for ourselves and for our nation. To see as far as one may. To try to understand the powerful forces at work behind the

details. To hammer out as solid a piece of work as possible. To make it first rate. And to leave it unadvertised." But differently Justice Holmes said that, "If we do not care who gets the credit, we can achieve a whole lot of good things." If we don't care who gets the credit for improving the veterans budget, we can achieve a lot. Now why? Why should we work so hard to do these things? Is it because the administration and the members of Congress are good people? Well, although we like to think they are and we are, it is not for that reason. Is it because the American people are generous and are moved by generosity?

Well, I believe that the American people are good and decent and generous, but that is not the reason either. These increased monies in the VA budget, these increased resources devoted to veterans, are there because they belonged to veterans all along. They were earned in the First World War in the Argonne Forest. They were earned in the Second World War at Normandy, in the Pacific. They were earned in Korea and in Vietnam. They were earned in Desert Storm. Those resources are put there because they belong to our veterans who have earned them with their blood and their sweat.

As I began my few brief comments to you today, I referred to all that our veterans have achieved for this nation to bring her to this pinnacle of unrivaled power and influence in the nation. It raises the question of what has enabled America's men and women in uniform and their families to achieve so much for this relatively young nation. Two-and-a-quarter centuries, after all, is not a very long time in the history of this world. One person gave an answer back at the beginning of World War II when the questions of entering the war or not were being debated. Harold L. Ickes, then the Secretary of the Interior for President Roosevelt spoke of what constitutes an American. For it is that which unites America's veterans, that common bond of being American. He said, "What constitutes an American? Not color. Not race. Not religion. Not pedigree of family nor place of birth. Not his social standing nor the size of his bank account. Not his trade. Not his profession. An American is one who loves justice and believes deeply in the dignity of every man and every woman. An American will fight for his freedom and for the freedom of his neighbor. An American is one who will forgo ease and property and security to assure for himself and his children the freedoms of free men and free women."

Well, God bless all those Americans who, in uniform, have stood for this nation over her life. God bless those who stand in their footsteps today in uniform of their services across the world. God bless those who love them and those whom they love. And on this day, here on the West Coast of the United States, in this 81st Convention of America's Legion, The American Legion, a place where patriotism is never out of style, a convention where it is never inappropriate to disclose one's love of country and of this country's people, here may God bless as well that dear and noble nation which has given to you and to me, to our children, and will give to our children's children, life, liberty, and opportunity. And to which you have given, to which we have given, our loyalty, our service, and, oh, yes, our love. God bless you all.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Mr. Secretary, I must say it's refreshing to have a gentleman of your stature who served the veterans so well in this country to have the courage to step forward and show that courage in your wish for the protection of our flag. Thank you for all the wonderful things you do, Togo.

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Award
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The American Legion honors many men and women for their dedicated service and efforts. The highest form of recognition that can be bestowed at the national level is The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal. This morning it is an honor to make that presentation, but I have to tell you that that honor comes with a full measure of sadness as well.

The gentleman that we have chosen to honor passed away June 4th of 1999. He is Zachary Fisher, a truly great American who actually was the son of a Russian emigrant. What he accomplished in his lifetime will be forever remembered in the history books but even more so in the lives that he touched. I would like you to watch a videotaped tribute to Zachary, to the man we honor today. It reveals to you his true spirit which molded the life of one Mr. Zachary Fisher.

...At this time videotape was viewed by the delegation.

I think it's very easy to understand why we honor Zachary today. Every day of his life, in every way possible, Zachary Fisher gave back to the nation that he loved and those who defended her. He truly deserves The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal.

Here to accept for the Fisher family is Ms. Gail Berry West, a volunteer member of the Board of Directors of the Fisher House Foundation.

MRS. GAIL WEST: Zachary very much wanted to be here today to accept The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal. Sadly, he cannot. In mid-March, Zachary wrote National Commander Miller, "I am humbled to learn of my nomination to receive The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal." He was looking forward to your annual convention, but his health began to worsen. He went into the hospital in early April and remained there until he passed away on June 4th. Before he died, Mr. Fisher asked that I represent him to accept the Distinguished Service Medal, and I am honored to do that today.

Zachary Fisher had a special love for the military and its men and women in uniform. When President Clinton presented him the Medal of Freedom in September of last year, Zachary responded by saying:

> I am proud of the calling which I have answered for the last 20 years, that of supporting the young men and women who defend our nation and their families. Our whole nation owes them a great debt. And Elizabeth and I have tried to do our share to pay that debt. Every member of the Armed Forces is welcome aboard Intrepid. Everyone can enjoy fleet week. Any military or veteran's family can stay in a Fisher house. Any military dependent can apply for one of our scholarships. I hope that these steps have made and will continue to make a difference in the lives of at least some of the men and women who proudly wear or have worn America's uniform.

I am here today to assure you that the magnificent programs begun by Zachary and his wife, Elizabeth, will continue. Zachary and Elizabeth did not have any children of their own, so two of their nephews have stepped in. Arnold Fisher will manage The Fisher House Program, while nephew Tony Fisher concentrates on the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum [New York City]. They are committing their time and their resources to continue his programs of support for members of the military, veterans, and their families.

But without Zachary Fisher, we will need your support to continue the legacy begun by two great American patriots: to build more Fisher Houses; to modernize the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum; to continue awarding scholarships to the sons and daughters of our military, we need partners, individuals, organizations, and corporations. The American

Legion Auxiliary has been one such partner. They are the single largest organizational donor to the network of 26 Fisher Houses which provide shelter and support to families when a loved one is hospitalized at a military or VA medical center. With help from the American Legion Auxiliary and thousands of others, we will be building three new Fisher Houses over the next two years.

This was Zachary's dream and his legacy. It has been and will continue to be a privilege and honor for me to serve as a trustee of an organization dedicated to bettering the quality of life for America's heroes, its service members, veterans, and their families. Were Zachary Fisher alive today and able to be with us, he undoubtedly would have noted that his award is for patriotism and public service. And he would have saluted you, loyal Legionnaires, for your service to our nation and its men and women in uniform.

On behalf of the Fisher family and the Fisher family of philanthropic foundations, we are proudly grateful for the recognition accorded to our founder, our mentor, and hero. Thank you so very much, and God bless each of you for your service to our nation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Gail, for representing the Fisher Foundation. It truly is an honor to be able to recognize Zachary and what he did.

For ten straight national conventions, we have dedicated and rededicated this great organization to the effort to return to Congress and the people the right to protect the flag of these United States. I don't think any of us anticipated the true measure of this struggle. After all, our free speech rights have flourished for nearly 200 years when flag desecration was against the law.

Well, we may not have anticipated it would take more than a decade to work to restore that protection. I am proud, and I'm sure that you are, too, that The American Legion remains steadfast in leading the effort to protect our flag. It is time once again for us to be brought up to date on our efforts. There is no better person to do that than our Chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance, a retired Major General, a recipient of the nation's highest honor, the Medal of Honor, for his service in Vietnam, and one of America's greatest Americans I have ever had the pleasure of meeting, and I'm sure many of you have had the pleasure of meeting him, too. Please rise and give the proper honor to a member of American Legion Post 800 in Idyllwild, California, Retired Major General Patrick Brady.

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

It's always such a great honor for me to be with you folks and to be able to talk to you. I went to a rally yesterday on the Legion's fight for what is right. And I don't think there's any fight more right, there's no cause more just, than to protect veterans, to protect the security of our nation, our Constitution, and to promote patriotism among the young people. Since St. Patrick's Day over 80 years ago, no one has done that better than the Legion. What is right is why you exist.

But the inspiration, I think, and the faithful companion to the Legion's fight for what is right has been Old Glory. In fact, the Stars and Stripes has been the constant companion and inspiration of all those in our history who have fought for what is right. Think of any significant event that's ever happened in America that did not involve our flag, from the Civil War to Suribachi to the moon landing. And therein, I think, lies Old Glory's greater worth. The unique respect that Americans have for our flag has inspired throughout all our

history the values our veterans fought for, values that make us the most respected nation on earth, and values that are vital and inspirational to our children and to our future.

Waving the flag has ignited the flame of patriotism in the hearts of countless Americans. Burning the flag will help put that flame out. The flag represents the core of what we have been in this country, what you all gave us in this country. Burning the flag represents what we are becoming.

All of you who helped pay the price for our freedom. You once took an oath to protect and defend our Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Every day millions of Americans take that same oath when they pledge allegiance to our flag. Now, although we take the oath and the pledge in the presence of Old Glory, it's not the colored cloth, it's the Constitution that's in our hearts. We have all seen our share of foreign enemies to our Constitution, communists, fascists, dictators. They are now vanquished to the slime pit of history. There are always going to be foreign enemies to our Constitution, but none that we can't handle, at least right now. The threat to our Constitution today is domestic. If it is ever destroyed, it will be by us as we commit suicide. That's why the Legion is leading the fight to recapture our flag. As the politicians will say, it's not the flag, stupid, it's our Constitution.

Today's enemies to the Constitution aren't armed with guns and tanks. They don't wear camouflage fatigues. They don't bunker in the jungle. They wear black robes and expensive suits, and their bunkers are the courtrooms, the classrooms, the coat rooms, and the news rooms. The missiles are lawsuits, legal dictates and media misinformation. Unfortunately, the casualties in this war are parents, children, teachers, and hard-working Americans struggling every day just to do what's right. Those who assault our Constitution grew up on different playing fields than the rest of us, the playing fields of the elite, and most of them have never seen a battlefield. They have a vision of our Constitution that's alien to most persons. Their battle cry is that evil has worth, that toleration for offensive and evil conduct is essential to freedom. Now where in the Constitution does it say that? Where does it say that we must tolerate conduct which a majority find evil or offensive? What has that to do with our freedom? They are masters of psychological warfare. They know if they can change the language, they can change our Constitution. Their armor is a distorted First Amendment, but the target is the Constitution. They are determined to mold it to their ideals and never mind the ideals of the Founding Fathers who created it.

A great Chief Justice, Hugo Black, said, "Our Constitution was not written in sands to be washed away by each successive wave of new judges blown in by each successive political wind." He also said, "It passes my belief that anything in the federal Constitution bars making the deliberate burning of the American flag an offense."

These elite will shout hysterically about a tyranny of a majority simply because they fear the will of the majority. They fear the democratic process. Why else would they deny us the right to protect our flag. Just to vote on this issue?

Some senators in the media say the flag amendment aligns the United States with totalitarian governments like China, Cuba, and Iran. The statement is truly amazing. To compare an American flag, protected according to the will of the American people, with flags that represent the horrors of Saddam Hussein, Mao Tse-tung, and Fidel Castro, I think, is an insult to all Americans and all that Americans stand for. George Washington helped design and adopt our flag. Does that align him with Communists? James Madison wrote the First Amendment. He and Thomas Jefferson both believed that our flag should be protected.

Does that align them with Hitler or Stalin? Our flag is designed and owned by the people, not a party.

Someone said that under majority rule, heads are counted; under minority rule, heads are cracked. It's vital that the will of the majority rule. In a democracy, it's the wisdom of the majority that protects us from the tyranny of the minority. Whether the minority be dictators, communists, fascists, or judges and those who compare our will with the will of dictators. It's a remarkable difference between our flag and the flag of tyrants that warrants its protection.

The enemy these elite fear most is an informed, alert, and active majority. A victory for an amendment which will return to us the right to our flag would be for them a devastating defeat. It would change the battlefield from the courtrooms to the living rooms. And for them it could start a slippery slope which will return to the people their Constitution. They fear Americans who ask why. Their position is endangered every time we ask why. The American GI was the most lethal weapon on any battlefield that he ever entered simply because he asked why. Why are we doing it this way? Is there a better way? And he usually found one.

Why is flag burning and pornography protected speech and prayer not? What is said when you burn a flag? If speech can be other than verbal, why isn't flying the flag speech and burning the flag an assault on speech? Why does the Supreme Court allow the flag to be burned anywhere except on their steps? If flag protection will destroy the Bill of Rights, why didn't it do so during the 200 years in which we have the right to protect our flag? Where in the First Amendment do we find conduct or expressive conduct or even expression? Why did the author of the First Amendment denounce flag burning if it was speech?

Abraham Lincoln once asked how many legs does a dog have if you call his tail a leg? The answer is four. You can't change a tail to a leg by calling it one. And you can't burn a flag with your tongue.

Most agree that the burning of the flag is a sign of moral weakness in an individual. Why then isn't the legalized burning of our flag a sign of moral weakness in our country? Why does the media bombard us with pro flag-burners they call heroes, like John Glenn. They give no coverage to heroes like Norman Schwartzkopf who said, "I regard the legal protection of our flag an absolute necessity and a matter of critical importance to our nation." He told me that his troops understood the importance of free speech. They would die for it. But what they don't understand is how is defecating on our flag is speech.

These folks rant and rave about civil liberties, but they never mention civil responsibility. There can be no freedom in our country without personal responsibility. The Constitution is nothing if it's not a set of values. A great teacher in his condemnation of a valueless society wrote about men without chest. The chest he called the spiritual element, the value center of a person. It was the indispensable connection between the head, the intellectual part, and the belly, the visceral, emotional part of our nature. Balance and goodness comes when the head rules the belly through the chest. Danger comes in a people without a chest, from intellectuals without values, and human animals governed by their passion and instincts alone. Columbine High School had two young men without chests. They asked a young lady if she believed in God. She said yes, and they shot her. Now she was ruled by a system of values. They weren't. And therein lies the cause. All the rest is meaningless commentary. People without chest would not possibly understand the importance of our flag or any symbols. The ACLU says the flag is just a piece of cloth and

a wedding ring is just a piece of gold and the cross is just a piece of wood and the Constitution is just a piece of paper. They see a colored cloth burning. Those who have chest see our Constitution, our ideals, burning.

One of our senators, in defense of flag burning, wrote, "I do not believe reverence for our country and its symbols can or should be imposed by law." That's a remarkable thing to say. Reverence as a feeling of awe or respect is, of course, an abstract. It cannot be measured or even known in any way. Certainly, you can't impose it. But reverence as an act of respect can be known and can be measured in many ways. Reverence for a country is known in the acts of patriots like all of those of you who are out here. The acts of our patriots are the foundation of the very security of our country. Would anyone go to war and die for something they did not revere? What if we had a war and no one came? Why should we not have a draft for fear it would impose reverence by law? Why is it illegal to burn draft cards, which is really the symbol of forced reverence in time of crisis?

The Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter said, "We live by symbols. Symbols are vital in a democracy." How can you separate ideals from the symbols that house them? It's like separating a person from his soul. The mentality that says we should do nothing to foster respect for symbols in our country is simply crazy. The senator and a minority like her will tell us that you can't legislate patriotism or morality, that patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrel. Where does that come from? What tells us more about a nation than its system of justice. How many of our laws come from the Ten Commandments, which is really a moral code? What are laws if not morality in action? If our laws do not foster patriotism, which is simply a love of country, of our neighbor, of our land, of our leaders, and it promotes service to others and to America, if we don't foster that, how long will we survive? Patriotism is the last refuge of a free people. The danger from those who demean patriotism is that it may result in the spawning of generations of America who will not care for their country, who will refuse to serve or sacrifice no matter how legitimate and eminent the threat. Most tragically, they will encourage and foster that same kind of conduct in their children.

As you know and as you do, patriotism in its highest form is service to our youth. The entire debate over the flag is centered on what we teach our children. No one would change the People for the American Way, they will not change you, and they will not change me; but they can change the children of the USA. Most will tell you that flag burning is wrong, but what is most important is that what it teaches is worse. It teaches our children disrespect. It teaches them that the outrageous acts of a minority are more important than the will of the majority. It teaches that our laws need not reflect our values and that it is not the Congress, not the people, but the courts that own the Constitution.

There is always a danger that if you have not served your country that you may not care for it. Some of these elite who have never saluted Old Glory in uniform, glory in saluting their personal courage by highlighting the unpopularity of their position on the flag amendment. But they fail to note that this position is very popular with the media and will gain them immeasurable goodwill there. Promoting one's popularity with the media, the greatest ally of our elite, the greatest influencer of votes in our society, requires absolutely no courage. Getting the media to condemn flag burning is like getting Satan to cast out devils. It's the politicians who stand up against the media for Old Glory and our Constitution who are truly courageous. I hope that you will let those courageous politicians hear from you. You will hear from some of them today, especially in the Senate, as we await the vote there after an overwhelming victory in the House.

The flags that we pledge will wear out, and they will be replaced; but our Constitution is ageless, and it must never be replaced. The great patriots here today participated in the defeat of all the foreign enemies to our Constitution in this century. It's comforting to know that you great warriors are with us in the battle to recapture Old Glory. You know that it's not a battle over a colored cloth. It's an affirmation of our oath as soldiers, of our pledge as civilians, to protect and defend the Constitution from all its enemies, foreign as well as domestic.

The Supreme Court has a right to make a mistake. They do it all the time. We have an obligation to correct their mistakes. We don't do it all the time. Let's do it this time. Let's send a message to those who mess with our Constitution and who have taken our flag away that we want them back.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, General Brady. I would like to personally thank you on behalf of The American Legion for your outstanding service, not only to the veterans of this country and the efforts to the flag, but I know that you are personally involved in this day in and day out. You go around the country and you ask for support. I'm happy to say that The American Legion has responded to that numerous times. As a further indication, we have some gentlemen back here who would like to present some checks to further our cause.

Al Ford, NECman from Michigan.

MR. FORD, Michigan: General Brady, it's a pleasure to be here this morning to present a check from the State of Michigan for $1,668. This is in addition to the forty thousand plus that we have already donated, and I am sure there is more on the way.

GENERAL BRADY: Thank you very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I thank all of you as individuals, as posts, as districts, as departments, as veterans and as citizens for the support that you have given this. You have not wavered one bit, and we will not waver, because protection of our flag is right. We are known as an organization that doesn't always do the easy things; we do the tough things; we do the right things. So keep it up. Morale is High on the flag!

The next guest, and the honor I have been given to introduce him, is truly one that I take very personally. He comes from a long line in his family of naval officers. His grandfather and father were admirals in the Navy. He only became a Captain. Now you might think that his career didn't attain the heights and the levels of his father and his grandfather, but let me tell you what he did. He lived through five and a half years as a prisoner of war, in my war and his war, and a lot of our wars, Vietnam, in that place that you know as Hanoi Hilton.

Today, he is still serving our country and in his third term as a U.S. Senator from the State of Arizona. He serves on the Armed Services Committee. *Time Magazine* in 1997 said that he was one of the 25 most influential people in America. I'm very proud to say that he is using that influence and he has been, and continues to be, a supporter of Senate Joint Resolution 14, the Flag Protection Amendment. It is with great pride as your National Commander and as a fellow veteran, to introduce to you an American Legion member from Post 2 in Phoenix, Arizona, our friend, Senator John McCain.

Address: The Honorable John McCain
The United States Senate

Thank you, Butch, for that warm welcome. It is a great privilege and honor to be with you today at our final convention in this century.

Before I get serious, I would like to recall to you one brief event that happened to me before I retired from the Navy. I was over at San Diego at the officer's club at the bar having a Coca-Cola, as most fighter pilots do. Standing next to me was a very senile looking guy. He looked a lot like Butch Miller, as a matter of fact. I engaged him in conversation and asked, "How long have you been in the Navy?" He said, "41 years." I then asked, "Why were you not promoted?" He said, "Well, I was based at the 1st Squadron at Henderson Field at Guadalcanal early in World War II. Every single night one Japanese airplane used to fly over our field." There's people in this audience that remember. They called it Washing Machine Charlie.

He continued, "It was a harassment raid but the siren would go off, and I would have to get out of my tent, get into my airplane, start the engine and sit there. After awhile, because it was Washing Machine Charlie, the all clear siren would go off; I would shut down the engine and get out of my airplane and go back to bed. It was terrible. I wasn't getting any sleep; the food was terrible. Well, finally I solved the problem. I went out in the jungle and I caught this monkey. And I trained this monkey that when the siren went off, he'd come out of the jungle, get into my airplane and start the engine and sit there, and when the all clear siren went off, he would shut down the engine and get out of my airplane and go back to the jungle. It was wonderful. It was working like a charm. I was sleeping like a baby every night. Well, sure enough, one night it was not a Japanese air raid, it was not Washing Machine Charlie, it was a real Japanese air raid. I came out of my tent just in time to see that monkey taking off in my airplane." I said, "Well, I can certainly see why you were not promoted." He said, "That's not what makes me mad. The monkey retired as an Admiral last week." I think maybe some of us served with that monkey; in fact, several monkeys, but I won't go on.

This morning I had the opportunity to spend time with the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary. They are a remarkable group of people that exemplify how blessed this nation is, and that service to its noble ideals is and always will be a family affair. Recently, I authored a book, *Faith of My Fathers'*, about my family's military tradition. I wrote it not for myself, but for my father and grandfather, both Navy admirals. I wrote it for all veterans whose service has been inspired, not only by love of country, but love of family and tradition. I wrote it for a special hero in that story: my mother. If this book can contribute in some small way to a greater appreciation of military service and the family's role in defense of America, I will have considered it a worth while endeavor. God bless our country and our families.

As the days dwindle down in the 20th century, the American century, we look with justifiable pride upon our country's role in the world history. We are proud and we are humble, humble in the knowledge that we enjoy our freedom because of the devotion of Americans who sacrificed greatly to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, those brave Americans to whom duty, honor and love of a country were more dear to them than self. We are humble as we remember our sons and daughters who stand their post today in foreign lands and ships across the globe, the thousands of young men and women who guard our freedom. Their service and sacrifice is our nation's finest honor and

always will be. With me today is one of my dearest friends and comrades from Hanoi Hilton, the first American pilot to be held captive in Hanoi, my dear friend Everett Alvarez. I hope you can welcome him today.

The world that many of us served in was a dangerous one, but more stable than the world today. It was a world where we confronted a massive organized threat, not only to our interests overseas, but to our very security at home. Our enemy was evil, but not irrational. And for all the suffering endured by captive nations and for all the fear of global nuclear war, it was a world made fairly predictable by a stable balance of power between two super powers. Yet that world had much cruelty and terror, some of which was my fate to witness personally. I have memories of a place so far removed from the comforts of this blessed country, that I have learned to forget some of the anguish it once caused me. But I have not forgotten the friends who did not return with me to the country we love so dearly. The memory of them, of what they bore for honor and country, causes me to look in every prospective conflict for the shadow of Vietnam. I don't let that shadow hold me in fear for my duty, as God has given me the light to see that duty.

But it no longer falls on us to bear arms in our country's defense. It falls to our children and our children's children. Should their duty lead them to war, I pray that the battle will be necessary and the field well chosen. But that is not their responsibility. It's the duty of the nation's civilian commanders and those of us privileged to be America's political leaders, to ensure that the service of our sons and daughters is ordered for causes important enough to justify the sacrifices we ask of them. It is up to us to follow rules that should govern the use of force; rules that we have learned from bitter experience. It's up to us to make every possible effort to guarantee that the men and women we send into harm's way are amply provided for as a super power with global responsibilities should provide for its forces. Almost 100,000 Americans are serving overseas in an unprecedented number of contingency peace keeping and humanitarian operations. Our armed forces are deployed for more countries in greater numbers for these purposes than at any time in our history.

While we debate the merits of all these contingencies, it is beyond dispute that a decade of declining defense budgets and ever more frequent deployments have stretched the services perilously close to the breaking point. Many of us who have criticized for sounding the alarm bell in the past, now have the empty satisfaction of seeing the Clinton Administration admit that there is more to maintaining strong defense than falsely promising to do so. After six years of severely under-funding the military, the President reversed himself and proposed increasing the defense budget. Once again, however, his rhetoric has far exceeded his actions.

Now, please don't mistake these observations for a partisan tirade. Congress deserves as sharp a rebuke as the President. While many Republicans and Democrats in Congress recognize our problems and wish to devote greater resources to the military, they cannot restrain the oldest of all Congressional afflictions, an all consuming addiction to pork barrel spending. While Congress increased the President's budget request, it diverted far too much of the additional money to garden variety pork barrel projects that had little, if anything, to do with readiness and the well-being of military personnel. In the most galling and self-interested and neglect of national security, Congress repeatedly refuses to close bases that everyone knows we no longer need, and can no longer support. It is unconscionable that we spend money on outdated facilities or unneeded weapon systems, when 12,000 enlisted personnel, proud young men and women, subsist on food stamps. That, my friends, is a week defense, and this nation deserves better service from us than that. The President's

empty promises and the irresponsible spending habits of Congress, offer little remedy to our readiness crisis.

I believe that military service is the most honorable endeavor an American may undertake, but I have never believed that lack of military service disqualifies one from occupying positions of political leadership or as Commander-in-Chief in America. The people are sovereign and they decide who is and who is not qualified. But as in every walk of life, experience counts. And in an administration with so few in its upper echelons who wore the nation's uniform, the inattention to our military and to our veterans, while inexcusable and dangerous, is sadly not surprising. This is the first administration in our history where we have a President of the United States, a Secretary of State, a Secretary of Defense, and a National Security Advisor, none of whom have ever spent one minute wearing the uniform of the United States of America. I promise you that will change. And I promise you, no young American in uniform will ever serve under the operational command of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The American people must recognize the gravity of the problem before their employees in Washington will fear to do the wrong thing more than they currently fear to do the necessary things. I and others who share my concerns have failed to make our case to the people. I regret our failure very much, and I promise you that I will try harder in the future. We made some significant headway this year to address the highest priority personnel retention problems, and to better fund modernization, but many of our most critical decisions, such as the deployment of a national missile defense program; reassessing roles and missions; and improving the mobility of our forces to deploy, still suffer from inattention and a lack of dedicated resources. Until America's political leaders show one tenth the courage and patriotism that have been the hallmark of Americans in uniform, we will keep squandering this priceless national asset, the greatest military in the history of the world.

We should be especially careful not to use the relief we feel over our apparent defeat of Mr. Malosivic, to indulge an impulse to pronounce ourselves smugly satisfied with the means we used to win that conflict. It would be a tragedy far outweighing the enormous good that was achieved by our victory if we used it as a model for meeting future military challenges. Nearly running out of cruise missiles, and the inexcusable delay in getting Apache helicopters to the theater should have raised an alarm, as should the fact that we went for a period of time without an operational carrier in the Pacific. Had North Korea chosen that moment to commit a truly irrational act, or China decided to resolve by force the Taiwan question, we would have faced much graver consequences of that neglect. The failure to learn the lessons of Kosova and repair our lagging readiness would be a perilous mistake, because surely even greater threats to peace and our national interest lurk ahead, particularly in Asia where China remains a potential flash point. It surpasses outrage that while 37,000 young Americans stand their posts in harm's way on the Korean peninsula, and our carriers must be ready to rush into the Straits of Taiwan to check Chinese saber rattling, political donations from a subsidiary of the Peoples Liberation Army are funneled into the Clinton Administration's campaign coffers, and nuclear secrets are hustled out the back door of our defense laboratories. That's wrong, my friends, terribly wrong. An irresolute and ambiguous America whose pursuit of domestic political advantages supersedes security demands, and where photo-ops and false comedy and not sound security relationships are the primary object of foreign policy, invites instability and danger to our interests and values.

Our goal at home must be clear: political leadership that puts security ahead of politics; leadership that has vision about the nation's standing in the world, not one's political standing in the polls; and leadership that understands the nature of our interest in Asia, and how to protect those interests. And our goal in Asia must be no less ambiguous, a stable and secure region in which we staunchly support its free and democratic nations, while we confidently support and encourage political change in China. That's the best guarantee that China will become a responsible great power. To the leaders of China we must say: If you desire to be a responsible member of the world community, we will support you. But if you want to join the club, you must play by the rules.

Press reports indicate that China is preparing a major new military exercises near Taiwan this fall. President Clinton should use his upcoming meeting with the Chinese leader Jiang Zemin to make it crystal clear that the United States categorically opposes military provocation in the region. If true, reports that China has decided to use force against Taiwan should convince the Clinton Administration to change its failed policy of pressuring only Taiwan to avoid open hostilities. China must be made to understand that the use of force would be very a serious mistake in judgment; a serious mistake with grave consequences.

Throughout American history, patriots like you have answered the nation's call to defend the rights we cherish as God given. And as you honored our nation's commitments, a grateful nation should honor its commitments to you. Many of the extraordinary contributions you and other veterans have made to our great country have been memorialized in bronze and marble, but more personally America—our government and our people—should show the same concern about your well-being as you have shown for our country.

Recently there has been a lot of discussion about the health delivery system in our country, about pending legislation that's being called the Patient's Bill of Rights. It's a vital issue of enormous importance to our country. But what about a Veterans Bill of Rights? You and I know that many of the promises of benefits that were made or implied to active duty personnel and to us veterans have been ignored, changed, or abandoned over the years. This primarily is true in the area of veterans health care benefits. This disgrace, this dishonesty must end.

With regard to health care, the Veterans Bill of Rights should be relatively simple: honoring the promises that were made to every veteran, particularly those with service-connected conditions, and those who can not afford other medical attention. You have earned the right to receive timely high quality medical care in an atmosphere of respect for the individual veteran. In 1997, despite the increasing needs and costs of an aging veteran population, Congress froze the veterans health care budget. But we added further insult to that grievous injustice by cloaking our action with the kind of scam that is the fodder for the scornful reputation that many politicians too often deserve. We based future budget increases on collection of money owed to the VA by insurance companies, collections that are not being made and may never be made. I'm ashamed that Congress finds billions of dollars for pork barrel spending on subsidies for reindeer ranches and power plants fueled by chicken waste, but finds it so difficult to fulfill our promise of access to quality health care for those who unselfishly answered our country's call.

It's time we repair this disgraceful abrogation of our public responsibilities. That's why it was not just my privilege, but a duty to lead a fight in the Senate this year to add three billion dollars to the VA's budget authority and work for a reversal of congressional plan

to transfer 17 billion dollars from veterans funding to pay for a highway pork. Veterans deserve better than that.

Though vital, increasing funding is not the only answer. An important improvement to the current situation would be for us to see that the Department of Veterans Affairs serves as the advocate for America's veterans. It must work closely with the veterans service organizations to ensure that the concerns of all veterans are taken into account. The VA and the Administration need to change their present course, and work diligently with the Congress to ensure that veterans services are regarded as a top national priority. The veterans health care system is your system and changes to it should be made with the advice and consent not only of the elected leaders in Congress, but more importantly with the veteran who has earned their consideration.

It is clear that the current national health care system is failing to measure up to our expectations and our needs. We have much work to do to repair this abrogation of our responsibilities. That's why among other initiatives I pushed for legislation to test an initiative directing Medicare to reimburse the VA for Medicare eligible veterans with health care costs, providing them with continuity of care, one of the program ideas presented in the Legion's proposed GI Bill of Health.

Veterans demand of their health care system exactly what their country demanded of their service: excellence and commitment. It's time we apply the creativity, focus and funding necessary to make access to quality health care for veterans not simply a promise, but a reality. We must increase funding to improve the quality of care, and expand the options available to veterans for receiving that care, and in a timely, convenient and respectful manner. We have let you down. We have let down the men and women who wear the uniform today. I pledge to continue to do all I can to ensure that our commitments to our veterans are honored, no matter what office I am privileged to hold.

My friends, as General Brady so eloquently stated, soon in the United States Senate we will have a vote on the Flag Amendment. I listened carefully to his articulate presentation. I'm deeply gratified that the Legion would commit its time and efforts and resources to this incredibly important issue. I would like to close by telling you a brief story, that I hope would make many Americans, whether they have served or not served, understand how important this symbol is to many of us in this room.

The first few years in which we were kept captive, Everett Alvarez and so many of us were kept in conditions of solitary confinement of two or three to a cell in Hanoi. In 1970, thanks to the efforts of millions of Americans, including Legionnaires all over this great nation of ours, the Vietnamese changed our treatment from conditions of solitary confinement or two or three to a cell, to putting us in a large room of 25 or 30 prisoners in each room. One of the prisoners who came into the room that I came into was a young man by the name of Mike Christian. Mike Christian came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He came from an exceedingly poor family. When he was seventeen he enlisted in the United States Navy. He later went to Officer's Candidate School; became an officer and a bombardier navigator in an A-6. He was shot down and captured a little before I was, and he was one of the finest, bravest men that I have ever known. The uniform that we wore in prison was blue trousers, blue short-sleeve shirt, and by the way, sandals that were carved out of automobile tires. I recommend them highly. The same pair lasted me for five and a half years. As part of this change in treatment that I described to you, the Vietnamese allowed us to have some packages from home, which were articles of clothing and scarfs and small articles of clothing. Mike Christian fashioned himself a bamboo needle; got himself

a piece of white cloth and a piece of red cloth, and over a period of about two months he sewed on the inside of his shirt the American flag. Every evening in prison cell, before we had our bowl of soup of undetermined content, we would put Mike's shirt on the wall of our cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance. Now, I will freely admit to you that there were many times in daily life when saying the Pledge of Allegiance was not the most important or meaningful part of my day. In that prison cell, some had been there as long as six or seven years in the prison system, it was indeed the most important and meaningful part of our day to pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

The Vietnamese came into our cell one day, searched the cell as they did periodically, and found Mike Christian's shirt with the flag sewn inside of it. They removed it. That evening they returned to our cell, called for Mike Christian to come out, which he did. They closed the door of the cell, and there for the next couple of hours they beat Mike Christian rather severely for the benefit of all of us. Following the beating they opened the door of the cell and threw him in, back into the cell. As you can imagine, he was not in very good shape. The cell in which we slept, in which we lived, had a concrete slab in the center on which we slept, and in each corner of the room hung a light bulb that shown dimly 24 hours a day. So as I said, we tried to clean up Mike Christian as well as we could. I went over to lay down and go to sleep on the concrete slab. As I did so, I just happened to look over in the corner of the cell. Sitting there between that very dim light bulb with a piece of white cloth and a piece of red cloth and another shirt and his bamboo needle, with his eyes almost shut from the beating that he had received, was my dear friend, Mike Christian, who was making another American flag. Mike wasn't doing that because it made him feel better, he was doing that because he knew how important it was to all of us in that prison cell long ago and far away, to be able to pledge our allegiance to our flag and our nation.

So I hope we can inform the American people that the Mike Christian's of this world and all over the world where there are quiet groves that once were killing fields, rest the bones of those who fought for freedom, usually somebody else's, in order that we might have the simple privilege of revering the symbol of hope and freedom.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Our next guest this morning is a man of principles, and he has shown his determination to not compromise them in any way. He, too, is a Vietnam veteran, and a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, an advocate of a balanced Federal budget, a smaller Federal government, lower taxes and less spending. He continues to work tirelessly in Congress to gain an accounting for America's unaccounted for POW's and MIA's. He is co-chairman of the Joint U.S.-Russian Commission on POW's and MIA's established by Presidents Yeltsin and Bush back in 1992. Join me in warmly welcoming American Legion Post No. 79 in Manchester, New Hampshire member, Senator Bob Smith.

Address: The Honorable Robert C. Smith
The United States Senate

I'm delighted to be here today. Let me also say since John Sommer is sitting here that you know what a great Executive Director you have. He's on the job everyday in Washington and he never lets any of us forget what's important to you as veterans. He does an outstanding job for you. Also a special hello to the New Hampshire delegation headed by Commander Jack Neylon. Thanks for the breakfast. And I'm proud to be a member of

the New Hampshire Legion Post 79. I did forget my Legion cap today, and I couldn't find one big enough to fit so I'm sorry about that.

As most of you here in the convention know, and certainly the folks in New Hampshire know, at this convention a couple of days ago New Hampshire lost one of its own, Bill Olmstead from Post 4 in Keene, New Hampshire, who died here at the convention, with his family present, grandchildren, children. That was very sad, but I think Bill probably would have liked it that way. He was doing what he loved. He was working for his beloved American Legion. And so my condolences go to his comrades as well as his family for that terrible loss.

It's always a privilege for me to address The American Legion. I addressed the California State Convention a few months ago. In 1994, I addressed your National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And after that they had a governor who was an independent by the name of Ventura. Now, I'm an independent having left the Republican Party. I have had some criticism about that. Some have made much of it. Let me just say I'm still 'Classic Coke'; the contents are the same, although the label might be a little bit different. But I don't think it matters what your label is, it's what's inside, and principle counts, not party.

My mom and dad are buried at Arlington National Cemetery on the hillside right underneath the Robert E. Lee mansion, looking across into Washington, D.C. On the morning that I resigned from the Republican Party, I stopped at my parents' grave, and stood there for several minutes, looking out across those rows and rows and rows and rows, acres of tomb stones. I didn't see 'R' or a 'D' next to anybody's name, and I don't think it matters one damn what their politics were. Who cares? They sacrificed for their nation, they gave it all, and party had absolutely nothing to do with it.

One of the things that has frustrated me about politics and the political party process—I had been a Republican for 50 years until July 13th, so I can speak with some authority—is that everybody has to poll somebody. For example, if I were to take a poll, I probably would have to find out what you all thought before I came here to speak, lest I might put my foot in my mouth. Politicians do that all the time anyway, and I think it's important for you to hear what comes from my heart. If I make a mistake, so be it. We all make mistakes and that's not a big deal. But could you imagine what it might have been like in history if the only reason we did anything was because of some stupid poll or some consultant telling us what to think? Could you imagine Ike at Normandy taking a poll deciding whether or not we should go? Or could you imagine Patrick Henry in 1773 before the Virginia Assembly standing up there before he said, "Give me liberty or give me—" and then pausing and saying, "I got to find out whether they want liberty or death before I make this speech." I mean, give me a break. It just doesn't make any sense. Lincoln took no poll when he ended slavery. He did the right thing. We don't need more polls in this country, ladies and gentlemen, we need more leadership.

Speaking of polls, if I could just make a little light story here. I broke my promise here and I took a poll of Legionnaires, and I found out that when you speak to a group of Legionnaires, 40 percent of the Legionnaires will listen very carefully to what you say. They will be polite, they will listen to everything, and they'll try to be attentive and respectful. Another 40 percent of Legionnaires will be thinking about some veterans issue that's very important, and not paying any attention at all to what I's saying. And then there is 20 percent of the Legionnaires who will be having sexual fantasies. So I'm delighted to know that at least 20 percent of you are going to enjoy the hell out of what I'm going to say today.

Now I want to be serious for just a couple of moments. I know you have had a lot of speeches and you're going to hear a lot more, and I'm fully aware of it and I'm going to be very brief here. You know better than anybody that freedom is not free. It's paid for with great sacrifice. One of the major problems that veterans face today is that we don't have enough veterans in Congress who truly understand veterans issues. Senator McCain pointed out that the leadership, the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and others never wore the uniform. This is a serious problem for veterans in our country today, and I say that to you in all candor as a friend. It's a serious problem.

Having been a veteran myself, I have a vision. I have one little reminder of my dad. I was only three years old when he died on March 28, 1945. I have one memory, and that's in the doorway with him hugging my mother. I can still see him in uniform, and it was the last memory that I would have, because he went out that day and was killed in an airplane crash.

My wife and I visited Anzio, Italy during the 50th celebration of Normandy, and we stopped at Anzio with Senator Bob Dole. I will never forget it. Rows and rows and rows of these crosses on a foreign land where Americans had died. And in a moment that I will never forget, totally haphazard, totally accidental, we were looking at these crosses, and on one of those crosses was the name of a young man from New Jersey where my wife was born, who died on her birthday, May 29, 1944 at Anzio. That was a pretty vivid reminder of what freedom means and how important that is and what a fine line freedom really is. What it reminded me of is that we have got to strive to remain worthy of that sacrifice, not only of that young man, but for every veteran that that young man personified on that tombstone on that day. When the day comes that we don't recognize and appreciate who you are and what you did, then America is in deep, deep trouble. I must tell you, we are fast moving toward that time and I'm concerned about it.

Probably most of you saw the movie Private Ryan. At the end of that movie when Tom Hanks tells Private Ryan as he was dying, earn it, that is a reminder, folks, of what we have got to keep in mind as we go through life. We've got to earn it. And I think right now there are people in the government who could care less, who have no appreciation for what you did. And I served with some of them, I regret to say. It's tough for those of us like Senator McCain and me and others who have served in the military to bring the attention to these issues that are so important.

It reminds me of the words of Dr. Joseph Warren just prior to the Battle of Bunker Hill. Warren was a physician and the President of the Massachusetts Congress. He died at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and he didn't have to go. As a matter of fact, his comrades begged him not to go. They said, "You're a doctor. We need you to administer to us. Please don't go into battle. Please don't pick up arms." He did. And before he died, and before he left for that Battle of Bunker Hill, he said, "Our country is in danger but not to be despaired of. On you depends the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important questions on which rests the happiness and liberties of millions yet unborn, act worthy of yourselves." Unfortunately, many of our leaders are not acting worthy of the sacrifices that you have made in the spirit of Dr. Joseph Warren. You have heard, will hear, and will continue to hear a lot of words from people in politics at this convention. But if the words are to mean anything, they have to come from here, right out of the heart. If they don't come from the heart, they are not worth the paper they are written on.

I'm reminded of the Jimmy Stewart movie, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. When Jimmy Stewart who was not expected to be a United States Senator came to Washington,

he went around to the monuments in that movie. He was Senator Jefferson Smith in that movie, and he read the words on the monuments, and on the walls and on the marble. Because if those words mean anything, then we have to make them mean something. Words are nothing unless you are prepared to back it up with action.

I want to speak to you on three or four issues quickly this morning from the heart, as a comrade and as a veteran, not as a politician. And I'm prepared to be politically incorrect and tell you the truth, because that's the way I am. And the truth is that the American flag should not be desecrated. We do need that constitutional amendment. I support it and I will do everything in my power to see that it's passed. Now, at a recent hearing before the Judiciary Committee, which as you know passed the amendment, there was some testimony from the opponents who said that the flag was just a piece of cloth or a piece of canvas, and therefore we shouldn't be upset if it were burned. Well, let me just say to those people, here's a 20 dollar bill; all right? And here's a piece of paper. So if this 20 dollar bill is only a piece of paper, you send me the 20 bucks and I'll send you a piece of paper; fair enough? And then I will give all the money to the homeless veterans and other veterans in need.

It's a lot of nonsense. We all know it. It's absolute nonsense. That flag is precious. It's much more symbolic. You couldn't do any better than Senator McCain's example of the importance of that flag. It's not five black robes that should decide whether or not the flag should be desecrated, it ought to be the American people, and let the American people have a vote on it with a constitutional amendment. Then we'll decide, not judges from the Supreme Court.

I want to thank especially General Brady, who just spoke to you a few moments ago, and my friend Joe Caouette, from New Hampshire, because both of those guys have been leaders on this Flag Amendment at the National level. We're closer now than we've ever been and the votes are very close. We need to lean on some of these undecided voters and let them know if they don't support you on the amendment, you're not going to support them when election time rolls around. Believe me, that gets their attention. It doesn't have be to a complicated letter. I get these postcards every once in awhile on issues. And they're very simple. You vote this in; I vote you out. You don't need anything anymore complicated, so you say you vote against the flag, I vote against you. Sign it and send it in. Let them know what it's talking about.

Let me tell you another issue of the truth. The truth is that I don't have, and I don't think you have, confidence in our leaders that they're going to continue to support veterans health care, veterans benefits, and veterans programs. We're seeing that proven every day. Some of you had to wait months for medical appointments; some of your colleagues have passed away before they could get a VA claim adjudicated; the administration budget has not increased even as the active workload rises; and the number of aging veterans in need of care goes up. We heard a proposal two weeks ago from the Administration to add another one billion to the VA budget. Let me say to you as bluntly and as concisely as I can: that ain't enough. Folks, that's not enough money. This government and some of the leaders that speak to you, voted for it and supported it, this government just sent 18 billion dollars to the International Monetary Fund. Eighteen billion dollars to the International Monetary Fund while veterans sleep on grates in the largest cities of America. That's wrong and it ought to be stopped, and it ought to be stopped today, not tomorrow.

Do you know where your tax dollars go when you send them to the IMF? Let me tell you where some of them went. Your tax dollars that you worked for as a veteran while your comrades are doing without. I'll tell you where they went. Some of them went to Russia.

Russia sent some of those dollars to Iran. Iran bought nuclear weapons with them, and sent those nuclear weapons to North Korea. So you'll be pleased to know that you tax dollars are building nuclear weapons for North Korea. That's exactly what's happening to some of that IMF money. It's an outrage and it has to be stopped. We need to speak out to our leaders to stop it.

As a conservative, I'm supposed to be opposed to big government spending, and I am. But let me tell you one thing, I'm prepared to take whatever amount of money we have to take out of the IMF and give it to the veterans. If it's three billion, four billion, five billion, ten billion, whatever it is, take it out of the IMF and give it to the veterans of the United States, because they need it and they deserve it.

That's a constitutional responsibility that we have. And it derives from our obligation to provide for the common defense. You serve, we give you the best when you serve, and when you come home in need, you get what you need. That's it, pure and simple. To do anything else is not worthy of a great nation.

We spend money on the National Endowment of the Arts; we spend money on the Department of Education which tells local school districts what to do; 70 billion in the Department of Education; 99 million in the National Endowment of the Arts, and we can't find a few billion dollars to help our veterans. It's wrong.

In addition to the IMF, we have been sending a little bit too much money to the UN to suit me. We just sent a billion dollars to the UN to pay for arrears, our back debts. This body that the United States of America has almost carried on its back by itself for the past 50 years, we just sent them another billion that supposedly we owed them. I was one of only two Senators who voted against it. I'm proud that I voted against it. Let me just say this while we're talking about the UN, let's get it the hell out of America; send it to Havana. That's where it ought to be. Put it right next to Castro's residence.

I want to make one commitment to you, and I think you should try to follow it. I don't know what my political future is either. Right now, I'm a Senator, but either as a Senator or something else, I'll tell you one thing, the VSOs in this country, if a Smith Administration takes place, is going to pick the next Veterans Affairs Secretary. You will pick him and you will make the recommendation to me if I'm the President.

And finally a another issue: POW/MIA accounting. The truth is, we don't have a full accounting. We have never had a full accounting. And those that tell you we have a full accounting are lying to you, pure and simple. Right now Madeline Albright is in Hanoi talking about betting more money for the Vietnamese, more trade, more aid. And they tell you that the Vietnamese are fully cooperating. And I'm telling you the truth, after 15 years of working this issue night and day, they are not fully cooperating. We need more documents declassified. They haven't given us the documents out of the Polit Bureau; they haven't given us the information on the shoot downs in Laos; and they haven't given us the information on the interrogation reports of POWs who never came home that they interrogated. They know what happened to them, and they haven't given us the information and we shouldn't be giving them aid; we shouldn't be giving them money; we shouldn't be giving them full diplomatic recognition until we get that information, period. To do anything less is wrong.

We are doing the same thing with China, full Most Favored Nation status to China. After all, China is only the country that stole our secrets, that's doing this, doing that, campaign contributions, you name it. They have the answers to what happened in the Korean War. Let me give you some good news, because as a member of the Joint

U.S.-Russian Commission, I spent some time in Moscow a few months ago, and we were able to get 10,000 documents out of the Russians because they are cooperating to some extent with us about shoot downs in Korea. That will help to account for many Americans missing from the Korean Conflict, because the Russians were piloting those aircraft that were shooting down Americans, and they gave us those documents, and we were helping to account for a lot of people as a result of that.

Another issue is military readiness. John McCain talked about it. The truth is that recruitment is down. We have people on food stamps; the pay is too low; our up tempo is a mess. We've got people all over the world, asking them to do more with less. We added 13 billion dollars to the Administration budget, and all of the Joint Chiefs said we needed 25 billion per year for the next five years just to get even. We have a mess on our hands and it's because we don't have enough people in government, in the Administration or in Congress, who understand how important this is to straighten this out. Our own children and grandchildren could very well be threatened in the future because of what we have done these past six to eight years.

The truth is, our national security is more in jeopardy now than ever in the history of the United States of America. We are vulnerable to missile attack because we fooled around and haven't built and deployed an NMD system. Our missile technology is being sold all over the world some by profiteers in our own country. It's falling into the hands of China, North Korea, and Libya. Iran and Iraq are developing weapons of mass destruction. China is threatening Taiwan; North Korea is firing and testing missiles right over the country of Japan. Chinese Communists have stolen the plans of every nuclear weapon in our arsenal, and we let the guys stay there for three years spying, knowing he was doing it. What has happened to America? And then the Chinese, on top of that, tried to get the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. Senator Jim Inhofe and I were able at least temporarily stop that. And the worst news of all, in my view, the Panama Canal. Guess what's happening there? 150,000 Chinese Communists now in Panama. They will control the Panama Canal on both ends as of January 1st, 2000. What happens? We just sit idly by.

We need leadership and we need it badly, and we need it soon. And if we don't get it soon, it's going to be too late. That's the truth. We need leaders who understand how and when to use military power. And the decisions that we make today over the next three to five years are going to determine whether or not our children live in freedom or under some God only knows government that we're not going to like.

So I call upon you, all of you, to continue to do what you do best, which is to keep the pressure on the politicians in this country to straighten this mess out before it's too late. We owe it to our founders and we owe it to those who served and fought, were wounded and died in the service of our country.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I take great personal pride and pleasure in introducing our next guest. I have had the privilege of traveling with her as we have traversed the world in many ways. Sometimes we were even fortunate enough to be in the same place at the same time. She has been a steadfast leader of the world's largest patriotic women's organization. Under her lead by example philosophy, the American Legion Auxiliary has recorded another solid outstanding year of service to the veterans of this community and this country and this nation. Please welcome the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, from West Hardin Unit 108 in Kentucky, our President, my friend, Miss Virginia Hobbs.

Mrs. Virginia Hobbs, Kentucky, National President
The American Legion Auxiliary

What a pleasure it is to come before The American Legion's 81st National Convention. This has been a tremendous year for The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and for our entire American Legion family.

I am reminded of a line from Private Ryan, *Saving Private Ryan*, where the young soldier who was sought on the battlefield, said that he wanted to remain there with his family; that his comrades in arms were his family. That is how I feel about our organizations, that The American Legion family is my family. I truly believe it this year, and will continue to believe and exemplify that in years to come.

I would be remiss if I didn't make mention that I can see the Department of Kentucky up here on my left side. Thank you for being there. I thank them because a while ago during our session I lost one of my contacts and can only half way see now.

You have had a great year under the leadership of your National Commander Butch Miller. As Commander Miller said, we have traveled some together, our paths have crossed, but we have been able to maintain communications wherever we were. Communications by using that marvel of technology called the computer, the Internet and e-mail. This is something which has made our lives easier, made it easier for us to communicate together and to you. We hope that you will take up our efforts in becoming more attuned to the means that we have of working smarter, not harder.

There's a tremendous task ahead for members of our family to making sure that our leaders in Congress and our State Houses are educated about veterans and their needs; to making sure that they have a commitment to the families and to the children of this nation. We have a commitment to one another of making sure that we maintain the strength of our organizations, because The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary must always have those numbers of members to maintain our viability, to maintain our visibility, and to continue doing the good works that we do across the country.

I thank you for having elected in New Orleans such a dynamic leader for The American Legion. I am very proud that he has not only served with me this year as National Commander, but that we started the year as friends, and unless in the course of two days we have a falling out, he's going to end this years as my friend, also.

Living around the military base I always heard the term being 'short'. Well, now I truly know what it means because by this time tomorrow I will be awaiting the installation of our new National President. I thank you, members of The American Legion for all that you have done in support of the Auxiliary, for all that you do in the efforts of your community and in serving your fellow veterans. The American Legion family is one tremendous family, one that I am extremely proud to be a part of.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Virginia, for taking time out of your own convention to come over here and visit us.

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

It's been a great pleasure to have served this past year with a man who has become a friend and, as our National Chaplain, truly lives a life of God and country. Father Robert J.

Sweeney of Arthur Finnigan Post 1443 in New York. Father Sweeney, or as I like to call him, Padre Bob, is a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War. He joined The American Legion in 1992. Among members of Arthur Finnigan Post 1443, as I said, near his home in Greenwood Lake, New York, Father Sweeney has served as post, county, and department chaplain.

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to present to Father Sweeney a certificate of appreciation for his caring and devotion and service to this American Legion.

Padre Bob, this certificate of appreciation presented to Reverend Robert J. Sweeney, appointed and served as National Chaplain of The American Legion during the year 1998 to 1999, given in recognition of faithful and honorable service to The American Legion. If I can add one more thing that we didn't put on here, because we weren't really sure, and for coming up with a wonderful prayer for good weather during our parade, it is with great honor that I present this to you, the certificate signed by National Adjutant Spanogle and myself as National Commander.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SWEENEY: I would just like to thank Commander Butch, all of the staff of The American Legion, for the opportunity to serve you because you are truly family, and it is as a family that we will stick together and work for each other.

Presentation: Plaque of Appreciation
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Past National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The next order of business is to recognize New Orleans, Louisiana, for hosting the 80th National Convention of The American Legion. I know personally I will always remember that convention, and I hope that many of you have recollections of good times there, not just the rain. To help with this order of business, I'd like to call on Immediate Past National Commander Tony Jordan of Maine.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JORDAN: It's a great honor more for me as the Immediate Past National Commander to present a plaque to the President of the 1998 National Convention Corporation of New Orleans, Past National Commander William "Bill" Detweiller. We have a plaque to give you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for hosting an outstanding convention. I will always remember it and I'm sure Butch will, too.

It states, "In appreciation of the hospitality of the City of New Orleans and in commemorating the 80th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1998." Signed by, at that time, National Commander Anthony Jordan, Robert Spanogle, Adjutant, and, of course, it would be William "Bill" Detweiller, president of The American Legion, Convention Corporation of New Orleans.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DETWEILLER: I am pleased to accept this plaque in remembrance of the 80th National Convention on behalf of the City of New Orleans, the city council of our city, and the citizens of New Orleans. Further, it gives me great pleasure to receive this plaque on behalf of The American Legion, First District Convention Corporation of Louisiana, the host corporation, and the Department of Louisiana and Commander Bobby Watts, and the more than 38,000 members of The American Legion, its Auxiliary, and Sons, who came together to seek and host our fifth National Convention since the founding of this great organization.

I realize that there was a little rain. However, I think for the most part people seem to have had a good time. I know there was one couple that came from New York that happened

to stop by the department office. The Department Adjutant of New York saw this young couple, and they looked kind of sad as they were looking at the material about the upcoming convention. And he brought them in and he said, you know, I realize that on your fixed incomes you may not be able to go down to New Orleans and enjoy the convention, but we want to do something and help you out a little bit. So we are going to send you to New Orleans, going to pay your way, pay your air, take care of you in a fine hotel, and I think you will have a wonderful time. Well, I think it was somewhere in October of last year the lady happened back by the office in New York to stop in to say thank you. And the people in the office were glad to see her. They said, "It's great that you came back. How did you enjoy yourself?" She said, "I had a wonderful time, but can you tell me who that man was that I had to share the room with?"

Our biggest disappointment, I guess, was the rain in some ways. But at the same time, I think we had a great convention. If you missed last year's parade, and I'm sure you enjoyed this one, join with us on June 6th of next year, 2000. The National D-Day Museum dedicated to the men and women who made those landings in both the Pacific as well as the Atlantic and in Normandy and on the European coasts, will open with a gala celebration including a parade. Our parade will be similar to The American Legion parades that we all enjoy since we are somewhat involved in helping to put it on. You are all invited to attend and participate. Shortly the D-Day Museum web site will go on-line. For those of you who have access to computers and the Internet, that information regarding the grand opening will be available. The museum will celebrate the D-Day invasions as I have indicated. Many organizations are preparing to have their reunions, military reunions, during the grand opening. I encourage all of you who can to come, attend and participate.

Mr. Commander, I thank you very much for the opportunity of hosting the convention at which you were elected and the convention that Commander Jordan presided at. We are always ready, willing, and able to host a convention; and we look forward to you returning as soon as possible.

Report: National Commander's Report to the Convention
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
National Commander

Bound together by a sense of purpose, born in the fiery crucible of war, willing to be their brother's keeper, believing wholeheartedly in God and the principles upon which their country was founded, the founders of The American Legion laid an enduring values-based foundation upon which millions have served. And it has lasted for 80 years. Dedicated Legionaries such as you have carried on the work of those that gave birth to The American Legion. Their work and yours has profited our great nation and bestowed honor on the memory of all generations who have fought and died to preserve the principles upon which America was founded.

We tend to describe our history and our accomplishments in some sort of panoramic terms while, in truth, every element of our success is directly attributable to individuals. Individuals, men and women, possessed of vision and imbued with the desire to serve, to leave the world a little better than they found it. During the course of my year of stewardship, I have been blessed to meet some of those individuals, those individuals who have made The American Legion the positive force that it is today.

One such person is Bill Brown, a Korean War veteran, a Legionnaire, assistant Sergeant-at-Arms in the Department of Georgia. Bill is 69 years young, but he's not ready in any way to ride a rocking horse and watch the world go by. Every day he takes his nitroglycerin pills, and then he goes out to do his work for The American Legion. We met him on a membership tour in Georgia. It was a hot day in Georgia, the middle of the summer, and Bill was out there as a member of our team pounding on doors, stopping people on the street, looking for a veteran to start a new Legion post. It's hard work pounding the pavement in the noonday sun in Georgia, but you would think that Bill would rather be fishing, doing something relaxing under a shade tree. But that's not the Bill Brown that we know. He does what he does because he loves this organization. And as he says, I love this American Legion. Bill loves it. He loves it and he likes it just like you and I do. Like hundreds and thousands of others like us do. That's what keeps The American Legion strong and vibrant and meaningful in this very complex world of ours. Bill Brown, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms, Georgia, is a metaphor in so many ways for all of us because we love America. And together we just keep doing things the right way and the good way.

Another for instance in this past year, you and your comrades raised more than $1 million to build a memorial for a group of veterans who we have all come to call The Greatest Generation. They grew up in a Great Depression while learning a work ethic that would rebuild the world after that war. When they came of age, they put their lives on hold and fought the greatest, bloodiest conflict of this century, if not all centuries. Those who came home, and there were many who didn't, rebuilt the nation and the nations of the enemies they had fought. They pioneered industry at home, created the wealthiest and freest nation in history, and gave birth to an age of technology and progress in every field of human endeavor. These men and women, the veterans of World War II, richly deserve that National World War II Memorial, which very shortly will be built for them in Washington, DC. It will be a magnificent memorial and a magnificent moment when it's dedicated. And The American Legion and you should be proud to have raised that $1 million plus, and we hope to add more so that that World War II Memorial can be built.

But I should submit to you that that memorial is redundant because, if the truth be known, the entire world as we know it is a memorial to what those ladies and gentlemen of that generation, the veterans of the Second World War, have accomplished. They richly deserve our thanks. Not just them, but every veteran who is called to our country's service and responds.

Every veteran goes where he or she is sent, and every veteran is deserving of our nation's thanks, especially those currently serving on active duty. Too many of whom are struggling, as we know, to make ends meet because of the shortages of pay and the cost of raising a family in today's world. The American Legion has long been an advocate for better pay for our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. Because of The American Legion's efforts, on New Year's Day of next year, every active duty GI will receive a 4.8 percent raise in pay, the largest single pay raise since the 1980s because of what you and I have done. It's a start, but that's all it is, just a start. Because a 4.8% pay raise is not enough. It won't ever be enough until there are no military families anywhere in this world dependent upon welfare, food stamps, or their families to take care of them while they defend our country. We have done everything to make that change, and we will continue to try to make those kinds of positive changes for those serving in our armed forces.

We have helped change the lives of hundreds who fell victim to national disasters in this last year. They lost homes and properties, and tragically in some cases, they lost loved

ones. Their homes and their worlds stood in the paths of things such as tornadoes, as those that ripped across, Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The American Legion National Emergency Fund, the NEF, provided cash grants totaling tens of thousands of dollars to those tornado victims in those three states. One such victim, Marjorie Griswold of Post 170 in Del City, Oklahoma, wrote the following letter after she received a $1,000 grant from The American Legion. She said, "It will be a tremendous relief to get a new roof on my house which was hit hard by an F-5 grade tornado on May 3rd. I will always work for the good of The American Legion in any way that I can."

When I took office, the NEF balance was $8,329. I asked you get me $1 for every Legion member in your post so that we can respond when we are called. During the year, our Legion family, you, contributed over $600,000 to the tax deductible charity trust fund which is the NEF. Today, even after providing many grants throughout the years, our current balance stands at $433,125, and it's growing every day. Thank you for your hard work and generosity. The American Legion is prepared to answer those calls should another natural disaster hit any of your family.

Since the NEF was started in 1989, The American Legion—you—have contributed more than $3 million helping others less fortunate than we are. These were not loans. They were grants given from one comrade to another at a time when that comrade needed the help the most. That's what we veterans do. We take care of our own. We never know who will need our help next. One day you are strong and vibrant, living tall, morale is high. The next day laid low by accident or disease. You can be well one day and poor the next.

Take the case of James Colley. He parachuted into Normandy, spent a year in a German POW camp, earned the Purple Heart. Shortly after I became your National Commander, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that this 81-year-old veteran, a true hero of World War II, a member of that greatest generation, was about to be kicked out of the VA Medical Center in Coatsville, Pennsylvania. Why? The answer is totally ridiculous, but he had become too sick! At a time when he needed the promises in the VA more than ever in his life, they decided that they would kick him out. Colley's Alzheimer's had worsened to the point that the VA program under which he had been treated could no longer be used because that treatment was given under the program for independent living. Colley was told he had to be moved to a private nursing home. The government would pay for his care for two months only, and then he was on his own. Colley was about to become a budget casualty. He was going to be a loser when an outstanding hospital system with fine practitioners ran out of money to care for him, he who had borne the battle and he was going to be kicked out. But our American Legion found out about it, and we said no way. That won't happen. As a result of our direct intervention by our national staff, the Secretary of Veteran Affairs placed an immediate moratorium on the removal of any elderly or disabled veterans from the VA nursing facilities.

James Colley was saved, again, as he was saved from a World War II prison camp. But unfortunately in February while still in the VA nursing home, he died. He never lost faith that his government would do the right thing. And when Congress comes to its senses and implements every provision of the GI Bill of Health, James Colley's faith and the faith of all veterans will become fact because they will be taken care of. The cruel but true and all too prevalent budget cuts and shortfalls in our world of today that almost dislocated Jim in the twilight of his life will never plague another patriot. Even though this was not an isolated case in a system driven by dollars, the administration submitted a VA budget that we have heard about that fell about $2 billion short of what is needed in fiscal year 2000 to simply

maintain the current level of services. Recognizing that there are hundreds, maybe thousands of Jim Colleys who will be facing a medical crisis and become a budget casualty, The American Legion has lobbied hard for an increase in the VA's medical funding. I am pleased to say that the House Appropriations Committee heeded our call. The committee tacked a $1.7 billion addition onto the original recommendation. Although they never met, this next man I want to tell you about could very well have been thinking of James Colley when he himself was but a young veteran in the great war.

The Armistice had been signed. GIs were waiting to go home. One of them was George Washington Bentley. Then he saw an ad in the *Stars and Stripes* of that time. They were talking about a gathering that they were having. As George told me himself when I had the pleasure of meeting him in February of last year, "We didn't know what was going on. We just thought they were going to have a get-together, and they were going to have some free refreshments and food. So we went." He attended the meeting in Paris in March of 1919 simply because of his curiosity. He became a founder of The American Legion. In later life, the French government gave him the highest medal that it can bestow, The Legion of Honor. He was a member of Post 231 in Minnesota, the state where I grew up.

George Bentley, a great friend to all of us, was the last living surviving founder of The American Legion. Unfortunately, as I said, he transferred to Post Everlasting on June 4th at the young age of 101. And if you ever had the pleasure of meeting him, you would know that for him 101 was young. Numerous American Legion honor guards were there honoring and remembering the passing of George, but I'm sad to say that there was no formal military presence there. There was no military honor guard there. I don't know if George's family requested an honor guard or not. He certainly was deserving of one. But this I do know: Many families are very disappointed when they request honor guards for funerals and, again, they are told no and the memories of those families becomes a budget tragedy.

As I watched the final honors being paid to George Bentley and helped carry his coffin to its final resting place, I thought that it was a shame that our government wasn't there to bid farewell to one of its true heroes. I am glad that The American Legion has been very successful in its attemp in doing something about that for thousands of families at least for the future. Under a new law that will take effect in January, the family of any veteran can request a military honor guard from the Department of Defense. There will be a toll free number that will be available for families to call. Where possible, the military will supply an honor guard. The American Legion believes that every veteran is a hero and every veteran deserves a burial with a military honor guard present. Burial honors include the placing of an American flag on a veteran's coffin. We do this because the U.S. Flag is the unifying symbol of our nation, and our veterans fought for it and the values it represents. That is the unifying spirit of America's people.

I am pleased to report that we are even closer than we have ever been to returning to the American people the right to protect our flag from acts of physical and intentional desecration. It is a right that the Supreme Court took away from us in 1989 by one vote, the narrowest of possible margins. In June, the House of Representatives passed the Flag Protection Amendment for the third time. During the past year, the amendment gained one supporter in the Senate, maybe two. Senator John Edwards of North Carolina has recently declared himself undecided on the issue. He had been against it before. We can only hope that he and others like him will see what this really means, that it is a values issue. It isn't a free speech issue. Let's cut to the quick. It's simply values of what our country is. Let's hope they come to their senses and vote on it.

As I have traveled back and forth across America, there is one thing I have learned for sure: the American people want their flag protected. There is no question about that. The American Legion is going to get that job done. Yes, it's been a long fight, and it may last a little longer; but as I told one reporter, if we have to, The American Legion is going to fight until hell freezes over. Then we will put on our skates and we will fight them on the ice because that's what we are here for. It's not a matter of how long. It's a matter of when. It's the right fight, and that's what we will do.

When I think of our flag and what it means, I am reminded of those three POWs who, when they were released from Yugoslavia's prisons a short time ago, told of taking comfort from a hand-drawn American flag that one of the troops had in his pocket. That one image embodied for them hope, confidence, and the assurance that they would never be forgotten. Much like the same hope, confidence that Senator McCain explained this morning displayed by one prisoner, Mr. Christensen.

As all of America celebrated their release, I, like many of you, thought about America's POWs and MIAs from other wars such as Vietnam and those before it. Many people think the terms POW and MIA were created for the Vietnam war. They were not. They have been present in every conflict that this country has ever been involved in. Every time The American Legion has gone to Vietnam, 13 in the past seven years, we have met with Vietnamese officials and urged them in the strongest possible terms to stop stalling and help and assist with our efforts to account for and return the remains of our POWs and MIAs, every single one of them. No good can come from prolonging this agony. I hope Secretary of Defense Cohen will add teeth to our demands when he visits Vietnam in the upcoming months. In the meantime, The American Legion will continue to fight for a full accounting of POWs and MIAs from all wars. Equally important, we will insist that the United States government enforces the provisions of the Missing Serviceperson's Act, which the Legion helped write. This act will insure that future POWs are treated humanely and released properly at the end of the hostilities.

One of the things I am most proud of this year is that The American Legion has become an on-line organization. One year ago when I took office, 17 departments were on-line. I could e-mail them from whatever hotel room I was staying in anywhere in the country or the world. Today, as I stand here before you, I am very proud to say that of the 55 departments in this organization, I can now e-mail with 54 of them. I'm only missing one. I don't take that one as a failure. I take that one as a challenge, and they will have a personal visit from me before this week is over.

Some people call me the Cyber Commander. Our National Adjutant has taken that title to heart. I'm still waiting for my cape which hasn't arrived yet. But I am proud to be that Cyber Commander because in today's world you can't afford not to be connected to the rest of the world. Last October when I met with all of the Department Commanders in Indianapolis and gave them my e-mail address. I told them I'm just a click away any time day or night. Then when they started talking to each other, their most frequently asked question between each of them turned out to be what is your e-mail address. The same thing happened between our National Vice Commanders. I am very happy to say that during the year we kept track of each other using e-mail. They wanted to stay in touch with each other instantly. I saluted them for it. In today's world, we have to be connected to each other if we are going to be and remain to be the best we can be.

In one area that continues to challenge us and in one area that that technology may have its greatest benefits in the future is that of membership. We need to build new posts in areas

where people and places that we don't have posts now. Every place there is a high school should be an American Legion post. This has been our challenge. It has been the standard that we will meet.

Kentucky, Nevada, Alaska, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Hawaii exceeded their 1999 membership goals. Nevada and Arizona reached all-time highs. I would also like to mention that this is the fourth year in a row for those folks in Arizona. Michigan is laying a strong foundation for the future of our organization. It has created 19 new American Legion posts this year and is revitalizing one post that was on the brink of extinction. Michigan is truly thinking outside the box, and that is where we all need to start thinking.

Innovation works, and I'm going to take just a moment and brag just a little bit and tell you about one of the efforts of a particular post in Virginia that just happens to be my home post, Post 364. You may have read about this in *The American Legion Magazine*. It was on the front cover. My post adopted the 340 officers, men and women, of the *USS Higgins*, the Navy's newest and, I might add, prettiest, destroyer. We saw it the other day down in San Diego. It is a brilliant ship. Signing up these members of the ship was based on an idea that my travel companion and aide, Bill Moriarity, a Navy retiree himself, came up with. Thanks to Bill and the support of post, we now have part of our post home floating, right now just at a pier in San Diego, but to be floating toward the Mideast shortly. That part of our post home is being paid for by the U.S. Government. It's fully equipped with the latest weapons and technology, all because someone was thinking out of the box and his fellow members getting behind the idea.

It's happening elsewhere. Past North Dakota Commander, Jim Clifford, advertised on a local T.V. cable channel. He invited viewers to an American Legion open house at Burlington fire station. When they showed up, he presented them with the opportunity to join The American Legion. As a result, that one night Jim signed up 15 new members and a new post charter.

By bringing in new members and going on-line, we perpetuate our service to America and multiply our good deeds to others. You, the members of The American Legion and your families, are a beacon of hope in a world that is confused and in some cases lost, a world whose values stand on shifting sands and whose vision of the future is murky at best and clouded at worst. Yet, you are clinging to the principles and the values that our founders built this great organization upon. You are passing them on to the nation's youth, that youth that you saw before you today in the choir and the champions. You are passing them on to the young people through our many national, state, and local programs. And every time you reach out, you show someone somewhere that we still care, that we, the 4 million members of The American Legion family: The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion, still care and we are still serving America. And you should be darn proud of it because I am.

Tribute to American Legion Founders

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Founders of The American Legion were men with a compelling drive to continue service to God and country once they were back in their "civvies." Over the years, those who had attended a caucus in Paris or St. Louis formed the Society of The American Legion Founders. They developed a medallion incorporating our American Legion emblem surrounded by the words "Founders-Paris- St. Louis." They attached it with a ribbon so it could be worn proudly around their necks. We

haven't seen many of these worn at National Conventions in the past years. Sadly, we have no more living founders, and we will never see it worn again. That is why today we pay special tribute to those 20th Century visionaries.

George Washington Bentley, a proud doughboy from Minnesota who attended the Paris caucus because he was curious, transferred to Post Everlasting on June 4th, 1999, at the young age of 101, as I said before. Comrade Bentley was a simple man. But yet, he was an exquisite man, a very interesting individual. He was a man whose curious visit to that meeting in the Cirque de Paris made him one of 463 registered delegates, most of them just like George. They weren't sure what was really going on. They thought there was going to be free refreshments, sweets and food, but they soon caught the fire, the zeal, of the those visionaries who started the organizational effort, individuals such as Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Lt. Col. George S. White, Major Eric Fisher Wood, and Lt. Col. William J. Donovan.

These four men pulled strings, influenced generals, and hand-picked those who could not know what journey they were about to take and that it would have such far-reaching impact. Others present in Paris went on to achieve great distinctions in other areas. Wood was a Brigadier General in World War II. Ogden Mills became Secretary of the Treasury. Frank D'Olier was the first National Commander, and later a president of a great insurance company. Two other future National Commanders were Alvin Owsley and James Drain. Our first National Adjutant, Lemuel Bolles, was also there. Bennet Clark became a U.S. Senator from Missouri and managed to enact laws affecting veterans of both World War I and World War II. A former national doubles tennis champion, Dwight Davis, was also there. So was John Winant, future governor of New Hampshire, member of the first Society Security Board and ambassador to England. And the list goes on. There was a future Congressmen from Massachusetts and Ohio, A. Piatt Andrew and Ralph Cole. Devereaux Milburn, one of the greatest polo players of the times, was also there. George Ijams served many years as Assistant Director of the Veterans Administration. Harry Foster became the mayor of San Diego, California. David Goodrich—yes, it is the name you remember—was a member of the rubber family, one of the names on the registration list. Vincent Carroll would become a judge in Pennsylvania. Walter Beals would end up on the Supreme Court of the State of Washington.

These 463 men who gathered in Paris simply concerned themselves with the details of organization. It was not in their plans to consider policy or philosophy. There was much work to be done. The American Legion would have the necessary foundation to carry on, that would be strengthened, defined, and empowered within the next eight months, from gatherings in St. Louis, Missouri, in Minneapolis, in small towns and villages across America. The American Legion seed had been planted, and it began to take root.

For those of us living in 1999, it's hard to imagine how the founders of this organization were able to accomplish this in such a short time. Think of it. They didn't have air transportation like we have. They didn't have 70 mile an hour interstates. They didn't have trains that traveled as fast as today. There was so little time. I believe it was because those men had a deep sense of urgency and the zeal that had been planted in Paris. That fire would not go out. Perhaps historian Richard Jones caught that urgency best when he wrote, "The American Expeditionary Force dissolved. It left its dead in France. It left its record for history. Its members were discharged from the armed services almost as quickly as they landed back home in America. To perpetuate their memories, continue in service to their country, care for the disabled, they founded the American Legion. In so doing, they had asked nothing of a grateful nation." It seems to me that while they asked nothing, they gave

in every possible way in daily living the aims and purposes of The American Legion embodied in our preamble.[1]

I call on Past National Commander Erle Cocke, Jr., who in 1983 was named the Honorary President of the Society of American Legion Founders. I believe he should have the honor of closing the book for this great society.

Tribute to Founders of The American Legion
Past National Commander Erle Cocke, Jr.

To say that I stand before you a sad man would be an understatement. When I was National Commander, more than 600 founders were at the Convention. In fact, there were 612 founders present when I became the First National Commander to ever address the Society.

They were my mentors. They were my confidants. And they certainly were my friends. They made it possible for you and for me to return home and to continue service to the country as civilians. They were Americans who had the passion for their country, their community, and for God Almighty. They are all gone but they will never be forgotten.

The star in Paris, developed in St. Louis, has been a real thrust throughout the perpetuation of The American Legion by those who saw so much future in it when it began. The Senior Chaplain of the American Expeditionary Force, the Very Reverend Charles Brent, was one of those in Paris back in 1919. His message struck with those delegates, and I see no reason why they shouldn't strike a chord with you and with me today as we look to the future and to the possibilities which await this great institution, The American Legion. Bishop Brent said, "I believe that the Army of today when it goes back to civilian thinking and civilian acting, it will be capable of contributing to the commonwealth of the United States, as well as the change of character of the whole country, and lift it up to the higher planes of political, industrial and religious life." He was right.

As we come to the end of the 20th Century, it is time for each of us to recapture that passion for the service, for America certainly needs God, and America needs The American Legion.

Commander Miller, I believe it is the appropriate time and hour to ask the National Chaplain, Father Robert Sweeney, to offer a prayer as we mark the end of the Society of American Legion Founders.

...At this time the Delegation stood and uncovered.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SWEENEY: We are gathered as friends with memories that never can be erased. Tears of sadness, tears of joy, whether our distance from loved ones be measured by miles, or from the beyond. They paved the way, but the future is ours. For we speak of them as living memorials.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we honor and revere the memories of our mentors, the Founders of The American Legion, who have been called to Post Everlasting. They had the foresight to organize an association of veterans returning to their homes after the battle scars of war. They realized the basic needs those veterans would encounter upon their return. They believed that by associating together in mutual helpfulness as veterans, we would be

---

[1] *A History of The American Legion*, by Richard Seelye Jones, Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1946, p.34

able to grow in strength in service to God and Country, thus serving each other as we support our youth and our community. By that bond forged in the fox holes and trenches of warfare we stand together, mindless of race, creed or sex. Bound as buddies who were united in war, we now stand indivisible in peace. We give thanks to The American Legion and the moral standards and family standards and values it has come to symbolize. We give thanks to the members of the Society of Founders of The American Legion who prepared the way, not for themselves, but for those buddies with whom they served and those who did not return. Amen.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Some of you may remember that performance which was done by Brandi Williams. She sang that song at our National Convention in Orlando. Some of you may also be wondering why Past National Commander Erle Cocke was chosen to give that tribute. Those of you who don't know it, Erle was the youngest National Commander ever elected by this organization so far. He was 29 years old at the time he was elected, and he is the Senior Past National Commander of this organization. And I didn't think that there was anybody that deserved to give that tribute more than Erle.

At this time it is an honor for me to introduce to the delegates of this Convention a man who shares our zeal for helping veterans. He is the Dominion President of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada. A veteran of World War II two, serving first in the Canadian Army and then transferring to the Royal Canadian Air Force, welcome a man who has already received The American Legion's Amity Award, a great leader from Canada, our friend to the north, Bert Pritchard.

Address: Bert Pritchard, Dominion President
Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada

Before I say my remarks, I consider it an honor to be here before you to address you on your 81st Annual Convention. I have been a member of 56 years of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, and I consider this my finest moment. Having said that, thank you, Comrade Miller, distinguished guests, and members of The American Legion, on behalf of the executive and all members of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada. I bring you greetings and friendship. It is a friendship which began between our associations during the early years after World War II, which led to the establishment of the Anavicus, the United States unit of Anavicus, a friendship like that of our countries, partly founded on history of military ventures over the years.

As an aside, Benjamin Franklin commented on being a friend in this statement: a false friend in the shadow that can see only when the sun shines. Certainly our countries' history shows that ours have been forced often through very overcast skies. As brothers in arms we go back a long ways, and history shows that Canadians served with your armies during the Civil War. About 70 years later during another civil war in Spain, many Canadians served in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Not many years later, the first special service force, known by its members as The Force and founded in 1942 by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Frederick, was manned by Canadians and Americans, and earned an enviable record as being tough and unbeatable, achieving one success after another in the battlefields of Italy, France and Germany. In the 1950s in the hills of Korea, at the Battle of Kapyong Canada's Princess Patricia's held off a large attacking force of the enemy. Along the American units on the right would carry out a tactical withdrawal, and later to retake their lost ground. And

the Patricia's, as part of the Commonwealth Division, stood shoulder to shoulder with American forces to contain communist aggression in that far off peninsula. Early in the 1960s, in the rice patties and hamlets of Vietnam, Canadian's served in the American units, and many gave their lives. On the Rhine in the 1950s, '60s and '70s we stood united as a bulwark to communist expansion in Europe. Here in North America, the mutual defense arrangement, known as NORAD, is another instance of service to brothers- in-arms.

Our long history of military service together is a telling reminder to all of our close association as neighbors. Today, we stand here in Anaheim, California, shoulder to shoulder to commemorate the sacrifices of our comrades who gave their lives.

Of course, rights have to be protected, and it has been the role of the warrior to do so. It is a role not very well understood by our political masters during times of peace. Let us work together in reminding our governments of the folly of forgetting about the need to keep strong and well equipped forces in sufficient number to ensure that protection. As veterans organizations we have another challenge of reminding succeeding generations of Americans and Canadians of the values of which our brothers and sisters have made the supreme sacrifice, and tell them that those who gave their youth, vigor in the service of our countries, that did so for their well-being. Our fallen comrades are counting on us to tell the story and to never forget.

I wish you a successful convention. God bless our countries.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Bert. It's always very nice to have fellow Anavicus members here.

Many American veterans have worked closely with members of those in the American and the Canadian armed forces, at both the civilian and military levels. That service formed bonds of friendship which have continued to this very day. Our support and appreciation of the service of The Royal Canadian Legion is a natural extension of that mutual service. We are honored to have with us in Anaheim, the Dominion Vice President, and the first woman to hold that position, I might add. She served with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Welcome to the stage, the Dominion Vice President, Mary Ann Burdett.

Address: Mary Ann Burdett, Dominion Vice President
The Royal Canadian Legion

It gives me great pleasure, and is the greatest honor of my life to bring you greetings from Comrade Chuck Murphy, our Dominion President of The Royal Canadian Legion, and the 500,000 Legionnaires in Canada.

From the moment I arrived here I have been impressed. And this morning I have had my heart wrenched so many times, starting with the beauty of the sound of your All-American Boys Choir; the feeling of patriotism and concern for the protection of the American flag, something we as Canadians can understand as well; by all of your speakers, and perhaps especially by Senator McCain who has suffered those things which we cannot even begin to comprehend, and has come through to carry on, to lead us, to show us the way and help the veterans attain what it is they so richly deserve. For the next sessions I will bring more Kleenex™, but I thank you all so very much for adding to my knowledge.

When I first started with The Royal Canadian Legion, my father, who had a great affect on my life, gave me some advice. He said, "Sweetheart, when you're making a speech," he said, "make it like a young lady's skirt, long enough to cover the subject and short enough to keep it interesting." Yesterday, while wandering around Disneyland I took a look at some

of the young ladies skirts; went back to the hotel and threw away the first 20 pages of my speech. So you can thank my father and those young ladies for me not being as long-winded as I might have been.

As Canadians, we inhabit the second largest country, and are bounded by three oceans, and we share with you people a landmass. But more importantly, we share with you the ideal of freedom and equality for all. The bonds of service shared on this continent are strong. Four times we have served together in this century alone for the good of mankind. And today, Canadian and American troops are serving together once again in the troubled Balkans. We are allies in NATO and NORAD. Service to our individual nations and the protection of our allies are ideals which we as Legionnaires understood during our service days, and which we understand now as we continue to pursue the rights and benefits earned by our veterans in this primary area and in the area of nation-building. We stand together, Canada and the United States of America. The relationships we have formed as nations and the service organizations in war and peace are second to none.

Your President Kennedy once said, "That like a marriage, it is a relationship which no one should put asunder," and he was right. We are neighbors because of geography; partners because of economics; and allies because we share the view of freedom and equality which few nations know, and many can only dream about.

We must make every effort to see that our knowledge and our caring of our veterans goes on to the next generation, that they become aware and remain aware of the sacrifices of their predecessors. This coming year, the millennium in Canada, in 1999 during our Remembrance Day time, The Royal Canadian Legion will be asking the Canadian people to stand for a two minute wave of silence across the country, from time zone to time zone at 11:00 o'clock. The 11th hour, the 11th day of the 11th month. We mean real silence, that cars will stop, that broadcasters will shut down, that everything will become silent as it becomes 11:00 o'clock, and that wave of silence will travel the country. We want to ensure that our young Canadian pay special tribute to their veterans that day.

In the year 2000 the Legion is spearheading the return to Canada of the remains of an unknown soldier. The remains will come from that famous battlefield of Vimy Ridge and will be returned to Canada for internment at the base our National War Memorial in our capitol city of Ottawa. Projects like these are why we as a Legion will continue to exist far into the future. We have a role to fulfill, and as long as we have men and women in uniform to stand for freedom and democracy, we, as Legions, will continue our role.

I thank you for your kind invitation to your Convention, the warmth of your hospitality, and the pleasures I have encountered here in your company. In closing, another one of my daddy's famous sayings: "Sweetheart, when your mouth is open, your ears are closed." So I'm going to sit down, close my mouth, reopen my ears and learn all I can from the most dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced Legionnaires I have ever encountered.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Our next guest has traveled far to bring his greetings. He is a man who has a distinguished military career in the Republic of China. Today, he is the Secretary-General of the Veterans Affairs Commission of that country. Welcome Lieutenant General Wu, Chi-liang.

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

It is my great honor to be invited to attend your 1999 National Convention here in Anaheim. I bring you greetings from the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Our Commission used to be called VACRS in short, and I think many of our old friends and your Past National Commanders, and Past National Presidents of the Auxiliary still remember us by that name. Well, whatever our name, our organization is always your ally in the West Pacific, and will always be willing to continue our relations with you.

January 16th, last year, I started to assume the Office of the Secretary General of the Veterans Affairs Commission of my country, the Republic of China. Since then, I have been informed that The American Legion and the VAC have been in very sound and close relationship for over 20 years. Each year our two organizations exchanged visits and each year our delegation to your Convention found the trip informative and impressive.

Last December I had the honor to meet with National Commander Miller and his party. It's a pity they could not have stayed long with us in Taiwan, but I think they must have shared some of what they had seen there in Taiwan with their friends and colleagues. I hope what he shared was about what we were doing there for our veterans, and not about our traffic, especially not the scooter riders.

Our organization, the VAC, is a equivalent to your Department of Veterans Affairs in the federal level. We focus our services on providing medical care, home care, education assistance, and employment assistance to our veterans. Our philosophy is that veterans have given the best part of their life to serve the country and the people, and so, when they are retired, the country needs to reciprocate their contribution by providing them at least a decent life. In the past years, our delegations visited your VA centers and other service facilities; they brought back to Taiwan many ideas about how you serve your veterans and how your veterans and the American veteran organizations continue to show patriotism to your country, and we learned.

Ladies and gentlemen, veterans are respectful. The majority of us present today are veterans; when we were in active service we served our country with all our might, and after we retire, we are still patriotic and loyal to our country. That is the unique nature of soldiers, and we are proud of being soldiers once in our life. Let us keep this feeling and pass it on to our next generation and to theirs too. Then, like General Douglas MacArthur said in his prayer to his son: We will not live in vain.

In closing, I want to once again thank you for inviting me to participate in this great occasion, and wish every one of you good health, and a successful Convention.

GENERAL WU, CHI-LIANG (translated): To show our appreciation, on behalf of the State President of the Republic of China, Lieutenant General Wu, would like to present the Medal of Cloud and Banner on behalf of Dr. Lee Ten-hui, the president of our country. I would take pleasure to read the English translation of the certificate accompanying the Award of the Order of Cloud and Banner.

Mr. Harold L. "Butch" Miller, National Commander of The American Legion has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China, and to the enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries. In appreciation of his meritorious service, National Commander Miller is presented the Order

of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China, in the accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations. Signed by Dr. Lee Ten-hui, President; Mr. Vin Sin Chau **(phonetics)** the Premier, and General Tun Ve, **(phonetics)** Minister of National Defense.

In addition to that, on behalf of the Chairman of Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, Lieutenant General Wu would also like to present to National Commander, Harold L. "Butch" Miller, a plaque. And the inscription reads: In appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Signed by General Lee Ten-hui Chairman, Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on the date of September 7, 1999.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, General Wu for your kindness and for your service.

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

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules
Ronald Murphy, Arizona, Chairman

Your Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 AM on Sunday, September 5, 1999 in the Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Laguna A room in Anaheim, California. Forty-seven (47) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus sixteen (16) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary of the committee were duly elected. I, Ronald C. Murphy, a delegate from the Department of Arizona, was elected Permanent Chairman. Claude B. Carpenter, a delegate from the Department of Arkansas, was elected Permanent Secretary.

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

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

A third unanimously approved motion authorizes the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules.

The Legislation and Rules Committee did not receive any resolutions for consideration or action.

Under new business, the Committee heard remarks from Andre Quintero, Staff Member for the Office of Senator Joe Dunn, California State Senate. Mr. Quintero discussed the development of effective working relations between professional staff and veterans' advocates. He effectively outlined the numerous ways in which professional staff can best assist Department leadership in advancing the legislative agenda in their states through close liaison with professional staff member, as well as with lawmakers.

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

Recently, the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders received letters from National Commander, Butch Miller, and Citizens Flag Alliance President, Pat Brady, requesting a vote on Senate Joint Resolution 14 on March 28, 2000. This vote would coincide with The American Legion's annual Washington Conference.

Today, Congress returns from its August recess to resume work on the FY 2000 budget. In fact, the House is expected to take up the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies appropriations bill either today or tomorrow. Unfortunately, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee has not yet even produced their version of the bill. VA will need a $1.9 billion increase in current funding in FY 2000.

Only one appropriations bill for FY 2000 has been signed into law. That means the other twelve (12) bills are still in limbo. The American Legion, you and I, still has time to lobby Members of Congress to adequately fund programs and services important to America's veterans and their families.

Yesterday, The American Legion opened a Command Post in Exhibition Hall A across from Emblem Sales. The Command Post is equipped with telephones and computer terminals. I would ask that each and every member of The American Legion family stop by and send a message to your lawmakers. The computers also give us the capability to send letters-to-the-editor of your local, hometown newspapers. The Command Post hours of operations will be until 5:00 p.m. today, tomorrow from 8:00 a.m until 5:00 p.m., and on Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Please have as many of your delegates visit that Command Post as possible. If you don't call, they won't listen.

On September 28, Legionnaires from across the country will accompany the newly elected National Commander to Capitol Hill. The purpose of this visit will be to discuss the legislative mandates adopted by the delegates at this National Convention. The highlight of this event will be the National Commander's testimony before a joint session of the congressional Veterans' Affairs Committees.

National Commander Butch Miller, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Arizona, I move the adoption of this report and the adoption of the Standing Rules of the Convention as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedures for Organizing National Conventions of The American Legion. Mr. Commander, I so move.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, those in favor of the motion signify in the normal manner. Those opposed? Ayes have it.

The Report of Legislation and Rules is adopted.

The Chair recognizes Ken Danilson of Iowa, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Finance
Kenneth Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

This is the report of the Convention Committee on Finance. Forty-two (42) members met at the Hilton Anaheim, Capistrano Room 20, Concourse Level, at 9:00 a.m., September 5, 1999 in Anaheim, California. Paul M. Allen (Minnesota), National Finance Director,

opened the Meeting as staff liaison and made general announcements concerning convention activities. He then informed the committee that nominations were in order for Chairman and Secretary. Kenneth D. Danilson (Iowa) was elected Chairman and Carl E. Levi (Tennessee) was elected Secretary by unanimous vote. The chairman introduced National Treasurer, George Buskirk, Jr. (Indiana) who updated the committee on the status of the U.S. economy and its effect on the investment policy of the National Headquarters. The Dow Jones Average which closed the 1998 year at 9,181 is now at an all time high of 11,326. This continued strength, coupled with a cautious policy of the Federal Reserve to keep the economy from over heating by increasing fed rates, is expected to sustain a foundation for continued economic prosperity. Foreign economies are expected to recover longer term as a result of government intervention to improve their credit and corporate performance. While the U.S. economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow at 3.5%, Europe should have a GDP growth of 2% in 1999. National Headquarters is projecting a operating surplus for 1999 of $4,262,443 which will be $1,860,067 higher than it was originally planned. Treasurer Buskirk then recommended that National dues be set at $9.00, no change from previous years. A motion from Silas Noel (Kentucky) was made that the 2000 per capita dues remain at $9.00. Anthony Minei (New York) seconded the motion and it was adopted by unanimous vote.

The chairman then recognized Dick McNally (Wisconsin), the Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of *The American Legion Magazine*. Mr. McNally reported that the magazine had a 1998 surplus of $1,968,698 and is projecting a $1,500,000 surplus for this year. Mr. McNally reported that even though the first and second quarter advertising revenues are down $623,945 from our revenue goal of $6,785,000, our third quarter advertising was very strong; strong enough, in fact to move us to the point where sales now exceed last year's by a small margin. Some of this was due to a 7.5 advertising rate increase this year and that national advertising is more profitable. Mr. McNally then informed the committee that we absorbed an 11% increase in postal rates over the past year. The impact was mitigated by the fact that our printer, R.R. Donnelly increased the number of postal entry points from 127 to 197. The new three year contract with R.R. Donnelly reflects a price cut of $350,000 annually. Additionally, we have experienced a price drop in paper costs.

National Finance Director Paul Allen reported that the 1998 Olive & Co. certified annual audit, which was distributed to each delegate prior to the convention and published in the convention program, shows our total assets were at $111,132,912 a 10% increase over last year and our 1998 year end surplus was $3,957,122. He also informed the committee that we are anticipating about the same year end surplus in 1999. The National financial status is very sound.

Chairman Danilson then updated the committee on the financial status of The American Legion's contribution to the Citizens Flag Alliance (CFA). As a federally chartered organization, the audit of The American Legion and the reports of the convention committees and the activities of the standing commissions are sent to the U.S. Congress, the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tem of the Senate. They are then reproduced by the Government Printing Office, reviewed by the Internal Revenue Service, and are made available to any citizen of the United States upon request. Additionally, everything in its totality about the finances of the CFA are public record and available to the National Convention, and at every meeting of the National Executive Committee and the National Finance Commission. Furthermore, Carl Levi (Tennessee) who is Vice Chairman of the National Finance Commission is the Chairman of the CFA's Internal Audit Committee. Mr.

Levi, CFA's Treasurer George Buskirk and CFA's Chief Financial Officer Paul Allen conduct periodical audits. Annually, all CFA records are audited by Alderding & Co., a certified public accounting firm.

Chairman Danilson then informed the committee in the interest of the fullest possible disclosure he asked the finance staff to distribute every resolution passed by the National Executive Committee, pertaining to the CFA, to the Convention Committee on Finance. These resolutions authorized The American Legion to invest $13,227,000 in the flag-protection campaign. Every penny is accounted for and we have documentation for all of it at National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Chairman Danilson then informed the committee that the CFA currently has around $550,000 cash on hand plus a $90,000 segregated account to pay for scholarships. He also informed them that the fund raising efforts are very successful, netting around $500,000 each year.

Brad Jorgens (Minnesota) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Finance. William Rochford (Maryland) seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

As a delegate to this Convention, Mr. Chairman, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the adoption of the report, signify in the usual sign. Opposed nay? Ayes have it.

The American Legion is a family organization. This morning you heard from the President of the American Legion Auxiliary. Now it is my distinct pleasure to present to you the newly elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. He is a man with a long list of service to veterans and their families in Oklahoma through his Sons leadership. Please welcome a member of Squadron 337 in Talala, Oklahoma, Commander Rick Cook.

Rick Cook, Oklahoma, National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

I bring you greetings from the Sons of The American Legion. We have completed a very successful year. Membership is almost 220,000 members, which is an increase of over five percent. VA&R participation has increased from last year's numbers. With Child Welfare donations, we set a new record of 181,000 plus. This put us over the one million dollar mark since 1988. All other programs which the Sons of The American Legion participate have shown increases.

Some of our goals for 1999-2000: membership to one quarter of a million members. This is a bold step. We think we can reach it. We want increases in VA&R participation and reporting. We know the squadrons are out there doing the work, we just need to find a better method to get the reports. Our Child Welfare program is 200 K in Y2K. This is $200,000.00 in the year 2000. This is slightly less than our ultimate goal of one dollar per member. We will also strive to increase participation in all other programs of the Sons of The American Legion.

This year my project will be the World War II Memorial. My father was a member of the Army Air Corps, and served in the South Pacific in World War II. Recognition of these men an woman who served in World War II is long overdue.

A new project of the Sons of The American Legion is a development of a youth soccer program. Boys and girls of all ages from coast to coast are playing soccer in this great country. The popularity has steadily increased over the last few years. We hope to have this program developed and in place in the next year or so.

I thank The American Legion for allowing us to assist in serving our veterans of this great nation. I now introduce a few of the people with me today. Our outgoing Commander is National Commander Byron Robichaux from Louisiana, National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne and my mother and father, Dorothy and Wilbur Cook. I would like to recognize the Department of Oklahoma for their support. And mostly, I would like to thank my wife, Jacquelyn, for her support the last nine years or so.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: When I was National Commander, one of the first trips that I took was back to Indianapolis. I happened to be there at a time when they said that the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion was having a meeting at the Adam's Mark Hotel. I walked in unannounced, and before I left they gave me a check for $15,000 to the NEF. That's the kind of organization we have supporting us.

This morning you saw an appreciation award given to the City of New Orleans for its contribution in the success of the Convention last year. Next year at our next Convention in Milwaukee, a similar award, a recognition will be given to the City of Anaheim and the Department of California for their efforts. One of the things that we do as a Legion family in showing our thanks to the department for what they have done for us in providing a venue that we can have such a successful Convention, is to leave a little bit of something behind. And I'm not talking about the dollars that we bring here, I'm talking about something that means a little bit more. It means life. And one of those things is our blood drive that we conduct in every host city. The blood drive is open right now over in the Exhibit Hall, and I would ask all of you, if you possibly can, to go leave a little bit of yourself, something that means life, behind, so that the folks here in Southern California have something to remember us by and possibly save a life or two here in California. That's the kind of generosity that American Legion members are known for.

As we come to an end of this opening day of the 81st National Convention, I want to also take a moment to encourage you to visit one more venue over there in the Exhibit Hall, and that is the iBelong booth. IBelong is a company that The American Legion has entered into an agreement with. They sell computer services, and through them The American Legion is going to step into the next century in advance of any other such veterans organization, I can assure you. Go over there and see what they have to offer. That represents in so many ways not only the future of this country in commercialism and in the information age, but it represents the future of this American Legion, and it should represent the future of you, as a member of this organization and your post and your district and your department. If you don't care to participate in it, at least you can say you saw it before it ran away from you.

I call on the National Adjutant for the purpose of making some announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Immediately following the recess of this first day of our Annual National Convention, the Western Caucus will be meeting in this hall; immediately after we recess.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I would like to see my National Officers in my office.

Delegates, please join me in a salute to the flag of our United States of America. Right-hand salute. One. Two! The Convention will now stand in recess until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

...At 2:10 p.m., the Convention recessed, to convene the following day, Wednesday, September 8, 1999, at 9:00 o'clock a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
SECOND DAY

Wednesday, September 8, 1999

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

...At 9:00 a.m., the delegates assembled for the second day of the 81st Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I would now like to call this convention to order. Delegates please stand and join with me in a right hand salute to the very honorable Colors of our country. One. Two!

For the matter of an invocation, it is with great pride that I call to the microphone our National Chaplain Father Bob Sweeney of New York.

Invocation
Rev. Robert J. Sweeney, New York, National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, relaxed, refreshed, rejuvenated, we gather once more and place ourselves in Your presence. We give You thanks for the gift of this day, may we use it wisely and heed Your word and will. Grant us the grace to recognize Your presence in our lives and enable us to serve You by serving our neighbor, for we assemble to serve God and country. Should we at any time forget one, we fail to respect the other. God bless The American Legion. God bless the United States of America. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Join with me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Let's do it in unison and in a true American Legion fashion.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The convention is now in session..

Our first distinguished guest this morning is a fellow veteran, a fellow Legionnaire, a government leader, and a family man. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. He has held elected government positions since 1976, including serving as a Congressman and Senator from Tennessee. He has a commitment to strong families. He is a co-sponsor of five separate bi-national commissions. But you and I, fortunately, know him as our Vice President. Please help me welcome to the stage a member of Charles E. Price Post 57 in Gordonsville, Tennessee, our Vice President, the Honorable Al Gore, Jr.

Address: The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.
Vice President of the United States

It's certainly an honor to be here. Let me first applaud your outgoing National Commander, Butch Miller, for a year of remarkable service. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our nation's veterans and for your love of our country. To all of the leaders of The American Legion, it's an honor to join with you. I want to acknowledge my former colleague in the Senate, Orrin Hatch, who's here, my former colleague Senator Alan Cranston, former Senator Alan Cranston who's here, Secretary West and Mrs. West and other distinguished guests, Hershel Gober and all the folks at the VA.

I'm especially pleased to be joined here by a very special friend of mine, Bob Delabar of Seattle. Bob served with me in Vietnam and we also served together stateside. We had our first duty assignment together at Fort Rucker, Alabama, the Army flight center and then he went over to Vietnam before I did. We got close to each other. He was in Saigon, I was 25 miles north of Saigon, but it was close enough to commandeer jeeps on our down days. We spent time together over there. Bob's presence reminds me of a gift that I received not too long ago from a Vietnam veteran in Chicago who helped put together a remarkable art museum that features art by Vietnam veterans. They engraved these words on the front of a canteen: "Each face will lose its name and time will not defer, for there will always be the bond between whom we are and where we were."

I know that a lot of you are like me in remembering that some of the greatest times in my whole life were the times spent with my buddies in the Army. We did a lot of things together, had a great time together and it's fun to look back on all those times.

Time has certainly passed. I was reminded of that recently. Before I went to Vietnam, I got married and Tipper and I recently celebrated our 29th wedding anniversary. It seems like yesterday. We have four children now and nine weeks ago, we became grandparents for the first time. That's been the big excitement for us. I don't think I've mentioned yet that my grandson was born on the 4th of July. Are there any other grandparents out here? Could I see a show of hands? When I come around shaking hands afterwards, I want you to give me some advice because I'm a rookie. But what I've been told so far is that evidently the preferred technique is to just give that grandchild whatever he wants. And then if it causes any problems, give him back to his parents.

This is really a homecoming for me. My dad was a member of The American Legion. We lost him in December, three weeks shy of his 91st birthday. My uncle, my mother's younger brother, Whit LaFon, has been active in The American Legion virtually all his life. He is a past Tennessee Department Commander, a past National Executive Committeeman. He's been coming to these annual meetings almost every single year for 40 years. And he's here with us again today and I want to acknowledge my uncle, Whit LaFon.

And, of course, with all that, you'd better believe that I'm proud to be a member of The American Legion myself, Department of Tennessee, Post 57. I was honored to wear my country's uniform during the Vietnam War. It's for this reason that my commitment to the veterans of America has always been a lot more than a policy position. It is a personal and moral standard to bear.

A great nation is not built on fear. It's built on courage, your courage. And when we send our courageous young men and women into harm's way, we had better be prepared to take care of them. That is America's sacred obligation.

Today, I want to talk about three areas that are critical to our men and women in uniform, to our veterans, and to all who love freedom. The first is a strong national defense. For all my public life, I have stood for a strong America, from my consistent advocacy of military forces second-to-none, to my vote in favor of the Gulf War in 1991. I have always known what you know: that nothing we do for our veterans after the battle is going to matter if we don't back them up while they're in the trenches and on the front lines, fighting for us. So you have this iron-clad commitment from me: so long as I am in a position to do something about it, America will be the strongest force for peace and freedom in the entire world.

In my years in the House and in the Senate, one of the issues I worked hardest on was facing down the Soviet threat and reducing the mortal dangers of nuclear war. Today, the Soviet Union is gone and freedom is on the advance everywhere.

Without the people in this room, without an America that stood tall for freedom, decade after decade, we could never have ended the Cold War, made America more secure, and brought peace and freedom to hundreds of millions of decent people at home and abroad. I thank you and I thank all the veterans that you stand for and represent. History will record that in the 20th Century, America's legions were the world's first line of defense against tyranny and oppression.

But victory calls on us for renewed vigilance, in the face of new and continuing dangers. As we move forward, we must honor this simple principle: let us never ask our servicemen and women to do what they have not been equipped to do. Let us match their courage with armor. Let us always equip them to do what we ask. That's why we're now fighting for the first long-term, sustained increase in defense spending in a decade. We want our Armed Forces ready to deploy in any crisis when they're needed. We want our forces to be the best equipped in the world well into the next century. And we want our forces to be strong enough to meet and overwhelm traditional forms of aggression, as well as newer threats, such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation. And so I ask for your help: together, let's keep our defenses strong.

Second, our soldiers, sailors, and airmen offer us no less than their lives. Surely, we should offer them the highest quality of life. We owe our men and women in uniform not just military strength and readiness, but also high living standards, and a high quality of life to make certain that their service is not only rewarding, but well-rewarded. We want to do right by our troops by upgrading and replacing aging equipment, barracks, and family housing. We are proposing the largest military pay raise since 1982. And we are going to reinstate military retirement benefits that were taken away over a decade ago.

Third, I pledge an unshakeable commitment to our tested American warriors, our veterans who have returned home from active duty. Often, as I travel around this country, veterans young and old will come up to me and express their gratitude for what our country does for them. But let's face it: we don't give our veterans anything. You have earned it, with sweat, courage, blood, and sacrifice. You've earned a gratitude no price can match. And America must do more for those who have stood ready to risk everything to keep us free. That's why, when I was first in Congress, I co-founded the Vietnam-era Veterans Caucus. At a time when all too few respected our service, much less welcomed us home, we fought to bring attention to the plight of those Americans who had served during Vietnam and came back to civilian life with needs that were being ignored. And in the last seven years, we have made real progress in improving and expanding benefits for all veterans.

You did not delay in answering your country's call; your country, in turn, should never make you wait. You should get your benefits faster, with less bureaucracy. So we are working to improve the processing of veterans' claims. And incidentally, I'm proud to report that all the critical systems supporting veterans' benefits and health benefits are now ready for the Y2K challenge and back-up plans are in place to make sure that our veterans benefits are completely secure.

In addition, every veteran's final resting place should be a place of due dignity and honor. We are opening four new veterans' cemeteries around the country, near Dallas, Cleveland, Chicago and Saratoga, the largest expansion in our national cemetery system

since World War II. I went to a veterans funeral not long ago. I'd like to tell you a little story about it.

Whit LaFon's younger brother, Everett LaFon, was called 'Punk' all his life. He served in World War II. As a kid, because he was the youngest and the littlest, somebody looked at him on a wagon with all the other older, bigger kids and said, "Why, he looks just like a pumpkin." And that became 'punkin' and that became 'Punk'. I never called him 'Punk'. I always called him Uncle Everett. When he came back from World War II, a lot of people didn't realize what he had been through. I only learned about it a lot later because he never talked about it very much. The truth is, he had kind of a rough life. He went off to Alaska and helped to build the pipeline. Worked as a fireman. Saved some lives there. He devoted himself in his later years to veterans, to The American Legion, to the VFW. When I say he had kind of a rough life, some of you know what I mean. When he died, lots of folks came to the funeral. Some people didn't know quite what to say. But then, with the honors came a telling of the story of his service. When he was young, along with many of you, he saved the world from totalitarianism and protected our freedoms. When that flag was folded in proper manner, it was one of the greatest honors of my life to stand as a representative not only of my uncle, but of the United States of America and hand that folded flag to his kids. He raised a boy who's a colonel in the Air Force, a military doctor, a girl who's a teacher, one of the finest in the country. And when I presented that flag, and everybody there reflected upon what he had done for our country as a veteran, that was all that mattered. I want you to know that's one of the reasons I fought hard to be able to tell you today that we're committed to making honors details available to every single veteran whose family requests them. I think that's something that needs to be done in our country.

For all veterans and all Americans, we also have to build on the programs and commitments that make life worthwhile for all of our families. For example, we have to save Social Security, so it's strong for today and for tomorrow as well. Like your hard-earned veterans' benefits, Social Security is yours, you paid into it all your lives and I'll be damned if I'm going to allow it to be cut or weakened or taken away. We need to stand by and not privatize any part of it.

And that's why I will fight against the reckless tax schemes that some have put forward in this Congress that would put us right back into deficits, in order to shower new benefits on special interests, instead of taking care of first things first. I've got a different idea: we should use that surplus, your surplus, to save Social Security first and strengthen Medicare, and provide prescription drug benefits for our seniors and completely pay off our national debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President, a generation before the Civil War.

As we strengthen Medicare, we must do more to allow veterans to take their Medicare benefits to veterans' hospitals. We're working to do that, and I urge you to join me in persuading Congress to pass our plan into law. It'll help strengthen veterans' hospitals. We've already brought health care closer to your homes, by adding hundreds of outpatient clinics, to a total of over 600, so even more veterans get the care they need when and where they need it.

I worked closely with The American Legion to improve veterans' health benefits in our budget. I heard your concerns loud and clear. I shared them. And I acted on them. That's why, two months ago in a ceremony in Tennessee, I announced that this administration would ask for an additional one billion dollars, above and beyond our current request to Congress, to reduce waiting times, expand outpatient care, and improve long-term care in

the VA medical system. And I'll fight to see that that increase is passed into law. And I know we have a lot more to do. I want to ensure that each and every veteran treated by our VA system gets the quality of care they need and deserve.

So this is the heart of my commitment to you: to stand for a strong national defense; to make sure our troops have all the resources they need while they are standing up for us; to make sure our veterans receive the benefits they fought for and thoroughly earned. This is the kind of commitment that you deserve. Together, let's build an America where not a single veteran is homeless, or hungry, or without the care that he or she needs. Let's build an America where we have a full accounting of every POW, and every brave soldier missing in action. Let's build an America where we honor the values that you fought for, the values that have sustained me and my life and career: faith, family, and freedom for all people.

Thomas Jefferson once said that "the cement of this Union is the heart blood of every American." I believe that. Of all our citizens, it is truest said of our veterans. Not long ago, I was looking through an old copy of *The American Legion Magazine*. My family has received it for as long as I can remember, no doubt because of Uncle Whit. It contained this description of the American veteran, which rang so true to me: A veteran "takes personal pride in the freedom of others, in men and women attending the church of their choice; in friends voting how they choose; and in children sleeping quietly, without fear to interrupt their slumber. A veteran is every man grown up a little taller, a person who understands the awesome price of life's intangibles of freedom, justice and democracy. His motto is to live and let live. But if he had to, if he had to choose between servitude and conflict, the veteran would once again answer a call to duty. Because, above all else, a veteran is an American."

I'd like to close with a story from Tennessee that was told to me by a constituent of mine from Murfreesboro, Tennessee. This happened when I was in my last year in the United States Senate. He knocked on my door and told me that he was born in Czechoslovakia—it's now called the Czech Republic, that part of the former Czechoslovakia—and he had escaped 25 years ago by riding a motorcycle across the Austrian border so fast and so suddenly that the border guards didn't have time to lift up their machine guns and kill him, the way they killed so many who were trying to escape communism. He came over here to the United States and made a life for himself and married and then he watched with a thrill in his heart, 20 years later, when the so-called Velvet Revolution freed Czechoslovakia from communist rule. He said to his wife, at that time after he had watched some of that drama on television, that he wanted to go back to his former homeland and see if he could help out in this transition to democracy and freedom. He went back to the little town where he had been born. They had pretty much secured their freedom then but the Soviet tanks were still there. While he was in his home town helping to organize people, the tanks pulled back across the border. He said that as that curtain of fear was lifted, everything changed immediately. The first thing that the people in that little town did was to build a small monument to the American GIs who had come in to free that part of Czechoslovakia at the very end of World War II. That was before the Iron Curtain fell. Then, he said, within a half an hour, something happened that amazed him. Everywhere he looked, he saw little American flags. It was almost like a movie set. He said he couldn't understand how that had come to pass until he looked a little bit more closely at those flags and suddenly he realized each one of them had 48 stars. The people of that town had saved them, hidden them under their beds or in their cellars during all that time since the GIs had come, until freedom was finally secure.

The United States of America stands for freedom and with people all over the world reaching out for what we have. It's awfully important for us to stand together in support of what our country represents. I'm proud to be an American. I'm mighty proud to be one of you. And I look forward to fighting side by side with you again, this time to build a 21st Century in which America will always be secure, and our freedom and justice will continue to be a light to all nations.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: We have another very special guest with us, a true champion. Three very strong traits mark the values of our next guest. Those traits are service, hard work, and perseverance. As Legionnaires, we have seen these traits guide him as he has led the fight to gain the Constitutional protection for the American flag. He has led this fight in the United States Senate and anywhere else that that fight needed to be conducted. He continues to strive to protect the principles of limited government, tax restraint, and integrity in public service. Welcome the Chairman of United States Senate Judiciary Committee, a true and long-term friend of the veteran and our champion on the flag issue. It is my honor to introduce to this Convention, our friend, our champion, Senator Orrin Hatch.

Address: The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
The United States Senate

I want to thank you, Butch, and all of the other leaders of The American Legion sitting behind me for what you do for this great organization and all you accomplish throughout all of our lives, from our children right on through to the grave. This organization is one of the greatest this world has ever seen, and I am grateful to all of you.

I hope you don't mind if I single out three special guys from Utah: Terry Shaw, Val Smith, and, of course, Bill Christoffersen. Bill has been a true leader and has done his level best to make sure I get it right. And I know he is visiting my office next week, so I will be sure to hear about it if I don't.

Some of us up here on Capitol Hill might learn a thing or two from the Legion about getting all sorts of divergent interests working together for the common good. I know it hasn't always been easy. I am sure you guessed by now that what I'm hinting at is the legendary rivalry among the branches of our armed services. In Steven Ambrose's widely praised book on D-Day, he quotes one of the Normandy invasion planners as saying, "nothing was ever proposed that didn't meet with heated opposition. If the Corps wanted it, division did not. If the Army proposed something and the Navy agreed, the Air Force was sure to object." When I saw that quote, it occurred to me that he left out the Marines. Of course, we can't leave out the Marines. In fact, let me tell you a story that probably won't surprise you because it came from the Marines. It's about a Navy admiral and an Army general.

It seems that during the invasion of the Philippines this general and admiral were both in a landing craft when it suddenly overturned in the surf. The admiral immediately began shouting, "General, General, promise you won't tell my men I can't swim." And the General yelled back, "All right, Admiral, as long you promise not to tell my men I can't walk on water." But just let me make my point by saying if The American Legion can get the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard all working together, I think that there's hope that even the Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill can get something meaningful accomplished this year. At least I hope so.

We truly live in a miracle moment in our nation's history. Consider this: for the most part, we are prosperous. We are living in peace. Although there are some in our country who need immediate help. America is the undisputed moral, military, and economic leader of the world. Our economy is the most efficient, most productive, most dynamic economic engine the world has ever seen. And it is driving a worldwide economic revolution that may one day bring to the poorest and most forgotten a way of life reserved only for the wealthiest and the most privileged. Our future is bright. We have the chance and the unique opportunity to live in an America of hope, freedom, individual dignity, and plain old neighborliness and goodness of heart. We have the opportunity to give all people the right to learn, to earn, to succeed, to fail, and to try again. We have the opportunity to bring peace and prosperity to the rest of the world. So the question we face is this: Do we have the courage and conviction to seize this blessed moment? Our answer must be yes.

I wish my wife of 42 years could be here with us today, the mother of our six children, and the grandmother of our 19 grandchildren. But she couldn't, so you are going to have to put up with me. I have to say, we were working down the street in Salt Lake City one day, and Elaine was trailing a little bit behind me. We were looking in the windows of one of the major department stores, and I noticed that she had stopped and talked to one of the window washers. So when she finally caught up with me, I said, "What was that all about?" She said, "Well, I used to date him in high school." I said, "Well, I guess you are glad you married me." She said, "Oh, I don't know." She said, "If I had married him, he would be the United States Senator from Utah." How true that is.

So today I want to speak, I want to speak more in detail. I was going to speak about two of the most insidious threats to our country's future and why I believe that it's imperative these be addressed in the days and weeks ahead, but I am going to add one more after the Vice President. Those threats are over-taxation, an erosion in our military capabilities, and finally protection of our beloved national symbol, the American flag.

Now, I wasn't going to speak about tax relief, but I did want to set the record straight after hearing the Vice President. What we have done in Congress is we have set aside of this almost $2.9 trillion projected surplus, we have set aside three-quarters of that to protect Social Security, Medicare, and for debt reduction. But we didn't think it was wrong to set aside one-quarter of it to give back to the American people who are overtaxed today paying 40 percent taxes, wartime taxes during times of great peace and prosperity. And so we have set aside a quarter of it for you. Now let me tell you about that. What's so wrong with setting aside a quarter of the projected monies so the taxpayers get some benefit? What do we do with that? We cut marginal tax rates one solitary percent across the board. We get rid of that vicious marriage tax. No wonder people don't revere marriage today. But we get rid of that marriage penalty. Number three, we reduce capital gains rates from 20 percent down to 18 percent. By the way, it was the Hatch/Lieberman Bill that reduced them from 28 percent to under 20 percent. Last but not least, we get rid of those awful death taxes where the family farm and the family business have to be sold because they are land rich and asset poor but have to pay a 55 percent death tax on top of that when they die. So the family loses the family farm and the family business. It's time we fight for tax relief in this country. And I am sick and tired of people who won't. Now I would like to talk more on that, but I had to say that much.

Let me talk a little bit about military readiness. Our nation's capacity to protect and defend itself is seriously eroded, a fact unfortunately not recognized by many in our country today. How has this happened? It is relatively simple. We are not taking care of our people.

We are not taking care of our equipment. Our military policy is haphazard. Nearly eight years of neglect has taken its toll. Army recruitment is coming up 8,000 short this year. We need almost 1,000 more Air Force pilots. Navy ships can't deploy because of critical skill shortages. 50 percent of skilled Air Force enlisted technicians are quitting. One-third of pilots are turning down aviation continuation pay, a type of bonus sometimes as high as $100,000 but requiring a long-term service commitment. Readiness has dropped from 68 percent, which is all Reagan could get it to under that so-called big build up, from 60 percent down to 30 percent.

Now look, military personnel don't seek wealth but they do seek pay for service and risks. Military pay comparability with civilian equivalency has not yet been achieved. It hasn't been achieved since 1982. A record number of military families are subsisting on food stamps. That's dlorable. It's outrageous. It's unbelievable, and we've got to stop it.

To add insult to injury, military health care, the single most important quality of life benefit for a service member, is an embarrassment to our nation. To put it bluntly, Tri-care is broken. We need a GI Bill of Health under Medicare so that you can get the health and the assurance and the health care that you need. I'm going to try to work to get that for you.

What about the equipment we provide our soldiers and sailors? Since the Gulf War and the "strategic pause" escorted in by the ABM Treaty and Star 2, we have reduced our army divisions by 30 percent, our carrier battle groups from 15 to 12, and our fighter wing equivalent forces by almost 50 percent. We have all but eviscerated our bomber forces. We have taken a ten-year procurement holiday shorting aircraft modernization programs so that today 75 percent of our wartime aircraft are better than 20 years old. But it gets much worse.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, over the next five years we will buy only 49 percent of the needed Navy and Marine fighter aircraft, only 4.3 percent of needed Air Force fighter aircraft, 3.3 percent of scout and attack helicopters, and only 3.2 percent of such critically needed ground combat systems as tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled artillery. And the most deplorable statistic of all, we will buy zero, I repeat zero, percent of needed aircraft, tankers, and bombers. To put this in prospective, over the strenuous objections of Democrats, Ronald Reagan was able to build military spending to 6.2 percent of the gross domestic product. Even so, this figure was more than one-third less than the level of military spending under President John F. Kennedy. This year military spending will go down to 3.2 percent of G.P. In fact, the President's own budget projects this to decline to 2.9 percent over the next three years.

And the final cause for this decay in our military's capability is the reality that the policies governing our military operations do not make sense. I will make it plain and simple: bad leadership affects morale. As a result of this administration's policies, we could have aging equipment being put into battle by troops whose military operational training is badly distorted by morale damaging and limited value missions. Leave peacemaking to the United Nations. Leave nation-building to suitably trained civilian organizers.

Let me tell you what our military priorities should be. First, we must recognize that increasing our defense capabilities is a national urgency, and it must be our national priority. No measure of education spending or healthcare spending or social spending will matter one whit if we do not have an adequate defense. That will require a change of view at the top.

Secondly, we must take care of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines when they are in training, when they are deployed, and after they have left the service of their country. We have to be concerned about them. We forced an additional $9 billion in defense spending on the President as part of the last year's Omnibus Appropriations Bill. Just this

year, Congress passed as one of its first priorities the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines Bill which boosts the salaries and benefits for our men and women in uniform. And it's about time, but it isn't enough. And we need to do more. We must fix Tri-care. We must improve living conditions for the military. We must close the pay comparability gap. And since we will never pay our soldiers and sailors what they deserve, I believe that enlisted military personnel below the rank of sergeant or petty officer should no longer have to pay federal income taxes. That should be one of the benefits of working for our military. It is a national disgrace that any military family has to depend on food stamps. We have to start taking care of those who are taking care of us.

Third, we must be committed to fighting terrorism, not pardoning it as we have seen. We can't send a mixed message. For your information, we have more than 1,500 known terrorists and terrorist organizations in this country, dedicated to the overthrow of this country. I am speaking as one who is on the Select Committee On Intelligence, one of the few who has ever served twice, Now I have to say the administration is doing a good job in stopping and at least fighting terrorism in this country. But it was in 1996 on *Meet The Press* that I recommended to the President he ought to watch out for Osama Bin Laden. I said he is going to kill Americans. Of course, ultimately he did.

Fourth, we must remember that an ICBM attack against the United States is our greatest military threat. Yet it took us years to convince the Clinton-Gore administration that the threat was not 15 years away but is actually much closer. This is the first year where we have been able to convince our friends on the other side that we have to have an incoming nuclear defense strategy and defense system that will stop incoming nuclear weapons if necessary. We must stabilize nuclear countries like Russia and China. We must contain rogue states like North Korea. And we must diffuse potentially devastating conflicts like those in India and Pakistan.

Fifth, when our military is sent to intervene, that action must be justified not just from a political perspective but on military grounds with clear objectives. Our military is not something we should loan out. If you want our armed forces, you get all of our armed forces, and we want American generals to lead our armed troops without question.

Now Congress, and I have to say something here. I recommended the lift and strike policy back in 1992 before Srebreniza. When the President finally did decide to go into Kosovo, I, along with Senator McCain and others, supported him. We didn't believe it was right to say you would not commit ground troops. You should never take any power off the table when you are dealing with people like Milosevic. But I was very disappointed because had this been a Republican president I think a lot of those Republicans would have voted for the armed intervention and a lot of the Democrats would have voted against it. But because it was a Democrat president a lot of Republicans voted against it and most all the Democrats voted for it. I thought that was deplorable. We ought to be consistent in our support of the military, and I intend to do that as long as I serve.

Now Congress has taken steps to address these pressing needs of our military, but we cannot do it by ourselves. We need an administration that shares a commitment to these principles. We are the only superpower left. To quote James Mosey, the former head of the CIA, there are 50 poisonous snakes out there developing biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, most all of which are dedicated against the United States of America. The enemies of freedom and justice have changed, but they still exist. We must never, never, allow our national defense to become second rate. Never.

Now before I close, I want to talk about the third threat to our national future. That's a lack of respect for our heritage and for our country. Nowhere is that irreverence more evident than in the unspeakable acts of violence against the most important symbol of our country, the American flag. The American people revere the flag. It is our unique symbol representing the commonly-held belief in liberty and justice that we all have. Regardless of our ethnic, racial, or religious diversity, we respect the flag as a symbol of our unity, our oneness. The flag has inspired men and women to accomplish courageous deeds on the battlefield. Each day it inspires children in the classrooms throughout this country who all pledge allegiance to this common symbol off our unity, the American flag.

I never fail to be amazed at the incredible risk borne by our founding fathers who declared independence from Britain or the incredible courage and determination of ragtag Continental Forces who fought for our independence. When you consider the odds of victory, you realize what a gamble the dream of independence was for them. When a passer-by inquired of Benjamin Franklin what type of government the new country was to have, he said, "A republic, sir, if you can keep it." We have kept it, and it has often been at great cost. Nearly every generation has sent its sons to fight for the values embedded in our Constitution. That is why I feel so strongly about protecting our flag from physical acts of desecration, and I know you agree with me. I know you have agreed with me each time we have brought our amendment to protect the flag before Congress. We are so close to passage. Each time we have been beaten back, but only by the smallest minority. Like our forebears, we are going to press on. We are ultimately going to become victorious.

Let me share with you excerpts from an article I found on the Internet. It is by a fellow named Melvin Butterfield at Juno.com, and I am going to quote him.

> To those who want to burn the flag, just ask permission. For those who want to light Old Glory on fire, stomp all over it, or spit on it to make some sort of statement, I say let them do it but under one condition: They must get permission from three sponsors. First, you need permission from a war veteran. Perhaps a Marine who fought at Iwo Jima. Maybe a Vietnam vet who spent years tortured in a small filthy cell unfit for a dog, or a Korean War soldier who helped rescue half a nation from Communism, or a Desert Storm warrior who repulsed a bloody dictator from raping and pillaging an innocent country. Next, you need a signature from an immigrant, from one of those who risked everything simply for the chance to be an American. Go to a naturalization ceremony and see for yourself the tears of pride, the thanks, the love, and respect of this nation as they finally embrace the American flag as their own. Ask one of them if it would be okay to tear up the flag. Last, you should get the signature of a mother. Not just any mother. You need a mother of someone who gave their life for America. It doesn't even have to be from a war. It could be a cop or a fireman. Maybe a Secret Service or NSA agent. Then again, it could be a common foot soldier as well. When that son or daughter is laid to rest, their family is given one gift by the American people, an American flag. So if you want to desecrate the American flag, before you spit on it or before you burn it, I have one simple request. Just ask permission. Not from the Constitution. Not from some obscure law. Not from the politicians or pundits. Instead, ask those who defended our nation so that we may be free today. For we cannot ask permission from those who died wishing they could just once, or once again, see, touch, or kiss the flag that stands for our nation, the United States of America, the greatest nation on earth.

I remember the day, I was ten years of age, when I heard my mother crying. I was playing in the woods down in front of the house. I ran from the woods. This was the first and only time in my whole lifetime that I saw both my mother and dad crying. My dad was a big, old, tough building tradesman. He taught me his trade. I worked for ten years in the building construction trade unions. In fact, to get myself through school I worked as a janitor once. When Ted Kennedy found that out, he said, Orrin, you should have stuck with it. But I ran from the woods, and I saw my mom and dad crying. There was a sergeant there. He had just told them that my brother, my only brother, who had flown ten missions, shot down on three of them, twice made it back through enemy lines to Fogia, Italy, in the Second World War, that he was missing in action on the third try. It happened to be on the Ploesti Air Raid, which will go down in history as one of the greatest sacrifices by our American airmen. Better than 80 percent of our people died that day. Most of them knew they were going to. But they knocked out the Austrian oil fields upon which Adolf Hitler and his Wehrmacht and his Luftwaffe had depended. I remember when they brought my brother back. They found his remains. I got all the records. I never shared them with my mom and dad. My mother, that ate her alive every day of her life, as it has many a Gold Star Mother in this country. The records were so bad of what happened. There was such a little bit left of him that I didn't want her to know that. But I got to tell you, when they brought him back, they gave my mom and dad the flag that rested upon his coffin. My mom and dad are dead now, and I own that flag. I have to say it's one of the most important possessions I've ever had.

Now look, the bill I have authored, the amendment I have authored with Senator Cleland, that great Democrat, the bill that your membership has steadfastly supported with so much enthusiasm, is only 13 words. "*Congress shall have* the *power to prohibit* the *physical desecration of* the *flag of* the *United States*." Thirteen words. It doesn't say Congress has to protect the flag. It says Congress shall have the power. The only reason it does that is because our Supreme Court decided for all of us to throw out 200 years of 49 states prohibiting desecration of the flag in one fell swoop and then did it again in a second opinion. Anybody that tells you we can have a statute take care of this, they don't understand constitutional law. The only way to take care of it is with a constitutional amendment. We passed two statutes, and both of them were considered unconstitutional, but the second statute passed with over 90 votes. If we pass this constitutional amendment, we will pass that second statute that had 90 votes on it, and we will pass it so fast their heads will be spinning. It will protect the flag of the United States of America once and for all, and everybody in this world will know that we stand for that symbol and we're not going to let anybody defecate on it, urinate on it, spit on it, or desecrate it in any way, or burn it.

The Vice President mentioned that the people in Czechoslovakia revered the American flag so much that they had kept them all through the war. Now if the people of Czechoslovakia revered our flag so much as to keep the 48-star flags, that the Vice President mentioned, throughout the whole World War so that they could fly them in the end as attribute to those who liberated them, how much more should we, the people who live under that flag? We ought to.

Now you have asked me not for a campaign speech, and I won't give you one. But suffice it to say though that next year's election will prove crucial for the very things we have been discussing this morning: fair taxation, a strong defense, national unity and respect for our country and values that have made this country the greatest country in the world. On each of these issues, I have tried to always stand for the things that are right. But in closing,

I want to share with you my very own personal story about the flag in addition to my brother.

I recall one dreary Washington morning about, oh, three years ago. It was dark and rainy. I was alone in my Capitol Hill office. It was 6:00 a.m. in the morning. I was probably the only member of Congress on Capitol Hill at the time. Our country faced a critical election, a national referendum, which would determine whether we would be continually guided by President Clinton and Vice President Gore or whether we should turn our stewardship over to a new leadership. I was disturbed over many of the policies of the Clinton-Gore administration. I was particularly galled that the Vice President had aggressively urged U.S. satellite manufacturers to use more foreign rocket launch vehicles. He took this action despite that fact the U.S. rocket industry, which, in my opinion, had helped to win the Cold War, was reeling, was facing extinction from NASA and DoD cutbacks. That morning I thought about our country and all it stood for. I thought about the discontent, the despair, about how poverty and dissidence caused sadness everywhere. Out of nowhere I had such a clear picture of our tremendous history, about our ancestors, our friends and our family who had lived and died for freedom. I thought about my older brother, Jess, whose flag-draped coffin was my most vivid memory of World War II. I gazed toward the Capitol, that beautiful Capitol, and I thought about the patriot's dream, about how it had lived on for over 200 years in the yearning hearts of all Americans. That arch of freedom's light shown through the gray day illuminating my work, and uplifting me as I realized how important it was to keep the fires of freedom burning. At my desk I began to pen a series of patriotic songs later to become my most popular album, *Freedom's Light*. It is my favorite of the eight musical albums that I have written. One of the songs, *Old Glory*, has particular meaning for me. Part of the lyrics go this way, "I hear the sound of a distant drummer. I hear the trumpets call. I hear the tramp of bandsmen marching stirring my heart and soul. I hear the Stars and Stripes forever. I hear the symbols crash. Leading the way in the grand parade, I thrill to my country's flag. I love Old Glory. In her I see the hopes of all men who would be free. I love Old Glory. Long may she wave over America, the homeland of the brave."

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Senator Hatch.

If any of you missed Monday's Fight For What's Right Rally and have not visited the Command Post over in our Exhibit Hall, I ask you to do so. Those of you that have visited, go back again. The Command Post is located next to Emblem Sales in the Exhibit Hall. Please take advantage of the telephones and e-mail capabilities that we have over there to contact your Senators. It's never been easier folks. Let them know that first of all Old Glory must be protected. Second, that the VA Budget and that extra 1.7 billion dollars is a very minimum that we will accept as veterans. And let them know that an adequate defense budget goes along with that. We must provide a creditable defense force to protect our nation. We have staff over there that will make it very easy for you. Each and every one of you is here representing a number of people back in your department. Do that representation proud, go represent them at the Command Post, and represent all the veterans.Let Congress and let the Senate know what The American Legion wants, what we the veterans of the Legion want, and what is right for this country.

I introduce the National Vice Commander from California, Mr. Leo Burke.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BURKE: For 24 years the man I'm about to introduce demonstrated a strong commitment to veterans, in virtually all areas of veterans programs in a very strategic location, the U.S. Senate. He was a leading advocate for

effective programs to fulfill the nation's obligations to those that served and sacrificed so much for our country's defense and world peace. His basic philosophy underlying his approach to veterans benefits could have come from the Founders of The American Legion. He believes such benefits are a continuing cost of providing for this nations' defense, that America has a fundamental obligation to meet the needs of veterans, particularly those who suffer from service-connected disabilities, and of the survivors of those who died in battle. It is indeed an honor to introduce to you a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, and a member of American Legion Post 302 in Culver City, California, a former United States Senator from California, the Honorable Alan Cranston.

Address: The Honorable Alan Cranston
Former United States Senator

I was dedicated to veterans issues throughout my 24 years in the U.S. Senate, beginning at the height of public discord over the conflict in Vietnam, until the day I left after the Gulf War. We worked together on many issues. The Legion was great to work with on the development, for example, of the Montgomery G.I. Bill, on to your leadership on problems relating to Vietnam veterans exposure to Agent Orange.

I must tell you that now I am concerned by what is happening. For example, in VA's health care system, funding for this vital program is included under very unrealistic statutory limits on domestic spending, known as caps, along with a host of other federal programs. It's a zero sum game. Any gain in one program, comes at the expense of another. If VA health care isn't given a priority, and I don't think it's getting that, veterans suffer. In this era of budget surpluses, we shouldn't be penny-pinching veterans health care. To stop this, veterans must be united. Millions must speak out; must tell Congress and the Administration this is not acceptable. Veterans health care must be a priority.

Congress has changed. There are fewer veterans there now, and there seems to be far less appreciation of military service and the nation's obligations to veterans. This has shown up in a number of ways. One of the most obvious was the vote last year in both Houses to shift hundreds of millions of dollars from veterans benefits in order to pay for highway projects. That was a disgrace.

There are also reasons to be concerned about the Executive Branch. I thought President Clinton got off to a good start when he picked a great fighter for veterans, Jesse Brown, as his first Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Jesse fought within the Administration, he took the fight to Congress, and with your help, he usually won. Now there is a vacuum. Dr. Kizer, the Under-Secretary for Health is gone. Secretary West is leaving. This leaves the VA budget in a very difficult situation. I played a major role on getting the VA into the cabinet, but the value of that is lost if the Secretary doesn't make himself heard.

Through the years, VA's health care system has been seen as separate from the rest of the U.S. health care system. This may have made sense at one time, but not now. VA must be better understood by those outside the system so that there will be a broad base of support. The U.S., and indeed most of the world, is just starting to come to grips with the need to take care of the largest population ever of older people. VA has played a great leadership role in developing geriatric medicine and in creating and putting in place alternatives to institutional long-term care. This expertise must be recognized. VA's role must be expanded both to serve World War II and Korean veterans, and to leave a legacy for the rest of the country. VA can be a role model in this area.

I'm particularly proud that my staff and I created the opportunity for veterans to gain judicial review of their claims before the U.S. Court of Appeals for veterans claims. Judicial review was a long time coming, but there was a consensus that it has turned out very, very well. The court provides final oversight of the benefit system, and serves as an important safeguard for individual veterans in their quest for fairness and justice.

Veterans benefits are an essential, tangible way for all Americans to meet our national obligations to veterans. But I have always felt that it's also extremely important to honor their service and sacrifice by working for peace. Those who fought to protect our nation and to create a more peaceful world, want a world in which America is safe and secure, and in which their children and grandchildren can live in peace and never face the horrors of war.

I hope the day will come when there will be no more war and no more veterans. However, there hasn't been much progress lately. This has been the bloodiest century in all history. There have been 170 wars just since World War II. They killed 35 million people. Ninety percent of the victims were civilians. There are 35 wars raging today. And it could get worse.

Shortly after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I met Albert Einstein. He warned me that if the bomb was developed further and ever used all out, the human race could be exterminated. The bomb has been developed further. *The explosion of one nuclear warhead could now let loose more destructive energy than all that has been released from all weapons fired in all wars in history.* That's one bomb. And there are thousands on the loose in the world.

Yesterday, the first act of this Convention was, "The Future is Our Legacy," honoring young champions. What future will there be for those young champions and for all young Americans and youngsters everywhere, and for all the generations of the yet unborn, if total human genocide is the lethal legacy of our generation?

The leaders who are presently responsible for America's defense warn that the only significant threat today to the security and survival of our country, is nuclear proliferation. Yet, proliferation is occurring right before our eyes. Once we were the only nuclear power. Then we were joined by the Soviet Union, France, and the United Kingdom. Then China joined the club, and Israel, then last year India and Pakistan. Today Iran, Iraq, North Korea terrorists, and even criminal drug syndicates seek the bomb. There is no secret now about how to make it, and there's grave danger that loose nukes or their component parts can be bought or stolen in chaotic Russia, where command, control and custody is rapidly deteriorating. It is more likely now than it was during the most stable days of the Cold War that weapons of mass destruction will be used. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry says, "It isn't a question of whether, but of where and when." I say to you that the notion that nuclear weapons can be retained forever and never used accidentally or by decision defies all reason, all logic. U.S. General Charles Horner, who commanded Allied Air Forces in the Gulf War, flatly predicts that a nuclear weapon will be exploded in some city in the next 10 years. Former U.S. Ambassador Robert Gallucci, who negotiated a nuclear weapons with both Iraq and North Korea, agrees. Galuchi predicts that it will be an American city blown up in the next 10 years and describes how it could happen. One of these rogue governments fabricates one or two nuclear weapons and gives them to a terrorist group created for this purpose. The group brings one of these bombs into Baltimore by boat, and another one up to Pittsburgh by car. And then the message comes to the White House: Adjust your policy in the Middle East or on Tuesday you lose Baltimore, and then Wednesday you lose Pittsburgh. Tuesday comes and we lose Baltimore. What does the

United States do? We might have no idea who is responsible, not a clue. We wouldn't know who to deter, who or what to counterattack with nuclear or conventional weapons.

The fatal bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City was perpetrated by fanatic fundamentalists who proclaim they intend to wage a holy war against the United States as long as we keep our "infidel" forces in Islamic lands. Do any of you doubt that they would have used a nuclear bomb if they had managed to lay their hands on one?

More and more American leaders, among them many generals and admirals, are coming to believe that the only way to eliminate the threat of a nuclear holocaust is to eliminate nuclear weapons, not, of course just ours, but every nations nuclear weapons. Listen to what a few of them have to say. General Collin Powell: "I hope that we will eventually see the time when the number of nuclear weapons is down to zero, and the world is a better place." General Lee Butler, former Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command said: "The likely consequences of nuclear war have no politically, militarily or morally acceptable justification. Therefore, the threat to use nuclear weapons is indefensible." General Andrew Goodpaster, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe said: "Increasingly, nuclear weapons are seen to constitute a nuisance and a danger, rather than a benefit and a source of strength." Finally, from General Charles Horner, Commander Allied Air Forces Gulf War: "The nuclear weapon is obsolete. I want too get rid of them all." General Horner once told me, "We generals don't like weapons we can't use." Each of the five nuclear major powers have lost a war to a non-nuclear nation without resorting to nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have cost the United States five trillion, seven hundred million dollars so far, and presently costs 37 billion dollars a year, diverting money from conventional weapons we could use, and diverting money from health care, education, and yes, veterans benefits. Among many other noted Americans who have spoken out about nuclear dangers and for abolition, are Ronald Reagan, John F. Kennedy, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

I urge you, my fellow Americans, fellow veterans, fellow Legionnaires, to think all this over with great care and all due deliberation. The stakes are immense. Life itself is at stake. I know there are many questions to ask. There are also many answers to be given. It would be great if one of you, maybe a Californian, might decide to offer a resolution that might say something like: The United States should enter into discussions with other nuclear powers, leading to negotiating a universal treaty for the verifiable and enforceable outlawing and prohibition of all nuclear weapons. After prudent, prolonged prayerful debate, you just might perform a totally unexpected act of supreme and historic leadership.

I close now by once again quoting General Butler, who said, "We cannot at once hold sacred the miracle of existence, and hold sacrosanct the capacity to destroy it. Deterrence at best is a gamble no mortal should pretend to make. At worse, it invokes death on a scale rivaling the power of the Creator."

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Senator, I want to thank you for being here with us this morning and for all those mornings over your 24 year career in the Senate. And it was with great pride that I would like to present to you The American Legion Veterans Advocacy Award. And if I can, I would like to read it.

"Presented to Senator Alan Cranston. For your unrelenting commitment to our nation's veterans and their families throughout your distinguished 24 year U.S. Senate career. You authored legislation and successfully fought for the rights and benefits of those who served America in our armed forces. As Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, the referenced resulted in enhanced health care for veterans, improved education and employment assistance programs, and an increased compensation for service-connected

disabilities. The 2.8 million men and women of The American Legion gratefully acknowledge your dedication, sir, compassion and acknowledgment on behalf of all the veterans. Presented this 8th day of September, 1999 at this Convention, the 81st of The American Legion."

Senator, it is indeed an honor to be here and present you this award, because I know you deserve it. And I have a son who is a veteran right now. He's a Captain in the Marine Corps. You stood up for me; you are standing up for him. Keep up the good work.

Our next guest oversees the most diverse cabinet level department with nine agencies, 40,000 employees, and a five billion dollar budget. He has a special interest in promoting small, medium and women owned businesses, many of those owned and operated and employ many veterans. He's been a Deputy Mayor of Washington, D.C., and a Chairman of the Board of Governor's of the Wesley Theological Seminary in that city. Welcome the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Robert Mallett.

Address: The Honorable Robert Mallett
Deputy Secretary, Department of Commerce

I'm a little nervous here today, not because of this very large crowd, but I know that you've been exceedingly patient, and not because you saw fit to make the Vice President of the United States and two United States Senators the opening acts, and me the main attraction. What worried me was that you have Kevin Sladik, who might be in the crowd, and I understand that Kevin won your oratorical contest. I was very happy to see Kevin win that contest because he's a Texan like I am. Are there any other Texans here today? I knew there would be.

I feel a little the way Winston Churchill did once he really appreciated American military power, and he felt very warmly towards our country. There was a story I once heard told about Sir Winston, he was on his way over to the United States to visit, and he was visiting, riding over on the Queen Mary. He was sitting in the big dining chair in the state room after dinner, sipping an after-dinner drink as he liked to do. At one point he turned to his science advisor, Lord Cherwell, and he said, "If all of the liquor I ever drank was poured into this room, would it reach the ceiling?" And Cherwell whipped out his slide-rule and he went to work. And after while he said, "Sir Winston, I regret to inform you that the alcohol would only reach up to your chin." Churchill looked up to the ceiling and he said, "Oh, so little time. So much to do."

Now, you invited me here today to talk a little bit about the census that's coming up in the year 2000, and I'm going to do that. Bt first I want to spend some time telling you how much I wish that my family could be here with me today, and how proud I think they would be. I was speaking with my father on Sunday and mentioned to him that I was coming out to speak to The American Legion in Orange County. He said, "You? The American Legion? You have been invited to speak to The American Legion?" I said, "Yes, I have." He said, "Will wonders never cease?" He said that because—I will think he was proud of me in a very odd way—out of the entire bunch of men in my family, I am the only PFC in the bunch. I'm the only one who got invited to speak at The American Legion and because I come from a military family of sorts. My father is a veteran; my brother is a veteran; my father served during the Korean War; and I have five uncles who served during World War II. One of my uncles was buried last year, a highly decorated soldier who earned a purple heart and is buried in Arlington Cemetery. I had another uncle who used to tell us all the

time that he was in the Navy. When I heard *Anchors Aweigh* this morning with Peter Ole playing it, I thought about him. He said, "I was in the Navy for 12 years, 10 months and eight days, and I remember every moment of it." Now, although these men aren't with us today, I still remember them, and I still remember their stories around our dinner table, and I can hear their voices. And in a real way I know that they are here with me today and they share my father's pride.

But not only have the men and women of The American Legion won the wars that kept us free, you have done something else that no other institution in our country has managed to do as effectively. After all, we are a country of different people. We are black and red and brown and white and yellow. We are from every continent on the planet, and every country on the planet. Now, I have a theory. Now it's a bit of a pop theory so it's my theory, and I believe this, and here it is. Over the last half century, the single best model in this country for bringing the country together from all walks of life and all hues, has been the military. The armed forces have taken Americans from all walks of life. It is the great equalizer in our country. And it's shown those men and women how to learn, how to work, and how to grow together. So I salute you for that, my friends. It has helped to change our country and to change it for the better. The examples set by the men and women who served in America's wars during this century will be equally compelling in the next one. So today we lift each other up. We have a partnership that was created in war with your courage. It is creating prosperity in peace for us all.

But of course even the best partnerships can only go so far. If America is to stay prosperous, it must have the best workers, getting the best education, going to the best schools, and going to work in the best plants and factories in the world. While there are a lot of tools, we have to do that. You invited me here today to talk about just one, and I will now do that for you, and then I will sit down.

It's the 2000 census. We are in countdown mode at the Census Bureau, which is an agency of the Commerce Department. Every 10 years we take a census of the population of the United States, and we get a snapshot, a portrait of what our country is. We have exactly 205 days before the countdown ends, and the census begins on April 1st, 2000. A lot rides on it, and there is a lot to do. But let me briefly tell you why the census is so important, and I guarantee you I will sit down.

A lot of people know that the census is used to determine reapportionment, that is, how many seats in the U.S. House or Representatives that each state will get. You know that it's used for redistricting; that is, how you draw the political boundaries in your individual jurisdictions. Not that's important, but it's not all important. What most people don't know is that the census is also used to distribute Federal funds every year, over a 180 billion dollars a year, and that's just the Federal side. The census is also used for the distribution of state, county and local government funds, and that's a lot of money. It's used to decide what areas are eligible for grants to help create jobs. It is used to train for seniors and the Older Americans Act. It is used to show where we need to build roads, schools, bridges and highways. It is used to help companies decide where to place new factories where the people are going to be. It is used to monitor the Civil Rights laws. It's used by states and towns to plan for hospitals and hospital districts. It is used for services that improve our children's health, and it is used for veterans. It must provide a complete and accurate count of all of our veterans.

Now, how do we make sure that the census is an accurate snapshot of our country? How do we make sure that everybody is counted? We do this every 10 years, and we've

been doing it since 1790. But in 1990 it was the first census in modern times that wasn't as good as the census before it. Now the Bureau is working very hard to make certain that doesn't happen again, and it is meeting its deadlines. But we need your help and we need it badly. We need you to work with families of your members. Tell them that it's essential to fill out their forms and to get their neighbors to fill out their forms. But we need more than that. The census is looking to hire 864,000 people to carry out the census in the year 2000. The only bigger mobilizations have come during times of war. We hope that some of you are part of that army for that enormous peacetime mobilization, and that you will alert people to jobs and census work, especially enumerated jobs. Those jobs pay anywhere from $8.25 an hour, to $17.24 an hour depending on where you live. But we need more than that. We need local legislators and community organizations to create partnerships with the Census Bureau, because only if we all get involved, will we all be counted.

I hope that you will visit the census booth in the Exhibit Hall and sign up to help in the areas in which you live. I hope you will get your friends to sign up. Because if we do that, if we can work as partners to create the most accurate census ever, then we will have provided America a powerful tool. Those numbers that we will collect together painstakingly one by one by those of you who are willing to help, will provide a portrait of the American family as it is. And they will help us to realize the vision of America that you have helped to create.

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

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER GOULART: Here in California veterans have one of the strongest advocates ever in charge of their State Department of Veterans Affairs. A Marine veteran of service in Vietnam, he was wounded during the Tet Offensive in 1968. When he returned to civilian life, he distinguished himself as an activist and advocate for his fellow veterans. That reputation has kept him busy working for his state, more than three million veterans both in state government, as a legislative aid working for the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. I'm proud to introduce to the delegates of this Convention, a member of The American Legion Post 804 in Los Angeles, the Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Tomas Alvarado.

Address: The Honorable Tomas Alvarado, Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs for the State of California

I'm honored to welcome you to California, again, as was done earlier by Bruce Thiesen, our Past National Commander. I hope the weather is fitting for your travels and what you need to do here to enjoy our magnificent state. I also want to express a profound appreciation for allowing me the privilege of sharing the stage with such distinguished leaders in the veterans community and champions of veterans. When I was informed that I was going to have a speaking role here at this magnificent convention. I said, "What am I going to say to these individuals that probably know more about veterans affairs and veterans advocacy than I do?" I also asked myself, if I sit up here and talk about what was previously discussed, they have already heard that before, and they are just going to be wasting their time sitting there, and I'm sure you have other things you can do.

I thought of the countless individuals I could recognize that have given all that they have to improve the delivery of health care, education and employment benefits within the Veterans Administration and the Department of Labor. But in my short 30 years as an advocate for veterans and their families, one person comes to mind as a man who put focus

and substance in his efforts to address the needs of veterans, and that man is Senator Alan Cranston.

I personally credit Senator Cranston for my standing here before you here today. He opened the windows of opportunity by allowing me to be associated with him for over 20 years as he crafted veterans related legislation. As a Vietnam veteran attending San Jose State, I and many of you here today were the recipients of his cutting edge legislation. The Senator was here today to receive an award for his legislative achievements that positively affected all veterans throughout this great nation of ours, and their families. I realized that he would be too modest to highlight all that he has done for all of us throughout his accomplished 24 year Senate career.

Comrades, the following profile I'm about to outline may sound like a campaign pitch for a candidate. Rather, it's a brief legislative history of a man who we all owe an enormous amount of gratitude. As far as I'm concerned, veterans, and great veterans organizations such as The American Legion, will not likely find another Alan Cranston in future years of advocacy. His tenacity and vision will remain second to none. Let me just inject you with a prominent summary which I hope will serve as a reminder to all of us of what this great man has done for veterans of our nation.

I want to begin by asking that you remain mindful that Senator Cranston never once hesitated to articulate that this nation has a fundamental and national obligation to meet the needs of veterans, particularly those who suffer from service-connected disabilities, and survivors of those who died in battle. This was his driving force. More importantly, Senator Cranston had a very special and deep concern for disabled women, Vietnam era and Vietnam veterans. I am an offspring of that concern. Beginning in 1969 Senator Cranston supported 20 increases in VA service-connected compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation, and for you old-timers, it's DIC. All of us in this room have benefited as a result of that effort. He authored or was the principal sponsor of this legislation in nearly every instance in his 24 years as a member of the U.S. Senate.

Senator Cranston was a champion for the disabled veterans. He rose to the occasion with the following, and I remind you in each category this is just a partial list of what this man has accomplished. In 1980 he authored legislation that led to the first comprehensive restructuring for VA Voc Rehap program, the first since 1943. In 1982 he led the fight to restore certain Social Security benefits to the survivors of those who died while on active duty, and who later died of service-connected disabilities. In 1984 Senator Cranston took on the Treasury Department when Treasury recommended repeals of the tax exempt status of VA service-connected compensation. That was dumped through his efforts; it never happened. In 1986 he authored legislation which provided exemptions for service-connected benefits, including specially adapted housing grants; mortgage protection life insurance; automobile assistance grants and auto adaptive equipment; Voc Rehab; educational assistance for the survivors and dependents of service-connected veterans, and the Service Disabled Veteran Insurance Program.

The Senator's special concern for Vietnam era veterans was clearly evident during his tenure in the Senate. You actually would have to live in solitary confinement not to take note of this man's efforts to make educational institutions readily available for Vietnam era veterans. He authored and co-authored every major legislative proposal that was enacted to improve education and employment assistance programs between 1969 and 1992. He was instrumental in the establishment of special programs for assistance for economically and educationally disadvantaged veterans. Senator Cranston's deliberate efforts are the reason

that we as Vietnam veterans had assistance such as the special G.I. Benefits; bill benefits for high school diplomas; tutoring allowance; pre-discharge education programs; expanded veterans outreach services; VA work study programs; and the successful veterans cost of instruction program. For some of you older guys that are in our 50s, it's the old VISA Program that was enacted in the early '70s at the local colleges.

Although Senator Cranston's record on employment for veterans is very extensive, he took a strong lead and demonstrated his concern for veterans employment in 1982. He co-authored provisions of the Job Training Partnership Act, that declared for the first time that veterans employment is a national responsibility. In 1983, he authored legislation in the Senate that led to the enactment of the Emergency Veterans Job Training Act of 1983. In 1988 Senator Cranston again authored legislation to establish a stable statutory funding base for veterans employment and training programs administered by the Department of Labor. Anticipating the need for employment and training information services for soon to be released military personnel, in 1989 Senator Cranston authored legislation that established a joint VA Department of Defense, and Department of Labor pilot program which subsequently led to the Transition Assistance Program, still in existence today.

Senator Cranston was the principal Senate author for all veterans health care legislation, enacted between 1969 and 1992. In 1969 he chaired the first Congressional investigation on the difficulties VA medical facilities were having in meeting the needs of veterans wounded in the Vietnam conflict. This Senator took the lead in efforts to foster the development of new methods by which the VA might furnish health care services to eligible veterans. He also authored laws which authorized the VA to furnish preventive care, adult day health and respite care.

Senator Cranston's determined vigil on health care issues led him to chair numerous hearings on Agent Orange, as you heard him say previously. During the years as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, he authored and co-authored all major legislation enacted relating to Agent Orange. In 1979 he again chaired the first Congressional hearing on veterans exposure to radiation. Senator Cranston authored legislation enacted in 1991 to provide the VA specific authority to give these exposed veterans medical care for conditions related to their exposure.

Senator Cranston also chaired the first Congressional hearing on the readjustment needs of our Persian Gulf veterans and their needs. In 1991 he authored legislation to allow veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, Panama, Granada, and Lebanon wars, to use the vet centers.

There are other merits that can be attributed to this man's magnificent career as a true and gifted champion on issues and programs affecting veterans, such as fighting for an adequate and equitable VA pension program for elderly and nonservice-connected disabled wartime veterans, and the survivors of wartime veterans.

He spoke on judicial review just briefly. Some of you may be mindful of what a disgrace this was. It was in a complete total unfair fiasco. To correct this inequity, Senator Cranston co-authored measures that passed the Senate in 1979, '82, '83 and 1985, that would give the right of appeal to Federal court to a veteran or survivor whose claim for VA benefits is denied. This in effect prevented the VA from subjecting veterans to second class citizenship.

I presented you with a clear profile of a man whom I've admired all my public life. As an advocate administrator, I have gone the extra mile to apply what I have learned from him. His legislative and programmatic concepts, and his commitment to veterans not only had

character, but were laden with responsible compassion for veterans and their dependents. I'm honored to have shared this stage with him. I feel the flavor of completion in my life by a mere association with his policies, his agendas, and his political astuteness.

Senator Cranston's retirement from the Senate has left us with a great absence of a true veteran's advocate. It is doubtful, and I will remain optimistic, but I do hope that in my lifetime another elected official of his caliber and determination emerges and rises to the occasion. Senator Cranston's legendary concerns for veterans will always remain with us, and I thank him for allowing me to be a small part of it.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Our next guest today is the President of the Board of Directors of the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation. This is a woman who knows now to succeed in any mission, and she has. She led the effort to build the nation's memorial for all women in military service, a memorial that was long overdue. She's a retired Air Force Brigadier General, a fellow Legionnaire, a friend of all veterans. She is a member of American Legion Post 477 in Chrisman, Illinois. Please help me welcome to our stage, Brigadier General, retired, Wilma Vaught.

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

I want to say that I'm proud to have grown up in Illinois, and that's why my membership in the post is in Illinois. I'm proud to have served 28 and a half years in the United States Air Force. I'm also proud to be a resident of Butch Miller's home state of Virginia. I'm also proud to be a Life Member of The American Legion.

I have been privileged that eleven of the last 12 American Legion Conventions I could come and give an update report on our progress on the Women In Military Service Memorial. Since it was dedicated in October of 1997, you may wonder why I am still back. Well, the reason I'm still back is it's not finished yet. We still owe money for it because we had to borrow money. Most of the exhibits remain to be done. But we have completed almost two years of operation. We have had a chance to analyze what we have done; where we have been.

Last year, 1998, we had a total of 170,000 people come and visit the memorial, and many of those were American Legion members, American Legion Auxiliary members, and of course the many other service women and just guests to Arlington National Cemetery.

As I think about the memorial now, after I have watched it through this period of time, it is a different kind of a memorial. We always knew it would be a living memorial, but we now understand some other things. It is a place of remembrance; a place of recognition. And every time that I am there and some family member comes in to pay tribute to some woman who has served, and perhaps she's no longer living, and tears come to their eyes as they walk through that memorial, I am proud of it. It is also a place of meeting. A place of ceremony. We have many promotion, retirement, re-enlistment ceremonies, as well as some memorial services. It's a place of education and learning. I am proud to say that during this last year we had some wonderful speakers come: Tom Brokaw; Coki Roberts; Betty Fridan and many others who came and spoke to those who came to hear them. We're also actively engaged in doing educational kits which are available to the VA medical centers and to military installations across the country each March for Women's History Month.

As I think back to two years ago at this time, we were frantically working to get ready for the dedication. But there were many other people who were preparing to come and visit

the memorial. One of those persons was Betty Jean Hanson-Miller, who was a Navy nurse in World War II. As she got ready to come to the dedication, sat down and wrote her memories of World War II. Her booklet was about a quarter of an inch thick. She wrote, "The dramatic events," of which she was a part, "were put away in my mind and forgotten, or if they surfaced were not discussed. It was not until the recognition of the Women In Military Service Memorial that I became aware of these memories once again. Writing about my past brings such memories to life. Perhaps there is healing in this for me, a need I never recognized as I took on the pain and suffering of others. I cried my tears for them that were never before shed as I wrote my story. In looking back from areas of stress that never resolved grief or fear were: ... severely burned patients. There is an odor about them that clings to you. Overseas we didn't have equipment to air condition the wards to free them of the odor. A nurse, who worked night duty with me have in the psychiatric ward and became suicidal, a psychiatric patient herself. A patient who hung himself in one of the bathrooms, and I found him and held him up until help could come. Psychiatric patients with horrendous experiences in battle. A patient who slit his wrists and died. I was not on duty but I had cared for him during the day. It makes an impact. Amputees, but most of the men were very courageous; a positive help to others."

At that time we didn't realize that women suffered just the same as soldiers out on the battlefield from what we now know and call PTSD. So she didn't have anybody to turn to. She had to resolve her problems herself, and she tucked them away. But she also wrote, "Through prayer and scripture, the Lord healed my scars of war. I am thankful that wherever I was His strength and guidance were there to sustain me. I sought Him and He answered me." This is the kind of person we're recognizing at the memorial, and many just like her.

I would ask you to do the following: when you come to Washington, D.C., be sure and come to the main gate at Arlington National Cemetery and visit this memorial that honors all women. I would ask you to help us in finding women to register. We have only found about 350,000 of the 1.8 million who have served, and I have tried for 12 years now to find them, and I can't do this job. It takes someone like you out in the towns and cities and farms and villages across America, to find them, because most of them have never stepped forward and acknowledged that they were veterans. I ask for your help. I would ask you to stop by and visit our booth, because for The American Legion Convention we are having this special sale of our commemorative coins. If you haven't gotten one of those I wish you would come by and buy one. We have about 11,000 left, and I'm committing to wearing this everyday until we sell them all, and I would like to wear something else different. So please come by and help me. And Butch, I have one reserved for you. Thirty dollars.

The American Legion leads the veteran organizations in terms of its donations. You have now donated $243,020.28, and that does not include the $1,100 check that was just given me since I have been here, from the Department of Texas for it's annual donation. I would like to challenge The American Legion to give $400,000, and that's one dollar for every woman who served in World War II. There have been just over 1,000 posts, districts and departments that have donated out of the over 14,000 posts. I would like to see every post make a donation, even if it is only a dollar or two or five dollars, so that I can stand before you and say that 100 percent of The American Legion posts have supported this tribute to our American women. I thank you for your support. When you are in Washington, do come visit me, and if I'm there I would be glad to meet you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: In case you have been doing any quick math, that's about 68 cents per member. I think we can do that. Thank you, Wilma, for your fine effort. We will help you take care of that memorial.

Presentation: 1999 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The next order of business is to honor an individual for setting the example in community service as a law enforcement officer. I don't think that bond is any stronger between any group of people than between veterans and law officers, firemen, EMTs. There's something very special between us. When we did our thing in the military, you couldn't leave when you wanted to. These gentlemen can, but yet they choose to do this each and every day of their lives.

Our 1999 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year waited until he was a young man of 42 to become a police officer. What blossomed is not only a police officer who has saved the lives of others but a community activist coordinating the neighborhood resource team. This team tackles family, public safety, tenant organization, a jobs program, diffusing community tension, and more. It's a holistic approach to the problem-solving method. And it works thanks to our officer, our Law Enforcement Officer of the Year 1999. Welcome a member of Miami Dade Police Department, Officer Ron Tookes, and his wife.

It is with great honor that I present this plaque to you. It says, "America's finest. The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award presented to Police Officer Ronald Tookes, Miami Dade Police Department, Miami, Florida. For distinguished service above and beyond your assigned duties, rendered through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievement. By your demonstrated performance, you have personified the versatile police officer who represents America's finest. The American Legion congratulates you and wishes you continued success in an already illustrious career." This award is given this 8th day of September 1999, at this 81st annual convention in Anaheim, California. It is with great honor that I present it to you, Ronald.

OFFICER RONALD TOOKES: Thanks to The American Legion Post 311 in Miami, Florida, and to Post Commander Stanley Gold, to The American Legion Florida and Southeast Regional organizations, to this national organization, and all the dignitaries here this morning, it was each of you that made it possible for me to stand here today. Accept my sincere gratitude for selecting me your 1999 National Officer of the Year. I accept this honor on behalf of my fellow officers in Miami, the Miami Dade Police Department, the citizens of Miami Dade County, and all law enforcement officers serving in this great country. Before I finish, I must thank my wife who stands behind me daily as I tackle and do law enforcement chores in Miami.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair now recognizes John Brieden of Texas, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Economics.

Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters
John Brieden, Texas, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m. on September 5, 1999, a total of 95 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in Room A9 of the Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California, to consider 61 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. John Brieden (TX) was elected general chairman and Bob Boxdorfer (MO) was appointed general secretary. Henry Field (SC) was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and Len Shaw (IA) was appointed secretary. Paul Morin (MA) was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Ben Lee (NJ) was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of the chairman, Al Robotti, Robert Boxdorfer (MO), Henry J. Field (SC), and William E. Christoffersen (UT), met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 3, 1999, in Mezzanine Room 3 of the Anaheim Hilton Hotel, Anaheim, California, to consider resolutions. The report of the screening committee was presented to the convention committees and was adopted with Resolution 51 (CA) set aside for separate consideration. Several resolutions were explained and discussed without being set aside. Resolution 51 was considered, discussed, and approved by the convention committee.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing the meaning. The meeting was recessed at 10:00 a.m. subject to recall by the chair.

[letter received for reading at the National Convention]

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
SECRETARY OF LABOR WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is a privilege for me to send my sincerest personal greetings to the participants at The American Legion's National Conference in Anaheim and to all Legion members throughout this great country. Your many activities supporting family and community have helped instill freedom's heritage into the very fabric of our daily lives.

This year, you are meeting while brave men and women in uniform are once again far from home and loved ones, standing freedom's watch to bring peace and security to people threatened by tyranny far away. In addition to our armed forces professionals, many citizen soldiers have temporarily turned their plow shares into peace keeping swords to assist in critical humanitarian operations and provide necessary administrative and logistical support. While they are in the field, we wish them God speed and a safe return home.

When our reservists and National Guard members are ready to resume their civilian lives, the Department of Labor stands ready to marshal all the resources at its disposal to make sure that they, and all veterans, have access to skills training and employment services they have earned. The enactment of the Workforce Investment Act provides unprecedented opportunity for major reforms that will result in a reinvigorated, integrated workforce

investment system. The Act establishes One-Stop delivery systems which will integrate multiple employment and training programs, including those for veterans, at the "street level." This integrated system will simplify and expand access to services for all job seekers and employers.

Our dynamic economy offers an unprecedented opportunity for veterans to find not just jobs, but to use the considerable technical and interpersonal skills that they acquired in the military to build strong, stable civilian careers for themselves and their families. America's veterans continue to be an important national resource as part of the civilian labor force, as active members of community organizations, and as a unified and articulate voice of national conscience, reminding us always that price of freedom is high.

As Secretary of Labor, it is my honor and my obligation to work for an America where every woman and man can find useful work with rising wages. I am committed to an America that offers opportunity for our youngest people, security for older people, and respect for the achievements of the millions of Americans who have willingly postponed personal gain and sacrificed family pleasures to proudly wear the uniforms of our armed forces.

Together, we can make sure that our vision of America will be a reality fulfilled, not a dream deferred. I thank you for your service and wish you every success as you enter the 21st century.

Sincerely,
\ss\ Alexis M. Herman

Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference Committee
Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approval

Resolution No. 16: Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998
Origin: CO
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Title: Veterans Preference Act, Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, P.L. 105-339, addresses veterans' employment issues; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) was signed into law on October 31, 1998; and

WHEREAS, This law gives the responsibility of enforcing veterans preference to the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, This is an excellent piece of legislation, which has put teeth back into an otherwise ignored law, truly never enforced by the Office of Personnel Management; and

WHEREAS, Veterans preference is often misunderstood by non-veterans and managers of federal agencies and often intentionally circumvented; and

WHEREAS, The Act provides redress by the veteran, which could result in a prohibited personnel practice by the federal hiring authority that could lead to a fine, suspension or termination of the personnel who violate the Act; and

WHEREAS, The Act further ends circumvention of veterans preference in a reduction-in-force (RIF) by a federal agency to protect non-veteran employees who are lesser qualified than the veterans; and

WHEREAS, This is an earned benefit of the veteran, who must be qualified for the position, and it is not a given fact that the veteran will be hired; and

WHEREAS, Though the Act is beneficial, it has flaws which need to be remedied, such as veterans preference in merit promotion within the agency, and the Act should involve all hiring authorities, not targeted at Schedule "B" appointments, and veterans preference should be invoked in the Priority Placement Program, which is a program in which displaced federal employees are placed in a RIF; and

WHEREAS, These were all original intents of the sponsors of H.R. 240; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion lobby for technical amendments of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act to replace what was omitted from the original format of H.R. 240.

Resolution No. 18: DVETS Residency Requirement Reaffirmed
Origin: CO
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has traditionally sponsored and supported the requirement that the United States Department of Labor Directors (DVETS) and Assistant Directors (ADVETS) for Veterans' Employment and Training be required to hold a two-year residency within the state to which appointed immediately prior to appointment; and

WHEREAS, DVETS and ADVETS operate in a complex system of networked political interactive communities; and

WHEREAS, Interaction with and involvement in veterans' organizations within the state is essential to the advocacy and activities work required of the DVET and ADVET; and

WHEREAS, Considerations to remove the residency requirement have been negative in their intent, and often abused by the agency responsible for enforcing Title 38 USC, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion oppose any movement to thwart the intent of the law and support retention of the residency requirement for Directors and Assistant Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training, as contained in the United States Code, Title 38, Chapter 41, Section 4103(b).

Resolution No. 30: Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
As amended

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

WHEREAS, A grateful nation, through its representatives in the Congress of the United States and state legislatures, has, in recognition of the special service and loss of employment opportunity while defending the country in time of need, extended a long

history of employing the returning veterans by enacting the Veterans Preference Act as contained in Title 5, USC, and Chapter 3-3, South Dakota Code; and

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the President of the United States, the Congress, the governor of each state, and the state legislatures be informed that The American Legion deplores each and every attempt to degrade, dilute, or modify the historical precedent of giving job eligibility preference to those who were taken from their communities to serve their country in time of war or armed conflict, and that the President and governors reject any and all proposed legislation that would reduce the employment opportunities for veterans in the federal or state workforce.

Resolution No. 51: Disabled Veterans as Priority Under Americans with Disabilities Act

Origin: CA

Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

As amended

WHEREAS, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 gave new and deserved emphasis to the employment problems of people with disabilities and recognized them as a specific group who need special consideration; and

WHEREAS, The attempt is made in other laws also to address these problems, specifically the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the handicapped; Title 38 USC, Chapter 42 for disabled veterans who have barriers to employment; and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which mandates the non-discrimination in employment requirements covering race, religion, age, sex and national origin; and many employers are required to have a written Affirmative Action Plan in order to avoid discrimination against any of these groups; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, Chapter 42 also contains specific requirements for federal contractors and federal agencies to take affirmative action to hire and promote minorities and disabled veterans; although in actual practice there is no breakdown by priority of affirmative action for minorities, disabled veterans or the handicapped as specific groups; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the high incidence of employment problems among disabled veterans is not enough; and in order to implement the plans and ensure actual practice of affirmative action, the disabled should be considered separately from minorities for preferential treatment by all entities who have affirmative action requirements under law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge Congress to enact legislation that gives disabled veterans priority in affirmative action as a group within the other designated groups for which affirmative action is required.

Resolution No. 54: Hire A Veteran Week
Origin: WI
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion goes on record to have the United States of America institute a national "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year, and urge all citizens, and especially those charged with the responsibility for hiring personnel, to recognize and support the hiring of veterans; and, be it further

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

Resolution No. 79: Recognition Of Military Service And Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
As consolidated with 99 (VA) and 136 (UT)

WHEREAS, The Office of Personnel Management's interpretation of Section 531.203 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations is as follows: "These regulations provide that a hiring agency may consider a rate of basic pay previously received by the individual in a position in any branch of the Federal Government as his or her 'highest previous rate.' The highest previous rate is used at the agency's discretion and no employee is guaranteed the use of his or her highest previous rate in setting his or her pay. Although this law does not allow the use of military pay rates to determine the rate of basic pay that may be paid to an individual upon appointment to a civil service position, agencies do have the ability to pay above the minimum rate of the grade when the new employee has superior qualifications or the agency has special needs for a candidate's service"; and

WHEREAS, That interpretation has the potential for placing a former member of the Armed Forces at a financial disadvantage because it does not require the hiring agency to consider the applicant's military experience and highest military pay as the basis for calculating that person's starting salary when entering into federal employment as a civilian; and

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

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

WHEREAS, In the above scenario, it is entirely possible that Employee A and Employee B could be hired by the same agency, to do the same job, with Employee A having the potential of being paid as much as $11,116 more per year than Employee B; and

WHEREAS, This quirk in the law clearly discriminates against the former Armed Forces member because the hiring agency is not required to take that person's military experience and military pay history into consideration when calculating his/her starting salary; and

WHEREAS, Another thing that makes this situation discriminatory is that while in the military, the veteran was in fact, in the service of this country's Federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that requires Federal agencies to take a candidate's military experience and military pay history into consideration when computing that applicant's starting salary.

Resolution No. 84: Tax Credits For Certain Employers

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

As consolidated with 10 (DC) and 131 (UT)

WHEREAS, More than 265,300 members of the armed forces reserves and National Guard served on active duty during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990-1991); and

WHEREAS, According to Defense Manpower Data Systems, since 1991, an additional 63,938 members of the reserve components served on active duty during the military operations known as Southern Watch, Joint Forge and Uphold Democracy; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of those men and women left jobs and careers in the civilian community to answer the call of their country; and

WHEREAS, Many of those veterans and their families suffered economic hardship as the result of that service because the military salaries they received while on active duty were often much lower than the salaries paid by their civilian employers; and

WHEREAS, While some employers were able to make up the difference between their employee's military pay and their regular civilian salary, most employers could not, or would not, make up the difference between the two; and

WHEREAS, There is no incentive for employers to make up the difference between an employee's military pay and their regular salary; and

WHEREAS, The financial disadvantages suffered by many members of the armed forces reserves and National Guard who are called to active duty could very possibly serve as a major impediment to the recruitment and retention of a competent reserve component of the military total force; and

WHEREAS, The recent downsizing of armed forces resulted in increased reliance on reserves and National Guard units for military operation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation providing tax credits to any employer who either pays an employee who is called to active duty their regular salary or who makes up the difference between that person's military pay and their regular civilian salary.

Resolution No. 86: Support Revision Of VETS Performance Standards
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
As consolidated with 129 (UT)

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

WHEREAS, At a 1997 hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) criticized VETS because its current performance standards focus more on process than on results; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's 1997 Annual Report showed that while nine states met that agency's performance standards, they placed fewer than 10 percent of veteran registrants; and

WHEREAS, A 1997 report by GAO indicated that 18 states placed fewer than one-in-five veterans who came to the Employment Service for assistance; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds these statistics unacceptable; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion seek and support a revision of existing Veterans' Employment and Training Service reporting requirements for measuring performance standards and for determining compliance with requirements for providing employment services to veterans.

Resolution No. 123: Job Protection For Service Connected Veterans Requiring Visits At VA Facilities
Origin: OH
Submitted By Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Congress to ensure that no veteran shall be denied employment, reemployment, advancement or discrimination in employment for serving the country's call to colors, whether such service was voluntary or involuntary, as provided for in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, formerly the Veterans' Reemployment Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, Veterans or disabled veterans who are required to report for mandatory compensation or pension physical examinations are considered as a "standard" or "regular" absence from work; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of employers throughout the country have very stringent attendance policies, that DO result in termination for continued attendance violations; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who are required to report to the Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation and pension examinations, as well as treatment for a service connected or service aggravated condition, are exposed to termination, lack of promotional opportunities and other forms of unjustifiable retaliations from employers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge state and federal legislators to adopt and enforce provisions of protection from any employer, against any veteran who is required to report to the Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation or pension evaluations, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, or treatment for any service connected or service aggravated condition, that is being treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 133: Change The Date Of Employ The Older Worker Week
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics (Employment & Veterans Preference)
As consolidated with 82 (MD)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long concerned itself with the difficulties encountered by older workers seeking to obtain and retain suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, "Employ the Older Worker Week" was initiated by The American Legion in 1958 as a means of promoting employment opportunities for older Americans; and

WHEREAS, Because of the Department of Labor's promotional efforts on behalf of this Legion program, it has become a national observance; and

WHEREAS, Other government agencies and private sector organizations also participate in various ways in "National Employ the Older Worker Week"; and

WHEREAS, Federal agencies and private sector organizations have requested that the Legion's observance be changed from the second full week in March to the last full week in September, starting in the year 2000, so that their promotion of the observance can be more effectively coordinated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the annual observance of "National Employ the Older Worker Week" take place during the last full week in September, beginning in the year 2000.

Resolution No. 134: Support Of America's Older Workers
Origin: UT
As consolidated with 8 (DC) and 81 (MD)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has traditionally supported programs that help older Americans to live happy, healthy, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion also has a long history of supporting older workers and promoting employment opportunities for them; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion regards older workers as a national asset because of the many fine attributes they bring to the workplace such as a strong work ethic, experience, maturity, and stability; and

WHEREAS, Factors such as inadequate pension benefits have forced many older Americans to work past what is considered the normal retirement age; and

WHEREAS, Because of corporate downsizing, and other circumstances, many older workers have become unemployed through no fault of their own; and

WHEREAS, Because age discrimination still exists, a displaced older worker may find it difficult, if not impossible, to find suitable new employment; and

WHEREAS, A recent study found that 43 million Americans are over the age of 60; and

WHEREAS, That same study also found that approximately 13% of those persons who are over 60 years of age are living at or below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, No doubt many of those individuals could and would work if they could find suitable employment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion reiterate its long-standing advocacy on behalf of America's older workers; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue its support of programs that benefit older Americans.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 5 (WY) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**

Resolution No. 13 (SD) 1999 NC: **Support a Strong Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

Resolution No. 19 (CO) 1999 NC: **Support Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

Resolution No. 25 (MA) 1999 NC: **Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA)**

Resolution No. 26 (MA) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**

Resolution No. 27 (MA) 1999 NC: **Support a Strong Veterans Employment and Training Service**

Resolution No. 28 (MA) 1999 NC: **Support LVER Program**

Resolution No. 47 (CA) 1999 NC: **Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Disabled Veterans**

Resolution No. 48 (CA) 1999 NC: **Transition Assistance Program to Be Fully Funded**

Resolution No. 49 (CA) 1999 NC: **The Employment Service to Be Fully Funded**

Resolution No. 52 (CA) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**

Resolution No. 55 (MT) 1999 NC: **DVOP/LVER Staff to Remain Public Employees**

Resolution No. 91 (IA) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 102 (OR) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 108 (FL) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 120 (OH) 1999 NC: **Expansion of Veterans Preference and Priority Service**
Resolution No. 121 (OH) 1999 NC: **Oppose Elimination of DVOP and LVER Programs**
Resolution No. 122 (OH) 1999 NC: **Workforce Investment Act States to Partnership with Federal Agencies**
Resolution No. 126 (UT) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 148 (NE) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 162 (WA) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 167 (NC) 1999 NC: **Oppose Report of Congressional Commission on Service Members and Veterans Transition Assistance**
Resolution No. 168 (IN) 1999 NC: **Ensure American Legion Representation on All State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**
Resolution No. 172 (MI) 1999 NC: **Adequate Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Service**
Resolution No. 173 (MI) 1999 NC: **Oppose Elimination of DVOP and LVER Programs**

Referred to the Standing Commission on Economics

Resolution No. 50 (CA) 1999 NC: **Women Veterans in Need of Employment Assistance**
Resolution No. 53 (CA) 1999 NC: **Support a National Task Force for Changes to Title 38 USC, Chapter 41**
Resolution No. 56 (MT) 1999 NC: **Amend Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998**

Committee on Other Economic Matters
Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approval

Resolution No. 7: VA Home Warranty Rules
Origin: DC
Submitted By: Economics
As consolidated with 85 (MD) and 130 (UT)

WHEREAS, The Veterans Benefits Administration's Loan Guaranty Service administers the Department of Veterans' Affairs direct loan and loan guaranty programs; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's recently issued interim rule, which would severely curtail the FHA home warranty program, will also impact veterans who purchase newly constructed homes with VA loans; and

WHEREAS, In order for a veteran to obtain a VA loan on a newly constructed home, the home must be either inspected during three crucial stages of construction, or covered by a commercial ten year structural warranty; and

WHEREAS, The Loan Guaranty Service at the VA has historically adopted HUD's regulations of FHA/VA-insured mortgage policies such as the HUD policy reducing new home termite infestation warranties to one year; and

WHEREAS, Officials in the Loan Guaranty Service are presently studying HUD's interim rule that eliminates the ten-year warranty and the Construction Valuation Staff is in the process of preparing recommendations on the issue for the Director of the Loan Guaranty Service; and

WHEREAS, Only 2% of structural damage occurs in the first year a house is built, while 77% of structural damage takes place when homes are 5 to 10 years old; and

WHEREAS, Warranty companies have paid more than a billion dollars repairing structural damage in new homes over the past 25 years; and

WHEREAS, If the warranty period is reduced to one year, as the proposed HUD regulations require, the huge costs of repairing structural damage in these homes will fall on veteran home owners, who cannot afford this burden; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion opposes elimination of the 10-year warranty and inspection provisions which provide essential protection to veteran home owners, safeguarding their new home investment during the years when major structural damage is most likely to occur.

Resolution No. 83: Support Improved Services For America's Veteran-Entrepreneurs
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Economics
As consolidated with 11 (DC), 35 (MA), and 132 (UT)

WHEREAS, Small business is the backbone of the American economy; and

WHEREAS, According to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, during 1992, 51% of the Gross Domestic Product was generated by small businesses with 500 or fewer employees; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor predicts that by the year 2005, small business will be the largest employer in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Veterans own and operate approximately one-sixth of this country's 24.2 million small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Veterans fought to protect and preserve the American way of life and the free enterprise system; and

WHEREAS, Despite the 1974 enactment of Public Law 93-237, which mandated the Small Business Administration to provide "special consideration to veterans of the Armed Forces and their survivors and dependents," the agency made only a token effort to define and implement that policy; and

WHEREAS, Over the past decade, the Small Business Administration has made it luminously clear to both Congress and the veterans' community that veterans are not an agency priority; and

WHEREAS, During that same time period, the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans Affairs has been hamstrung because the agency refuses to provide the support and resources necessary for that office to meet its mission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support any legislative or administrative proposal that will increase and improve federal assistance to America's veteran-entrepreneurs.

Resolution No. 135: Homeless Veterans
Origin: UT
Submitted By: Economics
As consolidated with 9 (DC) and 80 (MD)

WHEREAS, Despite a healthy economy, the percentage of veterans in this country's homeless population remains disproportionately high; and

WHEREAS, Although the exact number of homeless persons is unknown, experts agree that at least one-third of all homeless served honorably in our armed forces; and

WHEREAS, In many urban areas the percentage of veterans in the homeless population is believed to be upwards of 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, Based on anecdotal information, it appears that both the number of female veterans, and the number of veterans with dependents, in the homeless population are increasing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion renew its commitment to assisting homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to support the efforts of public and private sector agencies and organizations with the resources necessary to aid homeless veterans and their families; and, be it finally

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.

Resolution No. 184: Reaffirm Support For Department Of Veterans' Affairs Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: Economics
Submitted By: Economics

WHEREAS, The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 346, 78th Congress) established, among other things, a home loan guaranty program that was to be administered by the Veterans Administration, which later became the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and

WHEREAS, The two purposes of the original program were to help returning World War II veterans in their readjustment to civilian life and to stimulate the economy by assisting those veterans in obtaining mortgage financing from the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Because of the popularity and success of the DVA Loan Guaranty Program, and because it benefited the American economy as well as eligible veterans, Congress decided to make that five-year pilot program permanent; and

WHEREAS, To date the DVA has guaranteed well over 15 million loans to eligible veterans and has, for the most part, maintained a default rate that compares very favorably with the default rate on private sector mortgages; and

WHEREAS, While many of the veterans who have participated in this program could have obtained private sector financing, many others could not have qualified for conventional mortgages; and

WHEREAS, Congress has made numerous changes over the years in attempts to improve this VA program, including authorizing various pilot programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion reaffirm its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Loan Guaranty Service and its programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support any administrative or legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the Loan Guaranty Service's ability to serve America's veterans.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 24 (MA) 1999 NC: **Support the Small Business Loan Program**
Resolution No. 33 (MA) 1999 NC: **Support the Small Business Administration**
Resolution No. 63 (ND) 1999 NC: **Home Improvement and Structural Alterations Grants**

As a delegate from the Department of Texas, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The report has been given. Is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? All those in favor of the report, indicate in the usual sign. Those opposed? Ayes have it. The report of the Economics Commission is adopted.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

It is now time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making it a priority to hire veterans. That special recognition comes in the form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organizations as 1998 Employers of the Year. The awards are given in three categories. One for companies employing 50 people or less, another for companies employing from 51 to 200 people, and third, for companies with more than 200 employees. Each is nominated by a post, and then that advances through department to the national competitive levels.

The 1998 Employer of the Year Award in the under 50 employees category goes to Computer Science Corporation, the Utah Test and Training Range. The company's vice president, Phillip Randall, is here to accept the award.

The award reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 1998, presented to Computer Science Corporation for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at this 81st Annual National Convention, Anaheim, California, September 8, 1999."

Phillip Randall, President
Computer Science Corporation
Edwards, California

It's truly difficult to adequately express our gratitude for the great honor you have bestowed upon us today. CSC's defense group and, in particular, our flight test support center which serves the missions of both the Utah Test and Training Range at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, and the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards Air Force Base, California, have long respected the great value that veterans bring to the civilian workforce. We believe that as veterans have stood tall for us when we needed them, then we as employers in the federal sector should stand tall for them. On behalf of all our employees, especially our veterans, thank you for this honor and thank you for the outstanding support you provide to the military.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Our award in the 50 to 200 employee category goes to Jacobs Construction of Lemont, Pennsylvania. The owner of the company, Jim Jacobs, is here to accept the award.

The award reads, "The American Legion National Award Outstanding Employee of the Year 1998. Presented to Jacobs Construction for, again, an exceptional record in the employment of veterans, presented at this 81st National Convention, Anaheim, California, September 8, 1999."

Jim Jacobs, Owner
Jacobs Construction
Lemont, Pennsylvania

I really appreciate the Legion inviting us out here and recognizing our company for our veterans hiring policy and for the training program that we instituted about five years ago. The construction industry in general is having a severe shortage of skilled labor. In Pennsylvania we're definitely feeling the pains. I have been able to augment our employees with vets. I was a ten-year Navy veteran. When I got out of the service, I was looking for a good job. In some cases, our veterans are using the employment that we provide them as stepping stones. They are going to Penn State, getting advanced degrees. We have been successful with some of our veterans that have taken our two-year training program, and they are still with us. So we'd hire a vet in a heartbeat. And I guess there's a real shortage of them. But every time we get an opportunity to help a vet out, we'll do it. So thanks again for having us at your convention. I really appreciate the thoughts with this award.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The award in our last category, the more than 200 employees, goes to Georgia-Pacific Plywood of Crossett, Arkansas. It's a pleasure to have the company's resource manager, Larry Livingston, here to accept the award on behalf of Georgia-Pacific.

Again, the award reads, "The American Legion National Award, Outstanding Employer of the Year 1999, presented to Georgia-Pacific Plywood for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans, presented this 81st National Annual Convention, Anaheim, California, September 8, 1999."

Larry Livingston, Human Resource Manager
Georgia-Pacific Plywood
Crossett, Arkansas

As a Navy veteran and National Guard veteran, I would like to thank you. I would like to thank the State of Arkansas, The American Legion, and Georgia Pacific Corporation for giving me this opportunity to come out here and accept this award. It will be placed on the wall where everybody can see it. They know that we hire veterans and are proud of it.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: To all the employers, please stand up. Let's show them how much we appreciate the fact that they stand up and hire our veterans.

Presentation: Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion
Jack R. Childs, Southwest Regional Director
The Chapel of Four Chaplains

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Please welcome Jack Childs, Southwest Regional Director of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, for this purpose of a presentation.

MR. CHILDS: It's a real pleasure to be here with you today to represent the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. No tradition of American society is more precious to or characteristic of our culture than that of voluntarily reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and our religious heritage. The Chapel of the Four Chaplains, a national nonprofit organization, is founded upon one shining manifestation of our heritage, that of four Army chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the U.S. Army Transport *USAT Dorchester* after it was torpedoed on February 3rd. This historical event began at 'torpedo junction,' the U-boat infested icy waters on the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23rd, 1943, the *Dorchester,* an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York harbor bound for Greenland. The *Dorchester* was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks. The third, the *Tampa*, was 3,000 yards out front. Most of the men were seasick, green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold. With gale force winds, ice began building on the decks slowing the *Dorchester* to ten knots.

Moving along among them were four Army chaplains, George L. Fox, Alexander D. Good, Clark V. Poling, and John P. Washington. The chaplains talked with and listened to the men, soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes by their concern and their camaraderie with men and one another they brought solace.

On February 2nd, 1943, the *Tampa* sonar detected the presence of a submarine. She dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening the *Tampa* returned to the patrol up front, and the other ships followed. The Captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing with life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight there would be air cover from the American base. It was just after midnight on February 3rd, 1943, an enemy submarine fired a torpedo towards the *Dorchester*'s flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electrical supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly. Some were trapped below decks. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard. Overcrowded lifeboats capsized. Rafts

drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails frozen with fear unable to let go and plunge into the dark churning waters below.

The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the four chaplains who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed the men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of life jackets was exhausted. Several survivors reported watching in awe as the four chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own life jackets. These four men of God had given away their only means of surviving and saving themselves in order to save others. The chaplains gathered together and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the *Dorchester*, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men, two Protestants, one Catholic, and a Jew.

Today, as it has in these many years, the Chapel of the Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country. To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood, and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel established the Legion of Honor program. The Bronze Medallion is an award given by the Chapel in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual who contributes to the well-being of others at the national and world level and to a spirit of interfaith cooperation.

It is my privilege today to recognize one of your members who has clearly exemplified these characteristics for the past year. He has served as your National Commander of The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans group. He served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1974 and began his American Legion journey when his father signed him up in 1972 in Minnesota. After his military service, he spent more than 20 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He has held numerous positions at the state and local levels.

On behalf of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, I am pleased to present to Harold L. "Butch" Miller the Legion of Honor, Bronze Medal in recognition of his service to all people regardless of faith. This award symbolizes to all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon the fatherhood of one God.

I present you with this medal of honor, and plaque on this day, September 8th, from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: It's not hard to travel with the spirit of the four chaplains with you all the time as much traveling as all National Commanders do. In this world when things can go bad so quickly, obviously somebody was looking over us as we traveled this great country because we didn't have hardly any problems. Every landing was a safe. Every takeoff was safe. So, obviously not only your prayers and your thoughts were with us, but I have a good feeling that these four chaplains were with us all the way. And I know that the Post Everlasting is well represented and have chaplains probably better than anything we have here on this earth, but for a good reason. They are obviously close to the Lord. I will bestow it on the wall and remember it every day of my life.

Presentation: The American Legion Employment Center Award
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER TINGLER: Today we have a new award to present. It comes from The American Legion partnership with Hire Quality, an employment service designed to help young men and women leaving the military to find a job. I am happy to tell you that the system is working. It's working so well that just last month we signed a permanent agreement with Hire Quality to continue providing their service free of charge to veterans. Of course, I can always tell you the service is working. But sometimes it's best if you can hear it for yourself. Just listen a moment to the comments from veterans who have a job thanks to Hire Quality.

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

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER TINGLER: With me to present the first American Legion Employment Center Award is the chairman and CEO of Hire Quality, a retired United States Marine Major General and a member of The American Legion, Department of California, Matthew Caulfield. With General Caulfield at my side, I would like to read the inscription on the plaque that we are about to present. "Certificate of appreciation presented to Suburban Propane Partners, L.P., Whippany, New Jersey, for their devotion to mutual helpfulness by hiring during 1998 and 1999 over 100 veterans with expectations of adding an additional 100 veterans by the end of this year. This award is a testament to a record of outstanding contribution to the employment of veterans." The inscription is "Presented at the 81st Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Anaheim, California, September 4-9, 1999, in cooperation with The American Legion Hire Quality, a company dedicated to assisting the military community through their Career Services Division to find suitable employment for those men and women who have honorably served their country in the Armed Forces. This certificate of appreciation is hereby presented and given at the hand of The American Legion, National Commander Butch Miller and the Chairman and CEO of Hire Quality, Major General Matthew Caulfield, USMC (Retired), to a company who has demonstrated a progressive vision for recognizing invaluable human assets and thereby ensuring the economic well-being of our veterans." Here to accept the award, Human Resource Director of Suburban Propane Partners, William Hulsey.

Before we conclude this first award, I would like General Caulfield to share with all how this company of Hire Quality is making a difference. But before I do, I would like to present one of our newest members, Bill, with this cap for The American Legion of Washington Post 110. And his 2000 membership card.

MAJOR GENERAL CAULFIELD (Retired): As anyone knows, particularly former Marines know, there is nothing that's more a matter of pride to me than to be referred to as a Marine. Right next to that is to be referred to as member of The American Legion after what I have seen the Legion do in the last two years in terms of solving a very difficult problem.

Today we read the newspapers about low unemployment, and we look at our members, the men and women of our Armed Forces, and we say how could they ever have a problem getting a job? They are the best men and women we produce. You know better. You know you can't network from Bosnia nor from Okinawa. You can't network aboard a ship, and you are going to be discharged two weeks after you get off that ship.

The difference between these young men and women and your generation is that 65 percent of them are married, and the overwhelming number of the men and women who are

married in our Armed Forces have children. They need a job, and they need a job now. But not any job. They are held as an example in the community. They did not go out and flip burgers somewhere. They did not go out after high school to find themselves down somewhere with a bag of whatever. They decided to do something very difficult. They wanted to improve themselves. They wanted to be like their forefathers. They wanted to be someone. And my God, they are someone. They are the finest young men and women we have in America. They have honorable discharges. The honorable discharges, in fact, are testimony that they earned the right to participate in the very best jobs in America.

Because they can't network and have never gone to a job interview in their entire lives and because service demands deployments, nor allows them even time to fill out a resume, they are today the most discriminated group of people in the country in terms of getting good jobs. Not any jobs but good jobs. And the reason is very simple. What the all-volunteer force has done is essentially removed all of the experience, the environment, of the military away from the job site.

Let me give you an example. I'll bet most of you, when you were discharged and you went in to get your first job, were probably met by another veteran who was the hiring manager. He understood you completely. If not, his or her brother was a veteran. If not, their father was a veteran. If not, they at least dated a veteran. Today that's totally different. It is almost never that a young man and woman leaving the Armed Forces meets anyone other than a 26- to 30-year-old hiring manager who is a college graduate who has never served a day in the military, who doesn't know anybody who served in the military, who has never dated anybody in the military. When this young man with the virtue of the very best values we inculcate in the military, the best training superior to any civilian training, walks into that job center, frequently he's like a person from outer space.

This conversation that I am talking about, National Adjutant Spanogle and I had two years ago. That led to The American Legion doing something real about it. It is to build a bridge between that young man transitioning from the Armed Forces into civilian society to find veteran-friendly companies. Not companies that CEOs talk about how great it is to hire a veteran for public relations reasons, but companies that really do. And, in fact, we count them. We know the companies we do business with, and we know how our young men and women are treated. Thanks to Bob, who told me the only way we can really solve this is for all of us, people like you and me, is to do something about it. And the Legion did something about it. That's why I'm so proud today.

We have had this year 122,000 young men and women call us on an 800 number absolutely free, whether they are in Okinawa, aboard ship, which they can even do these days with e-mail, the first words they here are, "Welcome to Hire Quality. We are sponsored by The American Legion. Can we help you?" And we then help them. We spend almost an average of 20 minutes on the telephone helping them, absolutely free. At the end of the call, we say, "Incidentally, John or Peter or Harriett, thank you very much for serving our country." It's amazing how few times that is said to those men and women. Most of the time we are the only ones that say it. I'm very proud of The American Legion, of what you have done. I wish each of you could stand in our call center and listen to the young people from Germany and Okinawa and those places who talk to our counselors. You would be very proud of your Legion.

I would like to last simply thank National Adjutant Spanogle, Commander Miller, the National Executive Committee, my good friend Herman Harrington, and every member of the National Staff. It's always a pleasure to go to National Headquarters. In fact, I hate to

admit it, it's sort of like going back to the Marine Corps. It's so pristine, so orderly, and so well run.

At this time, I would like to introduce a company that decided not only to hire people coming from the military, but to actually change the culture of the company by giving military people, these young men and women departing the Armed Forces now, management jobs in key jobs in Suburban Propane. It's close to a $1 billion company, and they intend to change the culture of that company with members of the Armed Forces of the United States in key managerial positions.

MR. HULSEY: Before I start my remarks, I'm reminded of Andy Warhol who once stated that everybody has their 15 minutes of fame. If allowed, mine starts now.

Suburban Propane Partners Limited is a publicly traded master partnership of the New York Stock Exchange headquartered in Whippany, New Jersey. We have been in the customer service business since 1928. We are, at the present time, the nation's third largest supplier of propane gas. The partnership serves over 700,000 residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers throughout more than 350 customer service centers located in over 40 states. Suburban Propane's relationship with Hire Quality began in May 1998. Hire Quality is a Chicago-based organization specializing in search and recruitment of candidates who have successfully finished their careers in the Armed Forces. Their network provides unique access to potential candidates who have a proven track record, have worked in a drug-free and diversified work environment, and are highly trained. Suburban Propane's 350 customer service centers are located in both urban and rural communities. With current employment running less than 1 percent in some locations, finding qualified candidates is challenging.

Our partnership with Hire Quality is focused on identifying and pre-qualifying drivers, service technicians, customer service representatives, and managers. Since we have established our relationship with Hire Quality, we have hired over 200 former men and women of the Armed Forces. This relationship has given us the ability to move quickly when positions need to be filled. Hire Quality is a professional organization to do business with, not to mention the valuable service it provides to the men and women who have served our country well. On behalf of my CEO, we are proud to accept this award. It will hold a place of honor in our Whippany, New Jersey, corporate office.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Seabury & Smith, RxAmerica and Kirke-Van Orsdel are among our corporate sponsors and partners. They offer The American Legion a discount prescription program and administer the life insurance program and health insurance plan. Legionnaires, SAL members and their families have saved more than 17 million dollars since 1995 through the prescription program. Currently just 4 percent of our members are taking advantage of the savings offered by this program. Through KVI, the insurance plans have generated more than 2.3 million annually in revenue to The American Legion for use in Legion youth programs. To tell us more of the three companies and their products is Bruce Henderson, a member of American Legion Post 34 in Broad Ripple, Indiana.

BRUCE HENDERSON: It is truly an honor and a privilege to be with all of you again this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you out there that have helped promote all of the programs.

One that I'm especially involved in is The American Legion Discount Prescription Program. We have made great strides to get the word out to all of our members, although there is a lot of work left to be done. I'm happy to report that the exact number of amount

of savings is $17,043,350 that our members that have used the program have saved since August of '95. That's an average of 17 percent.

A few things to remember: you are already enrolled simply by being a member of The American Legion, SAL or Auxiliary. Thousands of participating pharmacists across the country are available to you. Just call the toll free number to inquire about a participating pharmacy in your area. Your biggest savings will be on the use of generic drugs, so be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if a generic is available.

RxAmerica America has a convenient mail service option with a state of the art facility. You can have a 90 day supply sent directly to your home. Spouses of deceased members are still eligible. However, since the addition of the Auxiliary, requests for these cards have diminished greatly. If there is a need, please contact your Department Headquarters. The program has generated in excess of $1,277,775 in revenue for The American Legion, and that includes the individual departments. If your pharmacist has any questions, call the toll free number.

And finally on another subject, Commander, KVI, Division of Seabury & Smith, on behalf The American Legion insurance programs and their carriers would like to make a donation of $5,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you for that generous donation.

Tim-Cor Financial is another one of our corporate partners. It's offers a tax deferred annuity through the Indianapolis Life Annuity Company. The current first year interest, pay attention to this now, the current first year interest is 10.25 percent. And Legionnaires have taken advantage of this and have invested five million dollars in annuities to date. This is just one more example of how your membership in The American Legion truly works for you. With us today is Jimmy Luther, President of Tim-Cor Financial, and a member of SAL Squadron 155 in Carmel, Indiana who will conduct a drawing to find out who gets that nice TV that they were raffling off.

MR. LUTHER: Just for a second, I would like to thank all of the folks that stopped by this year; all the new friends who we met, and all the friends who we have met in the past several years, I really appreciate meeting you, and thank you for working with us. The Commander will choose the winning name..

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name is Maxine Barnes.We have a phone number and will contact her.

Still another corporate partner is MBNA America Bank. Since 1987, MBNA has contributed over 19 million dollars to our American Legion programs. This has been accomplished by all Legionnaires who use that very familiar American Legion credit card. MBNA has also donated $45,000 to the National Emergency Fund, and has pledged $50,000 in matching funds for The American Legion credit card donations to the Citizens Flag Alliance. You might also be interested to know that Legionnaires, you and I and those like us, have over 325 million dollars on deposit in MBNA in CDs and money market accounts because of their above average interest rates that they pay on those deposits. Once again, your American Legion membership works for you. That's just another example of how it does. With us is Executive Vice President of MBNA, Frank Andrews, a member of American Legion Post 10 in Newark, Delaware, to determine the winners of the three, $1,000 CDs.

FRANK ANDREWS: It's my privilege to be here in front of you. Since 1987, MBNA has been a proud partner of The American Legion. Every moment of every day Legionnaires place their trust and their confidence in MBNA, and we thank you. Today, MBNA is

continuing its support of the National Emergency Fund by donating $5,000 for the important work that it does to those Legion families and communities stricken by natural disasters.

As Commander Miller said, we are drawing three, $1,000 certificates of deposit today.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The first lucky winner is Wendy Caron, Blaine, Washington. The next lucky winner is Jean Hinheagle of Rapid City, South Dakota. The next one is Roy Pressley, Waynesville, North Carolina.

The Chair now recognizes our hard working Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism, a gentleman that I have had the privilege of meeting all over the country because he's out there traveling for The American Legion and our Children & Youth programs and our Americanism programs, Mr. Joe Caouette of New Hampshire.

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

Fifty (50) members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 5, 1999, in the Anaheim Hilton and Towers, Anaheim, California, to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions that were assigned to the Committee.

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

The Committee discussed 8 resolutions that were assigned to the Committee. The resolutions that were considered continue to reflect the desire by Departments of The American Legion to address matters of patriotism and government, and to maintain strong general Americanism programs that compliment the organization and benefit the Nation.

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

Eight (8) resolutions were considered with 1 being approved; 2 received and recorded; and 5 referred to the standing Americanism Commission.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 1: Reaffirms Determination of The American Legion to Secure Constitutional Protection for the Flag of the United States
Origin: Americanism
Submitted By: Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has kept faith with the American people and the membership of the 140 organizations of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. in its decade-long struggle to restore legal protection to the Flag of the United States; and

WHEREAS, On June 24, 1999, the United States House of Representatives approved House Joint Resolution 33, a flag protection constitutional amendment; and

WHEREAS, Forty-nine state legislatures have asked Congress to propose such an amendment; and

WHEREAS, All that is necessary for the amendment to go to the states for ratification is a favorable vote by the United States Senate during the 106th Congress; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion intends to hold to its commitment and keep that faith with the majority of Americans who know that legal protection for the Nation's banner is the right thing to do; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled at Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion reaffirms the decade-long mandate of its membership, its commitment to The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc., and its responsibility to those who died defending the Flag of the United States to secure for the flag, through an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, protection from acts of physical desecration; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall not abandon this objective of constitutional protection for the Flag of the United States before the matter has, as part of the ratification process, been presented for deliberation and disposition by the legislatures of the 50 United States.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 34 (MA) 1999 NC: **Oppose Foreign Manufacture of American Flags**
Resolution No. 160 (NY) 1999 NC: **English Language Be Declared as the Official United States Language**

Referred to the Standing Americanism Commission

Resolution No. 57 (MT) 1999 NC: **National Constitution Month**
Resolution No. 116 (OH) 1999 NC: **The Chapel of Four Chaplains**
Resolution No. 155 (NY) 1999 NC: **Pearl Harbor Day**
Resolution No. 166 (NC) 1999 NC: **Petition Boy Scouts to Recognize Department Scout Leaders of the Year with Square Knot Award**
Resolution No. 169 (IN) 1999 NC: **Project Read USA**

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Do I hear a second for the adoption of the report?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Is there any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor signify in the usual manner. Those opposed nay? The ayes have it. The report of the Americanism is adopted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: With the adoption of the Americanism Report, it is appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards.

The Frank Belgrano, Jr. Award is given annually to the department rendering the most outstanding service during the 12 month period beginning August 1st to the Boys Scouts of America program. This year's winner I am happy to announce, is the Department of Illinois.

The Ralph T. O'Neill Education Award is given to the department within the United States, documenting the greatest activity in using The American Legion School Media Program. This winning department shows what can be accomplished by an active involved organization. The winner this year of the Ralph T. O'Neill Education Award is the Department of Wyoming.

Presentation: William Randolph Hearst AmericanismTrophy
Philip A. Bronstein, Executive Editor
San Francisco Examiner

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is an impressive award named in honor of one of American journalism's most prominent and influential figures. It is given to the department achieving the most outstanding results in conducting Americanism programs. The winning department is selected by the National Americanism Commission on the basis of total resources, manpower as well as financial, devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year. I call on the Chairman of that committee, Joe Caouette, to have the pleasure of making the announcement of the winner.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAOUETTE: It is my pleasure to announce the winner of the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy, which recognizes the department submitting the best report of Americanism activities for the past year. The award is provided annually by the Hearst Corporation for selection made by The American Legion's National Americanism Commission.

This year's recipient for the third time in the last 10 years is the Department of Ohio. Let me briefly mention some of the Americanism activities in the Department of Ohio, in this year's report. Americanism in Government Test Program. The Ohio Department, creator and founder of this program, had nearly 300 posts and units participating in the 1998-99 test program covering over 500 high schools. Several other departments have used the Ohio Americanism in Government Program as a model to create similar, though obviously smaller programs. Buckeye Boy at Boys State, the largest Boys State program in the nation, had 1,375 young men attend the 1999 session held at Bowling Greene State University. The department has 140 American Legion sponsored Scouting units, with over 3,700 Scouts participating. The department had 118 entered for the 1999 baseball season. The department provides monies and volunteer support for the Ohio Special Olympics Winter Games/Summer Games, the state bowling tournament, the state basketball tournament, and law enforcement torch run at the state games. The department hosts a breakfast at the Special Olympics Winter Games, which feeds over 400 athletes and support personnel annually. This is just a cut of the programs, of all of the programs being promoted in the Department of Ohio. It is my hope that we can get more departments across the United States to compete for the William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy, which is really an award granted to the department for promoting the Americanism programs within your departments.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Kermit Ellis of the USO will now join me.

Northwest Airlines is a proud sponsor of the USO. In keeping with the tradition of honoring those that so tirelessly and unselfishly defended our freedoms, Northwest Airlines is raffling off two round trip confirmed coach seat tickets to anywhere in the United States, the 48 contiguous states. It is a privilege for Northwest Airlines and the USO to participate in this American Legion Convention, and we would really like to thank them for their hospitality and generosity. Now for the big moment we have all been waiting for. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to winning an airplane ticket so I can go somewhere.

It's obvious that the guys have been in the Convention and all the ladies have been signing up for these contests. Marry Ann Gefroh, from Linton, North Dakota. 800 Northeast 1st Street is the lucky winner. She can fly from North Dakota to anywhere, round trip, two people.

MR. ELLIS: On behalf of the USO, we would like to thank The American Legion for its support throughout the year and throughout the years in the past. We have enjoyed great support with the USO and with The American Legion, and we hope it will continue in the future and that our sponsors will continue to support us as Northwest Airlines has.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: You have heard it before and I'm sure you are going to hear it again in the years to come. Membership is our lifeblood of this organization. The next award I am privileged to make is to a man who set that membership recruiting standard. The National Recruiter of the Year gathered 499 new members to The American Legion organization last year. One of the smaller numbers that he has recruited I might add. He is no stranger to being in this position, or at this podium. Over the last 10 years he has captured this award six times in the last 10 years. Give a warm reception to a very hard working individual from the Department of California, Post 888, Chilelli Memorial Post 888 in California, Mr. Joe Chilelli.

I have a story that I have to tell on myself, and it's a little bit embarrassing, but it's something that I want to do. I saw Joe the other day standing outside this building talking about sports or something like that.

MR. CHILELLI: It was girls.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Well, I had managed to get a new member out of the hotel. I walked up to him in a very boastful manner, and I said, "Charlie, guess what I did over in the hotel?" And he looked at me and he said, "What?" And I said, "Guess what I did over in the hotel." I was so excited about bragging to him I forgot his name. But he stood there and smiled and then he says, "What's my name?" And I said, "Joe." He said, "Oh, okay." Then he says, "Only one? I went to a wedding reception the other day and I got 28 people." That's the kind of service that we want.

National Recruiter of the Decade. Chilelli Memorial Post 888. We have made you the National Recruiter of the Decade. Let's give him a round of applause.

Joe, the National Membership Recruiter of the Year for 1999. I know this is nothing new to you, but I know the kind of Legionnaire you are. You are going to hang this up there just as high as the other ones you have got in your home. To Joseph Chilelli, Department of California, in recognition of appreciation of more than exemplary achievement by recruiting 499 new members for our great organization, The American Legion, for the year 1998-1999 membership year. In witness hereof, I have signed this; the National Adjutant has signed this. Joe, I can't tell you how much it means to me for your service, and the fact that you keep doing it year after year, I wish that we could bottle up that fire you have got inside of you and sell it somehow. But I know it's just that Chilelli thing that you have got inside of you.

MR. CHILELLI: You got to know that I'm getting old though.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: No, you're not. No, you're not.

MR. CHILELLI: You want me to say something? Unaccustomed to public speaking as I am, I would like to say that it gives me great, great honor to be up here today to receive this. And I like being the Recruiter of the Decade, but I ruined a good program by doing this. So what I'm doing on my own, I will work membership but I will never again be Recruiter of the Year. So you guys go out there and get it and work, please, but I will never be recruiter again.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Well, while Joe is out there recruiting on those cold California evenings, we've got a jacket here for you to wear. I know you are going to need a briefcase to carry all those applications in, so there's a briefcase. And Joe, you may

not be Recruiter of the Year ever again, but I'll tell you what, you are the Recruiter of the Decade, and that's a big job, partner. There's a lot of guys out there that can learn what you know. Teach us well; would you?

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair now recognizes Ken Sercerchi of Maine, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Membership and Post Activities, for the purpose of making a report.

Oral Report: Section on Membership
(Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)
Ken Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman

KEN SERCERCHI: As of Friday, September 3rd, 1999, membership for the 1999 year stood at 2,760,705. Unfortunately, which is 40,000 down from the same time last year. The DMS for 1999, however, exceeded our 95,000 projected goal, with a total of 97,767 new members thus far. The 2000 membership is off to a relatively good start with 1,183,045, as of September 3rd, and the DMS for 2000 stands at 37,564, also at this same time. Next Wednesday, September the 15th, will be the 45 percent target date for the year 2000. Fifteen departments have already reached this target.

Our 1999 awards program consisted of recognition of those departments receiving target date goals. For the 75 percent target date, December 9, 1998, the Department of Arizona received a free training session for having the highest percent in gain of traditional membership by the target date. The training was provided by Charlie Tyrian during the department's convention, and led to 65 individuals successfully completing the American Legion's Extension Institute Course. The Departments of Arizona and Nevada attained All Time Highs in membership for 1999.

The National Commander's Give Me Five Award Program provided a much needed boost in membership. 1,117 individuals became the recipients of several awards offered with the program. The awards included a Give Me Five tie; National Commander Miller ink pen, and the Legion mouse pad. Each recipient of the award had to have recruited five new members in order to become eligible. Because of the efforts, a total of 5,585 new members were acquired and needed.

During the 1999 National Membership Workshop, a drawing was held from among the 1999 members of The Gold Brigadiers. These five winners received a $1,000 gift certificate. The five winners are: James Durham, Post 214, Department of Georgia; Paul Fitzgerald, Post 364, Department of Virginia; Varn Chaluva (phonetics), Post 381, Department of California; William J. Duffy, Post 328, Department of New Jersey, and A.C. Byrd, Post 23, Department of Kansas.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee reports on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Written Report: Section on Membership
(Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs)
Ken Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman

47 members of the Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section III (Membership), was called to order by Liaison Representative, Billy R. Johnson (AR). Forty-

seven members of the Committee met on Sunday, September 5, 1999, at 9:00 a.m., in the Santa Monica Room #17 of the Anaheim Hilton & Towers, Anaheim, California.

Kenneth A. Sercerchi of Maine was elected Chairman [nomination by Lloyd Ricker (MN) second by Ken Trainham (TX); Steve Bartos (NE) moved nominations for Chairman be closed, second by J. T. Gore (AL), and so moved].

Chairman Sercerchi approached the podium, at which time, Gerald Goetzinger of South Dakota was elected Secretary [nomination by Steve Bartos (NE) second by Roselynn Utech (OK); Charles Aucoin (LA) moved nominations be closed, second by Dale Punch (NC) and so moved].

Staff reports were presented to the Committee by National Headquarters staff on current activities and future strategies on the following topics: The 1999 Membership Year, Post Development Participation, M&PA Recommendations Update, and Direct Marketing Programs.

Four resolutions were received and reviewed by the Committee. The actions taken are as follows:

Rejected

Resolution No. 22 (VT) 1999 NC: **Congressional Change In Eligibility Dates For Membership In The American Legion**
Resolution No. 38 (LA) 1999 NC: **Membership Of Department Holding Post**
Resolution No. 105 (MN) 1999 NC: **Change In Eligibility Dates For Membership In The American Legion**
Resolution No. 138 (MN) 1999 NC: **Change In Eligibility Dates For Membership In The American Legion**

As a duly elected and registered delegate for the Department of Maine, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Was that a second I heard?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor signify in the usual manner. Opposed nay? Ayes have it. The report of the Crendentials and Internal Affairs Membership is adopted.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: We have come to that portion of the program in the agenda that every National Commander looks forward to, with no exception. And that is a time to recognize and present those individual awards to those individuals that worked so very hard for our organization during the last year. I know that you have worked hard because I was out there with you and I have seen some outstanding efforts, things that I just, well, they caught my eye and they really made me understand what this organization is really about. And in watching those efforts of those individuals, I think that's really what made me understand the honor that you have bestowed upon me to be your National Commander for the last year.

Membership continues to be critical to The American Legion, now, more than ever. Without an active growing membership our programs will lose strength, as will our

organization and our voice with those have politicians that we have listened to today and yesterday, will be weakened. Our commitment of service to veterans and their families and communities will suffer. America loves, America learns, and America lives through the continued efforts of 2.8 million American Legion members. I adopted that slogan at the beginning of my year, not simply because it kind of rolled off your tongue. I adopted it because it was the truth, and it is today, and it will be as long as there are our American Legion members doing things in our community, state and nation.

During the past year two departments took their membership efforts to a higher level by posting All-Time-Highs. I would like to ask John Burch, Past Department Commander of Nevada, and John Maklary, Past Department Commander of Arizona, to join me at the lectern. Thank you both so very much for your hard work. John and Julius, the efforts of the men and women you represent in your department is to be commended. Through your determination, hard work and commitment to the membership program, your departments grew to higher levels than ever before. It is with sincere gratitude that I have presented you with these rings. I certainly hope that you go back to your departments and provide the fine mentoring that you so justly, and have the right, to perpetuate upon the department, because you have been there and you have done that.

I have another set of membership awards to present. Would Karl Caswell, Past Department Commander, Alaska and John Bursh, Past Department Commander, Nevada join me at the podium?

I have a plaque here: "Presented to The American Legion Department of Alaska for outstanding membership performance in 1998 and 1999 through the attainment of 100 percent of the department membership goal by May 12, 1999. In witness whereof, this testimony of personal gratitude is given under the hand of the National Commander, presented this 8th day of September, 1999 in Anaheim, California." Thank you. As you can see, he gets a handful of other stuff. Give him a round of applause.

Again, I have another handful of goodies and a plaque. The plaque is the very same, except this one is The American Legion Department of Nevada. John, thank you. And since the book was prepared, we also added one more, Commander Grissom from Kentucky.

There are currently seven departments who have met or exceeded 100 percent of their membership goal for 1999. Only two, Alaska and Nevada accomplished this feat by May 12th, the 100 percent target date, along with Kentucky I might add. It is with great pleasure I present to you and your membership chairman a plaque, along with a jacket and a bag which you saw me do. Thank your departments for their hard work and for a job well done. With any luck and continued hard work, we'll see you on stage next year at the next National Convention. I know this is only the beginning for those departments, they've got a good thing going and I know they will keep it going.

The remaining 100 percent departments are not forgotten. Your efforts are to be commended as well. It may have taken each of you a little longer but you kept trying, and that's the big thing. Nobody quit this year on membership.

Will the following Department Commanders please join me at the lectern: Clarence McGee, South Carolina; Donald Raven, Hawaii; Roger Clevinger, Virginia; Robert "Butch", number two, Woodruff, Georgia, and George Grissom from Kentucky.

The Chair now recognizes Chester Stellar of Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, for the purpose of a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Chester Stellar, Ohio, Chairman

Eighty-six members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on September 5, 1999 in the Anaheim Hilton California Ballroom, Section C, and agreed on the following report which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Carroll Williams (MD), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Philip Wilkerson (MD), Deputy Director, VA&R Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. Chester F. Stellar (OH), Chairman of the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman appointed Thomas Cadmus (MI), as Committee Secretary, and Allen K. Buttke (NM), Secretary of the Medical and Hospital Subcommittee and Tracy Taylor (FL), Chairman; and Teddy Duckworth (WI), Secretary of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee and Theodore S. Coleman (NY), Chairman.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Carroll Williams, Director, to Medical and Hospital; and Philip Wilkerson, Deputy Director, to Claims and Ratings.

As has been the custom for the 55 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Resolutions, in a three day preconvention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their analysis, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. The Screening Committee was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

REGION 8—Ruddy Reilly (MT)
REGION 1—Milton Willis (VT), Chairman
REGION 2—Lance Sweigart (MD)
REGION 3—Tim Ivers (FL), Secretary

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Eighty-Second National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 42 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee.

The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved as Amended	18
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	4
Referred to the Standing Commission	7
Received and Recorded	11
Rejected	2

A report of action taken on the 7 resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee

and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned, and, in addition, will be contained in the National Adjutant's report to the Eighty-Second Annual National Convention.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 6: Special Pension for World War I Veterans
Origin: DC
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The median age of the surviving veterans of World War I is approximately 100 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Their numbers have declined rapidly over the past eight years from 63,000 in 1990 to less than 4,800 today; and

WHEREAS, Over this same period, the number of living female veterans of World War I has also declined sharply from 2,800 in 1990 to less than 460 today; and

WHEREAS, When these veterans returned home more than eighty years ago, there were no government programs to assist in their readjustment to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, Through the years, the veterans of World War I worked tirelessly to develop and support the comprehensive programs of veterans benefits and services for subsequent generations of American war veterans; and

WHEREAS, Now, they are ill or infirm and no longer able to work; and

WHEREAS, In many instances, they are subsisting in financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, The Government of the United States and the American people have a moral obligation to insure that all veterans of World War I are not forgotten in their later years; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, since its founding in 1919 by veterans of World War I, has maintained its special concern for the needs and welfare of these war veterans; and

WHEREAS, The veterans of World War I are deserving of a special measure of recognition and attention, because of their efforts and sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, The most direct and tangible way for the nation to fulfill its obligation to those remaining veterans of World War I is to provide them a modest measure of monthly financial support; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, so as to provide that:

a. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay to each veteran of World War I, who meets the service requirements set forth in 38 USC 1521(j), a special pension in the amount of $150 per month;
b. Such special pension shall be paid without regard to (1) any income of any kind payable to the veteran's spouse, and (2) the corpus of the veteran's estate; and
c. Any eligible veteran in receipt of pension under 38 USC 1512 may also receive such special pension.

Resolution No. 29: VA Provide Appropriate Care For Gulf War Related Illnesses
Origin: MA
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Many Armed Forces personnel who served in the Gulf War contracted diseases endemic to that region such as dysentery, schistosomiasis, malaria, leishmaniaisis, Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever, chronic fatigue, multi-chemical sensitivity, PTSD, and others; and

WHEREAS, Some diseases, due to their nature, have presented diagnostic difficulties and some have proven resistant to standard antibiotic therapy; and

WHEREAS, Certain endemic diseases may, because of varying incubation periods and other factors, take months and even years to become manifest; and

WHEREAS, In addition to endemic diseases, many members of the Armed Forces may have incurred respiratory disorders, in some cases with long-term effects, as a result of inhalation of carboniferous gas caused by oil fires set by Iraqi troops; and

WHEREAS, Those individuals who contracted disease or potential disease causing agents, while performing duty in the Gulf War, deserve proper medical care from a "grateful nation"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to provide, on a presumptive basis, appropriate medical examinations and treatment, including follow-up treatment, to all veterans of the Gulf War who report signs or symptoms that may be associated with diseases endemic to that war region and other conditions related to the experience; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to expand the registry of Gulf veterans who seek such treatment to be used in case service-connected presumptions are later established.

Resolution No. 58: Protect Disability Rating after Ten Years
Origin: ND
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Section 110 of Title 38 USC now provides for the protection of all disability compensation evaluations that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, Permanence should be conceded for disability compensation ratings which have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion recommend that Section 110 of Title 38 USC be amended to provide that disability evaluations continuously in effect at that same evaluation rate be protected after a period of ten years.

Resolution No. 62: Urge Congress to Provide Adequate Current and Future Financial Assistance for Veterans Health Care and Oppose Further Reductions in VA Health Care Personnel
Origin: ND
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Consolidated with No. 15 (SD) and No. 142 (MN)

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) continues to improve its efficiency and serve greater numbers of eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA has been required to improve its cost efficiency due to various internal and external conditions and has responded by implementing a comprehensive primary care program; and

WHEREAS, In the process of implementing primary care, VHA has taken unprecedented steps to consolidate various medical center programs and administrative functions to generate efficiency savings; and

WHEREAS, In this process, VHA has significantly reduced its available operating beds and its employee levels; and

WHEREAS, There are repeated reports of increasing clinic waiting times and long waits for hospital admission due to the continued downsizing of various VHA medical programs; and

WHEREAS, VHA has been frozen at its Fiscal Year 1997 funding level for the past three years as a result of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997; and

WHEREAS, In order to continue operating within the budget caps imposed by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, VHA will continue to reduce staff, hospital beds and increase the waiting times of its veteran constituents; and

WHEREAS, VHA "belt tightening" is having an adverse effect on the morale of medical care providers; and

WHEREAS, Adequate funding must be provided to maintain and improve VA medical care to all eligible veterans to ensure that the services provided are of high quality and are provided in a timely manner; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide adequate appropriations for funding VA health care and vigorously oppose any further reductions in VA health care personnel; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress of the United States be urged to place the highest priority on developing permanent long-term solutions to increase the total financial assistance available on an annual basis to the Veterans Health Administration.

Resolution No. 87: Support Increase in Claims Personnel for VA

Origin: MD

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Due to persistent personnel cuts in recent years, regional office staffing levels are increasingly unable to handle the growing backlog of pending claims and appeals in a proper and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, The precedent decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims continue to add to the overall claims adjudication and appeals workload; and

WHEREAS, Frequent errors and processing delays have resulted in poor quality customer service and customer dissatisfaction which contributes to the sustained heavy volume of appellate activity in the regional offices and at the Board of Veterans Appeals; and

WHEREAS, The delay in the processing of claims and appeals by the regional offices is excessive and imposes a great hardship on many veterans and other claimants, including severe stress, additional medical and psychiatric problems, actual or attempted suicides, and many die while their appeals are pending; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support an increase in regional office staffing sufficient to provide timely adjudication of benefit claims and appeals.

Resolution No. 88: Eliminate All Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided for the recognition of representatives of The American Legion, and other organizations, to serve as counsel before the discharge and retirement boards of the Armed Forces, and this recognition was extended to cover the Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) when they were created under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was actively involved in the legislative process that established the Correction Boards under Section 1552 of Title 10 USC; and

WHEREAS, Although under provision of Title 10 USC 1552, a three year statute of limitations was created which begins as of the date of discovery of an error or injustice on the military records of a former serviceperson, the Boards are also authorized, under statute, to excuse filings beyond the three year period if it is in the interest of justice to do so; and

WHEREAS, For many years, the Boards routinely waived the three year statute of limitation so as to provide veterans the opportunity to correct any error or injustice in their records; and

WHEREAS, In the past, the BCMRs have considered that the effective date of commencement of the three year limit was effective the date of the final separation from service; and

WHEREAS, The Congress is investigating the fairness and independence of the BCMRs and the effective date for the commencement of the correction of records by active service members; and

WHEREAS, Section 205 of The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides for the waiver of periods of limitation for persons in military service with respect to civil proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in the case of Detweiler v. Pena, held that the three year rule does not apply to active duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, The Senate and DoD are supporting enactment of Section 538 of the Defense Appropriations Act of 1996 to overturn the Court's decision that this Act applied to military proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Such an enactment would effectively change the time of commencement of the limitation from the date of discovery to the date of occurrence; and

WHEREAS, The Discharge Review Board, considered to be a lower review agency has a 15 year statute of limitation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 10 USC, so as to eliminate all time limitations.

Resolution No. 89: The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Consolidated with No. 61 (ND)

WHEREAS, The current disability compensation program has proven to be a fair and equitable manner in which to indemnify veterans suffering disabilities that are incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the military, naval, or air service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is totally supportive of every benefit that is currently provided to veterans for their past contributions to their country and its welfare; and

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on a schedule of ratings of reduction in earning capacity from specific injuries as set forth in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of The American Legion that there is no way to adequately compensate a veteran for loss of ability to be a working, productive member of society, and that the current monthly rates do not adequately compensate these disabled veterans for the loss due to reduced earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes Congress should periodically review the amount of disability compensation veterans are receiving and provide a cost-of-living adjustment to assure they have sufficient economic support; and

WHEREAS, Periodically, proposals are made to tax VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, Taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Veterans in receipt of VA disability pension benefits who have no dependents and are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are entitled to receive $90 monthly for personal needs and wants (Public Law 101-58), none of which can be used to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, veterans having no dependents in receipt of VA disability compensation benefits and who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes are required to utilize all funds received from VA towards the cost of their nursing home costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion vigorously oppose any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any administrative or legislative proposal to dilute or eliminate any provision of the disability compensation program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 1114, to provide a periodic COLA increase and to increase the monthly rates of disability compensation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any legislative effort to automatically index such cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security recipients, nonservice-connected disability recipients and death pension beneficiaries; and, be it finally,

RESOLVED, That the American Legion seek legislation authorizing the payment of VA disability compensation to veterans having no dependents who are in Medicaid covered nursing homes of at least $90 per month, but also prohibiting any part of the compensation payment from being applied to reduce the amount of Medicaid paid a nursing home facility.

Resolution No. 90: Maintain Adequate VA Hospital Bed Capacity And Staffing Levels
Origin: IA
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Over the past four years, the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) number of hospital operating beds has been reduced from over 50,000 to approximately 25,000 beds; and

WHEREAS, The transition from hospital-based care to outpatient primary care is a significant factor in the reduction of hospital beds; and

WHEREAS, An additional and just as important a factor in the reduced number of hospital beds is the financial constraints imposed upon VHA; and

WHEREAS, All too often, veterans report long waiting times for primary and specialty clinic appointments and for certain hospital treatment and procedures, which is based in part on the low number of staffed VA hospital beds; and

WHEREAS, There is no currently logical basis for VHA to determine the appropriate number of hospital operating beds and contrarily, there is every appearance that the level of operating beds is set more by budgetary realities than by other rational measures; and

WHEREAS, One of the five missions of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide back-up contingency support to the Department of Defense in the event of a military emergency; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense does not have sufficient capacity to handle large numbers of combat casualties; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense would have to rely to a great extent on VA for medical support in the event of a national military emergency; and

WHEREAS, With there already being a shortage of VA hospital beds, it would be extremely difficult for VA to simultaneously support its veterans' health care mission and its back-up contingency support mission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That Congress consider the ramifications of a shortage of VA hospital beds should a major need for immediate beds occur as a result of a national military emergency; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress evaluate the current available operating beds within the Department of Veterans Affairs for both eligible veterans and for VA to sustain its mission to provide back-up contingency support to the Department of Defense in the event of a national military emergency.

Resolution No. 95: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange
Origin: VA
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was the most common herbicide used in Southeast Asia by the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam Conflict from 1962-1971; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was contaminated by the carcinogen dioxin (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin [TCDD]); and

WHEREAS, Over 2 million veterans served in Vietnam during the Vietnam Era and are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, Scientific evidence has linked human exposure to dioxin and certain diseases; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of Vietnam veterans have developed various cancers, neurological disorders, liver dysfunction, and other severe diseases; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported PL 96-151 which mandated that VA fund a non-government scientific body to conduct a major epidemiology study of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has still not funded the major epidemiology study mandated by public law; and

WHEREAS, In view of the current absence of alternative judicial recourse to remedy the injustice perpetuated on so many disabled Vietnam veterans, their families and survivors, The American Legion will continue to monitor other pending dioxin-related suits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion continue to urge the completion of the scientific study mandated by Public Law 96-151; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion vigorously support the liberalization of the rules relating to the evaluation of studies involving exposure to dioxin and the adjudication of claims based on Agent Orange exposure; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the development of all ongoing research on the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure and point out to the proper officials any perceived deficiencies or discrepancies in these projects; and to ensure that government committees charged with review of such research are composed of impartial members of the medical and scientific community; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Vietnam veterans reporting to VA medical care facilities claiming exposure to Agent Orange be provided examinations and treatment which is thorough and appropriate, and that VA physicians demonstrate compassion in responding to the medical needs of these veterans.

Resolution No. 97: Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits to Those Who Served In Israel and Turkey

Origin: VA

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Priority health care has been approved for Gulf War veterans assigned in the past to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Veterans assigned to Israel or Turkey during the Gulf War have not received such recognition for priority health care; and

WHEREAS, These veterans were exposed to most of the same environmental hazards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support legislation to provide authority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to extend priority health care to veterans who served during the Persian Gulf War in Israel or Turkey.

Resolution No. 98: Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
Origin: VA
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Approximately 700,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, More than 40,000 women served in theater during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Over 20 percent of new recruits in the Armed Forces today are women, and that percentage is likely to grow in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of Gulf War veterans are in good health, thousands of Gulf War veterans nevertheless suffer from unexplained physical symptoms known as "Gulf War veterans illnesses;" and

WHEREAS, Over 120 scientific studies are investigating these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Few of the aforementioned studies are focused exclusively on the illnesses experienced by women Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, Misleading information about Gulf War veterans illnesses has spread on the Internet and through the media, and this information has caused a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the severity and prevalence of Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine has completed, and is currently preparing reports, that evaluate the nature, the likely causes, and the Federal Government's response to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several independent expert scientific committees and organizations have stated that a number of suspected causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses are not likely associated with those illnesses, whereas others are more likely associated with those illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Pyridostigmine bromide was used by the United States and some coalition troops as a nerve agent pre-treatment during the Gulf War although the Food and Drug Administration had not approved the drug for that use, and some researchers contend that pyridostigmine bromide may be associated with Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several medical studies have found that the unexplained physical symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are similar to other medically unexplained symptom syndromes like chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization strive towards its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to devote the appropriate resources to finding effective medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs fund more scientific studies that exclusively investigate the health of women Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly implement any reasonable recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports regarding its Gulf War veterans programs and research; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses, and to refrain from

supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and, be it further,

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to consider offering healthcare and compensation to disabled Gulf War veterans who suffer from unexplained physical symptoms, or medically unexplained symptom syndromes similar to chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will continue to consult with medical experts from time to time in order to ensure the effectiveness of its advocacy.

Resolution No. 106: Urge VA To Make Organization-Specific Information Available To Veterans Service Organizations

Origin: IL

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is authorized access to the Department of Veterans Affairs computer system in individual cases in which The American Legion holds power of attorney; and

WHEREAS, Due to delays and problems with the Department of Veterans Affairs longterm computer modernization program and related initiatives, the current computer system still can only provide case-specific information to service officers; and

WHEREAS, Although the Department of Veterans Affairs has a number of data programs which develop a wide spectrum of information for the purpose of internal workload and management reports on individual regional office and system-wide operations, it does not separately identify the workload of the individual veterans service organizations; and

WHEREAS, The veterans service organizations do not receive regular distribution of these workload and management reports nor do they have electronic access to the VA system to obtain such reports directly; however, they can request hardcopy or E-mail copies of specific reports whenever this type of information is needed; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to work on developing a comprehensive data management system composed of the Veterans Information System, Data Inventory or Repository, and Business Information System which intended to provide information to VA Central Office officials, Service Delivery Network (SDN) officials, regional office staff, veterans service organizations, and Congress; and

WHEREAS, The Freedom of Information Act, as amended, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to release certain types of nonpersonal information in hardcopy or electronically from its records and data bases to the public upon request; and

WHEREAS, To effectively manage, direct, and budget for their respective service programs, the veterans service organizations need accurate, reliable data on their own workload; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is currently seeking the support and cooperation of the veterans service organizations in a variety of service improvement initiatives, such as TRIP (Training, Responsibility, Involvement, and Preparation) and the Predischarge Physical Examination Program; and

WHEREAS, Without greater access to or the availability of organization-specific workload information, the veterans service organizations cannot effectively determine the resources needed to take on these additional responsibilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to make available a full spectrum of organization-specific information and reports through improved access to the VA computer system.

Resolution No. 118: The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones
Origin: NJ
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, A proud nation should be willing to identify and memorialize for posterity each of its veterans; and

WHEREAS, Each and every veteran should equally be remembered and identified in their final place of rest; and

WHEREAS, Current provisions discriminately provide a means of identifying and honoring only those veterans who do not already have any other form of monument; and

WHEREAS, Monuments provided by family many times do not identify a grave as that of a veteran when interred in a non-government cemetery; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support entitlement for all honorably discharged veterans to an appropriate grave marker provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, without regard to whatever other private monument or headstone that may already be in place at the time of application.

Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill Of Health
Origin: IL
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Consolidated with No. 139 (MN)

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system was created to provide medical treatment to veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA initially provided care to disabled veterans, indigent veterans, and other veterans based on a resource and space available basis; and

WHEREAS, Since its establishment, Congress has significantly expanded the health care responsibilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Today, this is accomplished by VHA through the operation of 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) that provide inpatient and outpatient care across a spectrum of treatment milieus, and is committed to four primary missions:

- To develop, maintain and operate an equitable veterans health care delivery system.
- To carry out a program of education and training of health care personnel.
- To carry out a program of medical care research.
- To furnish health care services to members of the Armed Forces during a war or national emergency; and to civilians during national emergencies; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, VHA has been progressively impeded by funding shortages and geographic constraints; and

WHEREAS, The impact of recent Congressional budget shortfalls places the system in serious jeopardy, and prevents VA from accomplishing its myriad of missions which would have a deleterious effect on veterans seeking care for service-connected and nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the Federal Government must live up to its legal and moral obligations and expectations of veterans and the American people with regard to access to VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, This legislation will revolutionize the way VA delivers and pays for health care benefits to our nation's veterans and their dependents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion accept as its policy on veterans health care, "The GI Bill of Health" (formerly known as "The American Legion Veterans Health Care Security Plan"), which will:

1. Reorganize the Veterans Health Administration to improve access, quality, and efficiency of the medical care provided to veterans;
2. Operate the veterans health care system based upon the principles of "coordinated care";
3. Assure all veterans with service-connected illnesses and disabilities access to all services necessary for the treatment of their disabilities at no charge to the veteran;
4. Assure all veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, access to all VA health care services at no cost;
5. Assure all special category veterans, indigent veterans and service-connected veterans rated under 50 percent disabled, access to VA health care services at no charge or reduced charge;
6. Assure the long-term viability of VHA by encouraging veterans who presently are unable to receive VA care, self-employed veterans, and veterans' dependents, to enroll in a Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Plan;
7. Improve the long-term financial health of the veterans health care system by increasing other resources of the system to include other federal programs;
8. Federal appropriations for the VHA shall be based upon a capitated method using the calculation of fully-allocated costs of care to service-connected and other veterans receiving care at no charge; and
9. Require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report to the Congress at designated intervals on the financial soundness of the system, the budget-neutrality of the system and the quality of care rendered.

Resolution No. 153: Request DVA Establish Policy Of Enrollment In DVA Health Care System At The Time Of Separation From Active Military Service

Origin: NY

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Congress directed the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a National Enrollment Policy for health care in the Veterans Health Care Administration by October 1, 1999; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of this enrollment policy was to standardize Veterans Health Administration guidelines, procedures and eligibility criteria for veterans who use Department of Veterans Affairs health care; and

WHEREAS, American Legion Posts and American Legion Accredited Service Officers have assisted eligible veterans to ensure they have the opportunity to take part in this enrollment policy; and

WHEREAS, No specific policy exists within the Department of Defense to enroll active duty personnel at the time of their discharge outprocessing; and

WHEREAS, Many active duty military personnel are without health insurance at discharge time and Department of Veterans Affairs health care could fill an immediate need as well as be helpful in claims with the Veterans Benefits Administration in the future; and

WHEREAS, Discharge outprocessing would be the appropriate time and place for enrollment before these personnel are home seeking jobs and establishing their civilian life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs be requested to establish a policy for enrollment in Department of Veterans Affairs health care at the time of separation from active duty for all personnel on active military duty.

Resolution No. 171: Support Improved Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling Services

Origin: MI

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Many thousands of veterans sustained injuries as a direct result of their military service; and

WHEREAS, In many cases, those injuries impacted on the veterans ability to readjust to civilian life because of a diminished capacity to care for themselves and an inability to obtain and maintain suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling (VR&C) Service is to help qualified, service-disabled veterans achieve maximum independence in daily living and, to the maximum extent feasible, obtain and maintain suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, In the past, VR&C Service's focus was on how many veterans were enrolled in training, rather than on how many veterans completed training and were successfully placed in jobs; and

WHEREAS, VR&C Service now recognizes that its past focus was not in the best interest of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, VR&C Service is involved in an ongoing reinvention process so that it can provide the quality, quantity and timely services that program participants deserve; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support any proposal that will allow VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service to expand and improve its services to qualified, service-disabled veterans.

Resolution No. 179: Support the Consolidation of VA Home Loan Guaranty Program for the Southwest Region in California
Origin: CA
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In September of 1995, a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) task group issued a report to consolidate regional offices throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, In October 1999, the House Veterans Affairs Committee sent a letter to then Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown, indicating that both Senate and House Committees were dissatisfied with VA's attempt to explain the feasibility of that reorganization plan; and

WHEREAS, In December of 1995, VA began to implement its reorganization in some of the larger regional offices: New York, Los Angeles, Oakland and Washington, D.C.; the attempt was to move Compensation and Pension to Regional Service Centers, which was considered totally unfeasible by the Congress and the veteran community; the plan was, for the most part, scrapped; and

WHEREAS, VA has not completely abandoned its idea to regionalize services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The main driving force is a report issued by the Principi Commission, which talks about contracting consolidation; and

WHEREAS, Now, VA is regionalizing its Loan Guaranty Program; and

WHEREAS, Eligibility-processing will stay in one of two centers, but ultimately will wind up on the Internet; and

WHEREAS, The management VA properties are being considered under A76, a study for VA to contract the private sector, for the purpose of managing the properties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That it finds unconscionable that the loan processing function of VA's Loan Guaranty Program is being totally suspended in California, a state that is home to roughly 10% of the nation's veterans, and relocated to Phoenix, Arizona; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Home Loan Guaranty Program for veterans of California, Nevada and Arizona remain somewhere in the State of California, to provide loan processing and servicing functions to the veterans of this region.

Resolution No. 181: Indirect Cost Reimbursement to VA by Non-VA and Collaborative Studies Research
Origin: CA
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Reimbursement for infrastructure costs supporting non-VA and collaborative research that is conducted in VA has taken on greater importance due to the flat line budget and decreased buying power; and

WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health is prohibited from providing reimbursement of indirect costs on research grants made to other government agencies; and

WHEREAS, There are several locations where the National Institutes of Health has granted an add on to university affiliates; they in turn, pass along to VA; and

WHEREAS, Although the general rule of thumb is that VA does not receive any financial support to offset indirect costs or research; and

WHEREAS, Many affiliate universities have not negotiated the add on to the rate the Institutes of Health attaches per its grant to affiliates; and

WHEREAS, The National Association of Veterans Research and Education Foundation reported that Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health have indicated support for the concept of a 15% VA add on to offset direct costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That all VA institutions be afforded this add on from both university and corporate research collaboratives; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all research administered by VA's Independent Review Board and uses VA physical and material assets should include reimbursement to VA for these indirect costs, at a rate of 15% from the National Institutes of Health sponsored research; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That local health services research and development programs should negotiate for a similar rate from private funders of research.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Resolution No. 4 (WY) 1999 NC: **The Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (TRIP) Program**

Resolution No. 39 (CT) 1999 NC: **The Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (TRIP) Program**

Resolution No. 104 (IL) 1999 NC: **Unused Hospital Space for Veterans Homes**

Resolution No. 147 (NE) 1999 NC: **The Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (TRIP) Program**

Resolution No. 150 (NY) 1999 NC: **Establish a National Cemetery in Richmond County, New York**

Resolution No. 161 (WA) 1999 NC: **Advocate to Congress that VA make Special Treatment Category for Military Retirees**

Resolution No. 180 (CA) 1999 NC: **The Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (TRIP) Program**

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 23 (MA) 1999 NC: **The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans Home Program**

Resolution No. 31 (MA) 1999 NC: **Burial and Plot Allowance**

Resolution No. 59 (ND) 1999 NC: **The American Legion Policy on DVA-NSLI Insurance**

Resolution No. 64 (ND) 1999 NC: **Centralization of Veterans Claims Processing Centers**

Resolution No. 65 (ND) 1999 NC: **Burial and Plot Allowance**

Resolution No. 110 (PI) 1999 NC: **Improvement of Compensation, Pension and Health Care Benefits for Filipino World War II Veterans**

Resolution No. 111 (PI) 1999 NC: **Nonservice-Connected Pension and Health Care for Filipino WWII Veterans**

Resolution No. 112 (PI) 1999 NC: **Filipino WWII Veterans as Active Military in U.S. Armed Forces w/Full Benefits for Service and Appropriate Sufficient Additional Funding**
Resolution No. 143 (MN) 1999 NC: **Increase State Veterans Homes Per Diem Payment**
Resolution No. 164 (WA) 1999 NC: **Better Funding for VA Long-Term Care**
Resolution No. 165 (WA) 1999 NC: **Support Full Federal Funding for the Construction of State Veterans Homes**

Rejected

Resolution No. 100 (ID) 1999 NC: **American Legion Provide Pro-Bono Representation at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**
Resolution No. 113 (PI) 1999 NC: **Naturalized Former Filipino WWII Veterans Bring SSI with them upon Returning to Philippines**

That completes the report and as a duly elected delegate from the Department of Ohio, I move the adoption of this report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Do I hear a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Those in favor of the motion, signify in the usual manner. Those opposed nay? Ayes have it. Report of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission is adopted.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: With the adoption of the VA&R report, it is appropriate to announce the winner of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually to the department which best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. For the 1998-1999 program year, this trophy is awarded to the Department of Minnesota.

Simply reading the responsibilities associated with our next guest really fails to completely give a clue to the political and public tightrope this gentleman walks. He is the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, a position he has held since 1995. He is also a retired U.S. Army Major General. He served two tours in Vietnam during his 35 years of service. A member of American Legion Post 19 in the Department of the District of Columbia, please welcome to the podium, Major General, retired, John Herrling.

Address: MG John P. Herrling, USA (Ret.), Secretary
American Battle Monuments Commission

I had the pleasure of attending the last three summer conventions at Salt Lake City, Orlando, and in New Orleans, and I'm very pleased to be back here again with you at Anaheim. It's always refreshing to get away from Washington for a while, particularly after a long hot summer. For those of us who live and work in Washington, you tend to think that it's the center of the universe and that it's important to everything else. But when you get away from the hype and the politics, you're faced with a different reality, the reality that

there are great organizations like The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary that are having a major impact on America. In towns and villages across the country you are helping in innumerable ways to strengthen the country and keep it on a straight course. What you do in so many small ways adds up to a better America. So I am very proud to be here with you this afternoon.

In the next few minutes I will report on the progress of establishing the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., a project that The American Legion has contributed to in many ways. Before I do, allow me to share the spotlight for a few moments with a great actor and a great American, Mr. Hanks.

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

Those public service ads have been appearing on television across the country since April, along with the series of radio and print ads. Tom Hanks has donated his time and many talents to help us make this memorial a reality. His endorsements have had a dramatic impact on the nationwide awareness of the World War II Memorial, and our fund-raising campaign. Since January of this year we have received more than 140,000 calls on our 1-800 number. You could not ask for a more credible or powerful national spokesperson. Tom Hanks is not only a very talented Oscar-winning actor, he's also a very patriotic and dedicated American.

Tom Hanks' message to America is simple: "It's time to say thank you." But I don't have to tell you that. The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are in the forefront of this campaign, and have been from the beginning. Testifying publicly at design approval hearings in Washington; writing letters to the editor; promoting the campaign through membership publications; and spearheading a major fund-raising effort. You are leading the veterans support, and the American Battle Monument Commission is very grateful for that leadership role.

Now to our progress. You may recall that before we can break ground for this memorial, we must have final design approval and all the construction funds in hand. Getting the memorial design approved in Washington is a long and sometimes contentious process. During one public hearing, Friedrich St. Florian, our design architect, said the approval process alone is proof that democracy is alive and well in our country. But that's as it should be. When you are building a memorial on our National Mall, a memorial that will stand the test of time, you had better get it right. And this memorial will be one for the ages. Located on the last great site on the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, it will stand on the centerline of American history.

The memorial design must be approved at three different phases by three different commissions. All three approved our design concept in the summer of 1998; all three approved our preliminary design this summer; and we hope to have final approval for the memorial early next year. The preliminary design continues to feature a lower plaza surrounded by the Rainbow Pool, the central unifying design element. Two granite arches over four stories high provide monumental character in the north and south entrances to the memorial. Within the arches, bronze American eagles hold laurel wreaths memorializing the victory won by the World War II generation. On the sides, 56 stone pillars have been added to the design, flanking the arches and embracing the plaza. The 17 foot pillars have a powerful visual presence. Individually, the pillars represent the 48 states and the eight territories that comprised the United States during World War II, and collectively they symbolize the unity and the strength of the nation.

At the western side of the plaza, next to the Reflecting Pool, four primary elements combine to create the memorial's sacred area. A marker with the sculpted wreath symbolizes the 406,000 Americans who gave their lives. There are two other sculpted laurel wreaths, one commemorating the sacrifice of America's allies, and the other commemorating the suffering of all of humankind. On the western wall, a light of freedom rising out of a dark, broken crater, will symbolize the triumph of life over darkness. The dark broken crater symbolizes the global upheaval created by World War II. An inscription, yet to be selected, will be placed on that wall that we hope will stir visitors' emotions. The ceremonial entrance from 17th Street has been widened to 171 feet. This will provides a wide central vista from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, and will allow the entrance to serve as an amphitheater for ceremonies. It will also provide a grand entrance into the memorial. We are please with the progress of the design and the support we continue to receive from the Federal approving agencies.

On the financial side, I can report that the fund-raising campaign continues to pick up steam. We're nearing 70 million dollars in our 100 million dollar campaign. That money comes from veterans groups like yours; corporations; foundations; civic and fraternal organizations; states; and individual Americans. Veterans have contributed more than four million dollars, led by the 1.5 million netted thus far by The American Legion. And the American Legion Auxiliary has raised $167,000 and provided an additional $109,000 in kind. Corporations have contributed almost 30 million dollars. We received two million dollars gifts from Federal Express and Southwest Bell. An additional eight, one million dollar gifts; 85 gifts of $100,000 or more. Nearly seven million dollars have been given by foundations, including a two million dollar grant from the Lilly Foundation, and a million dollar grants from the Steele and Starr Foundation. Additionally, we ask each state to contribute one dollar for resident who served in uniform during World War II. With your help and the help of the Veterans Administration, 21 states that passed legislation committing six million dollars; nine states have legislation pending; and 18 states will introduce legislation next year. Civic and fraternal organizations have contributed almost two million dollars, led by a 1.1 million dollar pledge from the Benevolent Paternal Order of Elks. We also have cause-related marketing initiatives, and promotions have been completed with Blockbuster and Major League Baseball. Many of your posts were involved in each of those programs. Lastly, 330,000 thousand Americans have contributed more than 20 million dollars. Grassroots organizations are sprouting up in communities throughout the country, and they are doing very well within your own departments.

This has truly become America's campaign, and the momentum grows with each passing month. A little more than two years ago, our pledges totaled 5.5 million dollars. In May of last year they were 21 million dollars; today, nearly 70 million. The issue is not if the World War II Memorial will be built, but when. The urgency is amplified by a statistic all too familiar with this audience, we lose 1,000 World War II veterans every day. We are committed to continuing to accelerate our fund-raising efforts to complete this memorial before this great generation we honor passes into history. We hope to break ground sometime next fall. To do this, a lot of things must come together. But with your continued support, and the support of the American people, the National World War II Memorial will one day in the not too distant future assume its rightful place among our other cherished memorials on the National Mall. Thank you for all you have done for America, and what you are doing to help us build this national memorial.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: General, please stay up here at the podium with me. As a further indication of The American Legion's support of the Second World War Memorial, we have a number of people here from the various departments that have stepped forth and would like to make presentations to you. If they would, as they come forward, please announce the department and the amount of money that you are denoting. Al Ford from Michigan can start this parade.

NECman FORD (MI): I am proud to present today our Chairman of our delegation, Gerald Dennis and our Department Commander, Norb Schollett, who have checks for the foundation.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER SCHOLLETT: I am very proud to present to you today a check for $1,050 from some of the posts of the Department of Michigan.

NECman FORD (MI): Before I left office to turn it over to Norb, the finance committee and the Department of Michigan voted to present a check for $25,000 to this worthy cause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Next is George Derrick from Florida.

NECman DERRICK (FL): This morning, the 18 states that comprise the Southern block held a breakfast presided over by our Chairman, Mr. E. Roy Stone. He persuaded those people to donate $5,614 to the NEF. I don't have a check. The money has already been turned into the finance department.

NECman RUSK (IA): From the Department of Iowa, $2,108.51.

NECman KIRKHAM (LA): From the Department of Louisiana, we wish to present to you a check for $3,650 to supplement other funds.

NECman RAWERS (IL): Commander, the Department of Illinois would like to donate this check from our department for $10,000.

NECman PELLEGRINI (MT): I am pleased to announce that the Montana legislature appropriated $66,000 to be presented in October. To add to that, I have a check for $1,320 I picked up during district meetings.

NECman DALKE (ND): I have a check here for $500 from the Langton Post plus another $1,125 from the foundation of North Dakota, American Legion.

NECman BRYANT (VA): It's with great honor that the Department of Virginia presents a check today for $30,000. One of our top legislative priorities for the year 2000 would be a dollar per veteran for another $150,000.

NECman GALAZEN (MN): General, as a proud member of Post 294, the greatest little post in southern Minnesota, I would like to present $1,000 to the foundation for the World War II Memorial Foundation. We are a post that, in 1942, every member but one of the graduating class went into the war.

NECman MASON (SD): From the state with the faces on the mountain and the birthplace of American Legion baseball, we give $1,000.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER (MA): John Mulkern, who is our state chairman, is home ill. He has instructed me along with our department treasurer, Joe Tomato, and the commander of record last year, Jimmy Flatters, the new alternate NEC, to inform you that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has finally passed through the legislature, the mechanics of getting the money is on its way, to the tune of $550,000. I would like to present on behalf of the Legionnaries of Massachusetts the first check, the money is still coming in, for $73,460.62.

NECman POORE (DE): General, the Department of Delaware, the first state, would like to give you this check for $1,000.

ALISON HEWITT (VT): General, on behalf of the Department of Vermont, as the coordinator for the fund raiser for the World War II Memorial that is well overdue, I have the great honor and privilege of presenting two checks, one for $400 that was raised during our recent state convention in the fund raising that I did for department, plus a very special check from a small post in which this young lady is the commander of, and that is Pierce Lawton Post No. 37, Bellows Falls, Vermont. They presented to me at convention a check for $5,000 for the World War II Memorial in honor of 32 deceased World War II members as well as 154 members of World War II still alive and present in their post. So that totals $5,400 from Vermont not including the $3,400 that our Sons of The American Legion of Vermont donated this week to the World War II Memorial. And there's more coming.

NECman BORDERS (GA): The Department of Georgia wishes to make a donation today. We have already donated $16,000. We have $4,600 more to give us a total of $20,620.

NECman WEST (NH): General, the legislature in the State of New Hampshire has passed $60,000; and the Department of New Hampshire is proud to present a check for $3,766.

NECman ZUKOWSKI (WI): The Department of Wisconsin gratefully hands over a check here. The department alone gives $7,005.50. Along with me is John who has a blockbuster check for $10,000 for a total of $17,005.05.

NECman GALAZEN (MN): I am standing up, but I am real happy. From this great Department of Minnesota, $1,000 check from Cass Lake, Minnesota; $1,000 from Dawson, Minnesota, Post 177; $1,000 check from the post at South Rapids, Minnesota; a $200 check from Elk River, Minnesota; from Long Prairie, Minnesota, another check, $300. Another check from Zimmerman, Minnesota for $300. One more check from Hills City, $25.

NECman ANDERSON (CT): Along with the initial $5,000 that we sent a year ago, we are proud on behalf of our World War II Chairman, Frank Angelo, and the Legionnaires from the Department of Connecticut to present to you this check for $1,245.

NECman BARNEY (OH): Mr. General, as a representative of the 158,000 members of the Department of Ohio, we would like to give you a check for $25,000.

NECman CONLEY (PA): General, we would like to inform you that the commonwealth legislature's first processing legislature from the point of $1.7 million, another piece of legislation in the amount of $2 million, to be donated to the World War II Memorial. Along with that, the legislative have been guaranteed by a private donor that they will match whatever bill is passed. As for the Department of Pennsylvania, our American Legion, all of our war era veterans got together in honor of our World War II veterans. We would like to present this check to you in the amount of $18,205.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Noted that if all that legislation goes through from Pennsylvania, that state will donate more than $4 million to this memorial..

NECman PULAWA (HI): General, the Department of Hawaii presents it's first check for $500. I'm also a charter member and give my own personal donation every year.

NECman CHRISTOFFERSEN (UT): The Department of Utah was one of first in the nation to jump on board with this. Our legislature approved $79,000. We are proud of that. We are going to pledge another $1,000. We are hoping our finance committee will go along with that. If they don't, Bill and I will have to be paying that ourselves.

NECman ROY (OK): General, it is my privilege and honor to have received a check at our state convention from one of our outstanding posts in Oklahoma. This post wished to recognize their World War II veterans and those in their city. I'm accompanied today with

a past commander, Mr. Donald T. Younger, of American Legion Post Mohawk 308 of Tulsa, Oklahoma. This post is contributing $50,000 to the World War II Memorial.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: General, join me in presenting that post an award for their donation. It says, if I might read it, "Let it be known to all present that those men and women listed below were, during the global conflict in World War II, actively engaged in the defense of freedom either in the Armed Forces of the United States or on the American home front and are hereby recognized as having participated in and are responsible for victory in that conflict. May they always be honored and respected. Mohawk Post 308."

NECman ROY (OK): In addition to this, Mr. Commander, we have, from our Past Commanders Club in Oklahoma, $100, and from Post 129 another $340.

NECman WARD (NY): General, the Department of New York this year had a two-prong effort to raise funds for our World War II heroes. First, we went to our state legislature and, through the efforts of our legislative chairman, John DePersis, and our state adjutant, Dick Pedro, and their lobbying efforts, we were able to secure $1.7 million, representing one dollar per veteran who went off to war during World War II. In addition, I asked the Legionnaires of New York to contribute to this most important project. They've sent so far into the department, into National Headquarters, $160,000. In addition, through the Department of New York, we have already transmitted over $26,000. It is my pleasure right now to present a check to you, General, in the amount of $106,000 for our World War II project. So far this amounts to almost $2 million. We already know of a post in a couple of weeks that is going to present a check for $10,000 and an anonymous donor for $50,000. Next year's commander, Richard Keiser, has promised to carry on this important project. So a lot more money will be on the way.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I don't want you to think that we have slighted Mohawk Post 308 for that fantastic single post donation of some $50,000. We asked the post commander if he would like to say a few words. He just said, "No, that's okay. That's what we're here for." Now that's what The American Legion is right there.

MAJOR GENERAL HERRLING USA (Retired): The accountant behind me has just totaled up the gifts that we just heard presented for the World War II memorial. They total to $385,902.23. I would say that's incredible.

I mentioned in my remarks that The American Legion was leading the way in this campaign with the veterans organizations. I stand by those words. I think this is proof positive that you are really 100 percent behind this great national program. From all of us on the American Battle Monuments Commission, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair now recognizes Herm Harrington of New York, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs, for the purposes of making a report.

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

General Herrling in his remarks indicated that the World War II Memorial was near $70 million. I think through the efforts of all you people here today it is at $70 million and may be a tad over.

Chaplain Sweeney, Mr. Commander, my fellow delegates and friends, forty-six members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, considered seventeen resolutions, sixteen of which originated with Departments of The American Legion and one which was created by the committee. Of these, two were approved, three were approved as amended, two were approved as consolidated and amended; seven were referred, and three were rejected.

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 151: Include Funeral Honors Activity in Consolidated Post Report
Origin: NY
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, Public Law 105-261, The Strom Thurmond National Defense Act for Fiscal Year 1999 Section 567, directs the Department of Defense to provide an honor guard detail to provide military funeral honors for veterans in the form of a minimum of two DOD personnel; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 105-261 allows for the coordination with local veterans organizations to supplement the provision of military funeral honors; and

WHEREAS, American Legion posts across the world stand ready to give final honors to Legionnaires as well as other veterans at the time of their death; and

WHEREAS, This service is truly certainly part of our "devotion to mutual helpfulness and caring for those who have borne the burden;" and

WHEREAS, This activity is used as one of the criteria for awarding of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy; and

WHEREAS, The current format of the Consolidated Post Report provides no place to report such activity; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion make a change in the Consolidated Post Report to include Funeral Honors Activity provided by American Legion Posts.

Resolution No. 183: Appreciation to Host City
Origin: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, The 81st National Convention has been held in Anaheim, California, September 7-9, 1999; and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of Anaheim, California, the officers of the Convention Corporation, the Department, and by the officials and the people of Anaheim, California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That we express our deep appreciation to the Department of California, Governor Gray Davis; Mayor Thomas Daley; the city officials of Anaheim, including the Fire Department, Police Department, California Highway Patrol, and other Public Safety Officials, and to the 1999 National Convention Corporation Officers, Bruce Thiesen, President; Joseph O. Early, General Chairman; and D. W. Woollett,

Treasurer. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable Convention.

Resolution No. 109: Postage Stamp Commemorating the Purple Heart Medal
Origin: FL
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II

WHEREAS, The United States Postal Service has honored a variety of entities such as cartoon characters, etc., by placing their image on postage stamps; and

WHEREAS, Many of our veterans have been disabled in defense of this nation, both physically and mentally; and

WHEREAS, These veterans have been largely ignored publicly except by other veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion encourages the United States Postal Service Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee to honor combat wounded American Veterans by issuing a commemorative first class postage stamp displaying the purple heart medal.

Resolution No. 149: Support the National Veterans Hall Of Honors
Origin: NE
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II
As amended

WHEREAS, The American Legion is dedicated to preserving the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; and

WHEREAS, Mike Dankert, in creating and furthering the National Veterans Hall of Honor, is working toward that same preservation of our memories; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion and the National Veterans Hall of Honor, Inc., a nonprofit Nebraska corporation, are working toward the identical desired achievement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That Mike Dankert of Norfolk, Nebraska, and the National Veterans Hall of Honor shall be endorsed by The American Legion through supportive efforts to preserve our memories in the great wars, without financial obligation by The American Legion.

Resolution No. 158: United States Flag Postage Stamp
Origin: NY
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II
As amended

WHEREAS, The flag of our Nation is a symbol known throughout the world as representing freedom, democracy, and our Nation itself, and identifies the United States to citizens of other countries; and

WHEREAS, It is in the interest of the United States to foster patriotism and pride in our United States Heritage and to meld our diverse cultures; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Government Agencies should support the national objective and national interest; and

WHEREAS, Showing the flag is in the business interests of all our corporations; and

WHEREAS, For many years the U.S. Postal Service printed stamps showing the full U.S. Flag as the main circulating stamp, issued in sheets and on rolls, however, in recent years, the U.S. Postal Service has gradually reduced the depiction of the flag on its stamp from a full view to a minor representation occupying a minor portion of a stylized skyscraper scene available only on rolls; and

WHEREAS, The current depiction of the flag is unrecognizable as the major symbol of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Postal Service now prints stamps portraying numerous cartoon, stage and real and imagined screen characters, magazine covers, games, and other commercial products thus advertising commercial activities that have no lasting patriotic or national value; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion appeal to the United States Postal Service Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee to issue and use as its primary definitive first class postage stamp one which depicts the complete United States Flag, without artistic modification or curtailment.

Resolution No. 157: Audie Murphy Postal Stamp
Origin: NY
Submitted By: Credentials and Other Internal Matters, Section II
Consolidated with No. 67 (TX)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a patriotic organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, The United States Postal Service has previously issued postage stamps honoring individuals who made significant contributions to our nation in the areas of music, movies, entertainment, and stamps depicting flora and fauna; and

WHEREAS, Audie L. Murphy was the most decorated United States soldier in World War II, receiving 33 medals for valor including three purple hearts for wounds received in action and who also received our nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Audie L. Murphy's example of valor, patriotism, and personal sacrifice is most worthy of recognition by our nation and will serve as an excellent example for today's society and ensure that his contribution to a grateful nation will not be forgotten; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion recommend to the United States Postal Service Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee that a commemorative first class stamp be issued in honor of Audie L. Murphy for his heroic actions while in service to his nation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Organization take appropriate and aggressive action to implement this resolution.

Referred to Standing Commission on Internal Affairs

Resolution no. 93 (VA) 1999 NC: **Support Establishment of Freedom Museum, Inc. of Virginia**

Resolution No. 96 (VA) 1999 NC: **Support Establishment of National D-Day Memorial, Virginia**

Resolution No. 125 (NJ) 1999 NC: **Recollections of Veterans Program**

Referred to the Standing Convention Commission

Resolution No. 37 (MA) 1999 NC: **National Convention Badge Format**
Resolution No. 119 (OH) 1999 NC: **2005 National Convention Site**

Referred to the Standing Emblem Committee

Resolution No. 101 (ID) 1999 NC: **Pricing Of Legion Caps For Women**
Resolution No. 176 (PR) 1999 NC: **Garita Del Diablo Symbol For Department Of Puerto Rico Cap**

Rejected

Resolution No. 41 (MX) 1999 NC: **Department Of Mexico Name Change**
Resolution No. 46 (MX) 1999 NC: **Information On The Certification Of Service Record**
Resolution No. 178 (PR) 1999 NC: **Department Of Puerto Rico Commander's Cap**

Also, I would report to you on significant training that will occur this fall. The National American Legion College will reopen its doors to our future leadership of The American Legion, representing 34 departments, for the first time in over 40 years on November 14, 1999. This is an exciting and historic event as the Legion College will serve as the catalyst for many of the initiatives outlined in the 21st Resolution. In fact, it is the vision of the 21st Century Committee that serves as the guidelines for designating the training module of this course. You have seen on the screens to my front, the names of the 33 candidates selected by the National Selection panel here in Anaheim. This is the first official publication of the names of those who will attend. I extend my congratulations to all the individuals selected to attend this unique training experience. Also, my thanks to the departments who have joined in this new joint partnership as we transfer into the 21st Century.

Finally, it was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee.

Mr. Commander, it was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Committee Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: That was a second I heard?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Those in favor of passage of the motion, please indicate in the usual manner. Those opposed nay? Ayes have it. The report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Section II is adopted.

At this time, we would like to accept from anybody that would like to come to the podium, donations for the National Emergency Fund. It should be noted that the Southern Caucus was credited with donating $5,614 which was delivered by George Derrick, NECman of Florida. From the Department of Kentucky.

NECman WOODS (KY): On behalf of the Department of Kentucky, it's a great honor to present to you for the National Emergency Relief Fund these checks totalling $5,500.

NECman CONLEY (PA): Commander Miller, your visit to us at our post last year in August on your membership drive impressed us to the fact that we took it upon ourselves to collect a dollar from our members. I would like to present to you at this time a check for $2,000 from World War I Memorial Post 109 in Mechanicsburg representing our 1,983 members.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Again, the Department of Pennsylvania.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER (PA): Commander, from the Department of Pennsylvania, we, too, would like to help you increase the balance of the NEF. This is one of several more donations to come. This is in the amount of $2,060.

NECman PELLEGRINI (MT): Each year the departments of Montana, Idaho, and Nevada have a Fun Days golf tournament. This year it was in Jack Pot, Nevada. It has about 40 Legionnaires and their spouses. During the golfing tournament we collected $565 for the National Emergency Fund.

NECman BINGHAM (AZ): Post 42, Grand Canyon, Arizona, $1,000 for the National Emergency Fund.

NECman ZUKOWSKI (WI): On the behalf of the Department of Wisconsin, I would like to give you a check here for the sum of $1,0550 for the National Emergency Fund.

NECman ALDRICH (VT): TGhe Green Mountain State would like to present you with a check for $9,235. This along with what we have already donated should bring us over the 100 percent mark. We're awfully proud to be able to do it.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I should tell everybody that, if my figures are correct, I believe Vermont is the first state to hit that one dollar per member goal that I tried to set early in the year. And they are to be credited for that.

For those of you that haven't heard the report, in the last year, not counting the money that we collected today, when I took office we had a little over $8,000 in the NEF. During the year, nearly $600,000 was donated by our Legion family. We handed out some grants during the year for those people that had some tragedies happen. At this time we are well over $400,000 in that fund, and it's because of you that when we get those phone calls from our fellow members, those members in our family that are touched by disasters, it's because of you we will be able to answer those phone calls.

And for those of you that kind of forgot to make your donations yet, I would like to remind you that the World War II Memorial and the NEF have a booth over in Hall A. You can stop by there and make your donations any time you would like.

I know that Herm has an announcement on some prizes that have already been determined for those that stopped by the NEF booth and signed up. But our total today collected up here for the NEF is $27,224.

CHAIRMAN HARRINGTON (NY): I think the generosity that you have expressed here today has truly been overwhelming, and it's thanks to the efforts that Commander Butch Miller has breathed into the National Emergency Fund.

The three prize winners of the National Emergency Fund drawing are as follows: Second prize goes to Sandy Stevens of Chester Hill, Ohio, who will receive a Child Welfare Foundation Cross fountain pen. First prize is awarded to Marilyn Hogan of Argyle, Minnesota, who will be given a National Commander Butch Miller wooden clock. The grand prize has been awarded to Ray Waters of Austin, Minnesota, who wins a paid-up-for-life membership or a $200 equivalent if he already is a paid-up-for-life member.

The winners may claim their prizes in the Internal Affairs area of the National Headquarters area.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Obviously the spirit of charity has overtaken a few departments. We now have the Department of Wisconsin that would like to make another donation to the Citizens Flag Alliance.

NECman ZUKOWSKI (WI): On behalf of the Department of Wisconsin, we have finally loosened the purse strings a little bit. We have another $200 for the Citizens Flag Alliance and for you, Commander, and a hard program that you have worked very hard at.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you to all of my Midwestern folks up there.

The Chair calls on the National Adjutant for the purposes of making an announcement.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: This is the final day to purchase convention photographs.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair now recognizes Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children & Youth, for the purposes of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman

Distinguished guests and fellow delegates to this Convention, your Convention Committee on Children and Youth met at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 5, 1999, in the Hilton Anaheim, San Simeon Room #5, Concourse Level, Anaheim, California. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio as Chairman, delegate Herbert Petit, Jr. of Louisiana as Vice-Chairman and delegate Robert D. Scott of Oregon as Secretary. There were 52 members of the committee present.

There were three resolutions considered by the committee and referred to the Standing Children and Youth Commission.

Resolution No. 115 (OH) 1999 NC: **Protect Children From The Unrestricted Media**

Resolution No. 174 (MI) 1999 NC: **Immunization Against Anthrax**

Resolution No. 175 (MI) 1999 NC: **Immunization Against Smallpox**

Our partnership with Children's Miracle Network continues to grow and is a natural for the Legion family.

Hospitalized infants and children need unique medication and equipment engineered to work with their small statures. Skilled pediatric professionals armed with evolving treatments and expensive tools work to save more than 14 million children annually from life-threatening injuries, birth defects, cancer and numerous other ailments. To be able to treat kids, children's hospitals require funding. Children's Miracle Network raises money to benefit hospitalized kids and to increase awareness of its 170 member hospitals. All CMN contributions directly benefit hospitals, helping to purchase up-to-date equipment, train staff, conduct life-saving research, implement outreach programs, and provide healthcare for children whose parents can't afford to pay. Last year, the Legion family raised $250,000 nationally for local children's hospitals. National President Hobbs and National Vice-Commander Goulart appeared on their annual broadcast in Orlando for the official on-air check presentation. Currently, the Legion family is focusing our attentions on Miracle Balloons, the "Miracle Miles for Kids" Walkathon and a project called Josh & Friends. We

are proud of our alliance with CMN, whose efforts have made it possible for millions of children to receive the best possible care regardless of their family's ability to pay.

The American Legion maintains a good working relationship with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Their disabled Youth Leadership Forums are designed to educate our next generation of disabled leaders. In 1999, there were twelve states participating – three due to direct Legion involvement. Next year, fifteen more states have pledged to conduct these forums. I urge those Posts within those Departments to encourage and sponsor disabled young people from their respective communities to participate. By doing so, these young people will enhance their natural leadership skills, learn that people with specific disabilities are engaged in careers that they would not have thought possible and learn to appreciate and understand other disabilities.

Our Areas for Concern for the 1999-2000 year deal with quality of life issues affecting America's children. They are: Children's Hospitals; Youth Violence in Schools; Teenage Suicide Prevention; Parental Responsibilities and Family Life Education. These are timely topics which impact the lives of all young people. Our Temporary Financial Assistance Program continues its fifty year tradition of service to veterans and their families. I urge each of you to make use of this landmark program to assist needy veteran's children within your communities.

A motion was made and seconded to allow the Committee Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the committee. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate to this Convention from the Department of Ohio, I move the adoption of the report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Was that a second I heard?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? All in favor indicate in the usual manner. Those opposed nay? Ayes have it. The report of the Children & Youth is adopted.

Presentation: Garland E. Murphy, Jr. Award
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I now have the pleasure of presenting the Garland Murphy Award to the department that had the most participation in raising funds for the Child Welfare Foundation during the past program year. I am very proud to announce that the winner of that award is the Department of Florida.

Helping me present the award is Udie Grant, chairman of that committee. On behalf of The American Legion. The award reads, "The Garland E. Murphy Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Florida for the program year of 1998-1999. In recognition of their designation as the number one department in total contributions received from their volunteers in support of our annual program designed to meet the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of our nation's children through productive and meaningful grants." Signed by Udie Grant, the President of the Child Welfare Foundation, and by William Keys, the foundation's Executive Secretary.

Accepting the award is Lawrence Strainge, Past Department Commander of the Department of Florida.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER STRAINGE: On behalf of the Department of Florida, we thank you for this honor.

MR. GRANT: I have an award here for the National Organization of The American Legion. The Child Foundation is growing. In this year, we are having more requests for funds from the foundation than we have ever had. This next October the board of directors is going to be meeting. We have 71 grants totaling over $2,250,000. You can see how the information and the publicity about the foundation is growing. We annually give to organizations who are doing research about children on an annual basis from about $350,000 to $400,000. So you can see that we are going to have to do a lot of screening.

Now, how do we finance this? It's from contributions from you, from others, from foundations. And I would like to point out that the SAL with 200,000 members this past reporting year gave $181,000. That's almost a dollar per member. The American Legion Auxillary, with its 1 million members, contributed $89,000. The American Legion, with its almost 3 million, 2.8 million members, $84,000.

This is your foundation. I think we need to support it in a much more generous way. I think that we at least ought to reach that $100,000 mark each year. So I'm leaving it up to you. It goes for the good of the kids.

Now to make this presentation. "The Gold Award, recognized as a top supporter for the 1998-99 contribution year in service to the critical needs of America's children, is made possible through your caring and your generosity from the board of directors of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and to The American Legion, the National Organization."

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: In keeping with the spirit this afternoon, Udie, we have somebody from the Department of Oklahoma that wishes to make a donation to the foundation.

NECman ROY (OK): Oklahoma would like to kick this thing off and join with our state commander for this year with a check for $2,525.67 from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Now the Chair now recognizes Charles Mills, Chairman, the National Convention Committee on Consitutional Amendments, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Charles Mills, New York, Chairman

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 5, 1999 at the Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Avila Room #6, Concourse Level. Committee Liaison Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD) called the roll and announced that forty-six (46) members of the Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was agreed upon by the members and submitted to this Convention.

The meeting was opened by Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD), who acted as temporary chairman. He stated a quorum was present and proceeded to the first order of business which was the election of a permanent chairman and secretary.

Charles G. Mills (NY) was elected Chairman and Cathy J. Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary, thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of all the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, and copies of the National Constitution and By-Laws were made available to all members of the Committee.

A motion was made by Vincent M. Gaughan, and duly seconded that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting be seated with voice but no vote. The motion was carried by the members.

The Chair called upon Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., National Judge Advocate, to give a summary background report on the resolutions to the Committee, which was done.

The Chair then stated, based upon the National Judge Advocate's report to the Committee with regards to the requirements for consideration of resolutions to amend, he would rule out of order those resolutions which did not meet those requirements.

The Chair announced that he was in agreement with the Report of the Standing Committee that Resolution No. 40 (PA), Resolution No. 66 (TX) and Resolution No. 103 (IL) were out of order and that these resolutions would not be considered by the Convention Committee.

The meeting then proceeded to consider Resolution No. 12 (SD). This resolution is in proper form for a constitutional amendment to the Constitution of The American Legion and seeks to change the eligibility for membership in The American Legion as follows: "...or December 7, 1941 to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States,...".

The Committee agreed with the Standing Committee in that this resolution is impossible to interpret and is factually incorrect. In addition, this resolution would permit members of the Armed Forces who served during incursions of peace-keeping actions and not wartime engagements as members of The American Legion. This resolution could change the character of The American Legion as an organization of veterans who served during wartime.

This resolution could result in The American Legion losing the deductibility of contributions to it and its Departments and Posts under federal income tax. This resolution would permit a two-class membership in The American Legion, those entitled to veterans benefits due to service during wartime and those not entitled to benefits due to service during peacetime. This change from a wartime veterans organization to one including peacetime servicemen would present a real problem in arguing before Congress for benefits for services during wartime.

Also, the Legion's federal income tax position could be jeopardized. Money and materials contributed to the organization as a charitable contribution can presently be deducted from one's individual tax liability. Gifts to Legion Posts can be treated as gift tax deductions on individual tax returns. This was reaffirmed by an IRS ruling and the ruling was almost exclusively based upon a "war veterans" identification. The ruling clarified these tax considerations by requiring at least 90% of the members of the group receiving the contribution/gift must be "war veterans."

The change as requested in Resolution No. 12 could easily bring the membership in The American Legion below the 90% "war veterans" membership as required by the IRS for this tax privilege. The real solution to the problem would be to amend the tax code so that it would apply to veterans not just "war" veterans.

Finally, as worded, this resolution would wipe out all eligibility since the end of World War II.

William Weis (MO) a motion to reject Resolution No. 12 (SD). The motion was seconded by David King (KY) and unanimously adopted.

Resolution No. 124 (OH) was considered next. This resolution also is in proper form for a constitutional amendment to the Constitution of The American Legion. The resolution

seeks to admit men and women who served in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam Era with a beginning date of November 1, 1955 to May 7, 1975 for membership in The American Legion, retaining all other dates as presently exist for membership in The American Legion. This resolution, because it includes a period defined by International Law as "Peacetime", would cause the same tax problems as Resolution No. 12.

A motion was made by Harry Rhizor (NM), seconded by John Michalski (IN) to reject Resolution No. 124 (OH). The motion was passed unanimously.

At this time, I'd like to ask the Secretary of the Committee, Cathy Gorst, to continue with the report.

CATHY GORST (WI) continues: Resolution No. 145 (NE) was next considered. This resolution also is in proper form and seeks to change the eligibility for membership in The American Legion as follows: "...at some time since April 6, 1917, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States since April 6, 1917; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or is continued honorably; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service since April 6, 1917, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service."

This resolution also has a language problem because it doesn't establish when the various governments were associated with the United States. The resolution has serious ambiguity and no guidance is given as to its intended meaning. For example, a government could associate with the United States in one war, not in the next one and then become associated with the United States in a third war. An example that readily comes to mind is the NATO countries which were not associated with the United States as combatants during the Vietnam war.

A motion was made by Roy L. Kirkham (LA), seconded by Raymond Jacquez (MD) to reject Resolution No. 145 (NE). The motion was passed unanimously.

CHARLES MILLS: The Chair then asked for a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be permitted to sign the Report to the Convention on behalf of the members of the Committee.

Dee Collins (ID) made the motion, and seconded by Doug Winter (CO). The motion carried.

Roy L. Kirkham (LA) made the motion that the Chairman and Secretary be permitted to make technical reference or typographical changes to resolutions without changing the meaning. The motion was seconded by Al Canele (MA) and carried.

William R. Bryant (VA) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chairman. The motion was seconded by David King (KY). The Chairman then thanked the Committee for its cooperation and productive meeting. The meeting was then declared in recess pending a call from the Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate of the Department of Ohio, I move the adoption of the report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I'll assume that was a second I heard?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, those in favor of the motion please indicate in the normal manner. Those opposed nay? The adoption of the report is so moved.

I would now like to take a moment of personal privilege. All year long I have had the privilege of traveling this great nation in service to you, the veterans of this country of The American Legion. Almost every stop along the way I have had somebody with me that you all have gotten to know just about as much as I have. He has always been in the back of the room banging away on his computer or taking care of phone calls, whatever it is. It's long overdue, but I would like to do what I could right now to kind of give him his moment in the sun, Bill Moriarity. Thanks, partner.

MR. MORIARITY: A year ago, Commander Miller told me that we were in for quite a ride. I would like to say thanks to him. It was the ride of a lifetime. Thank you to each and every department that we went to for the hospitality that they showed the Commander and myself. I am the luckiest Legionnaire that is here. I have the finest or one of the finest mentors that anybody could ever ask for. With all of these witnesses here, I would like to just tell him that I'm giving him my 24 hour notice now that I have this gift.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Don't you love him?

As we prepare to bring this day to an end, this second day of business, let me once again urge you to visit the booths over in the exhibit hall. There's plenty of good information and ideas over there. I went over there yesterday and visited the booth that iBelong has over there. They tried to talk me into buying all that computer stuff, you know. I listened to them for about five minutes, and then I informed the young man that the quote that he has on the wall there, to tell everybody else to get into this, that's my quote. So he was talking to the wrong guy. But it's truly a very interesting booth. They have some great information there, and it is the future. I firmly believe that. I think that if you go over there and you look at it, you will agree. And there's lot of other good things over there, too.

I would please like to ask you now to stand, if you would. Join me in saluting the Colors of our nation. One! Two!

The convention will stand in recess until 9:00 tomorrow morning.

...At 3:00 p.m. The Convention recessed to convene the following day, Thursday, September 9, 1999, at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
THIRD DAY

Thursday, September 9, 1999

... At 8:30 a.m., the delegates were entertained by Mr. Peter Ole.

...At 9:00 a.m., the Delegates assembled for the third day of the 81st Annual National Convention and the following proceedings were had:

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The 81st Convention of The American Legion will come to order. Delegates, stand and join with me in a right-hand salute to the colors.

I ask Father Sweeney, the National Chaplain, to give us the invocation.

Invocation
Rev. Robert J. Sweeney, New York, National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for this day. May we pattern our lives after Your own. Grant us physical and moral strength to be valiant and to be truly wise. Give us wisdom to know and discern the truth and courage to stand by Your truth. May we never forget veterans in the VA Hospitals and the nursing facilities. May we work the members of our posts to further the cause of The American Legion for God and country. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance of our flag.

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I now declare this session of our Convention in order.

Repeat after me. I want to hear it loud and clear today. "Morale is high."

...The Delegates responded with a chorus of "Morale is high."

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Our guest plays a key role in implementing tactical defense strategy. He's a young man, having spent nearly thirty years in the United States Marine Corps. His leadership and professional achievements fill several pages. He's been near the top in everything he has done in the Corps, including the top Marine Aviator in 1982. Today, he is Commanding General of the First Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, California. I welcome Lt. General Bruce Knutson, Jr.

Address: Lt. General Bruce Knutson, Jr.
United States Marine Corps

When the Commandant out of the Marine Corps, General Jones, our new Commandant who's just been in office for two months, called and asked me to represent him, little did I know that I would be speaking to such a large and august body, representing the fifty states and the huge organization of The American Legion. Little did I know, also, that the list of guest speakers before me would include the likes of Vice President Gore, Senator Hatch, and Secretary West. It's a little overwhelming. Clearly, I'm honored to be in front of you. But I'm not honored because of the guest speakers who went before me. I'm honored because of you, the delegates 3000 plus, representing the fifty states, five territories, over 3 million

Legionnaires, doing great things for our country from supporting Boys and Girls State, youth marksmanship, too many scholarships to mention, teenage drug and suicide prevention programs and other civic action programs across all states and territories, doing what's right about America, day in and day out in our communities and supporting strong national defense. That's why I'm honored to be before you.

The other speakers, I'm sure, talked to you about the strength of the economy, foreign policy, social programs such as social security, Medicare, their support for National Defense, etc. But I'm going to talk just briefly about what your Marine Corps is doing to protect all that today, across the globe.

My wife, as always, gave me a little advice before I left home this morning to give this talk. She said, "Tell the story." And I know exactly what she means because it's her way of telling me to keep it short. The story is about this good friend of mine who's a fellow Marine General on the East Coast. Now, it's easy to tell stories about Marines on the other coast. He's a Marine General, he's a close friend of mine and he has a daughter who's a college student. She recently returned to school and wrote a letter to her father. It goes like this:

> Dear Dad, You know that red mustang you bought for me to go back to school this year? Well, last week I was in an accident and it was totaled. I wasn't hurt badly, but all the orthodontic work, which was just completed, has to be redone. The good news is I met this swell guy in the ambulance. He's been out of prison now for six months, he has two earrings, a goatee, a pony tail and if the tests come back positive, we'll be getting married. Page two. None of that is true, Dad, but I did get an F in Biology and I wanted you to keep things in perspective.

The point of that story, my wife tells me to tell, is that I need to keep it in perspective. I love talking about the Marine Corps. I love talking about Marines and I can go on and on. You're here at the Convention, your National Convention, winding up the last day of a very successful convention.

I will make a few remarks about your Marine Corps. We are out there today protecting all that's right about America. Today, 62 Marines from my command at Camp Pendleton are in Nairobi, Kenya guarding with machine gun nests and check points and bunkered positions the temporary embassy that our State Department is now occupying after the American Embassy was blown up last year. They have been there for over 12 months, guarding that temporary embassy and they are led by a First Lieutenant. In the Persian Gulf, we have 2,200 Marines on three amphibious ships who are just winding up an exercise with the United Arab Emirates, teaching the Arab Emirates that we are their partners in the defense of that vital part of the world. They are out there 12 months a year, every day. We have numerous battalions and squadrons and support units in Okinawa, in mainland Japan, providing for the defense and stability of the Western Pacific. I, myself, returned just eight days ago from Korea. My staff and I went there to do what we call a command post exercise, which is to exercise the war plan for the defense of Korea and that remains a very troubled peninsula with vital National Security interests to America. In the Mediterranean, we have a main expeditionary unit afloat on the shore in Turkey helping the Turkish people deal with that horrendous earthquake that they suffered just last week. We have two F-18 squadrons aboard Navy carriers, four deployed providing defense across the seas.

Now, I could go on and tell you about the status of the Corps, how we form up battalions, how we're trying to buy new equipment, how we're experimenting with new tactics and procedures, and how we're trying to harness this thing called technology. But rather, I'll talk a few minutes about the real strength of our Corps and that's the Marine, the

individual Marine. We have a bumper sticker in the Marine Corps with the following: "We equip the man, we don't man the equipment."

Now, there's a lot in that little saying and it really has the underlying philosophy of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is made up of individual Marines, that is our strength, that is our core, that is what we build on, that is what we build the team on. It's an important foundation because from the very beginning we've built combat capability, we've built defense based on the individual and if you think about it, that springs from what our country is founded on. Our country is a country of individuals where every single individual is equal and just as important as every other individual and that is the same idea as what we build our corps on.

We start at the recruiting process. If you notice in the advertisements on Sunday afternoon as you're watching the football game, we don't advertise about benefits and schooling and post service tuition. All we advertise in our recruiting advertisements is "in their face," giving them a challenge. Are you good enough to be a Marine? Can you hack the challenge? Can you stand up for what's right? Can you make it morally, physically and mentally? That's our advertising slogan and I'd ask you to pay attention to the advertising we do. And you know, in today's youth, it works. For fifty straight months we made our recruiting goals. No other service can come close to that in today's society. I do ask your help though. It's a very tough recruiting environment. That's why all the other services are having difficulty in not making their goals and quite frankly, we're struggling and just making it. Today's economy is extremely vibrant, provides much opportunity and a propensity for the youth to sign up in the services, not just the Marine Corps, is at an all time low. I don't think it's just the economy. I think also because we've had a rather long period of relative peace and a dwindling military. So at the Thanksgiving Day dinners, go ahead and talk about your service experience. In the teenage years and the young people around the Thanksgiving Day dinner should hear the stories and experiences of those of us that have served.

Most families in America today don't have the grandfather or grandmother who served in World War II, Korea, or even Vietnam. And so the propensity and the exposure of our youth today to the military and the benefits and rewards of service aren't as well known. Many of the ones whom we do recruit will tell us that they never thought about it. No one ever talked to them about the service. So, we have a big challenge ahead to recruit the excellence we have in our young people and I ask you for that.

We continue that challenge theme in the individuals as we send them though basic training. Our basic training at officer and enlisted level is the toughest of all the services. It's longer, it's tougher, we challenge them morally, physically and mentally. We make it hard. Recently, we instituted a thing called the Crucible. General Charles C. Krulak, our former Commandant, put it in as a test of unbelievable proportions, where for 54 straight hours, the young recruits are deprived of much sleep. I think they get 4-6 hours sleep in a 54 hour period, they're marched and put through a series of tactical problems as they're pushed farther than they ever thought possible, both physically and mentally. And then they have obstacles and problems to solve that are unsolvable by themselves individually. They have to bond together as a team to get through it. They have to join as fire teams and squad leaders to get across a make-believe stream or a gap and at the end of it they are physically exhausted.

But at the successful end, their drill sergeants hand them the "eagle, globe and anchor" and they are then called Marines. If you could see that early morning ceremony where the

youth of our country are standing there rubbing their globe and anchor with tears running down their eyes, you would see firsthand the making of a Marine.

In the follow-on training, we emphasize the aspect that every individual is part of the team. It goes in everything we do. We call ourselves the MAGTF. That's one of the tens of thousands of acronyms that we use in the service. We've had an explosion of acronyms and this one is the Marine Air Ground Task Force. It is a trinity of a *ground* combat element, normally the division, infantry division, the ACE, which is the *Air* Combat Element, and the CSS, the Combat Service Support of a *logistics* element. And every part of that team, air, ground and logistic support is what makes the United States Marine Corps, based on the individual, such a potent and world renowned fighting force.

I spend a lot of time going around Camp Pendleton and my other bases, visiting Marines—kicking boxes we call it—listening to their problems, their heartaches, their aspirations, and 'shooting the bull.' I look many of them in the eye and say, "You're job is just as important as my job. I'm a three-star general. If I don't do my job, we fail. If you don't do your job changing that hydraulic pump or siting in that rifle, we fail. Every individual on this team called the Marine Corps is as important as every other individual." I'm here to tell you the youth of America respond to that.

I'll mention one other thing and that is our commitment to values. We are a value based organization. We are founded on the very values that America is founded on and we work very hard to uphold them. We are teaching them at boot camp and upholding them at boot camp and we never let up. It's not easy, it's not always black and white and a lot of our Marines make mistakes. We try to forgive them as long as they've learned and as long as it's not repeated over and over again. But we stand and hope we uphold the values of America.

I'll tell you one more quick story that sums up kind of the way we feel about it in your United States Marine Corps. Clearly a man of the 20th Century, Winston Churchill was one of the greatest heroes of this century. But it seems that after World War II when he was still Prime Minister he was holding a consul, a meeting of his government. His ministers and he were conducting business at the conference table and wham! bam! the door slams open and his secretary runs in. He says, "Mr. Prime Minister, terrible news from Brazil. Your mother-in-law has died. What are your instructions?" He responded with "Embalm, cremate, bury at sea: take no chances."

We take no chances with your Marines Corps. We take the youth of America. We treat them. We challenge them. We make them hard. We uphold the values. We mold them together. We do our very best to mold together a fighting force that protects our great country. Sometimes we don't change as quickly as we should but we can't take the risk. We take no chances because our mission that the American people have given us is way too important. General Krulak, the 31st Commandant who just retired, had a saying: "What the Marine Corps is about is making Marines and winning battles." So, if you think about how we provide for defense, all the other services of our country out there, away from our shores defending America, and you think about how the Marine Corps does it and our foundation on individual Marines as part of the team, then you think about making Marines. That is so important and winning battles becomes a by-product. We can do that every single time, if we make the Marines right.

I congratulate you on a great convention and thank you for inviting me and the Commandant for asking me to represent him. I ask you for your continued support and wish you well in all that you do across our country.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award
Butch L. Miller, Virginia, National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The 1998 Fourth Estate Award recognizes outstanding journalism creating a positive impact on a community or state. It is difficult to tell the story of the work that this year's winner has done It is not simply a special project that our winning reporter accomplished. It is an on-going example of true investigative reporting. Jerry Mitchell of *The Clarion-Ledger* of Jackson, Mississippi, accomplished much during 1998. Among the results of his reporting are: a Klan killer brought to justice; a re-examination by authorities of the 1964 deaths of three young civil rights workers; making public the secrets of the now open Mississippi Sovereignty Commission files; and, most importantly, hastening the healing in Mississippi. I present to this Convention the 1998 Fourth Estate Award winner, Mr. Jerry Mitchell. Accepting the award with Jerry is Rick Santos from Maryland, PR Chairman. On the award reads the following:

> The American Legion 1998 Fourth Estate Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Journalism. Presented to Jerry Mitchell, *The Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson, Mississippi. Presented at the 81st National Convention, September 9, 1999, Anaheim, California.

JERRY MITCHELL: I can't tell you what an honor it is to be here today. My father was a Navy pilot, stationed just down the road here at Miramar for a number of years, in fact, many of his fellow pilots didn't return from Vietnam. I just can't tell you what an honor it is to have this come from you. I really feel like this honor doesn't belong to me. It really belongs to God, I think, Who's really carried the burden of what's gone on rather than me. I feel like He's really done the work and, therefore, He's the one that deserves the glory. I think of those men who have given their lives, like those in my dad's squadron and so many of your friends. The good book says, "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." I think that's a spirit that we all need to have, a spirit of surrender to self. And I think The American Legion emulates that. I just hope and pray that for us as a nation, we can emulate that spirit as well, to learn to surrender. Thank you so much for this award. It means so much to me.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair now recognizes Bill Bishop from Alaska for the purpose of a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
William M. Bishop, Alaska, Chairman

At 8:30 a.m., Sunday, September 5, 1999, 47 Delegates and Alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in the California Ballroom, Section B, Ballroom Level of The Anaheim Hilton & Towers, Anaheim, California. Mr. William M. Bishop (AK) was elected Chairman and Mr. Melvin M. 'Doc' Simon (VT) was appointed Secretary. Motions were also adopted authorizing the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report on behalf of the delegates as well as to make administrative and technical changes.

Following this initial meeting, two Ad Hoc Administrative Convention Subcommittees met in separate locations to consider the resolutions that had been assigned to them. The following were appointed Chairmen:

General Foreign Policy:	Chairman A.J. Forestiere, Arkansas
Far Eastern Affairs:	Chairman John Mullen, North Dakota

At 11:30 a.m., Sunday, September 5, 1999, the Delegates met in the California Ballroom for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations. Reports of the two Convention Ad Hoc Administrative Subcommittees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 12 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations and no resolutions were originated by the Committee.

The following Ad Hoc Subcommittee reports contain resolutions which will, in conjunction with resolutions previously adopted, provide an effective and viable foreign relations program for The American Legion. That program will fully support a strong and dynamic U.S. foreign policy to promote democracy around the world and discharge America's responsibility as leader of the free world in the continuing struggle to defend and promote liberty.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on
General Foreign Policy
A.J. Forestiere, Arkansas, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 76: America's Future
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The major international goals long sought by The American Legion—democracy and deterrence of general war—are closer to realization than ever before; and

WHEREAS, Far-reaching worldwide changes now occurring are altering Americans' perception of the threats to their security and making it imperative for the United States to adjust its grand strategy in light of new realities and future challenges as we prepare for the new millennium; and

WHEREAS, Ideas of democracy and market economics are gaining increasing acceptance around the world, thereby creating new hopes of peace and prosperity for mankind; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear and regional military threats still confront the Free World and transnational issues such as terrorism and drugs still confront civilization; and

WHEREAS, The collapse of the Soviet-style command economies, demands for democracy in Eastern Europe, ethnic warfare, economic difficulties in Asia, movement toward European unity, and growing international interdependence jointly create a new political and economic situation in the world; and

WHEREAS, As Americans search for a new definition of America's world role, they must forge a bipartisan consensus providing focus, continuity, and wise use of limited national resources for national security-foreign policy purposes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion, as a grassroots organization reaching throughout the land, recognizes the unprecedented changes throughout the world and urges the U.S. government to adopt a bipartisan national security-foreign policy of "Democratic Activism" promoting democratic values, maintaining adequate military

strength to deter or defeat aggression, cooperating with allies, encouraging free and fair trade, and assisting developing nations.

Resolution No. 77: Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, as veterans of wartime service in the defense of liberty, have a special concern for maintaining peace with freedom and recognize that a strong U.S. foreign policy is vital in that regard; and

WHEREAS, The official concern of The American Legion stems from that part of the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion which states: "We associate ourselves together...to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy..."; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion believes that the objectives of U.S. foreign policy must be to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That U.S. foreign policy should embody the following principles:

1. Recognition of U.S. responsibilities as leader of the Free World and of our heritage and traditions.
2. Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture.
3. Active promotion of democracy.
4. Support for human rights in other countries when such is consistent with U.S. national interests and national power.
5. Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share.
6. Use of national resources in critical world regions to achieve U.S. national interests.
7. Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve U.S. national security.
8. Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles to terrorist, communist or aggressor nations.
9. Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking.
10. Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with U.S. sovereignty and serve U.S. national interests.
11. Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices.
12. Recognition that the world basically operates on a national basis; consequently, U.S. sovereignty must not be abridged unless required by important U.S. national security interests.
13. Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of U.S. foreign policy as envisioned in the U.S. Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding.
14. Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests world-wide.

Resolution No. 154: Support for U.S. Steel Industry
Origin: NY
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee
As amended

WHEREAS, Many members of The American Legion are steelworkers and are clearly concerned about the crisis in the steel industry; and

WHEREAS, As Americans from all walks of life, we are deeply concerned about the crisis facing the American steel industry in that world-wide economic problems, particularly in Asia and Russia, are bringing a flood of unfairly traded foreign steel into America which threatens to devastate the industry, its hard-working employees, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Over the last 15 years, the American industry, its workers, and their unions have made tremendous sacrifices while working together to create the most efficient and productive steel industry in the world; and

WHEREAS, While we understand the need to aid foreign nations that are experiencing financial and social crises, we will not do so by sacrificing our steel industries, steel workers, their communities, and their union. Foreign governments and companies that illegally or unfairly dump their steel into our market must be dealt with swiftly and effectively by all necessary means; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support any and all actions necessary to immediately stop the flood of unfairly traded steel.

Resolution No. 159: House Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs
Origin: NY
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee
As amended

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported, endorsed, and lobbied for all legislation pertinent to the accounting of our POW/MIA's; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Peter King has, in the past, introduced legislation for the purpose of establishing a Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion strongly urges legislation to be introduced in The House of Representatives to create a Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Foreign Relations

Resolution No. 45 (MX) 1999 NC: **War Powers Act**
Resolution No. 170 (MI) 1999 NC: **Support for Michigan POW/MIA Legislation**

Rejected

Resolution No. 36 (MA) 1999 NC: **International Light for Peace**

Resolution No. 152 (NY) 1999 NC: **Mayaguez Incident MIA's**

Far Eastern Affairs
John Mullen, North Dakota, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 2: Policy on Support to The Republic of Korea
Origin: AK
Submitted by: Foreign Relations Committee

WHEREAS, The security of the Korean Peninsula is vital to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as well as to the security of the United States, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)-United States security alliance based on the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to the deterrence of war on the Korean Peninsula and to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, The government of the Republic of Korea embraces a forward-looking engagement policy toward North Korea based on three principles: (1) deterrence of any armed provocation, (2) denial of unification by absorption, and (3) promotion and reconciliation and cooperation. In so doing, the ROK government is pursuing the peaceful coexistence of South and North Korea as well as the dismantlement of the Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, Despite serious food shortage and economic failures, it is indicative that North Korea continues to build up its military capabilities, particularly long-range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons which weapons of mass destruction pose a grave threat to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia as well as to the security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, North Korea and the United States are currently negotiating to resolve the nuclear issue, such as access to the suspect underground facility in North Korea and the implementation of the KEDO light-water reactor project pursuant to the 1994 U.S.-DPRK (Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea) Agreed Framework, and to resolve the issue of North Korea's development, production, deployment and export of missiles, and in addition, Four Party Talks, involving the two Koreas, China and the United States, are being pursued in an attempt to reduce tensions and build confidence on the Korean Peninsula, and to eventually replace the current Armistice Agreement with a lasting peace arrangement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the government of the United States render prompt and effective assistance to the Republic of Korea to repel any external armed attack against the Republic of Korea in accordance with the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty, and to maintain solid ROK-U.S. combined defense readiness, and make efforts toward the long-term development of the ROK-U.S. security alliance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States increase its efforts to reduce the North Korean threat of weapons of mass destruction and reach an agreement with North Korea on the control of its development, production, deployment and export of ballistic missiles and to encourage North Korea to participate in international non-proliferation programs including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and that the U.S.

government take determined steps toward North Korea's missile threats with close consultations with the ROK government; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States continue its efforts for the further progress of the Four Party Talks with the thought that positive progress in the Four Party Talks is important to the reduction of tensions and establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and maintain the current Armistice Agreement as well as United Nations edicts until the Armistice Agreement is superseded by a durable peace arrangement.

Resolution No. 3: China and Taiwan
Origin: AK
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee
As amended

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), the United States has an obligation to provide defense equipment and defense services, in such quantities that the government of the Republic of China may maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Communist regime is a major threat to the nations of the Far East and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Recent revelations indicate that the Chinese Communists have not only purchased dual-use high-tech systems and information from the United States (including long-range missile technology and secure fiber optics telecommunications equipment), but have also conducted extensive espionage activities against U.S. nuclear research labs and possibly other military installations; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Communists have used such technology and information, whether purchased or obtained by espionage, to build formidable military systems and has exported locally-developed and the U.S.-based military technology and weapon systems to countries, such as Iraq, which oppose the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Pacific Rim; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion supports and encourages extensive Congressional investigations of both espionage activities conducted by the Chinese Communists and the transfer of dual-use technology to the Chinese Communists by U.S. corporations, with full disclosure by the Congress of the United States, to the American public of the nature of such espionage and transfers and their efforts on U.S. national security; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes the export of any U.S. dual-use high technology information and/or equipment to the Chinese Communists and insists that the approval authority for all technology exports be returned to the proper agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department of State, where it was originally, before such authority was granted to the Department of Commerce; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports and encourages the continued sales of sophisticated American weapon systems to the Republic of China, so that it can maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Resolution No. 21: Trade with The People's Republic of China
Origin: CO

Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee
As amended

WHEREAS, The trade regulations overseen by the U.S. Department of Commerce has been relaxed by the present administration, causing high tech missile and computer technology to be made available to China by U.S. corporations; and

WHEREAS, China has refused to comply with our wishes to curtail their nuclear missile program and have sold their weapons systems to other countries not favored by the United States; and

WHEREAS, China has been implicated in the espionage of the U.S. nuclear weapons program; and

WHEREAS, China has been dumping their foreign products on U.S. soil, taking away many manufacturing jobs which U.S. veterans could have come home to; and

WHEREAS, China has not done a reasonable job in protecting human rights in their country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate to return the U.S. Department of Commerce restrictions of trade with China to the former standard held before this administration took office; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States drop China from the normal trade relations trade status they presently enjoy.

Resolution No. 78: Chinese Espionage in the United States
Origin: MD
Submitted By: Foreign Relations Committee
As amended

WHEREAS, The U.S. House Select Committee Report (The Cox Report), a bi-partisan inquiry, has found that "The People's Republic of China has stolen design information on the United States' most advanced thermonuclear weapons;" and

WHEREAS, These thefts of nuclear secrets from our national weapons laboratories enabled the People's Republic of China to design, develop and successfully test modern strategic nuclear weapons sooner than would otherwise have been possible; and

WHEREAS, The theft of U.S. nuclear secrets gives the People's Republic of China design information on thermonuclear weapons on a par with our own; and

WHEREAS, It has also come to light that the People's Republic of China contributed funds to 1996 Presidential campaigns in order to influence U.S. foreign policy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion calls for the U.S. government to take appropriate corrective action to prevent further damage caused to our national security by the theft of these technologies by the People's Republic of China; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the U.S. government should take steps to ensure that this type of activity, by any entity, that has caused damage to our national security will not happen again in the future.

CHAIRMAN BISHOP: As a duly elected delegate from the Department of Alaska, I move for the adoption of the report of the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion, signify in the usual manner. Those opposed? Ayes have it. The report on Foreign Relations is adopted.

The Chair recognizes Alan Titus of Indiana, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security for the purposes of a report.

Report: Convention Committee on National Security Committee
Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 5, 1999, 246 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in Anaheim Hilton & Towers, California Ballroom, Section A, Ballroom Level. At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and his Secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolutions and to sign the report on behalf of the delegates. Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) was elected Chairman and Mr. George E. Harvey (Michigan) was appointed Secretary.

The six authorized Convention Committees (Aerospace, Defense Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, and Naval Affairs) met in separate meeting rooms. An additional Ad Hoc committee was appointed for General Security resolutions which required special attention. In compliance with NEC Resolution 18, a subcommittee on Conservation of Natural Resources was appointed. The following were elected Chairmen and Secretaries of the Convention Security Committees:

Aerospace
- Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman
- Allen J. Bero, New York, Secretary

Defense Civil Preparedness
- Paul J. Andrejewski, Minnesota, Chairman
- John Shurrer, Wisconsin, Secretary

Law and Order
- Daniel Darcy, Illinois, Chairman
- George W. Wehrli, Florida, Secretary

Merchant Marine
- Charles Moreland, Florida, Chairman
- Charles P. Powell, Jr., Virginia, Secretary

Military Affairs
- Norman C. Schlemmer, Indiana, Chairman
- Stanley D. Nelson, Alaska, Secretary

Naval Affairs
- Gerard W. Cheffer, Illinois, Chairman
- Daniel Burkhardt, Maryland, Secretary

General Security Ad Hoc
- Franklin R. Sickle, Jr., New Jersey, Chairman

Alexander MacInnes, New York, Secretary
Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke, South Dakota, Chairman
Richard Jepsen, Kansas, Secretary

On Sunday at 11:30 a.m., September 5, 1999, the delegates again assembled in the same room for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on National Security. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 34 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Security or prepared by the Committee to meet problems which were held to be of concern to The American Legion and germane to its principles and objectives.

General Security Ad Hoc Committee
Franklin R. Sickle, New Jersey, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 17: Nuclear Security
Origin: CO
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Our nation's nuclear weapons programs have been damaged by security breeches and espionage due to inadequate security measures at our nuclear laboratories; and

WHEREAS, China has been implicated as playing a major role in obtaining this technology and transferring this technology to enemies of our nation; and

WHEREAS, The condition of the security of these systems needs to be upgraded and maintained to the highest level of national security protection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges the United States Congress to return the United States nuclear weapons programs and defense systems to the highest level of security and to support these programs with adequate funding.

Resolution No. 42: Status of Forces Agreements and Military Retiree Use of Overseas Military Facilities
Origin: MX
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, A portion of the compensated benefits of military retirees is considered to be the use of military facilities such as Post Exchanges, Commissaries, recreational facilities, and other U.S. military facilities worldwide; and

WHEREAS, As a direct result of the Status of Forces agreements negotiated between the U.S. Government and host countries, many, if not all, of these benefits are usually denied to retired military members and their families/dependents residing or visiting U.S. military facilities located outside the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges that all future Status of Forces Agreements which are negotiated, renegotiated, or revised with host countries

should allow for the unimpeded use of all United States military facilities by retired U.S. military members and their dependents.

Resolution No. 68: Military Funeral Honors for Veterans
Origin: MD
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Providing military honors at veterans funerals represents the final tribute to special Americans who served their Country in uniform during periods of war and peace, and rendering these final tributes will warrant a rededication of effort and manpower to adequately accomplish; and

WHEREAS, Previous Department of Defense policy (DoD Directive 1300.15) called for the Military Services to render appropriate military honors to eligible veterans and others within the constraints of available resources. The Military Services provided funeral honors in accordance with these regulatory, not statutory, directives which became outdated by a variety of factors to include manpower and budgetary downsizing over the years; and

WHEREAS, Active duty and reserve component (National Guard and Reserves) manpower strengths have been reduced by 35 percent down to 1.4 million in the active component and 886,000 in the reserve components and, coupled with worldwide military deployments, has further strained the availability of manpower resources for veterans funerals; and

WHEREAS, Although the cumulative demand for military burial honors is currently unknown, as are the numbers of accommodated and unaccommodated requests for honors, the military services provided honors for 30,600 funerals in 1997 and nearly 35 percent of these military honors rendered consisted of single representatives. The number of ceremonies rendered is expected to rise over 250,000 per year as veterans' mortality rates continue to increase; and

WHEREAS, According to recent American Legion Consolidated Post Reports, many American Legion honor guard and firing party details have been formed, and The American Legion, as well as other veterans service organizations, have played a significant role in rendering military-like honors at veterans funerals although the precise degree of participation within the total effort is unknown. Just as the military continues to downsize, the membership of veterans service organizations has also been declining due to the passing of its own veterans. Since 1989, the number of deaths per year has climbed 18 percent as the active force has been reduced by over 33 percent; and

WHEREAS, The Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 directed the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to address the growing national concern over the availability and delivery of military funeral honors for America's veterans; and

WHEREAS, The DoD responded by acknowledging the national obligation to demonstrate the Nation's gratitude to veterans who defended our Nation during times of war and peace, and the Military Services would be required upon request of the next of kin to provide funeral honors at veterans burials. DoD is committed to providing increased military funeral honors by January 1, 2000; and

WHEREAS, The actual extent of military participation will depend on local resources and distances from supporting military installations. Minimum military funeral honors would consist of a team which would conduct the flag-folding ceremony and present the flag

to the family. At least two members of the team would be uniformed members of the veterans' parent service. A live or recorded rendering of "Taps" would be presented; and

WHEREAS, The Defense Department has recommended to Congress several changes to enhance reserve component participation to include allowing reservists to receive additional pay and retirement points above the annual 75-point cap and to be authorized to remain on active duty status beyond the 180-day limit. Additionally, toll-free numbers for the military services and other providers would be provided on a regional basis to funeral directors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges the Congress to mandate and appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the Military Services, to include the Reserve Components, to provide military honors upon request at veterans funerals in coordination with veterans service organizations such as The American Legion at local levels; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense and Military Services be encouraged to participate in military funeral honors to a greater degree than any minimum specified by law; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That performance of funeral honors functions by the National Guard be designated as an official mission requirement, and that the Department of Defense and Congress authorize the requisite positions and funding to support veterans funerals in all the states; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congressional funding approved for the rendering of military honors should be used explicitly for this purpose and not for other readiness requirements.

Resolution No. 69: Proposals to Ensure A Strong National Defense
Origin: MD
Submitted By: National Security Committee
Consolidated with No. 14 (SD)

WHEREAS, With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States on the eve of the 21st century faces a myriad of worldwide diverse and difficult threats and challenges to include serious regional threats to European instability in the Balkans as well as the continuing challenges to stability posed by North Korea, the People's Republic of China and by the vehemently defiant Iraq and Iran. Additionally, the United States must remain ever vigilant to the challenges of terrorism and the non-traditional threats of increasing nuclear proliferation and the potential usage of chemical and biological weapons by rogue nations; and

WHEREAS, The three major strategy reviews conducted by the Department of Defense, namely, the 1991 Base Force Strategy, 1993 Bottom-up Review and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review all shared the common belief that the United States can remain a global power(the "sole universal power"(at substantially lower defense budget levels than during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, As the world's "sole universal power," the United States would increasingly respond to worldwide regional and ethnic disputes, while reducing its military forces and defense budgets and reprogramming budgetary resources for domestic programs; and

WHEREAS, The Chiefs of the Military Services have acknowledged that defense budgetary reductions and depressed quality of life features have contributed to alarming low recruitment and retention levels and threatening the Nation's military readiness; and

WHEREAS, Despite the administration's claim to have significantly increased the Fiscal Year 2000 defense budget and the six-year budget plan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff disclosed in September 1998 that the military services faced a $160 billion shortfall over the FY 2000-2005 period; and

WHEREAS, Defense economists have also pointed out that without larger defense procurement budgets, the military services would have no choice but to further reduce force structure and manpower levels and to accept higher military risks; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-five years ago Americans opted for an all-volunteer force to provide for our national security. Inherent in that commitment was a willingness to invest the needed resources to bring into existence a competent, professional, and well-equipped military. Now is not the time to dismantle, through the consequences of under-resourcing national defense, what has been achieved in creating the all-volunteer force; and

WHEREAS, In light of these developments, The American Legion convened a meeting of its Policy Coordination and Action Group (PCAG) and heard from Defense Department and Congressional officials as well as Non-Governmental Organizations such as defense industrial and military association representatives on issues pertaining to declining military readiness and quality of life features as well as the impact of increased operating tempos and under-resourced defense budgets on recruiting, retention and readiness; and

WHEREAS, At the PCAG meeting, it was subsequently directed that the staff prepare a White Paper containing their recommendations with respect to these issues which are cited below; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the National Executive Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges that the Congress implement the following recommendations, as a minimum, with regard to current and future defense budgets:

- Passage of enhanced military quality of life features, beginning with the Fiscal Year 2000 defense budget and continuing in subsequent budgets which call for closing the pay gap with the private sector, an enhanced military retirement system, improved benefits under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and other quality of life features.
- Defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product needs to be increased from the current 2.9 percent to between 3 and 4 percent annually. At least an additional $160 billion should be authorized and appropriated over the next six years to address those readiness concerns voiced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- The Quadrennial Defense Review, the national military strategy, should be directed to provide the forces and the defense budgets necessary to fight two nearly simultaneously major regional conflicts. Most importantly, the mismatch between resources and ever-increasing military peace enforcement missions needs to be eliminated.

- Finally, force modernization for the Services needs to be realistically funded and not further delayed or the United States is likely to unnecessarily risk American lives; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls upon the American people to express their gratitude to the men and women in uniform for their many sacrifices and to urge their elected representatives in Congress to support the requisite funding for a stronger national defense.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 43 (MX) 1999 NC: **Use of Tricare Healthcare Outside the United States by Military Retirees**
Resolution No. 117 (OH) 1999 NC: **Investigate Theft of Missile Guidance Technology and Campaign Contributions**

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 71 (MD) 1999 NC: **The American Legion Statement on Yugoslavia**
Resolution No. 156 (NY) 1999 NC: **ROTC on College Campuses**

Rejected

Resolution No. 20 (CO) 1999 NC: **Payment of Income Taxes for the Armed Forces**

Aerospace Committee
Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 94: Support for Aeronautical Research
Origin: VA
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, In the pioneering days of aviation, this nation recognized the important values for aeronautics research. Therefore, Congress established the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA the predecessor to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA), with follow on investment in national aeronautics research laboratories and wind tunnels, which amounts to billions of dollars since 1915. The result: every aircraft, worldwide, uses NASA technology; and

WHEREAS, The aeronautic advances we currently enjoy have provided this nation with leading technology, world leadership and air superiority in the civil and military arena, some of which has taken 10 to 20 years of extensive research. Now the Nation's aeronautics research programs are in serious decline and NASA aeronautics research appropriations have declined over 37% since FY 1994. The FY 2000 budget further drops funding to a mere $640 million out of the agency's $13.6 billion, terminates high-speed research, and terminates advanced subsonic research; and

WHEREAS, NASA's top priority, the International Space Station, threatens to consume even larger portions of the agency's budget. As a consequence NASA will not achieve the 10 national aviation-related outcome goals announced in 1997 under the "Three Pillars for Success," (Pillar One-Global Civil Aviation, Pillar Two-Revolutionary Technology Leaps, Pillar Three-Access to Space) which was the response to the 1996 Presidential Report on Aeronautics and Space and pronounced all three pillars as critical to this Nation's continued leadership; and

WHEREAS, In civil air, less than 10 years ago Boeing and McDonnell Douglas had more than 70% of the world market. Europe's AirBus now has more than 50% and is aiming for 60-70%. This Nation needs to awaken to the fact that competitive nations have recognized the importance of aeronautics for economic and technology reasons and have built new wind tunnels and expanded research, and Boeing and Lockheed Martin are doing a significant portion of their wind tunnel testing abroad because the tunnels are newer and accessible. Also of significant concern and according to Company officials, plans call for the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to be tested abroad. This trend presents an industrial and military security threat. Furthermore, overseas testing provides a competitive edge and availability of our aero technology, testing techniques, research, aerodynamic development, test procedure, data acquisition and analysis to overseas competitors in the military and civil aeronautic arena; and

WHEREAS, Critics who view aeronautics research as "corporate welfare" do not recognize the long-lead-time research and technology advances vs. market realities or the national stake (economy, jobs, trade balance, prestige) in this technology. NASA's aeronautics laboratories have the research facilities, including wind tunnels and technical expertise to conduct the cutting-edge scientific inquiry needed to advance the state-of-the-art military and civil aircraft. Fundamental research in aeronautics is not being supported anywhere else in this Nation; and

WHEREAS, Civil air traffic is expected to triple over the next decade. Also of concern is the aging vintage of our military aircraft. New concepts, designs, and technologies have to evolve if costs are to be contained and efficiency and safety increased and military air superiority is to be maintained. These objectives must be based on solid research available to all manufactures and supported by those who benefit the flying public. The responsibility appropriately belongs to the Federal Government, to NASA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion recognizes that aeronautical research programs are critical to our national security and the continued dominance of American aeronautics. Therefore, the Congress is strongly urged to restore full funding of the NASA budget and mandate an amount equal to ten percent of the NASA budget for aeronautical research programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress direct NASA to achieve the 10 national aeronautics related outcome goals announced in 1997 under "Three Pillars for Success." Further, that Congress mandate that all military aircraft research, engineering, development and testing be performed within the boundaries of this Nation and also takes the initiative to upgrade the research facilities of this Nation and encourage civil aero-testing within these facilities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That with the decline of the United States global commercial aircraft market of 90% to below 50%, as well as the aging of our military aircraft and the increased investment by other countries in aeronautics, that the NASA aeronautics budget should be

fully restored to 1990 funding levels to meet the challenges of the 21st Century in military and civil aeronautics; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall employ its efforts to make this Nation and the Congress rectify the serious decline in aeronautics research which is critical to this Nation's continued world leadership and military capabilities.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 72 (MD) 1999 NC: **Support for the National Space Program**

Conservation of Natural Resources
Donald T. Clarke, South Dakota, Chairman

No new resolutions were received. The Committee conducted a review of previously adopted resolutions and reaffirmed their relevance.

Defense Civil Preparedness Committee
Paul J. Andrejewski, Minnesota, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 32 (MA) 1999 NC: **American Legion Support for Blood Banks**

Law and Order Committee
Daniel Darcy, Illinois, Chairman

No new resolutions were received. The Committee conducted a review of previously adopted resolutions and reaffirmed their relevance.

Merchant Marine Committee
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 107: Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws
Origin: FL
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always stressed that maintaining a viable U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and its supporting infrastructure is essential to the economic, national, and environmental security of this nation; and

WHEREAS, The maritime policy of the United States, as articulated in the 1936 Merchant Marine Act, states that "it is necessary for the national defense and development of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a Merchant Marine:

> Sufficient to carry its domestic water-borne commerce and a substantial portion of the water export and import foreign commerce;

- Capable of serving as a Naval and Military Auxiliary in time of war or national emergency;
- Owned and operated under the U.S. Flag by citizens of the United States
- Composed of the best equipped, fastest, and most suitable types of vessels, constructed in the United States and manned with trained and efficient citizen personnel; and
- Supplemented by efficient facilities for ship building and ship repair"; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned about the continued decline of the U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and the shortage of trained American Mariners; and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of 1998, the privately owned ocean going U.S.-Flag fleet consisted of only 259 active ships. This number included 119 ships in domestic trade and 36 other engaged exclusively in U.S. government work. Thus, only 104 U.S.-Flag ships are operating in international trade in support of the nation's economic and national security interests; and

WHEREAS, The United States is the world's largest trading nation, but only three percent of United States imports and exports are carried in U.S.-Flag ships which is economically unwise and militarily imprudent; and

WHEREAS, The Jones Act which is critical to United States National Security and to America's economic well being should be reaffirmed as should the continuation of the annual appropriations needed to fund the Maritime Security Act of 1996; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion support the Jones Act and related Maritime cabotage laws critical to America's maritime infrastructure and therefore to U.S. National Defense; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion would oppose legislation that has been introduced to alter those laws in ways that, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other defense leaders, and to many members of Congress, would be harmful both to the U.S. Defense infrastructure and to America's economic well being; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the Charter and Build program, now being considered by the Congress, that would provide commercially-financed and commercially-operated ships on long-term charter for the afloat logistic support of Naval forces; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support proposals that would move truck traffic from coastal highway and train corridors to offshore ships as a way to reduce both traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, improve highway safety, and strengthen the U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine by increasing the number of ships in the contiguous coastal trades; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support whatever additional budgetary and legislative measures are needed to maintain a robust U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine and its supporting infrastructure.

Military Affairs Committee
Norman C. Schlemmer, Indiana, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Approved

Resolution No. 60: Using Military Personnel for Experimentation Purposes
Origin: ND
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces make numerous personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Forces should be accorded our special respect and gratitude; and

WHEREAS, Although they sacrifice and relinquish many personal liberties, they should not have to surrender their own privacy and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, It is unethical to use service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and consent; and

WHEREAS, Our Government has in the past used military members as human guinea pigs to test the effects of harmful and injurious substances on the body; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration plans to make final a temporary ruling allowing administration of experimental drugs to military members without their knowledge and informed consent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion oppose any rule or provision that would authorize the utilization of service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

Resolution No. 70: The Armed Forces Retirement Homes
Origin: MD
Submitted By: National Security Committee
Consolidated with Resolution No. 127 (UT)

WHEREAS, The United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home (USSAH) and the United States Naval Home (USNH), jointly called the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), are continuing care facilities which were created more than 150 years ago to offer retirement homes for distinguished veterans who had served as soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in our Nation's conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH system, which is available to retiree veterans from all the Armed Services whose active duty was at least 50 percent enlisted or warrant officer, has been supported by a trust fund resourced by 50 cents a month withheld from active duty enlisted and warrant officer paychecks as well as from fines and forfeitures from disciplinary actions, resident fees and interest income; and

WHEREAS, The extensive downsizing of the Armed Forces has resulted in a 39 percent decrease in revenue and, coupled with rising nursing home care costs, the Homes have been operating at a $8-10 million annual deficit which would reportedly require both Homes to close their doors by the year 2004; and

WHEREAS, As the Armed Forces Retirement Homes have never sought nor received Congressionally-approved funding, the AFRH management has initiated numerous actions to reduce operating costs and increase revenues to include reducing the number of AFRH residents by more than 800 to a total of 1,600 residents, cutting staff by 24 percent and closing two dormitories. Additionally, dormitory resident fees are being increased to 40 percent of received federal annuities; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has authorized the Department of Defense to raise service members' assessments from 50 cents to $1.00 per month which has yet to be exercised; and such an increase could raise revenues by about $7.5 million annually; and

WHEREAS, Although the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 directs the sale of an excess 49 acre parcel of land from the USSAH to the Washington Archdiocese without competitive bids, the AFRH Board has subsequently proposed a long-term lease arrangement of this land to the Archdiocese; and

WHEREAS, Even if these potential sources of income reach fruition, they will not likely provide the permanent, long-term funding which is vital to assure the solvency and viability of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the U.S. Naval Home; and

WHEREAS, Maintaining both Homes also represents retaining the promise to current active duty service members and veterans that "our Nation and our military will look after their own" after their military careers have been completed; and

WHEREAS, This resolution was adopted by the National Executive Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That the American Legion urges the Congress to support and fund those measures, to include annual Congressional appropriations, which will provide for the long-term solvency and viability of the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the United States Naval Home.

Resolution No. 75: American Battle Monuments Commission Funding
Origin: MD
Submitted By: National Security Committee
Consolidated with Resolution No. 128 (UT)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), was established by law in 1923, as an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the United States Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Battle Monuments Commission was charged to erect suitable memorial shrines, for designing, constructing, operating and maintaining permanent United States Military Cemeteries and Memorials in foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, These United States Military Cemeteries have been established throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, These cemeteries are hallowed grounds for America's war dead; and

WHEREAS, Funding reductions for the maintenance of the United States Military Cemeteries in foreign countries has created reductions in human resources, equipment and supplies; and

WHEREAS, United States Military Cemeteries exist in foreign countries today, which are in need of adequate funding for repair, maintenance, additional manpower and other functions necessary to preserve the integrity of all World War I and World War II cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, Visitation numbers are increasing annually at United States Military Cemeteries overseas; and

WHEREAS, This resolution had been approved by the National Executive Committee at the Spring 1998 meetings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge the United States Congress to appropriate adequate funding and human resources to the American Battle Monuments Commission in order to properly maintain and preserve the final resting place of America's war dead located on foreign soil.

Resolution No. 92: Reserve and National Guard Force Levels
Origin: IA
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The Founders of The American Legion in convention in 1919 felt that the loss of many of their comrades was due to unpreparedness of the Nation and little training; and

WHEREAS, Although the American public demanded demobilization, The American Legion wanted a small regular military establishment and the creation of a citizens army composed of organized Reserves and National Guard units; and

WHEREAS, The size of the United Army, even after the Reserves were called to duty in 1940, was less than 500,000 men, and many units were forced to train with wooden sticks and paper tanks because of the lack of equipment caused by our Nation's leadership disarming our military in the 1920s and early 1930s; and

WHEREAS, If America had had a strong ready Reserve and National Guard with the latest military equipment at the beginning of World War II, early losses would have been mitigated and tens of thousands of men and women would not have been killed, wounded or disabled; and

WHEREAS, As of the Persian Gulf War, our reserve forces in 1990 totaled 1,898,000, however, by 1996 the total was 1,605,000, a loss of 293,000; Army Guard units went from 444,000 to 373,000, a loss of 71,000; Air Guard from 118,000 to 109,000, a loss of 9,000; Air Reserve from 286,000 to 261,000, a loss of 25,000; and the Army Reserve from 1,050,000 to 862,000, a loss of 188,000; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urge Congress to build up and maintain the readiness of the Reserves and National Guard units at the levels existing at the beginning of the Persian Gulf War, and to modernize them with state-of-the-art equipment to include aircraft, artillery, missiles, tanks, and ships.

Resolution No. 137: Military Preparedness
Origin: UT
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The disarmament and downsizing of America's armed forces of recent years is not only alarming, it has created a "hollow defense" for America's military to fly planes that are no longer properly maintained, ground forces without the latest technology with updated equipment and a Navy that has ill-equipped ships when needed for deployment at a moment's notice anywhere in the world; and

WHEREAS, Our Armed Forces have been deprived of first-line equipment, training and education incentives resulting in the mass exodus of skilled individuals from the military to better paying civilian occupations; and

WHEREAS, The cannibalization of aircraft, vehicles and other military hardware for spare parts is continuing at alarming rates leaving mission-capable equipment far below required numbers and readiness standards for military engagement when needed; and

WHEREAS, It should be of major concern to all Americans that over 25,000 military personnel are eligible for food stamps; that pay for military duty is an embarrassing 14 percent or more below the civilian sector; that military retirement packages that used to be a lucrative incentive to encourage reenlistment have lost a large percentage of their lifetime value in recent years; military medical programs for personnel and those who have families have deteriorated to an all-time low. The Air Force is currently retaining about 28 percent or less of its pilots after investing countless sums of money only to lose them to the civilian workforce; in addition, the overall strength of our armed forces have been cut by over 35 percent and, as a result, our military level of readiness has become questionable at best; and

WHEREAS, Because of America's success in the Cold War, it is a known fact that our defense needs have been reduced but such reduction does not justify cutting recommended defense spending far beyond the minimum to keep Americans safe. Military leaders have warned that American's military advantage will be nullified if we fail to have Defense budgets that are not completely committed to defense readiness rather than allowing some of the needed funds going to promote other low priority so-called "pork barrel projects;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion go on record as condemning the severe erosion of our military preparedness and urging the Congress to increase defense spending; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue its intensive efforts to convince the Administration and Congress that under-funding of our front-line military preparedness cannot be tolerated and needs to be resolved now; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That a concerted grass roots effort be made by The American Legion to educate The American Legion Family and the American people as to the grave seriousness of the present decline of our military preparedness to our National Security.

Resolution No. 185: Contingency Planning For Military Conscription
Origin: National Security Committee
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Cold War, the United States has deployed its military forces on the order of 300-400 percent more over the past decade than previously; and

WHEREAS, Military force structures, enstrengths and Defense budgets have been reduced by 35 percent since the late 1980's yet the current National Military Strategy calls for military capabilities to fight two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously while also conducting multiple worldwide enforcement peace operations in such environments as Haiti, the Sinai, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo and maintaining forces in the Persian Gulf, Europe and the Far East; and

WHEREAS, Until recently, recruiting for the all-volunteer force has enjoyed unprecedented success as was demonstrated in the mobilization for and conduct of the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, The Army, Navy and even the Air Force have recently been missing recruiting goals, and the Army is considering reducing educational requirements and category levels in order to increase their accessions; and

WHEREAS The decline in military recruiting is attributable to a number of factors which may include the robust economy, non-competitive military salaries, the declining manpower pool, the increased propensity for our youth not to enlist in the Armed Forces, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, From its very onset, The American Legion has given longstanding support to the principle of universal military training and for the maintenance of a Selective Service System registration system which serves as an unqualified and cost-effective insurance policy during these unstable times; and

WHEREAS, A fair and equitable Selective Service System with stringent controls over deferments places the concept of service to the Nation in its proper perspective with the direct involvement of all Americans to provide for the "common defense;" and

WHEREAS, Any implementation of a legislated draft system as a source of military manpower would require at least six months before the first conscripted recruit would emerge from the training pipeline; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Selective Service System to develop contingency plans for implementing a fair and equitable conscription system as a source of military manpower in the event the Military Services are unable to adequately recruit volunteers for the Armed Forces or in the event of mobilization emergencies.

Resolution No. 186: Support Expansion of Arlington National Cemetery
Origin: National Security Committee
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is our Nation's most sacred shrine representing an embodiment of the sacrifices that were made to uphold our country's ideals and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that World War II and Korean War veterans and military retirees are dying at faster and steeply inclining rates which will range from approximately 572,000 in the year 2000 to over 620,000 in the year 2008 and decline down to about 578,000 in 2015; and

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is filling up according to the staff at the Cemetery, Arlington has about 260,000 people buried in 195,000 graves and officials project the remaining 60,000 grave sites will be occupied by 2025. The numbers of daily interments have ranged from 15 to 23 funerals a day and may reach 30 funerals per day by 2008. Waiting times for the conduct of full military honors have doubled or tripled from over what they were two years ago; and

WHEREAS, In order to accommodate these predicted, and unprecedented, high mortality rates of America's distinguished military veterans in the years ahead, Arlington National Cemetery will need to expand by the transfer of contiguous parcels of land from the National Park Service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California, September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion urges the Congress to adopt

legislation authorizing the expansion of Arlington National Cemetery and granting the transfer of contiguous land parcels for additional burial sites; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to protect the solemnity and integrity of Arlington National Cemetery by continuing to recognize Arlington as the sacred resting place for America's distinguished military veterans.

Resolution No. 187: Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program
Origin: National Security Committee
Submitted By: National Security Committee

WHEREAS, There are more than ten countries that have or are suspected of developing biological warfare agents; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration has approved the anthrax vaccination in 1970 for use as a protectant from biological warfare exposure; and

WHEREAS, Anthrax is considered to be the primary biological warfare threat to U.S. Forces because it is lethal, easily produced and weaponized; and

WHEREAS, There are no other means of protection available, at this time, other than the anthrax vaccination from contacting the disease anthrax if encountered; and

WHEREAS, Over 300,000 Service members have received at least one anthrax vaccination shot and the Department of Defense's (DoD) Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program (AVIP) seeks to vaccinate all 2.4 million active duty and reservists; and

WHEREAS, A human efficacy study has not been conducted on the licensed anthrax vaccine and long term health effects have not been reviewed; and

WHEREAS, The sole manufacturer, BioPort Corporation, has had numerous problems with financial insecurity, building violations, and lack of investigational testing of anthrax product; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 250 adverse reaction reports have been filed, and some service members are refusing to take the vaccine thus ending military careers and an unknown number have seriously questioned the implementation of this program; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and General Accounting Office have noted the passive surveillance reporting that the Department of Defense (DoD) has employed is flawed as a tracking device for reaction rates; and

WHEREAS, The DoD has failed to adequately follow-up on vaccine reaction rates and track pertinent data for entry into individual medical records; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Anaheim, California September 7, 8, 9, 1999, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the progress of the Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program (AVIP), urge comprehensive congressional oversight and conduct outreach to service members, veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense to re-evaluate the Anthrax Vaccination Program as well as maintain individual medical records with the greatest of accuracy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to provide medical assistance and health care to those participants who experience vaccination reactions.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 114 (OH) 1999 NC: **Disposal of Ordnance**
Resolution No. 163 (WA) 1999 NC: **The Medal of Honor for Vernon Hill**
Resolution No. 182 (SC) 1999 NC: **The Medal of Honor for Major Rudolph Anderson, Jr., United States Air Force**

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 44 (MX) 1999 NC: **Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay And VA Disability Compensation**
Resolution No. 73 (MD) 1999 NC: **Quality of Life Features**
Resolution No. 74 (MD) 1999 NC: **Department of Defense Health Care Reform for Military Beneficiaries**
Resolution No. 140 (MN) 1999 NC: **Quality of Life Benefits for the Reserve Components**
Resolution No. 144 (MN) 1999 NC: **Healthcare for Military Retirees**

Rejected

Resolution No. 146 (NE) 1999 NC: **Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement Pay and Disability Compensation**

Naval Affairs Committee
Gerard W. Cheffer, Illinois, Chairman

Recommended Action on Resolutions
Rejected

Resolution No. 177 (PR) 1999 NC: **Cease Bombardment of Vieques Island**

Mr. Commander, National Officers, and Fellow Delegates. I am particularly pleased to announce the winners of the National Blood Donor Awards for this past year.

Category I—Department(s) with 100,000 or more members:
Post Participation and Individual Participation—Department of Florida

Category II—Department(s) with 70,000 to 99,999 members:
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Massachusetts

Category III—Department(s) with 40,000 to 69,999 members:
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Nebraska

Category IV—Department(s) with 25,000 to 39,999 members:
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Tennessee

Category V—Department(s) with 10,000 to 24,999 members:
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Rhode Island

Category VI—Department(s) with less than 10,000 members:
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Hawaii

The results of the competition for the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are as follows:

Over fifty Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. A total of over 7,500 medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 1998-1999 are the Departments of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia which speaks well for these Departments and The American Legion in their recognition of the youth of America enrolled in ROTC programs.

CHAIRMAN TITUS: Mr. Commander, as a delegate to this Convention from the Department of Indiana, I move the adoption of this complete report.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion indicate in the usual manner? Opposed nays? Ayes have it. The report of the National Security is adopted.

Peter Ole, my friend, please join me up here. I have the privilege this morning of giving Peter something he has never seen before. I understand that he was quite interested in seeing it, since I understand that you have never seen yourself on video tape playing the organ.

PETER OLE: That's correct.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Would you like to say a few words to these folks?

PETER OLE: It's really strange being up here because most of the time, I'm sitting down there watching everybody who's coming up here. Of course, it has been my extreme privilege for 25 years to be the National Organist. I owe an extreme debt of gratitude to my boss, Robert W. Spanogle and all of the National staff, who have done everything they possibly could to make me feel like a king and welcome here. Twenty-five years is a long time and it was just like I started yesterday. I look forward to coming back a lot more and I thank everybody for the wonderful response that you've had to my music. Commander, I appreciate this, too.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: About a year ago, I sat out there in the audience and watched a gentleman [National Commander Anthony G. Jordan] in this same spot, figuratively, trying to make it through the next couple of hours. I have to admit, right now, standing here at this moment, I am suddenly hit with an uncontrollable desire to get it over as quickly as I can. But I can't do that without first expressing my thanks. Behind me on the stage is probably the greatest group of supporters that anybody could ever have.

You already know about Billy, the only guy who has really grown this year. He started the year out as a rhinoceros and grew into being one heck of a good National Commander's aide. Anna Gear, Past National President from Virginia, was such a great help in the beginning and since that time. My good friend, Kathy, has allowed me to see The American Legion through different eyes. My mom and dad have allowed me to sneak into Wabasha and kind of hide for a couple of days now and then and understood why I didn't make those phone calls like I used to so often.

Then there is my son, a Marine Corps captain, who went to the Mediterranean for seven months and during that time moved his family—my four grandkids, April, Jasmine, Jessica,

Shawn—to Pensacola, Florida. He saw fit to e-mail me everywhere he went. As a matter of fact, when he was on the *USS Nassau* in the middle of the Kosovo situation, he had the audacity to e-mail me and ask how I was doing. During our March meetings, I happened to be talking to General Monday and remarked, "Up until recently, I had been e-mailing with my son almost every day. Now, all of a sudden, he's fallen off the 'net for the last few days." The General asked: "Well, what MEU? [Military Expeditionary Unit] I said, "He's with MEU 24." He pulled me aside and said, "Well, let me be the first to tell you that they went inland."

Now, maybe some of you know what that feels like to know that your son is in harm's way at that moment, but I suddenly understood what my mom and dad felt a couple of times during my military career. But that's all over now. He's home and fine and I'm going to see him shortly.

Over the past few months, one of the most asked questions thrown at me was: "What are you going to do after the convention?" I have completely avoided that question because I didn't have time to answer it. I was too busy doing what I thought I should be doing and that was being out there with you. I don't know what I'm going to do. But sometime between today and January 1, 2000, I'm going to make up my mind. I've given myself that time because I didn't think it was right to take the time before today away from you.

The other question is: "Has it been fun?" Let's just say it's been a tremendous experience. But I don't know if it has really been fun. Let me tell you why. Getting up at 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning after being up until 10:30 or 11:00 the night before traveling is not fun. Traveling halfway across the country where your body tells you it's 9:00 or 10:00 at night and you're trying to be effervescent and happy and smiling when it's really only 6:00 and you're in the middle of a dinner, that is not fun. Traveling around this country, seeing Legion Posts busting their butts doing what Legion people and our family do and not getting one iota of attention or press or any kind of recognition, that is not fun. Traveling around this country, listening to people throw out ideas and then have them immediately squashed by discontent, jealousy, that is not fun. Seeing people anxious to do things, jump on the Internet, do this, do that, and then seeing other members of that same Post who might be in a little more influential position completely dismiss those ideas because it's too visionary, or not their ideas, that is not fun. Seeing individuals who have been involved in The American Legion for years, who have done everything, who have been there, done that, who are knowledgeable and experienced, but who will not share that with new people in the post, or maybe not sharing with those other people that are interested in doing other things, that is not fun. It's been very hard during the year to see those situations and not react.

I was very fortunate, probably one of the most fortunate individuals amongst many of you, because when I was a young boy, I was exposed to The American Legion in a way that no other person has ever had the luxury, if you want to call it that, of being exposed to the Legion. My father died at a very young age. When I was seven back in Wabasha, Minnesota, I could remember my grandfather, who was the Finance Officer of American Legion Post 50 in Wabasha, Minnesota. I used to see him walk down the street once in a while with that silly looking hat on his head. I'd say to my mom, "Where's grandpa going?" "Oh, he's going to the Legion meeting." All I knew was that the Legion was a place that when I went there I got to have a bag of pretzels or peanuts and a soda. So, it was really a neat place for me.

As I grew up I became a little bit more aware of what they did. I also had the luxury of knowing another gentleman, Nick Kenitz. For lack of any other term, I'll just call Nick a

kind of the leader in Post 50. Then there was an awful lot of activity in the Legion Post and it wasn't until many years later that I understood exactly what was going on but my playmates up the street, the Foley boys, knew, too, what was going on. But we didn't really care because we were trying to perfect a slider and a curve ball and we were trying to terrorize the Mississippi River as much as you can terrorize it with a 12 foot boat and a 5 horse engine on the back of it. But that's when Mr. Foley, the Judge, as we all know him, served as National Commander of The American Legion. I saw that process.

Then I went into the military shortly after that. My mother, now married to Ken, started to see some new additions to the family. Ken was a member of The American Legion. Everything you did in Wabasha either started at, took place at, or ended at The American Legion. I could not imagine a world without The American Legion. It wasn't until I went into the military that I found that I had grown up in a different area, a different background. And I missed it. So I went to Virginia and became involved in the Legion. We can all see where that ended up.

It's been a great year. Personally, I can't thank you enough. I am now 52, in a couple of days I'll turn 53. The only thing I can do is promise that for whatever years the good Lord will grant me on this earth, for as long as I am physically able to do so, I promise that I will do everything that I can for you and will try to do for you what those Legionnaires of the past and present have done for me. I will try to be your Wilbur Walker, a guy from Virginia, who unfortunately most of you never had the honor of knowing. That's the only way that I can repay you is to try to help you help your post, community, state and nation.

I started this year out by vowing that I would not fail you and I would not allow you to fail me and those whom we serve. It is with the knowledge that I did not fail you and you did not fail me that I can say to you right now: Morale is High!

I call on the Vice Commanders as a group and as a group they're awesome.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER TINGLER: Commander Miller, we have had a great ride. Thank you for your leadership and your guidance, but most of all, thank you for your friendship. There's always a little bit of a letdown when we move on from an office, but we want your ride to continue just a little bit longer. We tried for months to get Richard Petty to make this presentation to you but were unable to do so. We were able to get his brother, Roger Petty.

ROGER PETTY: Commander, it's been a great year. We've learned that you had so much fun driving the go-cart at the Arthritis Foundation in Indianapolis, that we thought we'd give you a ride in a real race car. We know that one of your favorite drivers is Rusty Wallace, but we don't think Rusty Wallace has reached the plateau yet to be able to show other people how to drive a race car. So, I have talked personally to Richard Petty, "the King," and he assures me that with your two sessions that we're about to give you and your previous driving experience, that you will reach speeds up to 165 miles an hour, if you have the foot, and whatever else goes with it, to get there. So, on behalf of your National Vice Commanders, your Chaplain, your Historian, your Aide and your Sergeant-at-Arms, we want to give you one more ride for The American Legion. Good luck to you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I really get to drive this as fast as I want? And I don't have to worry about anybody with a light on their car chasing me around? Fantastic!

One of the things that my National Vice Commanders have done for me this year that I asked them to do was to travel around out there and speak against rumors. Rumors eat at our organizations. Well, I would now like to ask National Vice Commander John Morris from Texas to squelch one of those rumors by telling you what the truth is.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MORRIS: For the last two or three days, I have been approached by many delegates, ladies and men, regarding the National Convention to be held in San Antonio, Texas in 2001. As Executive Vice President of the National Convention Corporation of Texas, the answer to the rumor question: "Is San Antonio pulling out of the race?", the answer is "No". The Department of Texas, the city of San Antonio anxiously awaits you delegates to the 83rd National Convention of The American Legion. So, with that, you can be assured that that's where you're going to be in 2001, God willing.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I call on the National Adjutant, Mr. Spanogle.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: I'd like to have Dan Wheeler, the Executive Director of our Indianapolis office, John Sommer, the Executive Director of the Washington office, and Ron Brooks, the Executive Director of our Marketing Services group to join me at the platform, along with you, Mr. National Commander. We represent the staff of The American Legion and, of course, the appointed National Officers, our Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk and your National Treasurer, George Buskirk. We thank you for your leadership, your kindness, your inspiration and your steadfastness in bringing The American Legion into the 21st Century of the Millennium.

I kind of coined a term for the National Commander, an affectionate term, and referred to him as the CyberSpace Commander because of one thing. We have a magnificent website since we're in the business of communication, to everyone in this room and all 2.8 million members of The American Legion and the million members of the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. Whether you're at the Post, District, Department or National, it's communications and this Commander has brought that up to the epitome of communications as we go to the 21st Century. Every Department now has e-mail capability. He has led the way to have every Department have a website, although not all do yet. And he encouraged us to go out with the requests for a proposal and find an Internet Service Provider so we could provide the service that AOL provides to many of you through your individual computers in your homes and to go onto e-commerce and Emblem Sales. It is quite an achievement, an achievement that has not been met, to my knowledge, by any other veterans organizations or any other service or membership organization throughout the United States. It is a giant step, not just not for young Legionnaires or potential young Legionnaires.

He's kind of forced me, this 55 year old guy, to get a little bit better on the computer and all that sort of thing. But I've learned to enjoy it and those of us over 55—I understand the Commander hasn't reached that point yet—are the biggest users of personal computers and e-commerce. So, with iBelong, we started the 21st Century early. We thought that as the appointed National Officers and the Directors of The American Legion, we would like to present you—and we paid for it—with a laptop computer for the CyberSpace Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: These gentlemen standing with me here by this podium allowed a National Commander to do the things that he must do. It's too bad that we can't have the entire National staff, not only those in Washington, but those in Indianapolis, here because behind them is an army of dedicated individuals whom I have known very much through this last year. I can't tell you what kind of fire burns in them that makes them want to do the things that they do everyday, but they do. When you get a chance if you're ever in Indianapolis or Washington, say thank you. Because they are the most unbelievable people. It doesn't matter if it's membership, Internal Affairs, if it's Public Relation or Emblem Sales, they will bend over backwards. The thing that makes them continue to do that on a day to day basis is the representation and the leadership of those

gentlemen right behind me. They deserve more than our applause. But unfortunately, that's all that we can pay them right now. So, let's do it in a big way, all right?

We're going to move on to the election of officers, but before that I promised myself that I wouldn't leave the stage without delivering one threat. And that is to the people in Virginia who put me where I am and supported me so much: I'm coming home.

Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
John H. Geiger, Illinois , Past National Commander
The Honorable Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota, Past National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: National Vice Commander Fred Goulart will take the gavel and preside over the next order of business. Obviously, Fred's kind of nervous about this; he's back stage practicing. Fred, if this is your way of making sure that I stay as National Commander, it's not going to work. Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to preside over the next order of business because Fred is not here. This is the time when we present me a plaque and Colors of my office. Now I call on my friend, Past National Commander John Geiger of Illinois to present the plaque.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GEIGER: It's come to that time in the Convention when we close the book on this particular year of The American Legion. I'm pleased that you've stayed with Butch Miller as we come to the point in this program. As this 1999 National Convention of The American Legion draws to a close, marking the end of your memorable year as our Commander and new friend, let me also call forward as witnesses Mr. E. Roy Stone of Greenville, South Carolina, the Honorable Daniel Foley of Wabasha, Minnesota, your proud dad, Ken Wiemann from Wabasha, Minnesota. I also call upon the loving spirit of the late Wilbur Walker of Virginia who brought this young man to our attention many years ago.

Butch, this beautiful bronze plaque that we have is presented to you by the order of this Convention and it represents the deep appreciation and gratitude of each member of The American Legion and our Auxiliary for the inspiration and positive leadership you have provided to us as our Commander. Let me read the permanent message which it leaves for you. "National Commander Harold L. 'Butch' Miller elected by the National Convention to serve the high office of National Commander of The American Legion for the year 1998 to 1999, in appreciation of his dedicated leadership in recognition to his devoted service to God and Country and in token of the high esteem our fellow Legionnaires have for him." This citation is presented to him by authority of the National Executive Committee on the 9th day of September, 1999, which is a great computer day, Commander, 9/9/99, at the 81st National Convention in Anaheim, California.

Butch, I'm honored to present this plaque to you for display in your home or office as our proclamation of thanks and congratulation to you for the skills, energy and dedication given to our God and Country. Congratulations, Butch. God bless you and yours, with a warm welcome to the permanent ranks of the Past National Commanders of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you. I have very much looked forward to joining that very exclusive club of Past National Commanders. As a matter of fact, I've already adopted a new e-mail address, which you probably already saw, proudly proclaiming pncbutch@aol.com, Past National Commander Butch, as my new e-mail address. I hope to hear from all of you.

At this time, I'd like to call on a long time friend, Past National Commander Dan Foley of Minnesota to present the Colors.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FOLEY: The Commander's Colors will be presented by the National Champion Color Guard, Speedway Post, Speedway, Indiana. Color Guard will prepare to retrieve the Colors of the National Commander. Right hand salute. Two!

Commander Butch, once more you honor an old friendship by inviting me to make remarks on this occasion. Your year as National Commander comes to a close but in the words of a popular tune from another day, the memory lingers on and will continue to do so well into the 21st Century. The legacy of your service will be measured by the contribution you have made, your steadfast devotion to duty, your loyalty to those who have served this country and deserve a VA system providing the care and benefits promised by a grateful nation but too often compromised by an inadequate budget influenced by partisan politics. You will be remembered for you truthfulness, integrity, dependability and reliability and by the plainly demonstrated love of country in fighting to protect the flag of our nation from physical desecration. You will also be remembered for your common touch and easy manner. Your invisible contribution in the manner and way in which you have carried out the duties of your office reflect the highest ideals of The American Legion and by your public utterances which express the true meaning, indeed, and understanding of the very soul of The American Legion, its aims and purposes, its lofty goals. The greatness of your service will be felt for long years to come. You assumed your duties as Commander, filled with pride and confidence. You now leave office as we in The American Legion salute you with pride and gratitude for a job well done. Accept these Colors, Commander Butch, from The American Legion. They're yours to possess and cherish, always serving as a reminder of your valiant effort to protect, as did the patriots of old, the symbol of our cherished freedom. You are a sterling patriot. And from the friendly shores of the upper Mississippi to the historic land of Virginia, Legionnaires across the country in one voice proclaim: "You served us well, Commander Butch, may God bless you always."

Color Guard, retire the Colors of the Commander. Stand at hand salute. One. Two.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Thank you, Dan. This year coming to an end is given special meaning by you two gentlemen and the presentations you have made and by Post 500 Color Guard. Over the last year or two, because of our association in the Legion and because I have a little interest in racing cars, those gentlemen and I have kind of struck up a special relationship.

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers
National Commander

We now come to a special order of business, the election of National Officers. The National Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk of Maryland will read the rules of the Convention governing the nomination and election of officers. Judge.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PHILIP ONDERDONK: The rules for election of National Officers of The American Legion:

Rule 15: Final sentence: Election of National Officers shall be by roll call.

Rule 17: Prior to the election of National Officers, the National Commander shall appoint, subject to the approval of the convention, a judge of election and such number of tellers as he deems necessary, provided that the total tellers so appointed shall be an odd

number. In a contested election each candidate going to the ballot shall be entitled to one teller of his choice.

Rule 18: Nominations for National Officers shall be from the floor on roll call of the departments alphabetically arranged. Each department may present as many candidates as it chooses.

Rule 19: Nominating speeches for National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate, and said speeches shall be limited to three minutes.

Rule 20: When more than two candidates are nominated for any office, balloting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes of the convention, except in the election of National Vice Commanders.

Rule 21: In a contested election for National Vice Commanders, balloting shall continue until (a) majorities and (b) pluralities are established for one or more candidates under the following provisions: If, on any ballot taken, less than five candidates receive the necessary majority to elect, the candidate or candidates receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified; except should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

Rule 22: The convention will nominate and elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, in this sequence.

Rule 23: At the conclusion of balloting on National Vice Commanders, each Department Delegation Chairman shall deliver a written ballot to the tellers. Such ballots shall be in the hands of the tellers before communication is made to the National Commander for announcement of the results.

That completes the reading of the rules pertaining to election of National Officers.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: As Chairman of this convention, I now appoint as Judge of the Elections, Cornelius "Connie" O'Neill of Virginia and as Tellers of the election, H. Melvin Napper of Idaho, Roy L. Pressley of North Carolina, and Charles T. Allemann of California. Will the Judge and Tellers of the election please come forward?

National Adjutant Robert Spanogle will now call the roll of the departments. The purpose of the roll call is to receive nominations for National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Alabama.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ODOM: Chairman Morgan Odom from the Department of Alabama acknowledges Idaho for the purpose of a nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Department of Idaho.

DELGATION CHAIRMAN MASON: My name is Vernon Mason. For the Department of Idaho I respectfully request you recognize Past Department Commander Marion P. Johnson for the purpose of a nomination.

MARION P. JOHNSON: I've had the pleasure of knowing Al Lance for something over 20 years. In that length of time, I have come to understand that he is one of the outstanding young Americans that we have in this country today. Al and his wife, Sherry, have three children: Alan Lance, Jr., Lisa and Luke. It looks like Lisa is going to follow in Al's footsteps because at the present time she's a three-year law student at Willemette University in Salem, Oregon. Luke is a Junior in Meridian High School and has a special talent that is unique, I think, to somebody of his age because he handles his father's

investments in the New York Stock Market. He doesn't just call a broker and say, "We want to buy or sell this." He does it on the Internet and he's involved in puts and calls, options, some of the parts of the stock market that I have no idea what's going on, but he does.

I think I'll come back to Al's wife just for a moment. I thought I needed her approval on what I was going to say about her. As somebody who's been married to a woman for 57 years, I just decided it was the wise thing to do. So, Sherry said, "All you have to do is tell them that I'm Al's wonderful wife." I think the only thing I can think of that makes her unique in another way is the fact that she is so humble. She's the one that said the words "wonderful wife" and that's the reason I am repeating it to you.

Al Lance is a rather unique individual also. I think you've all heard the expression "Jack of all trades and master of none". Al is kind of a jack of all trades and he's the master of them all. He's an inventor. He invented a target to be used with pellet guns. It's a fantastic thing that pops up at different times and folds up. He's now got it at a manufacturing company to see what they have to say about it. He's been involved in producing apple juice because they've got about 50 trees. He does it on a small scale with a little press that they turn by hand. He's made a success of that. A few years ago, he bought a farm over around Sand Hollow, 40 or 50 miles west of Boise. And guess what he is raising on that? Potatoes. He has 50 acres of potatoes, so sometime in the coming year, when you have the opportunity to have an Idaho potato, it might have come from Al Lance's farm.

He's done so much for The American Legion, not only in Idaho, but throughout the nation. A few years ago when we were all trying to get our individual states to pass Memorial Resolutions honoring the flag of our country, he was the spokesman for the Idaho Legion when we were trying to convince our Representatives and Senators to pass this resolution. Of course, whenever he spoke, we had a delegation of people in the gallery and I was one of them on many on occasions. At these committee meetings, as a final little 'gimmick,' he took a dollar bill out of his pocket in one hand and his cigarette lighter in another and told the Senators on one occasion, "If I were to touch this flame to this dollar bill, I could be put in jail. But I could burn the flag of the United States of America and they wouldn't touch me." I think it was that demonstration and his ability to converse, that the resolution was passed that same day.

A couple of years ago, the Veterans Administration decided that they would take away the aid and attendance payments to the state veterans homes. Al Lance sued the VA and won. He has a plaque hanging in his office today from the National Association of Veterans Homes Directors complimenting him for the help that he gave them, not only in the state of Idaho, but all over the nation. When I think of some of the leaders that we have had in the past, Presidents Lincoln, Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, and General Eisenhower, in my mind, when you roll all those people together, you have Alan Lance. Mr. Commander, at this time, as a duly elected and registered delegate from Post 26 at Mountain Home, Idaho, it is my honor to place in nomination for the high office of National Commander of The American Legion for the year 1999-2000 the name of Alan G. Lance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Alan G. Lance has been placed into nomination. The Adjutant will continue the roll.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: ... *The National Adjutant continues the call for each Department in turn.*

DELEGATION CHAIRMANCASWELL: As Delegate Chairman from the great state of Alaska, the land of the midnight sun, at this time I would like to yield to the Department of Maryland.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SCHMIDT: Albert Schmidt, Department Commander, state of Maryland and Chairman of the Delegation requests the Chair recognizes Richard Santos for the purpose of a second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Richard Santos is so recognized for the purpose of a nomination.

RICHARD SANTOS: Membership, dedication, commitment and service are the building blocks for success in life and in The American Legion. Al Lance has exhibited these qualities throughout his life, from his childhood years in McComb, Ohio which carried to his military obligation and through his service to The American Legion. He has shown the traits of tact and leadership by his active duty in the United States Army in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. His initial assignment was to the 172nd Infantry Brigade, Fort Richardson, Alaska from 1974 to 1977. He was subsequently transferred to the Corpus Christi Army Depot, Corpus Christie, Texas where he served as Command Judge Advocate from 1977 to 1978, rising to the rank of Captain. Al returned to civilian life in 1978.

Al is a dedicated husband to his wife Sherry and a caring father to their three children, Alan Jr., Lisa and Luke. He is educated for and dedicated to his lifelong profession as a practicing attorney at law. As shown by his election to the high office of attorney general to the state of Idaho, Al is skillful, trustworthy and truthful. He exhibited the qualities of planning and statesmanship as he expanded his horizons in the various levels of leadership in The American Legion. As the 20th Century comes to a close, Al Lance stands in the portal of the ultimate leadership position of the world's largest veterans organization. Through his membership, his dedication, his commitment and his service, he is ready to lead The American Legion into the new Millennium. As the 21st Century arrives and Al steps through that portal of our number one leadership position, he is ready with vision, verve, energy and commitment to assume and to execute the duties and responsibilities as National Commander of The American Legion. Commander Miller, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Maryland to the 81st National Convention, I second the nomination of Al Lance of the Department of Idaho for the position of National Commander of The American Legion for the year 1999-2000.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Alan G. Lance has been seconded.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MAKLARY: The great state of Arizona, the home of the amazing Diamond Backs, yields to the great state of Texas.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WHEALEN: I requests permission for Past Department Commander John Brieden to approach the podium for the purposes of a second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: John Brieden is so recognized for the purpose of a second.

DELEGATE JOHN A. BRIEDEN: It's an honor to second the nomination of Alan Lance from the Department of Idaho for National Commander. Sitting back here and listening to the speech of Marion for the nomination, I felt it deserved a comment particularly about the wonderful wife, Sherry. I want you to know that she's also the smart wife Sherry. She's the one that took the family finances and investments away from Al and gave them to Luke.

Now I want to specifically address Alan's public service. He was elected State Representative in 1991 and by 1993, and then selected by his peers as the House Majority Caucus Chairman. Then in 1995, Al was elected Attorney General for the state of Idaho, a

position that he still holds today. How was he able to rise so far, so fast? I think it's obvious that the citizens of Idaho recognize his ability and leadership.

In 1995, Alan and I were part of the effort to pass the Flag Amendment and were in Washington, DC. There were six or seven Senators whom we were assigned that we would visit together. I'll not forget that we went to Senator Craig's office without appointment, although there was a lobby full of people with appointments. His staff shuttled us through a back door and we visited with Senator Craig. Not only did he reinforce his commitment to the flag amendment, but discussed how he could talk with other Senators and use his influence to try help our cause. Alan Lance understands the Legislative process. Alan Lance understands politicians. Alan Lance is a rising star. We need to hitch ourselves and our great American Legion to this rising star and he will carry us to new heights of achievement.

It's an honor and personal privilege for me to second the nomination of the Honorable Alan Lance for the position of National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Alan G. Lance has been placed into nomination and duly seconded.

...At this time a demonstration ensued in support of the nomination of Alan G. Lance as National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CLAUDE CARPENTER, Arkansas: Arkansas, the former residence of the President and First Lady, but the future home of the Clinton Library. It is with great pride and honor that I second the nomination of Mr. Al Lance for National Commander. Arkansas will cast its 28 votes for the election of Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLY WILKIN, California: I cast 150 votes from the Department of California, the state that is the home of our National Vice Commander Leo Burke.

DELEGATE BJARNE RUNCHEL, Colorado: Bjarne Runchel, Commander the Department of Colorado, and the home of the Denver Broncos, we are going for a repeat this year, three-peat, as a duly authorized delegate to the National Convention, the 81st, casts 30 votes for Alan G. Lance for the high office of National Commander.

DELEGATE EVERETT SHEPHARD, Connecticut: As an authorized delegate and 1999-2000 Commander of the great Constitution State of Connecticut, home of the NCAA Basketball National Champion UConn Huskies, am honored to represent the 37 delegates from Connecticut in seconding and voting for the candidacy of Al Lance of Idaho for National Commander 1999-2000.

DELEGATE THOMAS BURNS, Delaware: As a delegate to this Convention, the Little State, the First State of Delaware casts 16 votes for Alan G. Lance.

DELEGATE RAYMOND POTOCKI, D.C.: Representing Department of D.C., I present our nine votes for Al Lance as National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE STRAINGE, Florida: As Chairman Delegation Committee, Convention Committee, State of Florida, the Sunshine State, the other Sunshine State, we proudly cast a unanimous vote for the election of Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ARNIE MATANKY, France: As Delegation Chairman from the Department of France, the birth place of The American Legion, I proudly second the nomination of Al Lance for National Commander, votes unanimous.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CHARLES WESSINGER, Georgia: The great State of Georgia, the 100 percent department, casts all of its 53 votes for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DONALD RAVEN, Hawaii: As Delegate Chairman, Junior Past Commander, we are proud to cast all of our nine delegate votes for Mr. Alan Lance for the future National Commander of The American Legion.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN VINCENT GAUGHAN, Illinois: As Chairman Delegation for the great State of Illinois, I second the nomination of Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DICK TONKEL, Indiana: The delegation from the State of Indiana casts its entire delegate vote for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LOUIS KIRK, Iowa: Iowa proudly votes 79 votes for Al Lance for the new National Commander.

DELEGATE DICK NIELSEN, Kansas: From the State of Kansas, the land of windmills, the wheat, the corn, Bob Dole and NEC Udie Grant, it unanimously casts all of our votes for Al Lance.

DELEGATE RANDALL COFFMAN, Kentucky: National Executive Committeeman from the Department of Kentucky, home of the greatest two minutes in sports, first Saturday in May, the Kentucky Derby, proudly casts 39 votes for Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN KENT LYNN, Louisiana: As delegation Chairman of the Department of Louisiana, the Sportsman's Paradise, Louisiana proudly seconds the nomination of Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE DEARBORN, Maine: As Delegation Chairman from the Department of Maine, the state with the two living Past National Commanders, Bill Rogers and Tony Jordan, the state with the best potatoes, lobsters; blue berries and the sexiest moose you have ever seen in your life, cast 34 votes for our new National Commander, Al Lance.

DELEGATE MARK DAVIS, Massachusetts: As delegate to the 81st National Convention, from the great State of Massachusetts, home of Past National Commander John P.J. Comer who walked the walk and talked the talk for passage of the Flag Amendment,Massachusetts casts 73 votes for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ED DELINSKI, Mexico: The Department of Mexico, including the countries of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Panama, enthusiastically seconds the nomination of Al Lance of Idaho.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GERALD DENNIS, Michigan: As Delegation Chairman of the great State of Michigan, which is unique as it consists of both the upper and lower peninsula, do give not only one Terry Niles, a member of Michigan to be Idaho's next Department Adjutant, but also their 100 votes for our next National Commander, Alan lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT SKALLERUD, Minnesota: As Delegation Chairman, seconds the motion for Al Lance.

DELEGATE JOHNNIE BRACY, Mississippi: As Secretary Delegation Chairman, I cast 26 votes for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN WILLIAM MILLER, Mississippi: The Department of Missouri, being the birthplace of the first Legionnaire President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, is very proud to second the motion for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOYCE BABCOCK, Montana: As Department Chairman, I proudly endorses Al Lance, our next door neighbor for National commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN MICHAEL LANDKAMER, Nebraska: As Delegation Chairman from the great State of Nebraska, home of the five-time National Champion Corn Huskers, I proudly endorse and second Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOHN BURCH, Nevada: The Great Silver State casts all our votes for Alan Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DONALD SMALL, New Hampshire: As Delegation Chairman from the great State of New Hampshire, we proudly second the nomination for Al Lance for National Commander for the year 1999 and 2000.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN LEO McKERNAN, New Jersey: As Delegation Chairman for the great State of New Jersey, we proudly second the nomination for Al Lance.

DELEGATE HARRY RISER, New Mexico: As duly elected delegate to this National Convention from the great State of New Mexico, Land of Enchantment, we cast our 20 votes for Al Lance to lead The American Legion into this new millennium.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT MORRILL, New York: As Chairman of the Delegation from New York, New York seconds the nomination.

DELEGATE GEORGE WILLIS, North Carolina: As Department Commander and duly authorized delegate for the 81st National Convention from the great Tar Heel State of North Carolina cast all 53 votes for our next National Commander, Alan Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JOE BOSCH, North Dakota: North Dakota, the only department with 50 percent of its eligible veterans enrolled in The American Legion, proudly seconds the nomination of Alan Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN CARL SWISHER, Ohio: As Delegation Chairman from Ohio, birthplace of our next National Commander, has all their votes for our next National Commander, Alan Lance.

DELEGATED LARRY TIENSVOLD, Oklahoma: As duly elected representative, Oklahoma cast all 37 votes for Alan Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN DONEY CHRISMER, Oregon: As Chairman, Oregon casts all 33 votes for Al Lance for our National Commander.

DELEGATE JOHN KELLY, Pennsylvania: As duly authorized delegate from the great Department of Pennsylvania, home of the cradle of liberty, steel and coal, we are pleased and proud to second the nomination of our next National Commander, Al Lance.

DELEGATE ANTONIO TY, Philippines: I am very proud to nominate Alan Lance as our National Commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE, Puerto Rico: From the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, and host of the National Wheelchair Games, Puerto Rico casts 15 votes in favor of Alan Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATE RICHARD VERRIER, Rhode Island: Alternate NECman from the Biggest Little State of the Union; the home of the Rhode Island Red; and the qua hog, I proudly second the nomination of Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATE FRANK WARD, South Carolina: As a registered delegate, I second the nomination for Al Lance.

DELEGATE D. R. MASON, South Dakota: The birthplace of American Legion Baseball is very proud to cast our entire delegation support for Alan Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROLLEN BRADSHAW, Tennessee: As Chairman of the Delegation Department of Tennessee, home of Dolly Parton, Sergeant Alan C. York, and the legendary Jack Daniels, we cast 40 votes for Alan Lance.

DELEGATE TERRY SCHOW, Utah: Department Utah seconds the nomination for Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ERNEST CYR, Vermont: Department of Vermont, the Green Mountain State proudly seconds the nomination of Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATE WILLIAM BRYANT, Virginia: NEC and duly elected delegate to this Convention, from the great Department of Virginia, proudly seconds the nomination of Al Lance for National Commander.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JERRY HUFFMAN, Washington: As the Chairman for the Evergreen State of Washington, we are honored to cast 44 votes for Alan Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ART OGER, West Virginia: As Delegation Chairman, home of Past National Commander Miles Epling; also the home of Past Immediate National Vice Commander Robert Bass; and also Retired National Executive Committeeman Jack Gribben, proudly seconds the nomination for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN BOB ZUKOWSKI: Wisconsin, the land of milk and honey, and also the site of the 82nd National Convention, cast its 82 votes for Al Lance.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JEAN BROWN, Wyoming: As Delegate Chairman of the Equality State of Wyoming, we proudly endorse and second the nomination of Alan Lance.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander, that completes the roll call.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Recognize microphone number 4. Vince Gaughan.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GAUGHAN: As Chairman delegation from the state of Illinois, in view of the fact that there is but one candidate for National Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this Convention, close the nominations and that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this National Convention and that Al Lance be elected National Commander by acclamation.

I will now make the first motion. Mr. Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this Convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander and the nomination and election of the National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be reinstated at the conclusion of the election for National Vice Commanders.

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: There is a motion before us to suspend the rules of the Convention pertaining to the election of National Commander and the nomination and election of National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be automatically reinstated at the conclusion of the election for the National Vice Commanders.

The motion is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. Those in favor of the motion please signify in the usual manner of aye. Opposed nay? In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. Microphone number 1.

DELEGATE FRANK SICKLE: As delegate from New Jersey, I recommend that the nominations for National Commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The motion has been made. Is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The motion to close nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. Again, those in favor of the motion, signify in the normal manner of aye. Those opposed nay. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. Microphone number two.

DELEGATE JULIE RUST: As a duly elected and registered delegate to this 81st Convention, I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing

the entire delegate strength of this 81st Annual Convention and that Al Lance be elected National Commander by acclamation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Is there a second to the motion?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Hearing your second, there is a motion before us that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this Convention and that Alan G. Lance of Idaho be elected National Commander by acclamation. All those in favor of the motion, please signify in the usual manner of aye. Opposed nay. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegation strength of this Convention for the election of Alan Lance as the National Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I, Butch Miller, National Commander, proudly and with a great deal of personal pride declare Alan G. Lance duly elected National Commander of The American Legion for Legion year 1999-2000. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms assist as the new Commander of The American Legion is escorted to the platform by Vern Mason?

Delegates to this Convention, it is with great pride that I introduce to you our National Commander for 1999-2000, Alan Lance.

The Chair recognizes Past National Commander 'Sparky' Gierke of North Dakota for the purpose of administering the Oath of Office to the new National Commander of The American Legion.

Administering the Oath of Office to the National Commander

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GIERKE: Ten years ago, I had the privilege of serving as your National Commander and became the leader of a team called Three Million. I was privileged to have an outstanding young Commander from the Department of Idaho as part of that time, and today, I consider it a great honor and privilege to be able to administer to him the Oath of Office as our New National Commander. Alan, would you please step forward?

...National Commander-elect Alan Lance repeated the Oath of Office following the lead of Past National Commander Gierke.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT ALAN LANCE: I, Alan G. Lance, do solemnly pledge myself, to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of National Commander of The American Legion. I further pledge that I will support and defend the Constitution of The United States of America and the National Constitution and By-laws of The American Legion. And I do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government. So help me God.

Acceptance Speech by Newly Elected National Commander Alan Lance

First of all, in terms of all the advertising for your respective states, I take issue with the state of Maine and its potato claim. And I thoroughly enjoyed the claims of the state of Tennessee with Dolly Parton and Jack Daniels™.

Thank you for this great honor and this wonderful opportunity to serve as this organization's 81st National Commander and the first National Commander from my great department, the Department of Idaho.

Commander Butch Miller, National Officers, Delegates to the 81st National Convetvention, Auxiliary members, Sons of The American Legion, guests and friends all, first of all let me say some words to Commander Butch. On behalf of the Department of Idaho and myself, I thank you for the help and assistance you and the Department of Virginia have provided us during this campaign. And more importantly, on behalf of The American Legion family, I want to thank you for your leadership and the manner in which you have represented us over the past year. Thank you, Commander, and we wish you the very best.

And, Commander, what are you going to do now that you have all of this free time? He's going to Disneyland.

I would like to thank Past National Commander Judge 'Sparky' Gierke for administering the oath of office, and my Commander at home, Sherry, for presenting me with my cap. Thank you not only for what you have done for me today but what you have done for The American Legion in years past. At this time, I take a great deal of pride in introducing to you our family members who are present here today.

When I was a member of the 172nd Infantry Brigade up in Alaska, the people of the United States, for $11.25, gave me my first child. Lisa has held offices within the Auxiliary Junior Organization to include Western Vice President. She is presently a third-year law student at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. She has achieved many awards and honors in her short life, and yesterday she had her very own race to run as she was a candidate for the position of the president of her third-year law school class. I'm proud to present to you my daughter, Lisa, the president of Willamette University Law School, third-year class, Lisa.

I also present to you a kid who is my best fishing buddy, my best hunting buddy, my best golfing buddy, one of the poorest stockbrokers I've ever had. He's a junior at Meridian High School and he is the National Executive Committeeman for The Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Idaho, my son, Luke.

And I would like to present to you, because Idaho, like 12 other states, is a community property state, my business partner, whether she likes it or not, my wife of nine days, three months, and 30 years, my best friend, my best campaigner, the lady who has received honors from the Auxiliary as being the Member of the Year for the Department of Idaho, the lady who does the Girl's State Program for American Legion Post 113 and the Auxiliary, and the lady without whom I wouldn't have had a chance in this election nor any other election I have ever been involved with, my best friend, Sherry Lance.

I would like to thank Marion P. Johnson, Past National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Idaho, for the nominating speech, for his friendship, his support, and for serving as a co-chair of this election committee. I would also thank his lovely wife, Mardene, both of whom are great friends of ours and both of whom have contributed mightily to this campaign.

I would also like to thank my friend John Brieden, from Texas, and Rick Santos, from the Department of Maryland, for their seconding speeches in support of this nomination and, equally important, for their friendship and their support.

I would like to thank a number of individuals who have been so instrumental in this campaign and in our lives: Mel and Emily Napier, Chuck and Mary Price, John Dunlap,

Tom and Charlotte Moore, Commander Vern Mason and Beth, Commander Rich Hanni and Backy, NEC LeRoy Lebsack and Emma, Don Gunderson and Pat, Cash and Louise Arrasmith, Cleve Rice, Rickey Helsley, Alternate NEC Dee Collins, Frank and Carol Dalton, Paul Brown and Past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary and my friend, Norma Brown, as well as all members of the Department of Idaho. I would like the members of the delegation of the Department of Idaho to please rise and be recognized.

Not with us today is our son, Alan; my mother who is back in Ohio; four sisters in Ohio; Sherry's mom and dad who are in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and by virtue of distance, we hope they will join us in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the 82nd National Convention, which is only 360 days from today.

I would like to give a special appreciation and a word of thanks to Past National Commanders John Geiger, Roy Stone, Jim Wagonseller, Dan Foley, and all of the other Past National Commanders who have given me the advice, the council, and the encouragement that I've needed to run for this high office.

I would like to acknowledge my staff of 178 dedicated individuals back in the Office of the Attorney General in the state of Idaho as they will keep the home fires burning in my absence.

To all of these persons, to you the Delegates, and to all members of the 55 respective departments, and to this organization, I say thank you.

As a young farm kid growing up in northwest Ohio, I was raised to believe that service to the community, state, and nation is a duty of every citizen and an obligation of citizenship. I was taught, and I do believe, that civilization, the state, and any nation can only give back what it receives from its citizens not just in taxes but in terms of a sense of duty, obligation, concern, and caring. I was taught, and I do believe, that it is essential to respect the efforts of churches, groups, and organizations who respect our citizens, our country, our Constitution, and our system of government even if I do not totally agree with them or share their views on every occasion. And I was taught never to shrink from, run away from, or attempt to hide from responsibilities and duties of being a citizen of any community, of any state, of any nation, or any organization to which I belong.

I grew up in an America that was, with justification, proud of itself, proud of its citizens, and where citizens were truly proud of each other. I grew up in an America where the people from different race, different political parties, and different occupations all came together for the good of their community at the fire hall, the city hall, or at The American Legion hall. In those times and at that place, both so now distant, I grew up believing, like Ronald Reagan, that America was that white shining city on the hill, a beacon of hope and faith to the rest of the world. I grew up in a family and in a community where the only days off were Sundays, Christmas, Memorial Day, and the 4th of July, times to worship, times to remember, and times to celebrate.

I knew instinctively then as a child, as many years later I would learn, that there was something noble in service to your fellow countrymen and something sacred in the reverence they displayed and something unique in the quality of character of those who remembered, those who wore the cap of The American Legion. And as a child, I followed those men on Memorial Day, those heroes, those ordinary farmers, those ordinary bankers, those ordinary plumbers, in silence to the cemetery to remember those who had made the supreme and ultimate sacrifice.

But things in Custer, Ohio, have changed, things in America have changed, and things in the world have changed. Suddenly there were those who were of the opinion that service

to the community, state, and nation is not essential and that honorable service is not necessary. Suddenly there were those who believed that the hard work of the laborer, the craftsman, the farmer, the small businessman was no longer the strength of our society, but that big government, big business, and the courts could provide for all of the needs of all of our citizens all of the time.

Unfortunately, it would appear that we are now paying a very high price for this misplaced trust in incorrect beliefs. In the United States of America, during the years of 1992 and 1993, more than 7,000 children were killed on the streets, in their homes, and in other places. During that same time frame, 70 children were killed while in school attempting to get an education and attempting to build their lives.

We now have a military which cannot meet its minimum recruiting goals to fill the shrinking ranks. We have about 1.37 million active duty forces committed in 133 countries around the world. The experts tell us that we need about 1.7 million; but as a result of the increased operations tempo and manpower shortages, we are losing our pilots, we are losing our middle management NCOs and our middle management officer corp, and we are unable to recruit replacements. In 1999 the Army will recruit 74,500 young persons, 7,000 short of its minimum goal and the worst recruiting failure since 1979.

In the last seven years, we have given up 709,000 active duty troops, 293 reserve slots, 2,000 combat aircraft, 121 ships and submarines. Shamefully, we spend only about 2.4 percent of our gross domestic product on defense when the experts advise us that we need to be spending 4 percent of our gross domestic product just to maintain our present state of readiness.

And shamefully, and what I will say to you and everyone else who will listen, in what I call a national disgrace, we have far too many military families on food stamps and public assistance; welfare to our young men and women who stand guard at the outposts of freedom in 133 countries. The sentinels of democracy, of America, of our way of life, are not being paid enough to feed their families. No wonder we have a recruiting and retention crisis.

The people in Washington, D.C. like to talk about a budget surplus; but the surplus, if any, cannot be calculated until all the debts are paid, the debt to our veterans in the form of promised but undelivered health care; deferred compensation for a job well done; the ongoing expense of maintaining a strong national defense; paying, equipping, and training our active duty reserve and national guard forces to fight the next war, not the last war.

According to the *Washington Times* in their August 30th, 1999 edition, the present global strategy recently drafted by the administration's National Security Council staff provides for increased intervention in world troubled spots while facing a continuing downsizing of the active duty military forces while facing the greatest espionage threat in our nation's history and while facing a growing probability of concentrated attacks against the United States and its citizens by use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons or cyber attacks on critical military infrastructure or informational systems.

Quoting from the *Washington Times* copyrighted article, the National Security Council's document reads, "At the same time, easier access to sophisticated technology means that destructive power available to rogue nations and terrorists is greater than ever." The document goes on to state, "We, the United States, must be prepared and willing to use all appropriate instruments of national power to influence the actions of other states and nonstate actors, to exert global leadership, and to remain the preferred security partner for the community of states that share our common interests."

And there is a startling reversal of a long standing and time-tested policy of the present quadrennial defense review polity which provides for a two-fronted war capability based upon long accepted and applied principles which have concluded that without a two-front war capability, and I quote, "our standing as a global power, as a security power of choice, and as the leader of the international community would be called into question."

These are some of the challenges that we face.

Giving up the true theater of war concept is a tremendous threat to our security. The national security document, draft document, all assume that aggressors don't plan together, they don't talk to each other and have to worry about the same Democratic processes that we do. I don't think that is the case. And I believe that this new strategy is dangerous to our nation's future and very dangerous through our inadequate numbers of poorly paid military personnel. Remember that veterans are a by-product of a failed foreign policy; and I fear that this policy may be very, very costly.

And what is it that our allies are doing, those most directly related and tied to our NATO and UN commitments, our security partners of choice? Well, according to a recent copyrighted story of *The Associated Press*, Germany's defense minister said it will reduce its military force by another 8,000 next year to meet that government's budget cut targets. They are downsizing to balance their budget; but the threats are too real, too large, and too wide.

According to the Congressional Cox Commission Report issued in May in Washington, D.C., foreign nations have acquired sensitive design information on virtually every weapon in the United States nuclear arsenal. So who is going to stand up for America? Who is going to stand up for the American fighting man and fighting woman on active duty, in the National Guard units, and in the reserve units? And who is going to speak out for the average concerned citizens of this great country? Who is going to be talking to a Congress which is made up of only 31 percent veterans, and to a United States Senate who has only 44 percent of its senators who have ever worn the uniform of their country?

While I am mindful of the broken promises concerning VA medical care to our aging veteran population, while I am aware of the gross and persistent inadequacies of the Tricare health system our active duty retirees and dependents rely upon, and while I am aware of the continuing problems of our nuclear, Agent Orange, and Gulf War Syndrome veterans, I'm scared to death about the future of our country and its defenses.

And so I must tell you that I am aware of only one organization bold enough, big enough, and committed enough to take on the three major threats which I have identified:

- inadequate military strength and defense spending and the threat of espionage;
- to implement Resolution 44, which was unanimously passed in May by our National Executive Committee, requiring commitment of forces only when it's in the national interest and that interest has been identified, and with an exit strategy and with a broad based public support as well as political support;
- the perversion of our American political processes by foreign campaign contributions.

Consistent with our preamble, our resolutions, and our rich history, that organization is The American Legion, which was formed for God and country to implement those ten basic objectives and goals outlined in our preamble.

The American Legion is at its best when we pursue causes and objectives that are unequivocally in the national interest, are noble in origin, and are viewed by the American public as not being self-serving.

Remember that after the 25th National Convention in September of 1943, National Commander Warren Atherton, a World War I veteran, appointed a committee to study how to best help returning World War II veterans, keeping in mind that the majority of our members at that time were, in fact, World War I veterans themselves who had only received a train ticket home and $60 upon their completion of service. But in 1924 those veterans had received a promise from Congress of a bonus of $500 that was to be payable in 20 years, 1944; but in 1932, 20,000 veterans during the height of the Depression marched to Washington, D.C. in an effort to accelerate payment of that bonus during the Great Depression. The military was called out to quell the bonus marchers and anarchists, and they were lead by General Douglas MacArthur, assisted by Major Dwight Eisenhower and Major George Patton. There was injury. There was death. And as a result of this action, and by some reports, America did not give a very good account of herself that day, putting active duty military forces and pitting them against the veterans.

The majority of our membership and leadership in 1943 were World War I vets. It would have been very easy for them to turn their backs on those serving in World War II. It would have been easy to say let's give the returning GIs exactly what we were given in our day; that is to say, $60 and a train ticket home. It would have been easy to say that the ranking officers of World War II were the same officers who commanded the forces in 1932 that resulted in the death and misery to our World War I fellow veterans.

But The American Legion, its membership and its leadership, World War I veterans, did the right thing. They cast aside the temptation to be petty, to be jealous, to be vindictive, and took the high road, the noble way; and National Commander Atherton appointed a committee to make recommendations as to how to best help returning American GIs and veterans who had not yet joined The American Legion.

In December of 1943, in Room 507 of the Mayflower Hotel, in Washington, D.C., Past National Commander Harry Colmery, a World War I veteran, drafted on the back of hotel stationery what would later become the GI Bill of Rights and would later be referred to by James Michener, writer and historian, on January 11th, 1993, as one of the two or three finest laws ever passed by the United States Congress since our Constitution took effect.

Art Buckwald, the columnist, says, "I think the GI Bill was one of the greatest things that America ever did." And it happened because the membership of The American Legion, veterans of a previous war and a previous period, were looking out for the active duty forces of the country at that time. It happened because National Commander Atherton, a California attorney, made it a priority of his administration. It happened because Past National Commander Harry Colmery and members of that committee made it a priority. It happened because The American Legion and its members made it a priority and then made it happen.

The nobility of this average American Legion World War I member, in helping the active duty GI of World War II without anything in it for himself, is one of this organization's crowning achievements in the 20th Century and in our 81 year history. Many in this convention hall today, World War II veterans, benefitted from this act of generosity and nobility as this American Legion initiative was introduced in Congress on January 10th of 1944 and signed into law on June 22nd of that same year.

2.2 million went to college with it. 3.5 million went to business and trade schools with it. 1.4 million received on-the-job training. 690,000 received agricultural training with it. 15 million have received home loans and business loans with it. And it was The American Legion, once again, who stood up for the Korean War veterans to insure that they received the same benefits as their World War II compatriots under the GI Bill.

And it was The American Legion who, once again, listened to the Vietnam Agent Orange veterans who were being told by a VA system that they had no problem.

And a work in progress is the research that is being done on Gulf War Syndrome. Illnesses reported, illnesses which exist, illnesses which are debilitating some of our younger veterans, but it was The American Legion who, once again, stood up.

And I call upon you, the membership of The American Legion, and especially those of us who were recipients of those noble efforts, to return those noble gestures. Let us take the lead and be the voice for those young, patriotic, and brave men and women in uniform today who are undermanned, under appreciated, under paid, overextended, and overworked. Let us be their voice and the conscience of America. Let us be the caretakers and watchdog of our national defense. Let us be the guardians of our Democratic political processes and remove the taint and the appearance of foreign influence in our processes. Let us insist upon a 100 percent Americanism in our election processes. Together we will continue to do great things for The American Legion so that The American Legion can continue to do great things for America.

We have before us threats and problems which, quite frankly, scare me to death. But out west we have a saying that the United States Cavalry gave us, that courage is being scared to death but saddle up anyway. The American Legion and its members will saddle up once again for American, and we will lead America into the 21st Century.

Tonight when I retire, I will ask the Almighty to give me the strength, the wisdom, and the courage to do this job and to do it right for America. Tonight I ask, when you offer prayer, please offer the same prayer for me.

God bless you, God bless The American Legion, and God bless this Republic.

Election of National Officers

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Microphone number 4, please.

DELEGATE KEISER, New York: I am a duly authorized delegate from the Department of New York. 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 MILLER: Is there a second to the motion?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Those in favor of the motion signify in the usual manner of aye. Those opposed nay. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. Microphone number 1.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN GORE: I would like for the Chair to recognize our National Executive Committeeman from Alabama, Ray White.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair so recognizes.

DELEGATE RAY WHITE: What an honor for me to stand on this platform where so many outstanding Legionnaires have been nominated and elected to fill the various offices of The American Legion. Our Legion organization is where it is today because of your foresight in electing outstanding leaders of this great organization. As the NEC and duly elected delegate to the 1999 81st National Convention, I wish to place the name of James L. 'Jim' Fraughnaugh in nomination for National Vice Commander.

Jim is a Legionnaire's Legionnaire. Jim has come up through The American Legion the way that I feel that it should be. Jim has served every office starting in his Post, Junior,

Senior, Vice, Post Commander, County Commander, District Commander, First Division Commander, Department Junior Vice, Department Senior Vice, Department Commander, National Alternate Executive Committeeman, and National Executive Committeeman. Jim has served on national appointments on the Americanism Council, National Security Civil Defense Preparedness Committee, National Security Commission, Liaison from the NEC to the Magazine, Liaison from the NEC to the Internal Affairs Commission, and presently serving as a member of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Jim is married to Liz, who is a good friend of mine. They have four children and eight grandchildren. Jim is a lifelong member ofdVWdPost 171, Birmingham, Alabama and he has had 21 continuous years of membership, joining that Post July 4, 1979. Jim has served on the Department level and numerous Chairman Commission, the latest being the Chairman of Department Finance Commission, Chairman of Department Convention Commission, and member of the Department World War Memorial Commission. Jim, this year, is Chairman of a new Commission or Committee that's been appointed in the Department of Alabama, that is the Tissue Organ Donation Program. Jim is going to help us get this off and we hope that this, the first that I know of in the nation, in any Department, will be a huge success. Because of Jim's leadership, I know that it will.

Jim served in the United States Navy from 1957 through 1978, retired a Master Chief Petty Officer E-9. He served in Virginia's National Guard 1954-1957 and his Navy assignments include assignments aboard the *USS Charles S. Perry*, *USS Robert K. Huntington*, *USS Robert L. Wilson*, *USS Patterson*, *USS Miller*. His job in the Navy was a boiler technician and has taught the boiler technicians school in Great Lakes, Illinois. Jim was previously employed by Commercial Insurance Union as a service consultant and now is retired and is a service consultant in a retired status.

It gives me one of the greatest honors in the world to be able to stand on this podium, where so many previous leaders have been elected and to nominate a great Legionnaire, Jim Fraughnaugh, for the high honor of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: James Fraughnaugh has been placed in the nomination for the office of National Vice Commander. Microphone number 4, please.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JERRY DENNIS: As Delegation Chairman, I request permission for NEC Elton Ford to approach the podium for the purpose of a nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: NECman Alton Ford, from Michigan is so recognized.

DELEGATE ALTON FORD: It's a pleasure and privilege to be here today to present to you our candidate for National Vice Commander from the great state of Michigan. His name is Milton Lobstein. Milt gained his eligibility to belong to The American Legion by serving in the United States Navy from 1951 to 1955. He served his entire Navy career aboard ship reaching the rating of Machinist Third Class before being honorably discharged. He is a life member of the Police and Firefighters Post 161 with 32 years of dedicated service to The American Legion. He served all offices in his Post, including Commander for two years. He served his District as Committeeman for three years, Department Vice Commander one year and in 1983, Milt served as our Department Commander. Since that time, he has served on many Department Committees including Chairman of VA&R for four years and Chairman of the Law & Order Committee. He was the manager of his Post American Legion Baseball Team for eight years. On the National level, Milt served on the Law & Order Committee and is currently serving as Vice Chairman of the Counter Subversive Activities Committee.

In 1985, Milt retired from the Detroit police force with 30 years of service, then served the United States Government as a special agent, criminal investigator, retiring recently to devote full time to The American Legion. Milt has been married to his lovely wife Virginia for 24 years. They have three children and six grandchildren and Ginny is very supportive of his work in The American Legion. He is an active member of the Lutheran Church, serving as a catechism teacher and as a member of the choir and the men's club. He is a member of the Navy League, the Navy Institute and is a 32nd Degree Mason. He has the support of his Department of Michigan, the Great Lakes state. I am proud to present to you the name of Milton Lobstein for the high office of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Milton Lobstein has been placed into nomination. Microphone number 3, please.

DELEGATE CHAIRMAN DEL MARTIN: As a delegate from Minnesota, I ask the Chair to recognize Department Commander Dennis Sculthorp for purpose of nomination.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Dennis is so recognized by the Chair for the purpose of a nomination.

DENNIS DENNIS SCULTHORP: The American Legion Department of Minnesota, as a result of an election in the Minnesota Department Convention held July 17 at Morehead, Minnesota proudly nominates Robert 'Call me Buster' Skallerud for the office of National Vice Commander for the year 1999-2000. Robert is a Korean conflict veteran. He served in the U.S. Army from 1951 to 1953. He has been a member of The American Legion for over 46 years. He was awarded life membership in his post in 1993. He has served most offices and chairmanship on the Post level including Commander. He has served as County Commander along with other offices and Chairmanships.

On the District level, he has served most offices including Commander in 1992-1993. And for the great state of Minnesota Department, Robert has served on many Committees and held many Chairmanships. He has also served as Department Vice Commander. I guess after today we can call him Junior Past Department Commander, which he is just completing. Robert has been invited to become a member of Anavicus at this Convention and he has since completed that task. Robert has been a delegate to more than 20 district conventions, 17 Department Conventions and 11 National Conventions where he has served on several committees. He has attended several regional workshops and leadership schools.

He has completed The American Legion Extension Institute course and the last I talked to him, he passed. Robert has attended several briefings, Spring Meetings, Fall Meetings at National Headquarters in Indianapolis. He has also represented The American Legion at the Legislative meetings in Minnesota and in Washington, DC. He actively promotes the awareness of the POW/MIA issue. He represented Minnesota American Legion on a trip with the Minnesota International Guard to Tyndell Airforce Base in Florida and to Panama to learn about our country's war on drugs and our military positions with Panama and the Panama Canal. Robert is an active supporter of The American Legion Baseball Program. He has also received several meritorious awards from his local 4-H and Boy Scouts for his active participation and donation to their many projects.

Robert is a retired auctioneer and enjoys dedicating his time and energy to The American Legion. He is a knowledgeable, dedicated and experienced Legionnaire. He has the leadership qualities and the ability to identify with Legionnaires of every level and every walk of life. The Minnesota delegation is confident that he will be an excellent representative of the National Organization for The American Legion. In an honest, kind and sincere manner and as capable and ready to perform all duties as assigned to and expected

of him, therefore, we of Minnesota proudly enter the name of Robert 'Buster' Skallerud for the nomination of National Vice Commander for the year 1999-2000.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Robert Skallerud has been entered into nomination by the Department of Minnesota. Microphone number 4.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT MORRILL: As a delegate Chairman from the great state of New York. I request that you recognize Al Carpenter for the purposes of a nomination for National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Chair so recognizes the gentleman for the purposes of a nomination.

DELEGATE AL CARPENTER: I have been afforded the privilege of placing a nomination for the high office of National Vice Commander of The American Legion, a friend and dedicated 30-plus year Legionnaire from the Department of New York, Robert F. Neville. Bob is a Vietnam era veteran and family man. He and his wife are the proud parents of the Reverend Father Robert L. Neville. Our nominee worked up through The American Legion chair, been there, done that, has the shirt and hat to prove it, therefore, I will not relate all of his accomplishments. However, Legionnaire Neville has been extremely involved in our youth and has been a part of The American Legion Boys State Program for some 25 years, serving as Post Chairman, City, County, State Counselor, Program Director and Executive Director prior to his election as Department Commander in 1997. Since Bob's term as an outstanding Department Commander, he has continued to keep busy as consultant to the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of New York and is a member of the Financial Investment and Executive Committees of the Department.

On the National level, he's a member of the Foreign Relations Commission and, of course, an active participant in The American Legion Boys State National Meetings as well as a delegate to many National Conventions. He's found time throughout all of this to be active in his fire department and serves on the advisory board for the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stoney Brook. As a duly elected delegate from the great empire state of New York American Legion, I nominate Robert F. Neville for National Vice Commander for the 1999-2000 American Legion year.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The name of Robert F. Neville has been placed into nomination. Microphone number 3.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN JERRY HUFFMAN: I am a duly elected and registered delegate and Chairman of the evergreen state of Washington Delegation. I request you recognize Past National Vice Commander Doris Gross for the purpose of placing a nomination before this body.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Past National Vice Commander Doris Gross from Washington is so recognized for the purpose of placing into nomination an individual.

PAST NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER DORIS GROSS: As a delegate from the state of Washington, it is my privilege and honor to nominate an active Legionnaire from the state of Washington for the prestigious office of National Vice Commander, Harry Easley. Born and raised in Hannibal, Missouri, he came to the state of Washington to Missouri via Illinois and California. He immediately became active in The American Legion. Harry, an Air Force veteran of the Korean conflict, has served The American Legion as Chairman of several Post, District and state Committees. He was especially active as Department Law & Order Chairman. He created meaningful programs for the presentation of awards for those special firemen and policemen.

Harry Easley has been Post Commander, District Commander, Department Vice Commander and Department Commander. He has served nationally as Alternate National Executive Committeeman, as a member of the Defense Civil Preparedness Committee and also worked with the National Law & Order Committee. It is prophetic that before moving to the state of Washington, Harry was a policeman for 28 years here in Anaheim. He retired in 1986 as the Crime's Property Bureau Commander in the Detective division with the rank of Lieutenant. In 1978, while here in Anaheim, Harry was named Policeman of the Year by Anaheim Post 72. Harry has the great support of his wife, Janice, who is very active in the Auxiliary. Harry Easley, leader, excellent speaker and dedicated Legionnaire, will proudly present The American Legion as a National Vice Commander for the year 1999-2000 and we, in the state of Washington, are so proud to have nominated him.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Harry Easley's name has now been placed into nomination. The Chair will entertain a motion of seconding all five nominations. Hearing a second, those in favor signify in the usual manner of aye. Nays? Ayes have it.

The Chair would now like to call microphone number 1.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN ROBERT PROCTOR: As a duly elected delegate from the state of Florida, I move the nominations of National Vice Commander be closed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Motion's been made to close the nominations. Is there a second?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Hearing a second, it is non-debatable. Those in favor of the motion, signify in the usual manner of aye. Nays? In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

I recognize microphone number 2.

DELEGATION CHAIRMAN RAY HENDRIX: As a registered delegate to this convention, I move that the National Adjutant be directed to cast one unanimous vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention for the following names of National Vice Commander and that they be elected by acclamation. They are as follows: James L. Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan; Robert D. Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert L. Neville, New York; and L. Harry Easley, Washington. I so move.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Is there a second to the motion?

...The motion was seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Hearing a second, those in favor of the motion signify in the usual manner of aye. Opposed nay. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

I'd like to call on the National Adjutant, please.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant of The American Legion, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of the convention for James F. Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton W. Lobstein, Michigan; Robert D. Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert F. Neville, New York; L. Harry Easley of Washington for the offices of National Vice Commander of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I declare James Fraughnaugh, Alabama; Milton Lobstein, Michigan; Robert Skallerud, Minnesota; Robert Neville, New York; and L. Harry Easley, Washington as duly elected National Vice Commanders of The American Legion. Will the new National Vice Commanders please come to the platform?

Presentation of Colors to Newly Elected National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: I now call on Past National Commander Bob Turner of Georgia to present the Colors to our incoming National Commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TURNER: Delegates to this Convention and distinguished guests, will you please rise for the presentation of the Colors to our new National Commander? Color Guard, would you please present the Colors of the new National Commander of The American Legion.

Commander Lance, would you please join me here at the podium?

Mr. Commander, you stand before this convention having received a unanimous vote of confidence in your ability to represent not only Legionnaires but all America's veterans. I know, and all the delegates here know, that you are the right man to carry us into the new Millennium. May the Colors that we present to you this morning be a source of inspiration and pride. And Alan, we pray God's blessings on you and your family as you travel for our organization during this next year.

Color Guard, please return the colors of the National Commander to the post. Right hand salute! Two!

Presentation of Newly Elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: This is a very special time in the business of this convention, the time when we meet the distinguished lady who will lead the nearly one million patriotic women of the Auxiliary over the next year.

Please welcome to our stage the newly elected National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, a member of Otis D. Green Unit 155 in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, a true lady, a true leader, and our good friend, Miss Lib Stewart.

PRESIDENT STEWART: Someone has said that for every opportunity we enjoy there is a challenge and for every challenge, there is an opportunity. And certainly, as our new National Commander has said, The American Legion family faces many new challenges in the new century. Personally and on behalf of the nearly one million members of the American Legion Auxiliary, I want to take this opportunity to thank The American Legion family for all that you do in your local communities for veterans and their families and for children and youth. And to our new Commander and to our outgoing Commander also, we continue to pledge our 100% support to all the programs of The American Legion family.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank Commander Miller for his outstanding leadership during the past year and to thank you all on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary. I look forward to working with Commander Lance and all of you in the coming year. And I have with me this morning, the newly installed National Vice President Chris West of the Department of New Hampshire. We will celebrate America 2000 as the Auxiliary theme and we do have much to celebrate.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: It is with great pride, as a member of this organization and a Past National Commander of this organization, that I to present to you for the very first time, the leadership team for 1999-2000, our National Commander Alan Lance and our National President Lib Stewart.

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: As you know, during this year, I've been tagged the Cyber Commander, and a number of other titles. You have been very gracious

in allowing me to interact with you on a somewhat electronic basis and I have to admit when I first began I didn't know how well it would be accepted. But it has been accepted much better than I had anticipated. There was more than once that I spent a number of hours, until 1, 2, 3 o'clock in the morning sometimes, answering all the e-mail especially around the time when we passed Resolution 44 [The American Legion Statement on Yugoslavia].

I enjoyed it then and I will enjoy it in the future. The transition that you see on the screen is from Red Cap Mr. Miller to Blue Cap Mr. Miller. Don't you just love electronics? I will also transition from the NatCmdr@aol.com address to my new pncbutch@aol.com. So, please, I'll be out there. I would love to hear from you and I'm hoping that together we can get ourselves into the next century and be in the lead as our National Adjutant says, because we are the best and we need to stay there.

I now call on the Adjutant for the purpose of some announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT SPANOGLE: The National Convention By-Laws of The American Legion require that the National Executive Committee meet within 24 hours following the adjournment of the Annual National Convention. I'm announcing a meeting of the National Executive Committee to be held immediately following the adjournment of this National Convention in Room A9 of the Anaheim Convention Center, first level.

Unfinished Business

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: Is there any further business to come before this convention? Hearing none, I call upon outgoing National Chaplain Father Sweeney of New York to offer the Benediction.

Benediction
Rev. Robert J. Sweeney, New York, National Chaplain

As we go our separate ways, and the work of the 81st Annual Convention of The American Legion is concluded, we pray for a safe journey homeward for the delegates, alternates, guests and spouses present at this Convention. When they arrive at their homes, may they bring the true message of The American Legion to their individual posts, a message of generosity of spirit and selfless service to God and Country. Continue to fill Past National Commander Butch Miller with Your spirit. Bless our new National Commander Al Lance, his Vice Commanders and their families as they begin their year of service across this great nation. And as we pray for safe journey for ourselves, let us continue to pray for the members of our Armed Forces that they may be returned home to their families and loved ones. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

Retirement of Colors

NATIONAL COMMANDER MILLER: The Speedway Post 500 Color Guard will retire the flag of the United States. The delegates will render a right hand salute. One! Two!

I now declare the 81st Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, *sine die*.

...At 12:55 p.m.,, the 81st Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL AWARDS

National American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually for outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: Zachary Fisher

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: Tony Gwynn; San Diego Padres

Bob Feller Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player recording the greatest number of strikeouts during the regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT: Steve Grasley, Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.
RECIPIENT: Tri-City Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota

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: Brian Paone, Post 513, New Brighton, MN

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: Washington (Post 34, Kennewick, WA)

The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.
RECIPIENT: Illinois

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.
RECIPIENT: Jeremy S. Roberts, Post 83, Rison, Arkansas

The Howard P. Savage Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having the baseball team which becomes the Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.
RECIPIENT: Minnesota (Post 513, New Brighton, MN)

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award: Awarded annually to the manager and coach of the national championship team, as representative of the adult leadership Jack Williams stressed during his lifetime.
RECIPIENT(s): Manager Jeff Larsen, Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota
Coach Mark Paone, Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota
Coach Mike Maslowski, Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota

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: Timothy Brusseau, Jr., Post 39, Wood River, Vermont

Louisville Slugger Trophy: Plaque is presented to recipient, or designated representative, by appropriate official upon the conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series.
RECIPIENT: Kenny Judd, Post 111, Edmond, Oklahoma

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.
RECIPIENT: Wyoming

Rawlings 'Big Stick' award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player having the highest total number of bases as determined by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT: Brian Paone, Post 513, New Brighton, Minnesota

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: Texas (Kevin Sladek, San Marcos, TX)

William Randolph Hearst Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department attaining the greatest number of percentage points compiled from information contained in the Consolidated Post Reports, and supporting Department narrative.
RECIPIENT: Ohio

Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate.
RECIPIENT(s): Allan Babcock (Ontario)
Donald L. Gallant (Prince Edward Island)
Roderick K. Johnston (New Brunswick)
Roger Ouellette (New Brunswick)
Ronald Rivard (Alberta)
Thomas Arthur Snell (Ontario)
Boyd Story (New Brunswick)

Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting: Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post reports.

RECIPIENT(s): California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania

Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans: Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.
RECIPIENT(s): Category I—Jacobs Construction, Lemont, Pennsylvania
Category II—Computer Sciences Corporation, Clearfield, Utah
Category III—Georgia-Pacific Plywood, Crossett, Arkansas

Employment Service Awards: Awarded in three categories: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) of the Year; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) of the Year; Employment Service (ES) Office of the Year.
RECIPIENT(s): LVER of the Year: Max Niesar, Minot, North Dakota
DVOP of the Year: Robert E. Loter, Des Moines, Iowa
ES Office of the Year: Fayetteville JobLink Career Center, Fayetteville, NC

Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the JC Penney Co., to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.
RECIPIENT(s): The judging for the 1998/1999 awards has not been completed.

National Department History Contest Awards: Awarded annually at the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee to those contestants entered in the National Department History Contest having submitted the One-Year History *Narrative* or *Yearbook* of the Department which best meets the standards established for that particular competition.
RECIPIENT(s): Vermont (One-Year Narrative History)
South Dakota (One-Year Yearbook History)

National Post History Contest Awards: Awarded annually to those contestants entered in the National Post History Contest deemed by a duly authorized panel of judges to have submitted the One-Year History of the Post which best meets the standards established for the competitions.
RECIPIENT(s): Women's Post 118, Virginia Beach, Virginia
(One-Year Narrative History)
Santiam Post 51, Lebanon, Oregon
(One-Year Yearbook History)

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate.
RECIPIENT(s): Kap-Chong Chi (Korea)
Lee Cheng-Lin (Taiwan, Republic of China)
Blas F. Ople (Philippines)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of three membership size categories (I - 1-999 members; II- 1,000-2,000 members; III - 3,000 members or more), each

of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

1998 RECIPIENT(s):	**(I)—Detachment of Iowa**	**132.1%**
	(II)—Detachment of North Carolina	**116.9%**
	(III)—Detachment of Pennsylvania	**112.3%**

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— No Departments Qualified in this Category
Category II— No Departments Qualified in this Category
Category III— Virginia
Category IV— Kentucky
Category V— South Carolina
Category VI—Alaska & Nevada (tie)

General John J. Pershing Honor Award: Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more, of the post's previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.
RECIPIENT: Vermont

The Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.
RECIPIENT: South Dakota

The North Carolina Trophy: Awarded annually to the Department, not included among the several state Departments or the Department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year's membership.
RECIPIENT: Puerto Rico

The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.
RECIPIENT: South Dakota

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 Jeffry D. Moffitt

The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.
RECIPIENT: Cadet Michael Sharp

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 George Lloyd Beck, Jr.

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 Jason A. Grassbaugh

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 Jeffrey Michael Monoghan

National Commander's Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program.
RECIPIENT(s): **Category I** - Depts. with 100,000 or more members
Post & Individual Participation: Florida
Category II - Depts. with 70,000 to 99,999 mbrs.
Post & Individual Participation: Massachusetts
Category III - Depts. with 40,000 to 69,999 mbrs
Post & Individual Participation: Nebraska
Category IV - Depts. with 25,000 to 39,999 mbrs.
Post & Individual Participation: Tennessee
Category V - Depts. with 10,000 to 24,999 mbrs.
Post & Individual Participation: Rhode Island
Category VI - Depts. with less than 10,000 members
Post & Individual Participation: Hawaii

National Law Enforcement Officer Of The Year Award: To recognize an outstanding law enforcement officer as selected from Department law enforcement officer winners for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.
RECIPIENT: Police Officer Ronald Tookes, Miami-Dade, FL

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.
RECIPIENT(s): Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and Virginia

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: Jerry Mitchell, Reporter, The Clarion-Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi

National Commander's Public Relations Award: Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.
RECIPIENT: Alan Keyes

The Arch M. Cantrall Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Band winning first prize in competition with all other American Legion bands during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, Post 264, Tonawanda, NY

Emblem Sales Trophy: To be awarded annually to that Junior sponsored Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Junior sponsored Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: No Contest in 1999

The Four Chaplains Trophy: Awarded annually to the winner of The American Legion Firing Squad competition at the National Convention.
RECIPIENT: No Contest in 1999

The Glen R. Hillis Trophy: Awarded annually to that Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: Henderson-Smith-Edmonds Post 86, Rockville, MD

The Lemuel Bolles Trophy: Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.
RECIPIENT: American Legion Band of the Tonawandas Post 264, Tonawanda, New York

National Adjutant's Trophy: Awarded annually to that American Legion Firing Squad winning first prize in competition with all other Firing Squads during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: No Contest in 1999

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy: Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.
RECIPIENT: Minnesota

Abbreviations

ABMC	American Battle Monuments Commission
ACE	Air Combat Element
ADVETS	Assistant Directors for Veterans' Employment and Training
AFRH	Armed Forces Retirement Home
AVIP	Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program
BCMR	Boards for Correction of Military Records
CD	Compact Discs
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Citizen's Flag Alliance
CMN	Children's Miracle Network
COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment
CSS	Combat Service Support
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
D.C.	District of Columbia
DIC	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
DMS	Direct Mail Solicitation
DOD	Department of Defense
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs
DVETS	Director for Veterans' Employment and Training
DVOP	Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KEDO	Korea Energy Development Organization
KVI	Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc.
LVER	Local Veterans Employment Representative
M&PA	Membership and Post Activities
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force
MFN	Most Favored Nation

MIA	Missing in Action
NACA	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCS	National Cemetery System
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEF	National Emergency Fund
NMD	National Missile Defense
NORAD	North American Air Defense
NSA	National Security Agency
NSLI	National Service Life Insurance
NVTI	National Veterans Training Institute
PCAG	Policy Coordination and Action Group
PL	Public law
PNC	Past National Commander
POW	Prisoners of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RIF	Reduction in Force
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROTC	Reserve Officers Training Corps
SAL	Sons of the American Legion
SDN	Service Delivery Network
SJR	Senate Joint Resolution
SMOCTA	Service Members Occupational and Training Act
TCDD	Tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin
TRIP	Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims
UN	United Nations
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United States Code
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USNH	United States Naval Home
USO	United Service Organizations
USSAH	United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home
VA&R	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
VA	Veterans Affairs
VAC	Veterans Affairs Commission
VACRS	Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China

VAMC	Veterans Affairs Medical Centers
VEOA	Veterans Employment Opportunities Act
VERA	Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation
VETS	Veterans Employment and Training Service
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VISN	Veterans Integrated Service Network
VR&C	Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling
VSO	Veterans Service Organizations

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Harold L. 'Butch' Miller, Woodbridge, Virginia. Membership was strong with more than 2.9 million veterans in more than 14,000 posts throughout the nation and overseas. We recorded another year of rewarding service to America, her veterans, and their families.

The American Legion National Headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to the Indianapolis facilities, offices are maintained in Washington, DC, to house those organizational functions requiring a close working relationship with the Congress and the appropriate agencies of the federal government. The editorial and advertising staffs of *The American Legion Magazine* are located at The American Legion's Indianapolis Headquarters.

The National Commander's report is published herein as a part of the National Convention proceedings. Reports of the other national officers, the national commissions, financial statement with accompanying data, and a report of the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary are included.

Throughout the year, the two organizations continued to provide vital leadership to the nation and, through our activities and programs, contributed significantly to the preservation of the American way of life. We are proud of our accomplishments and look forward to the challenges ahead in the coming year.

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE
National Adjutant

EXCERPTS FROM CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

ARTICLE II

Nature

Section 1. The American Legion is a civilian organization; membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service. Rank does not exist in the Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any convention or meeting of the Legion.

Section 2. The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. The American Legion shall be organized in Departments and these in turn in Posts. There shall be one Department in each state, in the District of Columbia, and there may be one Department in each territory and insular possession of the United States. The National Executive Committee may establish Posts in the territorial and insular possessions of the United States and foreign countries, and shall designate the Department under whose jurisdiction they shall function, but this shall in no way affect the status of Departments already established.

ARTICLE IV

Eligibility

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990 until a date established by Congress for ending the Desert Storm period; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any said periods; provided however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life.

Section 3. No person may be a member at any time of more than one Post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled by a Post shall be admitted to membership in another Post, without the consent of the expelling Post except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, he may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to be admitted to membership in another Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

ARTICLE V

Section 1. The legislative body of The American Legion shall be the National Convention, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. The time and place of the National Conventions shall be determined by the National Executive Committee, which shall have authority to change such time and place for sufficient reasons to it appearing.

Section 3. In the National Convention each Department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each one thousand members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said Convention and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid, and to one alternate for each delegate. The delegates shall be chosen not less than 2 weeks before the National Convention at Department Conventions or in any other manner specified by the Department Constitution.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials after his registration fee has been paid.

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at a National Convention when 60 percent of the Departments are represented as provided above.

ARTICLE VI

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No two Vice Commanders shall be chosen from the same Department. No person shall be eligible for re-election to the Office of National Commander or National Vice Commander.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices occurring between National Conventions shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee, and any member of The American Legion, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy. Provided, however, that no Past National Commander or Past National Vice Commander shall be elected to fill any vacancy in these respective offices.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee at its first meeting following the National Convention shall appoint the National Adjutant, National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, National Chaplain and National Historian, such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing power. All persons having the custody of funds shall give adequate bonds, which shall be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. All Past National Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Posts, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without vote, and shall also be life delegates to all National Conventions of The American Legion, with vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Departments.

ARTICLE VII

National Executive Committee

Section 1. Between National Conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the National Commander, the National Vice-Commanders, and one National Executive Committeeman and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to vote only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman.

Past National Commanders

E. Roy Stone, Jr., South Carolina
Erle Cocke, Jr., Maryland
J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma
William R. Burke, California
Hon. Daniel F. Foley, Minnesota
Donald E. Johnson, Virginia
L. Eldon James, Virginia
William E. Galbraith, Arizona
John H. Geiger, Illinois
Joe L. Matthews, Texas
James M. Wagonseller, Ohio
Harry G. Wiles, Kansas
William J. Rogers, Maine
John M. Cary, Florida
Frank I. Hamilton, Indiana
Michael J. Kogutek, New York
Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
James P. Dean, Mississippi
John P. Comer, Massachusetts
Hon. H.F. Gierke, North Dakota
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, Pennsylvania
Roger A. Munson, Ohio
Bruce Thiesen, California
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine

National Executive Committeemen

Ray White, Alabama
Joseph T. Craig, Alaska
William C. Bingham, Arizona
Claude B. Carpenter, Arkansas
Michael A. Gombar, California
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut
Robert H. Poore, Delaware
Raymond J. Potocki, District of Columbia
George L. Derrick, Florida
Merwyn M. Beavers, France
Horace Borders, Georgia
LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii
LeRoy Lebsack, Idaho
Arthur Rawers, Illinois
John W. Pipher, Indiana
William Rusk, Iowa
U. S. Grant, Kansas
Joe E. Woods, Kentucky
Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana
Robert A. Owen, Maine
Ashby L. Jenkins, Maryland
Henry P. Bradley, Massachusetts
John E. Hayes, Mexico
Alton R. Ford, Michigan
Raymond L. Galazen, Minnesota
Hershel O. Ladner, Mississippi
James F. Mareschal, Missouri
John C. Pellegrini, Montana
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska
Archie Pozzi, Jr., Nevada
George V. West, New Hampshire
Joseph F. Ward, New Jersey
Robert L. Crotzer, New Mexico
Franklin C. Ward, New York
Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
Aaron 'Moody' Dalke, North Dakota
Samuel Barney, Ohio
Lawrence F. Roy, Oklahoma
T. Les Galloway, Oregon
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Ernesto P. Golez, Philippines
Andres Rosario Bordonada, Puerto Rico
Charles J. Zawacki, Rhode Island
E. Roy Stone, South Carolina
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee
John W.J. Richter, Texas
William E. Christoffersen, Utah
Ronald P. Aldrich, Vermont
William R. Bryant, Virginia
Robert W. Wesphal, Washington
Jack T. Gribben, West Virginia
Robert K. Zukowski, Wisconsin
Todd E. White, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

Clarence W. Jacobs, Alabama
Thomas W. Streeper, Alaska
Marco A. Valenzuela, Arizona
Hoy M. Haught, Arkansas
Mae Mitchell., California
Joseph E. Ross, Colorado
Joseph F. Mardu, Connecticut
Calr H. Platner, Delaware
Clayton S. Dann, District of Columbia
Robert J. Proctor, Florida
Steven J. Pratschler, France
Jimmy C. Hartwick, Georgia
Eugene K. B. Won, Hawaii
Dee Collins, Idaho
Ralph D. Adler, Illinois
Bill Hicks, Indiana
Dave Rehbein, Iowa
David O. Warnken, Kansas
Randall Coffman, Kentucky
John A. Bennett, Louisiana
Richard M. Blouin, Maine
Robert M. Johnson, Maryland
Alfred G. Canale, Massachusetts
Jack B. Driscoll, Mexico
Henry J. Sacha, Michigan
Ambrose J. Koll, Minnesota
Charles E. Langley, Mississippi
Sam Yancey, Missouri
Charles Vangorden, Montana
Robert H. Zersen, Nebraska
John W. Stingerie, Nevada
Benjamin F. Talford, New Hampshire
Franklin R. Sickle, Jr., New Jersey
Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico
William H. Purcell, New York
David G. Desmond, North Carolina
Don R. Herrly, North Dakota
Jerrold W. Wilson, Ohio
Charles R. John, Oklahoma
Robert D. Scott, Oregon
Alfred Pirolli, Pennsylvania
Ignacio F. Palad, Philippines
Arturo Diaz Neval, Puerto Rico
Richard E. Verrier, Rhode Island
Rennie M. Singletary, Jr., South Carolina
Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota
Ralph J. Reel, Tennessee
Delbert D. Fuhrman, Texas
Duane S. Willis, Utah
Alan B. Grazini, Vermont
Dale D. Chapman, Virginia
Lilburn H. Easley, Washington
William W. Kile, West Virginia
David A. Korth, Wisconsin
Joseph G. Sestak, Wyoming

EXCERPTS FROM BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

ARTICLE I

National Executive Committee

Commission, Committee, and Employees

Section 6. The National Executive Committee, upon nomination by the National Commander, appoints the following standing commissions: National Americanism Commission, National Commission on Children and Youth, National Convention Commission, National Economic Commission, National Finance Commission, National Foreign Relations Commission, National Internal Affairs Commission, National Legislative Commission, The American Legion Magazine Commission, National Public Relations Commission, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and National Security Commission.

The National Executive Committee shall provide for the appointment and employment of such subordinate officers and employees as may be needed for the administration of The American Legion, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Leo P. Burke, California

For those of us in attendance at the Post Convention Executive Meeting of The American Legion in New Orleans September 10, 1998 for installation and ratification of Commander Miller's appointees to guide and assist this great organization in fulfilling its Charter by Congress, the flooding appeared to be Mother Nature's way of saying, "MAINTAIN A STEADY SHIP AHEAD". We escaped safely, perhaps a little more moist than when we came.

The orientations conducted at The American Legion Headquarters were more comprehensive than anything given before marching into battle and served as the parameters and guidelines for the discharge of our responsibilities over the next 12 months. All 15 of the Western Region departments were assigned to me to include Mexico and the Philippines, thus creating a region that spans half the globe.

The briefing at our Washington, DC Headquarters prepared us for the visit to Capitol Hill where Commander Miller briefed a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. The Commander's testimony was very informative and well received. He articulated to these elected representatives how painfully unfair it is for the VA Budget to have been on a flatline basis for some several years even though the VA is subject to the rigors of inflation just as those other elements of Federal Government who get their cost of living increase.

I was assigned to participate in The American Legion Information Conferences for Region 7 in Nevada and Region 8 in Washington. These conferences were reminiscent of GI Joe's return to college, only this was The American Legion University. There was a great

exchange of information and lots of interaction between the delegates and staff, resulting in added enthusiasm and rejuvenation to better work our programs.

In working The American Legion programs throughout my travel to the various departments that comprise the Western States Region, I early on chose MEMBERSHIP as the program that would make the biggest difference for all. As we approach the end of this term of office, I see great improvement in every direction I look. Many departments are approaching or have achieved goal. We now have more people working this program who know how to achieve positive results.

An effort was made to visit all departments who extended an invitation. The following agenda will provide a resume of my activities over the past 12 months:

September 1998	
4-10	The 80th American Legion Convention in New Orleans, LA
14-18	Orientation at The American Legion Headquarters
18-20	Information Conference, Region 7, Las Vegas, NV
October 1998	
2-4	Information Conference, Region 8, Yakima, WA
5-6	Washington, DC Headquarters orientation and Commander Miller's testimony before the Joint Session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees.
9-10	Commander Miller's Homecoming, Hampton, VA
11-15	The American Legion Executive Committee and Fall Meeting to include hosting Department Commanders Breakfast in Indianapolis.
January 1999	
2-6	Travel with The American Legion Commander Miller on his visitation to selected Posts in the Department of California.
16	Official Visit to Mid-Winter Conference in Lander, Wyoming
29-31	Official Visit to Mid-Winter Conference in Colorado Springs
February 1999	
5-6	Membership Visit to Alaska Southeast District Convention in Sitka
25-28	Official Visit to New Mexico Mid-Winter Conference in Santa Fe
March 1999	
22-24	Washington, DC Conference
26-31	Membership Promotion for Nevada in Reno and Las Vegas
Arpil 1999	
2-4	Official Visit to Idaho Homecoming Activities for Department Commander
May 1999	
5-6	The American Legion Executive Committee and Spring Meeting in Indianapolis
6-8	Official Visit to Alaska Department Convention in Anchorage
14-15	Region 8 Meeting in Cheyenne, Wyoming
16-20	Visit to Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT
June 1999	
16-20	Official Visit to Department of California Convention in San Diego
25-27	Official Visit to Utah Department Convention in Salt Lake City
July 1999	
9-10	Official Visit to Montana Department Convention in Livingston
September 1999	
1-9	Attend The American Legion Convention in Anaheim, CA

Through our orientation programs at The American Legion Headquarters we five Vice Commanders were provided with a slogan: America Learns, America Loves, America Lives through The American Legion. The American Legion lives through MEMBERSHIP! We have provided our members with great leadership. Those following the leadership provided have made tremendous contributions to our country and this organization.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Fernando 'Fred' M. Goulart

It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve the nations largest veterans' organization as its National Vice Commander. In representing the National Commander, Harold 'Butch' Miller, I have experienced the immense sea of volunteerism, goodwill, hospitality, generosity and friendship throughout The American Legion, Northeast Region.

In my area of responsibility, I had the privilege of serving with Lawrence Dearborn of Maine, Donald Small of New Hampshire, Ernest Cyr of Vermont, Robert Morrill of New York, James Flattes, Sr. of Massachusetts, Anthony DeQuattro of Rhode Island, William Neitz of Pennsylvania, Eliott Meccico of Connecticut, Charles Armbruster, Jr. of Delaware, Leo McKernan of New Jersey, Victor Riston of Maryland, and Edward Burke of the District of Columbia as Department Commanders.

My schedule for the 1998-1999 year was as follows:

September 1998	
14-17	Brainstorming Sessions, Indianapolis, IN
25-27	National Information Conference, Saratoga, New York
October 1998	
3	Post Installation, Fierlit Korzen Post 79, Rhode Island
4-7	Legislative Meetings and Commander's's Testimony, Washington, DC
8-10	National Commander's Homecoming, Norfolk, Virginia
11-15	Fall NEC Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
23-25	National Information Conference, Waterbury, Connecticut
30-Nov. 1	Membership Roundup, Maine
November 1998	
6-8	Membership Roundup, New Jersey
13-14	Membership Roundup, New Hampshire
14	Commander's Reception, Massachusetts
17, 24	Membership Meetings, Providence, Rhode Island
29	Past Post 69 Commander's and President's Dinner, Providence, Rhode Island
December 1998	
7	Pearl Harbor Observance, Providence, Rhode Island
8, 15, 22	Membership Mailing, Providence, Rhode Island
January 1999	
15-17	Mid-Winter Conference, Trumbull, Connecticut
29-30	Mid-Winter Conference, Burlington, Vermont
5, 12, 19	Officer's Mid Year Meetings, Department Headquarters, Providence, Rhode Island

February 1999	
15	Mid Winter DEC Meeting, LaPlata, Maryland
9, 16, 23	Chairman's Mid Year Meetings, Department Headquarters, Providence, Rhode Island
March 1999	
21-24	Washington Conference, Washington, DC
26	Post 49 Testimonial Dinner, Past Post Commander, Vermont
April 1999	
17	Post 37, Appreciation Dinner (State Veterans Plate), Vermont
18	Department Commander's Testimonial, New Hampshire
23-25	National Information Conference, South Portland, Maine
May 1999	
1-2	Department Commander's Testimonial and DEC, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
16	DEC, Westernport, Maryland
21-23	National Information Conference, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania
June 1999	
4-6	Children's Miracle Network, Check Presentation, Orlando, Florida
12	Heather Beasley, National Vice President's Testimonial Dinner, Wiscassett, Maine
16-17	Department Convention, Springfield, Massachusetts
17-20	Department Convention, Ellsworth, Maine
25-27	Department Convention, Wilmington, Delaware
July 1999	
9-10	Department Convention, Waterbury, Connecticut
14-17	Department Convention, Binghamton, New York
23-24	Testimonial in my honor, Warwick, Rhode Island
24	Department Picnic, Warwick, Rhode Island
29-Aug. 1	National Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, IN
August 1999	
14	11th District Drum & Bugle Corps Competition, Scranton, Pennsylvania
September 1999	
3-9	National Convention, Anaheim, California

Throughout the Northeast, the National Commander's message was clear—raise one dollar per member for the National Emergency Fund, pass the Flag Protection Amendment and advance the GI Bill of Health. Along the way, in promoting the Commander's Agenda, enthusiasm building and having fun was the cornerstone of my talks. I always asked, "Who's the best?" and always enthusiastically, the sea of Legionnaires and family responded with "WE ARE!".

For the first time, the Northeast National Vice Commander represented the National Commander at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I am thankful for everyone's hard work in membership to make that possible.

My personal thanks to Harold 'Butch' Miller, National Commander, Joseph Posato, my staff Liaison, Peggy Judd and National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle for their advice, guidance and support.

From the floods of New Orleans, at our annual 80th National Convention, to Anaheim, California, the experience and thrill of service to this organization has been second to none. It will long live etched in my memory. Thanks to all for the many courtesies, hospitality and

generosity extended to my wife and me. Most of all, thanks for the many friendships made along the way.

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James W. 'Jim' Gravenstein, Kansas

I was very honored and proud to have been elected as a National Vice Commander on September 10, 1998, at the 80th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. It has been a duty and privilege to advance National Commander Butch Miller's policies with the greatest vigor I possess. The departments in my Central Division achieved many goals. We were the only Division to make the 85% target date in January, the 90% target date in February, the 95% target date in April. My area of responsibility included Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and the Department of France.

The following visitations were made by me during the 1998-1999 year:

September 1998

4-10	80th Annual National Convention, New Orleans, LA
14-18	Brainstorming sessions with National Headquarters Staff and Membership Phone calling at National Headquarters, Indianapolis, IN
25-26	National Information Conference, Rochester, MN

October 1998

5-6	Orientation briefings at Washington, DC Headquarters and National Commander's testimony before Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees
9-10	National Commander's Homecoming, Hampton, VA
11-15	NEC, Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, IN. Hosted my Commanders at Breakfast
16-17	Placed National Wreath at Eisenhower Pilgrimage, Abilene, KS
21-24	Whistle Stop Membership Tour of Department of South Dakota

November 1998

5	Guest speaker at Casper J. Middlekauf Post 173, Hays, KS
21	First District Membership Rally, Post 400, Topeka, KS

December 1998

1	Visited Colmery-O'Neil VA Hospital Gift Shop, Topeka, KS
4-6	Guest Speaker at Willmar, MN Membership Rally
12	Department of Kansas Christmas Party

January 1999

9	Department Oratorical Meeting, Junction City, KS
15-17	Guest Speaker at Mid-Winter Conference, Appleton, WI
20-23	Membership Tour of Department of Kansas
24-27	Membership Tour of Department of Nebraska
29-30	Guest Speaker at Membership Rally, Swartz Creek, MI

February 1999

5-7	Guest Speaker at Kansas Mid-Winter Forum, Hays, KS
12-14	Guest Speaker at Winter Conference, Mandan, ND
17	Department of Kansas Legislative Party
18	Presented Senator Pat Roberts plaque for his support of Constitutional Amendment to protect the Flag from desecration
20	First District Star Party, Seneca, KS

March 1999

13 Department of Kansas Oratorical Contest, Junction City, KS
22-24 Washington Conference, Washington, DC
27 Guest Speaker, Legion Birthday Party, Capital Post #1, Topeka, KS

April 1999

9-11 American Legion First District Convention, Marysville, KS
16-18 Represented National Commander Miller at National Oratorical Contest, Indianapolis, IN
23-24 Guest Speaker at Robbinsdale, MN Spring Conference

May 1999

5-6 NEC Spring Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
14-16 Region 6 National Information Conference, Fargo, ND
24-25 Represented National Commander Miller at U.S. Naval Academy Awards Ceremony, Annapolis, MD
29-31 Represented National Commander Miller at Memorial Day Ceremony, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA
31 Had Breakfast at the White House and picture taken with President Clinton.

June 1999

8-13 Worked Membership and Guest Speaker at American Legion State Convention, Pierre, SD
14 Attended dedication of the placing of the SAL Emblem on Kansas American Legion Department Headquarters Building with SAL National Commander Bryon Robichaux
25-27 Guest Speaker at Nebraska Department Convention, North Platte, NE

July 1999

3 Dedication of new post home, Emporia, KS
10 Re-dedication Ceremony commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Forbes Air Force Base, Topeka, KS
16-18 Guest Speaker at American Legion Department Convention, Sioux City, IA

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
John D. Morris, Texas

It was an honor to be elected as National Vice Commander of The American Legion at the 80th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, to serve with National Commander Harold (Butch) Miller and this great organization during it's last full year of this century.

Schedule of activities for the 1998-1999 year are as follows:

September 1998

10 Elected National Vice Commander and brief orientation
24-26 Brainstorming Sessions as Newly Elected National Vice Commander & Membership Phone Calling at Indianapolis Headquarters
24-26 Texas DEC and my Homecoming, Austin, Texas
24-27 Official visit to Indiana-Fall Conference, Indianapolis

October 1998

11-15 NEC, Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, Indiana, reported to NEC members on activities since elected and hosted a breakfast for Department Commanders in Midwest Resion
24-26 Attended NIC, Region 5, Champaign, IL

24-27	Orientation briefings at Washington Headquarters & National Commander's testmony before Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees
24-26	National Commander's Homecoming, Hampton, Virginaia
November 1998	
24-26	Official visit to Illinois—62nd Jamboree of the Egyptian Past Commanders Club at Marion and visited Veterans Home
December 1998	
None	
January 1999	
5	Attended Past National Commander Jack W. Flynt's funeral, Dimmit, Texas
24-26	Official visit to Oklahoma Mid-Winter Conference, Oklahoma City
24-27	Visit to Oklahoma, Post Membership tour
February 1999	
24-26	Visit to Ohio, Membership Roundup
24-27	Official visit to Texas Mid-Winter Conference and DEC Meeting at Austin
24-26	Visit to Missouri, Membership, Jefferson City
March 1999	
24-26	Washington Conference, Washington, DC
April 1999	
24-27	Visit to Oklahoma, Old Timer Parade in Guthrie and tour Children's Home School in Ponca City, as a continuation of January membership tour
26-May 1	Indiana statewide membership tour and Department Commander, Harold Epley's Homecoming
May 1999	
24-26	NEC, Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
24-27	Official visit to Missouri, Truman Pilgrimage at Independence
June 1999	
24-26	Guest speaker, 4th Division Convention, Texas
24-27	Visit to Buckeye Boys State at Bowling Green State University
18	Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY for award presentation
24-28	Official visit to Kentucky, Department Convention at Ft. Mitchell
July 1999	
9-12	Department of Texas Convention, Ft. Worth, Texas

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Roger L. Tingler, Georgia

It was a distinct honor to serve as National Vice Commander for the 1998-1999 year.

As I look back over this past year and realize the accomplishments achieved in my Region, it is most rewarding. The Departments in the Southern Region finished the membership year in first place. My area of responsibility included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

September 1998	
3	Post NEC Meeting, New Orleans, LA
14-17	Brainstorming Meeting, IA, A/C&Y, and PR, Indianapolis, IN
October 1998	
4-7	Legislative Meeting and Commander's Testimony, Washington, DC
9-10	National Commander's Homecoming, Norfolk, Virginia
11-15	Fall Meetings and Host Department Commander's Breakfast at Indianapolis Athletic Club, Indianapolis, IN
23-25	National Information Conference, Little Rock, AR
29-Nov. 1	Fall Conference, Department of South Carolina, Myrtle Beach, SC
November 1998	
11	Georgia Veterans' Day, Atlanta, Georgia. Spoke at Veterans' Day Celebration, Covington, GA
December 1998	
11-13	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Florida
January 1999	
8-10	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Mississippi
22-24	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Louisiana
February 1999	
5-7	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of West Virginia
11	Spoke at Legion Function, Atlanta, Georgia
25-27	Spring Conference, Department of South Carolina
March 1999	
12-15	Spring Conference, Department of Virginia
19	Spoke at American Legion Post 216, Austell, GA
21-24	1999 Washington Conference, Washington, DC
26	Spoke to Georgia BPOE
27	Department of Georgia Commander Homecoming
April 1999	
20	Opened The American Legion, Newton County Fair
23-25	Spring Conference, Department of Georgia
May 1999	
5-6	Spring Meetings, NEC Meeting, Indianapolis, IN
21	Dedication New Department HQ Building, Georgia
24	Gave Memorial Day Address on Square, Covington, Georgia
27-28	U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY
June 1999	
3-6	Department Convention, Department of Florida
10-13	Department Convention, Department of North Carolina
24-27	Department Convention, Department of South Carolina
July 1999	
22-25	Department Convention, Department of Georgia
August 1999	Spoke and Installed Officers at several Legion Posts

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
Reverend Robert J. Sweeney, New York

The founding fathers of The American Legion were fully aware that God and Country must go together, if our Nation was to remain great and permanent. To advance this spiritual concept, the Office of Chaplain was consitutionalized and imposed with accountable

responsibilities to keep this great veterans' organization steadfast for God and Country, perform such divine and non-sectarian services that may be necessary, and carry out ceremonial rituals recommended by the National Headquarters from time to time.

At the Post Convention National Executive Committee Meeting, held at the Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on September 10, 1998, I was appointed National Chaplain for the Legion year 1998-1999, by National Commander Harold L. "Butch" Miller.

During my term of office, invocations and benedictions were given at the following occasions: Post Convention National Executive Committee Meeting; Fall National Executive Committee Meeting, Indianapolis; Spring National Executive Committee Meeting, Indianapolis; Pre-Convention National Executive Committee Meeting, Anaheim; and Legislative Rally, Washington, DC.

During 1999, The American Legion and this office promoted National Day of Prayer —May 6; Ringing Church Bells for VJ Day— September 2; and Four Chaplains Sunday and Religious Emphasis Week—February 7-13. I delivered the memorial message during the annual Patriotic Religious Service in conjunction with the 81st National Convention of The American Legion.

I wish to express my appreciation to Harold L. "Butch" Miller, National Commander; Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant; and the staff at National Headquarters Indianapolis, Indiana and Washington, DC for the assistance and support they offered me.

It has been an honorable privilege, a sincere pleasure, and a truly rewarding experience to have had the opportunity to discharge the duties of the National Chaplain for The American Legion in services for God and Country.

In facing a new millennium, with its awesome challenges and opportunities, we are mindful of those who stood to defend this nation in time of war, who continue to stand for a strong national defense in a changing world, and who steadfastly work to preserve the fabric of this nation—that is today's American Legion, Still Serving America!

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN
Robert L. Klipstine, Ohio

At the conclusion of the 80th National Convention, held in New Orleans, the newly elected National Commander 'Butch' Miller introduced the newly elected officers and those who were appointed to serve The American Legion with him for the coming year of 1999. I, being the newly appointed National Historian, felt very privileged and honored to have been chosen.

I attended Commander Miller's Homecoming, hosted by his own Department of Virginia. It was an outstanding sendoff for the Commander.

My first assignment was an invitation to Post No. 72 of Cincinnati, which I had the honor of chartering in the year of 1976 as the Department of Ohio Commander.

My first challenge was attending the Fall Meetings at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis, when all Legion commissions and committees meet. I, as the National Historian, conducted and oversaw the judging of the National Historians Contest. This has been happening since the year of 1930. I soon saw that it required a number of qualified and dedicated past Historians to undertake the judging. Thanks to the outstanding staff at the Headquarters of the National Library and Librarian/Curator Joseph Hovish, the task was made easy. I was guided by Past National Historians Delfo Barabani and Roy Mahoney, and with help from Past Department Historian Don Simons who has had much experience in past coordination and tabulating the results of the contest. After the judging of 48 entries, the results were made known to me. I had the privilege of informing the National Executive Committee the results of the 1998 Historians Contest.

The contest is divided into 4 categories. The winner of the **One-Year Department Narrative** History Contest, was the Department of Georgia, and the First Place Winner of the **One-Year Department Yearbook** History Contest, was the Department of Ohio. The Winner of First Place of the **One-Year Post Narrative** History Contest was Charlotte Post No. 110 of Florida. The First Place Winner of the **One-Year Post Yearbook** History Contest was Windcrest Post No. 612 of Texas.

During the Fall Meetings, a dinner at National Headquarters was hosted by outgoing President Dan Watrous of the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL). The Association held an election for a new President to serve for the coming year. Harry Crow, the Department Historian of West Virginia, was elected as the incoming President.

I received much help from President Crow during the meetings and looked forward to working with him all year. While spending several days in the Legion's Library, getting acquainted with the available information, I found in the records that Eben Putnam of Maine served as the first National Historian having served 1920-1933. I am the 40th National Historian to serve and will be the last to serve in the 20th Century.

Having served in World War II, I was interested in the history of the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. I wanted to know more about the survivors. After much research, I found there are 186 Unit organizations across the United States. In my own State of Ohio, there are several active organizations that meet regularly. I arranged with my own Post No. 487 members, to host a program to pay tribute to those survivors.

I was overwhelmed with the success of the outcome when 21 survivors attended, and related to many veterans, community leaders and high school history class members, their experiences of that surprise Sunday morning attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

I plan to make this a yearly program on December 7th. I believe the younger generation should be more informed of this great history event of the 20th century. I have encouraged more states to get involved in this program in the future.

In March of this year, I attended the Annual Washington Legion Conference in DC. I had no special committees to attend; however, I did attend several committee meetings. Along with other members, I spent one afternoon meeting with Congressional Representatives in their offices on the Hill.

Two important subjects were of much concern of the veterans—our own GI Bill of Health and the ongoing Flag Amendment.

During Memorial Day weekend in May, I witnessed 1,200 Boy and Girl Scouts place the American Flag on more that 30,000 graves at the National Cemetery in Dayton, Ohio. This takes place every year.

Because of my cancer operation, these last four months I have been unable to participate in many programs of the Legion.

I did, during my year, join a committee know as **Friends of the Soldiers Home**. The purpose of the committee is to convince our representatives in Washington to save and preserve historical buildings at our VA facilities. For example, at the VA facility in Dayton, Ohio, with the government cutting funds, there are no reserves to keep up a 119 year old chapel. This is happening across our nation. I find **History** is being forgotten. Our veterans are forgotten.

Before my operation, I was able to make plans for the traditional Historian Luncheon which is held at the National Convention each year.

For my Historian's Luncheon, Mr. John Taylor volunteered to be the main speaker. Mr. Taylor is currently serving as Executive Director of the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation.

To be a life member of The American Legion for 45 years, has been the greatest experience for me. I have experienced the progress of this generation, the greatest of all generations. All has happened in the 20th century. World War II, and other National conflicts—all happened during the 20th century. The American Legion was chartered by the United States Congress and has grown to help the development of the Free nation, naming one outstanding Constitutional Right, the GI Bill of Rights. My appreciation to National Commander 'Butch' Miller, for allowing me to serve as his Historian.

As the National Commander related in his acceptance speech one year ago, it is worth repeating today. "I will be the last National Commander to have this red cap placed on my head, and removed from my head in this, the 20th century. Do you realize that what we, you and I, do this year will be recorded as the last accomplishment of The American Legion in this century. Think about it! We, you and I, have the opportunity to write the last chapter of The American Legion's history in this century. The century in which The American Legion was born."

This past year I encouraged, the Historians especially, to realize the remark Commander Miller made. I did notice there were many inquirers seeking information from me, concerning their own posts—County, District and Department histories. What an opportunity for all Historians of this century. We recommend more states to make use of the accomplishments of their own.

Commander Miller has accomplished what he set out to do, as others who have served before—remembering the needs of the veterans, the care of their dependents and those who gave their life.

'Butch' Miller has helped all of us in making preparations for the 21st century. He has prepared those who will follow, as future leaders, so that the next century can be just as great or greater than the 20th.

It has been a great honor for me to have served the Legion for most of the 20th century and to have served as National Historian this past year. My fellow officers will not be forgotten as my most memorable associations.

My success belongs to Past National Commander, John Geiger, James Wagonseller, E. Roy Stone, Roger Munson and Past Washington Director, Mylio Kraja for their recommendations and guidance this past century.

I shall continue to help and guide others in the 21st century, to become great Historians.

REPORT
NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE
P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

Contracts

The following thirty-six (36) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

1. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and The American Legion National Convention Corporation of North Carolina covering the convocation of the 2002 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Charlotte, State of North Carolina has been executed.
2. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Grant Thornton LLP, whereby Grant Thornton LLP will develop, modify and/or integrate software for The American Legion computer system.
3. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Sigma Micro Corporation, whereby Sigma Micro Corporation will provide certain

maintenance and support services in connection with the Controller+™ Software licensed to The American Legion.

4. Agreements by and between The American Legion and Delta Air Lines, Inc., Southwest Airlines, and United Air Lines whereby each Air Line will provide attendees a discount for flights to the National Convention, Anaheim, California.
5. License Agreement by and between The American Legion and Ibelong Networks, Inc., whereby Ibelong Networks, Inc. will design, develop and administer an Internet access program which will be marketed to Legion members using The American Legion's name, trademark, service mark and logos.
6. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Teletron, Inc., whereby Teletron, Inc. will provide telecommunication analysis and auditing services.
7. Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fuller Engineering Service Corporation, whereby Fuller Engineering will provide maintenance on the air conditioning in the computer room at Park 100.
8. Memorandum of Agreement by and between The American Legion and National Veterans Legal Services Program, whereby National Veterans Legal Services will provide consultations, informal training of Department Service Officers, BVA staff and claims/representatives, case work review, briefings on proposed changes in law and regulations and assistance in methods for prompt adjudication of veterans' appeal cases.
9. Eight (8) Baseball Regional Tournament Contracts and the Contract for The American Legion World Series.
10. Five (5) List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass-mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:

    Brick Mills Studios, Inc.
    Barton-Cotton-Famous Hospitality, Inc. (Famous Artists Studios, Inc.)
    Association Group Insurance Administrators (AGIA)
    Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.
    S. A. VanDyk, Inc.
11. Subcontractor Standard List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:

    Aegon Special Markets Group
    Communicolor
    Dataquik Corporation
    Harland
    Mailing Services of Pittsburgh, Inc.
    National General Insurance Company
    World Color Direct
    Quadriga Arts
    Long Term Preferred Care, Inc.
    Marketing General Agents, Inc.
    Quincy Sun

BBC Calendar
Acxiom Corporation

Litigation

Litigation styled:

TINA V. CASE, Administratrix of the Estate of Clive Case, Jr., LARRY SPEARS and CONNIE SPEARS Plaintiffs vs. THE AMERICAN LEGION; THE WAR VETERANS CLUB; ROBERT CONLEY acting on behalf of The War Veterans Club; JOHN B. REYNOLDS POST #283, AMERICAN LEGION DENSIL HALBERT, DELBERT ISON, WARREN WOLFORD, DEMRA TAYLOR AND ROGER TURNER all acting on behalf of John B. Reynolds Post # 283, American Legion and The War Veterans Club; FRANK DeROSSETT; LOUISE "LULA" SPRADLIN and BILL SPRADLIN	)) COMMONWEALTH OF) KENTUCKY) FLOYD CIRCUIT COURT) CIVIL ACTION NO.) 92-CI-00622))))))))))))

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. Tina Case's husband allegedly was killed by defendant, Frank DeRossett. It is alleged that Frank DeRossett entered American Legion Post 283 in Martin, Kentucky and started shooting a gun in the direction of the band in which Clive Case was a member. Case was shot several times and subsequently died. Larry Spears was also shot and claims permanent injury and disablement. At this point, the matter has been referred to our insurance company, an appearance has been filed and a motion to dismiss has been filed. The Floyd County Circuit Judge overruled our Motion for Summary Judgment and will entertain a Motion to Reserve Entry of his Judgment for Six Months until the plaintiff proves a legal theory against The American Legion. After this period, the Judge dismissed the case. Plaintiff did not appeal. The case is closed.

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF WAKE	IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
HARRY H. HURLEY and NANCY C. HURLEY CO-ADMINISTRATORS OF THE ESTATE OF DOUGLAS C. HURLEY, Plaintiffs	)))))

vs.	) 97 CV 07386
	)
EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR.	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH	)
CAROLINA, INC.; and CARY AMERICAN LEGION	)
POST 67,	)
Defendants	)

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA	IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
COUNTY OF WAKE	
GRAHAM TRENT ELLIS and	)
HOWARD ELLIS, JR.,	)
Plaintiffs,	)
	)
vs.	) 96 CV 06139
	)
EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR.	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH	)
CAROLINA, INC.; AND CARY AMERICAN LEGION	)
POST 67,	)
Defendants	)

Litigation Styled:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA	IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
COUNTY OF WAKE	
DOUGLAS E. DANIELS, by and through	)
his Guardian ad Litem,	)
William D. Webb; DONALD E. DANIELS	)
and ANTELA M. DANIELS,	)
Plaintiffs,	)
	)
vs.	) 96 CV 07442
	)
EDWIN L. REEL, III; EDWIN L. REEL, JR.	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION and ITS SUBDIVISIONS;	)
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NORTH	)
CAROLINA, INC.; and CARY AMERICAN LEGION	)
POST 67,	)
Defendants	)

These are cases growing out of an auto accident involving a car load of six (6) baseball players going between games. The plaintiffs claim the 16 year old driver used an interstate exit and, at the last minute, attempted to exit. They further claim he turned too sharply for the rate of speed and rolled the car. The injuries were severe. All plaintiffs claim the driver, who was the coach's son, and the coach were agents of The American Legion.

The case has been referred to the insurance company who retained counsel. After the discovery phase, The American Legion filed a Motion for Summary Judgment. It was granted for The American Legion, the Department of North Carolina and the Post. Plaintiffs appealed. The Appellate Court ruled for The American Legion. The Post and Department requested discretionary review on the last day which allowed the plaintiffs an extra ten (10) days to request review which they did. We filed our response. The Supreme Court of North Carolina refused all appeals for discretionary review.

Litigation Styled:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN
AND FOR DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

SHIRLEY CLOW and VERNON HANSON,
Plaintiffs

vs.

THE AMERICAN LEGION, HARVEY W.
SEEDS POST NO. 29 AMERICAN
LEGION, INC., NICHOLAS
WILLIAMS, and THE AMERICAN
LEGION, DEPT. OF FLORIDA, INC.,
Defendants

The plaintiffs filed the complaint for sexual harassment, discrimination, negligence, assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and defamation due to alleged incidents at Post No. 29. A complaint was originally filed by the plaintiffs with the EEOC, Florida Human Services and Metropolitan Dade County Equal Opportunity Board which found cause for discrimination and provided plaintiffs with a notice of right to sue and thereafter plaintiffs filed suit. A Motion for Summary Judgment was filed. The National Organization was dismissed. The case is now over.

Litigation styled:

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
PULASKI CIRCUIT COURT
DIVISION NO. II
CIVIL ACTION NO. 98-CI-00158

HOWARD O. EDWARDS;
GLENNA EDWARDS AND
H.V.A.C. PARTS & SUPLY, INC.

Plaintiff

vs.

SHARON STAFFORD;
THE AMERICAN LEGION;
AMERICAN LEGION OF KY.;
GOLDEN RULE PUBLISHERS;
WEST AMERICAN INSURANCE COMPANY and
HAMILTON MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY
and ALYEA-DOOM, INC.
Defendants

This is a personal injury case. The allegations of the complaint are that co-defendant, Sharon Stafford, negligently operated her vehicle in a manner causing it to collide with the vehicle of the Plaintiff, Howard O. Edwards, causing him physical injuries. The action against The American Legion, itself, is based solely on the theory that Sharon Stafford was an agent of The American Legion and acted within the scope of her authority in operating her vehicle in a negligent manner. A Motion for Summary Judgment was filed with the Court for dismissal of the Defendant, The American Legion. The judge refused to grant it. The plaintiff agreed to dismiss The American Legion without any payment but with prejudice. The case is closed.

Litigation styled:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

PATRICIA MOSS;	)
Plaintiff	)
	)
vs.	) CIVIL ACTION NO.:
	) CV-98-1666
AMERICAN LEGION; AMERICAN	)
LEGION-DEPARTMENT OF	)
ALABAMA HEADQUARTERS;	)
EASTERN SHORE AMERICAN	)
LEGION POST NO. 199; A,B	)
and/or C, the person, firm or	)
corporation who owned, operated	)
or maintained the wharf/pier made	)
the basis of this suit; D,E and/or	)
F, person, firm or corporation	)
responsible for the maintaining of	)
the premises at the location known	)
as the "Legion Pier" made the basis	)
of this suit; G,H, and/or I, person,	)
firm or corporation responsible	)
for the posting of warning signs	)
at the wharf/pier made the basis	)
of this suit; all of whose names	)

and true legal identities are	)
otherwise unknown at this time but	)
who will be substituted by	)
amendment when ascertained,	)
individually and jointly,	)
Defendants	)

The plaintiff, Patricia Moss, allegedly a guest of a member of American Legion Post No. 199, was participating in recreational activities at the "Legion Pier" located in Fairhope, Alabama, where she was swimming. She claims she dove from the Legion Pier into the shallow water and suffered permanent injuries to her neck and spinal cord thereby rendering her quadriplegic. She is claiming negligence against the Defendants for failure to warn members, guests and invitees of the shallow water because there was no placement of signs or fencing around the property surrounding the Legion Pier. A Motion for Summary Judgment was filed. The Court granted the motion on behalf of The American Legion and dismissed the case against The American Legion.

Litigation styled:

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Plaintiff	)	
	)	
Joan Hoppe	)	
	)	
v.	)	Small Claims Case 777-658
	)	
Defendants	)	
	)	
Fred R. Compton, Jr.	)	
The American Legion, dba	)	
American Legion Post	)	
No. 230	)	

Litigation styled:

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Plaintiff	)	
	)	
Joan Hoppe	)	
	)	
v.	)	Small Claims Case 777-659
	)	
Defendants	)	
	)	
Peter A. Gianopoilos	)	
The American Legion, dba	)	

American Legion Post)
No. 230)

This is a Small Claims case for assault and battery filed by Joan Hoppe against Fred R. Compton, Jr. and Peter Gianopoilos, patrons at American Legion Post No. 230, The American Legion and American Legion Post No. 230.

The Court consolidated the cases. A motion for dismissal was filed in person and the Court granted same. A judgment was ordered against Fred R. Compton, Jr. The American Legion was dismissed.

Litigation styled:

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

EMMANUEL RIOFRIR and JULIETA O. RIOFRIR,	) Case No. EC 024402
Plaintiffs,	) AMENDED CROSS COMPLAINT
	) INDEMNITY AND DECLATORY
vs.	) RELIEF BY CITY OF GLENDALE
CITY OF GLENDALE, a municipal entity; GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, a public entity; and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,	)
Defendants.	)
CITY OF GLENDALE, a municipal corporation,	)
Cross-complainant,	)
vs.	)
NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL; AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL; CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL; AMERICAN LEGION LTD., VERDUGO HILLS POST 288; FRED LINGAD; ANDREW HAWKINS; GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, a public entity; DOES 51 through 100, inclusive,	)
Cross-defendants	)

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. Decedent Julius Riofrir was pitching at batting practice at Stengel Field located in the City of Glendale, State of California. While pitching, the Decedent Julius Riofrir was struck by a ricocheting batted ball which caused his death. It is alleged that defendants negligently, carelessly and recklessly designed, built

and maintained the batting cage. The insurance company was able to get all parties to agree to a settlement agreement. The case has been dismissed.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF SHAWNEE COUNTY, KANSAS
DIVISION 7

JERMAINE ADAMS AND BONNIE ADAMS,
BY AND THROUGH THEIR NATURAL
GUARDIAN AND NEXT FRIEND, LISA FISHER,
Plaintiffs,

Vs. Case No. 99-C-201

THE JORDAN-PATTERSON POST 319 OF THE
AMERICAN LEGION, INC., KANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION,
THE AMERICAN LEGION; AND WILLIE JACKSON,
Defendants.

This is a wrongful death and negligence suit. Decedent Bonnie Dexter Adams was sitting in his car in the parking lot of American Legion Jordan-Patterson Post No. 319 when he was shot and killed by another patron of the Post. The natural children of the decedent filed a wrongful death and negligence suit. A motion for summary judgment has been filed. The case is pending.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

SHELLY J. BROWN 99-CV-329
Plaintiff,

-vs-

AMERICAN LEGION CORTLAND CITY POST
489; JOSEPH SMITH, Individually and as
POST COMMANDER; TOM CLARK and JAMES
DUGGAN, as VICE COMMANDERS of
AMERICAN LEGION CORLTAND CITY POST 489;
JOSEPH DWYER, Individually, and as 6th
DISTRICT COMMANDER; THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK, and THE AMERICAN
LEGION

Plaintiff Shelly J. Brown alleges claims of sexual discrimination based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the New York Human Rights Law against seven defendants. Specifically, she claims that members of Post 489 sexually harassed her and discriminatorily discharged her from her position as a bartender at Post 489. A Motion to Dismiss has been filed. The case is pending.

Other Legal Matters

There are a number of other legal proceedings in which The American Legion has been contacted for discovery purposes which are not part of or named in the particular cause and a number of cases are in the beginning stages but not yet filed.

The National Judge Advocate has rendered 1149 written opinions on questions which have been submitted by the several Departments and/or Posts of The American Legion, National Officers, staff members and individual members of our organization. These opinions involved matters legal, such as contracts, probate matters, federal tax questions, torts, insurance matters, Articles of Incorporation, civil rights statutes, retirement benefits under the law and other matters of a legal nature; problems concerning the interpretation and construction of the National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion, policy matters, many of which matters required a great deal of legal research.

In each instance, when appropriate, a copy of the opinion rendered was furnished to each of the following so that they would be acquainted with the decision affecting their Department; National Executive Committeeman, Department Commander, Department Adjutant, and the Department Judge Advocate of the Department involved.

Many oral opinions were also rendered to the National Officers, National Commission Chairmen, to Department Officers, and to staff Directors of the national organization upon subjects involving matters legal, financial, administrative and policy.

There were four (4) written opinions rendered during the year to the National Secretary of the American Legion Auxiliary, in response to queries submitted to her for determination by me.

The National Judge Advocate has also rendered oral advice on matters legal and administrative to the National Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary on many occasions during the past year.

The American Legion Magazine

The National Judge Advocate in accordance with established policy, has reviewed all manuscripts of articles destined for future publication in *The American Legion Magazine* and *The Dispatch*, for the purpose of expunging statements or materials questionable in character, contained therein which might subject The American Legion to a suit in libel. To date 188 scripts have been reviewed and appropriate comments in connection therewith were transmitted, when necessary, to the Publisher or Editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Firing Line

At the 1955 National Convention of The American Legion it was concluded that all statements made in each issue of the Firing Line should be documented and that the National Judge Advocate should approve each issue prior to publication in order to protect The American Legion from actions in libel. In accordance therewith all issues have been reviewed and either approved by the National Judge Advocate prior to publication, or rejected in whole or in part, with appropriate comments.

The American Legion Retirement Plan for Employees of the National Headquarters and Subordinate Groups Thereof

In accordance with the requirements of law, the National Judge Advocate has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1998 with the Internal

Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Retirement Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also prepared the Summary Annual Report for The American Legion Retirement Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law. A new Summary Plan Description has been distributed.

Employees' Salary Savings (401(k)) Plan

In accordance with the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) the office of the National Judge Advocate has filed all of the necessary Annual Return Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 1998 with the Internal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Employees' Salary Savings 401(k) Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also prepared the Summary Annual Report for the Employees' Salary Savings Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law. Amendments to comply with the Tax Reform Act of 1986 have been completed, filed and accepted. A Summary Plan Description has been distributed.

Parliamentary Duties

The National Judge Advocate attended the past National Convention of The American Legion and all meetings of the National Executive Committee and has served both bodies in the capacity of National Parliamentarian.

Other Duties

The National Judge Advocate functions as Secretary for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. and attended all of the board meetings of said corporation and caused the minutes of each meeting to be prepared and distributed. The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel on matters involving to date, contracts, labor issues, real estate law, postal regulations, corporate organizations and insurance.

The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel for and a director of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. In that capacity, the National Judge Advocate reviews contracts such as the trust for the flag essay scholarship fund and attends board meetings.

The Office of the National Judge Advocate files required charitable registrations and reports to allow The American Legion National Organization to solicit funds in the states with charitable solicitation registration laws. To date 24 registrations and reports have been filed. Some counties even attempt to require registrations and reports.

The National Emergency Fund has been converted to a Trust and an applicaton filed with the Internal Revenue Service for charitable status.

Meetings of the National Retirement Committeeand Salary Savings Committee

The National Judge Advocate, as a member of The National Retirement Committee of National Headquarters, The American Legion, and Chairman of the Employee's Salary Savings Committee, has attended and participated in meetings held by these committees during the past year.

I have also, in response to requests, drafted legal and other documents for the use of National Officers of The American Legion and Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the past year I have met with and attended numerous conferences with officials of outside corporations and the government for the purpose of representation or for the

rendering of advice and guidance for and on behalf of The American Legion on matters legal and administrative.

In conclusion, the National Judge Advocate wishes to thank all National Officers, Department Officials, and members of the National Executive Committee for the valuable assistance and cooperation extended to him during the past year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, Executive Director

Three major responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Director, whose office is located in the National Headquarters, Indianapolis:

- During temporary absences of the National Adjutant from The American Legion National Headquarters, he acts for him. He additionally performs such duties as may be assigned to him by the National Adjutant to assist in meeting the responsibilities of that office.
- He is in charge of the Administrative Services Division, which has the following divisions under that responsibility: Administrative Communications, Human Resources, Maintenance, Cafeteria, Library, Internet, and the E. A. Blackmore Museum.
- He serves on the Personnel Committee, Publications Board, HPC/PM Board of Directors, and the MIS Committee.

The Administrative Services Division also provides all secretarial assistance to the executive officers of The American Legion, and all Division Directors resident at the Indianapolis National Headquarters report to the Executive Director.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS
June 1, 1998—May 31, 1999

Labels extracted from main frame	128,425
AS/400 / Gateway 2000	1,362
A/M Varityper/Processor	57,420
Binding	1,135
Xerox 5390	9,474,869
Print Shop	1,464,430

MAIL
June 1, 1998 through May 31, 1999

Incoming Letters (Distributed to various Divisions for processing)	924,358
Incoming Parcels	1,550
Outgoing Letters	9,484,565
Outgoing Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales)	3,500

FREIGHT AND EXPRESS
June 1, 1998 through May 31, 1999

Out (cartons)	10,900
Out (pounds)	350,000
UPS (in)	6,720
UPS (out)	9,600

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Library
Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Librarian

The mission of The American Legion Library is to provide an information storage and retrieval system for The American Legion.

Indexing of documents continues. Resolutions have been indexed back to 1950. *The American Legion Magazine* index is being continued using our specialized database. Converting the index created before 1980 to machine readable information will be a considerable task.

Requests for information have put a considerable workload on the Library staff. Many individuals who might not have picked up paper and pen have no hesitation to ask questions via e-mail. The next annual report will reflect the numbers of messages received and sent from the Library. E-mail comes from many countries, with inquiries about replacing lost military records, researching history of the 1944 GI Bill, and learning details about our nation's 20th Century wars. Requests for genealogical research and pre-20th Century are often referred to other libraries and associations.

The Web site of the Legion displays our background and this, too, generates visitors and researchers to the Library. Our collection of military unit histories is excellent and draws many historians. Some of the other major projects for publication or higher education requirements included:

- GI Bill, Public Law 16, 1943 (two different researchers)
- Memorial Day
- Popular Influences Upon the Public School Curriculum
- War Memorial Plaza History
- American Values to Children during the Cold War

Without our donations, our collection could not be as valuable as it is. One donor in particular stands out with his generous contributions. Robert H. Barnes has donated this past year such items as *They Also Served* by Scott Baron; *The Indebted Society* by James Medoff and Andrew Harless; *The Secret History of Armand Hammer* by Edward Jay Epstein; *Painfully Rich: The Outrageous Fortunes of the Heirs of J. Paul Getty* by John Pearson; *Andrew Hacker: Money—Who Has How Much and Why* by Andrew Hacker; *Americans at War* by Stephen E. Ambrose; *Official Secrets* by Richard Breitman; *Panzers at War* by A. J. Barker; *Five Presidents and the Legacy of Watergate* by Bob Woodward; *Tom Brokaw: The Greatest Generation*—Autobiography.

Among other new books added to The American Legion Library, along with the names of the donors, are the following: *Lodge of the Double-Headed Eagle, Two Centuries of Scottish Rite Freemasonry in America's Southern Jurisdiction* donated by C. Fred Kleinknecht, Washington, DC; *S.S. Leopoldville Disaster, December 24, 1944* donated by Alton H. Carpenter, New York; *I'm a Lucky Guy* donated by James G. Ramsay, New York Time-Life Series—*The Third Reich* (8 books) donated by Robert Marr, Indiana; *The Deadly Stroke, Liebling Abroad* and *The Rising Sun* donated by Lucille Moore, Indiana; *A Rifleman Remembers* donated by Edwin F. Forrest—Montevallo, Alabama; *The Air Force Blue Book* donated by Lee A. Hardy—Greenfield, Indiana; *My Home—The Home of Many* donated by Kenneth B. Adams—Ponca City, Oklahoma; *History of the World War* donated by William G. Wilson—Logansport, Indiana; *Born to Build: The Story of the Gene B. Glick Company* donated by Frank Basile, Indianapolis, Indiana; *Origin of Navy Terminology* donated by Dan Wheeler for compilation of material used in the book—Indianapolis, Indiana; *Jasiu* donated by John F. Nowak—Lowell, Massachusetts; *Catalinas on the Swan River—Perth, 1942-1945* donated by Avis M. Koenig, Western Australia; *The American Legion Weekly,* April

4, 1924 issue and June 13, 1924; *The American Legion Magazine,* November 1941 and January 1942 donated by Richard M. Pedro, Albany, New York; 2 issues of the pamphlet *L'Illustration* donated by Frank Gisonna—Staten Island, New York.

General Correspondence Received and Filed	5,296
Subject Correspondence Received and Filed	3,217
Bulletins, Reports, etc. Received and Filed	346
Periodicals Received	9,810
Books, Pamphlets and *The American Legion Magazine* Catalogued	361
Correspondence Written by National Historian	430
Correspondence Written by Librarian	687
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Mailed	3,529
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Returned	169
Prominent Legionnaire Entries to Membership File	28,580
Photos Indexed	4,751
Requests Answered via Telephone	7,994
Requests Answered via Visits to Library	529
Follow-ups of Correspondence	370
Items Microfilmed	31,304
Requests of Membership Listing	307
Rolls of Microfilm Added to Stock	20
E-mail	5,322

Museum
Joseph J. Hovish, Curator

The Emil A. Blackmore Museum continues to be visited by individuals and groups. Our visitor book also show most states represented. Countries represented include the Philippines, Mexico, Wales, England, and Russia.

As with a library's book catalog, so too, the museum has begun a better organization of its material. The database should eventually lead to better displays at a reduced cost in time.

Once again, we thank our donors for their contributions to the collection. Significant objects added in the past year, with the donor's name, include the following: William Shields American Legion Post No. 43 Pin donated by George R. Walmsley, Rhode Island; Fife and Drum Corps Uniform Hats donated by John A. O'Neill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; VVA 20th Anniversary First Day Cover donated by George C. Duggins, President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Washington, DC; Distress Message in Thirteen Languages donated by Steve Robertson, Washington, DC; Medal donated by Alton H. Carpenter, New York; Japanese Rifle, Arisaka Type 99 Short Rifle donated by Charles William Hawkins—Shelbyville, Indiana; 13th National Convention Guest's Ticket Book donated by Anne McCafferty—Indianapolis, Indiana; World War I Wooden Shoes donated by William G. Wilson—Logansport, Indiana; United States Flag signed by General John J. Pershing donated by Lloyd L. Rounds—Silver City, New Mexico; VCR Tape of Interview with National Commander Butch L. Miller, Robert L. Morrill, Department Commander of New York, and Richard M. Pedro, Department Adjutant of New York donated by Thomas E. Kaiser—Amityville, New York; 50th Anniversary Commemorative Bottle; National Convention Commorative Bottles—1974-76 and 1978-87 donated by James Holmes, Consultant to the Internal Affairs Commission, Indianapolis, Indiana; Campaign Pin of the late National Commander Harry W. Colmery and a 1932 Steivos Pin donated by Charlie

Allemann, California; Half-tone Cut of Photograph of the 1919 Paris Caucus donated by Thomas H. Keyes, Jr., Maryland; Photographs of Battery A, 101st Field Artillery and theHalifax Explosion donated by Irving A. Farrar, Bella Vista, Arkansas; Data Card from the Royal Air Force Marine Branch

Mr. Robert H. Barnes donated the following First Day Covers—Stamps: Commemorating the Royal Silver Wedding; Colorano "Silk" Cachets; Operation Desert Storm Cease Fire; New York Military Academy—1889—Centennial—1989; Operation 'Dynamo'; 60th Annual American Legion Convention—San Mateo, Califor-nia—1978; Spanish Settlement of the Southwest; Alfred Hitchcock; 1955 Commemoratives (9); 1958 Commemoratives (21); 1961 Commemoratives (12); 1963 Commemoratives (12); Royal Air Force Patches (3); Titanic First Covers; Pacific '97 Colorano "Silk" Cachet; U.S. Naval Academy; Tennessee Statehood; and 1945 Victory at Last Colorano "Silk" First Day Issue; Special Polish Commemorative Postmark Envelope; American Commemorative on Winter Sports, The World of Dinosaurs and the Klondike Gold Rush; Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, Royal Air Force, 13 May 1972; No. 511 Squadron, Royal Air Force 30th Anniversary of the Formation of the Squadron, 10 October 1972; 50th Anniversary of the No. 1 School of Technical Training, 1st August 1920 - 1970, Royal Air Force; Halton and the Royal Visit by her Royal Highness Princess Margaret to Broughton House 26 July 1991—Lord Dowding/Hurricane; First Day Covers/75th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Commemoration Stamps—1918-1993, Squadrons No. 33 and 54(F); Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Berlin Airlift; Newton/Hubble Telescope First Covers (4).

INTERNET OPERATIONS

Joseph J. Hovish, New York, Director

The Internet Operations Center of The American Legion continues to be proven as a valuable source of information to the organization and its members. Through the use of the Internet, The American Legion web-site (http://www.legion.org) provides the organization with an efficient and effective means in which to communicate with not only fellow Legionnaires, but also to the general public.

The American Legion's web-site provides over 900 web pages of information relating to the organization and is divided into easy to navigate areas. Some of the more popular areas include: American Legion Baseball, Gulf War health issues, Flag education, Boys State and Boys Nation, News Releases, *The Dispatch*, and *The American Legion Magazine*, to name a few.

The Internet Operations staff is also responsible for the management and maintenance of the Citizens Flag Alliance web-site. The Citizens Flag Alliance web-site provides over 175 pages of the most current Flag protection amendment information to the 130 member organizations of the CFA representing over 20 million Americans.

Membership is the life blood of the organization and membership acquisition is vital. Through the provision of forms, 824 new members have been signed up this year via information provided from The American Legion's web-site. Veterans can ask to sign up by sending a message to the Membership Division of National Headquarters to be billed to their home address. Another way to enrol is printing out the form found on the web-site, filling in the necessary information, and then mailing in via the U.S. Postal Service. But the most effective way is via the secure form. This is completed on-line and then transmitted with credit card information directly to national headquarters. PUFL is another membership category with a form for printing out and sending.

The American Legion added three Departments for hosting and design of their web-sites. Other features provided include list-serves to provide an efficient communications

vehicle, a comprehensive search engine, and forms available in Adobe Acrobat for cross platform viewing and printing.

Cards for Christmas and Armed Forces Day were a considerable success. This brought about not only the attention of veterans but of the media.

Staff assigned to this area include one full time manager, one temporary part-time assistant and one summer intern.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES (MIS) DIVISION
Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director

MIS staff plays a key role in the selection of all software to be used by National Headquarters staff. Training on the selected software as well as support and modifications are performed by our Staff. MIS also determines and procures the hardware to be used by employees of National Headquarters and is responsible for troubleshooting and maintaining the equipment.

MIS is responsible for the computer system which houses The American Legion National Headquarters membership database as well as keeping this database updated with changes to the membership, whether it be adding new members, renewing existing members, changing addresses of members or changing any other membership information. Much of this work is accomplished using a high-speed optical scanner, capable of processing in excess of 100,000 responses a day.

In conjunction with the membership database capabilities, The American Legion has invested in sophisticated list processing software, which the MIS Division administers. This software ensures that all mailings are done at the lowest cost by complying with US Postal Services guidelines.

The MIS Division also has the capability to perform high-speed personalized laser printing. Annual membership cards, membership solicitation letters, renewal notices, return address labels for the Departments' revenue programs, mailing labels for various publications and a variety of letters and fundraising pieces are all printed by MIS.

AMERICANISM COMMISSION
Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., New Hampshire, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

The Americanism Commission of The American Legion was created by a recommendation adopted by the National Convention of The American Legion held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1919. It read: "We recommend the establishment of a National Americanism Commission of The American Legion whose duty it shall be to endeavor to realize in the United States the basic ideal of this Legion of 100 percent Americanism through the planning, establishment and conduct of a continuous, constructive educational system."

It is the objective of the Americanism Commission to translate Americanism precepts, principles and ideals in an understanding and practical manner to Legion Posts and other groups and individuals, including young America.

While the Americanism program consists of a broad, objective, general plan that features wide-range community service, better citizenship, youth development and counter-subversive activities, the efforts of the Americanism Commission are educational in nature and embrace these specific objectives:

- Promote understanding of the principles of democratic governmental problems, and bringing more citizens to think seriously of the duties of citizenship;
- Give sound, practical service in our communities, working to make these communities better and safer places in which to live;
- Emphasize religion, encouraging its continuation in the life of every citizen;
- Encourage education in every possible manner, presenting school awards, sponsoring and conducting oratorical contests, cooperating with education and citizenship groups, promoting proper flag etiquette and display, and sponsoring objective youth development programs;
- Do important work for the youth of America, sponsoring American Legion Baseball, the National High School Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Boy Scout activities and many other citizenship and objective training activities;
- Work for the assimilation of aliens through schools of citizenship and other agencies and stand for the restriction of immigration so that this assimilation may approach perfection; and
- Combat subversion and all un-American groups and activities which have for their aim the downfall of democracy in America.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued to be actively involved in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among our legislative priorities are illegal entry of aliens into this country, voluntary prayer in public buildings, bilingual education alternatives and English as the official language of the United States. The most recent legislative initiative of The American Legion is the continuing efforts to obtain a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws.

This Commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of two standing committees: The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education.

The Americanism Commission participates each year in The American Legion's series of National Information Conferences. These conferences are held at eight locations in different regions of the country during the spring and fall. The Commission uses these workshops as an opportunity to train and provide information to Americanism program volunteers.

Following is a summary of various programs which are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 1998-99 American Legion year.

Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its present form of government, it must have a citizenry which has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what the Boys State program does for the young men of our Nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government through the state level.

It was 64 years ago that Legionnaires in the state of Illinois recognized the need for a program that would help high school boys understand and appreciate the government they were learning about in the classroom. It was a time in the history of this Nation when un-American ideas seriously threatened the future of the Nation. The whole idea of Boys State, then and now, is to show young people that beyond a doubt, our form of government is

good; but its preservation depends on intelligent, informed and loyal citizens in combination with an honest and impartial administration of government activities.

Ten years after the inception of Boys State as a program of the Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a program similar to Boys State at the National level and in 1946, began sponsorship of American Legion Boys Nation. This year, The American Legion celebrated its 53rd anniversary session of Boys Nation.

Both Boys State and Boys Nation are unique programs that emphasize participation and personal experience in a respective model "state" and "nation" that is complete with its governing bodies and elected officials.

Each year, more than 28,000 young Americans take part in Boys State, and through 64 years, the program has graduated well over one and a half million young men.

Every year, each Boys State selects two outstanding graduates to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation. In 1999, the program was again held in Washington, DC, during the month of July, and it introduced delegates first-hand to the structure and function of the federal government.

The week of government training in the Nation's Capital combines lectures and forums with visitations to federal agencies and institutions, shrines and historical points in and about Washington, DC. Actual participation in the political process is highlighted through the week to include the organization of party conventions and the nomination and election of a Boys Nation president and vice president. In addition to federal legislators and representatives of federal agencies, American Legion officials and other leaders of national distinction participate in Boys Nation. Ryan Daniel Rippel (MO), was elected President of the 53rd anniversary session of Boys Nation. He joined the youth champion delegation as a guest of the National Commander at the National Convention of The American Legion in Anaheim, California, September 3-7, 1999.

National High School Oratorical Contest

The American Legion has awarded over two million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual National High School Oratorical Contest. This program, in its 62nd year, was recognized by the Federal Commission for the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution as a program of "exceptional merit." Additionally, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed the program on the NASSP National Advisory List of Contests and Activities for 1999-2000.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to his government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant, taking not less than eight nor more than ten minutes for delivery. Each contestant must also give an assigned topic presentation on a constitutional topic (not known until the time of the contest) taking not less than three nor more than five minutes for delivery.

Funds totaling $138,000 in college scholarships are available to the fifty-four National level contestants, with the winner receiving an $18,000 scholarship. Funds for these awards are provided by The American Legion Life Insurance Fund. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National Organization, there are several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of the intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 62nd annual National Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana. The three finalists were: First place—Kevin Sladek, San Marcos, Texas; second place—Matthew Platt, Fiederica, Delaware; third place—Susanna Cox, Forest Park, Georgia.

Boys Scouts of America

The American Legion charters approximately 2,500 Scout Units in communities across the country involving more than 79,000 youth. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion selected Steven Corsello of Pittsford, New York, as its 1999 Eagle Scout of the Year. His selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive an $8,000 scholarship.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a $2,000 scholarship. They were David Eastman, Huntington Beach, California; John Krempecki, Greensburg, Pensylvania; and Chisum Pierce, Taylor, Texas.

In addition, an estimated 900 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

Junior Shooting Sports Program

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national Americanism program administered through Post-sponsored Junior Shooting Clubs. The purpose of the program is to provide gun safety and marksmanship training for young people 14 through 20 years of age and to offer a wholesome recreational activity through organized competition. The Junior Shooting Sports Programs has 524 active clubs with 1,349 young people participating.

The ninth annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 4-7, 1999, at the Olympic Training Center range in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The tournament climaxed two rounds of postal matches which began shortly after the first of the year and involved over 1,300 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in each category, as well as in each of the three positions of prone, kneeling and standing.

The 1999 winners were Crystal Dove of Georgia (Precision) and Tate Robbins of Washington (Sporter). Both received $750 scholarships.

Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund

The American Legion develops, publicizes and administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund. This Fund, established in 1957, was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in either supervision, administration or teaching. These prospective positions must have a direct relationship in the areas of care and prevention as it relates to lung and respiratory diseases. The Eight and Forty, for the year 1999-2000, awarded twenty $2,500 scholarships to recipients in fourteen states for one year's study to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 42 years to 695 scholarships, totaling $1,309,500 to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 2000-01 school year.

Flag Education

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, hundreds of letters, phone calls, and electronic mail messages

are routinely answered giving factual information on the display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

Additionally, over 65,000 copies of our publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* and more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, *Flag of the United States—How to Display It, How to Respect It* are distributed annually to schools, organizations and individuals. This information is sent at little or not cost to all who request it.

In 1988, The American Legion published *Our Country's Flag* for use in elementary schools. Well over a million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced. In May, 1995, the newest education booklet *I Pledge Allegiance* was published, also for use in elementary schools.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the U.S. Flag from physical desecration. A total of 49 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions as of August 1, 1995, in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact and enforce flag protection laws.

Service to God and Country

A program of basic Americanism, "Service to God and Country," seeks to prevent the spiritual decay of America by charging the citizenry with a spirit of positive Americanism, respect for law, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

"Service to God" emphasizes regular public worship, daily family prayer and the religious education of children, while "Service to Country" attempts to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and Nation. These objectives are aimed at preparing young Americans to take up tomorrow's responsibilities by teaching them moral and spiritual values, renewed interest in our Country's history, self-discipline, self-reliance, ideals of loyalty, honesty and physical fitness.

Each year, a Conference for the Department Chaplains is held under the direction of the National Chaplain. Training and program information is provided for further dissemination to District and Post Chaplains who coordinate the program at the local level.

American Legion Baseball

American Legion Baseball marks its 74th season in 1999. Over 93,500 players on 5,192 teams participated in this American Legion Americanism youth activity during the past year.

More than 17 million dollars in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. Almost $1.2 million dollars is appropriated by the Legion's National Organization to conduct eight Regional Tournaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Former American Legion Baseball players George Brett and Robin Yount were elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Forty-one other former Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. They include Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Pee Wee Reese, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Willie Stargel, Stan Musial, Carl Yaztremski, Warren Spahn, Brooks Robinson and Frank Robinson.

Over 62 percent of the Major League ballplayers and almost 72 percent of college players competed in American Legion Baseball as teenagers. The lessons learned on the baseball diamond, such as leadership, teamwork, respect for the rules, are lessons that are learned for a lifetime.

COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
F. Rodney Loper, Pennsylvania, Chairman

The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee, since its establishment by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 17, 1950, has scrutinized and continues to monitor what is transpiring in the realm of subversion and terrorism. This is a program of the Americanism Commission and detailed reports of its activities are given to the National Executive Committee at its Spring and Fall Meetings and at National Convention.

The Committee is responsible for furnishing background information on assigned resolutions that are considered by the National Americanism Commission for recommended action to the National Executive Committee or the National Convention.

The National Americanism Commission has long been concerned about anti-American activities and, in 1952, developed a publication known as *Firing Line*, which began regular dissemination of information on certain groups and organizations participating in activities of a subversive nature.

Every effort is made to maintain a publication which is current and up-to-date. During the past year, *Firing Line* has reported on matters concerning desecration of the U.S. Flag, illegal immigration, espionage and terrorism.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Dr. Charles L. Vawter, Jr., Arizona, Chairman

The Committee on Education, established in 1976, is the only joint committee comprised of members of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee on Education are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American Legion, educators, students and other organizations concerned with the well-being of education throughout the Nation.

Education was one of the first major concerns of The American Legion. In 1921, the organization committed itself to a constructive support of education. During the years which followed, The American Legion developed a formal Policy on Education.

The American Legion has always supported the principle that education is a necessary prerequisite to the successful functioning of a democracy. While recognizing the right of private and religious groups to maintain schools, The American Legion vigorously subscribes to the necessity for a publicly supported education system to ensure that every American child has the opportunity for an adequate education. The American Legion believes that popular self-government as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, cannot continue to exist unless there is the bulwark of a continuing system of free public education. Not only does proper national defense require trained personnel, but every phase of life today demands that we have competent citizens who are qualified, willing and able to discharge their responsibilities.

The availability of educational opportunity for every individual to pursue his own development is a prerequisite to the achievement of all other social goals. Our education system must be designed to provide every person with the means to reach his potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers which it requires. In turn, we will have greater assurance of economic growth, of sound decision-making, and the knowledge necessary to promote our national security.

The American education system should produce citizens who understand and are dedicated to principles of free enterprise; to democratic principles and processes; and whose devotion to freedom and human dignity goes beyond mere lip service.

The Education Program consists of four basic elements: (1) recognition of local systems through observance of American Education Week; (2) dissemination of scholarship and financial aid information through the publication of *Need A Lift?*;(3) promotion of involvement by American Legion Posts and American Legion Auxiliary Units in a community-wide effort to enhance the programs and policies of the local schools through the guidelines provided in the handbook *PACT* (Post, Auxiliary, Community Together); and (4) scholarship programs.

American Education Week is an annual event co-sponsored nationally by The American Legion. The observance was originally established by The American Legion with the help of the National Education Association in 1921. The major objective of this program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is "Students today, Leaders Tomorrow." The observance will be November 15-21, 1999.

The publication *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains 152 pages of scholarships, grants and loan information, work-study cooperative programs and sources of career information for all students. There is a section directed toward opportunities for veterans and their dependents. Another section lists scholarships and financial aid available from Departments of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary totaling more than $600,000. Each fall, complimentary copies of *Need A Lift?* are sent to over 25,000 high schools across the nation. In all, last year over 100,000 copies of *Need A Lift?* were distributed from the Legion's National Headquarters.

A companion to *Need A Lift?* is the pamphlet *A Guide for Parents and Students* which contains planning and financial aid information for high school students and their parents. Each year, distribution of more than 100,000 copies of each of these publications is handled through American Legion Posts, schools, counselors and librarians, by mail and through distribution at national education conventions. Copies of these publications can also be obtained by writing The American Legion National Emblem Sales Division, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Individual copies of *Need A Lift?* are $4.95 each, prepaid. *A Guide for Parents and Students* is available at a cost of $13.95 per 500 or $23.00 per 1,000 copies, prepaid.

Scholarship programs include the National High School Oratorical Contest, Eagle Scout of the Year, Buick American Legion Baseball Leadership Scholarships, the Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship and Samsung American Legion Scholarships. Through these scholarship programs, worthy students are able to further their education.

The *PACT* handbook is the guide for The American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the program, ideas and suggestions for activities, coordinating concepts and a typical calendar for a successful program. Programs covered in the handbook include: Citizenship Education, Career Education activities such as career nights, community resource files, Adopt-A-School, how to promote American Education Week, and financial aid nights.

Over 38,000 students are recipients of The American Legion School Award Medal each year. This award is designed to recognize the student for the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. The award is presented to a boy and girl upon graduation from elementary school, junior high/middle school or high school.

The American Legion believes that the citizens of this Country should be dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the entire realm of intellectual endeavor; that our people should recognize those persons who have developed their intellectual abilities to the fullest extent;

that teachers should enrich their knowledge, particularly in the field in which they teach and that scholarship assistance to deserving students should be expanded.

Such an educational program will fulfill the dreams of the past, the aspirations of the present and the needs of the future. The American Legion supports such a system of education and believes that the vitality of our democratic way of life is dependent upon such schools.

Americanism Commission
Executive Section

Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., Rollingsford, New Hampshire—Chairman
Daniel J. O'Connor, New Fairfield, Connecticut—Chairman Emeritus
Paul B. Phifer, Jr., Richmond, Virginia—Vice-Chairman
Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska—Commander's Representative
Kermit Holtgrewe, Belleville, Illinois—Consultant
Earl B. Wright, Severna Park, Maryland—Consultant

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

Since our beginning, The American Legion has actively voiced concerns related to the care, welfare, and education of our Nation's children and youth. As early as November 1919, we were asking local Posts to aid the widows and children of our deceased comrades.

Throughout the decades that followed, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. Our early years were devoted to progressive child care and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations, many states and communities were urged to improve their own child welfare provisions.

This development of new and improved public programs designed to provide economic security for children, made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other problem areas affecting young people. To-date there exists no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency—private or governmental—in its ability to expand into every arena of concern for child welfare and child health.

The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'." This remains our ultimate goal and the definite challenge for the years ahead.

To attain this goal, The American Legion, in 1925, adopted the "Whole Child" plan, which states: "every child should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity." Its foundation is based on three guiding principles:

i. To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society, recognizing that the most normal environment for children is a home with their own parents.
ii. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provides services for children and youth. Always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
iii. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for

future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines for Action, working together:

i. PREVENTION—Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
ii. EDUCATION—Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
iii. LEGISLATION—Maintaining a knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws which affect young people at the national, state and local levels.
iv. MATERIAL AID—Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past eighty years, The American Legion's Children & Youth Program has contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. While our list of achievements is extensive, it is by no means complete nor completed. The American Legion has, and will continue, its deep community-centered interest in children to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. At present, there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. But all of us know that our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training which we, as parents and citizens, provide for all children today.

The American Legion is proud of the Legionnaires, and the members of its affiliated organizations, and their achievements on behalf of our nation's youth. Their efforts in the area of child welfare are a living testament to the ability of an organization of free men and women to adapt itself to evolving needs, while maintaining high principles and taking on increased responsibilities under those principles.

1998-99 Program

Each year, during the month of May, The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth meets to discuss what programs it wants to emphasize for the coming program year. The National staff is then directed to research these areas of concern and publish materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 1998-99, our Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following problem areas, which directly impact our young people on the National level:

i. Family Emphasis
ii. Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
iii. Missing Children

Family emphasis: The family is the cornerstone of American society. But today, modern society places demands on the family that did not exist in years past—demands that can chip away at family strength and unity. Two-income families are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Divorced families, stepfamilies, and single-parent families have reached all-time highs. More teenagers than ever hold down part-time jobs. Children are placed in day care centers at earlier ages. Instead of safety in their neighborhoods, adolescents face physical danger; instead of economic security, they face uncertainty; instead of intellectual stimulation, they face boredom; in place of respect, they are neglected;

lacking clear and consistent adult expectations for them, they feel alienated from mainstream American society.

For many years, the Commission on Children & Youth has, by mandate, advocated the passage of federal legislation designating the week of Thanksgiving as National Family Week. Many organizations have joined us in this quest. It is now our position to continue to push for legislation, but in the meantime, to conduct our own observance of this important event.

Many activities have been outlined to help us bring the basic unit in America, the family, into proper perspective. As an example: SUNDAY—Religion Day—Whatever your faith, share its importance with our young. MONDAY—Home Day—Focus attention on the responsibility a parent and children have to each other. TUESDAY—Education Day—Self-discipline, the key to excellence, is essential at all levels of education. WEDNESDAY—Community Day—Your family's role in the community. THURSDAY—Nature Day—Discipline selves to nature's laws and beauty. SATURDAY—Recreation Day or Religious Observance Day.

Juvenile delinquency prevention: Over the last three decades, violent crime has increased by more than 500 percent. America leads the industrialized world in rates of murder, rape and violent crime. Nearly three out of four convicted criminals are not incarcerated. Fewer than one in ten serious crimes result in imprisonment.

The American Legion is seriously concerned about the recent high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation. While juveniles account for approximately 35 percent of our population, they account for better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Uniform Crime Reports.

During one typical day in the lives of American children, the FBI reports indicate 2 children younger than age 5 are murdered, 248 children are arrested for drug abuse, and 427 children are arrested for alcohol abuse or drunk driving. In 1991, one out of every four Americans arrested was a teenager. In that year, approximately 2.7 million American youth, age 10 to 19, were arrested and a growing number are spending time in jail. The juvenile arrest rate for murder has doubled between 1978 and 1990. For that same period, we have seen juvenile arrests for aggravated assault increase by two-thirds, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increase by 60 percent, and the juvenile arrest rate for rape increase by almost 40 percent.

Through the urging of The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention was unanimously approved as one of our major areas of concern. We have developed support materials to be disseminated to communities through our volunteer network of Legion members. In addition, we are in the process of developing a plan for community action in combating the problem of Juvenile Delinquency.

Missing children: According to national estimates, the number of children who disappear each year ranges from one million to as many as two million. Many of these children are considered runaways, but of the approximately 150,000 children who are abducted each year, 50,000 are taken by strangers and 100,000 are taken by non-custodial parents of divorces or separations. This is a problem that not only threatens the family way of life, but the very existence of children that most often are too young to help themselves.

To combat this growing problem, The American Legion, in a nationwide program, is emphasizing a program of public information and precautionary steps for parents to take to avoid the tragedy of missing children. By utilizing resources and volunteers at the local, state and national levels, we have been getting the word out.

In addition, The American Legion, in conjunction with the National Crime Prevention Council, continues The American Legion/McGRUFF Safe Kids Communities Program. A key part of the program is the distribution of the McGRUFF Safe Kids Identification Kits

to children ages 4 through 12. These booklets contain safety tips and include a child identification record complete with fingerprint ink. The kit offers families an opportunity to review, in positive and non-threatening ways, personal safety guidelines and procedures. We continue to be involved with the community distribution of these kits, working in conjunction with local law enforcement, schools and other organizations concerned with protecting children and increasing community safety.

The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth continues to cultivate their relationships with the Children's Miracle Network and the Disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

The Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 14 million children annually in the United States and Canada. These hospitals treat children with all types of afflictions and injuries, rendering service based on need, not the ability to pay. They annually provide $2.5 billion in uncompensated charity care and are committed to turning no child away.

The Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to ensuring that 100 percent of local donations made through CMN Champions (the continuing theme of CMN's fund-raising campaign) stay in the community in which they were made to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

The Commission voted to encourage its Departments and Posts to work with and support their local CMN-affiliated children's hospitals to benefit the health and well-being of our nation's children. During the 1998-1999 program year, The American Legion family raised over $250,000 for local CMN-affiliated children's hospitals throughout this nation.

The Disabled Youth Leadership Forums are designed to educate our next generation of disabled leaders. The forums are an outgrowth of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD). Their goal is to continue expanding roles in the disabled work force by providing leadership skills to disabled youth of today to better fill our society's needs of tomorrow.

The Commission voted to urge the Departments to provide leadership, support and to work closely with their respective State Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to assist in the establishment of disabled Youth Leadership Forums. In addition, the Commission urged local Posts to encourage and sponsor disabled young people from their communities to actively participate in these disabled Youth Leadership Forums.

Continuing Programs

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA): This is the landmark program of the Commission on Children & Youth. Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. In 1998, the program aided 839 children with over $307,635.00 in grants. From its beginning to present, this fund has assisted veterans' families with millions of dollars in non-repayable grants.

The fund is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and health expense items when the parents are unable to do so; thereby helping to keep the child, or children, in a more stable home environment.

Through TFA, a Post may call upon the Americanism and Children & Youth Division of The American Legion for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children. Funds can be granted over a temporary period to eligible children when it has been determined by investigation that the child is in need and that no other sources are available, or those that are available are inadequate. It is important to note while the veteran must have

served honorably on active duty during a designated war period, the veteran does not have to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

As sure as The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in the world, there are veterans' families who require help. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because the father is sick or disabled, deceased, or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion; and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program is the vital tool which is used to help meet the maintenance and health needs of veterans' children, thereby allowing the child to develop in the home.

Halloween: The "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night" program is now entering its 25th year of National emphasis. In 1972, the Commission on Children & Youth realized Halloween was no longer the carefree, happy occasion it had once been for our nation's young people. Nationwide attention was focused on our children being maimed and drugged by "treats" they had gathered from neighbors on Halloween. In response, the Commission established a community-oriented program on Halloween Safety.

There are many activities that can be planned at the community level to reduce the risks of children being harmed during this time of the year. A haunted house maze, carnival activities, costume parades with prizes awarded for the most imaginative and safest costume or a party for older youngsters with a Halloween theme.

The Commission on Children & Youth of The American Legion publishes a brochure that provides safety tips to aid children and parents in keeping this a fun and festive occasion. These brochures are available through our state organizations and all are encouraged to use them to help protect the well-being of our children.

To supplement the brochure, the Commission produces a project guidebook. This guidebook provides suggestions to local Posts on how to prepare for a safe Halloween. In addition, there are sample press releases, mayoral proclamations, and radio and TV spot announcements. All are designed to be used in conjunction with the brochure to help ensure that all children "Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night."

Regional children & youth award program (VISION): This is a recognition program for our Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units. Each year, we encourage our Posts and Units to submit a project they have conducted during the past year that has benefited the youth of their community. As an incentive, beautiful plaques and lapel pins dated for the program year are presented to the winners and awarded in the presence of their peers at their National Information Conferences held each fall.

Whether it is a Certificate of Participation, a Certificate of Excellence, or a plaque and lapel pin, all Posts are winners. But the true winners in a program such as this are the children and youth of the various communities throughout the country. They are the ones that ultimately benefit from these efforts.

Child safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920s. Until recently, child safety had been one of our major areas of concern, continuing on a yearly basis. In 1992, the Commission on Children & Youth, in a unanimous decision, voted to designate the Child Safety program as one of our Annual, or Continuing Programs.

Child safety is defined as any external event, which may present a significant danger to a child or young person. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child Abuse and Neglect
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Indoor/Outdoor Safety
4. School Safety
5. Playground Safety

6. Childhood Communicable Diseases
7. Accidents (automobile, drownings, firearms)
8. Fire Safety
9. Substance Abuse
10. Teenage Suicide

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 25,000 children under the age of 19 will die in automobile crashes, drownings, fires, and through the improper use of firearms. Even in somewhat environmentally controlled homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Our Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to assure our children have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

Alcohol, marijuana and cocaine are considered "gateway drugs" for thousands of young people throughout the United States. The great tragedy of substance abuse, which continues to infest all levels of our society, is its prevalence among elementary school age children. Most come in contact with drugs by age seven.

Prevention education is part of the answer, but it must begin early. Children, of all ages, need to be taught drug awareness, and the physical and mental dangers involved with the use of all substances, to include the legal drugs of alcohol and tobacco. The American Legion considers a child's future to be very important. Our brochure "Gateway Drugs" is designed to cause young people to stop and think about what they may be doing to themselves, and how what they do can affect others. The key to their future is responsible decision-making. As concerned citizens, we must never give up in our battle against drugs. We must strive to increase awareness, and show our children that we care about both them and their future.

According to statistics, the suicide rate for persons under the age of 21 has tripled since 1960. Every hour, at least one American teenager or young adult has committed suicide and as many as 40 others have made the attempt. Research findings from around the country indicate that eight out of ten people who kill themselves give some warning of their intentions. Because of this, it is imperative for any adult who has daily contact with young people to acquaint themselves with the warning signs of suicide if we are to decrease the numbers in this tragic area. The American Legion volunteers continue their work to educate parents, schools and communities on this epidemic killer of our nation's young people. We, as parents and concerned citizens, cannot afford to let one of our greatest national resources go to waste.

National Information Conferences (NIC)

The 1998 NICs saw an increase in the number of new attendees for both Legion and Auxiliary members. At these workshops, we share our programs and methods of implementation with the Posts and Units. In 1998, our NCIs were:

Region 1 – Waterbury, Connecticut—October 23-25
Region 2 – Saratoga, New York—September 25-27
Region 3 – Louisville, Kentucky—September 18-20
Region 4 – Little Rock, Arkansas—October 23-25
Region 5 – Champaign, Illinois—October 2-4

Region 6 – Rochester, Minnesota—September 25-27
Region 7 - Las Vegas, Nevada—September 18-20
Region 8 – Yakima, Washington—October 2-4

We move our National Information Conferences each year, from city to city within each Region. This gives Posts in each area the opportunity to send representatives at a very minimal cost. Our major goal is to help children, and our presence at these outreach workshops is really having a positive impact on our annual program.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one of the means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goal during the 1998-1999 program year. At our National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 8-10, 1998, the following mandates were introduced for our attention during this Congress:

Children in Pornographic Literature: Res. 306-1998. Studies indicate that there is a direct and strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes. Additional data reveals that child pornography, "kiddy porn," is often found in the personal effects of child molesters after their arrest. The American Legion is firm in its position that the interstate transportation of obscene material must be stopped and that the United States Postal Service be provided sufficient investigators to enforce existing federal laws against pornography and the transportation of pornographic material.

Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature: Res. 308-1998. As there have been attempts to eliminate protective laws from the criminal code regarding the production, distribution and sale of pornographic and obscene literature, The American Legion is strongly opposed to any attempt to weaken existing laws.

Reaffirming Immunization Program: Res. 304-1998. The American Legion realizes that in today's society there is no place for communicable disease for which there is a vaccine. Though true, we also realize that several childhood communicable diseases breakout annually because children are not properly vaccinated. It is our belief that full protection is available and that the state and federal governments should provide sufficient funding so that indigent families with children can receive the necessary immunizations against all communicable diseases.

Violence and Vandalism in the Schools: Res. 305-1998. Juveniles account for nearly 35 percent of our population and better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Crime Reports. Much of that crime results in the over $500 million damage done to Government-supported institutions, specifically schools and housing. With this violence and vandalism in our Nation's institutions, is an enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential. The American Legion urges those local school boards, law enforcement agencies and their state organizations to develop a balanced and effective program to reduce and prevent violence and vandalism in educational institutions. Further, Congress is urged to enact legislation through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish a grant program to assist in these efforts.

National Family Week: Res. 303-1998. One of the basic principles of our program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country...the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and

stability to our society. Every year we urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

School Nutrition Program: Res. 302-1998. The American Legion again reaffirms its position that the Congress of the United States and the various state legislatures be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

Catastrophic Illness Among Children: Res. 309-1998. It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Through our Temporary Financial Assistance program, we have seen an increase in the caseload of needy medical problems. Unfortunately, many of our children are not receiving the necessary medical care due to the extreme requirements placed on the financial abilities of the average family. Consequently, children with severe catastrophic illnesses are not receiving the needed medical care. The rising cost of medical care in such cases is not covered by even the best medical policies. The American Legion believes that the state and federal governments should enact legislation to assist financially, those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Drug Trafficking: Res. 307 -1998. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution is to urge funding to all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of these substances that are being made available in this Country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users.

Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 301-1998. United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel. In part, because of this, many children in foreign countries are progenies of United States citizens. Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens, but addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982. As The American Legion believes that no child of a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country, we urge legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Res. 310-1998. The American Legion is vitally concerned about the high levels of violent crime committed by juveniles in this nation each year. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is organized: to develop and encourage the implementation of national standards for the administration of juvenile justice; to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, including methods with a specific focus on maintaining and strengthening the family unit so that juveniles may be retained in their homes; to develop effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization; and to coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children. The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention program now promoted by the OJJDP has proven effective in many states. The American Legion opposes any and all efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs because of a lack of funding. The need to bring the national economy under control cannot overshadow or ignore the need to further the Office of Juvenile Justice and its programs which may be our national defense against an impending escalation of juvenile crime in America.

Oppose the Legalization of Marijuana: Res. 26–1998. The members of The American Legion are committed to protecting the health and safety of our citizens, especially our children. Various states are now under attack by groups of persons who are part of a well-organized and well-financed national movement to legalize marijuana. These groups are targeting specific states by organizing initiative campaigns to place on the ballot for the next general election measures to legalize marijuana. One initiative that is currently being circulated misleads the voters to believe that there are medicinal uses for marijuana, even though the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society and other medical associations have rejected smoking marijuana as the only way to achieve medicinal benefits. Research demonstrates that marijuana actually harms the brain, heart, lungs, and immune system and that it impairs learning, memory, perception, judgement and the ability to operate a motor vehicle. Marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 controlled substance under federal law, indicating that it has a high potential for abuse and that it is recognized as a gateway substance of abuse that frequently leads to abuse of other drugs including cocaine, "crack" cocaine, methamphetamine "speed" and heroin. The Commission feels the legalization of marijuana would decrease the perception of risk associated with the abuse of drugs, especially in the eyes of our youth. Therefore, The American Legion opposes any effort to describe marijuana as medicine or that the possession and use of it be further decriminalized for medicinal or any other purpose. In addition, any information provided to the general public that attempts to mislead them into believing that marijuana has medicinal uses for which less harmful, legal and medical substitutes could be utilized is here by rejected.

These are the highlights of our 1998-99 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged its Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances as they deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. Our Children & Youth legislation program is a never-ending process, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children—everywhere.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 75 years, the National Commission on Children & Youth records activities from nearly 15,000 Posts of The American Legion; 11,000 Units of the American Legion Auxiliary; and hundreds of Salons of the Eight and Forty. In addition, the expenditures of Departments and of the National Organization are obtained for the 12-month period of June 1 through May 31, and combined with these reports.

This year, Posts and Departments of the Legion reported expenditures of $17,391.356. To this amount, we proudly add $4,715,717.72 by the Auxiliary. An additional $320,208.01 was given to 419 families in need through our Temporary Financial Assistance program. To this, we add other contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation in the amount of $411,169.27. This amounts to a grand total of expenditures and contributions to the total Children & Youth program in 1998-99 of $22,838,451.

Children & Youth Literature

During the 1998-99 program year, tens of thousands of pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division as it attempted to further the objectives of our total program.

As shown in Table #5, our most popular brochures are related to our major points of emphasis—Missing Children, Child Safety, Substance Abuse Prevention and Teenage

Suicide Prevention. It is of further interest to note that some 6,350 citations were distributed to Departments in order to recognize Posts for their contributions to the overall Children & Youth Program.

Appreciation Acknowledged

The Commission on Children & Youth and its Chairman must take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of the Legion and the Auxiliary. Many hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice cannot be repaid. We are indeed thankful that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in The American Legion. Special mention must also go to our National Commander Butch Miller; not because of his rank, but because of his sincere dedication and verbal support for our program during this past year. Likewise, special thanks to National Adjutant Robert Spanogle for his support and cooperation. The American Legion does an excellent job with this program, but the record must be clear. Without the assistance of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion, our National Children & Youth Program would have little chance for success.

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Executive Section

Elmer Fuhrhop, Hamler, Ohio—Chairman
Robert D. Scott, Lebanon, Oregon—Vice-Chairman
Margaret M. Malone, Hamilton Square, New Jersey—National Commander's Representative
W. Darrell Hansel, Vevay, Indiana—Consultant
Walter F. Baker, Seneca Falls, New York—Consultant
Talmage C. Carawan, Rockville, Maryland
James P. Holley, Center, Texas
Cletus A. Lehne, North Aurora, Illinois
Eugene V. Lindquist, Clarissa, Minnesota
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Kenner, Louisiana

AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.
U.S. 'Udie' Grant, Kansas, President
William A. Pease, Indiana, Executive Secretary

In 1954, The American Legion allowed the separate incorporation of what is now called The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted just over five million dollars to other non-profit youth oriented organizations.

In October of 1998, the Board of Directors approved grants to 23 non-profit organizations in the amount of $379,450 for projects to be completed in calendar year 1999. The Organizations and amounts are as follows:

Table No. 1

Region and Department	Reporting Legion	Reporting Auxiliary	Temporary Financial Assistance by National	Contributions to Child Welfare Foundation by Posts & Units	Direct Aid from Posts, Units and Departments	Contributions to Other Child Serving Agencies by Legion and Auxiliary	Other Expenditures for Children by Legion and Auxiliary	Department Administrative Expense by Legion and Auxiliary	Total Aid for Children from B/40	Total Number of Children Served Nationally	Total Aid Legion and Auxiliary Lines 4 thru 10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
REGION 1											
Connecticut	53%	100%	50	14,384	$25,593	$67,965	$23,753	$100	$2,800	3135	$124,575
Maine	36%	45%	0	415	61,117	98,481	59,280	32	284	8111	$215,589
Massachusetts	32%	100%	1,208	2,107	81,181	147,198	91,883	1,133	3,364	19432	$328,074
New Hampshire	100%	80%	2,575	1,625	95,624	176,081	117,292	0	421	17141	$397,598
Rhode Island	48%	37%	1,550	0	8,803	18,034	7,242	451	200	1270	$36,340
Vermont	88%	73%	0	253	78,184	174,518	102,211	750	1,693	9538	$357,608
TOTAL:	**50%**	**85%**	**5,333**	**8,763**	**354,562**	**682,257**	**401,661**	**2,465**	**8,742**	**58627**	**$1,463,783**
REGION 2											
Delaware	81%	100%	0	1,226	13,409	24,678	49,647	480	(2)	13028	$89,420
D.C.	41%	100%	0	553	1,241	2,535	75,724	300	50	649	$80,403
Maryland	72%	80%	3,100	3,587	234,422	608,472	248,002	525	735	54964	$1,098,744
New Jersey	44%	0%	5,200	3,352	72,268	171,298	94,089	0	2,406	5170	$348,613
New York	77%	96%	9,580	5,070	579,777	1,444,462	691,669	2,011	9,881	120264	$2,735,448
Pennsylvania	84%	100%	750	1,437	273,859	509,781	446,878	8,876	6,141	53208	$1,247,761
Virginia	61%	68%	3,258	2,073	358,622	496,806	234,030	2,315	2,624	69221	$1,098,728
West Virginia	67%	44%	2,235	1,024	86,564	325,667	72,622	10	1,927	12600	$491,048
TOTAL:	**66%**	**79%**	**26,131**	**18,321**	**1,620,202**	**3,583,689**	**1,913,561**	**14,496**	**19,767**	**329102**	**$7,196,166**
REGION 3											
Alabama	30%	0%	23,557	2,114	32,422	147,031	27,682	0	890	1682	$233,806
Florida	88%	100%	4,046	25,742	533,201	243,382	308,753	7,500	8,353	80257	$1,230,978
Georgia	80%	43%	500	1,686	476,892	220,457	219,605	450	(2)	92983	$919,590
Kentucky	63%	34%	13,717	2,812	140,997	353,573	181,501	1,250	886	11114	$734,735
North Carolina	33%	37%	4,305	849	85,846	152,024	45,359	788	(2)	21680	$288,773
South Carolina	18%	8%	872	3,670	23,692	24,583	13,478	1,350	(2)	6387	$66,245
Tennessee	46%	0%	4,590	300	94,948	53,460	32,598	0	0	4187	$185,896
TOTAL:	**50%**	**40%**	**51,588**	**36,973**	**1,387,798**	**1,334,510**	**828,976**	**11,938**	**10,038**	**218290**	**$3,681,822**
REGION 4											
Arkansas	36%	0%	2,100	854	14,454	49,514	40,471	3,000	293	3492	$110,996
Louisiana	34%	0%	0	2,031	129,704	108,509	19,589	0	14,941	1717	$281,774
Mississippi	24%	31%	4,750	1,476	52,684	46,936	22,896	200	330	5749	$128,281
Oklahoma	41%	51%	23,467	1	21,369	43,795	55,575	2,759	897	5011	$147,774
Texas	36%	75%	1,559	10,426	138,808	503,499	164,404	500	855	73731	$820,051
TOTAL:	**35%**	**41%**	**31,876**	**14,777**	**348,029**	**751,354**	**298,935**	**6,459**	**17,146**	**91700**	**$1,468,576**
REGION 5											
Illinois	39%	70%	22,997	8,803	230,251	378,750	117,720	10,745	25,787	82712	$796,063
Indiana	1%	59%	16,468	5,587	45,340	53,533	24,828	25	5,894	13066	$151,685
Michigan	50%	37%	7,240	4,217	142,047	225,276	92,087	407	7,625	23915	$478,899
Missouri	41%	48%	13,355	1,682	74,634	270,198	76,878	0	4,786	14338	$441,331
Ohio	75%	54%	300	11,918	335,658	609,847	405,865	2,500	10,100	568139	$1,376,188
Wisconsin	73%	71%	0	3,416	69,957	144,967	103,995	12,841	(2)	10875	$334,081
TOTAL:	**49%**	**55%**	**61,360**	**35,622**	**897,882**	**1,682,181**	**821,093**	**26,518**	**54,577**	**709645**	**$3,578,247**
REGION 6											
Iowa	51%	83%	3,500	1,436	53,838	134,526	78,890	500	(2)	18908	$272,492
Kansas	63%	48%	0	8,654	34,420	29,433	78,500	8,715	5,343	7074	$165,065
Minnesota	42%	0%	31,113	3,855	219,020	569,118	345,487	0	645	11190	$1,168,138
Nebraska	54%	77%	0	5,083	55,329	94,987	117,169	6,825	2,775	30233	$282,168
North Dakota	98%	92%	1,695	862	99,138	295,253	57,583	4,125	(2)	15270	$458,656
South Dakota	51%	53%	500	233	34,823	32,485	33,315	1,200	1,169	13200	$103,759
TOTAL:	**57%**	**52%**	**36,808**	**18,124**	**496,568**	**1,155,807**	**710,694**	**21,365**	**20,039**	**95875**	**$2,449,218**
REGION 7											
Arizona	79%	74%	39,330	1,253	235,958	108,322	115,592	0	14,844	40586	$514,809
California	43%	100%	500	16,736	242,192	387,132	419,275	30,000	24,126	66786	$1,099,980
Colorado	45%	38%	7,596	743	29,515	54,694	41,737	0	1,028	6870	$135,812
Hawaii	72%	67%	0	830	9,425	15,770	34,534	0	419	881	$58,882
Nevada	30%	57%	800	151	12,502	7,187	5,212	260	234	590	$26,396
New Mexico	36%	54%	2,214	890	44,395	29,928	58,275	0	370	8161	$145,732
Utah	43%	22%	700	310	30,328	8,525	24,372	0	1,227	8886	$65,462
TOTAL:	**52%**	**73%**	**51,540**	**21,093**	**600,515**	**601,468**	**695,907**	**30,260**	**42,298**	**134650**	**$2,042,023**
REGION 8											
Alaska	81%	81%	0	152	67,611	177,398	80,690	1,100	2,065	12254	$329,417
Idaho	50%	54%	10,899	174	5,014	23,018	12,427	6,420	456	2786	$58,207
Montana	65%	53%	4,035	554	11,782	23,258	21,383	50	918	6194	$62,000
Oregon	52%	99%	5,045	1,327	62,654	82,694	57,801	4,760	2,273	15081	$216,554
Washington	48%	67%	33,793	3,091	45,944	60,343	20,611	1,400	6,515	9750	$171,599
Wyoming	94%	73%	600	1,754	23,019	35,676	23,979	1,500	429	5760	$86,957
TOTAL:	**65%**	**69%**	**54,172**	**7,062**	**216,024**	**402,787**	**216,891**	**15,230**	**12,657**	**52105**	**$924,334**
REGION TOTALS:	**53%**	**60%**	**318,808**	**160,676**	**5,921,594**	**10,194,052**	**5,887,718**	**128,762**	**185,253**	**1689894**	**$22,786,269**
FOREIGN											
France	85%	0%	0	100	3,400	6,430	7,070	250	0	158	$17,250
Mexico	0%	0%	0	0	16,822	0	1,000	0	0	170	$17,822
Philippines	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,006	0	$1,006
Puerto Rico	0%	0%	1,400	0	1,500	700	700	1,200	0	105	$5,500
TOTAL:	**8%**	**0%**	**1,400**	**100**	**21,722**	**7,130**	**8,770**	**1,450**	**1,006**	**3604**	**$41,578**
SUBTOTAL:	**52%**	**60%**	**320,208**	**160,776**	**5,943,316**	**10,201,182**	**5,896,488**	**130,212**	**186,259**	**1692498**	**$22,839,451**

(2) - Not organized in the Department

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$10,559
Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary	$20,000
Child Welfare Foundation by National B/40	$2,070
Children & Youth Division by National B/40	$1,300
Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary	$73
Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals	$25,824
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$1,989
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$167,474
Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	$984
GRAND TOTAL	$23,069,123

TABLE # 1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 1997 - MAY 31, 1998

TABLE NO. 2

EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-35	1936-45	1946-55	1956-65	1966-75	1976-90	1990-98	Last 7 mos 98	First 5 mos 99	Grand Total
Alabama	15,281.65	13,899.68	27,466.26	23,700.80	19,672.79	76,536.49	130,997.61	17,698.49	5,859.00	331,112.77
Alaska	0	0	627.56	1,000.00	950	1,200.00	0	0	0	3,777.56
Arizona	17,587.40	8,474.30	5,094.00	3,658.00	250	70,608.25	214,529.36	31,018.86	8,311.22	359,531.39
Arkansas	9,845.20	24,028.00	20,999.22	4,963.00	100	11,731.26	37,384.09	1,134.06	966	111,150.83
California	25,558.18	4,547.97	13,231.40	2,795.05	800	1,450.00	8,309.00	500	0	57,191.60
Colorado	26,956.23	14,664.88	17,360.78	5,257.33	770	3,875.25	15,788.90	5,025.58	2,970.00	92,668.95
Connecticut	160	1,694.00	350	90	0	450	1,052.00	0	0	3,796.00
Delaware	1,025.00	1,010.00	825	175	150	6,723.00	14,502.87	0	0	24,410.87
D. of C.	1,790.00	780	983.5	220	0	600	2,435.00	0	0	6,808.50
Florida	16,607.28	16,734.00	24,207.50	1,313.00	0	4,366.00	34,925.55	2,778.09	1,267.88	102,199.30
Georgia	14,839.50	55,054.57	51,488.42	34,596.00	4,015.00	3,900.00	4,184.51	500	0	168,578.00
Hawaii	450	420	0	0	0	900	0	0	0	1,770.00
Idaho	3,641.00	3,952.50	2,721.00	3,050.85	4,071.97	8,716.71	27,159.47	5,124.62	5,574.29	64,012.41
Illinois	11,943.25	18,277.54	3,211.53	1,132.00	1,078.11	14,872.75	180,525.76	16,277.51	7,719.51	255,037.96
Indiana	24,906.08	6,944.00	4,213.40	4,853.00	190	29,096.52	123,175.92	6,732.77	9,735.00	209,846.69
Iowa	15,833.58	1,659.50	407	190	773.45	3,805.00	18,043.82	1,500.00	2,000.00	44,212.35
Kansas	9,552.50	11,214.30	31,565.87	10,498.48	4,273.00	8,354.00	5,537.50	0	0	80,995.65
Kentucky	13,922.00	9,921.50	15,488.90	30,039.00	28,540.66	68,104.30	31,547.66	8,000.00	5,717.00	211,281.02
Louisiana	12,554.00	10,846.50	24,376.30	14,078.00	1,208.00	3,837.00	4,733.20	0	0	71,633.00
Maine	2,564.94	1,054.00	889.9	1,020.36	0	6,326.55	24,885.50	0	0	36,741.25
Maryland	3,862.00	2,025.00	2,430.57	960	358	4,645.00	28,627.61	1,900.00	1,700.00	46,008.18
Massachusetts	2,064.50	690	455	0	0	1,300.00	1,000.00	0	1,208.31	6,717.81
Michigan	12,709.48	11,185.85	20,653.85	12,627.39	9,719.46	7,016.60	14,189.71	4,413.00	2,827.11	95,342.45
Minnesota	6,516.00	2,094.77	14,908.19	8,414.60	2,327.23	14,435.00	231,446.48	23,363.98	7,748.65	311,254.90
Mississippi	16,509.00	23,784.63	30,843.14	32,411.00	37,582.00	99,937.96	39,475.55	3,250.00	1,500.00	285,293.28
Missouri	18,047.08	35,026.00	33,824.64	13,975.00	7,231.76	6,750.00	17,045.22	1,953.60	11,401.24	145,254.54
Montana	5,099.25	315	744.5	924.35	365	4,046.80	43,017.66	2,500.00	1,535.00	58,547.56
Nebraska	14,091.20	4,378.90	7,479.25	10,316.43	14,111.06	6,196.00	3,196.40	0	0	59,769.24
Nevada	390	195	566	200	1,978.00	5,894.00	1,500.00	800	0	11,523.00
New Hampshire	2,562.00	1,688.50	4,791.50	150	0	7,472.05	36,925.74	1200	1,375.00	56,164.79
New Jersey	7,163.68	1,831.85	1,701.00	245	600	7,822.73	62,787.25	4,150.00	2,050.00	88,351.51
New Mexico	11,473.72	8,600.58	25,665.74	27,433.00	19,145.00	56,834.99	85,070.81	1,635.00	579.15	236,437.99
New York	4,547.97	3,339.57	3,411.00	1,392.00	300	2,450.00	50,673.57	7,838.17	1,750.00	75,702.28
North Carolina	12,230.50	34,367.00	52,708.00	28,311.60	3,705.00	11,601.00	14,845.07	2,887.50	1,418.00	162,073.67
North Dakota	13,204.37	12,813.08	8,138.21	3,650.00	2,083.01	7,387.71	4,555.00	610	1,085.00	53,526.38
Ohio	16,220.00	7,710.43	3,360.50	1,755.75	1,690.00	13,625.54	7,518.53	300	0	52,180.75
Oklahoma	24,955.05	15,503.00	26,118.77	39,287.70	46,835.00	81,298.91	172,653.16	13,043.90	10,423.38	430,118.87
Oregon	855	395.5	6,190.65	7,559.50	3,178.00	26,128.95	35,495.60	2,545.00	2,500.00	84,848.20
Panama	105	570	234	300	0	600	0	0	0	1,809.00
Pennsylvania	19,239.41	3,608.00	434	217	435	39,113.28	16,833.94	750	0	80,630.63
Puerto Rico	5,671.00	11,386.00	27,210.00	30,544.00	49,304.50	17,455.00	40,390.00	1,400.00	0	183,360.50
Rhode Island	1,277.00	285	1,641.00	0	760	650.00	21,142.52	850	700	27,305.52
South Carolina	29,589.20	38,863.85	16,780.54	9,912.80	2,936.07	2,682.93	2,127.00	872.08	0	103,764.47
South Dakota	19,555.89	22,874.38	13,405.05	2,957.00	0	36,460.89	38,556.19	500	0	134,309.40
Tennessee	12,211.52	18,933.25	29,403.20	25,210.00	5,604.50	26,107.23	32,807.23	2,500.00	2,089.91	154,866.84
Texas	11,239.50	24,134.00	31,879.35	15,513.08	12,856.00	2,714.74	3,814.74	0	1,558.78	103,710.19
Utah	3,435.00	7,690.48	3,248.00	0	0	6,815.62	10,239.12	0	700	32,128.22
Vermont	1,559.50	265	9,026.50	225	0	3,525.00	3,613.00	0	0	18,214.00
Virginia	19,219.86	26,090.45	26,449.78	1,588.00	9,768.00	20,190.00	22,167.00	725	2,532.96	128,731.05
Washington	3,033.00	345	427.5	0	0	75,072.49	132,180.07	18,271.35	15,522.06	244,851.47
West Virginia	20,276.98	7,353.00	5,801.00	5,594.94	650	17,023.65	20,372.11	2,235.00	1,000.00	80,306.68
Wisconsin	9,561.68	6,320.30	2,542.00	5,525.25	2,116.00	10,098.13	13,581.13	0	0	49,744.49
Wyoming	6,885.00	1,295.00	793	1,200.00	0	1,079.00	2,853.54	600	0	14,705.54
Other Depts	200	360	173.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	733.50
Miscellaneous	19,499.21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19,499.21
TOTAL	$580,077.34	$541,495.61	$658,946.47	$431,030.26	$302,481.57	$949,884.28	$2,090,418.67	$197,383.56	$122,824.45	$5,874,542.21

1) Includes $19,499.21 for the year 1926--Department totals not available

2) Includes first 5 months of 1998

TABLE NO. 3

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF WW II, KOREAN, VIETNAM AND GRENADA/LEBANON AND PANAMA VETERANS RECEIVING AID FROM NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH DIVISION

	No. WW II Children	No. Korean Children	No. Vietnam Children	No. Grenada/ Lebanon Children	No. Panama Children	No. Persian Gulf Children
6-1-98 to 5-31-99	14 (1.27%)	12 (1.09%)	545 (49.59%)	171 (15.56%)	13 (1.18%)	348 (31.67%)
6-1-97 to 5-31-98	14 (.94%)	38 (2.54%)	847 (56.66%)	216 (14.45%)	36 (2.41%)	344 (23.01%)
6-1-96 to 5-31-97	14 (.94%)	38 (2.54%)	849 (56.71%)	216 (14.43%)	36 (2.40%)	344 (22.98%)
6-1-95 to 5-31-96	13 (1.09%)	48 (4.01%)	904 (75.46%)	210 (17.53%)	23 (1.92%)	
6-1-94 to 5-31-95	27 (1.95%)	37 (2.67%)	1096 (79.19%)	189 (13.66%)	35 (2.53%)	
6-1-93 to 5-31-94	17 (.81%)	80 (3.83%)	1814 (86.84%)	142 (6.80%)	36 (1.72%)	
6-1-92 to 5-31-93	8 (.45%)	29 (1.63%)	1565 (87.97%)	121 (6.80%)	56 (3.15%)	
6-1-91 to 5-31-92	36 (2.27%)	68 (4.28%)	1371 (86.33%)	75 (4.72%)	38 (2.40%)	
6-1-90 to 5-31-91	17 (1.32%)	74 (5.75%)	1074 (83.45%)	47 (3.65%)	75 (5.83%)	
6-1-89 to 5-31-90	7 (1.09%)	49 (7.62%)	587 (91.29%)			
6-1-88 to 5-31-89	16 (2.35%)	61 (8.94%)	605 (88.71%)			
6-1-87 to 5-31-88	41 (6.65%)	68 (10.97%)	510 (82.38%)			
6-1-86 to 5-31-87	28 (4.60%)	60 (9.85%)	521 (85.55%)			
6-1-85 to 5-31-86	29 (4.54%)	114 (17.84%)	496 (77.62%)			
6-1-84 to 5-31-85	57 (9.27%)	114 (18.53%)	444 (72.16%)			
6-1-83 to 5-31-84	56 (8.88%)	125 (19.60%)	457 (71.60%)			
6-1-82 to 5-31-83	40 (5.9%)	158 (23.30%)	480 (70.80%)			
6-1-81 to 5-31-82	51 (14.36%)	80 (22.54%)	224 (63.10%)			
6-1-80 to 5-31-81	65 (14.74%)	125 (28.34%)	251 (56.92%)			
6-1-79 to 5-31-80	94 (21.81%)	58 (13.46%)	279 (64.73%)			
6-1-78 to 5-31-79	111 (27.54%)	101 (25.06%)	191 (47.40%)			
6-1-77 to 5-31-78	198 (30.33%)	215 (32.92%)	240 (36.75%)			
6-1-76 to 5-31-77	216 (38.30%)	140 (24.82%)	208 (36.88%)			
6-1-75 to 5-31-76	177 (29.70%)	233 (39.09%)	186 (31.21%)			
6-1-74 to 5-31-75	189 (36.00%)	208 (39.62%)	218 (41.52%)			
6-1-73 to 5-31-74	248 (36.69%)	334 (49.41%)	94 (13.90%)			
6-1-72 to 5-31-73	204 (43.59%)	150 (32.05%)	114 (24.36%)			
6-1-71 to 5-31-72	360 (46.15%)	309 (39.62%)	110 (14.10%)			
6-1-69 to 5-31-70	749 (53.32%)	417 (39.00%)	82 (7.68%)			
6-1-68 to 5-31-69	706 (61.49%)	414 (33.99%)	51 (4.18%)			
6-1-67 to 5-31-68	875 (61.66%)	390 (34.06%)	46 (4.01%)			
6-1-66 to 5-31-67	1,024 (64.02%)	463 (33.86%)	25 (1.83%)			
6-1-65 to 5-31-66	1,147 (72.86%)	384 (27.06%)	11 (.08%)			
6-1-64 to 5-31-65	1,091 (82.11%)	249 (17.82%)				
6-1-63 to 5-31-64	1,099 (79.86%)	273 (19.99%)				
6-1-62 to 5-31-63	1,077 (78.73%)	296 (21.20%)				
6-1-61 to 5-31-62	1,329 (82.47%)	221 (16.92%)				
6-1-60 to 5-31-61	1,716 (83.59%)	251 (15.79%)				
6-1-59 to 5-31-60	2,536 (84.99%)	288 (14.27%)				
6-1-58 to 5-31-59	1,589 (85.16%)	389 (13.06%)				
5-1-57 to 5-31-58	2,050 (86.78%)	195 (10.65%)				
6-1-56 to 5-31-57	1,713 (89.32%)	206 (8.98%)				
6-1-55 to 5-31-56	1,579 (90.06%)	142 (7.47%)				
6-1-54 to 5-31-55	2,098 (85.68%)	146 (7.92%)				
5-1-53 to 5-31-54	2,519 (84.32%)	140 (5.63%)				
5-1-52 to 5-31-53	2,050 (87.12%)	135 (4.66%)				
5-1-51 to 4-30-52	1,481 (84.36%)	39 (1.61%)				
5-1-50 to 4-30-51	1,506 (83.39%)	5 (.28%)				
7-1-49 to 4-30-50	1,584 (85.04%)					
7-1-48 to 6-30-49	1,796 (78.45%)					
7-1-47 to 6-30-48	1,218 (72.98%)					
7-1-46 to 6-30-47	785 (52.77%)					
Prior to 7-1-46	590 (43.83%)					

Table 4

Child Welfare Foundation Grants		
Organization	**Location**	**Amount**
Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation	New Orleans, LA	$7,000
APHS	Manchester, MO	$15,000
Children Awaiting Parents, Inc.	Rochester, NY	$25,000
Children's Express Foundation, Inc.	Washington, DC	$8,000
Children's Haven and Adult Community Services, Inc.	Sarasota, FL	$10,200
Children's Medical Center	Dallas, TX	$7,500
Erikson Institute for Advanced Study in Child Development	Chicago, IL	$24,000
Glaucoma Research Foundation	San Francisco, CA	$15,100
Goldenrod Hills Community Services	Wisner, NE	$1,400
Guardians of Hydrocephalus Research Foundation	Brooklyn, NY	$35,000
Central Montana Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies	Lewiston, MT	$750
Juvenile Diabetes Foundation	Los Angeles, CA	$15,400
Michael's House, A Center for Grieving Children	Chagrin Falls, OH	$22,000
Mercy Medical Airlift	Manassas, VA	$15,800
National Crime Prevention Council	Washington, DC	$20,000
Ounce of Prevention Fund	Chicago, IL	$24,800
Pittsburgh Vision Services	Pittsburgh, PA	$3,000
Project OZ	Bloomington, IL	$25,500
The American Legion Department of Kansas	Topeka, KS	$24,000
The Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation	Bethesda, MD	$15,000
The National Exchange Club Foundation	Toledo, OH	$15,000
THINK FIRST Foundation	Park Ridge, IL	$25,000
The Foundation Fighting Blindness	Hunt Valley, MD	$25,000

Table No. 5

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request During Period June 1,1998 through May 31,1999

Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	11,091
Children Beware	58,008
April Is Children & Youth Month	18,622
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	36,460
Gateway Drugs	44,608
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night	83,039
National Resource Directory	100
Regional Children & Youth Award (VISION)	18,492
TFA Applications	750
TFA Brochures	28,266
Warning Signs—Suicide Prevention	44,130
Safety Tips—Indoor	45,337
Safety Tips—Outdoor	45,327
Americanism/Children & Youth Catalog Brochure	7,281
National Family Week	27,773
Parents: For Your Information	36,848
Juvenile Delinquency Prevention	36,127
Citations:	
Annual Children and Youth Citations	4,500
Certificate of Meritorious Service	250
National Achievement Award	200
Special Children & Youth Citation	1,000
Vision Certificate of Excellence	250
Vision Certificate of Participation	150
Reporting:	
Tally Sheet	400
Unit Report Form	5,100
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	1,230
TOTAL	555,339

During the 1998 contribution year, donations exceeded $411,000 with over $181,000 of that amount coming to us from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion. Their Posts, Units, Salons, and Squadrons are the primary contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation. We encourage each member and each local organization to make an annual contribution in support of your Foundation so it can continue to fund projects that will assist children by giving them a better chance at life. It is important to remember that every dollar given to the Foundation is put directly into the trust fund to be used for grants that assist our young people.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation held in Indianapolis on May 2, 1999, the following officers were elected:

U.S. 'Udie' Grant of Kansas, (President); James P. Holley of Texas, (Vice President); Kenneth D. Danilson of Iowa, (Secretary); and Robert Turner of Georgia, (Treasurer). Administrative personnel that were re-appointed by the Board of Directors were George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Assistant Treasurer) and William A. Pease (Executive Secretary).

Under the 1969 Tax Reform Act, the Foundation retains its tax-exempt status. Gifts, therefore, are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law, and bequests to the Foundation are deductible for federal inheritance tax purposes to the extent permitted by the Federal Tax Act.

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION
Jeffrey L. Olson, Minnesota, Chairman
Richard D. Holmes, Indiana, Director

The 80th annual National Convention of The American Legion took place in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 4-10, 1998. National Commander Anthony G. Jordan (Maine) called the opening session to order at 9:00AM on Tuesday, September 8, 1998. Commander Jordan welcomed the Legionnaires to New Orleans, Louisiana and thanked them for their past, present and future service to America. Legionnaires were also welcomed to the National Convention by The Honorable M.J. 'Mike' Foster, Jr., Governor of Louisiana, The Honorable Marc Morial, Mayor of New Orleans, J.E. 'Al' Gibson, Department Commander, The American Legion of Louisiana, and William M. Detweiler, President of The First District Convention Corporation of Louisiana. The Honorable John B. Breaux and the Honorable Mary Landrieu, also addressed the convention, via videotape. United States Senators from Louisiana. The Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, Secretary of State, and the Honorable Togo West, Secretary of Veterans Affairs also addressed the convention.

One of the many highlights for the 1998 National Convention was The National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests that took place in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Marriott Hotel. Michael Davis and Marlene Ricci provided entertainment to a record crowd of Legionnaires and guests.

CONVENTION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The National Convention Commission held three regular meetings during the year. Discussions continue regarding the revisions of our requests for proposals (RFP) that are sent to cities interested in hosting a National Convention. This process is extremely important as it provides an equal opportunity for all cities to be judged during the initial review and site visit process. It is the commission's desire to continue to attract new cities desirous of hosting our National Convention. This provides our "blue cap" Legionnaires and their families with a varied and enjoyable convention that can be shared by all on an annual basis.

The commission continues to review and improve the surveying of our attendees during the National Convention. The survey has been improved and will be available to all attendees at future conventions. These surveys will be reviewed and will allow the commission to continue to develop ways of improving the National Convention for all attendees. Subsequent to the receipt of the 1998 National Convention surveys, the Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that all future National Conventions be held, and concluded, prior to Labor Day. This was also placed in the updated copy of our Request for Proposal and will begin with the 2001 National Convention.

During the Spring Meeting, the commission recommended to the National Executive Committee, several initiatives that will enhance the National Convention experience for all attendees. These initiatives included a registration increase for the Sons of The American Legion National Convention, improved registration procedures for all attendees at the respective conventions within the National Convention of The American Legion and a clarification of the guidelines for the convention stabilization fund. Beginning with the 1999 National Convention, each attendee must have the proper identification badge to enter any of the venues of The American Legion National Convention. On-site registration tables will be available for those who need to register at the site of the convention. Additionally, the convention office was directed to procure a new badge for the National Convention that will significantly reduce the expenses for badges purchased by the Convention Corporation. This badge proposal must be available for the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All of these initiatives were coordinated with the respective national commissions with which they may have an impact. Commission members recommended to the National Executive Committee that the City of Nashville, Tennessee be tentatively awarded the National Convention in the year 2004 for the dates of August 27 – September 2, 2004. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation. Dates and future conventions are:

Milwaukee, Wisconsin	September 1–7, 2000
San Antonio, Texas	August 24–30, 2001
Charlotte, North Carolina	August 23–29, 2002
St. Louis, Missouri	August 22–28, 2003

DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE
George G. Sinopoli, California, Chairman

The Distinguished Guest Committee exists under the umbrella of the National Convention Commission. Responsibilities include the coordination of activities of all persons invited to attend the National Convention as our distinguished guests. The committee arranges each guest's arrival and departure at the National Convention. Each distinguished guest is also assisted with credentials, agendas and other details of the National Convention.

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
John A. Brieden III, Texas, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director

This report covers the programs, activities and accomplishments of the National Economic Commission, its two standing committees (Employment and Veterans' Preference), and the staff from July 1, 1998, through June 30, 1999. Since the commission and the committees always meet concurrently, all future reference to the commission in this report will automatically indicate the inclusion of the committees.

1998-1999 Meetings

During the period this report covers, the commission met for four regularly scheduled executive sessions. A list of those meetings follows:

(1) Members and guests of the National Economic Commission met on Saturday, September 5, 1998, in the New Orleans Riverside Hilton Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, in

conjunction with the Eightieth Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday, Sept. 7, 1998. The complete text of that report appears in the Proceedings of the National Executive Committee's Pre-and Post-Convention Meetings.

(2) An executive session of the National Economic Commission was held in the headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 1998. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 1998.

(3) The National Economic Commission met in conjunction with the Thirty-ninth Annual Washington Conference on Monday and Wednesday, March 22 and 24, 1999. Those sessions were held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. A report on the topics covered during those two sessions is contained in the commission's Advance Report to the NEC.

(4) Members of the commission met on May 3-4, 1999, in the headquarters of The American Legion, in Indianapolis, Indiana. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, May 5-6, 1999.

Legislative Appearances

A very important part of the work of the National Economic Commission is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony on issues affecting the economic well-being of America's veterans. During the period covered by this report, the commission testified or participated in the preparation of testimony on several occasions. A list of those hearings follows:

February 21, 1999; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Housing and Benefits; Veterans' Employment and Training Service FY 2000 Budget

February 24, 1999; House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Housing and Benefits; Veterans' Employment and Training Service FY 2000 Budget

April 13, 1999; House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies; VETS FY 2000 Budget

June 23, 1999; House Committee on Small Business; The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999

June 24, 1999; House Veteran' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; Federal grants for homeless veterans' programs

The economics staff prepared the commission's portion of the testimony that was presented in October 1998 by the National Commander at a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs regarding The American Legion's goals and concerns, as well as the Legion's February and March 1999 appearances before the same committees concerning the administration's proposed FY 2000 budget for the VA and veterans' programs.

Administrative Activities

The commission's staff of three manage all of its activities and programs on a daily basis.

The staff's major responsibility is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans at the national level. This is accomplished through the commission's ongoing work with Congress and a number of federal agencies, including the Department of Labor, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The director and assistant director also represent The American Legion on

the following boards and committees: Executive Committee of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and its Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans; the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training; the Veterans' Committee of the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies; and the veterans' advisory committees of the Small Business Administration, its Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Office of Personnel Management. They also act as advisors to the Legion's Veterans Planning and Coordinating Committee.

In addition to those activities, the director and assistant director work closely with community based groups such as the National Organization on Disability, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, and the Veterans Organizations Homeless Council.

Another staff responsibility is answering the large volume of mail that is received annually from veterans seeking information or assistance on issues which come under the commission's jurisdiction. While the staff can neither place individual veterans in jobs nor represent them in labor disputes, the staff does provide information, guidance and, when appropriate, referral. Besides correspondence from individuals, the staff also receives and answers frequent requests and inquiries from government agencies, members of Congress, congressional committees, private organizations, and other groups regarding veterans' economic issues.

One of the commission's major programs is its Employer Awards Program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program, The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who have established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers.

Publications

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the commission does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on a network of Employment Chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding employment.

In order to assist the employment chairmen to be as effective as possible, the staff provides them with pertinent information and guidance through the Legion's biweekly newspaper, *The Dispatch*. They also provide articles on a routine basis to *The American Legion Magazine*.

The commission's various publications are kept in stock and distributed upon request, free of charge.

Employer of the Year Awards

Each year since 1969, the Legion's National Economic Commission has sponsored an Employer of the Year Awards Program. This program seeks to honor those employers across the country that have established an outstanding record in the employment and retention of veterans. Nominations for these award are submitted by Posts to their Departments for review. Each Department must then select what it feels is the most worthy nominee in the large employer category (those companies with more than 200 employees), one in the medium-size employer category (51-200 employees), and one in the small employer category (50 or fewer employees). These three nominations are then forwarded to the National Economic Commission, prior to January 15, for final approval and the issuance of plaques. After the plaques are prepared, they are sent to the Departments for presentation.

Prior to this year's Washington Conference, the Chairman of the National Economic Commission, John A. Brieden, III (TX), appointed a six-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 1998 in the Employer of the Year Awards

Program. The purpose of this subcommittee was to select a national winner and a runner-up in each of the employer categories. Those serving on the subcommittee were Paul Morin (MA), Chairman; William E. Christoffersen (UT); Henry J. Field (SC); Ben Lee (NJ), Leonard E. Shaw (IA), and William Strong (OH).

The members of the Employer of the Year Subcommittee met on March 22, 1999, to consider 46 employer nominations from Departments. Of these nominations, 14 were for small, 17 were for medium, and 15 were for large employers. Only three of these nominations (one medium size, two small) were ineligible for the national awards.

Prior to the meeting, the Staff Liaison to the subcommittee mailed copies of all nominations and supporting data to each subcommittee member. After a thorough review of this material, the Employer of the Year Subcommittee selected the following winners:

Large Employer: Georgia-Pacific Plywood, Crossett, Arkansas

Medium Size Employer: Computer Sciences Corporation, Clearfield, Utah

Small Employer: Jacobs Construction, Lemont, Pennsylvania

The subcommittee also selected three runners-up in the event that one of the winners is unable to accept the award, or is disqualified because of any labor relations or OSHA violations that might be pending against them. The three runners-up are as follows:

Large Employer: Kelly Springfield Tire Company, Freeport, Illinois

Medium Size Employer: Raytheon Aerospace Company, Sheppard Air force Base, Texas

Small Employer: Custom Communications, Decatur, Illinois

Officials of the three winning companies have agreed to come to the 81st Annual National Convention in Anaheim to accept the national awards. Upon their arrival in the convention city, each company will receive a small stipend to help defray the travel costs of their representatives

LVER and DVOP Awards

Beginning in 1993, three awards have been presented to the Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year, and the Employment Service Office of the Year. These awards are given in cooperation with local Job Service offices across the country, to recognize truly outstanding veteran-dedicated staff members.

Department winners were selected and submitted to the national commission in the same manner as Employer Award Winners. Entries were considered by the Employer Awards Subcommittee on March 22, 1999. Winners are to receive their plaques at their respective Department Conventions. National winners are the following:

LVER of the Year: Max Niesar, Minot, North Dakota

DVOP of the Year: Robert E. Loter, Des Moines, Iowa

ES Office of the Year: Fayetteville JobLink Career Center, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director

The mission of the committee is to promote employment and training opportunities for veterans. To accomplish this, the committee works at the national level with Congress and various federal agencies. The committee does not place veterans in jobs, but rather, relies on its network of Employment Chairmen to assist individual veterans in finding

employment. These Employment Chairmen are appointed by their Posts and Departments. Occasionally, Departments also appoint them at the County and District levels.

The National Economic Commission is pleased to report that the study completed in 1997 by The American Legion has resulted in some additional activity in the area of credentialing. That study identified all of the career possibilities in the areas of aircraft maintenance and repair and health care related fields. In each case, former service members received formal military training and in, each case, a license or certificate is required to work in that career field in civilian life.

The Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance funded a study which identified ALL of the professions in the civilian workforce which require a license or certificate and for which the military provides training. The Veterans' Employment and Training Service funded a Federal Agency Task Force which is examining how each of the agencies can evaluate and then recognize the military training so as to allow credit for such training toward the license or certificate required by that agency. The Task Force has issued an interim report.

The Benefits Subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is planning to hold a hearing on the subject in September 1999. Resolution of this non-recognition of military training by civilian credentialing authorities will provide a more seamless transition for about 85-90 thousand separating service people annually.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE
Henry J. Field, South Carolina, Chairman
James B. Hubbard, Michigan, Director

This committee is charged with the responsibility of promoting veterans' employment opportunities in federal government and for ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

Federal Veterans' Economic Programs

The following is a brief overview of the activities of those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the commission works regularly.

Department of Labor: Unemployment and underemployment among veterans and non-veterans has continued to decrease over the past year. However, there are still some major problems.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans constitute about 14% of the nation's labor force. The percentage of displaced workers has not been formally tabulated since 1988; at that time, however, about 23% of all dislocated workers were veterans. Many of these veterans lost their jobs because of plant closings, shift abolishment, slack work demand, or because the employer went out of business for one reason or another.

Unfortunately, it is generally very difficult for the dislocated worker to find new employment that is suitable. This is because most of these individuals do not have the financial resources necessary either to obtain job training or to relocate to an area where employment might be available. The problems of these men and women are further exacerbated by many employers' view of them as older workers. About half of dislocated workers find new jobs paying less than they were making before dislocation.

The commission is also concerned about the employment of severely disabled veterans. According to data supplied by the Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, about 85-90 percent of all veterans who are 60% or more compensably disabled have completely dropped out of the labor market. This has occurred

partly because many employers in both the public and private sectors have refused to make the necessary accommodations for their employment, and partly because many of the workers have reached retirement age.

Another major concern of the commission and the Department of Labor is homeless veterans. While there seems to be a vast disparity in the estimates of the number of homeless persons in this country, one thing the experts do agree on is that a large percentage are veterans. They also believe that many of the homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. In response to this need, the commission has prepared and widely distributed a pamphlet entitled *A Resource Guide for the Homeless Veteran*, intended to help homeless veterans locate resources and benefits that may be available to them because of their military service.

The American Legion continues to work with the Department of Labor and other federal agencies that have the resources necessary to help homeless veterans get off the streets and onto payrolls. In the weeks and months ahead, the commission will continue to work with the Labor Department to find solutions to these and other problems that affect veterans economically.

Department of the Treasury: The Economic Commission continues its active support of U.S. Savings Bonds, which have recently gained a new popularity because of an added education benefit. Savings bonds can be completely tax free when used for higher education tuition.

Because of federal budget cuts, the U.S. Treasury Department can no longer afford to send each Legion post promotional material on savings bonds. The Economic Commission, however, continues to provide Legionnaires with information on the value of these bonds through articles and public service advertisements in Legion publications.

Department of Veterans Affairs: The loan guaranty program, operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, has guaranteed over 16 million loans to veterans since its inception in 1944. In FY 1998, VA guaranteed 344 thousand loans totaling $37.9 billion. The average home loan amount was $110,000. Over 90 percent of the veterans purchasing a home were able to obtain no-downpayment loans. Approximately 56 percent of veterans purchasing a home were first time home buyers. VA expects to guarantee about 425 thousand loans in FY 1999.

Defaults and foreclosures continue to be relatively low. There were 133 thousand loans in serious default at the end of FY 1998. This represents 4.2 percent of all loans outstanding. The inventory of acquired properties was 12,541 in September 1998, an increase of 32 percent from 12 months earlier.

Office of Personnel Management: The federal government is the largest employer in the country as well as the largest employer of veterans. The responsibility for ensuring that veterans receive the preference they have been granted by law is vested in the Office of Personnel Management.

The following statistical summary appeared in OPM's annual report to Congress on veterans' employment in federal government. This summary covers veteran hiring and promotion activities for FY 1998.

Veterans hired totaled 34,514 (16.3 percent of new hires);
- 11,975 of those were Vietnam era veterans;
- 5,559 were disabled; and
- 2,471 of those were 30% or more disabled.

Veterans promoted totaled 55,682 (22.2%);
- disabled veterans promoted numbered 9,004; and
- 3,353 of those were 30% or more disabled.

11,839 Veterans Readjustment Appointments were made;
- This included 8,667 new hires.

Trends in veterans' employment in the federal service indicate a gradual decline in veterans from 1986 to 1998. This decline is due primarily to the retirements of older veterans (over 47 percent of all retirements over the last six years were veterans), and fewer new veterans entering the civilian labor force (a shrinking applicant pool). In spite of the overall decline in veterans in the federal work force, the 26.7 percent veterans' representation in the non-Postal federal service is more than double the 11.6 percent in the civilian labor force. Representation of disabled veterans declined from 4.5% in 1986 through the late 1980s and early 1990s until returning to 4.5% in FY 1996, 1997 and 1998. Representation of 30% disabled veterans increased from 1.2% in 1986 to 1.7% in 1997 and 1998.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to monitor veterans' employment trends in the future. It will also continue to work with OPM to promote employment opportunities for veterans.

Postal Service: The Postal Service is one of the largest employers of veterans in the nation. As of September 11, 1998, the latest statistics are available to us, the Postal Service had a career workforce of 791,073 persons. Of this total complement, 255,503 (32.3 percent) were veterans preference eligibles, 83,055 (10.5 percent of workforce) were veterans with disabilities, and 19,761 (2.5 percent) were veterans who are 30-percent or more disabled.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Postal Service.

Small Business Administration: During fiscal year 1998, about 13% of the loans guaranteed by SBA were made to veterans, who received 5,912 loans totalling nearly $1.3 billion. Individual figures for Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans, women veterans, and minority veterans were not available.

Through SBA's 8(a) program, under which contracts are awarded to businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, 818 contracts were awarded to 670 veteran-owned firms for a total of $912 million, which represents 13% of the dollars and 9% of the contracts awarded in that program for 1997. These are the latest figures available to us for this program.

Many small business contractors are unable to obtain work because of the unavailability of bonding. During FY 1998, utilizing SBA's surety bond program, 532 veteran-owned firms obtained contracts totalling nearly $130 million, or 7.32% of the total dollar amount awarded.

Conclusion

The National Economic Commission is fully aware that it would be impossible to carry out its mandates without the active involvement of Posts, Districts, Counties, Departments and individual Legionnaires. We deeply appreciate their continued support and involvement. Chairman Brieden also thanks the National Commander, the National Adjutant, the National Executive Committee, and the staff of both the Washington and Indianapolis offices for the outstanding support and cooperation they have provided during the past year.

FINANCE COMMISSION

Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman
George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana, National Treasurer
Paul M. Allen, Minnesota, Director

The primary obligation of the Finance Commission is to prepare a yearly budget for the National Executive Committee, handle funds under that budget, and exercise reasonable

oversight to see that the various divisions and departments of the National Organization operate within appropriations. The Finance Commission includes seven members, with the National Adjutant as ex-officio secretary, and the National Commander and National Treasurer as ex-officio members. Also attending these meetings are the Executive Directors of the Washington and Indianapolis offices and the Finance Director, as well as liaison observers from the National Executive Committee.

The National Organization had an operating surplus of $3,957,122 for 1998. In that year, we received $9 dues per member, allocating $6 to the General Fund and $3 to *The American Legion Magazine.*

Income of the National Organization derives from annual membership dues, interest on investments, magazine advertisements, Emblem Sales, contributions, and other approved activities.

A full financial statement is incorporated in the auditor's report. Your attention is directed also to the Reports of Committees and Trusts, which can be found in this publication.

These entities include the:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation
American Legion Life Insurance and Trust Committee
American Legion Emblem Committee
American Legion Overseas Graves Decoration Trust

EMBLEM COMMITTEE
Keith H. Gwilliam, Utah, Chairman
Jeffrey O. Brown, Indiana, Director

The American Legion emblem is the exclusive property of the National Headquarters. The sale of the emblem, emblem pins, merchandise carrying the emblem and other items of organizational equipment is the responsibility of the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The following tables show gross sales, net earnings, etc., for the entire calendar year 1998 and for the first three months of 1999.

January 1 to December 31, 1998
(Twelve months)

Gross Sales	$8,129,972
Cost of Goods Sold	4,788,577
Overhead	2,522,594
Operating Profit	818,801

Total number of 1998 orders processed was 94,837.

January 1 to March 31, 1999
(Three months)

Gross Sales	$1,722,631
Cost of Goods Sold	964,226
Overhead	556,316
Operating Profit	202,089

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 1999 was 17,395.

THE AMERICAN LEGION INSURANCE COMMITTEE
Steve A. George, Minnesota, Chairman
G. Paul Dunn, Oklahoma, Member Benefits Administrator

The American Legion Insurance Committee provides oversight for the several insurance plans currently offered by The American Legion and is assigned to the National Finance Commission.

The American Legion Insurance Program supports several National programs which are among the most prominent and visible activities of The American Legion. The programs are listed below with the corresponding funding for 1999.

American Legion Baseball $625,688; National Oratorical Contest $273,387; Junior Uniformed Musical Groups $27,000 for participation at the National Convention; Boy's Nation $159,925; Boy Scout of The Year Scholarship Award $14,000. An award of $2,000 per year up to four years, not to exceed $8,000, for pursuit of a course of study beyond high school. Three second-place awards in the amount of $2,000 each are also granted.

These requests for grants are approved by The American Legion Insurance Committee, the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee.

The American Legion offers a variety of insurance plans which are described as follows:

Level Term Life Plan: The American Legion currently offers a Level Term Plan to members, their spouses and dependents. This includes Sons of The American Legions' members and spouses. Members can apply up to age 70 and coverage ends at age 75. The Legion-approved Level Term Life Plan is underwritten by Hartford Life Insurance Company. The Administrator for the plan is Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc. located in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Simplified Issue: Another plan offered by Hartford Insurance Company costs less than typical guaranteed issue plans and provides an option for those unable to pass medical underwriting on standard plans. The plan is issued through age 59. The benefit amount is up to $50,000 for under age 50 and up to $20,000 for those between 50-59 years old.

Under the plan, benefits are reduced by half at age 65 and the plan terminates automatically at age 75. The plan is currently not available in some states. Call the Administrator at 1-800-542-5547 for details.

Modern Vets: The American Legion has recently approved a new life insurance plan which is also underwritten by Hartford Life Insurance Company. This plan is designed specifically for members separating or retiring from the military. If you are a member of The American Legion, under age 40, live in the U.S., and have separated from the military in the last 12 months, you are eligible. The LegionLife Modern Vets Plan is a life insurance plan that picks up where your military coverage ends for about HALF the cost of Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

LegionPlus Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement: The American Legion has approved a National Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement Program for active duty and retired military members and dependents. This program is designed to meet the needs of active duty and retired military members who may be referred to civilian facilities for care. It includes an active duty and retired version.

Requests for information on the Level Term Life Plan, Simplified Issue Plan, Modern Vets Plan or the Tricare/CHAMPUS Supplement Plan, should be directed to the Administrator, Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc., 1776 West Lakes Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50398; 1-800-542-5547.

Birthday Life: Another plan available to members and spouses is Birthday Life, underwritten and administered by Union Fidelity Life Insurance (now owned by GE Capital Assurance) located in Trevose, Pennsylvania. This plan is a guaranteed-issue, whole life plan combined with accidental death insurance, with premiums at entry age which do not increase as the insured grows older. No medical exam is required.

The plan provides a limited death benefit, for the first two years, for death from natural causes, and provides full benefits during that period for accidental deaths. Full benefits in any event are payable after two years.

Requests for information on the Birthday Life Plan should be directed to the Administrator, Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., (now owned by GE Capital Assurance) 4850 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19049; 1-800-523-5758.

Claims

The primary feature of The American Legion Insurance Plan is the benefits paid to beneficiaries of deceased insured Legionnaires. In 40 years, claims have been paid amounting to more than $158 million in benefits. These benefits were paid at no cost to the National Organization of The American Legion and no expenses to the general membership, other than certificate-policyholders. The insurance plan has proven to be a self-sustaining program. By the end of 1999, the total benefits paid will be nearly $170 million.

Healthcare

The National Organization has several healthcare products which are offered to Departments on an individual basis, as requested. Departments must approve the products by a vote of their Department Executive Committee and certify the approval to the National Adjutant. Departments may or may not approve all plans offered. Upon approval by a Department, appropriate announcements will be made to the membership. The National Health Insurance Program now has six Departments who have approved participation: Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Marketing of plans is underway in those Departments.

Administrative Matters

Requests for information concerning the status of applications, non-receipt of insurance renewal, filing of death claims, status of death claims, amount of premium, inquiries as to whether or not a member is insured, or specific questions pertaining to the terms of coverage should be directed to:

Hartford and CNA Plans
Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc.
1776 West Lakes Pkwy.
West Des Moines, IA 50398
1-800-542-5547
Decreasing Term
Level Term
Simplified Issue Level Term

Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co.
4850 Street Rd.
Trevose, PA 19049
1-800-523-5758
Birthday Life

Globe Life and Accident
Globe Life Center

Modern Vets

CHAMPUS Supplement Insurance
For Active Duty and Retired Military
Offered by Allianz Life
1-800-542-5547

Oklahoma City, OK 73184
1-800-811-3927
Level Premium/Level Benefit

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION
William M. Bishop, Alaska, Chairman
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director

The following annual report covers the activities of The American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission and Foreign Relations Council for the 1998-99 program year ending June 30, 1999.

Overview

There are two principal goals of the Commission's continuing work. First, the Commission is dedicated to keeping the membership and leadership of The American Legion informed on relevant foreign policy issues and to carrying The Legion's important voice on these matters to our government. Second, the Commission and its staff work to urge bipartisan cooperation by the Congress and the Administration in developing consistent, viable foreign policies for the United States.

To keep the membership fully informed, the Foreign Relations Commission conducts meetings and programs throughout the year featuring prominent speakers who focus on important relevant foreign policy issues. The Commission is also dedicated to providing and exchanging information on foreign relations topics and ideas through its speaker program, while also regularly consulting with its grassroots membership on these key issues.

To influence the Administration and Congress toward development of bipartisan foreign policies which are consistent with our adoption principles of foreign policy and Democratic Activism, The American Legion participates in numerous meetings, hearings and programs throughout the year, providing both input and recommendations to the State Department, to Congressional offices and committees, and to the White House. This is done either directly or through liaison offices at these Agencies or in some cases through the Veterans liaison office at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. William M. Bishop, of Alaska, was appointed in the Fall of 1998 and serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions
Adopted at National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana 1998

Of the eighteen resolutions that were adopted , two overarching general foreign policy resolutions outline the major principles that have characterized The American Legion's approach to foreign affairs over many years. These Resolutions are:

Resolution Number 209, *America's Future*, which outlines the major international goals sought by The American Legion and recognizes the unprecedented and far reaching changes in the international security environment in the post-Cold War period. This Resolution calls upon the U.S. Government to adopt policies of "Democratic Activism" by promoting democratic values, maintaining a strong national defense to deter or defeat aggression, cooperate with allies, encourage free and fair trade and assist developing nations.

Resolution Number 210, which outlines The American Legion's objectives for U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy.

Resolution 184 suggests that U.S. foreign policy embody key principles that include: recognition of U.S. responsibilities as a world leader

- dedication to world peace and a peace through strength posture
- active promotion of democracy
- support for human rights consistent with U.S. national interests
- participation in collective security alliances
- use of U.S. national resources in critical world regions to achieve interests
- equitable and verifiable arms control agreements
- opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery
- opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking
- support for responsible international organizations consistent with our interests
- participation in the increasingly interdependent free world trade system
- recognition of the importance of national sovereignty in foreign relations issues
- recognition of the important roles played by the President and Congress in foreign policy.

Sixteen additional resolutions were adopted at the 80th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana on September 3, 1998. They were as follows:

General Foreign Policy

Resolution No. 10: *Missing Service Personnel*
Resolution No. 215: *United Nations*
Resolution No. 216: *Regulation of Lobbying;*
Resolution No. 218: *Priority POW/MIA Actions*
Resolution No. 219: *World War II, Cold War and Korean War POW/MIAs*
Resolution No. 220: *Vietnam POW/MIA Policy*

European Affairs

No resolutions were adopted.

Far Eastern Affairs

Resolution Number 2: *Policy on Support to the Republic of Korea*
Resolution Number 3: *Relations with the People's Republic of China*
Resolution Number 212: *Policy on the People's Republic of China*

Inter-American Affairs

Resolution Number 101: *Panama Canal Treaties*
Resolution Number 102: *War on Drugs in Latin America*
Resolution Number 213: *Panama Canal*
Resolution Number 294: *Policy on Cuba*
Resolution Number 295: *Policy on Mexico*
Resolution Number 297: *Policy on Central America*
Resolution Number 298: Enterprise for the Americas *Initiative*

Middle Eastern & African Affairs

No resolutions were adopted.

National Executive Committee Meeting, Fall 1998

On October 14 and 15, 1998, the Foreign Relations Commission met at the Radisson City Center Hotel to consider resolutions and conduct other business. A broad range of topics were discussed including current and potential threats to the United States such as North Korea, Iraq and China. Also discussed was the current status of the POW/MIA issue. One resolution was recommended for and received NEC approval.

Resolution No. 13: *Recognition of Personnel Involved in POW/MIA Recovery Efforts*

Washington Conference, March 1999

The Foreign Relations Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill on Monday, March 23 and on Wednesday, March 25, 1999. Topics covered during each session follow.

Morning Session, March 22, 1999

Colonel Joseph Rozek, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, spoke on "The Defense Department's Role in Countering Terrorism." Col. Rozek addressed the growing threat of weapons of mass destruction and the planning efforts underway within the United States Government to prevent, counter and respond to potential terrorist employment of these weapons against the United States. The Department of Justice would head the interagency effort for domestic preparedness within the United States and the Department of State would head the counter-terrorism efforts overseas. The Department of Defense would be a major player in the Government's domestic and overseas programs due to the availability of its resources to include highly trained personnel. Undoubtedly, the first to respond to terrorist activity would be local firemen and police. Additionally, trained National Guard Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection (RAID) teams could be summoned as well as FEMA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies.

Colonel Paul Arcari, USAF (Ret.) of the Retired Officer's Association, **Mr. Charles Calkins** of the Fleet Reserve Association, and **Mrs. Sydney Hickey** of the National Military Family Association—held a Panel Discussion on "Military Realities and Legislative Goals for FY 2000 and Beyond." The organizations that these panel members represent, are members of The Military Coalition (TMC). An array of quality of life issues ranging from an improved military retirement system and reducing the military pay comparability gap, an enhanced Survivors' Benefits Plan, to Medicare subvention demonstration projects at VA medical centers were discussed. Legionnaires in the audience were reminded that in the current session of Congress only 31 percent of United States Representatives were veterans and 43 percent of United States Senators had prior military service. Mrs. Hickey emphasized that the loss of, or threats to, family quality of life features, such as caps on cost of living allowances or attacks on commissary benefits, were not perceptions but were very real concerns as to whether military families remained in the military. Finally, it was noted that a long-range plan for addressing all these issues had to be developed and followed year after year. The trust of military families and military retirees has, in many cases, been broken, and one of the goals of military and veterans associations should be to restore that trust by making Governmental policy-makers aware of the issues and then addressing them.

The final speaker **Congressman Floyd Spence** (R-S.C.), Chairman, House Armed Services Committee discussed "Military Readiness and Quality of Life Issues for FY 2000." Chairman Spence emphasized the need for continued development and deployment of a national missile defense system that was contained in House bill, H.R. 4. He also voiced strong support for the Government's coordinated counter-terrorism efforts and the need to adequately protect the citizens of the United States. He addressed the Quadrennial Defense Review, the national military strategy, which contained the two-war "nearly simultaneously" strategy and noted that, in his view, the Nation could perhaps fight one major regional conflict, but not two. Chairman Spence also reiterated the need for a strong quality of life package for the Armed Forces so as to enhance military recruiting and retention. Many of his points were addressed in American Legion adopted resolutions and articulated in Congressional testimony.

Afternoon Session, March 22, 1999

The Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee and presided over by Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

Brigadier General Terry L. Tucker, USA, Commanding General of the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting in Hawaii, whose discussion centered around "Current MIA Recovery Efforts in the Pacific Region" General Tucker outlined the mission of the Joint Task Force and what the Joint Task Force is doing today for the fullest possible accounting of American personnel missing in action in Southeast Asia. The total number of Americans missing in Southeast Asia as a result of the Vietnam War stood at 2,064. This total number included the following categories by branch of service: United States Air Force: 689; United States Army: 653; United States Navy: 417; United States Marine Corps: 265; United States Coast Guard: One; and 139 American civilians.

Mr. Matt McKeown, Deputy Attorney General of the State of Idaho spoke on "The Freedom of Information Act and POW/MIA Research." Mr. McKeown has been involved in litigation against the federal government on behalf of the State of Idaho for the release of classified information. His remarks outlined a plan, using current laws, to obtain recently declassified information from the federal government by employing some of the experience he has gained from this litigation. Many documents that pertain to the POW/MIA issue remain classified. If these documents were made available to researchers, we would be closer to our goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting.

Mr. Dino L. Carluccio, Senior Legislative and Executive Assistant for U.S. Senator Bob Smith (R-N.H.) spoke on "The Need for Legislative Efforts on the POW/MIA Issue." Mr. Carluccio outlined the current Administration's lackluster performance on accounting for America's POWs and MIAs. Mr. Carluccio said that, currently, Senator Smith is in the process of drafting comprehensive new POW/MIA legislation. "The POW/MIA Full Disclosure and Accounting Act of 1999 " will be presented this Fall. This new legislation will encompass a full range of issues including declassification of foreign and American documents. He is looking forward to American Legion input on this issue.

Foreign Relations Commission Business Session, March 24, 1999

The Commission conducted a business session on Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. which also included a presentation by **Mr. Marshall S. Billingslea,** a member of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations staff. He talked about the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. While no resolutions were properly before the group, a variety of issues were discussed. Updates were provided on NATO Enlargement; foreign policy strategy for the New Century and POW/MIA issues. In the latter area, information

was provided on the Jackson-Vanik waiver by the President, Missing Persons legislation and future actions. The United Nations, including U.S. arrears and State Department resourcing were also discussed. The Commission addressed the upcoming 81st National Convention. Also discussed was the speakers program and the business sessions to be held in Anaheim.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Spring 1999

The Commission met in Executive Session on May 5-6, 1999, in conjunction with the National Executive Committee Spring meeting. A broad range of subjects were discussed to include the major topic of discussion—U.S. military operations in Kosovo. One resolution was adopted and assigned to the Commission:

Resolution No. 44: *The American Legion's Statement on Yugoslavia*

The National Security—Foreign Relations Division

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security—Foreign Relations Division, located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; John Petersen, Assistant Director; Angela L. Venson, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Cheryl L. Henson, Secretary.

During the year, the combined division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The duties have consisted of answering correspondence, E-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. These contacts related to a variety of matters, some of which involved members of the armed forces.

Liaison also is maintained with a host of military and quasi-military organizations with whom common goals are shared. Among these are: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; The Retired Officers Association, Association of the U.S. Army; and the National Guard Association of the United States. Most importantly, the National Security—Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, is also a duty of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field.

Particularly vigorous activities were conducted during this reporting period to monitor the conflict in Kosovo, the continuing tensions in Iraq and ort Korea, and our relationship with The People's Republic of China. Also, there were many activities in support of fullest POW/MIA accounting including a staff trip to North Korea and numerous congressional actions including two significant appearances before House Committees in June 1998.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as the *Dispatch, The American Legion Magazine* and the principal means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign relations.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Herman G. Harrington, New York, Chairman
John W. Querfeld, Illinois, Director

The National Internal Affairs Commission was established by resolution of the National Executive Committee in 1947. The original charge for this constitutional commission still remains: to formulate and recommend policies and to oversee the implementation of adopted policies relating to activities conducted for organizational purposes.

Among those purposes are all those not properly the responsibility of any other national commission, as well as membership strategies, post formation, clerical and records administration for posts and individual members, and special projects. The commission also is required from time to time to provide guidance and assistance to the National Adjutant on necessary administrative operations of the National Headquarters.

Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline, and commemorative activities. The commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities which potentially affect posts and departments, and recommends appropriate courses of action.

The commission has four standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination. They are Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials, Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws, and Membership Post Activities. The latter has separate reporting responsibilities to the National Convention and the National Executive Committee. Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the activities of the Sons of The American Legion, which is not a separate organization, but rather, a major program of the organization.

The commission also oversees long-term programs and activities as the National Paid-Up-For-Life program and the National Emergency Fund.

Special projects of significance are the World War II Memorial fundraising in conjunction with the American Battle Monuments Commission, and the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War.

Direct Renewal

The Direct Renewal Program is a uniform, organized, and simple way to invite members to renew their membership in The American Legion using a direct mail system. This program has been very successful and effective and has been funded at no cost to either the participating Departments or Posts.

The first two renewal notices are optional for Posts but the final three notices go to all delinquent members. Each Department chooses the dates that its members receive the first three notices - (1) July 1 or August 1, (2) October 1 or November 1, (3) December 15 or January 11. The March 13 and May 1 notices go to all delinquent members.

Direct Membership Solicitation

Since 1982, the Direct Membership solicitation (DMS) Program has been responsible for acquiring over 2,073,564 new members into the 52 participating Departments. Obviously, the DMS Program has proven to be very successful in the acquisition of new members. Again this year, the emphasis is on renewal and retention of these members as well as transfer to local traditional posts.

The DMS Program will continue to support The American Legion's on-going membership efforts with special emphasis on the retention of all members.

National Information Conferences

Sponsored through a cooperative effort of the National Headquarters of The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Departments, this important series of conferences is held in eight regional locations to provide updated information and to train current and future leaders.

The American Legion is about Americans taking care of America, assisting others to prepare for the changing world in the 21st century. This conference explores the rapid and dramatic economic, technological, social and political trends that affect the way we conduct business today, and in the years to come.

Conference Instructors are the professional staff of the Organization, and some will be leaders from the volunteer sector. These knowledgeable, dedicated instructors will be covering many programs and activities, providing a blend of experience, educational expertise, sharing of ideas, helping to solve problems, exchanging information, and sharpening individual skills.

Conference Schedules

Region	1999	2000
Region 1	South Portland, ME; April 23-25	Burlington, VT; April 7-9
Region 2	Coraopolis, PA May 21-23	Charleston, WV; March 31-April 2
Region 3	Huntsville, AL; October 1-3	Nashville, TN; September 29-October 1
Region 4	Lafayette, LA; September 24-26	Houston, TX; October 6-8
Region 5	Evansville, IN; October 1-3	Toledo, OH; October 6-8
Region 6	Fargo, ND; May 14-16	Sioux Falls, SD; April 7-9
Region 7	Las Vegas, NV; September 24-26	Las Vegas, NV; September 29-October 1
Region 8	Cheyenne, WY; May 14-16	Pendleton, OR; March 31-April 2

Paid-Up-For-Life Program

Each summer, when The American Legion prints and distributes annual membership cards for the coming year, there is an increasing number of Legionnaires who will receive a special card. These are the members who have chosen to pay their dues with one "lump" fee. These members never have to pay another membership payment for as long as they live. Since the lifetime program started in 1975, nearly a quarter of a million members have applied for a Paid-Up-For-Life membership, and the number is growing.

Being a lifetime member of The American Legion is significant to each person and is a valuable asset to the world's greatest veterans' organization. It shows a lifetime of commitment and is an exemplary civic demonstration of "Still Serving America."

National Emergency Fund

There is some good news so far this year in what is perhaps the most vivid example we have of veterans helping veterans and their families in need. As of this writing we have approximately $400,000.00 in the National Emergency Fund account. We have grown from just $26,000 since the 1998 Fall Convention in New Orleans. So far this year, we have paid $52,750 in NEF grants to 44 individuals and four posts. The American Legion National

Emergency Fund was born out of disaster and has evolved to compassionately and efficiently heal the wounds of catastrophe. The National Emergency Fund has kept Posts from closing and enabled Legionnaires to begin to rebuild their homes and their lives. The money in the fund comes from Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary and The Sons of The American Legion who have generously donated to help members of their Legion family. The Fund was designed as a temporary means to get Posts, Legionnaires and their families back on their feet. It was not designed to replace insurance or provide for long-term support.

Since National Commander Butch Miller's kick-off of the "Give a Buck" fundraising initiative at the 1998 Fall Convention, Legionnaires and the Legion family have banded together to rise to the occasion. We have collected over $595,000 in donations. Of great significance is since this program was developed in October 1989, we have paid out over $3,000,000 in grants to individuals and Posts.

Each and every dollar contributed to this fund is used for the express purpose of rendering financial assistance to our members who have incurred devastation from wind, rain, fire and earthquakes. Moneys to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and conducting fundraising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

The beauty of this unique program is that our members know they can turn to The American Legion for immediate financial assistance without the red tape or repayment requirements normally associated with other federal and state agencies. With the help of all Legion members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the most urgent needs of our Legion family after a local, state or national disaster.

Consolidated Post Reports

The Consolidated Post Report—one of The American Legion's most valuable documents—is our report card to congress. It provides a summary of the collective assistance provided to the nation from our Legion Posts. Nearly 54 percent of American Legion Posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 1997-1998 year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit Color Guards, Firing Squads and other uniformed groups was $2,358,465; Legion baseball team support cost $7,980,335; other athletic teams were provided $1,993,955; cash contributions to VA Voluntary Service was $1,795,630 and over 1,258,763 hours of volunteer service were provided; 62,486 Boy Scouts were sponsored at a cost of $1,481,691; scholarships valued at $3,514,117 were awarded to 8,418 students.

In addition, 3,327,835 hours were spent performing community service work, valued at $5,364,744; nearly 98,080 pints of blood were donated, and additional millions of dollars in goods and cash were contributed to programs helping veterans and their families. Remember, these facts and figures represent just over half of all American Legion Posts; if all Posts submitted a report, the information would reflect substantially higher totals.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Charles G. Mills, New York, Chairman

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a National Convention.

However, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the Constitution and By-laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and

regulations for the Revocation, Cancellation, or Suspension of Department and Post Charters of The American Legion.

RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT
Whit S. LaFon, Tennessee, Chairman

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the annual National Convention. This committee has the responsibility to receive, consider and transmit all resolutions—with or without recommendation—to the appropriate convention committee for a report to the convention. During an average year, 300-400 resolutions will be assigned.

TROPHIES, AWARDS AND CEREMONIALS
William H. Schultz, Illinois, Vice Chairman

This committee supervises all of the official national awards and recommends to the National Executive Committee recipients for the Distinguished Service Medal; over the years, some of those awarded The American Legion's highest honor were: General John J. Pershing, Ignace Jan Paderewski of Poland, Henry Ford, Ernie Pyle, Bob Hope, Babe Ruth, Dr. Jonas E. Salk, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the dead & missing of the Vietnam War, 10 men who have served as President of The United States in the 20th Century, plus many other citizens of renown who have made lasting and significant contributions.

Other awards that this committee makes recommendations on include the International Amity Award, and the Canadian Friendship Award. A report is also prepared for the NEC on miscellaneous awards that have been presented during each year.

The committee also supervises the contents of the Manual of Ceremonies of The American Legion.

MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Kenneth Sercerchi, Maine, Chairman
Billy R. Johnson, Arkansas, Membership Director

Membership and programs go hand-in-hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide the people and resources to serve the need of the veteran and his/her family. Your Membership and Post Activities is please to report a continuing membership of nearly 2.9 million members world-wide.

Membership

Final 1997 membership	2,831,819
Final 1998 membership	2,806,834
1999 membership as of Aug. 1, 1999	2,756,000*

*Estimate. The year-end membership should equal the 1999 final membership.

36th Annual National Membership Workshop

The 36th annual membership meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Friday, July 30, 1999, with over 400 department and district officers in attendance from nearly all of the 55 departments.

Many of those attending arrive in Indianapolis with a very good understanding of the membership program, especially as it pertains to their areas. But, by the time the workshop concludes they are prepared to face the day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of The American Legion as it relates to potential members.

The goal of this workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to grow the membership in The American Legion. The continuing theme of "Still Serving America" remains the battle cry for not only the membership program, but permeates throughout the programs of organization. Whether it is membership recruitment or program implementation—it is all about veterans helping veterans and providing communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life for which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

New Post Development/Revitalization Program

The Membership and Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996 designed to assist Posts, Districts and Departments in developing and revitalizing posts.

The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers along with practical field application. A total of twenty-six Departments have received assistance from this effort as compared to twenty-two last year when this report was provided.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization of 89 American Legion Posts and development of 71 new Posts; in the past three years. This adds up to a total of 6,814 new, renewed and transferred members. Many of the Departments have been successful in this program without any actual assistance from National Staff. Whether a Department requests field assistance or just the training workshop, if the guidelines are followed, there will be success.

All the Departments are encouraged to participate in this program. The program, however, requires a commitment from every level of leadership, if it is to be successful.

Membership Campaign Promotion

The National Membership Awards Program distributes over 65,000 various awards annually to recognize membership accomplishments at all levels of the organization. The promotion plan for the National Membership Campaign is formulated during the annual planning session of the M&PA Committee held in Indianapolis in January.

Unofficial Membership Awards–1999

Contained within this extensive program are a wide variety of prizes ranging from simple certificates and ribbons to valuable gifts and travel. The awards are designed to reward the membership success of dedicated Legionnaires at all levels of the organization and encourage continued growth. Get active in membership recruiting, ask a veteran to join our ranks today, you'll be glad you did—and you can earn one of the many prizes and awards listed below. Contact your Department Membership Chairman for more information.

Early Bird Contest—August 12, 1998:
Thirty-one Departments qualified for the 35% awards.

Autumn Festival—September 10, 1998:

Forty-Eight Departments qualified for the 45% awards with 30 of them qualifying for the 50% bonus awards.

Oktoberfest—October 14, 1998:

Forty-Six Departments qualified for the 55% awards with 17 of them qualifying for the 60% bonus awards.

Pearl Harbor–December 9, 1998:

Thirty-seven Departments qualified for the 75% awards with (4) of them qualifying for the 80% bonus awards.

Big Twelve Competition–February 10, 1999:

Twelve (12) Departments qualified for the 90% awards with none qualifying for the 95% bonus awards.

"Big Twelve" Competition Winners:

Category I	No Winner
Category II	No Winner
Category III	No Winner
Category IV	South Dakota
Category V	No Winner
Category VI	No Winner

The American Legion Birthday – April 14, 1999:

Twenty-four (24) Departments qualified for the 95% award.

May Day—May 12, 1999:

By achieving 100% of the Department's 99 membership goal, winning Department Commanders and Membership Chairmen have a choice of several gifts available, based on the number of targets/bonuses made during the year.

Department Commander of the Year:

Any Department Commander who met or exceeds his/her 100% goal for 1999 by May 12, 1999, will receive a plaque recognizing his/her achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in Anaheim.

Gold Brigade Recruiter Award:

A Legionnaire who recruits 50 or more NEW members by District Competition target date, May 12, 1999, will qualify for enrollment in the elite GOLD BRIGADE of The American Legion.

Gold Brigade Drawing:

All certified members of the Gold Brigade will automatically be entered in a drawing with the five winners to be announced at the 1999 National Convention in Anaheim, California. The five winners of the drawing will receive a $1,000.00 Award Certificate.

Flag Day—June 9, 1999:

By meeting 110% of the Department's 1999 membership goal, the Department Commander and Membership Chairman will receive a $1,500.00 gift certificate. Each

Department that qualifies for this award will also receive the 110% National Commander's Plaque, to be presented at the National Convention in Anaheim.

Delegate Strength—August 10, 1999:

Delegate Strength is determined by the membership in the hands of the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the National Convention. Total number of delegates for each Department is based on five delegates at large, one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, and the members of the National Executive Committee.

Post Honor Ribbons:

Post Honor Ribbons were shipped to 1,831 Posts whose 1999 membership as of December 31, 1998 exceeded their final 1998 membership.

Certificate of Meritorious Service:

These certificates were awarded for 167 Posts for attaining a new All-Time-High membership for 1999 by December 31, 1998.

Five Consecutive Years All-time-high:

These citations are awarded to Posts with five or more consecutive years of All-Time High membership in 1999.

District Commanders "Race To The Top"

District Commanders are the lynch pin of The American Legion's Chain of Command, serving as the vital link between the National and Department organizations and all Posts. As we are all aware, the local Post is where the "rubber meets the road." If it doesn't happen at the Post level—it doesn't happen at all. District Commanders are the people charged with insuring that all Posts in their District maintain their vitality.

Consequently, this unique award was created to provide a meaningful incentive for the District Commanders and reward their successful membership efforts. The winning District Commander and guest receive:

- Reserved tickets to the Indianapolis 500, "the greatest spectacle in racing."
- First class hotel accommodations for four nights at the Indianapolis Radisson Hotel.
- Reserved seating for the Indianapolis 500 parade.
- Dinner reservations Friday and Saturday evening at two of Indianapolis' finest restaurants.
- Tour of the National Headquarters of The American Legion.

Previous winners have reported how much they enjoyed their opportunity to participate in this world renowned racing event and that they have fond memories that will last a lifetime.

The following provides more specific information on how you can win.

District Commanders "Race To The Top"

Competition will be divided into five categories based on the membership of the District without regard to geographic locations. District Commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on the final 1998 totals, and a top District Commander for the National award will be selected from each of the five categories. Second and Third place awards will also be presented in each category.

Category I	Districts of 15 to 1,499 members
Category II	Districts of 1,500 to 2,999 members
Category III	Districts of 3,000 to 4,999 members
Category IV	Districts of 5,000 to 7,499 members
Category V	Districts of 7,500 and above members

The 500 Trip

The 500 Trip will be presented to the Top District Commander and spouse in each category whose District membership for 1999 on March 31, 1999 represents the greatest percentage over the final 1998 membership of the District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. First Place Award entitles you and your guest to attend the 1999 Indianapolis 500 Race, and first-class hotel accommodations.

Second Place awards

Second Place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 1999 on March 31, 1999 represents the second highest Percentage over the final 1998 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a $500 gift certificate.

Third Place awards

Third Place awards will be presented to the District Commander in each category whose District membership for 1999 on March 31, 1999 represents the third highest percentage over the final 1998 membership of that District. Cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Winners will receive a $375 gift certificate.

First Place Winners: Trip to the Indianapolis 500 Race

Category I	James Waters	Georgia	108.07%	Dist. 8
Category II	Robert D. Shalala	Pennsylvania	103.05%	Dist. 2
Category III	Dale Nauman	Delaware	102.38%	Dist. 4
Category IV	No Winner			
Category V	No Winner			

Second Place Winners:

Category I	Earl Severson	Colorado	107.00%	Dist.12
Category II	Nelson Robinson	North Carolina	102.05%	Dist. 9
Category III	No one qualified			
Category IV	No one qualified			
Category V	No one qualified			

Third Place Winners:

Category I	Gary Thor	Idaho	104.15%	Dist. 8
Category II	Ronald Cook	New Jersey	100.75%	Dist. 8
Category III	No one qualified			
Category IV	No one qualified			
Category V	No one qualified			

District Commander New Post Achievement Award Recipients:

District Commanders who achieve the goal of creating new American Legion Posts in their respective District and have the new Post's Temporary Charter Application on file in National Headquarters by the Target Date "May Day" May 12, 1999, qualify for a special recognition plaque.

Department Recruiter of the Year:

Each American Legion Post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the "Top Recruiter" for that Post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the 1999 membership year by May 12, 1999. Department Adjutants will determine the Top New Member Recruiter for their respective Department and certify their "Department Recruiter" to National Headquarters on or before May 20, 1999.

The "Department Recruiter" properly certified from each Department, will be awarded a Plaque with his/her accomplishment inscribed thereon.

National Recruiter of the Year:

The individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all the Departments will be declared "National Recruiter of the Year". The winner of this award will receive an all expense paid trip to the 1999 National Convention in Anaheim, California.

Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Award

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion award is presented annually to the Detachment of the Sons of The American Legion which on December 31 of each year has attained the greatest percentage of increase over the previous year's total membership. There are three (3) categories and three (3) awards. The winners are:

Category I	Iowa	132.1%
Category II	North Carolina	116.9%
Category III	Pennsylvania	112.3%

The Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion will conduct its 28th National Convention at the Marriott Hotel in Anaheim, California.

For the 25th consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion is at an "All-Time-High" in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 1998 with a record 211,256 members. This number represents a 5 percent increase over the previous year. Membership figures for the 1999 year are exceeding the figures for this same period last year. By the National Convention in Anaheim, California, the SAL will have surpassed the 1998 final figures, giving them another "All-Time-High" in membership.

The SAL continues its support of American Legion programs and is heavily involved with the Citizens Flag Alliance in support of a constitutional amendment to protect our flag. The SAL continues its support for our nation's veterans in the VAVS program. In 1998, the SAL provided over 153,577 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded $649,273.00 nationwide. The SAL also raised over $181,800.00 this year for the Child Welfare Foundation, surpassing all previous years. They also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. At present, the Sons already have surpassed the 1998 goal in donations to the Child Welfare Foundation.

An integral part of the Legion family, the Sons continues to serve and provide assistance to Posts and their communities.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
Charles Pesso, New York, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the Legislative Commission from August 11, 1998 through August 6, 1999. During this period, the Commission met four times to review the legislative program and to make recommendations to the National Executive Committee. Reports of these meetings are contained in the published proceedings of the National Executive Committee.

Purpose, Personnel and Organization

The Legislative Commission represents The American Legion before the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters in which the Legion is officially interested. It also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of thirty-three members and five National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee in 1975 created the National Legislative Council, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their elected representatives. There is one council member for each member of Congress. A National Chairman, who is assisted by a Vice Chairman in 50 State Departments, heads the Council. The Chairman, Vice Chairmen and general membership of the Council are appointed by the National Commander upon recommendation by the Departments.

The professional staff of the Commission (the Legislative Division) concentrates on implementing the legislative mandates of The American Legion which are expressed in resolutions adopted at its annual National Convention and by the National Executive Committee at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. The Legislative Division is located in Washington, DC and consists of the director, a deputy director, an assistant director, a grassroots coordinator, two secretaries, a librarian and a research analyst. The director, deputy director, assistant director and grassroots coordinator are registered lobbyists and submit biannual lobbying reports to Congress. Because The American Legion is a federally chartered organization, an annual report is also prepared and submitted to Congress.

105th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 105th Congress finally adjourned on October 20, 1998 after a last-minute flurry of activity to pass dozens of bills. Congress had spent an inordinate amount of time working on the 13 appropriations measures, which are needed, to fund federal government operations. This work should have been completed by September 30 (Fiscal Year 1999 began on October 1, 1998). By that date, only two of the 13 funding bills had been enacted and three others were awaiting President Clinton's signature.

To avoid another round of government shutdowns (similar to those that occurred in 1995 and 1996), Congress passed four continuing resolutions that funded the federal government for several days during the first three weeks of October. Meanwhile, Congress and the administration finally agreed on an omnibus funding bill, HR 4328. In its final form, HR 4328 contained nearly 4000 pages, weighed over 40 pounds, and included funds which

normally would have been covered by eight of the 13 appropriations bills which normally fund federal government operations. The bill passed the House on October 20, 1998 by a 333-95 vote, which then was approved by the Senate on October 21 by a 65-29 vote. The President signed it the same day, becoming Public Law 105-277.

Americanism

On October 7, 1998, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., brought SJ Res. 40 to the floor for Senate consideration. Sadly, Senators Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., objected to the move, claiming there was too little time to debate the measure as Congress rushed to complete its business for the year. As a result of their objections, Sen. Lott was forced to withdraw the bill. Under Senate rules, all senators present must agree to allow a bill to be considered on the floor before the measure can proceed. The American Legion will continue to pursue this issue during the 106th Congress when it convenes in January 1999.

Children & Youth

Total funding for the Department of Justice for FY 1999, contained in PL 105-277, was $18.2 billion. The Immigration and Naturalization Service received $2.56 billion, nearly $200 million more than the previous fiscal year. Finally, $285 million was given to the Office of Juvenile Crime Control and Delinquency Prevention, a Justice Department program which has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974.

One item of conflict between President Clinton and Congress was postponed until next year. PL 105-277 appropriates $1.32 billion for the operations of the Bureau of the Census through June 15, 1999. At that time, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide if the Census Bureau can use "statistical sampling" to augment the actual enumeration of Americans for the 2000 census.

Economics

FY 1999 Department of Labor funding was included in PL 105-277, the FY 1999 omnibus spending bill. Programs that benefit veterans received funding as follows: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) $80 million; Local Veterans Employment Representative Program (LVER), $77 million; federal administration, $25.6 million. This last category includes $2 million to operate the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), the same amount requested by the administration as a separate line item. Attendees at the institute are primarily state employees who provide employment services to veterans. Another program under this account is the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which assists servicemembers leaving the armed forces to find employment in the private sector. For veterans' employment, the bill provides the Job Training Partnership Act (Title IV-C) with $7.3 million, which mirrors the President's budget request and the previous year's funding level. These funds provide special employment and training programs designed to meet the unique needs of disabled, Vietnam-era, and recently separated veterans. Finally, $2.5 million was appropriated for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP), which assists homeless veterans in seeking adequate employment.

On October 5, 1998, the full Senate passed S 1021, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act. On the floor, the bill was amended by adding back to the bill several provisions that were removed during committee consideration. Specifically, the returned provisions: a) allow honorably discharged veterans with three or more years of military

service to apply for federal positions that are otherwise closed because of certain requirements, and b) allow veterans subjected to reductions-in-force (RIFs) the opportunity to compete for unaffected positions within their agency, provided the unaffected positions were filled six months or less prior to the actual announcement of the RIF. Then, in a parliamentary maneuver designed to avoid a conference, the Senate stripped the text of HR 240 (the companion measure to S 1021) and inserted the language of S 1021, passed it and referred the bill to the House. In a major victory for the veterans' community, the House passed HR 240 on October 8, 1998, and President Clinton signed the measure into law on October 31 as PL 105-339.

Foreign Relations

PL 105-277 appropriated $31.3 billion for foreign operations, which includes military and economic assistance to various foreign nations. The bulk of those funds ($17.9 billion) went to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a one-time shot-in-the-arm. Despite this, the overall bill was about $750 million less than the amount requested by the President. A highlight of the foreign operations portion of PL 105-277 was an earmark of $801 million for states of the former Soviet Union, including $195 million for Ukraine, $84 million for Georgia, $80 million for Armenia, and $10 million for Turkmenistan. Other earmarks in the law included Israel ($1.9 billion), Egypt ($1.3 billion) and Jordan ($70 million). Prospective NATO members Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic will each receive $30 million in military aid to help integrate them into the alliance. In addition, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will each receive $15 million to make their respective military forces more compatible with those of NATO, in hopes of these nations joining the alliance in the future.

National Security

On October 17, 1998, President Clinton signed PL 105-262, the Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill for FY 1999. It was passed by the House on September 28 by a 369-43 vote and approved by the Senate the next day by a vote of 94-2. DoD funding was set at $250.5 billion for FY 1999, $2.8 billion more than FY 1998 but $488 million less than requested by the administration. One of the major victories for The American Legion was a 3.6 percent pay increase for military personnel contained in the measure. The administration had originally requested a 3.1 percent pay raise, but acquiesced on the Senate-originated increase. Listed below are some of the major accounts as appropriated for FY 1998, the administration's request for FY 1999, and the final totals passed by Congress:

	FY 1998 Appropriations	**FY 1999 Request**	**FY 1999 Final: PL 105-262**
Personnel	$69.5 billion	$70.8 billion	$70.6 billion
Operations & maintenance	82.9 billion	83.5 billion	84.0 billion
Weapons procurement	45.6 billion	47.8 billion	48.6 billion
Research, development & testing	37.9 billion	36.1 billion	36.8 billion
Other programs	11.8 billion	12.7 billion	10.5 billion
Total	$247.7 billion	$250.9 billion	$250.5 billion

In a related matter, the President on October 17, 1998 signed PL 105-261, the FY 1999 DoD authorization measure (an authorization measure sets the budget and spending

limits for federal agencies, essentially a blueprint for the coming fiscal year). FY 1999 authorizations for DoD and defense-related programs totaled $270.5 billion. Highlights of PL 105-261 include:

Quality of Life provisions

a. a 3.6 percent military pay increase, which the administration accepted;
b. a three-year demonstration project to allow up to 66,000 Medicare-eligible military retirees and their families to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) beginning January 1, 2000, under the same cost-sharing arrangements as other federal employees;
c. a total of $1.46 billion for family housing, troop housing, and child development centers; and,
d. increasing from 12 to 24 the number of days per year that certain Ready Reserve members and Reserve retirees under the age of 60 may use commissary stores, as well as allowing National Guardsmen to use commissaries while they are called-up for federally declared disasters;

Weapons Procurement and Development

a. $3.5 billion for the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO);
b. $2.9 billion to procure 30 F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, and $935 million for continued development of a Joint Strike Fighter for the Air Force and Navy;
c. $743 million for 8 V-22 Ospreys for the Marine Corps;
d. $285 million for the procurement of 30 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, and $392 million to step up development and construction of the Comanche helicopter. The Comanche, the next generation of combat helicopters, is set to be available in 2004;
e. $213 million for development and advance procurement of CVN-77 and $110 million for development of CV(X), the next generation of naval carriers; and,
f. $2.1 billion to modernize National Guard and Reserve equipment;

Miscellaneous provisions

a. require the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to meet with representatives of veterans' service organizations by December 31, 1998 to determine how to improve and increase the availability of military funeral honors for veterans and to report their findings by March 15, 1999. The military services then must provide, upon request, honor guard details for veterans' funerals occurring after December 31, 1999. In recent years, DoD has cited manpower and budgetary shortfalls as reasons not to provide honor guard details for many veterans' funerals;
b. authorize the Secretary of Defense to furnish burial flags for deceased members and former members of the Selected Reserves;
c. require the service secretaries to provide separate and secure housing for male and female recruits during basic training by April 15, 1999, including a provision which expresses the sense of the House that the service secretaries should require male and female recruits to be assigned to separate platoons, flights or divisions;
d. prevent the Secretary of the Navy from conveying the former Naval Station at Long Beach, CA to the China Ocean Shipping Company, or any successor of that company, by repealing the President's waiver authority on the matter;

e. prohibit the Army from reducing the staff at the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI), which identifies the remains of military personnel lost in past conflicts, particularly the POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War;
f. authorize $882.8 million towards the military's role in the nation's drug interdiction strategy; and,
g. increase the maximum additional monthly GI Bill education benefit for hard-to-fill military specialties (sometimes called a "kicker") from $700 to $950.

One area for which PL 105-261 did not allocate any funds was the Bosnia peacekeeping mission. President Clinton had requested $1.9 billion, but the money for Bosnia was included as emergency funding in PL 105-277, the FY 1999 omnibus spending package. Other issues addressed in that supplemental measure include:

- $1.8 billion for enhanced embassy security,
- $3.35 billion for Y2K computer fixes,
- $6.8 billion to improve combat readiness and intelligence operations,
- an additional $1 billion for missile defense programs, and
- $2.4 billion for anti-terrorist efforts.

Funding for U.S. Coast Guard operations was included under the Transportation Department portion of PL 105-277, the FY 1999 omnibus spending package. Coast Guard funding totaled $3.9 billion. This amount is over $21 million less than was funded for FY 1998. Coast Guard operating expenses will be pegged at $2.4 billion, a decrease of $15 million from last year. The acquisition, construction and improvement account will receive $395 million, an increase of $6 million.

As part of PL 105-276, the FY 1999 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending measure, the Selective Service System will continue to receive funding under its provisions. The agency received $24.2 million for its operations for FY 1999. The American Legion continues to support Selective Service as an inexpensive back-up to our nation's military recruitment efforts should a major war ever occur.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On October 21, 1998 President Clinton signed PL 105-276, the FY 1999 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill. The measure passed the House on October 6 by a 409-14 vote, then cleared the Senate by a 96-1 vote on October 8. Under the bill, VA would receive $42.6 billion in funding for FY 1999. The chart below compares the funding amounts for the previous fiscal year, the amount requested by the administration, and the amounts contained in the enacted law:

Table 6

	FY 1998 Final Funding	**FY 1999 Request**	**PL 105-276**
Veterans Benefits Administration	$22.2 billion	$23.3 billion	$23.2 billion
Medical Care	17.6 billion	*17.0 billion	*17.3 billion
Medical/Prosthetic research	272 million	300 million	316 million
General operating expenses	786 million	850 million	856 million
Major Construction	178 million	97 million	142 million
Minor Construction	175 million	141 million	175 million
National Cemetery Administration	84 million	92 million	92 million
State veterans homes construction grants	80 million	37 million	90 million
State cemetery construction grants	10 million	10 million	10 million

VA Totals	$41.0 billion	$42.2 billion	$42.6 billion

* Includes $558 million in Medical Care Collection Funds (MCCF) projected for FY 1999

Other spending included in PL 105-276 for agencies of interest to The American Legion included:

- $13.7 billion for NASA, including $5.5 billion for manned space flights;
- $425.5 million for the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps);
- $26.4 million for the American Battle Monuments Commission; and,
- $10.2 million for the Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA).

On October 7, 1998 President Clinton enacted PL 105-244, the "Higher Education Amendments of 1998." One of the provisions of this measure affects student-veterans using the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). The measure exempts veterans' benefits from being counted as resources when veterans apply for federally subsidized Stafford student loans. In addition, the law ensures that Reservists who are called to active duty will not be forced to begin repaying their student loans while serving their country.

One of the last important pieces of legislation passed by the 105th Congress was PL 105-368, the "Veterans' Programs Enhancement Act of 1998." It passed the House on October 10, 1998 by a 423-0 vote, cleared the Senate on October 21 by a voice vote, and was signed into law by President Clinton on November 11. This omnibus veterans bill contains provisions from several separate measures, which were combined to enhance the overall measure's chances of passage as the 105th Congress headed for adjournment. Among the provisions of PL 105-368 are:

- Provide for the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review and evaluate the available scientific evidence and determine whether there is scientific evidence of an association between illnesses experienced by Gulf War veterans and service in the Persian Gulf War. NAS would report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who would evaluate the report and provide recommendations to Congress as to whether such scientific evidence would warrant a presumption of service connection. However, this section of the bill was nullified by an amendment contained in the omnibus appropriations measure, PL 105-277. Senator Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., disagreed with House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., and believed the VA secretary should be granted the authority to presume service connection. In a major victory for Persian Gulf veterans, Senator Byrd amended PL 105-277 prior to its enactment by adding language that nullified this position and instead granted authority for the VA secretary to presume service connection;
- Establish authority for VA to provide priority health care to treat illnesses that may be attributable to a veteran's service during any war after the Persian Gulf War or during any other future period of hostilities. Treatment would be available for two years after an eligible veteran's discharge from the service;
- Extend VA's authority to provide care to Persian Gulf War veterans through December 31, 2001;
- Extend VA's authority to evaluate the health status of spouses and children of Persian Gulf War veterans through December 31, 1999, and to provide such examination through VA facilities, or under its fee-basis or other contract arrangements;

- Require that any Persian Gulf research conducted by or for the U.S. government be made available to the public on the Internet;
- Require VA and the military services to expand outreach services concerning VA education program requirements to members of the armed services. Also require VA and the military services to ensure separating servicemembers are well informed of the eligibility requirements for their education benefits;
- Allow servicemembers to earn college credit for life experiences to meet eligibility requirements for Montgomery GI Bill benefits;
- Allow veterans to use their educational benefits in on-the-job training programs leading to employment with state and local police and fire departments;
- Clarify the enforcement of veterans' rights under the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act;
- Increase the special pension for Medal of Honor recipients from $400 to $600;
- Authorize VA to furnish a memorial marker for certain members of the armed forces and spouses whose remains are unavailable for interment;
- Redesignate the National Cemetery System (NCS) as the National Cemetery Administration, and to redesignate the Director of NCS as the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs;
- Modify the existing State Cemetery Grants Program to authorize VA to pay up to 100 percent of the cost of constructing and equipping state veterans' cemeteries;
- Rename the Court of Veterans Appeals as the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;
- Authorize the VA secretary to guarantee loans to provide multifamily transitional housing for homeless veterans;
- Extend VA's authority to guarantee home loans for members of the National Guard and Reserve components until September 30, 2003 (the current program expires in 1999);
- Authorize VA to carry out an employee-incentive scholarship program through December 31, 2001, to assist in meeting the staffing needs for health professional positions for which it is difficult to recruit or retain qualified personnel;
- Authorize VA to provide priority health care for treatment of cancer of the head or neck to certain veterans who can document nasopharyngeal radium irradiation treatment in service;
- Extend VA's authority to counsel and treat veterans for sexual trauma through December 31, 2001;
- Change the formula used by the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) to determine the number of Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) to reflect the working-age veteran population in each state;
- Authorize 11 major medical facility projects totaling $241.1 million, and three major medical facility leases for an additional $8.5 million, for Fiscal Years 1999 and 2000;
- Designate the Aspinwall, Pa. VA Medical Center as the "H. John Heinz III VA Medical Center," and the Columbus, Ohio VA Outpatient Clinic as the "Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Outpatient Clinic;" and,

- Provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans, effective December 1, 1998.

On July 22, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee heard testimony on HR 836, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act. This measure would amend the definition of active military service to include those who are veterans of service in the Philippine Commonwealth Army and the New Philippine Scouts for U.S. veterans' benefits purposes. Nearly 72,000 Filipino veterans would be affected by this legislation. On the day before the hearing, a contingent of Filipino veterans demonstrated at VA headquarters and the White House in support of HR 836. The American Legion testified in support of HR 836 at the hearing. While critics of the measure cited possible cost and budget impact of this initiative, The American Legion said that funds for this program could be taken from the projected FY 1999 budget surplus.

106th Congress, First Session

The First Session of the 106th Congress convened on January 6, 1999. The Republicans continue to retain a majority in both chambers, but the plurality in the House is narrower. There are now 222 Republicans, 211 Democrats, 1 Independent and 1 vacancy in the House (Rep. George Brown, D-Calif., died on July 15 and Rep. Michael Forbes of New York switched to the Democratic party on July 19). In the Senate, Republican gains in Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio were offset by Democratic gains in Indiana, New York and North Carolina. The result is that the Republican Senate margin is 54-45 with one senator —Robert Smith of New Hampshire, formerly a Republican—now an Independent.

In February, the House approved the roster of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., remains as the chairman, while Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., continues as the ranking Democrat. Ten new members were appointed to the committee, including five freshmen. There were no membership changes on the Senate panel.

Major issues on the agendas of both chambers include campaign finance reform and the Fiscal Year 2000 federal budget. To date, The American Legion has participated in twenty congressional hearings during the First Session.

President Clinton's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2000 has recommended heavy increases in education and other social spending, which would essentially "unbalance" the delicately balanced budget. The budget surplus for the current fiscal year is estimated at $79 billion, while the FY 2000 surplus is projected to be $117 billion. At the same time, the President's recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflected another basically flat-lined budget for this department. Though $43.6 billion was proposed by the administration for VA, The American Legion has stated that at least $45.4 billion will be needed to keep VA operations at current service levels. In particular, VA medical care would receive $18.1 billion under the President's budget proposal, an increase of less than $200 million over current year funding.

On March 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee recommended a $1.8 billion increase over the administration's FY 2000 budget request for VA, for a total of $19.6 billion for medical care and $45.5 billion overall. Part of the medical care increase came as a result of the committee's unwillingness to accept the administration's bare-bones VA budget. The committee was also alarmed by reports that the administration has instructed VA to identify over $1.1 billion in efficiencies, which could include reductions in personnel, programs, services and treatment, as well as rationing of care to veterans.

In addition, on May 19 and 25 respectively, the House and Senate Appropriations committees made discretionary funding allocations to the 13 subcommittees which are

responsible for developing the 13 funding bills for FY 2000. The House VA-HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee was given $5.8 billion less than this year to fund VA and other programs under its jurisdiction. Even worse, the Senate VA-HUD Subcommittee's allocation was $9.6 billion less than the current year.

These spending gaps were a result of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, which set spending caps for several years. The main reasons for the wide disparity is that the 1997 Balanced Budget Act did not take into account pay raises or increases in the medical care index. This attempt to unilaterally dismantle America's largest health care network is absolutely unacceptable. America's veterans have been deeply involved in balancing the federal budget over the past two decades. Now that the budget is balanced, it is time for veterans' programs to receive sufficient funding to allow them to function properly.

As of September 7, the House has passed 11 of the 13 spending bills needed to fund the federal government for FY 2000 (which begins October 1, 1999). The Senate has cleared 9 funding measures. In addition, three conference reports have been completed. Two of these conference reports—for the Legislative Branch and for Military Construction—were cleared for the President's signature during the first week of August.

On January 14, the Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance—informally known as the Dole Commission for its chairman, former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, who introduced the legislation creating the commission prior to leaving Congress to run for the White House in 1996—released a report for a vast overhaul of veterans benefits. According to Mr. Anthony Principi, former VA acting-Secretary, who served as the commission chairman, "The system is broken and the commission took a 'no holds barred' approach to fixing it." The report contains 100 recommendations spanning 31 issues relating to veterans programs. Among the major recommendations made by the commission are:

- Under the Montgomery GI Bill, qualifying veterans would be paid full costs of tuition, fees, books, and supplies for college or apprenticeship training. This benefit would also not be accompanied by a $1200 reduction for servicemembers. The benefit could be transferred to immediate family members, and veterans would have 10 years after separation to use the benefit.
- Increase DoD funding for individualized transition assistance. For those eligible, revamp employment assistance services—especially those with service-connected disabilities, who face employment barriers or are recently separated from active duty—in all federally funded employment and training programs. Replace the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative Program with Veterans Case Manager and Veterans Employment Facilitator programs, a proposal adamantly opposed by The American Legion. The Case Manager program would provide veterans with job-seeking skills, while the Employment Facilitator program would market veterans to local employers.
- DoD would train soldiers in civilian job requirements for licensing, certification and apprenticeship throughout their military careers and help DoD and VA to sell the abilities of the servicemembers to federal contractors.
- VA would have two years to improve its vocational rehabilitation and counseling program or lose it to private concerns.

- Require DoD to continue offering the military's TRICARE health program to separating servicemembers and their families—including eligible former "un-remarried" spouses—for a maximum of 18 months.
- Require the federal government to provide health care for Medicare-eligible retirees, that DoD and VA buy medication through a joint procurement office, and that the two agencies combine medical research.

- Encourage Congress to pass legislation to deliver cost-effective services to homeless veterans by changing VA's grant per diem program to allow in-kind goods and services provided by community groups to count against matching requirements for grants for operational expenses, and provide funding for existing and new homeless programs.

The American Legion supports many of the recommendations of the Principi Commission.

Americanism

Efforts to pass a constitutional amendment to prohibit the physical desecration of the American Flag continued earlier this year. On February 24, Representatives Randy 'Duke' Cunningham (CA) and John Murtha (PA) introduced House Joint Resolution (HJ Res.) 33. On May 26, the House Judiciary Committee voted by a voice vote to report HJ Res. 33 to the House for further action. On June 24, the House voted 305-124 to pass HJ Res. 33, sending it to the Senate for action.

On March 17, Senators Orrin Hatch (UT) and Max Cleland (GA) introduced Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.) 14. Currently, 56 other cosponsors have joined Senators Hatch and Cleland. On April 29, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 11-7 to send SJ Res. 14 to the full Senate. A final Senate vote on this legislation has not yet been set.

Children & Youth

On July 22, the Senate passed S 1217, a bill to provide funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary for FY 2000, by voice vote. Under its provisions, the Justice Department would receive $17 billion. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) would receive $2.6 billion, nearly $440 million more than the previous fiscal year. Finally, $285 million was given to the Office of Juvenile Crime Control and Delinquency Prevention (OJCCDP), a Justice Department program which has enjoyed the support of The American Legion since its creation in 1974. The House version, HR 2670, cleared the full House Appropriations Committee on July 30. This measure would fund the Justice Department at $18 billion, with INS receiving $2.9 billion and OJCCDP getting the same amount as proposed by the Senate.

One item of conflict between President Clinton and Congress was resolved earlier this year. The administration wanted to use "statistical sampling" for the 2000 Census. This procedure would have actually enumerated only 90 percent of the U.S. population then estimated the remaining 10 percent for purposes of congressional apportionment. On January 25, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "statistical sampling" could not be used for the 2000 Census.

Consequently, as part of PL 106-31, the FY 1999 emergency supplemental spending measure signed by the President on May 21, funding for the departments of Commerce, Justice, and State will continue through the end of FY 1999 while Congress and the President work out their differences. Funding for these departments had been slated to end

on June 15. A total of $4.5 billion was set aside for the 2000 Census, with all of these funds being declared "emergency appropriations" so that the money would not be subject to scrutiny under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

PL 106-31 also contained an added $80 million for the FY 1999 budget of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for increased border enforcement.

Economics

Neither chamber of Congress has passed a funding bill for the Department of Labor for FY 2000, as of September 7. Because of the provisions of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, severe funding caps were put in place. Consequently, Congress has concentrated on passing most of the other FY 2000 spending bills except the bill to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education. As this measure is the largest in terms of programs and money, it has been set aside until last.

President Clinton's initial request for programs under the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) asks for $192.3 million. The various programs would be funded as follows:

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) – this program seeks disabled veterans, conducts job development with employers and provides case management services to customers; $80.2 million sought;

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) program – this program coordinates local employment service office efforts to provide priority of service, with emphasis on federal contractor job listings; $77.3 million proposed;

Federal Administration – this account provides the funding for the VETS staff and also supports Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops for servicemembers leaving the armed forces to allow them to smoothly transition to the civilian workplace; $26.1 million sought;

Veterans Workforce Development Program (formerly JTPA Part IV-C) – this program provides training opportunities and supportive services designed to help veterans get jobs; $7.3 million proposed;

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project – this program help homeless veterans find jobs; $5 million sought; and,

National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) – this institute, through a contract with the University of Colorado, trains veteran service providers; $2 million proposed.

Thousands of former servicemembers in five states—Alaska, California, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin—are currently prohibited from receiving state-finance home mortgages under a little known provision in the 1984 tax bill. These states have a program in which the states issue tax-exempt bonds to finance home mortgage loans to veterans. Veterans living in those states who began military service after 1976 are prohibited from receiving state-financed veterans home mortgages. This means that servicemembers who served in Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf War cannot get veterans home mortgages from their own state government while veterans who served before that time are fully eligible. This arbitrary cutoff was created to raise revenue for the 1984 tax bill by limiting the use of tax-exempt bonds to finance state veterans mortgage programs.

In the 105th Congress, Rep. Gerald Kleczka, D-Wis., introduced legislation to eliminate the arbitrary cutoff date that exists under current law. Although that legislation failed to receive consideration, Rep. Kleczka re-introduced the bill in the 106th Congress. The legislation, HR 1215, the "Veterans American Dream Homeownership Act of 1999," will eliminate the arbitrary cutoff that exists under current law. This measure currently has 35 cosponsors, and The American Legion supports Rep. Kleczka's efforts.

On August 5 the House by a voice vote passed HR 1568, a bill to create a federally chartered National Veterans Business Development Corporation. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on August 5 after a minor amendment to the bill.

This corporation would be responsible for developing a network of public and private initiatives to help veterans in small-business efforts. It would also provide training, counseling, management and technical assistance, and procurement information to veterans embarking on small business ventures. Over the past decade the Small Business Administration (SBA) has not been following its federal mandate to assist veteran entrepreneurs in starting and running their own businesses. HR 1568 would address this deficiency.

On June 29 the House by a vote of 424-0 passed HR 2280. [The other provisions of this measure are explained in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section below.] One of the provisions of the bill seeks to help homeless veterans find jobs by authorizing a five-year increase in Labor Department funding for community-based employment programs. The measure would double the current authorization for all such programs to $10 million in FY 2000 and increase that amount by $5 million each year until it tops out at $30 million in FY 2004.

Foreign Relations

On June 30 the Senate voted 97-2 to pass S 1234, the Senate's bill for FY 2000 foreign operations funding. The measure includes $12.7 billion in economic and military aid to a variety of foreign nations. It also includes over 40 amendments, most dealing with policy issues. The House passed its version, HR 2606, on August 3 by a 385-35 vote. HR 2606 also contains $12.7 billion in foreign aid. Both bills continue to assign large amounts of military assistance to Egypt and Israel—$1.6 billion to each country from the Senate, with the House giving $1.9 billion to Israel and $1.3 billion to Egypt. Neither chamber went along with the administration request for $500 million to bolster the 1998 Wye River peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians. The President is expected to request for additional funds later this year. The House bill does include $100 million in economic and military aid to Jordan in conjunction with the Wye River agreement.

National Security

The Senate on Feb. 24 voted 91-8 to approve S 4, a measure to make improvements in the armed forces pay and retirement systems. The major provisions of this measure would:

a. authorize a 4.8 percent pay raise for all military personnel on January 1, 2000, and authorize future pay raises through the year 2006 that will be 1/2 percent above average private-sector pay increases;
b. provide additional raises of up to 5.5 percent to certain mid-career personnel with skills and experience which the armed services particularly value;
c. offer service members the option of participating in the more generous pension program that was in effect until 1986, under which they could receive 50 percent of their basic pay if they retire after 20 years, or staying in the current pension plan and receiving a $30,000 lump-sum bonus;
d. establish a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) to allow service members to save up to five percent of their base pay, before taxes, and permit them to

directly deposit their enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses into their TSPs; and authorize the Service Secretaries to offer to match the TSP contributions of those service members servicing in critical specialties for a period of six years in return for a six-year commitment;

e. increase the monthly Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) allowance for service members who serve more than three years form $528/month to $600/month, and increase the monthly MGIB allowance for service members who serve less than three years from $429/month to $488/month;

f. eliminate the $1200 ($100/month for the first year of service) contribution that each service member must make to participate in the MGIB program; and

g. allow service members to transfer their earned GI Bill benefits to one or more immediate family members. This provision of S 4 is one of the few that The American Legion opposes.

During floor consideration of S 4, six amendments were added to the bill, which were of great interest to The American Legion. Each amendment, outlined below, was approved by a voice vote. The first amendment allows a person who served in a reserve component to receive accelerated payments for his MGIB entitlement. The second amendment allows a member of the Select Reserves up to five years from the date of separation from the Selected Reserves to use his MGIB entitlement.

Another amendment allows the use of MGIB benefits for taking a preparatory course for a test that is required or utilized for admission to an institution of higher education or to a graduate school. A fourth amendment is a "sense of the Senate" provision which urges the VA Secretary to review Veterans Benefits Administration programs, policies and procedures for veterans' benefits claims processing, and to recommend and initiate changes to speed claims processing.

Another amendment gives VA the authority to initiate a Medicare subvention project for veterans in selected VA medical centers. The final amendment expands the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected for radiation-exposed veterans to include lung cancer, colon cancer and tumors of the brain and central nervous system. House action on this measure is still pending. Budgetary hearings in the Senate occurred during the month of March to fit the military pay raise into the Fiscal Year 2000 budget.

On July 22 President Clinton enacted PL 106-38, which would declare that it is the policy of this country to deploy a national missile defense system as soon as it is technologically possible. Congressional leaders sought to send a clear message to the White House that a national missile defense system should be a top national priority. But PL 106-38, introduced by Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., is not binding and does not authorize any funding for the weapons system. Therefore, it is a largely symbolic gesture to show congressional commitment to addressing reports of rogue nations (such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq) coming closer to developing ballistic missiles that could threaten the United States. It also states that the U.S. should continue seeking negotiated reductions in Russian nuclear forces.

National Security Resolution #178 was passed at the 1998 National Convention and supports PL 106-38. It states in part that "...the United States Government [should] renegotiate, modify or abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and...develop and deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people."

On May 21 President Clinton enacted PL 106-31, an emergency supplemental funding measure for FY 1999. It contains $14.5 billion for various programs. In specific areas of importance to national security issues, PL 106-31 provides:

- $984 million to replenish munitions, including Tomahawk and air-launched cruise missiles;
- $439 million for personnel costs related to the Kosovo operations and $16 million for personnel costs for ongoing operations in Iraq;
- $2.3 billion for various readiness accounts, including spare parts and logistical support, maintenance and repair requirements, training and recruiting costs;
- $475 million for overseas military construction projects to be determined by the DoD Secretary;
- $300 million to a new account to enable the rapid transfer of equipment or other war-fighting systems between different theaters of operations;
- $1.8 billion for increases in military basic pay, targeted pay increases and overhaul of the military retirement system;
- $1.1 billion for refugee, disaster and economic assistance to address the crisis in Kosovo, including international disaster assistance, economic support aid, migration and refugee assistance, and funds for temporarily resettling 20,000 Kosovar Albanians in the U.S.;
- $71 million for diplomatic security upgrades and evacuation costs related to the Kosovo crisis; and,
- $100 million in economic support and foreign military financing for Jordan in conjunction with that country's participation in the Wye River Peace Accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

On June 10 the House by a 365-58 vote approved HR 1401, the FY 2000 DoD authorization measure. Approximately $8.3 billion was added to the President's request for defense programs, for a total of $288.8 billion. Most of the additions were spread across a wide range of accounts reflecting the views of many members of Congress that President Clinton has run down U.S. forces by giving them too little money and too many missions. Among the additions were:

- $3 billion to housing and other military construction accounts. The administration was only going to request $5.6 billion for these accounts in FY 2000, and promised to request the additional $3 billion in succeeding years, a process which the committee rejected and authorized the entire amount for next year;
- $1.5 billion to the amounts the administration requested for operating military bases and maintaining facilities; and,
- $524 million to beef up stocks of precision-guided bombs and long-range missiles. Also included was funding to restart the production line for the Navy's Tomahawk cruise missile.

On May 27, after a week of debate, the Senate voted 92-3 to approve S 1059, the companion to HR 1401. The Senate added $8.3 billion to the administration's request, including:

- $3 billion to housing and other military construction accounts;
- $1.15 billion to the accounts for facilities' operations and maintenance;
- $1.3 billion to the amounts requested for the Apache and Comanche helicopters; and
- $339 million to the $3.3 billion requested for anti-missile defense programs.

Both measures also include a 4.8 percent military pay raise effective January 1, 2000. It would also require that future annual military pay raises through FY 2006 be one-half percent higher than the average increase in civilian pay. The Senate also rejected, by a 60-40 vote, the Clinton Administration's call for two more rounds of base closings and realignments.

A conference committee must now reconcile the conflicting versions of this legislation before the President can signed it.

On June 8 the Senate by a vote of 93-4 passed S 1122, the FY 2000 Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill. The House passed its version, HR 2561, on July 22 by a 379-45 vote. Below is a breakdown of the major accounts funding for FY 1999, the White House proposal for FY 2000, and the Senate and House figures.

Table 7

	FY 1999 Funding	**FY 2000 Proposal**	**Senate S 1122**	**House HR 2561**
Military personnel	$70.6 billion	$73.7 billion	$73.9 billion	$72.0 billion
Operations & maintenance	$84.0 billion	$91.3 billion	$91.9 billion	$93.7 billion
Procurement	$48.6 billion	$51.9 billion	$54.6 billion	$53.0 billion
Research & development	$36.8 billion	$34.4 billion	$36.4 billion	$37.2 billion
Other DoD programs	$11.8 billion	$12.9 billion	$13.3 billion	$12.9 billion
Rescissions (cuts)	1.2 billion	$.9 billion	$5.4 billion	$ .1 billion
Grand Total	**$250.6 billion**	**$263.3 billion**	**$264.7 billion**	**$268.7 billion**

Both House and Senate measures provide for a 4.8 percent military pay raise in FY 2000, rather than the 4.4 percent proposed by President Clinton; however, each chamber had differing ideas on how to handle future pay raises. Another major change is in the House bill, as that chamber denied the White House's request for $1.8 billion to begin production of the F-22 fighter plane, but approved $1.2 billion to continue development of the plane. Most of the money denied for the F-22 would go to other areas, including:

$564 million to buy eight KC-130J tanker planes, while the Senate only allocated $77 million for one additional plane;

- $451 million for various air reconnaissance programs;
- $440 million for 8 F-15s, which were not requested by the White House;
- $300 million for bonuses to stem the exodus of pilots from the Air Force; and,
- $115 million for five F-16s in addition to 10 requested.

Funding for various DoD accounts, as provided by each chamber, are presented below:

Table 8

	House HR 2561	**Senate S 1122**
Joint Strike Fighter (continued research & development)	$577 million	$492 million
F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet (36 planes requested)	$3.03 billion	$3.00 billion
V-22 Osprey (Marine Corps tilt-rotor troop plane, 11 funded by House, 12 by Senate)	$1.15 billion	$1.22 billion
F-15 (8 funded by House, 4 by Senate)	$593 million	$220 million
F-16 Falcon (15 funded by House, 12 by Senate)	$502 million	$421 million

DDG-51 (3 *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyers)	$2.88 billion	$2.86 billion
New Attack Submarine (SSN-774)	$1.12 billion	$1.11 billion
CVN-77 (last *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier)	$752 million	$752 million
Abrams M1 tank upgrades	$691 million	$691 million
Bradley vehicle upgrades	$451 million	$374 million
RAH-66 Comanche helicopters (research & development)	$427 million	$483 million
UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters (19 requested)	$224 million	$224 million

The administration requested $4.25 billion in funding for ballistic missile defense programs (BMD) for FY 2000. The House bill would allocate about the same amount while the Senate would add $476 million. Finally, the White House requested $1 billion for cooperative threat reduction. This aid goes to states of the former Soviet Union for destroying nuclear and chemical weapons, and supports various measures aimed at preventing the smuggling of these weapons to terrorist or rogue states or individuals. The House would only provide $456 million, while the Senate would provide the full amount requested.

On June 23 the House by a 429-3 vote passed HR 2084, the FY 2000 Department of Transportation spending bill. Funding for the U.S. Coast Guard is included in the bill. The Coast Guard would receive $4 billion from the House, which is $153 million more than it received for the current year but $37 million less than requested by the White House. The Senate version, S 1143, was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 27 by a vote of 27-1. That measure would fund the Coast Guard at $60 million less than the House's total.

Funding for the Selective Service System has been eliminated from the House version of the FY 2000 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies spending bill, HR 2684. Token funding of $7 million was provided to pay for program termination costs. U.S. forces are being stretched too thin by budget-driven base closures and personnel cuts, peacekeeping missions and the continued threat of rogue and terrorist nations. Unless a return to national conscription is desired, The American Legion supports retention of Selective Service as an inexpensive alternative. The American Legion will work to see that funding to continue this agency is included in the final bill.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On March 25, 1999 the full House and Senate passed House Concurrent Resolution (H Con Res.) 68, the Fiscal Year 2000 budget resolution. This measure passed the House by a 221-208 recorded vote, after debating and rejecting two budget alternatives and President Clinton's original budget proposal. Several hours later, the Senate approved its version of the bill by a 55-44 tally. This occurred after the Senate incorporated Senate Concurrent Resolution (S Con Res.) 20, that chamber's version of the FY 2000 budget resolution, into the House bill. After several weeks of negotiations, the House passed the conference report for H. Con. Res. 68 on April 14 by a 220-208 vote. The Senate passed the conference report on April 15 by a 54-44 vote.

The budget resolution provides the non-binding budgetary blueprint for Congress to formulate the 13 appropriation measures to fund all federal government operations. Congressional leaders hope to avoid a repeat of last fall's budget fiasco when the House and Senate never agreed among themselves on a budget resolution. This consequently led to funding by continuing resolutions, until final FY 1999 funding was enacted in late October of last year.

Below is a chart laying out President Clinton's funding proposal for the Function 700, Veterans Benefits and Services, portion of the federal budget for FYs 2000-2009, proposed amounts in the House-passed version of H Con Res. 68, and proposed budget figures contained in the Senate-passed version of the budget resolution. The House-passed proposal is much closer to funding levels espoused by The American Legion. It should again be stressed that these numbers are tentative recommendations for fiscal spending for FYs 2000-2009.

Table 9

	President's Budget Proposal	House Version	Senate Version	Final Version
FY 2000	$43.9 billion	$45.1 billion	$45.1 billion	$45.6 billion
FY 2001	$44.9 billion	$45.0 billion	$45.0 billion	$45.0 billion
FY 2002	$45.3 billion	$45.1 billion	$45.1 billion	$45.1 billion
FY 2003	$45.9 billion	$46.4 billion	$46.0 billion	$46.4 billion
FY 2004	$46.3 billion	$46.7 billion	$46.3 billion	$46.7 billion
FY 2005	$48.8 billion	$49.3 billion	$48.8 billion	$49.2 billion
FY 2006	$47.4 billion	$47.8 billion	$47.4 billion	$47.8 billion
FY 2007	$45.8 billion	$46.2 billion	$45.8 billion	$46.2 billion
FY 2008	$48.6 billion	$49.0 billion	$48.5 billion	$49.0 billion
FY 2009	$49.2 billion	$49.7 billion	$49.1 billion	$49.7 billion

There are still several areas in VA's FY 2000 budget which need more funding than is currently being projected by Congress. The American Legion will continue to seek sufficient funding for those areas that are most critical to keep VA functioning at current levels.

On July 30 the House Appropriations Committee approved HR 2684, legislation to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for FY 2000. Presented below are the funding amounts approved for VA for the current year (FY 1999), the President's budget proposal for FY 2000, the Appropriations Committee's proposal, and The American Legion's FY 2000 proposal.

Table 10

	FY 1999 Actual	President's Proposal	FY 2000 Hse. Approp.	Legion's Proposal
Compensation and pensions	$21.9 billion	$21.6 billion	$21.6 billion	
Readjustment	1.2 billion	1.5 billion	1.5 billion	
Veterans insurance	47 million	29 million	29 million	
Veterans housing	300 million	282 million	282 million	
Medical care	17.3 billion	17.3 billion	19.0 billion	19.5 billion
Medical/prosthetic research	316 million	316 million	326 million	335 million
Medical administration	63 million	61 million	61 million	
General operating expenses	856 million	912 million	886 million	877 million
Inspector General	36 million	43 million	39 million	
Natl. Cemetery Administration	92 million	97 million	97 million	105 million
Major construction	142 million	60 million	35 million	105 million
Minor construction	175 million	175 million	102 million	200 million
State home construction grants	90 million	40 million	80 million	100 million
State cemetery construction grants	10 million	11 million	11 million	

Total VA funding	**$42.7 billion**	**$42.5 billion**	**$44.2 billion**

Funds for "Compensation and pension" is mandatory spending and is automatically generated based on number of recipients. The committee increased Medical Care by $1.7 billion over current year amounts. Other increases in veterans programs were: $10 million in Medical and Prosthetics Research; $30 million in General Operating Expense; $5 million for National Cemetery Administration; $2.5 million for Inspector General; and, $1 million for State Cemetery Construction Grants, for total increases of $48.5 million.

The committee made reductions, including: $.8 million from Medical Administration; $108 million from Major Construction; $73 million from Minor Construction; and, and, $10 million from Grants for State Veterans Homes, for total reductions of $191.1 million. Once the smoke cleared and the budgetary sleight of hand was competed, VA got an overall increase of ***$1.56 billion***.

As of September 7, the House had not acted on HR 2684. The Senate VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee has not begun to mark up its version of the legislation.

On July 15 the House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved by a voice vote HR 2116, the "Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act," legislation introduced by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla. This proposal, among other provisions, is designed to overhaul long-term veterans' care, realign VA facilities, and change current eligibility requirements for VA health care. The American Legion praised the introduction of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act. The legislation contains many of the provisions of the GI Bill of Health, which The American Legion has been advocating for several years.

On March 23, the House by a recorded vote of 428-2 passed HR 70, a measure introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump, R-Ariz., to redefine eligibility standards for Arlington National Cemetery. This bill is similar to legislation that passed in the House during the 105th Congress, but was not taken up by the Senate. Introduced in response to accusations that President Clinton was issuing burial waivers to allow political friends and those who contributed to the President's campaign access to Arlington's burial plots, HR 70 would remove eligibility from most U.S. government officials by eliminating presidential waivers for burial in Arlington Cemetery. Under the bill, Congress could still introduce and pass individual waivers on a case-by-case basis.

Among those eligible for burial in Arlington would be: servicemembers killed in the line of duty; retired or retirement-eligible servicemembers; certain elderly disabled veterans; servicemembers with certain military honors; the President or former Presidents; former prisoners-of-war; and certain family members of deceased veterans. The bill would eliminate automatic eligibility for members of Congress, cabinet members and ambassadors who do not meet the military qualifications.

The American Legion continues to work on the problem of concurrent receipt, which penalizes certain servicemen who receive military retired pay along with VA disability compensation. Current law requires these retirees to forego a portion of their retired pay equal to the amount of their VA disability compensation payments. Military retirees are the only federal retirees required to do this, and The American Legion feels this is patently unfair. Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., has introduced three bills to address this inequity.

The first is HR 65, the "Military Retirement Equity Act of 1999." This bill would amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the armed forces who have a service-connected disability to receive military retired pay concurrently with veterans' disability compensation. The person's entitlement to retired pay would be based solely on age, length of service (at least 20 years), or both. It would reduce the retirement pay by a specified percentage of the disability compensation that decreases as the disability rating

increases. The bill also prohibits any reduction in the retirement pay of a disabled person when the disability rating is total. This measure currently has 85 cosponsors.

A second bill, HR 303, would amend title 38, USC, to permit retired members of the armed forces who retired with over 20 years of service and who have service-connected disabilities to receive compensation from VA concurrently with retired pay, without deduction from either. This measure currently has 144 cosponsors.

Finally, HR 44 would authorize special compensation for the most severely disabled retired veterans – those who have served for at least 20 years and who have disability ratings of between 70 and 100 percent. Specifically, it would authorize monthly payments of $300 for totally disabled retired veterans; $200 for retirees rated as 90 percent disabled; and, $100 for retirees with disability ratings of 70-80 percent. This bill has 99 cosponsors. In the Senate, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has introduced similar legislation, S 789, which has 12 cosponsors. When the Senate passed its version of the FY 2000 DoD authorization bill (S 1059), provisions from Sen. McCain's bill were included in the final version.

The American Legion continues to seek enactment of the GI Bill of Health. One of the pillars of the GI Bill of Health is Medicare subvention, which would allow Medicare-eligible veterans to use their Medicare benefits for treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VA facilities. Under DoD's new health care program, TRICARE, military retirees and their dependents that are Medicare-eligible are no longer eligible to participate in TRICARE. The American Legion believes they should be allowed to continue in TRICARE by using their Medicare benefits.

The American Legion would support Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents using their Medicare benefits in the VA health-care system. Access to quality health care for military retirees and their families has steadily eroded over the years as base closures and downsizing have limited space-available care. Many retirees sincerely believe that the federal government broke its promise to provide them with health care for life.

On March 25, Rep. "Chip" Pickering, R-Miss., introduced HR 1347, a bill which would provide for a Medicare subvention demonstration project for veterans. This measure currently has 4 cosponsors. In a related area, on April 14, Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., introduced HR 1413, legislation that would make the TRICARE Senior Prime demonstration project for military retirees and their dependents permanent on a phased-in basis. It would also expand the project by ten additional locations by January 1, 2001, and then across the remaining TRICARE Prime catchment areas no later than October 1, 2002. This bill currently has 79 cosponsors.

On May 20 the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits heard testimony on legislation relating to veterans' educational benefits. Two bills have been introduced; HR 1071, the "Montgomery GI Bill Improvement Act of 1999" introduced by Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill.; and HR 1182, the "Servicemembers Educational Opportunity Act of 1999," introduced by Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz. Mr. Evans' bill has 78 cosponsors, while Mr. Stump's measure has 16 cosponsors. The House Veterans' Affairs Benefits Subcommittee held a hearing on these bills on May 20, where representatives of various veterans' service organizations—including The American Legion—presented their views.

Both measures seek to expand and improve the MGIB program by creating an enhanced educational assistance program for enlistments or reenlistments of four years active duty and repealing the current $1200 reduction in pay for basic educational benefits. HR 1182 would pay 90 percent of the cost of tuition and fees, as well as a sum equal to the reasonable cost of books and supplies and pay a monthly stipend of $600 for full-time enrollment (or a proportional amount for less than full-time enrollment).

HR 1071 has a two-tiered system of MGIB benefits depending upon whether a program participant enlisted/re-enlisted for four year or for less than four years. For those

servicemembers enlisting for less than four years (Tier 2), they would receive an increased basic educational assistance of $900/month. These persons would also receive accelerated lump-sum payments of basic educational assistance, and reopen the period for certain VEAP participants to elect to participate in the MGIB program of basic educational assistance. For those military personnel enlisting or re-enlisting for a minimum of four years (Tier 1), they would receive MGIB benefits sufficient to cover the full costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies, as well as receive a monthly stipend of $800/month for 36 months. In addition, all VEAP participants who were on active duty on October 9, 1996 could transfer to the MGIB-Tier 2 program.

On January 19, 1999 Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, introduced S 72, a bill to restore the eligibility of veterans for benefits resulting from injury or disease attributable to the use of tobacco products during a period of military service. Those benefits were eliminated last year when President Clinton enacted Public Law 105-178. The elimination of these benefits was recommended by the President in his FY 1999 budget proposal last year, and was never examined in a public hearing by either chamber of Congress. In addition, there was little debate on this issue on the either the House or Senate floors. In the House, Representative Barney Frank, D-Mass., introduced companion legislation, HR 832. The measure currently has 61 cosponsors. Further, Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., has introduced HR 691, which would provide for a portion of any funds recovered by the U.S. in any future lawsuit brought by the federal government against the tobacco industry to be made available for health care for veterans. This measure currently has 23 cosponsors.

Also on January 19, Sen. Snowe introduced S 71, legislation to establish a presumption of service connection for certain veterans with hepatitis C and would receive disability compensation. Many veterans from the Vietnam War time period, especially those in country, contracted hepatitis C while in the armed services. Because hepatitis C was not identified until 1992, many veterans contracted the ailment and were unaware of its existence. There are nearly 4 million Americans affected by hepatitis C, with almost 10,000 deaths each year. The veteran must show that, while he was in the military, that he or she experienced: a blood transfusion before December 31, 1992; blood exposure through the skin or mucous membrane; hemodialysis; a tattoo, body piercing, or acupuncture; unexplained liver disease or unexplained liver dysfunction value or test; or working in a health-care position or specialty. S 71 currently has seven cosponsors.

On June 23 the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee passed S 1076, an omnibus veterans' package introduced by committee chairman Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa. The legislation would:

- Authorize a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans' compensation and DIC recipients, effective December 1, 1999;
- Increase Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) basic educational benefits from $528 to $600/month for a 3-year enlistee, and from $429 to $488/month for a 2-year enlistee, and allow servicemembers who opted not to participate in the MGIB program (by refusing to allow $100/month basic pay reduction) to buy back in at anytime by payment of $1500;
- Allow a $300 funeral expense allowance and $300 plot allowance for Filipino veterans receiving VA compensation or were eligible for VA pensions and were U.S. citizens resident in the U.S.;
- Authorize VA to provide to veterans community-based nursing home care at VA expense, and to provide respite care services in the veteran's home, not solely in VA facilities;

- Expand "new programs" grant authority to allow grants to homeless veterans' service providers to expand existing programs and authorize $50 million in appropriations per year for FYs 2000 and 2001;
- Extend VA authority to sell or rent to homeless services providers VA-owned residential properties due to defaults on VA-guaranteed home loans;
- Extend for two years the Department of Labor's Homeless Veteran Reintegration Project grant authority, and authorize appropriations of $10 million for FYs 2000 and 2001;
- Mandate that VA provide, directly or through reimbursement, emergency care services to all enrolled veterans;
- Extend VA authority to evaluate the health status of spouses and children of Persian Gulf War veterans;
- Require that third-party collection funds be remitted by VA to the collecting VA health care facility;
- Outline new eligibility rules for burials in Arlington National Cemetery; and,
- Authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to solicit funds to complete construction of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC.

On June 29 the House by a vote of 424-0 passed HR 2280, which would make changes to veterans' disability, retirement, health and education benefits. It would also speed progress on the World War II memorial in Washington, DC. The House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved the bill on June 23 by a voice vote.

To accelerate construction of the World War II memorial near the Lincoln Memorial, the bill would grant authority to the American Battle Monuments Commission to borrow up to $65 million from the U.S. Treasury and expand its general authority to solicit and receive contributions for construction and maintenance. Under current law, the commission must have $100 million before construction may begin.

The bill would also:

- provide authority to recall judges who retired from the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;
- add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma to the current list of presumptive diseases for certain radiation-exposed veterans;
- provide for the reinstatement of certain benefits for remarried surviving spouses, who previously received Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), upon the termination of the remarriage through death or divorce;
- authorize the payment of DIC to the surviving spouse of a former prisoner-of-war who, at the time of his death, was rated totally disabled for a service-connected disability and who had been diagnosed with one of the presumptive POW diseases listed in title 38, USC;
- require the establishment of a quality assurance program within VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, and would require the VA Secretary to assign an adequate number of full-time personnel to VBA's programs;
- propose a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the monthly rates of compensation for service-connected disabled veterans and DIC to surviving spouses and children, effective December 1, 1999;

- direct the VA Secretary to establish additional national cemeteries, and provide for a comprehensive assessment for improvement to veterans' cemeteries; and,
- provide permanent eligibility of former members of the Selected Reserves for veterans' housing loans.

However, when the measure was considered by the Senate on July 26, that chamber amended HR 2280 by removing all the text of the House bill and inserting the text of S 1393, a similar bill. The Senate version only addresses cost-of-living adjustments for compensation and DIC rates. A conference committee will now be required to eliminate differences in the two measures before it can become law.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Allen L. Titus, Indiana, Chairman
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director

As has been its custom since its inception, the National Security Commission has attempted to remain informed, and to keep the membership of The American Legion informed, on the range of issues related to the National Defense of the United States in order to recommend responsible national security policies to the governing bodies of The American Legion. To accomplish this task, the Commission conducts regular meetings designed to provide members with current information from responsible government officials on timely issues concerning national security. One of these meetings takes place in conjunction with the National Convention, two in conjunction with meetings of the National Executive Committee, and the fourth is held during the Washington Conference of The American Legion.

Mr. Allen L. Titus (Indiana) is Chairman of the National Security Commission. Mr. Titus was selected as Commission Chairman at the Fall 1995 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

Pre-Convention Meetings, 1998

During the 80th National Convention of The American Legion in New Orleans, Louisiana, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions convened a joint session at the Hilton Riverside Hotel. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Michael Sheehan spoke on the status and financial standing of the United Nations and its relationship with the United States. He was followed by Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) Charles Cragin who outlined several of the initiatives being undertaken by the Reserve Components to counter potential threats of weapons of mass destruction. The final speaker was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW and Missing Personnel Robert Jones who presented an update on developments undertaken by the Department of Defense with regard to the POW-MIA issue.

The National Security Commission and its Standing Committees conducted a comprehensive review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on Security. Many of the resolutions reviewed were updated versions of previously adopted positions.

National Security Resolutions, 80th National Convention

The following resolutions, listed in Committee order, were unanimously adopted by the delegates to the 80th annual National Convention:

General Security
Resolution No. 174, *National Security Principles.* Establishes The American Legion's national security objectives.
Resolution No. 175, *United States Military Forces in Peacekeeping Operations.* Includes the principle that United States military forces should not be placed under foreign or United Nations operational control except where Congress grants specific approval.
Resolution No. 178, *National Missile Defense System.* Urges the Congress to fund and deploy a national missile defense system.

Conservation of Natural Resources
Resolution No. 55, *Domestic Energy Production and Conservation.* Calls for further development of domestic sources of energy.
Resolution No. 56, *Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste.* Encourages the continued growth of our nuclear electric capacity and proper disposal of nuclear waste material.

Aerospace
Resolution No. 185, *Support for the National Space Program.* Urges continued support for the goals of the National Space Program.
Resolution No. 186, *Aerospace Production and Research.* Urges the continued support of U.S. aeronautical and aircraft production.

Defense Civil Preparedness
Resolution No. 188, *Support for the Non-Federal Roles of the National Guard.* National Guard units should be maintained at reasonable levels so that they may continue to perform both Federal and State missions.
Resolution No. 189, *Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities.* Urges American Legion support for this FEMA program.

Law and Order
Resolution No. 190, *Combating Crime in America.* Recommends a series of judicial actions including more stringent measures to combat juvenile crime.
Resolution No. 191, *Support for the Second Amendment.* Reaffirms its recognition of the United States Constitution as guaranteeing law-abiding American citizens the right to keep and bear arms.

Merchant Marine
Resolution No. 192, *Preserving the American Merchant Marine.* Urges the United States Government to rebuild the United States Merchant Marine to its former position as second to none in the world.

Military Affairs
Resolution No. 14, *Increased Resources to Enhance Military Readiness, Quality of Life and Modernization.* Urges the Government to rededicate its commitment to a strong national defense by increasing defense budgets over the next five years.
Resolution No. 18, *Military Funeral Honors.* Urges the Government to mandate and fund the Department of Defense to provide increased military honors to deceased veterans upon request of veterans' families.
Resolution No. 194, *Total Force Policy and Viable National Guard and Reserve Forces.* Urges that the National Guard and Reserves be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels.

Resolution No. 198, *Department of Defense Health Care Reform for Military Beneficiaries.* Recommends a series of guidelines be incorporated as an inherent part of the military health care package including the implementation of Medicare Subvention for Medicare-eligible military retirees.

Resolution No. 199, *Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation.* Urges action to amend Title 38 United States Code to remove the unfair restriction against the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay for longevity and VA disability compensation.

Resolution No. 201, *Service of Women in the Armed Forces.* Supports the expansion of women's roles in the Armed Forces when it is demonstratively proven that such expanded roles will not impair deployability, readiness and unit cohesiveness in the Armed Forces.

Naval Affairs

Resolution No. 207, *Modernize the United States Navy and Marine Corps.* Supports defense budgets which reflect a viable United States Navy and Marine Corps capable of projecting American seapower abroad.

Resolution No. 208, *Support for the United States Coast Guard.* Fully fund the United States Coast Guard to carry out its numerous vital missions.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Fall 1998

A total of thirteen resolutions were considered, and six were recommended for adoption. The Commission Chairman discussed some of the highlights of the House-Senate Conference Report to the Fiscal Year 1999 National Defense Authorization bill. This budget was a no-growth budget and represented the fourteenth straight year of decline.

Chairman Titus' comments follow:

Many of the national security mandates of The American Legion are contained in the House-Senate Conference Committee report for the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 1999. The House and Senate voted solid approval for this compromise $270.5 billion defense bill. It would raise military pay by 3.6 percent, impose new curbs on satellite exports, offer new healthcare options for military retirees and a number of other items.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have briefed the President that without additional defense resources to reverse the fourteen year pattern of defense spending decline, the military services will be unable to stabilize their shrinking force structures, protect quality of life and readiness and modernize rapidly aging equipment. The President has indicated he would increase the defense budget which has been held hostage to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

With regard to healthcare, the Congress is directing the Defense Department to submit a plan for the redesign of the military pharmacy system with an eye toward providing all military beneficiaries, to include Medicare-eligibles, with a universal, uniform pharmacy benefit. Also authorized is a three-year demonstration program to allow Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) beginning on January 1, 2000. Also included is a provision to test the feasibility of providing TRICARE coverage as a supplement to Medicare for dual-eligible retirees.

The recent report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States (i.e. the Rumsfeld Commission) delivered the most serious national security warning the American people have received since the Cold War. The Commission reported that the ballistic missile threat to the United States is "broader, more mature, and evolving more rapidly than previously reported". Just a few weeks after this report was published,

North Korea tested a new ballistic missile with sufficient range to attack U.S. forces in Japan, and possibly parts of Hawaii and Alaska as well.

The Department of Defense has cited manpower and budgetary shortfalls as reasons for not providing military honors for many veterans' funerals. This bill requires the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to meet with veterans service organizations before December 31, 1998 and determine how to improve and increase the availability of military funeral honors and report to Congress by March 15, 1999. The Services must provide, upon request, honor guard details for veterans' funerals after December 31, 1999. In addition, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is directed to provide U.S. Flags to drape the coffins of deceased veterans or former members of the Selected Reserve.

The conferees also included a provision to require the Service Secretaries to provide separate and secure housing for male and female recruits during basic training by April 15, 1999. The bill expresses a sense of the Congress that the Secretaries should also require male and female recruits be assigned to separate basic training units. Finally, the conferees included a provision to prevent the Secretary of Navy from conveying the former Naval Station in Long Beach, California, to the Red Chinese China Ocean Shipping Company and by repealing the President's waiver authority on the matter.

Policy Coordination and Action Group (PCAG) Meeting, February 8-9, 1999

The American Legion had convened a PCAG meeting in February 1999 which was prompted by DoD and media reports regarding declining military quality of life features and readiness as well as the impact of increased operating tempos and under-resourced defense budgets on recruiting, retention and readiness. Based on briefings by senior DoD officials, Congressional staffers and others, the PCAG directed the preparation of a White Paper containing recommendations for a strong National Defense. These recommendations were consolidated into a resolution and adopted by the National Executive Committee at its Spring meetings

Washington Conference

The National Security Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference on Monday, March 22 and Wednesday, March 24, 1999. Topics covered during each session follow.

Morning Session, March 22, 1999

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session. Colonel Joseph D. Rozek, United States Army, Director of Combating Terrorism, Office of the Secretary of Defense, addressed the growing threat of weapons of mass destruction and the planning efforts underway within the United States Government to prevent, counter and respond to potential terrorist employment of these weapons against the United States. The Department of Justice would head the interagency effort for domestic preparedness within the United States and the Department of State would head the counter-terrorism efforts overseas. The Department of Defense would be a major player in the Government's domestic and overseas programs due to the availability of its resources to include highly trained personnel. Undoubtedly, the first to respond to terrorist activity would be local firemen and police. Additionally, trained National Guard Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection (RAID) teams could be summoned as well as FEMA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies.

A panel composed of Mr. Charles Calkins from the Fleet Reserve Association, Colonel Paul Arcari, USAF (Ret.), from The Retired Officers Association and Mrs. Sydney Hickey from the National Military Family Association discussed the topic: "Military Realities and Legislative Goals for Fiscal Year 2000 and Beyond." The organizations which these panel members represented are members of The Military Coalition (TMC). An array of quality of life issues ranging from an improved military retirement system and reducing the military pay comparability gap, an enhanced Survivors' Benefits Plan, to Medicare subvention demonstration projects at VA medical centers were discussed. Legionnaires in the audience were reminded that in the current session of Congress only 31 percent of United States Representatives were veterans and 43 percent of United States Senators had prior military service. Mrs. Hickey emphasized that the loss of, or threats to, family quality of life features, such as caps on cost of living allowances or attacks on commissary benefits, were not perceptions but were very real concerns as to whether military families remained in the military. Finally, it was noted that a long-range plan for addressing all these issues had to be developed and followed year after year. The trust of military families and military retirees has, in many cases, been broken, and one of the goals of military and veterans associations should be to restore that trust by making Governmental policy-makers aware of the issues and then addressing them.

The final speaker for the morning was Congressman Floyd Spence (R-S.C.), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Chairman Spence emphasized the need for continued development and deployment of a national missile defense system which was contained in House bill, H.R. 4. He also voiced strong support for the Government's coordinated counter-terrorism efforts and the need to adequately protect the citizens of the United States. He addressed the Quadrennial Defense Review, the national military strategy, which contained the two-war "nearly simultaneously" strategy and noted that, in his view, the Nation could perhaps fight one major regional conflict, but not two. Chairman Spence also reiterated the need for a strong quality of life package for the Armed Forces so as to enhance military recruiting and retention. Many of his points were addressed in American Legion adopted resolutions and articulated in Congressional testimony.

Afternoon Session, March 22, 1999

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA Update presented by the Special POW/MIA Committee and presided over by Chairman Robert S. Turner of that body.

Brigadier General Terry L. Tucker, USA, Commanding General of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in Hawaii, began his presentation by reviewing the mission statement of the Joint Task Force namely to conduct recovery operations and analyses in pursuit of the fullest possible accounting of American personnel missing in action in Southeast Asia. The total number of Americans currently missing in Southeast Asia as a result of the Vietnam War is 2,064. Since 23 January 1992, 465 remains have been repatriated; 203 remains have been identified; and 598 sets of remains are considered non-recoverable. Recovery operations are expensive but, as a matter of policy, the United States pays for the costs of the operations themselves but not for information leading to the recovery or identification of American remains.

Mr. Matthew J. McKeown, Deputy Attorney General of the State of Idaho, spoke of the Freedom of Information Act and document declassification in regards to the POW/MIA issue. Mr. McKeown has been involved in litigation against the federal government on behalf of the State of Idaho for the release of classified information. His remarks outlined a plan, using current laws, to obtain recently declassified information from the federal government by employing some of the experience he has gained from this litigation. Many

documents that pertain to the POW/MIA issue remain classified. If these documents were made available to researchers, we would be closer to our goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting.

Mr. Dino Carluccio, Senior Legislative Aide to Sen. Bob Smith of New Hampshire, spoke on the need for legislative action in regards to the POW/MIA issue. Mr. Carluccio outlined the current Administration's lackluster performance on accounting for America's POWs and MIAs. Mr. Carluccio said that currently Senator Smith is in the process of drafting comprehensive new POW/MIA legislation. "The POW/MIA Full Disclosure and Accounting Act of 1999" will be presented this fall. This new legislation will encompass a full range of issues including declassification of foreign and American documents. He is looking forward to American Legion input on this issue.

National Security Commission Business Session, March 24, 1999

The National Security Commission conducted a business session on Wednesday morning which began with a presentation by Mr. William Owens, a member of Senator Charles Robb's staff, on the Senator's proposal to construct a National Military Museum in the area now occupied by the vacated Navy Annex buildings. The Museum would feature displays of all the Military Services, the United States Coast Guard, National Guard and Merchant Marine. During the ensuing discussion it was pointed out that this area was where it was planned to expand Arlington National Cemetery.

The Commission Chairman reminded Commission members that 1999 was not a renewal year for resolutions at The American Legion's 81st Annual National Convention in Anaheim, California. The National Security Commission is planning to visit Camp Pendleton United States Marine Corps Base during Pre-Convention. The Commission also heard Mrs. Penny Maklary, the American Legion Auxiliary National Security Chairman, who delivered greetings and outlined the Auxiliary's goals of working with the USO, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other objectives.

The Commission Chairman also briefed Commission members on current legislation affecting the Armed Forces and other issues to include national and theatre missile defense systems, Arlington National Cemetery, military funeral honors, and the financial solvency of the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home.

A total of nine resolutions were considered, and two were recommend for adoption. They included: "Proposals to Ensure a Strong National Defense" and "The Armed Forces Retirement Homes." The Commission Chairman discussed some of the highlights of the Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Bill. Like previous budgets, this budget is a no-growth budget and represents the fifteenth straight year of decline.

Chairman Titus' comments follow:

In early February 1999, The American Legion convened a meeting of its Policy Coordination and Action Group (PCAG). This PCAG meeting was prompted by Department of Defense and media reports that the Armed Forces were experiencing problems in attracting qualified individuals to volunteer for military service and in retaining seasoned service members. Allied to those issues are the realities of declining military readiness and quality of life features as well as the impact of increased operating tempos and under-resourced defense budgets on retention, recruiting, readiness and force modernization.

Undoubtedly, taking care of our military and its people must be at the top of the priority list, although force modernization and military acquisition have also been substantially under-budgeted for years. The Marine Corps, for example, continues to fly 30-year old helicopters. Air Force B-52 bombers are, on average, 37 years old, and plans are in-place to fly them for another 30 to 40 years. The Army that is stretched thin with

peacekeeping missions is also flying 37-year old CH-47 Chinook helicopters. We are asking our sons and daughters to go to war in equipment that is older than they are.

In the end, attracting and keeping good people will determine our future security. Even the best of combat equipment is useless without qualified people to operate and maintain it. Secondly, our defense budgets need to have procurement budgets in the $100 billion range to maintain current inventories not the current $46-62 billion per year range. The bottom line here is certain: Without larger procurement budgets, the military services will have no choice but to continue to reduce both force structure and personnel, and to accept higher military risks.

The PCAG directed the staff to prepare a White Paper which included the following major recommendations, which were formatted into a proposed resolution and submitted by the National Security Commission to the National Executive Committee for approval:

- Immediate passage of the provisions of Senate and House bills which call for increased military pay raises, reformed military pay tables, a revised military retirement system, improved benefits under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and other quality of life features.
- Defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product needs to be maintained between 3 and 4 percent annually. At least $160 billion should be authorized and appropriated over six years to address those concerns voiced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) needs to be reevaluated as it provides neither the forces nor the defense budgets to fight two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts while also conducting peacekeeping operations. The strategy-resources mismatch needs to be eliminated.

Our Armed Forces are also stretched thin worldwide, and this may be one reason why the administration has not yet committed to a ground plan in Kosovo when NATO launched its air campaign over a month ago. The American Legion has made its position known that the following conditions should be met before any U.S. ground troops were committed in Kosovo: No U.S. military forces should be used as peacekeepers until/unless there is an established peace; secondly, the administration must explain why intervention is in the national interest of the United States; operational guidelines and a realistic exit strategy are critical to mission success; congressional approval and a reasonable degree of support by the American people are essential; and U.S. troops must be under U.S. commanders.

At this Spring meeting, the National Executive Committee responded to events in Kosovo by adopting Resolution No. 44 which resolved that unless the following conditions are fulfilled, The American Legion calls upon the President and the Congress to withdraw American forces from Operation Allied Force:

- That there be a clear statement by the President of why it is in our vital national interests to be engaged in Operation Allied Force;
- Guidelines be established for the mission, including a clear exit strategy;
- That there be support of the mission by the U.S. Congress and the American people; and
- That it be made clear U.S. Forces will be commanded only by U.S. officers which we acknowledge are superior military leaders;

Copies of this resolution were dispatched to the White House, to the Secretaries of State and Defense and to Congressional leaders.

National Security—Foreign Relations Division

Responsibility for the daily conduct of the extensive work of The American Legion in defense and foreign policy is assigned to the National Security—Foreign Relations Division located in the Washington, D.C. office. The staff of the Division consists of: G. Michael Schlee, Director; Dennis M. Duggan, Deputy Director; John C. Petersen, Assistant Director; Angela L. Venson, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Cheryl L. Henson, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division has endeavored to not only fulfill its responsibility to implement the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs, but to constantly expand and improve the ways and means of projecting our interest in these two important areas. The duties have consisted of answering correspondence and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Transportation (Coast Guard); the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others. These contacts related to a variety of matters, some of which involved members of the armed forces.

Liaison also is maintained with a host of military and quasi-military organizations with whom common goals are shared. Among these are: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; The Retired Officers Association; Association of the U.S. Army; and the National Guard Association of the United States. Most importantly, the National Security—Foreign Relations Division provides a steady flow of information on defense matters to members of both commissions and the leadership at all levels of our organization. Writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, is also a duty of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as the *Dispatch, The American Legion Magazine* and *The American Legion News Service,* the principal means for distribution of factual information and program support in the fields of national defense and foreign affairs. The internet is rapidly becoming the primary mode of communicating responses both within and outside The American Legion. National Security and Foreign Relations Web sites are being developed.

Committee Reports

The following reports, received with grateful appreciation, were prepared under the leadership and guidance of the following Committee and Council Chairmen: Robert C. Gabrielson—Aerospace; Frank J. D'Amico—Defense Civil Preparedness; George Wehrli—Law and Order; Charles F. Moreland—Merchant Marine; Norman C. Schlemmer—Military Affairs; Franklin R. Sickle, Jr.—National Security Council; and Gerard W. Cheffer—Naval Affairs.

AEROSPACE COMMITTEE
Robert C. Gabrielson, South Dakota, Chairman

During the past year, the Aerospace Committee continued its efforts to ensure that the United States does not become a second-rate power in modern air power or advanced aerospace technology. The authority for the Committee's efforts are the resolutions adopted at the 80th National Convention. The effort to implement these positions required both administrative and legislative activities.

Legislative Activities. Implementation of these policies necessitates correspondence and testimony to the Armed Services/National Security and Appropriations Committees of both the Senate and House in coordination with our Legislative Division. In addition to correspondence, principal presentations were before the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees. Testimony and resolutions on aerospace and other issues were presented to the Subcommittee in their consideration of Fiscal Year 2000 defense appropriations bills. Of particular emphasis, was continued support of the National Space program and adequate provision for research and development, the strategic airlift, and aircraft production and development to include the C-17, F-22 fighter, and the Joint Strike Fighter.

DEFENSE CIVIL PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
Frank J. D'Amico, New York, Chairman

The American Legion continues to advocate adequate staffing, adequate budgeting and adequate technical and research support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In an era when Russian civil defense efforts are far greater than those of the United States, it becomes imperative that planning for emergencies to include, for example, potential chemical, biological or cyberspace attacks be enhanced.

Disaster Relief Assistance: The Defense Civil Preparedness Committee, under direction of the National Security Commission, will continue to review and monitor the progress and after-action reports of FEMA as well as legislation affecting disaster relief assistance. In 1997-1998, 1,359 Posts were involved in disaster relief and other emergency assistance programs.

Energy: War in the Persian Gulf had refocused the attention of The American Legion on America's continued reliance on foreign sources of energy. Unquestionably, Iraq's seizure of Kuwait and the threat to Saudi Arabia could again endanger our national security interests and economic well-being.

The energy crisis in 1973 prompted a series of energy-oriented resolutions in the 1980s and 1990s which addressed, primarily, nuclear energy and nuclear waste, energy recovery and conservation. At its Fall meetings in 1989, the National Executive Committee mandated that the Chairman of the National Security Commission annually appoint a Subcommittee on the Conservation of Natural Resources, which included energy issues. Over 778 American Legion posts have appointed Energy Chairmen.

The American Legion, at its 73rd National Convention, adopted a comprehensive National Energy Strategy resolution which collectively addressed energy conservation and efficiency, energy recovery and development, and alternative sources of energy such as nuclear electricity. Many of these recommendations were incorporated in the National Energy Act. More recently, The American Legion has been supportive of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge area for oil exploration as well as urging the Federal government to adequately dispose of nuclear waste.

Blood Donor Activities: The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary continue to be principal sources of blood donors in the United States. Through our vast network of Posts and Units organized into Department programs, Legionnaires and Auxiliary members continue to supply the blood needs of their own members, hospitalized veterans and through cooperative agreements, to patients in civilian hospitals. During 1997-1998, a total of 98,080 pints of blood were donated by 48,593 American Legion donors.

National Commander Awards: To stimulate activities on the part of Departments and Posts, annual awards are made by the National Commander. During the period from July 1, 1997 through June 15, 1998, many Departments of The American Legion actively

participated in the Blood Donor program. The winning Departments included Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Rhode Island.

Each winning Department received a Certificate of Recognition signed by the National Commander and National Adjutant.

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE
George Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

The Law and Order Committee continued this year to emphasize crime prevention by promoting the distribution of the Crime Prevention booklet across the nation. Liaison was maintained with the National Crime Prevention Coalition in order to keep the committee up-to-date on the latest developments in the field of crime prevention.

American Legion Departments, Posts and individual citizens have been overwhelmingly responsive to the Legion's Crime Prevention program. Requests for this booklet have come from state and local law enforcement officials; from senior citizen groups; from libraries; and from school children. This program is viable, ongoing and important to our National interest. The Law and Order Committee has continued to promote its goals in this area. Over 1,359 Posts had crime resistance programs in 1997-98.

Fire Protection/Prevention: The National Executive Committee authorized The American Legion Fire Protection and Prevention programs. An information booklet on this subject was published in the Spring of 1986, and was the basis of a slide show production. Over 1,248 Posts had Fire Prevention programs in 1997-98.

Junior Law Cadet Program: The American Legion, in its efforts to better educate our young people in regard to laws which govern our society, and the agencies which enforce those laws, has developed several programs which feature law enforcement training. Fifteen Departments, in cooperation with state law enforcement agencies, sponsored youth programs designed to acquaint the participants with methods of basic law enforcement.

National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Program: Based on its published criteria, the Law and Order Committee selected five Regional winners who contended for the prestigious honor of being selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Deputy Sheriff Earl McDonald from Louisiana was selected and presented with the second award of the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at the 80th National Convention at New Orleans, Louisiana.

MERCHANT MARINE COMMITTEE
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Since its founding, The American Legion has realized the importance of a strong American Merchant Marine and the indispensable role of this "fourth arm of defense." Today, the ever increasing dependence of the U.S. economy on raw materials from Third World countries and overseas areas demand renewed efforts to build up our merchant fleet.

Retaining American Merchant Marine independence in supplying our economy and the added demands of military sealift, spurred this Committee's support for expanding the Merchant Marine during the past year. The effort to inform its membership, the general public and the Congress of our views were guided by resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the 78th National Convention.

Maritime Power: Throughout our history, maritime power has been a key element in the growth and strength of America. Moreover, the new sealift demands of the United States make the Merchant Marine even more imperative in our strategic planning. We must

rebuild the Merchant Marine if we are to maintain free use of the seas in the face of potential challenges presented by regional conflicts.

For the fifth consecutive year, the National Organization of The American Legion presented its award to an outstanding midshipman at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The American Legion presents awards at all the Service Academies.

MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Norman C. Schlemmer, Indiana, Chairman

During the year, the Military Affairs Committee has directed its major efforts toward maintaining a strong and modern United States Armed Forces, second to none in the world. We believe the times deserve no less. Our activities have been guided by the resolutions adopted by the 79th and 80th National Conventions and subsequent National Executive Committee actions. Wide dissemination was given those resolutions to Congressional, government, military and industry leaders to inform them of our mandates for supporting a strong and modern military forces to include the Reserve Components. Bound volumes of the resolutions were presented to the President, Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Maintaining a strong national defense was designated as a legislative priority by the National Commander.

Press Conference/Legislative Activities: The staff has kept up-to-date by attending press conferences on various subjects of interest, including the press conferences sponsored by the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation (Coast Guard) and several Congressional press conferences.

The Department of Defense presented a special briefing on the Quadrennial Defense Review to which The American Legion and other veterans service organizations were invited.

Through the Legislative Division, correspondence with Members of Congress and Congressional staff was initiated and followed through in other areas as follows: Military funeral honors; military health care; military commissaries and impact aid for military school children; military pay and allowances; and other military quality of life incentives, to include revamping the military retirement pay system, and funding the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home. Additionally, testimony was presented before the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense in support of military readiness, quality of life features and continued modernization of the Armed Forces. Emphasis was also placed on revising the national military strategy so as to better match military resources with continued overseas deployments which are beginning to impact on the morale and well-being of the Armed Forces.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
Franklin R. Sickle, Jr., New Jersey, Chairman

Selective Service System: The American Legion, over the past year, has continued to support the Selective Service System by strongly advocating the maintenance of the Selective Service Registration Program as a viable preparedness measure.

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Criterion for judging the winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy is based on Departments giving the greatest degree of support to ROTC programs to include the number of medals presented and Legion participation in award ceremonies this year. The winners of the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are the Departments of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Gerard W. Cheffer, Ohio, Chairman

Guided by resolutions adopted at the 80th National Convention, the Naval Affairs Committee has worked to strengthen the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard during the past year. It begins with the premise that sea lanes are the life lines of America, both in peacetime and war. The United States is no longer hesitant about sending powerful signals to aggressors that it will not stand idly by and watch while they conduct violent takeovers of legitimate governments, particularly when those takeovers are contrary to the national interests of the United States. This new diplomacy requires a mobile, flexible and capable and deployable United States Navy and Marine Corps.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMISSION
Richard J. Santos, Maryland, Chairman
Joseph H. March, Maryland, Director

The Public Relations Commission serves as the conduit between The American Legion and the media, provides media tools to Legion Public Relations Officers and publications and promotes the varied programs of the organization to the public. During the 1998-1999 program year, Commission efforts focused on the implementation of effective communications strategies which played a key role in advancing corporate goals.

Through the use of the Internet and electronic digital communication technologies, timely news releases were provided to national and local media regarding support to veterans on issues including VA health care, the diminishing Dept. of Veterans Affairs budget, the GI Bill of Health, the deployment of U.S. Forces to Kosovo as well the ongoing American Legion efforts to find answers regarding Gulf War Illnesses. Commission staff provided nearly a thousand media interviews to newspapers, magazines, specialty publications, television, radio and cable stations across the country.

Public awareness for the contributions of our nation's veterans was elevated by the distribution and publication of opinion editorials and public service ad slicks on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, July 4 and Flag Day to over six thousand daily and weekly newspapers. Working with the Americanism Commission, the Public Relations Commission developed a videotape—"What is a Veteran" to be distributed to schools around the nation. A teachers workbook accompanies the tape designed for a discussion period to follow. A separate curriculum is provided for Legionnaires to use in presenting the tape during visits to local schools. The tape will also be distributed to commercial stations and cable television systems over the next several years.

PR volunteers successfully supported American Legion Boys Nation. Departments were provided materials for PR volunteers to use in promoting delegates to their hometown media when they are selected. The information which Department PR volunteers obtained was subsequently provided to the National Public Relations staff for ongoing media relations efforts while the delegates were in Washington, DC. This joint volunteer-national staff effort continues to garner unprecedented coverage of this superb Legion program in the home towns of participating youths.

Achieving Corporate Goals

The Public Relations Commission and staff services to advance corporate goals involved a variety of tactics and efforts in support of the campaign for a Constitutional Amendment to protect the U.S. Flag from acts of intentional physical desecration. Among

them special guest editorials by the National Commander were provided to thousands of media. Nearly a thousand letters to the editor were written and published by the PR staff in response to opposing editorials.

To elevate understanding of the flag-protection amendment among Americans nationwide, the Commission staff alerted talk radio stations of the status of the measure. The efforts generated numerous talk-radio show opportunities by which Commission staff and American Legion volunteers explained in great detail the position of the nation's largest veterans organization with respect to the proposed 28th Amendment: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States."

The Commission staff implemented a proactive media-relations program that achieved print and electronic media coverage of American Legion corporate goals in conjunction with the departmental visits of the National Commander. Due to the media advance program, print coverage of corporate goals—primarily health care for veterans, use of U.S. troops around the world and the flag-protection amendment—reached over 2 million, combined circulation, during 1999 and resulted in hundreds of radio and television news reports.

The Commission staff also continued to provide volunteer support materials including suggested Addresses for key patriotic holidays, maintained a Veterans Media Data Bank which was used to support CNN, Fox News, PBS, ABC, NBC, CBS as well as members of local media outlets searching for a veteran with specific duty assignments to interview for news stories.

Awards

The National Commander's Public Relations Award was presented to Alan Keyes, Ph.D., national radio talk show host, former ambassador to the United Nations and winner of the 1967 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. He also served as President of American Legion Boys Nation during the same year. Dr. Keyes received the award in recognition of his intense dedication and continuing leadership in raising the issue of declining values in our nation. Through his daily talk show, appearances on national television programs and frequent speeches, he continued to challenge Americans to uphold the values necessary for the future of America.

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award was presented during the 81st National Convention to Reporter Jerry Mitchell of The Clarion-Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi for outstanding achievement in the filed of journalism. Mitchell's sustained civil rights reporting covered the violent past of racial discrimination and brought about legal resolution of several outstanding cases.

Entering the New Millennium

As The American Legion moves into the 21st century, the Public Relations Commission and staff will continue to engage evolving communications strategies and modern technology in advancing the programs of The American Legion and work for the betterment of our nation's veterans and their families.

The American Legion Magazine

Milford Forrester, South Carolina, Chairman
Dick McNally, Wisconsin, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

"For God and Country". That long-time motto has guided the direction of *The American Legion Magazine* for eight decades. In 1999, the magazine continues to aspire to

publish articles that are of value and interest not only to members of The American Legion, but the general reading public as well.

Industry observers have taken note of our editorial and graphic content in recent months. Earlier in the year, the magazine won 13 awards in the prestigious 1999 National Mature Media contest, including one Gold, four Silver, four Bronze, and Four Merit Awards. The Gold Award was for the magazine's special section, "Christmas at War," in its December 1998 issue. Silver awards were presented for "The American Century," (September 1998 special issue); for "Korea's Lingering Grasp," (writing award); for "The Dark Side of the Sun," (writing award); and for "Panama Canal: The Last Ditch in American Giveaways," (writing award).

We could not achieve the editorial quality and publish the number of articles we do without the strong support from advertising. In the first two quarters of 1999, advertising was $341,358 below our budget target of $4,278,000, but was still strong enough to support editorial goals. Since then, sales have showed strong gains, and have vastly outpaced last year's sales in the third quarter. We expect revenues to exceed last year's, though we may not achieve the overall advertising budget for the year of $9.2 million.

Paper prices have remained favorable in 1999. We enjoyed a price cut early in the year, but then had an increase a few months later. Prices may begin to ratchet up again later in the year, though we don't expect to see costs go far beyond what we've seen in the past two or three years.

The magazine weathered an approximate 11-percent increase in postal rates over the past twelve months. That increase has been mitigated by instituting new postal handling methods through our printer and commercially shipping more magazines to postal entry points across the nation.

The commission and staff continue to evaluate the division's products and the means to control costs. Along with that, *The American Legion Magazine* will seek new and innovative ways to meet the needs and interests of its 2.7 million subscribers and live up to its pledge, "For God and Country."

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

Chester F. Stellar, Ohio, Chairman
Carroll Williams, Maryland, Director

The Eightieth Annual National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana and the Fall and Spring Meetings of the National Executive Committee approved certain positions expressed in resolutions submitted to those bodies through the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

The following report covers the activities of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff during the year ending June 30, 1999. The first section of the report describes the action taken on all resolutions assigned to the Commission for consideration, and the status shown as of June 30, 1999, the date of this report.

Beginning with the 1998 National Convention, the Commission received a total of 70 resolutions for appropriate action and consideration. There follows a breakdown of these resolutions by source and type:

32 Approved or Approved as Amended
17 Consolidated with Resolutions Approved
12 Referred to Resolutions Standing Commission
5 Received and Recorded
4 Rejected

There were seven resolutions from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee Meeting of October 14-15, 1998.

There were six resolutions from the National Adjutant at the National Executive Committee Meeting of May 5-6, 1999.

The status of these resolutions is set forth as follows, beginning with those covering the 1998 National Convention, followed by those presented and referred by the National Executive Committee.

1998 National Convention Approved Resolutions

The Director informed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on September 23, 1998, of The American Legion official policy on the following resolutions.

Resolution No. 17 (CO): Support Veterans Nursing Home at Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center.

Resolution No. 28 (CO): The American Legion Policy on Tobacco Related Disabilities.

Resolution No. 36 (SD): Allow Concurrent Payment of Compensation or DIC and Educational Benefits to Dependent Children.

Resolution No. 75 (IN): Seek Legislation to Pay Accrued Benefits in a Pending Claim to the Date the Deceased Veteran's Claim was Filed.

Resolution No. 76 (IN): The American Legion Policy on Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

Resolution No. 77 (IN): Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program.

Resolution No. 78 (IN): The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans' Home Program.

Resolution No. 79 (IN): The American Legion Policy on VA Disability Compensation.

Resolution No. 90 (VA): Protect Disability Rating After Ten Years.

Resolution No. 93 (VA): The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration.

Resolution No. 97 (TX): Provide Full Medical Care for World War II Veterans.

Resolution No. 126 (IL): Urge the Congress to Exempt the VAMCs from Copyright Infringement Laws.

Resolution No. 131 (FL): Enhanced Education and Training Readjustment Program for Servicepersons (GI Education Bill).

Resolution No. 132 (FL): The American Legion Policy on VA-NSLI Insurance.

Resolution No. 133 (FL): Provide Adequate Funding for VA Construction Program.

Resolution No. 141 (FL): Support Enactment of The GI Bill of Health.

Resolution No. 143 (PI): Urge Congress to Amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 107 to Recognize Filipinos as Veterans.

Resolution No. 144 (PI): Urge Congress to Provide Equal Benefits to Naturalized Filipino Veterans.

Resolution No. 145 (CA): Establishment of a New National Cemetery in Northern California.

Resolution No. 164 (DC): Support Increase in Claims Personnel for VA.

Resolution No. 165 (DC): Eliminate all Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records.

Resolution No. 170 (MD): The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange.

Resolution No. 171 (MD): The American Legion Policy Regarding the Use of Depleted Uranium.

Resolution No. 172 (MD): The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses.
Resolution No. 173 (MD): The American Legion Policy on VA Long-Term Care.
Resolution No. 237 (MD): Request Congress Provide Adequate Funding for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Programs.
Resolution No. 253 (NY): For VA to Develop a Geographically Adjusted Means Test.
Resolution No. 260 (NY): Permit VA to be an Authorized Health Care Provider Under Duly Licensed Health Maintenance Organization (HMOs), Preferred Provider Organization (PPOs), and Other Similar Health Plans.
Resolution No. 273 (WA): Extend Persian Gulf War Benefits to American Service Personnel who Served in Israel and Turkey.
Resolution No. 287 (MI): Reduce Disability Requirements for Nonservice-connected Pension.
Resolution No. 288 (MI): The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners-of-War.
Resolution No. 311 (VA&R): The American Legion Policy on VA Physicians and Medical Specialists Staffing Guidelines.

National Executive Committee Meeting
October 14-15, 1998

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:
Resolution No. 1: Provide Presumptive Service Connection for Cold-Related Injuries.
Resolution No. 2: The American Legion Policy on Exposure to Ionizing Radiation.
Resolution No. 4: For Congress to Provide a Special Pension for World War I Veterans.
Resolution No. 5: The American Legion Policy on the VA Compensated Work Therapy Program.
Resolution No. 6: Exempt Former Prisoners-of-War from Co-Payment of VAMC Issued Prescriptions.
Resolution No. 7: Support Legislation to Extend Eligibility for Health Care to Recipients of the Purple Heart.

National Executive Committee Meeting
May 5-6, 1999

The National Executive Committee approved the following resolutions:
Resolution No. 18: Reaffirm Priority Access to VA Health Care for all Veterans as Proposed in The GI Bill of Health.
Resolution No. 20: The American Legion Policy on a Federal Settlement with United States Tobacco Companies.
Resolution No. 21: Support Presumption of Service Connection of the Hepatitis C Virus for Certain Veterans.
Resolution No. 22: The American Legion's Support for the National Veterans' Creative Arts Program.
Resolution No. 23: The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans' Home Program.
Resolution No. 24: The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners-of-War.

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held three meetings during the period August 31, 1998 through May 4, 1999, as follows:

The VA&R Commission met on September 5, 1999 during the National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. A report was subsequently made to the National Executive Committee relative to the Commission's meeting.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the VA&R Commission met at National Headquarters, October 12-13, 1998, for the purpose of considering those matters which had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a broad range of other veterans' related matters. A report of that meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on October 14, 1998.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 76th consecutive year in Washington, DC, on March 22, 1999, in conjunction with the 39th Annual Washington Conference. The actions taken by the Commission were reported to the National Executive Committee (NEC) on May 5-6, 1999, in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the Spring NEC Meetings.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met on May 3-4, 1999, at National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana. Chairman Chester F. Stellar (OH), chaired the Subcommittee meeting and encouraged those present to continue their efforts on behalf of the nation's veterans. A report of this meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on May 5, 1999.

National Information Conferences
The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary

For the twentieth consecutive year, twelve National Information Conferences were conducted throughout the months of September and October of 1998, and April and May of 1999. The meetings were held in the following cities:

Region 1—Waterbury, CT, October 23-25
Region 2—Saratoga Springs, NY, September 25-27
Region 3—Louisville, KY, September 18-20
Region 4—Little Rock, AR, October 23-25
Region 5—Champaign, IL, October 2-4
Region 6—Rochester, MN, September 25-27
Region 7—Las Vegas, NV, September 18-20
Region 8—Yakima, WA, October 2-4

*****

Region 1—South Portland, ME, April 23-25
Region 2—Corapolis, PA, May 21-23
Region 6—Fargo, ND, May 14-16
Region 8—Cheyenne, WY, May 14-16

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary met jointly at each Saturday session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Commission attended the Conference in their respective regions. The Regional Chairpersons were in attendance at all Conferences.

Staff members of the VA&R Commission were present at each Conference providing those present with overviews of various topics relative to the VA&R program including "The GI Bill of Health."

Representatives of VA medical centers attended the Conferences for the purpose of discussing the impact of funding shortfalls regarding veterans' access to medical care. A significant number of questions were posed concerning veterans' access to VA medical care and eligibility reform.

Noteworthy at all Conferences was the high percentage of first-time attendees, and a large number of Post Service Officers.

For the sixth year, a Post Service Officers School was held and well received. Claims, ratings, and benefits were discussed. This school will continue on an annual basis.

Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference

The 76th National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference was held March 22-24, 1999, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Participants included members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, Department Service Officers and Rehabilitation Directors, County and Post Service Officers, members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and various National, Department, and Post officials.

Mr. Chester F. Stellar (OH), Chairman of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and Thomas Cadmus (MI), Vice Chairman, presided at the sessions of the Conference. Addressing the Conference were National Commander Butch L. Miller; National President Virginia Hobbs, American Legion Auxiliary; and, The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, presentations were also made by the following officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs: The Honorable Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, Under Secretary for Health; Mr. E. Dane Clark, Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Ms. Leigh Bradley, General Counsel; Mr. Roger Rapp, Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs; and, Mr. Patrick Nappi, Deputy Under Secretary for Operations.

National Commander Butch Miller made a presentation to Mr. Jason Tomlinson, National VAVS Volunteer Worker of the Year.

Prior to the Conference, for the eighteenth year, the Chairman and members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation staff met with Department Service Officers for the Annual Department Service Officers Seminar. Topics discussed included current VA programs and staff operations.

Conference Recommendations

The members of the Recommendations Committee met on March 22, 1999 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, DC. No recommendations were submitted from the 1998 National Information Conferences. Four recommendations were received during the 1999 Washington Conference.

Recommendation No. 1

Reaffirm priority access to VA health care on a permanent basis for all eligible veterans, as proposed in The American Legion's GI Bill of Health.

Recommendation No. 2

That The American Legion participate in the VA/DoD Predischarge Physical Examination Program.

Recommendation No. 3

That The American Legion urge the aggressive pursuit by the Federal Government of monies from the tobacco industry for cost of benefits and medical care for veterans with tobacco-related illnesses.

Recommendation No. 4

Seek legislation to provide presumptive service connection for veterans with Hepatitis C.

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Legislative Activities

Over the past year, the staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission was actively involved with legislative issues affecting the programs and services administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Activities included the preparation and presentation of testimony at hearings scheduled before Congressional Committees, and drafting legislation pursuant to the mandates adopted by the National Convention and the National Executive Committee. Active liaison is maintained with the staff of the Legislative Commission, officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congressional Committee staff and with various members of Congress.

The following is a brief summary of the Congressional Hearings held from July 1, 1998, to June 30, 1999, relative to the deliberation of Congress on matters pertaining to the Legion's National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission programs.

(1) On July 27, 1998, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on VA Specialized and Rehabilitation Treatment of Disabled Veterans.

(2) On September 22, 1998, the Deputy Director for Health Care provided testimony on Quality of Care within the Veterans Health Administration before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate.

(3) On September 25, 1998, the National Field Service presented testimony on the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) System before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, United States House of Representatives.

(4) On October 6, 1998, National Commander Butch Miller presented testimony on priority programs of The American Legion before a Joint Session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, United States Congress.

(5) On February 11, 1999, the Director testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee, United States House of Representatives, on the President's Fiscal Year 2000 budget proposal for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(6) On February 24, 1999, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the Veterans Health Administration budget for Fiscal Year 2000.

(7) On March 25, 1999, the Deputy Director for Operations testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

(8) On April 28, 1999, the Assistant Director for Resource Development presented testimony on the President's Fiscal Year 2000 budget proposal for the Department of Veterans Affairs, before the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives.

(9) On May 20, 1999, the Assistant Director of the Persian Gulf Task Force presented testimony before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the Future Role of the Montgomery GI Education Bill.

(10) On May 19, 1999, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified before the Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act.

(11) On May 20, 1999, the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, on various veterans related legislation.

(12) On May 20, 1999, the Deputy Director for Operations testified on the National Cemetery Administration before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(13) On June 10, 1999, the Deputy Director of Operations testified on various veterans legislative initiatives before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives.

(14) On June 16, 1999, the Assistant Director for Resource Development testified before the Subcommittee on Benefits, Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States House of Representatives, on legislation related to the National Cemetery Administration, Homeless Veterans Projects, and the World War II Memorial Completion Act.

Informational Services

Each year, through its informational services, the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff endeavors to keep Legion officials and other parties informed of our program's activities and functions. Preparation and distribution of various publications consumes considerable research, time and effort. These publications, based on various topics, are disseminated routinely to Department Service Officers, members of the VA&R Commission, and others interested in The American Legion's rehabilitation program.

To further strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs' health care delivery system, The American Legion has several pamphlets and brochures: The American Legion Guide To: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—What Is It? Who Gets It? What Can Be Done? This brochure is still very much in demand and is widely distributed. The Gulf War Veterans' Guide to Benefits is also an extremely helpful publication. Other publications available upon request are: Things To Do Before A Veterans Dies and The American Legion Handbook of Veterans Benefits—Get What You Deserve. This Handbook is used as a hand-out at Seminars, Conferences, and Department Conventions. Supplies of these and other VA&R pamphlets are maintained and distributed upon request.

On an annual basis, the staff revises *The American Legion Post Service Officers Guidebook* (PSO) to reflect legislative and program changes. This Guidebook is widely distributed. Sufficient copies are mailed to all Department Headquarters equal to one half the number of Posts. The PSO Guidebook is an indispensable research tool for Post Service Officers in providing assistance to veterans and their dependents. Also updated frequently is *The American Legion Voluntary Service Handbook* which is furnished to new VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives who volunteer their time and services in VA medical centers.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff strive to provide as much information as possible concerning our program to the various divisions of the National Organization, Departments, individual Legionnaires and the general public.

Report on the National Cemetery System

Since 1973, annual interments in national cemeteries have doubled from 36,400 to more than 76,000 in Fiscal Year 1998. Veterans' deaths are expected to increase annually, peaking at 620,000 in 2008, and slowly return to the 1995 level by 2020. It is estimated that approximately 552,000 veterans' died in 1998.

Four new national cemeteries are expected to open over the next 12 months. These are Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX; Albany, NY; Chicago, IL; and Cleveland, OH. Other expansion projects at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, Florida National Cemetery, and Ft. Sam Houston, TX will add over 106,000 gravesites to the National Cemetery Administration. Over the next ten years, priority areas for new national cemeteries include Oklahoma City, OK; Sacramento, CA; Atlanta, GA; Pittsburgh, PA; south Florida; and Detroit, MI. The expansion of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, MO is also a high priority. All of these sites require congressional funding for an environmental impact study, preliminary design work, land acquisition and construction.

New legislation, Public Law 105-368, permits VA to provide 100 percent of the construction cost and the cost of new equipment for state veterans' cemeteries. States are still required to fund environmental impact studies, planning and design work, land acquisition, and to commit to the cemetery's long-term maintenance cost. The American Legion supports an increase in the amount the Federal Government pays the states for each veteran's burial and an expansion of this payment to all honorably discharged veterans.

One of the primary challenges facing the National Cemetery Administration is meeting the expected increase in deaths of World War II veterans and their eligible dependents over the next 10 to 15 years. Thus, the funding of new national cemeteries will continue to be a major priority of The American Legion. State Veterans' Cemeteries provide an excellent enhancement to the National Cemetery Administration. However, they are not the sole answer to the anticipated increase in veterans deaths. The Federal Government must make certain that national cemeteries and state veterans' cemeteries are available and are located in the right geographic centers to ensure proper access to burial for all veterans.

Annual Report of the Medical Consultant

There have been no significant changes in the duties and activities of Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Senior Medical Consultant during the past year.

The primary duty assigned to the medical consultant is to act as a source of medical/technical knowledge to the appeals and claims representatives of The American Legion at the Board of Veterans Appeals. The case workers refer the claims folders to the medical consultant for evaluation and advice as to the appropriate course to pursue in presenting the case. They may take place in the form of guidance, but more frequently, it will involve a written memorandum to the appeals representative who refers the case. Certain cases are medically and technically difficult for a non-physician to present and such cases are presented directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals by the medical consultant.

In some cases, the medical consultant is directly contacted by American Legion Service Officers in the field asking specific questions. Department Service Officers are encouraged to refer difficult cases to the Washington office and to call or discuss them with the medical consultant. This year, again, there was an increase in requests for consultations from the field. It is strongly felt that having more contact with the representatives in the field, will benefit the veterans as well as the representatives in the field. The requests were answered within days, usually requesting additional information and records. In some cases a formal request for a disability rating is subsequently initiated.

The Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission uses the medical consultant in an advisory capacity for the work conducted by his office. This can be in the form of policy with regard to the operations of the Department of Veterans Affairs' medical care system, or it might be in an advisory capacity on legislative proposals and testimony before Congressional Committees. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and is discussed among several key members of the VA&R Division. Occasionally, perceived administrative problems within VA have been drawn to the attention of the director who calls upon the medical consultant for a solution to these problems. This year, more requests from the various sections of VA&R have been received. Some of the requests dealt with the issue of individual veterans and some were of a general nature. Several of those requests required additional information not available at the time of the request. Fortunately, the availability of multiple medical libraries in the area helped to gather the required information and present it to the requester. These requests are welcome and gives the medical consultant an opportunity to have input in the decision-making process of the various departments of The American Legion.

The medical consultant represents the director at the monthly meetings with the Chief Medical Director, along with other veterans service organization representatives, to gain information concerning the recent operation and direction of the Veterans Health Administration. These meetings are to express concern over the changes in the course of treatment being offered by the Veterans Health Administration.

During the past year, the medical consultant has screened/evaluated 230 cases referred by staff.

Government Life Insurance Activities

The United States Government, acting through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), directly administers four life insurance programs for veterans of the World War I, World War II and Korean War periods, as well as two special on-going programs for veterans in certain service-connected disabled categories. These programs are administered under the titles of United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI) for World War I era veterans, National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) for World War II era, Korean War era and Service-Disabled veterans, and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) for totally disabled veterans who are approved grants for specially adapted housing purposes by VA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 2.36 million policies in force as of March 31, 1999, with a combined life insurance coverage of some $22.8 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately $800-900 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 110,000-120,000 claims annually in addition to a very high number of other policy transactions as the program's policies are individual in nature and are composed of diverse plans of insurance. The VMLI program insures some 3,630 veterans with over $205 million dollars of coverage in force. Currently, these programs are operated totally out of the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA. Previously, part of these programs were also administered at the VA Insurance Center at St. Paul, MN, but all NSLI operations have now been consolidated into the Philadelphia, PA Center as of March 1, 1999.

In addition to the life insurance programs operated by VA, the Department also has supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs. These programs have provided insurance protection, since 1965 and 1970 respectively, to active duty and reserve military personnel (SGLI), and to separated veterans and (recently) to retired and separated Reservists (VGLI). The SGLI and VGLI programs are administered by the Prudential Insurance Company at a

center in Newark, NJ, with all administration and other program expenses being paid by the policyholders from a portion of their insurance premiums, save for the extra hazard mortality experience of wartime periods when general tax revenues take over. These insurance issues are solely Group Term Insurance without dividends, disability benefits, or diverse types of permanent plans with equity values such as the individual policy contracts contained in VA's NSLI program. On March 31, 1999, SGLI provided some 2.36 million active duty and reserve personnel with more than $467 billion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 362,000 veterans with insurance in excess of $31.2 billion dollars. Of these policy accounts, the OSGLI Center in Newark, NJ maintains only VGLI, with the various military service departments maintaining the rest. The OSGLI Center processes between 3,500-4,000 death claims annually with minimal other transactions due to the very limited nature of the coverage. In 1992, the face amount of SGLI coverage was increased to $100,000 with an additional $100,000 permitted as an option, and VGLI became renewable instead of the single five-year term previously in effect. In 1997, Retired Reservists, instead of being insured under the SGLI program until age 60 or the receipt of their first retired pay check, were merged into the VGLI program to allow them the option of retaining their coverage as long as desired. Reservists leaving reserve service, without the amount of time needed for full retirement, may now also be covered under VGLI if desired. In addition, veterans are now permitted to convert their SGLI/VGLI insurance, in partial amounts at different times or in whole, to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial insurance carrier as they leave service, or at any time they are in the VGLI program, without having to wait a stipulated period as was previously the case. Those entering active duty are now automatically covered for a full $200,000 under SGLI. Recent legislation also now permits insured veterans to access up to 50% of their coverage for their current use in cases where medically certified life terminating conditions are in effect. The American Legion insurance unit presented supporting testimony on these legislative changes as they improved greatly the range of financial options available to veterans in these programs, not only at the time of their separation from service, but in later years as their life situation changed as well.

The American Legion's National VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA Center has been working with VA insurance management staff to provide added protection to those veterans leaving service in a totally disabled and life threatening status, to attempt to ensure these veterans do not lose coverage (as happens periodically) due to misunderstanding certain requirements of the SGLI to VGLI transfer system stemming from inconsistencies in the manner these are explained to them as they outprocess from various military facilities, or failing to respond in a timely manner to initial insurance invitations and premium billings, etc. Recommended safeguards include such items as automatic coverage and premium deduction start-ups from military retired pay or VA disability compensation (recommendations have been made for an American Legion legislative resolution on this point), policy liens for past due premiums, and closer contacts between the SGLI/VGLI administering office and veterans in this category. To date, VA insurance management has completed a staff study through the military service departments, the Defense Manpower Data Center, DPC Austin and OSGLI on the methods such individuals can be identified, but has not instituted any specific system whereby these cases can be separated out from the main body of those leaving service and targeted for appropriate further actions, evidently due to cost considerations arising partly from the added expense of such identification procedures, but mostly from estimates of increased claims costs. However, an on-line SGLI/VGLI manual has been prepared for availability to all military outprocessing centers to ensure these have immediate access to correct information concerning the requirements for veterans being separated to convert their in-service SGLI coverage to VGLI coverage.

For all programs, the Department of Veterans Affairs administers and/or supervises some 5.07 million life insurance policies for military personnel and veterans, with a total in force coverage of over $490 billion dollars.

In the NSLI program, thousands of disabled veterans continue to take advantage of the new supplemental Service-Disabled insurance also provided for in the legislative changes of 1992, whereby an additional $20,000 of coverage may be purchased by those veterans having a basic NSLI Service-Disabled policy and who become totally disabled before age 65. The American Legion National VA&R office continues to maintain a special notification system to provide those veterans who choose The American Legion as their representative and who are applying for Service-Disabled NSLI coverage to ensure they are informed as early as possible of these additional benefits. This is particularly needful as the current VA system may, in certain areas such as during the time period while a disability compensation claim is awaiting adjudication in a VA regional office, be faulty in communicating information on benefits such as disability premium waivers and supplemental coverage to veterans who may qualify for it and who may very well be in life threatening (and therefore time constrained) conditions. American Legion staff recommendations in this area have resulted in the VA Insurance Center taking special care in NSLI cases where insurance applicants are in severe medical condition, to provide more timely information on possible supplemental benefits to these applicants so they may apply for them while they are still able to do so.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Insurance Centers continues their on-going effort to provide better service and program enhancements to their veteran policyholders by periodically updating their computer and communication systems, both as part of the overall VA area networks and through the Internet, and placing ever more records and transaction activities, previously done on paper, into their on-line computer systems. In this vein, the VA Insurance Center continues to prepare to embark on an initiative to achieve a "paperless office" in the near future. Final steps are being taken to begin a test project to create electronic folders in lieu of paper ones through document scanning techniques, with the goal of retiring all paper case folders in upcoming years. This will necessitate veterans' service organizations having inquiry status into the NSLI insurance system for the first time. It is hoped this initiative will assist in both cost reduction by elimination of file maintenance, movement, and space rental costs, and increase efficiency in processing insurance actions by allowing insurance specialists immediate access to records and the direct processing of them in a real time mode, without waiting for paper records or batch processing of transactions. Insurance services are augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit has been completed to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries received at the VA insurance Internet address (VAinsurance@vba.va.gov), and by providing insurance information through links to VA's Home Page and VA's insurance Home Page. Additionally, in accordance with the federal initiative to have all or most government disbursements done by Direct Deposit (Electronic Transfer of Funds) the VA Insurance Center has begun a project through mass mailings for the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. With preparations by the Treasury Department now completed, all monthly insurance award/annuity payments will be by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees unless they request a special waiver. It is envisioned this will be in effect within the upcoming year.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Service Units:
VA Insurance Centers at Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN

The American Legion National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff at Philadelphia consists of a Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative and one Secretary/Transcriber. An associated office at the St. Paul Insurance Center has one Supervisor/Insurance Representative and one Secretary/Transcriber. The St. Paul office is now primarily a service unit assisting veterans, their beneficiaries and field veterans service officers in the area of VA Debt Management; the VA office in St. Paul being the site of VA's Debt Management Center. However, assistance on insurance matters in the area of general inquiries is still rendered.

The Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative must have a thorough knowledge of government life insurance laws, regulations and transaction and adjudication procedures, and be able to analyze them correctly in order to properly represent insured veterans and their beneficiaries. The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director and other interested personnel are kept informed on policy matters, changes in VA administrative procedures and all related areas to include new legislative initiatives. NSLI re-open periods for service-disabled and nonservice-disabled veterans, with increased face value coverages, continue to be an American Legion legislative effort.

Daily operations involve a full range of insurance services to include the representation of insured veterans and their beneficiaries, the review of insurance case files and supporting evidence and claims files as required, the furnishing of status reports and account assistance to insureds, beneficiaries, accredited field representatives and VA adjudicative and accounts personnel, close liaison with Department Service Officers and other field personnel to ensure prompt and complete service, and the input to, review of, and where necessary, the correction of VA actions and records both on cases involving disability and death claims and on those involving any of a wide variety of insurance accounting and financial transactions that occur on both active and matured accounts. General insurance information and guidance is provided to field service officers across the United States, along with assistance in the preparation of insurance appeals and claims submittals. Coordination with VA executive and program management personnel is conducted on both individual cases and broad policy/administrative matters. A telephone FAX capability added to the Philadelphia office has greatly expedited claims processing by enabling rapid receipt of documents needed to complete transactions and claims that would otherwise be significantly delayed due to mailing times.

The St. Paul office performs similar operations in the field of debt management operations.

The Philadelphia office has now been provided with two new computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the VA networks and the Internet. These are now operational and have Internet (E-Mail at AMGLAVE@vba.va.gov) and VA Benefits Delivery Network access. It is expected that inquiry access to the insurance system will be provided in the future.

For the period July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1999, the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported:

Insurance

Letters Received	4334
Letters Written	6488
Disability Insurance Claims	724
Death Insurance Claims	2490

Insurance

Insurance Folders Reviewed	3792
In-Force Policy Accounts Reviewed	4588
Telephone Contacts	3835
Personal Contacts	3493
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	3242
VA Case Responses Mailed	7577
* Live Claims, Evidence and other Submittals Presented	8098

* Excludes death claims and includes policy transactions such as dividend, loan and premium actions, plan conversions, cash surrenders, refunds, beneficiary changes, disability claims with related medical and legal evidence, Wills, estate documents, check tracers, master record data changes, disability questionnaires processing and general inquiries.

Debt Management (St. Paul Only):
(Dmc=Debt Management Center)

DMC Claims	837
DMC Case Audits	1534
DMC Debt Waiver Cases	1354

Claims Service

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission provides assistance and representation to all veterans and their survivors in claims and appeals before the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as appeals for upgrade of military and naval discharges and the correction of military and naval records through a staff of sixteen Appeals Representatives. During this period, one Appeals Representative was temporarily assigned to the Veterans Pro Bono Consortium as a case screener.

Within the Table of Organization, the Deputy Director for Operations is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Board Unit, and the Insurance Activities Unit.

Cases at the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted or the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a member of the Board of Veterans Appeals with the appellant. There is an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, three secretaries, and nine Appeals Representatives assigned. During this period, the staff has been augmented by service officers from across the country participating in The American Legion/National Veterans Legal Services Program Veterans Law Internship Program.

Two Appeals Representatives and one secretary are assigned to provide claims service to individuals residing under the jurisdiction of the Washington, DC VA Regional Office which includes the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's, and the Virginia counties of Arlington and Fairfax, as well as those residing overseas.

The Military Review Boards Unit reviews records and files written briefs or appears at personal hearings with an applicant before the Discharge Review Board and the Board for the Correction of Military or Naval Records of the various armed services. One Supervisor and two Appeals Representatives are assigned.

Board of Veterans Appeals

This report reflects the activities of The American Legion's Board of Appeals and Special Claims Unit for the period July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999. During this twelve months, the Appeals Representatives reviewed a total of 8,052 cases for written presentations or other dispositions to the Board of Veterans Appeals. Included in the above total are 494 scheduled hearings in Washington, DC and 117 Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims remands.

Assisting in the review and presentation of complex medical cases is Dr. Nikita Tregubov, Senior Medical Consultant. A total of 230 cases were referred to Dr. Tregubov for advisory opinions, including a significant number of cases where he provided nexus opinions in order to make a claim well-grounded.

During this period, the Board of Veterans Appeals rendered a total of 36,176 decisions which included 7,624 with American Legion representation. These decisions consisted of 1,566 (20.54%) approvals, 2,978 (39.06%) remands, 2,924 (38.35%) denials, and 139 (1.82%) others. The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases, and dismissals.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed and disposed of 7 cases involving requests by Department Service Officers of The American Legion for advisory, legal and medical opinions or assistance in obtaining Administrative Review by the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office, Compensation and Pension Service.

Military and Naval Review Boards

Title 10, United States Code, Sections 1552-1554, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for the Correction of Military and Naval Records.

During the period July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999, the staff of the Military Review Boards Unit provided advice, assistance, and representation and other services to applicants seeking consideration by the Department of Defense review boards in 2,750 cases. These involved such issues as changes of narrative reasons for discharge, upgrade of discharge, entitlement or changes to military disability retirement, reserve retirement payment, issuance or reissuance of military awards or decorations, and other corrections to military and naval records. Of these actions, 48 personal hearings were held and documentary review briefs were submitted in 330 cases.

The following is a breakdown of actions by the respective service boards:

Table 11
Board for the Correction of Military and Naval Records

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
Department of the Air Force	45	7	15
Department of the Army	135	27	20
Department of the Navy	48	5	10
DOT Coast Guard	1	1	100

Military and Naval Discharge Review Boards

Department of the Air Force	40	4	10
Department of the Army	125	38	33
Department of the Navy	122	4	4
DOT Coast Guard	0	0	0

The various Boards have been successful in their efforts to substantially reduce the processing time for an individual's application. This action has been in response to increased Congressional oversight and concern regarding the Boards problems with timeliness of review, questions independent from active components, and a lack of satisfaction by many applicants. The following are current projected timeframes:

Air Force Discharge Review Board:	
With personal hearing	6-12 months
Record review	6-12 months
Air Force Correction Board:	
Record review	18-24 months
Army Discharge Review Board:	
Personal hearing in Washington, DC	6-8 months
Personal hearing with Travel Board	12-18 months
Record review	6-12 months
Army Correction Board:	
Record review	18-24 months
Navy/Marine Discharge Review Board:	
Record review	11-15 months
Navy/Marine Correction Board:	
Record review	12-18 months
DOT Coast Guard Discharge Review Board:	
Record review	12-16 months
DOT Coast Guard Correction Board:	
Record review	10-12 months

The Military Review Board Unit staff also traveled to sites in Maryland, Indiana, and Michigan at the Departments request to provide training to service officers in form preparation, development of supporting evidence, and presentation of Discharge Review and Correction Board cases.

Staff Workload

Part of the overall activity of the various offices of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is reflected in the annual volume of incoming and outgoing correspondence. During this period, approximately 11,200 letters, E-mails and Faxes were received from claimants, service officers, and VA officials. Correspondence received by the Insurance Activities Units in Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN, was in excess of 4,300 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 6,800 pieces.

The combined workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards Unit, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 22,200 cases.

Department Service Officers School

The National Commander continues to authorize the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission to conduct two separate three and one-half day training programs for Department Service Officers and other accredited representatives of The American Legion.

The purpose of the Department Service Officers School is to provide current technical information on a variety of issues relating to the development and presentation of claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The program of instruction includes basic information and updates on subjects such as veterans benefits, claims processing, disability evaluations, rating procedures, the conduct of personal hearings, the development of appeals, interpretation of decisions of the Court of Veterans Appeals and advocacy skills. Instruction is provided by Mr. Ron Abrams, Director of Training, National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and members of their legal staff, as well as staff to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

The goal of this formal training is to improve proficiency of American Legion Service Officers in their effort to represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors. A subgoal is to enable participants to share the knowledge, information, and material with the other service officers in their respective departments.

This School represents a major commitment by The American Legion to develop a network of highly trained and experienced service officers to carry out the VA&R program. The cooperation and participation of the Departments continues at a very high level.

The Twenty-sixth session of the Department Service Officers School was held July 20-25, 1998 at the Radisson Hotel Centre in Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 120 service officer attendees. The Twenty-seventh session was held March 17-20, 1999 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. There were 120 service officer participants. This was followed immediately by the Department Service Officers Seminar and National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference.

National Field Service

The National Field Service (NFS), under the supervision of the Deputy Director for Health Care, has spent the majority of the past year in a reorganization mode. As a result of the Veterans Affairs Local User Evaluation (VALUE) workbook and report card development, NFS has issued a new mission statement, which is "To promote universal access to quality health care for veterans and their families through advocacy, service, and support." The new objectives of the NFS are to:

- Quantify and qualify VHA performance in areas of importance to veterans, over time,
- Monitor network performance in relation to one another to ensure equity of health care delivery across the system,
- Identify variations and contributing factors,
- Track impact of legislative, policy or structural changes in VHA over time, and
- Provide veterans with easy to read and important information about their health care.

The NFS, through the institution of the VALUE book methodology, began to achieve these goals by using a standard instrument to perform comparative analysis, tracking VISN performance data, conducting town hall meetings and focus groups with veterans, and made

recommendations to VHA and Congress. Final reports from the site visits were distributed to approximately 50 sources to include VHA leadership, Congressional delegations, other VSOs and professional organizations, and, of course, local American Legion officials.

NFS representatives are assigned specific areas of the 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) to cover. During the period of June 30, 1998 to July 1, 1999, site visits were conducted in VISNs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 19. NFS representatives participated in a special task force visit to VISN 22 to investigate the closure of research at the West Los Angeles facilities. This was accomplished in spite of being one Field Service Representative short as a result of his deployment to Bosnia with the US Army Reserves in March 1999.

In addition to their usual duties, Field Service Representatives, as a result of their compelling reports, have been called upon to testify before Congress, attend VISN director meetings, and have been invited to MAC and other special committee meetings. NFS was also invited to have a display booth showcasing the VALUE book methodology at the National VA Research and Development Conference. A new brochure was published this year highlighting the role and functions of the NFS and it was distributed at a variety of conferences and meetings.

Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

The Fifty-third National Advisory Committee Meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was held in Richmond, Virginia, May 5-6, 1999. This year's meeting was moved from the traditional Fall timeframe to Spring to accommodate more members of the VAVS National Executive Committee

The American Legion representative on the National Advisory Committee is the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission who serves as the National VAVS representative. This year, the Director was represented by Tim Jones, who himself was substituting for Harry Kelly, Assistant Director for Program Management. Mr. Kelly also serves as the National Advisory Committee Treasurer.

The 1999 winner of the James H. Parke Scholarship Award was Jodi Pavolini of Temple, Texas. Runner-up awards went to Aaron Altman of Togus, Maine; Daniel Merced of Miami, Florida; and Nathan Garnto of Dublin, Georgia. The Parke Memorial Scholarship Award was established in honor of the first Director of VA Voluntary Service, who is also the founding father of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. Each medical center nominates one VAVS student volunteer for receipt of the award.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Chairman, Chester F. Stellar, views The American Legion Volunteer Program as a priority issue. The American Legion's goal is to increase both the number of hospital and community-based volunteers and the number of voluntary hours contributed for the coming year. Representatives of VA Voluntary Service provide overviews of the various volunteer programs at each of the eight VA&R workshops held in conjunction with the annual National Information Conferences.

Accredited Representatives

In completing VA Form 21-22, Power of Attorney, the claimant appoints The American Legion as their accredited representative in a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is the duty of the organization to provide assistance, advice, and counsel to veterans, survivors and dependents so as to ensure their rights are protected and they receive all benefits to which they may be entitled under the law. The American Legion, as a Congressionally chartered organization, conducts this service

program through the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals is provided by Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. These representatives have been recommended for accreditation by their respective Departments because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of federal benefit programs, especially those provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To become an Accredited Representative of The American Legion, a formal application (VA Form 2-21) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, with an accompanying endorsement signed by the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. The Director, as the National Certifying Officer, or the Assistant Director for Information Management, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of the VA for action. This form is never sent directly to the General Counsel, as accreditation will not be granted unless the request has been certified by the organization. Upon approval of the application, the individual is recognized by VA as an Accredited Representative of The American Legion and will receive official notification of this action from the VA. The accreditation will remain in effect until such time as the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission receives a written request from the Department Commander or Department Adjutant to cancel the individual's accreditation due to death, retirement, or resignation. The Director will then notify the General Counsel that the accreditation should be canceled.

New accreditations and cancellations are reported monthly on VA's General List of Accredited Representatives—VA Information Bulletin IB 2-51. During the reporting period, 91 requests for accreditation and 203 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 1999, there were 1,100 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion. Any questions concerning the proper procedure or regulations pertaining to accreditation of individuals or their activities should be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission in the Washington office.

Distribution of VA Releases

To ensure that the staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, service officers in the field, members of the VA&R Commission, and other interested parties are kept advised and informed about American Legion policies, recent legislative action, changes in VA regulations, policies and procedures, the Administrative section of the Director's office receives and distributes VA news releases, printed changes in VA regulations and manuals, and other informational material to all VA&R staff. This information is then disseminated through VA&R Bulletins and Memoranda. In this reporting period 83 Bulletins and Memoranda were distributed.

Special requests, from the field for VA publications and material, can be submitted to the Director's office and an attempt will be made to provide the requested material. However, an attempt should first be made to obtain the material through the Publications Officer at the nearest VA regional office.

Personnel and Organization

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division at the Washington office from July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999.

Mrs. Gloria Knight was reassigned back to the Legislative Division from VA&R at her request. The position remains vacant with recruitment efforts underway to fill the vacancy.

The VA&R Division accepted the resignations of Appeals Representatives Robert Parks, Joyce Price, Chyrdonna White, Hezekiah Hayes and Anita McKim-Spilker. Three new Appeals Representatives were hired and assigned to the Board of Veterans Appeals: Andrew Gillispie, Barry Scharbrough and Mark Seavey. Mrs. Sylvia Evans was also hired as a Secretary and assigned to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

The table of organization of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 1999 is as follows:

Table 12

Director	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Deputy Director for Health Care Issues	1
Field Representatives	4
Secretary	1
Deputy Director for Operations	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Program Management	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Information Management	1
Secretary	1
Assistant Director for Resource Development	1
Assistant Director for Persian Gulf Task Force	1
Appeals Representative	1
Research Analyst	1
Supervisor, Review and Correction Boards	1
Review Board Representative	1
Office Manager, Board of Vets. Appeals Unit	1
Appeals Representatives	9
Case Screener, Court of Veterans Appeals	0
Secretaries	3
Medical Consultant	1
Veterans and Dependents Claims Unit	1
Secretary	1
Total Personnel—Washington office	36
Insurance Field offices:	
Philadelphia, PA	
Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative	1
Secretary/Transcriber	1
St. Paul, MN	
Supervisor of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative	1
Secretary/Transcrber	1
TOTAL PERSONNEL	
Field offices	4
Washington office	36
VA&R TOTAL	40

Staff Field Assignments

The staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, including the director, deputy directors and assistant directors attended various Legion functions around the nation such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, Conferences and fact-finding trips. Departments visited included: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, and Wyoming. The staff also participated in eight National Information Conferences in 1998, and four in Spring 1999.

The Field Service Unit performed visitations to selected VA medical centers in all 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). The entire Division staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

In addition, the Director received official visits from representatives of the Governments of Russia, Romania, and South Korea. The purpose of these visits was to discuss the benefit programs provided for U.S. veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the service program of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Certificates of Appreciation

Under authority of May 1958 NEC Resolution, we have continued the program of awarding a Certificate of Appreciation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon their retirement or resignation, "For Services Rendered and Cooperation Extended in Connection with The American Legion's Rehabilitation Program." Under criteria established in line with the enabling resolution, nominations for the award are submitted by Department or National officials of The American Legion twice a year. The nominations are considered by a committee of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission at meetings preceding the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, and the National Convention. The Committee recommends to the Commission the names of those considered deserving of the Certificate.

Eleven Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999, for an overall total of 1,243 since the program was initiated.

Citations for Meritorious Service

This Citation, authorized by the National Executive Committee in May 1956, seeks to recognize the long and faithful service of Post Service Officers and others. Nominations for the Citation are submitted by Department officials to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director at any time; the Director, acting for the Chairman and members of the Commission, issues the award.

One hundred-thirteen Citations "For Meritorious Service and Loyal Cooperation in The American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program" were presented during the period July 1, 1998—June 30, 1999. Since this type of recognition and appreciation began, 4,315 Citations for Meritorious Service have been presented.

Persian Gulf War Task Force

The American Legion's Persian Gulf Task Force was created in October 1995. The mission of the Task Force is to enhance The American Legion's service to America's newest generation of war veterans, their families, and their advocates. The Task Force has vigorously approached its mission, and has undertaken many efforts to accomplish it. These efforts include Town Hall Meetings, oversight of scientific and clinical studies, oversight of VA's compensation system, site visits to VA medical centers and regional offices, the upgrading of our presence on the World Wide Web, and the maintenance of a toll free number for Gulf War veterans.

The Task Force expanded its analytical and outreach capabilities in 1999 by replacing its vacant secretary position with a research analyst, Ms. Lisa Spahr. Lisa arrived with a background in clinical research, social work and advocacy. Lisa has undergone risk communication training since joining the Task Force, and is undertaking more outreach duties. Lisa is focusing on reviewing the findings of the completed scientific studies investigating Gulf War veterans' illnesses after our contract with our medical consultant has expired. She also is managing our site on the World Wide Web, and the revision and creation of outreach materials.

The Task Force conducted a number of Town Hall Meetings, service officer training, and outreach efforts in North and South Dakota, Colorado, Texas, North Carolina, Minnesota and Georgia. The events improved our outreach to Gulf War veterans, and better prepared Legionnaires to serve these veterans within their communities.

The Task Force noted an improvement in the allowance rate for Gulf War undiagnosed illness claims following successful efforts to revamp the way VA adjudicates these claims. Reports from the field still indicate, however, that many of these claims are denied. The Task Force is preparing to report this to Congress on a tentatively scheduled hearing on September 30, 1999.

The Task Force has continued its steady oversight of the Department of Defense's efforts to investigate exposures to troops in the Gulf to environmental agents, and the implementation of lessons learned from the Gulf War. DoD has made steady progress in these efforts, but it has not found any clear causes of these illnesses. The Task Force, for its part, has found DoD's efforts to be credible and part of a successful effort to improve its relationship with The American Legion. All the recommended changes to DoD doctrine, in the wake of the Gulf experience, have not occurred as quickly as we would like, particularly as they relate to medical surveillance and Depleted Uranium training. The Task Force is currently planning a series of site visits to validate some DoD claims.

The Task Force mailed over 9,000 *Gulf War Veterans' Guide To Benefits* booklets, and distributed over 10,000 others to Gulf War veterans and service officers. The Guide has proven to be a great success, and the Task Force is creating a revised edition geared to all Gulf War era veterans in order to provide a more comprehensive outreach tool to the Departments.

The Task Force successfully lobbied Congress to open VA health care to war veterans after future wars, and to presume that Gulf War veterans are ill from their wartime experience and exposures in the Persian Gulf. The law, signed on November 11, 1998, achieved all the goals spelled out in VA&R resolutions, and laid out the next steps for the Federal Government in relation to Gulf War veterans' illnesses.

The Task Force has expanded its scope to include all Gulf War era issues, from Depleted Uranium to expanded education benefits, and the anthrax vaccine. It works closely with other divisions in the National Headquarters in order to provide the best service to these veterans, their families and the service officers helping them. It has also cooperated with the Membership Division in order to encourage those we serve to join the Legion family.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
American Legion Auxiliary
Kristine W. West, National Chairwoman, New Hampshire

"Reach for Success," the theme of our National President, Virginia Hobbs from Kentucky, was truly met by the members of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committees reaching out to veterans across America. From Unit member volunteers, to District, Counties, Departments and including our National Staff of The American Legion, our veterans have been cared for in many ways.

For the first time, 12 National Information Conferences were held during this year versus the traditional eight. It was a great opportunity to share the goals and objectives and receive updated information on veterans affairs and benefits. We, as an Auxiliary, are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated and knowledgeable staff in the Washington, DC office, serving on the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Field Service orientation courses were conducted at all 12 NICs and it came across loud and clear that our volunteers are doing an outstanding job for veterans in their communities, VA medical facilities, State Veterans' Homes, and in the home of the veteran.

A great privilege and honor was given to myself, Vice Chairwoman, and Committee members to join the National President, Vice President and Secretary to meet in Washington, DC with Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Togo D. West, Jr. Meeting with his staff and receiving updated information on veterans affairs and benefits and cemeteries, etc., was indeed a positive re-enforcement that our veterans are being cared for. However, we will continue to have a constant concern and "battle" to ensure veterans benefits are still a high priority to our elected government officials, statewide, as well as members of the United States Congress.

A special Veterans Day card, that was designed and suggested to use by Auxiliary members, was well received within the Departments and widely distributed by our members. Many were colored, some enhanced by placing an American Flag on them, and others printed on colored paper. 88,324 Veterans Day cards were distributed by 72.5% of Units reporting. This was the first year it was suggested by the National VA&R Chairperson and by comments on reports, many Units will continue this idea to honor veterans.

Saluting our veterans, during the week of February 14th, was well attended across America honoring "Salute to Hospitalized Veterans." Thousands of volunteers distributed specially made valentines for our veterans and they were given out by members of The American Legion family as well as school children. Truly a remarkable display of love for the veteran to let them know they are not forgotten.

The American Legion Auxiliary, along with many powerful individuals and National leaders, were saddened by the loss of a true patriot and friend, Zachary Fisher, founder of the Fisher Houses who passed away in June 1999. National President Virginia Hobbs presented a special memorial donation to the Fisher House Foundation on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary. Fisher House is a vital part of the VA&R program and Auxiliary members have given great service to the 26 houses that adorn the countryside at military base hospitals or VA facility grounds. Reports show that a total of $9,394.00 in donations were given to the Fisher Houses. Many Unit members who live near a Fisher House volunteer their time cooking meals for their families, doing landscaping, and many other household chores to make a very difficult time for military or veterans families seem much warmer and happier.

JC Penney, Co.—National Organization on Disability Award, new this year, brought great interest to our members as we expressed continued concern for the disabled veterans in our communities. We have the esteemed privilege of promoting this award that is given

by the JC Penney, Co. in the amount of $1,000.00, administered by the National Organization on Disability, in Washington, DC. There were a total of five entries submitted this first year.

With 85% of Departments reporting, the results show we did "Reach for Success" for our veterans and their families.

Table 13

	Volunteers	Hours	Expenditures
VA Facilities	26,147	726,369	$3,020,789
Field Service	29,948	829,866	1,037,903
Home Service	35,338	859,914	$ 774,129
Grand Total	91,433	2,416,149	$4,832,822

A total of 1,085,000 veterans were cared for in some way through the efforts and extreme dedication of our volunteers.

In addition to our traditional volunteerism at VA hospitals, State-owned veterans homes and local nursing homes, our members continue the tradition of our VA Christmas gift shops, as well as hosting bingo's, ice cream socials, holiday parties and many other activities for our veterans. Some Departments did share additional information which I would like to highlight below:

Alaska reported 28 new volunteers for Field Service.

Arizona recruited a total of 107 new volunteers of which 64 were non-affiliates.

Connecticut continues their Stand Down and attendance increases each year.

Delaware continues their tradition of a sleep-out to heighten the awareness of homeless veterans.

Indiana reported 132 new volunteers and opened a new Homeless Home for Women Veterans.

Kentucky reported 80 new volunteers: 37 Auxiliary, 8 VolunTeens, and 35 non-affiliates.

Maine has a food drive for Vet Centers. High schools and Middle schools donated over 9,400 items of food. The drive lasts approximately 3 weeks and all the food is distributed by vans to the Vet Centers.

Minnesota reported 63 new regular scheduled volunteers, 12 VolunTeens, and 1 non-affiliate. They also have a Stand Down and do lots of work with Fisher House.

Mississippi's Department President's project was to raise funds for VA hospitals and State Veterans' Homes. Nearly $40,000 was realized.

Montana takes veterans to a Post Home and allows the veterans to select their own meals, watch and in some cases help to prepare their meals.

Nebraska is very concerned about the two hospitals that closed, and only hopes the remaining hospital continues to operate and assist the deserving veterans.

Oregon reported a 10% increase in reporting from the previous year, and volunteers doubled in their Department, which was approximately 1,300.

Pennsylvania held a special drive to collect blankets for the homeless veterans. A total of 338 were collected.

South Dakota had a special project of raising funds to purchase televisions for VA, and a total of 17 TVs were purchased at $5,236.

Vermont VAVS representative travels 200 miles round-trip to volunteer at the VA hospital; drives the veterans to and from regional VAs for treatment not provided at their VA. Department President project for Vermont was raising funds for the State Veterans' Home.

Many Department Chairwomen are very coy when it comes to reporting individual accomplishments of members, Units, or Districts and this report covers only a fraction of what our members really do for our veterans. I will continue to promote the importance of reporting to our Department leaders and let our volunteers know, we can't do without them!

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
National President Virginia Hobbs

National President Virginia Hobbs of Radcliff, Kentucky, was sworn into office at the organization's National Convention in September of 1998. Her theme was "Reach for Success" as she emphasized that success is individually defined and qualitative, not quantitative.

Special projects this year included the initiative of fund raising for the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, organ and tissue donation awareness, Random Acts of Kindness, the USO, Habitat for Humanity, and continued support of the Taste of the NFL.

Americanism

Each Department made important contributions to its community through teaching of flag etiquette, patriotic programs, and many other innovative projects. This year, the Americanism program had a very special program to work on raising funds for the World War II Memorial to be built in Washington, DC. More than 1,300 Units report donations. To-date, more than $100,000 have been raised by the Auxiliary to this effort.

The Americanism Youth Conference conducted by Freedoms Foundation, April 8 through 11, 1999, was titled "Freedom Encourages Success." The 71 students in attendance left there understanding exactly what this meant.

More than 2,250 Units worked on "Get Out the Vote" campaigns. Activities ranged from voter registration to know your candidates gatherings. Many Units made phone calls and gave rides to the polls.

Our essay contest this year allowed the youth of our country to express how they felt about voting. More than 1,300 Units participated in the National Americanism Essay Contest. More than 34,000 students submitted essays titled "Voting—Why It's Important" or "Voting—A Privilege and Responsibility."

More than 100 girls applied for the Girls Scout Achievement Award from some 30 Departments. The winner receives a $1,000 scholarship and a trip to the National Convention. To support our many programs of the Americanism Committee, we asked our Units to contribute to the Spirit of Youth Fund. Almost $23,000 had been recorded to help with our youth programs from more than 1,000 Units.

Our Units continue to support the Citizens Flag Alliance and have written and called their elected officials with their concern to protect our flag. American Flags were presented to schools, churches, and other organizations numbering more than 150,000.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund uniquely affords us the ideal opportunity to help our own members. It's a strong tradition of members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and we certainly maintained that tradition this year in the AEF program. Forty-eight Departments reported donations of more than $150,000 to the program.

One Unit sponsored a special breakfast to benefit AEF. Others pledged money through various efforts. One very supportive Legionnaire shaved his head and raised $100 for our program.

Awareness was also created when we joined forces with The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF). Due to all the recent weather-related tragedies, its fund has been inundated with requests for assistance. In an effort to respond quickly and aid as many members as possible, the AEF worked directly with it. If the member met our eligibility criteria, the grant committee reviewed her request. If she was not eligible for an AEF grant, her application was returned to the NEF committee. By accepting the applications used by NEF, it saved time and was easier for members.

Through the Displaced Homemaker Fund, we offered financial grants to members who had to enter or return to the job market because of divorce, illness, or death of a spouse, and who lacked the skills or training needed to obtain satisfactory employment. One member was assisted this year.

Children and Youth

Children's Miracle Network remained one of the largest benefactors of funds contributed by the 45 Departments who reported. Video games were collected; dances held; balloons sold; auctions, dinners, and walkathons held, and change from kids collected.

The American Legion Auxiliary, for the second consecutive year, continues to be the largest contributor of Spinoza bears. Nearly every one of the 45 reports told of success in providing Spinoza bears to terminally-ill children and adults. In addition, many Units collected and distributed stuffed animals to firemen, police officers, hospitals, and abuse shelters to be given to injured and neglected children.

Halloween Safety, Make a Wish Foundation, Special Olympics, juvenile delinquency, teen suicide programs, burn centers, fingerprinting, among others, were only a few of the many diverse projects mentioned in reports. Many special activities were held during National Family Week as well as Children and Youth Month.

What a great record has been accomplished by the Departments who reported. Cash to needy children totaled nearly $520,000 and the estimated cost of goods reported was $860,000 for total direct aid of $1,401,500. More than 1,275,000 kids benefited from a total $4,390,000, and volunteers in 4,830 Units contributed 795,650 hours in Children and Youth projects in their communities.

Community Service

The objectives of the Community Service program were met with more than 93,520 volunteers serving communities and participating in projects that made a difference in the lives of others. This year's new emphasis was the Organ/Tissue Donor Program—a program very close to the heart of our National President. It is with pride that we report 5,597 Auxiliary members will share their lives by their decision to be organ and tissue donors.

More than 7,500 members opened their hearts and lent a hand on the eighth annual Make a Difference Day. Five hundred fifty-nine Units entered projects such as Coats for Kids, purchasing school supplies for needy students, volunteering at child crisis centers, cleaning up at veterans homes, beautification programs, tree plantings, fingerprinting of children, and clothing drives. Junior Units participated in youth-oriented activities in 311 Units.

Once again, Auxiliary members in 695 Units did their share in promoting National Family Week by reinforcing family values as they participated in activities such as Family

Fun Run, distributing clothing for the needy, stocking food pantries, participating in parent-child story hours, reading books to a school, serving dinners to families of those hospitalized, attending church as family, and submitting newspaper articles on family values and Family Week activities.

The Auxiliary once again sponsored and promoted the program of the Taste of the NFL. More than 450 Units participated in fund raisers, raising $12,460. Two thousand one hundred ninety-six Units participated in fund raisers for local food banks in their communities with $152,915 donated and food goods valued at $166,497.

Practicing random kindness was an effective way to get in touch with the job of giving without expecting something in return. More than 3,100 Units practiced acts of kindness in their homes and communities.

Units continued to incorporate in the Community Service program the national blood program of the American Red Cross. Six thousand five hundred forty-six members gave blood. Units sponsored blood drives or assisted by providing refreshments, signing cards, and helping with registrations.

Auxiliary members continue their efforts to support the Habitat for Humanity International. This year, 320 Units supported the HFHI program to make decent shelters a matter of conscience and action.

Education

Literacy has been a major emphasis of the Education Committee. Reports indicate that 461 Units participated in baby, preschool, or school age literacy programs; and 226 Units provided assistance to non-traditional students. Six hundred thirty-eight schools were adopted with 1,277 members volunteering, and 565 classrooms were adopted and 861 volunteers participated. A total of 565 Units were involved in the America Reads Challenge, and 861 volunteers contributed to this important effort. Units provided special scholarships for non-traditional students who were attempting to further their education, provided tutoring for the GED, helped with baby-sitting and rides to school, and supported these students in the workforce by providing appropriate interview and job-related clothing.

Two hundred sixty-one Units participated in American Education Week. These Units provided special decorations for school halls and classrooms, gave treats to school personnel, and cooked special meals to show their appreciation for their school personnel.

The special Junior Project, Pack up and Distribute the Books was also supported by Senior members. Four hundred twenty-one Junior groups scoured their communities and packed up and distributed 33,785 books. Scholarships to support education are given freely by Units, Departments, and our National Organization. There were 389 entries for the National President's Scholarship and 155 entries for the Spirit of Youth Scholarship. Units provided 2,107 scholarships valued at $915,295, and Departments provided 1,220 scholarships valued at $249,079. During the 1998-99 year, our National Organization supported the new Non-Traditional Scholarships. A $1,000 scholarship was provided for non-traditional students in each of our five divisions.

Girls State

Nearly 20,000 high school graduates of the Year 2000 received a head start on their future by attending Girls State sessions nationwide. Not only were the participants taught the fundamentals of our democratic government, they experienced a strong sense of patriotism and camaraderie.

Special emphasis was placed on orientation and student selection this year. Orientations on the Unit and District levels were encouraged and made a requirement for attendance to Girls State. Remarkable improvements and added interest was noted when Girls State information was added to Department web sites. Countless hours were donated by hundreds of volunteers to ensure that the citizens received the best instruction possible.

During the week of July 24-31, two representatives from 48 states attended Girls Nation in Washington, DC. Senators presented bills and resolutions that were debated enthusiastically for passage. Laying wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Arlington Cemetery and various monuments made the Senators aware of the sacrifices of our veterans.

The Senators heard from Mary Ellen Withrow, National Treasurer of the United States; Sen. John D. Rockefeller of West Virginia, and Marsha Ivins, NASA astronaut. A highlight of the week was meeting President Bill Clinton in a joint reception with Boys Nation.

Junior Activities

Juniors across America, in organized groups or as individuals, lived up to the Auxiliary Preamble they have learned and recite, by taking part in numerous programs. Our Juniors continued our commitment to the President's Summit—"America's Promise." Senior members provided the relationship of a caring adult and structured activities. Juniors learned life skills, opportunities of volunteerism, and the rewards of making a commitment to help others. Four thousand sixty-six projects, identified by Juniors in grades 9-12 as "our commitment," culminated in 35,867 hours. All ages of Juniors participated in giving an additional 71,026 of hours in community service volunteerism.

One thousand six hundred eighty-five Junior of 538 Units organized a "Pack Up the Books and Distribute" campaign. Books collected and purchased were delivered to homes, group homes, shelters, day cares and schools. Literacy fairs were held and Juniors took delight in being children's hour readers.

Americanism projects were in abundance with strong accentuation of flag education and appreciation and the flag amendment. One thousand three hundred seventy-three Junior VolunTeens in 226 Units, served 19,291 hours to benefit our veterans.

One hundred fifty-three new or revised organized Junior groups were started this year. The Pen Pal program continued to soar and expanded with the addition of the e-mail Pen Pals.

Legislative

Primary focus of the American Legion Auxiliary Legislative program was to know and follow the legislative leads of The American Legion in its endeavors to lobby for veterans. In addition to direct communication from The American Legion, members kept abreast of legislative issues through bulletins, legislative alerts, and various Legion publications.

The 43,555 letters written to lawmakers and the 17, 238 personal contacts, combined with the 85 letters to the President of the United States, had a tremendous impact in building relationships with elected officials. The combination of letter writing and other contacts coupled with the 14,111 responses from legislators put both the Auxiliary and elected officials "on record" concerning critical issues.

Nine hundred seventy-eight Units held special legislative meetings which provided members and the public the opportunity to meet representatives, to hear congressional speakers, and to take part in round table discussions.

The National Legislative Council and the Auxiliary were alerted to several key issues including the GI Bill of Health; Senate Joint Resolution 14 and House Joint Resolution 33, the flag amendment. Most recent legislative alerts stressed the necessity to urge Congress to enact a realistic FY 2000 VA Budget Resolution.

Letters of appreciation and plaques were presented to legislators who supported the flag amendment, and voting records of political candidates on veterans issues were studied prior to election.

Membership

"Race for the Roses" was the 1999 membership theme. The whole concept of thoroughbred racing lent itself to a variety of fun and exciting ideas for Departments, Districts, and Units to use. The focus for our membership efforts was three-fold: the actual Race for the Roses, new awareness for our members, and growth within the organization.

The Silver Brigade Award was created as the ultimate Recruiter Award. The success of this award is reflected in the 64 recipients who recruited at least 1,600 members in order to wear the navy blue blazer with the elegant Silver Brigade insignia.

Poppy

One of our most beloved programs of the American Legion Auxiliary is the poppy program because it symbolizes the sacrifices paid by our veterans. Six thousand nine hundred thirty-one Units reported ordering 7,046,786 poppies. It was reported that poppy contributions amounted to $2,730,970.

Eight hundred forty-three veterans were recruited to make poppies in VA facilities throughout the Departments making approximately 7,555,918 poppies. Poppy makers earned $485,584.

Units reported using poppies for table decorations, corsages, boutonnieres, floral arrangements, holiday floats, and tray favors for patients in VA medical centers and nursing homes. Poppies were reported being used in decorating veterans graves and poppy bouquets were placed in houses of worship.

Approximately 600 Units reported sponsoring the Poppy Poster contest and some 400 Units report holding a Miss Poppy contest. Today, we must continue our poppy program to remind America about the value of this precious memorial flower.

Independent Auditor's Report

Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. Harold L. Miller, National Commander
and Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statement of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly owned subsidiary (the Legion) as of December 31, 1998 and 1997, and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of the Legion's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and subsidiary as of December 31, 1998 and 1997, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audits were performed for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The reconciliation of audited financial statements to internal financial statements is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

Olive LLP
Indianapolis, Indiana
April 2, 1999

Assets	December 31 1998	1997
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,607,309	$ 1,059,824
Restricted cash	58,118	56,472
Due from The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (Special Account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Accounts receivable		
Emblem Division	125,152	160,294
Publications Division	1,745,820	1,588,008
Other	1,734,259	1,548,935
Prepaid expenses and deposits	652,546	550,161
Deferred membership expense	3,910,895	3,977,001
Inventories		
Emblem Division	1,352,573	1,426,913
Publications Division	798,894	219,559
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	203,676	227,562
Prepaid pension expense	11,199,193	9,699,864
	25,388,435	22,514,593
Investments		
Segregated for Designated Funds	15,793,240	14,716,561
Segregated for Washington, D. C. building	1,268,400	1,118,911
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	960,083	951,587
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	39,506,413	34,215,155
Other	23,672,670	22,256,151
	81,200,806	73,258,365
Property, equipment, and intangible asset		
Land—Indianapolis parking lot	238,359	238,359
Washington, D. C. real estate		
Land	80,000	80,000
Building	4,172,718	4,138,918
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis, In.	8,832,184	9,293,188
Washington, D. C.	1,547,095	1,567,235
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	694,233	735,972
	15,564,589	16,053,672
Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(11,020,918)	(10,776,788)
	4,543,671	5,276,884
Total assets	$111,132,912	$101,049,842

Liabilities	December 31 1998	1997
Accounts payable	$ 2,662,498	$ 2,917,143
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	97,498	145,025
Deferred advertising income	71,828	47,020
Deferred dues income	20,138,838	20,053,298
Deferred income—direct membership solicitation	854,102	694,473
Accrued vacation benefits	619,191	599,643
Other liabilities	1,561,277	1,363,775
Deferred dues income—Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	30,627,517	26,563,739
Total liabilities	56,632,749	52,384,116
Net Assets		
Unrestricted—general	11,423,800	8,972,187
Unrestricted—designated		
Citizens Flag Alliance	203,676	227,562
Computer reserve	500,000	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	100,000
Convention stabilization	257,699	222,489
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	100,000
Oratorical contests	285,690	245,295
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	8,870,171	7,656,365
Real estate reserve	1,268,400	1,118,911
Reserve Fund	2,316,653	2,259,838
Restricted Fund	13,447,879	12,400,778
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	5,440,343	4,870,748
Veterans' rehabilitation/child welfare (Special Account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Others	51,298	55,153
	46,265,609	40,729,326
Temporarily Restricted		
Buick scholarship	601,540	435,266
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	992,722	975,594
Samsung scholarship	1,489,959	987,248
National Emergency Fund	103,414	
Others	46,919	538,292
	3,234,554	2,936,400
Permanently restricted		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
Total net assets	54,500,163	48,665,726
Total liabilities and net assets	$111,132,912	$101,049,842

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

	Year Ended December 31, 1998						Year Ended December 31, 1997					
	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, Gains and Other Support												
National member dues	$22,946,958	$ 1,429,611	$24,376,569			$24,376,569	$23,230,845	$ 1,337,103	$24,567,948			$24,567,948
Sales of Emblem items	8,112,800		8,112,800			8,112,800	7,153,675		7,153,675			7,153,675
Sales—NPC	1,112,357		1,112,357			1,112,357	800,858		800,858			800,858
Advertising	8,547,502		8,547,502			8,547,502	9,841,301		9,841,301			9,841,301
Direct membership solicitation	1,986,017		1,986,017			1,986,017	2,053,871		2,053,871			2,053,871
American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation support	508,886		508,886			508,886	502,072		502,072			502,072
Contributions	743,326		743,326	$ 816,936		1,560,262	637,447		637,447	$2,094,658		2,732,105
MBNA financial program income	1,720,137		1,720,137			1,720,137	1,794,782		1,794,782			1,794,782
Label and printing fees	1,905,963		1,905,963			1,905,963	1,925,368		1,925,368			1,925,368
Member service fees income	1,870,035		1,870,035			1,870,035	1,731,244		1,731,244			1,731,244
Investment income, net of trustee fees	742,393	1,215,716	1,958,109	369,113		2,327,222	465,023	1,165,251	1,830,274	461,511		2,291,785
Net realized gains (losses)		86,483	86,483	273,260		359,743	(167,824)	(3,017)	(170,841)	573		(170,268)
Other	169,838	2,312,740	2,482,578			2,482,578	1,353,198	2,346,134	3,699,332			3,699,332
	50,366,212	5,044,550	55,410,762	1,459,309		56,870,071	51,521,860	4,845,471	56,367,331	2,556,742		58,924,073
Net assets released from restriction	1,306,768		1,306,768	(1,306,768)			2,244,133		2,244,133	(2,244,133)		
Net assets released from designation	4,992,948	(4,992,948)					4,515,482	(4,515,482)				
Total revenues, gains and other support	56,665,928	51,602	56,717,530	152,541		56,870,071	58,281,475	329,989	58,611,464	312,609		58,924,073
Expenses												
Salaries	10,034,987		10,034,987			10,034,987	9,860,367		9,860,367			9,860,367
Employee benefits	787,695		787,695			787,695	658,338		658,338			658,338
Cost of sales	6,499,244		6,499,244			6,499,244	5,459,409		5,459,409			5,459,409
Direct publication	12,476,667		12,476,667			12,476,667	13,455,570		13,455,570			13,455,570
Executive and staff travel	981,534		981,534			981,534	1,071,224		1,071,224			1,071,224
Commission and committee	1,303,619		1,303,619			1,303,619	1,318,820		1,318,820			1,318,820
Printing and postage	3,927,315		3,927,315			3,927,315	4,665,880		4,665,880			4,665,880
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,412,996		1,412,996			1,412,996	2,359,863		2,359,863			2,359,863
Office and other operating	8,724,468		8,724,468			8,724,468	9,272,839		9,272,839			9,272,839
Occupancy and usage	2,033,524		2,033,524			2,033,524	2,403,781		2,403,781			2,403,781
Special projects and programs	4,526,757		4,526,757			4,526,757	5,551,196		5,551,196			5,551,196
Total expenses	52,708,806		52,708,806			52,708,806	56,077,287		56,077,287			56,077,287
Change in Net Assets Before Net Unrealized Gains	3,957,122	51,602	4,008,724	152,541		4,161,265	2,204,188	329,989	2,534,177	312,609		2,846,786
Net Unrealized Gains	64,809	1,462,750	1,527,559	145,613		1,673,172	245,363	3,070,116	3,315,479	358,836		3,674,315
Change in Net Assets	4,021,931	1,514,352	5,536,283	298,154		5,834,437	2,449,551	3,400,105	5,849,656	671,445		6,521,101
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	8,972,187	31,757,139	40,729,326	2,936,400	$5,000,000	48,665,726	8,017,150	26,862,520	34,879,670	2,264,955	$5,000,000	42,144,625
Transfer of funds	(1,570,318)	1,570,318					(1,494,514)	1,494,514				
Net Assets, End of Year	$11,423,800	$34,841,809	$46,265,609	$3,234,554	$5,000,000	$54,500,163	$ 8,972,187	$31,757,139	$40,729,326	$2,936,400	$5,000,000	$48,665,726

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Operating Activities		
Change in net assets	$5,834,437	$ 6,521,101
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities		
Depreciation and amortization	1,062,017	1,492,407
Loss on sale of investments	12,658	170,268
(Gain) loss on sale of fixed assets	(33,424)	158,932
Unrealized gains on investments	(1,673,172)	(3,674,315)
Changes in		
Restricted cash	(1,646)	(26,620)
Accounts receivable	(307,994)	(336,175)
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(102,385)	658,865
Deferred expenses	66,106	960,711
Investment in CFA	23,886	(46,200)
Inventories	(504,995)	161,492
Prepaid pension expense	(1,499,329)	(1,557,681)
Accounts payable	(254,645)	462,601
Deferred income	4,286,228	2,206,309
Accrued vacation	19,548	26,714
Other liabilities	197,502	593,470
Net cash provided by operating activities	7,124,792	7,771,878
Investing Activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(315,917)	(459,332)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	20,537	24,212
Purchase of investments	(69,604,829)	(54,178,471)
Sales and maturities of investments	63,322,902	47,588,226
Net cash used by investing activities	(6,577,307)	(7,025,365)
Financing Activity—reduction of long-term debt		(559,960)
Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents	547,485	186,553
Cash and Cash Equivalents, Beginning of Year	1,059,824	873,271
Cash and Cash Equivalents, End of Year	$1,607,309	$1,059,824
Supplemental Cash Flows Information		
Cash paid for interest		$45,207
Income taxes paid	$382,572	

See notes to consolidated financial statements.

Note 1 - Nature of Operations and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

General

The American Legion National Headquarters (the Legion) is a national veterans organization which was declared to be a corporate body by an Act of the United States Congress on September 16, 1919.

According to the Original Act and Subsequent Amendments, the purpose of the Legion is: "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and goodwill among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country."

Approximately 50% of the Legion's income is derived from membership dues. An additional 15% is generated through subscriptions and advertising for the American Legion Magazine. Another significant source of income is Emblem sales, which includes the sale of apparel, jewelry, and other items bearing the American Legion Emblem. Income is expended by the Legion on several different programs including The American Legion Magazine, Emblem sales, veterans assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs, and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion baseball, oratorical contests, and Boys' Nation.

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses, gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Principles of Consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of The American Legion National Headquarters, and its wholly owned subsidiary, Haynes and Partners Communications Inc. (HPC). All material inter-organizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation. Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc., an Indiana corporation, is a full-service, direct marketing and advertising agency whose services include innovative marketing and creative automated mailing. The majority of its sales are to the Legion. The remaining sales are made primarily within the State of Indiana.

Net Asset Classifications

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations. SFAS No. 117 requires, among other things, that the financial statements report the changes in and total of each of the net asset classes, based upon donor restrictions, as applicable. Net assets are to be classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted.

The following classes of net assets are maintained:

Unrestricted Net Assets

The unrestricted net asset class includes general assets and liabilities of the Legion, as well as assets and liabilities designated by the National Executive Committee, the governing body of the Legion. The unrestricted net assets of the Legion may be used at the discretion of management to support the Legion's purposes and operations.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets

The temporarily restricted net asset class includes assets of the Legion related to gifts with explicit donor-imposed restrictions that have not been met as to specified purpose, or to later periods of time or after specified dates. Unconditional promises to give that are due in future periods and are not permanently restricted are classified as temporarily restricted net assets.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets

The permanently restricted net asset class includes assets of the Legion for which the donor has stipulated that the contribution be maintained in perpetuity. Donor imposed restrictions limiting the use of the assets or its economic benefit neither expire with the passage of time nor can be removed by satisfying a specific purpose.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

For purposes of reporting cash flows, the Legion considers all liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. At December 31, 1998, the Legion's cash accounts exceeded federally insured limits by approximately $1,660,000. However, all of these amounts were collateralized by overnight repurchase agreements.

Unbilled Production Costs

HPC records time incurred on approved projects each day at standard billing rates (based on the employees' years of experience, job quote, market conditions, etc.). Production time is accumulated daily and is recorded as either unbilled production time, accounts receivable (when billed) or written off as uncollectible. Production costs also include the cost, plus a standard mark-up, for purchases from outside vendors.

Inventory

Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market. Supplies which are not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

Investments

Investments are carried at fair value. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the consolidated statement of activities. Premiums or discounts on investments are generally recognized at the time of disposal or maturity.

Property and Equipment

Expenditures for property and equipment and items which substantially increase the useful lives of existing assets are capitalized at cost. The Legion provides for depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designed to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives.

Depreciation on the Washington, D. C. building is computed on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from 5 to 7 years.

Support and Revenue

The Legion reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Dues Income and Expense

Dues are recognized as income over the applicable membership period, which is on a calendar-year basis.

In addition to other methods of obtaining new members, the Legion uses direct mail and other direct marketing approaches. The income generated from the direct membership solicitation is recognized over the applicable membership period (calendar year). The direct-response expenses incurred in obtaining new members are deferred and written off in the subsequent year.

Income Taxes

The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(19) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. The Legion is not considered to be a private foundation. The Legion is subject to income tax on unrelated business income. However, due to net operating loss carryforwards, the Legion paid no taxes for the years ended December 31, 1998 and 1997.

Federal and state income tax expense is recorded for HPC as incurred.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments

The carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents approximates fair value. Investments are carried at fair value.

Expense Allocation

Expenses have been classified as program services, management and general, member development and fundraising based on actual direct expenditures. Additionally, some expenses are allocated among departments based upon estimates of the amount of time historically spent by Legion employees performing services for those departments.

Reclassifications

Certain information for 1997 has been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

Note 2 - Investment in Affiliate

During 1994, the Legion, in conjunction with approximately 80 other organizations, created a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. (CFA) for the purpose of aiding in the campaign to secure a constitutional amendment empowering the Congress and the States to enact legislation to protect the Flag of the United States of America from physical desecration.

To support these efforts, the Legion invested $1,425,000 and $1,225,000 in CFA during 1998 and 1997, respectively. CFA recognized net losses of $1,448,886 for 1998 and $1,178,800 for 1997. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been reduced by this amount and a corresponding charge has been reflected in unrestricted designated net assets.

Note 3 - Investments

The Legion's market value of investments is as follows:

December 31, 1998	Segregated for Designated Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Market Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U. S. Government obligations	$15,403,304	$1,234,774	$946,334	$14,673,926	$10,471,280	$42,729,618
Corporate bonds				4,845,300		4,845,300
Common and preferred stocks				18,337,495		18,337,495
Mutual funds					4,655,367	4,655,367
Money market accounts	179,796			1,311,358	8,424,334	9,915,488
Accrued interest	210,140	33,626	13,749	338,334	121,689	717,538
	$15,793,240	$1,268,400	$960,083	$39,506,413	$23,672,670	$81,200,806

	Market
Unrestricted	$11,986,595
Unrestricted—designated	61,110,470
Temporarily restricted	3,103,741
Permanently restricted	5,000,000
	$81,200,806

December 31, 1997	Segregated for Designated Funds	Segregated for Washington, D.C. Building	Market Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U. S. Government obligations	$14,386,378	$1,090,685	$935,133	$ 7,887,287	$11,334,214	$35,633,697
State and municipal bonds				648,684		648,684
Corporate bonds				8,335,635	244,194	8,579,829
Common and preferred stocks				16,679,195		16,679,195
Mutual funds					3,268,645	3,268,645
Money market accounts	154,512			406,687	6,792,636	7,353,835
Certificates of deposit					510,126	510,126
Accrued interest	175,671	28,226	16,454	257,467	106,336	584,354
	$14,716,561	$1,118,911	$951,587	$34,215,155	$22,256,151	$73,258,365

	Market
Unrestricted	$11,776,635
Unrestricted—designated	54,073,937
Temporarily restricted	2,407,793
Permanently restricted	5,000,000
	$73,258,365

Note 4 - Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund

The National Executive Committee approved the establishment of a life membership plan available to any member of a participating department. In accordance with the plan, the assets of the Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund are segregated in a trust account from which funds equal to the annual dues of life members are withdrawn for current operations each year. The trust agreement provides that the Legion has the right to withdraw part or all of the assets of the trust account and to modify or terminate the trust agreement at its discretion.

Note 5 - Restricted and Reserve Funds

The Restricted Fund is designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee of the American Legion. Earnings of the Restricted Fund, along with the principal, can be expended only upon recommendation of the National Finance Commission and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee at two successive meetings. It is the policy of the Legion to transfer 10% of the prior year's defined net income to the Restricted Fund. There were no transfers in 1998.

The Reserve Fund is also designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee. However, earnings of the Reserve Fund may be used for the general operations of the Legion. The principal can be expended only by action of the Legion at its national convention, or by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the National Executive Committee in two successive meetings not less than 60 days apart.

Note 6 - Life Insurance Plan

During October 1992, the National Executive Committee approved a resolution to terminate the Legion's Life Insurance Trust. Upon dissolution in April 1993, funds remaining in the Trust totaling $4,285,984 were transferred to a non-trust sub-account (named The American Legion Life Insurance Plan) under control of the Legion for use in youth programs.

The Legion's National Executive Committee has directed that monies within The American Legion Life Insurance Plan be used to fund oratorical contests, Boys' Nation, American Legion Baseball, and other youth programs of the Legion. At December 31, 1998, $1,100,000 in funds had been approved for use in designated programs during 1999.

Note 7 - Permanently Restricted Net Assets

The Legion received $5,000,000 from The Samsung Group during 1996. The principal is to be permanently endowed and the income is to be used to fund undergraduate scholarships for descendants of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U. S. servicemen and servicewomen participated. Such scholarships will be administered by the Legion.

Note 8 - American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation

The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (the Corporation) was incorporated in 1925 as a not-for-profit corporation with perpetual existence to act as trustee for the American Legion Endowment Fund (the Endowment Fund), which was created to provide permanent funding for rehabilitation of American veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans. In August 1946, the Legion transferred securities having a market value of $2,000,000 to the Endowment Fund. The assets transferred have been held segregated by the Endowment Fund and the principal related to the 1946 transfer, which had a market value of $2,131,470 and $2,115,808 at December 31, 1998 and 1997, may be withdrawn by the Legion, if needed, for rehabilitation of veterans or assistance to orphans of veterans.

Income earned on the investments of the Endowment Fund, net of administrative expenses, is payable to the Legion to support its programs for the above-mentioned purposes. Income from the Endowment Fund amounted to $508,886 and $502,072 in 1998 and 1997.

Note 9 - Leases

The Legion and HPC have several non-cancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, copiers and cash registers that expire over the next six years. Rental expense for these leases aggregated $505,824 in 1998 and $781,954 in 1997. Future minimum lease payments under operating leases are as follows:

Years Ending December 31	Operating Leases
1999	$139,932
2000	138,289
2001	115,552
2002	77,900
2003	46,000
Thereafter	14,000
Total minimum lease payments	$530,773

In addition, the Legion has a lease with the State of Indiana for rental of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis through June 30, 2002. The lease can be renewed at the option of the Legion for nine additional four-year periods. According to the terms of the lease, the Legion is required to maintain the interior of the building, and provide adequate insurance on the building in lieu of lease payments. The cost of maintenance approximated $368,000 and $352,000 in 1998 and 1997, respectively. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

Note 10 - Income Taxes

The following is a reconciliation of income taxes at the federal statutory rate to actual income tax recorded by HPC:

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Income tax expense:		
Currently payable:		
Federal	$299,146	$90,403
State	73,211	12,524
Deferred:		
Federal	(101,925)	(95,191)
	$270,432	$198,118
Reconciliation of federal statutory to actual tax expense:		
Federal statutory income tax at 34%	$191,882	$178,104
Nondeductible expenses	3,982	1,101
Effect of state income taxes	48,319	8,266
Change in valuation allowance and other	26,249	10,647
Actual tax expense	$270,432	$198,118

The components of the net deferred tax (liability) assets are as follows:

December 31	1998	1997
Asset		
Net operating loss carryforward	$15,447	
Liabilities		
Accrual to cash adjustment		$(95,191)
Other	(8,713)	
Total liabilities	(8,713)	(95,191)
	$ 6,734	$(95,191)

The deferred tax asset and liability are included in other accounts receivable and other liabilities, respectively, in the statement of financial position.

Note 11 - Net Assets Released From Restriction

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Purpose restrictions accomplished:		
Overseas graves decoration	$ 289,765	$ 55,196
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	562,551	1,901,344
Other	454,452	287,593
Total net assets released from restrictions	$1,306,768	$2,244,133

Note 12 - Net Assets Released From Designation

Net assets were released from designations by satisfying the designations previously established.

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Purpose designations accomplished:		
Flag education	$1,448,886	$1,178,800
Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	2,019,864	1,828,962
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	1,100,000	1,100,000
Other	424,998	407,720
Total net assets released from designations	$4,992,948	$4,515,482

Note 13 - Employee Benefits

The Legion has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees as well as those of certain affiliated and subordinated groups. The plan was established in 1944 by vote of the Legion's National Convention. Contributions to the plan are made by the Legion and other participating groups on the basis of annual actuarial valuations. The following table sets forth the Legion's portion of the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in the Legion's consolidated statement of financial position at December 31, 1998 and 1997.

December 31	1998	1997
Benefit obligation	$(22,069,554)	$(18,686,662)
Fair value of plan assets	45,634,005	39,828,713
Funded status	$23,564,451	$21,142,051
Prepaid benefit cost recognized in the balance sheet	$11,199,193	$ 9,699,864

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Benefit cost	$(1,344,191)	$(1,405,259)
Employer contribution	154,553	152,353
Benefits paid	1,222,593	1,261,473

December 31	1998	1997
Weighted-average assumptions:		
Discount rate	7%	7.5%
Expected return on plan assets	7.5	8.5
Rate of compensation increase	3	3

Note 14 - Functional Expenses

The following represents a functional breakdown of the American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Program Services:		
Veterans affairs	$28,120,652	$30,888,462
Americanism and children and youth activities	3,552,204	5,988,697
Flag education and legislation	2,879,708	2,022,343
Direct response advertising and marketing	538,801	207,809
Total program services	35,091,365	39,107,311
Supporting Services:		
Management and general	10,945,237	9,113,580
Membership	5,830,306	6,849,817
Fundraising	841,898	1,006,579
Total expenses	$52,708,806	$56,077,287

Note 15 - Litigation

The Legion is currently involved in and/or has been mentioned as a defendant or co-defendant in several legal actions. It is the opinion of the National Judge Advocate that these claims are without merit and any ultimate liability of the Legion with respect to these actions will not materially affect the financial position of the Legion.

Note 16 - Year 2000

Like all entities, the Legion is exposed to risks associated with the Year 2000 Issue, which affects computer software and hardware; transactions with customers, vendors, and other entities; and equipment dependent upon microchips. The Legion has begun, but not yet completed, the process of identifying and remediating potential Year 2000 problems. It is not possible for any entity to guarantee the results of its own remediation efforts or to accurately predict the impact of the Year 2000 Issue with which the Legion does business. If remediation efforts of the Legion or third parties with which the Legion does business are not successful, the Year 2000 Issue could have negative effects on the Legion's financial condition and results of operations in the near term.

Reconciliation of Audited Financial Statements to Internal Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31	1998	1997
Change in Net Assets – Internal Financial Statements	$3,957,122	$2,204,188
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains not included in internal financials		
Unrestricted designated	51,602	329,989
Temporarily restricted	152,541	312,609
	4,161,265	2,846,786
Net unrealized gains		
General	64,809	245,363
Unrestricted designated	1,462,750	3,070,116
Temporarily restricted	145,613	358,836
Change in Net Assets – Audited Financial Statements	$5,834,437	$6,521,101

AMERICAN LEGION ENDOWMENT FUND

Foreseeing the necessity of a recurring income source for funding its war veterans rehabilitation and child welfare programs, The American Legion conducted a national campaign in 1925 which raised approximately $5 million for this purpose. The funds contributed were entrusted to the custody of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation.

The Corporation was incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware in 1925 and a trust agreement between The American Legion and the Corporation was signed. Funds are administered by the Corporation in accordance with the trust aggreement and annual net investment income is paid to The American Legion for use in the aforementioned programs.

The results of operations and financial condition of The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation for each of the last five years is summarized below (taken from the annual audit report prepared by Olive LLP, Indianapolis, Indiana).

December 31	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994
Total assets (1)	$8,035,988	$7,927,268	$8,694,667	$8,162,289	$7,846,801
Investments (1)	$7,918,724	$7,823,846	$7,830,853	$7,991,301	$7,644,325
Interest income	$503,588	$519,819	$539,900	$575,688	$550,155
Contributions (4)	27,964	(744,754)	765,598	7,552	
Net realized gains	5,596	9,739	48,948	60,891	
Net unrealized gains (losses)	133,672	39,724	(258,531)	424,307	
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children and Youth Programs of The American Legion National Headquarters (2)	(459,669)	(487,152)	(500,367)	(496,538)	
Other expenses	(53,252)	(32,667)	(39,533)	(48,226)	(46,472)
Change in net assets	$157,899	($695,291)	$556,015	$523,674	$503,683
Funds transferred to The American Legion (3)	$508,886	$502,072	$524,339	$550,057	$537,035
Average yield on value of investments at market	6.47%	6.77%	7.44%	8.14%	6.99%

(1) Beginning in 1995, investments are included at fair value in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124, contributions are recorded in accordance SFAS 116, and the financial statements are prepared in accordance with SFAS 117.

(2) Accrual basis

(3) Cash basis

(4) 1997 amount includes adjustments to write off contribution receivable of $759,000.